

ABSTRACT

Transmission of Tradition, Knowledge and Techniques of Midwives of Rural Maharashtra: A study of the social dynamics surrounding childbirth

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Through ethnographic observation, my goal is to collect information concerning the tradition, knowledge and transmission of techniques and practices of the traditional birth attendants (TBA) of rural Maharashtra (*suins* or *dais*). At a local level, this study should reveal the place and importance of this female practitioner and her practices within her own community. This topic is a window onto contemporary social dynamics in India because childbirth, and issues surrounding it, draw the attention of not only local people, immediate family and relatives, but also actors from diverse sectors of society, both local and foreign: from the biomedical professions and also the associative milieu (NGOs). Therefore, this study leads to a broader level and an investigation must be conducted to ascertain the interactions of these different actors: the TBA and her community, the biomedical representatives, and the humanitarian organizations (NGOs).

In order to carry out this study, we propose to examine several villages in the district of Pune in rural Maharashtra. Classical ethnographic methodology (such as observation, formal and informal interviews and discussions with the aid of an interpreter) is to be employed when conducting this study.