

Identification of Food Avoidance Myths in Pregnant Women, Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency

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Abstract

The myth of dietary taboos in Indonesia is still a problem because there are still many foods that should be consumed but are prohibited. The basis of food habits is characterized in a person's value system in choosing foods that can be consumed and should not be consumed. The value system is based on religious sources and belief in God, customs that come from ancestors. This study aims to identify the myths of dietary taboos for pregnant women in Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency. This study uses a descriptive culture studies method using an anthropological approach that does not require scientific proof. Data collection techniques used in this study using interview, observation, recording and documentation techniques. The data analysis technique uses descriptive - analytical, which describes the existing data so that it becomes clear. This research was conducted in Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency. The subjects in this study were residents of Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency. The object of study in this study is the myth of food taboos for pregnant women. The myth of food taboos for pregnant women circulating in the village of Kedungwringin, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency is that pregnant women should not eat shrimp, catfish, soy leaf vegetables, attached bananas, cold water / ice because they are believed to have a bad impact on the baby they are carrying. This research on the myth of dietary taboos for pregnant women in the village of Kedungwringin, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency was studied using Roland Barthers' semiotic theory which was seen from the denotative and connotative meanings.

Keywords: dietary restrictions, pregnant women, Kedungwringin village

1. Introduction

Culture is something that is closely related to social life. People live in groups with different customs, environments, and historical cultural heritage and ultimately form different group cultures. According to Koentjaraningrat, culture is all thoughts, actions and results of human work in life that belong to oneself by learning. Because all human actions are obtained from the learning process, all human behavior is culture. Culture is not passed down through genetics, but is learned through life processes and interactions with the environment. This culture is passed down from generation to generation (Koentjaraningrat, 1983).

Humans live in society and develop a series of habits that eventually become a culture. Each region has its own culture. This happens because of natural factors, education level, habit factors, technological advances and others. Educational and technological factors also have a strong influence on a person's way of thinking and interpretation of his beliefs or thoughts.

Traditional society in Indonesia has a variety of cultures that are still thick with the community, especially the Javanese community which has many cultures with various traditions, but prefers to believe in traditions that come from their ancestors and are preserved from generation to generation to this day. This form of culture that was born in Indonesia has values that are in line with people's lives, namely religious values, tolerance values, and caring values. The culture of the Indonesian people has three values that can be used as guidelines in the life of the nation and state. Cultural traditions that are still thick in society will give rise to a mythical belief.

Myth is a term that comes from the Greek *muthos*, which literally means a story or something that people say, in a broader sense interpreted as a statement, besides that myth is also paired with the word *mythology* in English which has the meaning as a study of myths or myth content (Roibin, 2007). *Mythology* or *myth* is a collection of traditional stories that are usually told from generation to generation in a nation or family of nations (Wadiji, 2011). *Myth* is a medium for understanding and inheriting the cultural values of society which are still believed to be hereditary from the past to influence the pattern of today's society. Even today, in modern times that are all sophisticated, there are still many people who grow and develop with the myths of their ancestors and elders in their environment. because they think that what their ancestors said is the truth (Wewengkang, 2018). According to Van Peursen, *myth* is a story that can provide certain guidelines and directions to society. The story is usually in the form of symbols that can give a picture of something good and bad, life and death, sin and purification, and marriage and birth (P, 2001). *Myths* are beliefs that exist in society (Alam, 2018). According to *myth* is the result of intellectual thought and not the result of logic, it is a spiritual orientation (H, 2010) Roland Barthers explains that *myth* is included in the communication system (Barthers, 2010) thus, *myth* is a message that cannot be an object or a concept, or become an idea. *Myth* is a model of signification that is a form, while Peursen states that *taboos* and recommendations are part of the *myth* (P, 2001). Based on the above definition, it can be said that *myth* is something that has been passed down from generation to generation from our ancestors for us to continue to use and preserve at any time. Especially the *myth* of food *taboos* for pregnant women to be safe, healthy and without any shortcomings.

