

Folk Belief (Superstitions) and Its Relation to the Birth, Newborn, and Children in Simalungun Society

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the structure, meaning, and function of the folk belief (superstitions) related to pregnancy, childbirth, newborn, and children. Superstition is used to forbid someone from taking certain actions to avoid a bad result or misfortune. Therefore, superstition can be used as social control in everyday life. The method used is a qualitative descriptive method using folklore theory. The results show that (1) The two structure that consists of cause-effect and cause-effect patterns. (2) The three structure that consists of cause-effect-conversion patterns and cause-conversion-effect patterns. Superstition contains the philosophy of Simalungun's everyday life that contains the values of goodness that govern the relationship among humans, humans and the natural environment, and humans and God. Superstition functions as a means of children's education, coercion, and supervisory to the norms to obey by members of society. It also a system of collective imaginary projection and strengthening religious emotions or beliefs.

Keywords: superstition, childbirth, newborn, childhood.

INTRODUCTION

Superstition or *takhayul* (Indonesian local people belief) is a part of folklore which is a combination of oral and non-oral elements. The globalized societies have different views about superstition. For society who believe in superstition, it is considered to have an important role as social control and

educational tools, especially for parents in educating their children in everyday life. Contrary, for an unbeliever society, superstition is a fatuity and ignoring of science, for it's not based on the facts. However, if we examine further, the superstition can be used to fight the negative influence of modernization, and to maintain the original culture of the community.

Today, some of the superstitions are familiar and still believed by some of Simalungun society, especially about pregnancy, childbirth, infancy, and childhood related to activities around the life cycle. This superstition is generally serving as a prohibition on what to do and what not to do. When the prohibition is violated, it is considered a disaster. Thus, the superstition should be obeyed.

Underlying Theories

a. Folklore

Marsellaa and Putri (2020) found that ethnic folklore is the identity of an ethnic group. In line with the opinion of Dundes (1965:2) folklore is a collective culture, which is spread and passed down from generation to generation in different versions. Folklore is a reflection of the collective human self and habits, so by revealing folklore it is like searching for human identity. Barnouw (1982:241) argued that researching folklore will arrive at "the enjoyment of life". Folklore in development according to Dundes (1965: 2), Bruvand in

Danandjaja (1997: 21-22) is divided into: 1) oral folklore, 2) partly oral folklore and 3) non-verbal folklore. Folklore, according to Dundes, has other functions of folklore, namely: (1) to strengthen the feeling of collective solidarity, (2) as a means of justifying a society, (3) providing direction to the community, so that it can criticize others, (4) as a means of protesting against injustice, (5) as a fun and entertaining tool. Bascom in Danandjaja (1995:3-20) adds, folklore has four functions, namely (1) as a projection system, namely as a means of reflecting the dreams of a collective, (2) as a means of validating cultural institutions and institutions, (3) as a pedagogical tool, and (4) as a means of coercion and supervision so to ensure the social norms are obeyed by their collective members.

William John Thomas in Khan's (2018) quoted that the term "folklore" was adopted in 1846. The term folklore today has become the field of culture-learning, research, and the subject of field problems. The studies of folklore or folklife constitute first and foremost of oral literature that is also known as verbal arts or expressive literature. It stands for either spoken or chanted oral literature or in voice forms denoting traditional speech in repeated patterns. Folk songs or folk tales spread from mouth to mouth. In contrast to the printed works (since the printed literature was produced), folklore does not grant any copyright. One of the prominent folklores is the recitation of the Ramayana, a mythological folk tale that dominates culture as well as a religious sensibility in the Indian subcontinent.

Folklore is a form of community culture which its dispersion and inheritance are carried out orally, namely through the speech of the community. Folklore is well developed in Indonesian society, which is dispersed and inherited in the form of spoken from one generation to generation (Nurizzati & Zulfikarni, 2013 in Ningsih, et al., 2020).

b. Traditional beliefs

The folk beliefs (superstition) is partially oral folklore. Traditional beliefs consist of verbal statements and gestures that are considered to have magical meanings. One form of folk belief associated with the supernatural is the prohibitive expression. Prohibition should be obeyed by the community. The prohibitive expressions dispersed in generations, regardless of the age and sex of the speakers. However, today it is only familiar to the elders.

In general, educated people consider the folk beliefs as irrational, for it is not underlying logic, or scientifically unjustified. The term 'superstition' is considered to mean insulting or degrading. Therefore, modern folklore experts prefer to use the term folk beliefs rather than superstitious. For superstition means fantasy.

