

Adjustment Level of Children of Working and Nonworking Mothers: A Comparative Study

Krishna Choudhury^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The foundational setting of home plays a pivotal role in shaping the child's early experiences and laying the groundwork for their emotional well-being and social development. The success and well-adjustment of many children can often be attributed to the positive and nurturing environments in which they are raised. In particular, those who thrive typically hail from homes where parental attitudes are supportive, and wholesome relationships between children and parents flourish. **Methodology:** A Non experimental comparative research design was adopted among 100 children studying in three high-schools of Kamrup rural district of both working and non-working mothers. Sampling technique was Non probability convenience sampling. A self-structured socio-demographic tool consisting of 13 questions, a modified Bell's Inventory Adjustment Tool consisting of Home, Health, Social and Emotional Adjustment domains with 135 items was utilized to collect the data from the sample. **Results and Discussion:** Data was analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. With respect to children of working mothers, 80% had moderate level of adjustment problems, whereas 18% had low level of adjustment problem followed by 2%, those who reports severe adjustment problems. Among the children of non-working mothers, 70% had moderate level of adjustment problems and 30% reported to have low level of adjustment problems. There was no statistically significant difference in the level of adjustment between the children of working and non-working mothers. But significant difference was observed with the emotional adjustment domain with "t" value of ($t=2.472$, $p=0.015$) which was statistically significant at $p<0.05$ level. **Conclusion:** The process of adjustment is a universal sequence that can be identified in the behavior of organisms, spanning from the lowest species to humans. Whether observed in simple organisms or complex human beings, the ability to adjust to environmental conditions, changes, and challenges is a common thread. This universal adaptation sequence highlights the significance of the adjustment process as a fundamental and shared characteristic that contributes to the survival and functionality of living organisms across different levels of complexity in the natural world.

Keywords: Adjustment, Working Mothers, Nonworking Mothers

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For millennia, Indian culture has placed significant emphasis on the concept of "VAMSA," a Sanskrit term synonymous with "HOME," where a child is born and nurtured. The home is regarded as the most crucial environment, serving as the backdrop where a child experiences their initial essence of love, care, and empathy through engaging in playful learning activities. The foundational setting of home plays a pivotal role in shaping the child's early experiences and laying the groundwork for their emotional well-being and social development.⁹ A mother holds significant importance not only due to her unique set of skills but also because she spends a substantial amount of time with her children. This enduring presence and nurturing role contribute significantly to shaping the character and development of her offspring.¹ The initial warmth and affection provided by a mother hold a profound association with the child's demeanor, fostering a sense of tranquility, happiness, and cooperation. The early experiences of warmth and affection from a mother play a crucial role in shaping the child's overall disposition, influencing their ability to form healthy relationships and exhibit cooperative behavior in various social contexts.¹⁰ Within a family structure, children assume a pivotal role as the essential and future components of life. This responsibility is consistently shouldered by the mother, as well as other family members who coexist with the children.² Parental warmth is characterized by the expression of both verbal and physical affection toward a child. This positive form of interaction fosters a sense of security and emotional well-being in the child. On the contrary, low parental warmth manifests in actions such as criticism, disapproval, and rejection.³ The success and well-adjustment of many children can often be attributed to the positive and nurturing environments in which they are raised. In particular, those who thrive typically hail from homes where parental attitudes are supportive, and wholesome relationships between children and parents flourish.⁴ Children are the future citizens of a country and hold a pivotal role in steering the nation towards progress. It becomes the sincere responsibility of parents to mold their children into healthy and virtuous citizens. Recognizing and nurturing the potential within each child is essential for building a society that thrives on the positive contributions of its citizens.⁵ The concept of adjustment revolves around the efficiency with which an individual can fulfill their responsibilities in diverse circumstances. It encompasses the individual's capacity to effectively navigate and cope with the challenges presented by their environment.⁶ Successful adjustment, therefore, is indicative of an individual's capability to thrive and perform optimally across a range of circumstances and challenges.⁶ The experiences and dynamics of a working mother's schedule may influence the social, emotional adjustment of her children differently compared to those with non-working mothers. These distinctions highlight the importance of understanding and addressing the specific dynamics that contribute to the development of self-regulation and social adjustment in children based on their mothers' employment status.⁷

Problem Statement:

Adjustment Level of Children of Working and Nonworking mothers: A Comparative Study.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify the level of adjustment of children of working and non-working mothers.
- To compare the level of adjustment of children of working and non-working mothers.
- To assess the level of association of adjustment with selected demographic variables.

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Operational Definitions:

- **Adjustment:** In this study, adjustment refers to the slight change adopted by the children to make something work better. The level of adjustment in this study will be measured by Modified Bell's Inventory.
- **Children:** In this study, Children refers to the younger adolescents, whose age group ranges from 13-15 years.
- **Working Mothers:** In this study, working mothers refers to the mothers who were indulged in a government job, private- sector or are working as an entrepreneur.
- **Non- working mothers:** In this study, non- working mothers refers to the mothers those who are not indulged in any kind of jobs or entrepreneurship.