Even though it is difficult to prove the truth, many members of the community still have very strong beliefs about the truth, especially in traditional societies, it is only natural that in such a society it still thrives as a *myth* and *taboo* in various life practices. Thus, it must be admitted that *myths* and *taboos* do not only exist in traditional (rural) community culture, the reality shows that there are still many people who claim to be modern and educated still believe in the truth of a *myth*. The Indonesian people, especially the Javanese people have various kinds of *myths*, one of the *myths* that exist and are believed to be *myths* about pregnancy. The *myth* that occurs is marked by *taboos* against the prohibition of certain types of food.

The *myth* of food *taboos* is defined as a prohibition on consuming certain foods because there are several threats to people who consume them. The basis of food habits is characterized in a person's value system in choosing foods that can be consumed and should not be consumed. The *myth* of food *taboos* in Indonesia is still a problem because there are still many foods that should be consumed but are still *taboo*, due to the *myth* of dietary restrictions, pregnant women do not dare to eat certain foods so that they can reduce food intake and will ultimately affect nutritional status. The *myth* about food *taboos* around pregnancy that is still circulating in Kedungwringin village, Jatilawang district, Banyumas district is that pregnant women should not drink ice because later the baby will be big. Pregnant women should not consume shrimp, catfish, and leafy vegetables because it is believed that the baby will be difficult to come out.

From the above background, the author's goal in this study is to identify the *myths* of dietary *taboos* for pregnant women in Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive culture studies method using an anthropological approach that does not require scientific proof. According to Stake, a case study is a choice of research object, not a methodological consequence. The selected cases may be simple and may also be complex and complex (Stake & E, 2009). The purpose of case study research as qualitative research, in general, is to examine human understanding and behavior based on beliefs, scientific theories, and differences in values (D & Beck, 2004). In this case, Nyoman Kutha Ratna said that definitively the case study requires a research with certain and unique characteristics, in this connection, the researcher already has the view that in the location concerned there is a different problem based on trust (Ratna & Kutha, 2010).

Data collection techniques used in this study using interview, observation, recording and documentation techniques. The data analysis technique uses descriptive - analytical, which describes the existing data so that it becomes clear. From this descriptive discussion, it will be able to provide an overview of the data contained in the *myth* of *taboos* for pregnant women in Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency. Identification of *myths* using Roland Barther's Semiotics theory.

This research was conducted in Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency. The subjects in this study were residents of Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency. The object of study in this study is the *myth* of food *taboos* for pregnant women

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the author's observations and interviews with mothers who have been pregnant, and elderly people, it can be seen that many people in Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency still believe in *myths* about dietary restrictions for pregnant women in the local area. Foods that are *taboo* include shrimp, catfish, leafy vegetables, attached bananas, cold water/ice. The reason for the Kedungwringin villagers against food *taboos* in general is because the food will have an impact on the baby who is born later. People who recommend complying with these dietary

restrictions include parents or in-laws, close family, relatives and the local community. The reason for pregnant women in Kedungwringin village to believe in the myth of food taboos or prohibitions on consuming it is because they still believe there is a threat or punishment. In this threat they believe there is a supernatural or mystical power that will punish them if they violate that affect the baby to be born.

It is believed that if pregnant women eat shrimp it will hinder the process of giving birth to a child, this is based on shrimp which always goes backwards so that if a pregnant woman eats shrimp it is believed that when giving birth the baby will be difficult to come out because it will walk backwards following the path of the shrimp. . It is forbidden to eat catfish for pregnant women in Kedungwringin village if when pregnant women eat catfish, it is believed that later when their children are born, they will make children who are unruly and unable to stay still like catfish that are still alive because of their slippery skin making them difficult to catch. Abstinance from eating so/melinjo leaf vegetables is believed to complicate the delivery process because it will make the mother often take a break (rest) during the delivery process. Another myth is that pregnant women in the village of Kedungwringin are forbidden to eat banana sticks. His belief is that if you eat bananas, you will have conjoined twins. The abstinance of pregnant women should not drink cold water or ice is believed to make the posture of the baby conceived to be large so that it will complicate the birth process.