Folk belief is not merely a belief, but also a practice which is generally passed on through the speech, explained with conditions, consisting of sign or cause and result. For example, for the Simalungun people, when the gibbon voice was heard in the distance (*sign*), it indicates the rain will follow (*result*).

Superstition is an unscientific belief. Our ability to think causally ranges from understanding physical strength to comprehend other people's goals. The origins of our causal beliefs can be traced to animals with developed brains. The world cannot be understood by animals in terms of cause, or intention. The world can be explained by considering the relationship between inanimate objects and tool making. Perception of other individuals' intentions, resulting in better competitive strategies and managing the environment. Belief is an attempt to explain to ourselves the world in which we live. Our social intelligence is the foundation of religious belief. Confidence creation is a necessary by-product of strong causal thinking. Economic and geographic conditions help us build trust. However, the changes in these factors may change the individual beliefs. Thus, superstition or

superstitious beliefs are not based on scientific judgment.

Dundes in Danandjaya (1991:154-155) divided the structure of belief expressions into two types. Firstly, the expressions that are structured in two parts, namely cause and effect, and secondly, the expressions that have a three-part structure, namely a sign, a change from one state to other states (conversion), and the effect (result). The second structure is also subdivided according to the location of the conversion. Some conversions are located at the end and some are in the middle.

Meaning is an utterance that conveys a message. The expression of folk belief is formed from a word arrangement that forms language and contains the meaning. The relationship between word-natures and word meanings is arbitrary. There is no mandatory relationship between the word-forming phonemes and their meanings. While the expression is interpreted in connotation, the meaning is implied, and there is no logical relationship to be found.

Furthermore, Danandjaya (1991) in Ningsih, et al. (2020), put forward the function of expressions in folk belief. The expression functioned: 1) to strengthen the religious emotions or beliefs, 2) as the projection of a collective fiction that originating from someone's fantasy, 3) as a pedagogical tool, 4) as a reasonable explanation, 5) to entertain someone who is experiencing difficulties.

METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. Qualitative study is a procedure in research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the behavior of the people observed (Moleong, 2014:4).

DISCUSSION

According to Wayland D. Hand in Danandjaya (1986: 155), the first order of folk belief is related to the human life cycle, for example, pregnancy, childbirth, infancy,

and childhood. The reason is that this period is the earliest stages of human life.

In the first order, the rules such as prohibitions have been implanted in every child. In the case the prohibition is violated, it will proceed as a consequence. Thus, the prohibition should be obeyed to avoid any bad impact. These rules or prohibitions govern the social order of life, ranging from attitudes, traits, and behavior. These rules also contain superstitions. Even though it looks obsolete, folk beliefs (superstitions) have influenced people's lives since ancient times until now. Likewise for the people of Simalungun.

The folk beliefs of the Simalungun community are found to be very diverse. This diversity shows that the Simalungun community's beliefs have a considerable influence on the daily activities and covers the life cycle of the Simalungun community. Simalungun folk belief divides childhood into three stages, they are fetus, infant, and child. This is because children are a critical part of the life cycle. Thus, children cannot be separated from the existing rules. Some of the rules are applied to the child himself or rule the child as an object that affects others.

Concerning pregnancy, the folk belief of the Simalungun community generally set the norm for parents to obey. The folk belief implies that the Simalungun community should treat pregnant women kindly, for pregnant women will give birth to children which are the precious things in human life. The pregnant woman wishes for safe childbirth and has a healthy baby who inherits the good traits too. Thus, in the period of pregnancy, pregnant women practice virtue, as they hope their baby should behave as well in the future. Moreover, it indicates that children are the right objects to rule the parent's behavior.

The norms of the childbirth period are basically similar to pregnancy, where parents are playing the main role in these periods. Although babies cannot do anything in this period, however, they are assumed to take part in folk belief by their

parent's action. Because infants are helpless, the folk belief suggests the importance of parents' role as the source of parental love. Moreover, in childhood, the folk belief generally teaches how to behave well. Children are sincere and innocent, this makes children easy to be influenced and believe things they see or hear without adequate reasoning. In addition, the nature of children is very trustworthy, this makes it easy for parents to regulate children's attitudes through folk belief. Generally, children are afraid of pain or hurt. Thus, folk belief is dominated by its painful consequences. However, folk belief is a form of parental love and responsibility for their children. Most of them are aimed to give awareness to children concerning the cause and effect of their actions. Because children's reasoning still developing, it is easy for parents to use folk beliefs to teach children about the consequences of their actions and the choices they make. And today, folk belief or superstition is considered a lie because of its illogical contents.

