

Wiley, Andrea S. (2004). *An Ecology of High-Altitude Infancy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

This book is a study of a high-altitude area in the Himalayas called Ladakh. It describes the physical and medical difficulties of reproduction, childbirth, and the raising of infants in this high-altitude climate. The book focuses on ecological, cultural, historical and political implications of living, what these people do, how it affects the lives of children, and the people who care for them.

The unique mountain environment these people live in, greatly affects their lives and culture. Because of the high altitudes, it makes the health of the infant in the womb very susceptible to birth defects such as low birth weight and inadequate oxygen. Therefore, the death rate of infants is relatively high. This affects how the people view infants as well. Because of the death rate, children are not seen as fully human until well after they are born. When they die they are buried in the ground, not cremated like adults, and are not given a ceremony.

Because of the difficult subsistence strategy of the society, women work alongside the men when they are pregnant, furthering the health risks. It also means that the entire family helps in the child care process.

Wiley chronicled these and other examples from ethnographic fieldwork display a community where childhood is much different from Western society. The lives of children are particularly harsh. It is interesting to see how people cope with this in their childrearing methods.

This book uses these views of the ecological factors of these people's lives to provide a look into their culture and particularly how childhood is handled and viewed.