

# Marital Adjustment Among Employed and Unemployed Women: A Study in Rajasthan

Parth S. Meena<sup>1</sup>, Mahendra Jain<sup>2</sup>, Yogesh Dosodiya<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India

<sup>3</sup>Psychiatry, Saadat District Hospital, Tonk, Rajasthan, India

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### \*Correspondence:

Parth S. Meena  
parthaiims@gmail.com  
Department of  
Psychiatry,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
Medical College, Ajmer,  
Rajasthan, India

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## Abstract

**Background:** Rapid westernization and industrialization have led to an increase in the number of people migrating to urban areas in search of jobs. In order to achieve financial security, both husband and wife are required to work in a family. Employed women face a multitude of problems compared to employed men, including adjustment issues with family members, children, and the workplace. Their marital life is also affected, leading to marital adjustment problems that can negatively impact their well-being and even result in divorce. Marital maladjustment can arise due to problems in adjusting to the challenges of married life, with causes such as lack of communication, financial issues, cultural and lifestyle differences, and more. The present study makes an attempt to examine the marital adjustment among employed and unemployed women

**Method:** Using specific inclusion criteria, a sample of 200 women (100 employed and 100 unemployed women) were recruited for the study. Data were used revised dyadic adjustment scale (R-DAS). Statistical analysis of data was done using Windows compatible SPSS version 21, student t-tests were used to compare the groups.

**Results:** The mean R-DAS scores of the two groups (employed=51.78, unemployed=54.190) didn't differ significantly ( $P=0.15$ ), although unemployed women scored higher in the satisfaction domain (0.012) and employed women fared better in the cohesion domain (0.03). Apparently, the score of the unemployed women's group gave better score but it was not significantly higher than that of the employed women's group ( $p=0.15$ )

**Conclusion:** employment status of married women is not related to marital adjustment.

## INTRODUCTION

The number of married working women has been steadily increasing due to shifts in socio-cultural norms of society as well as due financial demands of the families. The conventional concept of marriage, where the woman is responsible for managing the household and looking after the kids while the man is the breadwinner, is not prevalent anymore.<sup>[1]</sup> This has led both genders to re-evaluate their respective responsibilities in matrimony. Despite this shift, a lot of people seem to have mixed feelings about their altered roles.<sup>[2]</sup>

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Although women in marriages may have varying perspectives regarding their role as providers, most of them express apprehension about the potential consequences of working outside the home on their family's overall welfare.<sup>[3]</sup> Matrimony is a critical personal connection, often referred to as the closest, most intricate, and extensive relationship between a man and a woman. The solidity and persistence of a marital union are crucial for the partners and their extended family and community. Through the institution of marriage, society provides security and care, ensuring its continued existence and prosperity.

The marital adjustment refers to the overall state of happiness and satisfaction with one's marriage and partner. However, adjusting to one another's sensory, emotional, and intellectual capacities can be complex.<sup>[4]</sup> On a personal level, couples must also adjust to their environment, which includes establishing a new household, raising children, providing and preparing food, and managing relationships with relatives, friends, and work.<sup>[5]</sup>

Effective adaptation of both spouses is crucial for the success of a marriage. Marital maladjustment can lead to conflicts, strains, and divorce in severe cases. The present study examines marital adjustment among both employed and unemployed women.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

a cross-sectional analytical study was conducted at the Department of Psychiatry of a government-run Medical College in Rajasthan. The sample included 200 women, 100 of them were employed for at least one year and 100 were unemployed married women.

Employed women were teachers, bankers, doctors, paramedical staff etc. while a sample of unemployed women was taken from non-working housewives of hospital staff. Employed women having age between 21-60 years and married for at least one year were included in the 'employed group'. The 'unemployed group' included unemployed women with similar demographic characteristics. Subjects suffering from acute, unstable, significant, or untreated medical illnesses, particularly neurological disorders, were excluded. The subjects were

required to be able to read and understand English. After explaining the participant's purpose of study written informed consent was obtained from all those who agreed to participate in the study. 100 women from each group who fulfilled the eligibility criteria were included in the study.

## **Instruments Used**

Socio demographic profile included name, age, marital status, education, occupation, family type and monthly income.

The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (R-DAS): It is a self-report questionnaire that examines seven domains of a couple's relationships within three broad : (a) Consensus in decision-making, values, and emotional attachment; (b) Satisfaction in the relationship concerning durability and conflict management, and (c) Cohesion as evident in shared activities and communication. The R-DAS consists of 14 items on a Likert scale. Each item rates a specific aspect of the relationship. The Scores range from 0-69 and has a cut-off score of 48. Higher scores denote higher degree of satisfaction in a relationship, while lower scores suggest difficulties in a relationship. Scores below 48 indicate distress in marital relationships while scores of 48 and higher indicate good marital adjustment. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.90 indicates excellent reliability of R-DAS. Descriptive parameters were calculated as arithmetic mean and standard deviation.

We tested the differences between the groups using unpaired t-test. The level of statistical significance was set at  $P < 0.05$

## **RESULTS**

The mean age of employed and unemployed groups ( $36.4 \pm 8.56$  years, unemployed= $34.8 \pm 9.11$  years, respectively) didn't differ significantly and both groups were comparable.

Table 1 compares the mean R-DAS scores of the two groups. Apparently, the score of the unemployed women's group on marital adjustment ( $51.78 \pm 12.18$ ) was higher than the employed group ( $54.19 \pm 11.52$ ) but the difference was not statistically significant ( $P=0.15$ ).

The two groups were compared on three domains of the R-DAS i.e. Consensus, Satisfaction

**Table 1:** Compare of marital adjustment between employed and unemployed women  
No significant difference observed in marital adjustment between the groups. (P=0.15).