1. The Structure of Simalungun Folk Beliefs

Folk belief and practice are usually passed down through speech. The speech conveys folk beliefs by the explanation of conditions. According to Koentjaraningrat in Danandjaja (1986:154), the conditions consist of signs or causes and expected results. For example, in Simalungun folk belief, *lang boi na lau partus mamake rante* - "it is inappropriate for pregnant women to wear necklace" (cause) *holi payah anggini kaluar* - it causes the pain in giving birth (effect). This folk belief has two patterns.

Other than two structures, there is a three-structure of folk beliefs. It consists of a sign/cause, a change from one state to another (conversion), and a result (effect). For example, the three-structures of Simalungun folk belief: *anggo mambuat bulung atak aha pe ai* 'If you take any leave' (sign) *ulang saponggol dassa*

ibuat 'don't just take half of it' (conversion), *holi sining/cacat niombahni* 'if you do not wish a birth defect' (result).

The examples of folk belief or superstition above are causal according to association relationships. In fact, there is also a folk belief where the human actions are carried out on purpose that causes an "effect". It is known as magic. The following are examples of folk belief in two and three patterns:

a) Folk beliefs with Two Structures: Cause - Effect Patterns

As previously explained, folk belief with a causal pattern has two elements, namely sign/cause, and effect/results. Every action will proceed with an effect or a result. Therefore, folk belief contains action (things are done) and its resultant effect (things are obtained).

Below are the examples of Simalungun folk beliefs which have a two-dimensional pattern:

1) *Ulang ililithon hiou bai borgok holi lilit pusokni bani borgok niombah ai.*

'Do not put any cloth (scarf) on your neck, if you do not wish the infant umbilical cord will wrap around his/her neck'

This folk belief is aimed at pregnant women only. It is indicating a causal pattern. *Ulang ililithon hiou bai borgok* - 'do not put any cloth (scarf) on your neck' is the cause. When a pregnant woman keeps wrapping the cloth around her neck, what will happen is *holi lilit pusokni bani borgok niombah ai* - later, the infant umbilical cord will be wrapped around his/her neck'. Thus, an action resulting an effect.

2) *Ulang hona udan inangni dakdanak na baru tubuh ase ulang mapingor uluni niombahni.*

'Do not get wet in the rain, if you wish the newborn doesn't get headaches either'

This folk belief has a causal pattern. The part of cause is *ulang hona udan inangni dakdanak na baru tubuh*. When this

condition is violated, there will be a consequence. The consequence is *mappingor uluni niombahni* - the newborn will get a headache".

b) Folk beliefs with Two Structures: Effect - Cause Patterns

Similar to the previous pattern, these patterns have two elements. However, the patterns are reversed, where the cause being an effect and vice versa. This folk belief reveals that every time the sign/cause is occurring, the consequence will follow.

Examples of folk belief of the Simalungun community with two-pattern of effects are as follows:

Anggo dong na birong i igungni niombahni aima tandani dong maginni.

"If there is a dark patch on the child's nose, it means that he/she has a convulsion"

The sign is followed by an effect. The signifying part is *anggo dong na birong i igungni niombahni* - if there is a dark patch on the child's nose'. This sign is a physical feature. When a child has this physical characteristic, it means '*aima tandani dong maginni*' that the child has a convulsion (effect).

c) The Folk Belief with Three Structures: Cause-Effect-Conversion Pattern

This folk belief has three patterns, namely cause, effect, and conversion. The folk beliefs also related to pregnancy, infancy, and childhood period. These three patterns are shown as follows:

Anggo iboan dakdanak hu rumah ni hasoman, tapi lang dong mambere atak aha pe hasoman ai, ase ulang alukon ia, ikiskis ma dinding jabuni hasoman ai, ibuat baru ibere ma bani niombah ai irik manghatahon "ulang alukon ho da anggiku".

'When you take children with you to visit someone's home, but you don't give anything to the host, just scrape the wall of the house, take it and give it to your children and saying "please do not ask for anything right now"'.