Hypotheses

- **H¹:** There is a significant difference between the level of adjustment between the children of working and non-working mothers
- **H²:** There is a significant association between the level of adjustment of the children of working mothers with their selected socio- demographic variables.
- **H³:** There is a significant association between the level of adjustment of the children of non-working mothers with their selected socio- demographic variables.

Assumption

It is assumed that the level of adjustment of the children of both the working and non-working mothers will be suitably assessed through Modified Bell's Inventory Scale.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Approach:** Quantitative Non Experimental Research Approach
- **Research Design:** Comparative Research Design
- **Setting:** Three schools located in a rural community of Kamrup rural district, Assam.
- **Study population:** Adolescent children studying in high- schools from age group of 13-15 years.
- **Sample size:** 100 (50 children of working mothers and 50 children of non-working mothers)
- **Sampling Technique:** Convenient non-randomized sampling technique.

Research Variables:

- Research Variable 1: Adjustment level of children of working mothers
- Research Variable 2: Adjustment level of children of non-working mothers

Development of the Tool: The tool utilized was modified from a standardized tool, on the basis of objectives of the study.

Description of the Tool: The tool comprised of two sections:

- **Section 1:** Consists of demographic variables of 13 questions.
- **Section2:** Modified Bell's Adjustment Inventory, which consisted of 135 questions on four domains.

- a) **Home Domain:** Home domain consists of question 1 to 31
- b) **Health Domain:** Health domain consists of question 32 to 68
- c) **Social Domain:** Social domain consists of question 69 to 108

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d) **Emotional Domain:** Emotional domain consists of question 109- 135

The subjects were asked to answer the questions as:

- Yes: which carries 2 marks
- Doubtful: which carries 1 mark and
- No: which carries 0

Total Score are as follows:

Interpretation	Scoring
Low level of adjustment problem	0-90
Moderate level of adjustment problem	91-180
Severe level of adjustment problem	181-270

- **Content Validity of the tool:** Content validity of the demographic and modified tool was established by experts from the field of nursing and psychiatry.
- **Reliability:** Reliability of the tool was found to be 0.82.
- **Ethical Consideration:** Ethical permission was obtained before carrying out the study from the Institutional Ethics Committee of NEMCARE Hospital, Guwahati.
- **Data Collection Procedure:** Data was collected by obtaining prior permission from the Principals of three schools located in Mirza are of Kamrup rural district of Assam. The names of the school are: Saraswati Shiksha Niketan, Mirza, Arunoday English Medium High School, Mirza and St. Joseph's School, Mirza. The data was collected in the month of September, 2023. The sample were chosen by a lottery method. Children from the age group of 13 to 15 years were included in the study. 50 numbers of children of working mothers and 50 numbers of children of non-working mothers were segregated in a prior basis.

Funding: No external funds were received for the study. The study was performed as part of the usual research activities, held in a routine basis in The Assam Kaziranga University, Jorhat.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Ethical Consideration: Ethical permission was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of The Assam Kaziranga University, Jorhat, Assam. All methods were carried out in accordance with relevant guidelines and regulations.

Informed Consent: Informed consent was obtained from all the participants, those who were included in the study.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:*Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of working and non-working mothers.*

N = 100(50+50)

Demographic Variables	Working Mothers		Non-working mothers	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age				
13 years	4	8.0	8	16.0
14 years	36	72.0	31	62.0
15 years	10	20.0	11	22.0
Sex				
Female	30	60.0	30	60.0
Male	20	40.0	20	40.0
Others	-	-	-	-
Religion				
Hinduism	44	88.0	38	76.0
Christianity	2	4.0	4	8.0
Islam	4	8.0	8	16.0
Others	-	-	-	-
Caste				
General	29	58.0	25	50.0
OBC	19	38.0	19	38.0
ST	1	2.0	2	4.0
SC	1	2.0	4	8.0
Occupation of mother				
Homemaker	0	0	50	100.0
Entrepreneur	5	10.0	0	0
Govt. employee	21	42.0	0	0
Private sector employee	24	48.0	0	0
Occupation of father				
Cultivator	2	4.0	4	8.0
Entrepreneur	6	12.0	5	10.0
Govt. employee	17	34.0	16	32.0
Private sector	19	38.0	18	36.0
Any contractual job	6	12.0	7	14.0
Mother's educational qualification				
H.S.L.C passed	3	6.0	7	14.0
H.S Passed	11	22.0	25	50.0
Graduate	21	42.0	14	28.0
Post graduate & above	15	30.0	4	8.0
Father's educational qualification				
H.S.L.C passed	3	6.0	7	14.0
H.S Passed	21	42.0	15	30.0
Graduate	16	32.0	15	30.0
Post graduate & above	10	20.0	13	26.0
Any siblings				
No	30	60.0	12	24.0

