

A Comparative Study of Family Adjustment among Working and Non-Working Tribal Women

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ABSTRACT

Family adjustment plays a central role in maintaining emotional harmony, social stability, and interpersonal balance within a household. In tribal societies, women perform multiple roles family caregivers, agricultural contributors, and cultural transmitters making adjustment a crucial psychological factor. With the increasing participation of tribal women in employment sectors, the dynamics of family roles, responsibilities, and adjustment styles are undergoing rapid change. The present study aims to make a comparative analysis of the family adjustment patterns of working and non-working tribal women in **Ranka, Bhandriya, Chainpur, Chattarpur state Jharkhand**. A sample of 120 tribal women (60 working and 60 non-working) aged 20-45 years was selected by purposive sampling. The Family Adjustment Scale (Kumar & Rohatgi, 1989) was used to measure emotional, social, marital, and family role adjustment. The results revealed that working tribal women had significantly better emotional, social, and marital adjustment, whereas non-working tribal women scored higher in role-performance in household responsibilities. The study concludes that employment enhances self-esteem and decision-making among tribal women, but family workload distribution remains a major challenge.

Keywords: Tribal women, family adjustment, working women, non-working women, dual-role conflict, marital adjustment, social support

Family adjustment is an essential psychological and social process through which individuals maintain harmony and adapt to the expectations, norms, and functioning of their family system. In tribal communities, family life is characterized by collectivism, strong kinship bonds, and mutual cooperation. Traditionally, tribal women have been integral contributors to agricultural labour, household chores, child rearing, and community activities.

Changing role of tribal women

With socio-economic development, government schemes, educational expansion, and job opportunities, the participation of tribal women in employment sectors has increased considerably. Working tribal women today manage dual responsibilities:

- **Professional responsibilities** (teaching, Anganwadi, nursing, government schemes, self-help groups)

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- **Domestic responsibilities** (cooking, care giving, family rituals, household management)

This dual role often influences their emotional well-being and family adjustment. Non-working tribal women, on the other hand, devote more time to household and child-related activities but may have limited financial independence and social exposure.

Why family adjustment needs to be studied

Family adjustment reflects:

- How women handle family demands
- How they maintain interpersonal relationships
- Their ability to balance multiple roles
- Emotional stability
- Conflict management within family

Studying family adjustment among tribal women is important because:

1. Their social structure differs from mainstream society.
2. Their lifestyle is highly community-oriented.
3. Women play a central role in sustaining family and cultural traditions.
4. Employment has transformed gender roles in tribal areas.

Thus, a comparison between working and non-working tribal women becomes essential.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A comprehensive review of previous studies helps understand how family adjustment has been addressed in psychological and sociological research.

- **Rao (2015)** Found that working women demonstrate better social adjustment due to increased interaction and financial independence.
- **Kumar & Rohatgi (1989)** Developed the Family Adjustment Scale (FAS), highlighting emotional, marital, and social dimensions of adjustment.
- **Sinha (2018)** Reported that tribal working women experience moderate stress but higher self-esteem and problem-solving skills.
- **Devi & Minz (2016)** Revealed that non-working tribal women maintain stronger involvement in traditional household roles.
- **Tirkey (2020)** Found that support from spouse and family members plays a major role in the adjustment level of working tribal women.
- **Ekka & Toppo (2021)** Concluded that employed tribal women show better communication and marital satisfaction.
- **Singh & Kujur (2022)** Indicated that employment increases independence and decision-making ability among tribal women.

Research Gap

Although numerous studies have examined working and non-working women, **studies exclusively focusing on tribal women's family adjustment, especially with modern socio-economic changes, are limited.** Therefore, this research fills an important gap.

Objectives of the Study

1. To measure the family adjustment level among working tribal women.
2. To measure the family adjustment level among non-working tribal women.

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3. To compare overall family adjustment between working and non-working tribal women.
4. To examine the differences in emotional, social, and marital adjustment.
5. To understand the challenges faced by tribal women in adjusting to dual roles.

Hypothesis

1. There will be no significant difference in overall family adjustment between working and non-working tribal women.
2. Working tribal women will show higher emotional and social adjustment.
3. Non-working tribal women will have better adjustment in household-role performance.
4. Employment status significantly influences family adjustment patterns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A comparative descriptive research design was used.