This folk belief is a cause-effect-conversion pattern. The cause pattern is *anggo iboan dakdanak hu rumah ni hasoman, tapi lang dong mambere atak aha pe hasoman ai* 'When you take children with you to visit someone's home, but you don't give anything to the host'. After the cause occurred, the expected result is *ulang alukon ho da anggiku* - please do not ask for anything right now. To achieve the desired effect, the conversion (change of state) is required. The conversion that must be done is "*ikiskis ma dinding jabuni hasoman ai, ibuat baru ibere ma bani niombah ai irik manghatahon "ulang alukon ho da anggiku"* - just scrape the wall of the house, take it and give it to your children and saying "please do not ask for anything right now"'.

a) Folk beliefs with a Three Pattern: Cause-Conversion-Effect

The last pattern is folk belief with three patterns, namely cause-conversion-effect. Folk belief with this pattern features conversion before represent its consequences. Examples of folk belief with cause-conversion-effect pattern in the Simalungun community are as follows:

1) *Anggo roh lalou, mintor ma hubagas tukkarang podoman irik manghatahon "bassah au ompung" marulak-ulak ase ulang guguron.*

'When an earthquake occurs, get under the bed and say continuously "*bassah au ompung*", so that there is no miscarriage.

This folk belief has a cause-conversion-effect pattern. *Anggo roh lalou* 'when an earthquake occurs' is the cause. The cause is a natural disaster. Thus, when an earthquake occurs, what the pregnant women have to do is *mintor ma hubagas tukkarang podoman irik manghatahon "bassah au ompung" marulak-ulak* - get under the bed and say continuously "*bassah au ompung*", so that there is no miscarriage. This is a conversion. At this stage, the situation may changes from one state to another, as the result, where the pregnant woman may miscarry or not. Meanwhile, *ase ulang guguron* "so the

miscarriage does not occur" is the result. This result is the final state that occurred due to conversion.

2) *Anggo lagi dear angkulani parrumahni, lang boi laho mangkail paramangonni holi sining/cacat niombahni.*

"During the pregnancy of a wife, her husband should not go fishing, if not, the unborn child becomes abnormal"

In this folk belief, the cause is *anggo lagi dear angkulani parrumahni* "during the pregnancy of a wife". As if a cause occurs, an action should not be done to avoid misfortune. Therefore, *lang boi laho mangkail paramangonni* "a husband should not go for fishing", this part is called a conversion. The misfortune (consequence) to be avoided is *holi sining/cacat niombahni* - if not, the unborn child becomes abnormal'

2. The Meaning of Simalungun Folk Belief

All of Simalungun folk beliefs about pregnancy, infancy, and childhood contain the meaning related to the life of Simalungun people. These meanings generally regulate the attitudes and behavior of parents and children by providing consequences for each behavior and actions. The following are some examples of the meaning of Simalungun folk belief:

a) *Ulang mangan kuskus ni indahan holi rutu-rutuon niombah ai*

'Do not eat the rice crust, if you wish the child free from scabies'

This folk belief means that a pregnant woman who is pregnant should behave politely. The rice crust is overcooked rice, it indicates the imperfection process, while scabious is a skin disease. Thus, eating the rice crust is not a wise choice for a woman who can serve good rice. The similarity of the *rice crust* as cause to the *scabious* as the effect is that both conditions are defective. Based on this reason, the pregnant woman suggests not to eat the rice crust.

b) *Ulang mambokbok kiok holi lang boi mardalan niombahni*

'Do not hit a snake, if not, the child will lame'

This folk belief means to be vigilant and careful. Snake is a dangerous animal, whether with venom or not. Hitting a snake is considered a reckless and dangerous activity carried out by a pregnant woman because the snake may bite down on her. It implies how people behave. For example, someone who afraid of things will take a rash action that may harm him/herself. The pregnant woman might be hit the snake out of fear. However, her act will endanger herself and her unborn child. Because the safety of her child is a crucial thing, this folk belief is considered to be able to remind the pregnant woman to act carefully for the safety of her pregnancy and unborn child. Meanwhile, the relationship between cause and effect is a fantasy; both a snake and an unborn child are unable to walk. The snakes moving to slither. This is the main thought: like a snake that unable to walk, so the child, if the cause is violated.

3. The Function of Folk Belief

Apart from having patterns and meaning, folk belief also has a function. According to Koentjaraningrat in Danandjaja (1986:169-170), the function of folk belief is as a collective imaginary projection, as a strengthening of religious emotions or beliefs, as a means of education for children or adolescents, and as a means of coercion and supervision of community norms to be obeyed. Based on the functions of folk belief stated above, the Simalungun folk belief has these four functions.