Variable	N	Mean	SD	T	Degree of Freedom	P
Employed women	100	51.78	±12.18	1.43	198	0.15
Non-employed women	100	54.19	±11.52			

and Cohesion (Table-2). In the 'satisfaction' domain, the unemployed women's group had a significantly higher mean score ( $13.51 \pm 5.66$  vs  $15.98 \pm 7.88$ ,  $P=0.012$ ). Employed women had a significantly higher score in the 'cohesion' domain ( $11.33 \pm 4.45$  vs  $10.06 \pm 3.67$ ,  $P=0.03$ ). In the consensus domain, the groups' mean score didn't differ significantly ( $P=0.2$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to evaluate and compare the level of marital adjustment between employed and unemployed women. Our hypothesis was that there would be no notable differences in the level of marital adjustment between the two groups. Both the groups were comparable in terms of mean age as no significant difference was found between the mean ages. As it is evident from Table-1, there was no significant difference between the R-DAS scores indicating that there is no difference between the employed and unemployed women in terms of marital adjustment. We can infer from the findings that marital adjustment is not related to women's employment status. Women having dual responsibilities of taking care of their families

**Table 2:** In the 'satisfaction' domain, the unemployed women's group scored significantly higher ( $P=0.012$ ). Employed women had significantly higher score in 'cohesion' domain ( $P=0.03$ )

Domains of R-DAS	Employed		Unemployed		T	Degree of freedom	P
	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev			
Consensus	18.61	±7.43	20.08	±9.38	1.22	198	0.2
Satisfaction	13.51	±5.66	15.98	±7.88	2.54	198	0.012
Cohesion	11.33	±4.45	10.06	±3.67	2.20	198	0.03

and working for job are as well-adjusted in their married life as the unemployed house wife's were. Numerous researchers have aligned with the current discovery and have reported similar findings. Two Nigerian studies have reported no significant variations in marital adjustment between employed and non-employed women.<sup>[6,7]</sup> He deduced that marriage is a universally recognized and established institution that any other factors cannot influence. Additionally, the presence of an employed spouse or a full-time homemaker (housewife) does not affect the methods of adjusting to various areas of life such as home, health, social, emotional, and occupational spheres.

In his research, Wright<sup>[8]</sup> corroborated this finding and concluded that both women who work outside of the home and full-time homemakers have associated advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand the, working women may not give as much time to the family chores as housewives give, they add to the family income and overall prosperity.

In research by Kausar,<sup>[9]</sup> personality traits and socioeconomic status were investigated as potential predictors of marital adjustment among employed women. The study discovered that there was no significant variation in the marital adjustment of employed women across all socioeconomic backgrounds. The author suggested that personality traits may have a greater influence on marital adjustment for both employed and non-employed women, rather than socioeconomic factors. As a result, the researchers concluded that their socioeconomic background did not determine the marital adjustment of working-class women, but instead, the woman's personality traits were a crucial factor in their marital adjustment.

Adegoke,<sup>[10]</sup> Nathawat and Mathur<sup>[11]</sup> suggest that employed women generally experience greater satisfaction in both their lives and marriages than non-employed women. This is attributed to their increased independence and decision-making power.

The study compared two groups, employed and unemployed women, in terms of three different domains of R-DAS: Consensus, Satisfaction, and Cohesion (Table 2). The consensus includes deci-

sion-making, affection, and values, with no difference found between employed and unemployed women in this domain. However, unemployed women appeared to fare better in the Satisfaction domain, which consists of marital stability and conflicts. The assumption is that unemployed women are more successful in avoiding marital conflicts and working towards stability in their marriages. In families where the husband is the primary earner, he may tend to be more dominant, while housewives may be more flexible in their attitudes and avoid conflict.

The third domain, cohesion, consists of two aspects: activities, i.e. engaging in outside activities together and working on projects together and discussion i.e. calm but stimulating exchange of ideas. We hypothesized that employed women would perform better in this domain because they could share their experiences and ideas from work with their spouses, who would also be employed and could relate to their perspective. Additionally, being similarly educated could lead to a better understanding and discussion of issues. Our results confirmed this hypothesis: employed women scored significantly higher than unemployed women in the cohesion domain.

According to the study conducted by Vibha A. Dave, employed married women encounter more challenges in their lives than non-working married women.<sup>[12]</sup> Dave suggested that working women cannot contribute significantly to their family's well-being because they have to juggle their work and personal life. Consequently, they are incapable of giving sufficient attention to their married life, which may lead to marital maladjustment. In our study, we observed that employed women faced more difficulties in terms of stability of marriage and conflicts than unemployed women. However, no noteworthy difference was observed between the two groups regarding marital adjustment as a whole. The outcomes of our study offer valuable perspectives on the significant aspects of marital adjustment that affect both working and non-working women.

Considering all the findings, it can be inferred that regardless of their employment status, women experience comparable levels of marital adjustment.

This implies that a woman's marital adjustment level is determined by her capacity to attend to the needs of her spouse, children, and household and manage them effectively as well as by her communication and interaction with both her household and the wider society. Regardless of whether a woman is employed or not, she can always strive to create a positive environment for her marital adjustment, even in the face of environmental pressures at home.

The achievement of a satisfying dyadic adjustment in marriage is influenced by multiple factors, including but not limited to mutual understanding, loyalty, fondness, sexual contentment, and appreciation for one another.<sup>[8]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The marital adjustment of married women is not affected by their employment status, as both working and non-working women can enjoy a satisfactory married life. This is largely dependent on factors such as mutual trust, a healthy sexual relationship, mutual understanding, and adjustment to each other's needs. Therefore, it can be concluded that employment status is not a determining factor in the marital adjustment of women.

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