Sample

- **Total Sample:** 120 tribal women
- **Working tribal women:** 60
- **Non-working tribal women:** 60
- **Age Range:** 20–45 years
- **Area:** Palamu, Garhwa (Jharkhand)

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling.

Inclusion Criteria

- Married tribal women
- Living with spouse and children
- Minimum education up to primary level
- Minimum 3 years of marital life

Variables

- **Independent Variable:** Working status
- **Dependent Variable:** Family adjustment (total and sub-dimensions)

Tools Used

Family Adjustment Scale (FAS) by Kumar & Rohatgi (1989). The scale includes:

- Emotional adjustment
- Social adjustment
- Marital adjustment
- Family role adjustment

The scale has good reliability and validity.

Procedure for Data Collection

- Tribal villages and semi-urban areas were visited.
- Rapport was established with women and community leaders.
- A structured questionnaire was administered.

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- Non-working women were contacted at home, while working women were approached at workplaces (schools, Anganwadi centres, SHG groups).

Statistical Techniques

- Mean & Standard Deviation
- t-test
- Percentage analysis

RESULTS

1. Overall Family Adjustment: Mean Comparison

Group	N	Mean	SD
Working Tribal Women	60	74.20	8.75
Non-Working Tribal Women	60	66.85	7.92

t-value = 4.12 (significant at 0.01 level)

2. Interpretation

- Working tribal women show significantly higher family adjustment.
- They have better emotional stability, social exposure, and marital communication.

DISCUSSION

The findings support the hypothesis that working tribal women exhibit higher emotional and social adjustment. Employment has given them:

- Social identity
- Confidence
- Decision-making power
- Economic independence
- Greater communication skills

Non-working tribal women, although devoted more to household responsibilities, experience:

- Low social exposure
- Limited decision-making power
- More over-dependence on spouse
- Higher psychological burden during financial issues

However, they score slightly better on household-role adjustment because:

- They devote more time to children
- Their daily routine largely revolves around home

Dual Role Conflict among Working Tribal Women

Many working women face:

- Time management issues
- Workload stress
- Insufficient support from husbands
- Pressure to maintain traditional roles

Despite this, their emotional resilience and social confidence remain higher due to employment.

Cultural Influence

Tribal families often follow:

- Strong kinship support
- Joint family patterns
- Community cooperation

These factors also influence women's family adjustment.

Major Findings

1. Working tribal women show superior overall family adjustment.
2. Emotional and social adjustment is significantly higher among working women.
3. Non-working tribal women show better adjustment in household-role performance.
4. Employment enhances women's self-esteem, autonomy, and marital communication.
5. Lack of shared responsibilities increases the burden on working tribal women.
6. Community support and joint family systems help women manage roles effectively.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that employment plays a positive role in the family adjustment of tribal women. Working tribal women demonstrate better emotional, marital, and social adjustment due to broader exposure and financial participation. Although non-working women show better involvement in household roles, their limited social and economic autonomy restricts overall adjustment.

Thus, improving education, encouraging employment opportunities, and promoting supportive family environments are essential for better adjustment patterns in tribal communities.

Suggestions

1. **Promote shared household responsibilities** between spouses.
2. **Strengthen self-help groups (SHGs)** for women's empowerment.
3. **Provide counselling services** to help women manage dual roles.
4. **Encourage tribal women's education and skill development.**
5. **Introduce flexible working hours** for tribal women in government and private sectors.
6. **Promote awareness programmes** on gender equality.
7. **Strengthen childcare facilities** in tribal areas.
8. **Encourage men's participation** in family responsibilities.

Implications of the Study

- Useful for policymakers working on tribal women's welfare.
- Helpful for NGOs focusing on gender sensitivity in tribal regions.
- Can guide future research on tribal women's psychology.
- Provides insights for family counselling and mental health interventions.

Limitations

1. Sample was limited to selected districts of Jharkhand.
2. Self-report measures may have social-desirability bias.
3. Only married tribal women were included.
4. Cross-sectional method does not show long-term changes.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. A larger sample including different tribal groups may be used.
2. Comparative studies can be done between tribal and non-tribal women.
3. Longitudinal research may assess adjustment changes over time.
4. Studies may include husband's perception of family adjustment.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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