The following examples include these four functions:

a. As a Collective Imaginary Projection System

Folk belief functioned as a collective imaginary projection system, a superstition which is believed to bring bad or good fortune. People who believe in the superstition that function as collective

fantasy suggested to avoid bad incidents or misfortune by doing so.

The examples of folk belief that function as a collective imaginary projection system in the Simalungun community are as follows:

1) *Ulang ililithon hiou bai borgok holi lilit pusokni bani borgok niombah ai.*

'Do not put any cloth (scarf) on your neck, if not, the infant umbilical cord will wrapped around his/her neck'

In common sense, wrapping a cloth around the neck of a pregnant woman will not make the umbilical cord of the unborn child wrapped around his/her neck. We can examine this folk belief by considering its function as a collective fantasy. However, this folk belief has affected pregnant women to do so in the Simalungun community. Simply, this folk belief is created by making associations of scarf and neck in pregnant women and unborn child. It makes two objects with the same characteristics, namely the cloth and the umbilical cord, the things that can be wrapped around. The cloth (scarf) which is tied around the neck of a pregnant woman is associated with the umbilical cord wrapped around the neck of an unborn child.

2) *Anggo manussi bajuni dakdanak na baru tubuh, ulang poroh tu ase ulang ratraton ia.*

"When washing the clothes of the newborn, do not squeeze too hard, if not, the child will get pain, which can cause him/her to cries a lot"

The function of folk belief (superstition) is a collective delusion. The Simalungun people believe that a person has an inner connection with that person. Thus, this folk belief (superstition) is just an illusion that children's clothes have a relationship with a newborn child. Clothing is used to cover the body, therefore it is related to the body of the newborn child. Squeeze the clothes firmly, meaning that a lot of water is drained, the water that comes out is believed to be a lot drained of the newborn child's

energy. To squeeze a child's clothes firmly is an illusion of rough treatment of the child's body. From such fantasy, it is assumed that the newborn child will cry.

b. As a Strengthening of Religious Emotions or Beliefs

Folk belief as a strengthening of religious emotions is functioned to increase human belief in the existence of God or supernatural beings and ancestral spirits who are invisible but impact the Simalungun community. This type of folk belief believes in those creatures through natural phenomena but unexplained with human reason.

The Simalungun community believes that God is a protector, the Almighty who keep everything in control, and tender. Moreover, the spirits of the ancestors are people who were born earlier who also must protect their offspring. The ghosts, jinn, etc., are the things which are often regarded as the trouble maker. Even in some beliefs, these ghosts also prey on humans.

However, there is a type of ghost which are regarded can be ruled by the shamans. They do it for certain purposes, for example, to scare and disturb others. As a reward, those ghosts must be served with sacrifices. This reward can be in the form of food offerings, such as chicken, blood, and even humans. Besides believing in superstition, the community believes in the existence of these creatures. They also take the action to avoid interfering with those creatures.

From the research conducted in the Simalungun community, there are 3 folk beliefs or superstitions. They are the superstition about pregnancy, infancy, and childhood that functioned as emotional and belief strengthening. Other examples of folk belief which are function as the strengthening of religious emotions or beliefs in the Simalungun community are as follows:

1) *Anggo roh lalou, mintor ma hubagas tukkarang podoman irik manghatahon*

"bassah au ompung" marulak-ulak ase ulang guguron.

When an earthquake occurs, get under the bed and say continuously *"bassah au ompung"*, so that there is no miscarriage.

The conversion pattern in this folk belief functions as a strengthening of religious emotions or beliefs. This is because the folk belief suggests that pregnant women should pray to God to save them from a miscarriage due to an earthquake. When an earthquake occurs, the safest place for a pregnant woman is under the bed. Since ancient times, the Simalungun community lives in the *rumah bolon* (the traditional house of the Simalungun). This house has a ladder to the entrance, meaning that if you enter or leave you have to use a ladder. If a pregnant woman trying to get out during an earthquake, she should use a ladder too. However, the pregnant woman may get shocking and jump out of the house that may lead to miscarriage. Therefore, the best place is to hide is under the bed. This place can also protect pregnant women from falling objects. The traditional house of the Simalungun tribe is also believed to be able to withstand earthquake attacks. Meanwhile, the saying *"bassah au ompung"* or literally "Oh God, my body is big" is a prayer to God to be protected herself and her unborn child from miscarriage. This means that the woman acknowledged that she was pregnant.