This research on the myths of dietary taboos for pregnant women in the village of Kedungwringin, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency was studied using Roland Barthers' semiotic theory with the community's point of view as readers.

Semiotics is the study of signs and sign processes. The science of semiotics assumes that social phenomena or what is called society and culture are signs. The study of semiotics studies the systems, the rules that allow these signs to have a meaning. Etymologically, the term semiotics comes from the Greek word semeion which means 'sign'. A sign can be defined as something that has been built before, a sign is also interpreted as something that points to something else. For example, smoke indicates a fire (Yuni Kartika, M. Bahri Arifin, 2020).

Studies According to Barthers in Kusuma & Nurhayati, there are three important things that form the core of the theory, namely denotative meaning, connotative meaning and myth (Kusuma & Nurhayati, 2017). The meaning of denotation and connotation in Berger's book plays a very important role when compared to the role in linguistics. The meaning of denotation itself is direct which can be called a picture of a signified. While the connotative meaning of some signs will become a kind of myth or mythical clue (which emphasizes the meaning of these meanings) so that in many ways (meaning) the connotation becomes the embodiment of a very influential myth. The mechanism of a myth itself is a way of depiction that is usually tied to the object itself, so that the application of its ideological meanings becomes natural to be accepted with common sense (Berger & Asa, 2010).

The denotative meaning contained in the prohibition on pregnant women not to eat shrimp is the belief that if pregnant women eat shrimp it will complicate the birth process, the baby will be difficult to come out. The connotation meaning of the prohibition is referring to the reasons for the opinion of nutritionists who do not recommend that pregnant women consume seafood in excess because it is feared that it contains mercury and cholesterol so that it is feared that it will affect the health of pregnant women. Regarding labor difficulties, almost every woman experiences a difficult stage in the birthing process. If you give birth normally, the baby's head will come out first and then the rest of the body will slowly come out. The process is indeed back and forth according to your ability to push. And this has nothing to do with shrimp eating habits.

The meaning of denotation Abstinance from eating so/melinjo leaf vegetables is believed to complicate the labor process because it will make the mother often take a break (rest) during the delivery process. While the connotation meaning contained in it is due to health reasons, because it is feared that if pregnant women consume too much melinjo leaf vegetable this can increase uric acid significantly.

Another myth is that pregnant women in Kedungwringin village are prohibited from eating attached bananas, which has a denotation meaning if eating attached bananas will have conjoined twins. The connotation meaning contained therein is for the reason that pregnant women should eat good bananas, which are whole and smooth. Because what is eaten by pregnant women is what will become food intake for the baby in the womb, so it is hoped that mothers always provide nutritional food from the best food sources.

Myth of prohibition Pregnant women are not allowed to drink cold water or ice, which means that the denotation will make the baby's body posture bigger so that it will complicate the birth process. The connotation meaning is because of health concerns, if a pregnant woman drinks too much cold/ice water, she can catch a cold or flu. Another concern is that drinking cold water / ice that tastes sweet and contains sugar can increase sugar levels in pregnant women.

The positive impact of mythology in the village of Kedungwringin, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency is the principle of obedience and obedience. They respect the beliefs and rules that have become the beliefs of their parents and the surrounding community. They are also obedient to the belief of the myth and do not dare to violate it. Because the myth of food taboos for pregnant women in the village of Kedungwringin, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency has influenced all residents in the area so that it becomes like a rule that has been passed down from generation to generation from their ancestors. While the negative impact of the belief in the myth of food taboos for pregnant women in Kedungwringin Village, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency is that the nutritional needs of pregnant women are not fulfilled perfectly because there are several types of foods that have high protein nutritional value which are prohibited for consumption such as shrimp and catfish.

4. Conclusion

People in the village of Kedungwringin, Jatilawang District, Banyumas Regency still believe in the myth of food taboos for pregnant women. Foods that are taboo are shrimp, catfish, leafy vegetables, attached bananas, cold water/ice. The reason the villagers of Kedungwringin believe in dietary restrictions is because they still believe in the threat or punishment they will receive. They are afraid to violate because they believe it will have an impact on the baby that is born later.

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