2) *Anggo mamboan dakdanak na baru tubuh bai borngin, iharati ma jarangou, ibahen i uluni baru isapuhon ma hu badanni niombah ai ase ulang isisei pangisini talun niombah ai.*

"When a newborn child is brought out at night, the mother should bite the sweet calamus, made on the child head and body to avoid him/her from evil"

This folk belief also functions as a strengthening of religious emotions. The Simalungun community considers that newborn babies are still pure and innocent. The scent of a baby is considered fragrant, that may enchant the evils. It is considered

that ghosts or other spirits love the baby's scent. Thus, the Simalungun community believes that evils regard the baby as the prey. A mother who cares about her child who believes in the folk beliefs will prevent misfortune by rubbing the sweet calamus on the baby's head and entire body. The smell of the sweet calamus is believed to be disliked by spirits. After all, evil will not approach the baby.

c. As a pedagogical tool

Apart from the two previous functions, folk beliefs are also used to educate children or adolescents to behave. The folk belief is used to improve or shape young people's attitudes and behavior. Usually, this folk belief expresses the negative effects when violated. Today, most of the young are hard to believe the truth of folk beliefs, but some regard that folk beliefs have a positive impact on them because they focused on its positive message.

The following are examples of folk beliefs which function as educational tools for young or adolescents in the Simalungun community:

1) *Ulang ipangan sisa ni pamarutan ni kalapa holi dapotan paramangan ni halak.*

"Do not eat the leftover of grated coconut, if not, (a girl) will get someone's husband"

This folk belief functions as an educational tool for young people. This folk suggests a young girl be polite. Eating leftover grated coconut looks impolite because it's like eating leftover food. In this folk belief, similar characteristics are used as an association. The rest of the grated coconut is associated with finding another's a spouse to be a partner. Both cause and result have a similarity in the term of "used" things. Apart from having the similarities, this folk belief emphasizes the great importance of the meticulous in finding a partner, especially for a young girl. Moreover, this folk belief serves to educate young girls to be meticulous and polite.

2) *Ulang hundul i atasni battal holi bayohon.*

'Do not sit on the pillow, if not, you get boils'

This folk belief functions as a collective fantasy. Sitting on the pillow will not cause boils. The pillow support and give comfort to someone's head. Someone's head who place is at the top is regarded as a high position by the Simalungun community. Therefore it is impolite to have a seat on the pillow. Besides, a pillow as a headboard should not be made as a seat. This is because taking the pillow as a seat may leave it dirty. When someone reuses it as a pillow, it may cause itching on the scalp.

This is just a parents' fantasy to teach their children to be polite. Moreover, there is no specific reason why people regard the boils as resulted from sitting on the pillow. It is only because people, especially the young ones are afraid of pain or sickness. Children who are trusting their parents might obey this folk belief. It proves that the children's thoughts and reasoning are not mature yet. It is a good assumption why children believe the superstition.

d. As a tool of coercion and supervision to obey the society norm

The last function of folk belief is to act as a means of coercion and supervision for collective members to obey the norms. In social life, there are always rules or norms. This type of folk belief is made as feature of the rules and norms. The examples of folk belief which functions as a means of coercing and supervision norms in the Simalungun community are as follows:

Anggo lagi dear angkulani ulang makatai halani ra holi sonai na roh bani niombahni.

'If you are pregnant, do not gossiping, if not, the bad things will happen to unborn child'

This folk belief functions as a means of coercion of norms in society. No doubt, that it is rude to gossiping with others. No exception for a pregnant woman. Gossiping is disrespectful. In this folk belief, it appears that the Simalungun people believe in the karmic law. The Simalungun people believe

that karma does not only affect the doer, but also others who have a relationship with the doer. Thus, an unborn child who is still in the womb of a pregnant woman is affected by his/her mother's action. A mother who cares about her child should take into consideration how she acts and talks.

CONCLUSIONS

Superstitions are related to the human life cycle. Those are related to pregnancy, infancy, and childhood in the Simalungun community can be seen as a means to teach the people, especially the young ones in a good manner of speech, politeness, and prudence.

The superstitions related to pregnancy, infancy, and childhood consists of two structures. The first structure is cause/sign and effect which is referred to as two patterns, and a triple structure is cause-effect-conversion and cause-conversion-effect that referred to as three patterns.

The superstitions function as a collective fantasy projection system, as a strengthening of religious emotions or beliefs, as a pedagogical tool for children, and as a means of coercing the norms for society to obey. The meaning of superstition contains goodness or values that featuring the norms of Simalungun society, such as the values of humanity, the relationship between humans and their natural surroundings, and the relationship between humans and God.

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