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Demographic Variables	Working Mothers		Non-working mothers	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	19	38.0	29	58.0
2 or more	1	2.0	9	18.0
Type of family				
Nuclear family	24	48.0	21	42.0
Extended family	26	52.0	29	58.0
Joint family	-	-	-	-
Place of residence / area				
Urban	8	16.0	10	20.0
Rural	42	84.0	40	80.0
Parental marital status				
Married	50	100.0	50	100.0
Widowed	-	-	-	-
Separated	-	-	-	-
Single parents	-	-	-	-
Divorced	-	-	-	-
Monthly income				
Rs.<20,000	3	6.0	8	16.0
20,000 – 50,000	40	80.0	31	62.0
>50,000	7	14.0	11	22.0

Table 1 depicts that among most of the children of working mothers, majority of the children, i.e. 72% belongs to the age of 14 years, 60% were female, 88% were Hindu, and 58% belonged to general category. It was also seen that, 48% of the mothers were private sector employees, 38% of fathers were working in private sector. Majority of the mothers, i.e. 42% of were graduates, 42% of fathers were H.S passed. 60% of the children had no siblings and 52% belonged to extended family. 84% were residing in rural area. 100% of the parents were married and 80% of the children reported to have a family monthly income of Rs.20, 000 – 50,000.

Among most of the children of non-working mothers, 62% belonged to the age group of 14 years. 60% were female, 76%) were Hindu and 50% belonged to general category. 100% of the mothers were homemakers, whereas 36% of fathers were working in private sector. 50% of mothers were H.S passed and 30% of fathers were H.S passed and equally 30% of them were graduates respectively. 58% of children had only one sibling and 58% belonged to extended family. 80% of the children were residing in rural area. 100% of parents were married and 62% had reported to have a monthly income of Rs.20000 – 50,000.

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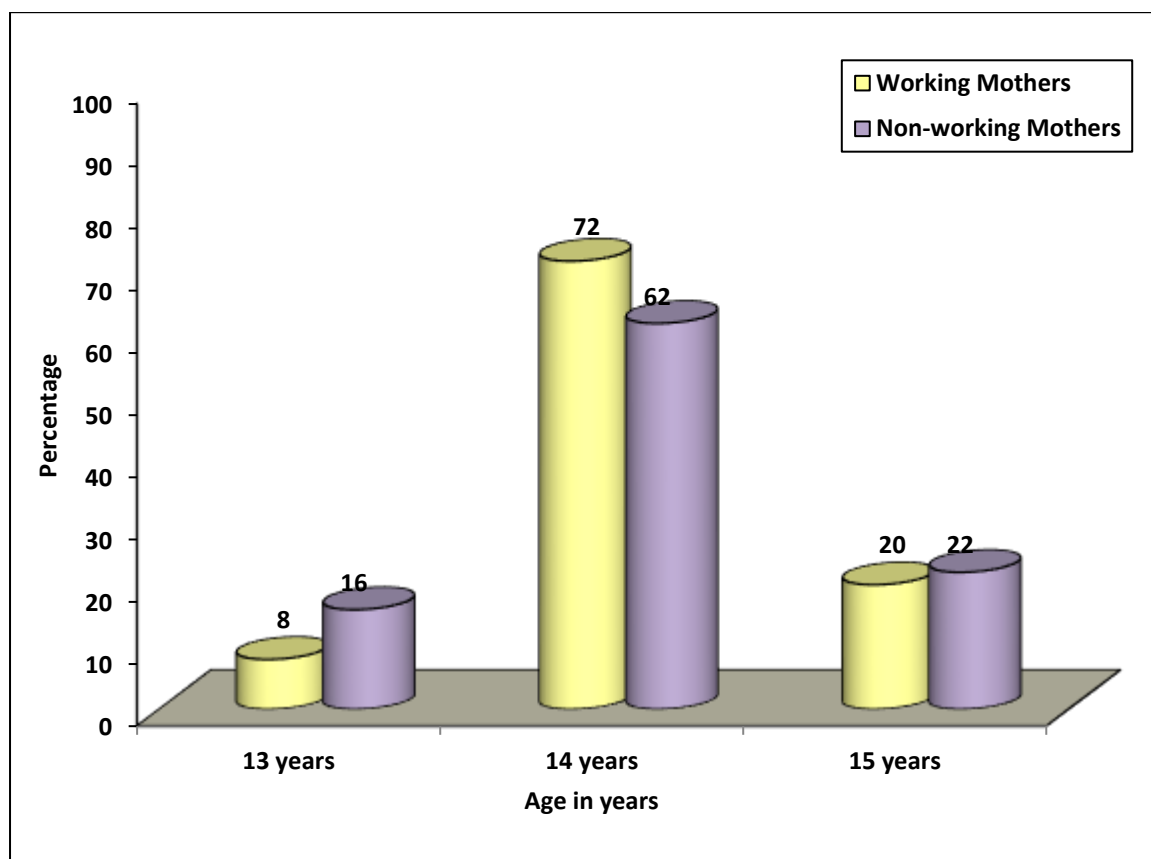


Figure 1: Percentage distribution of age of the children of working and non-working mothers

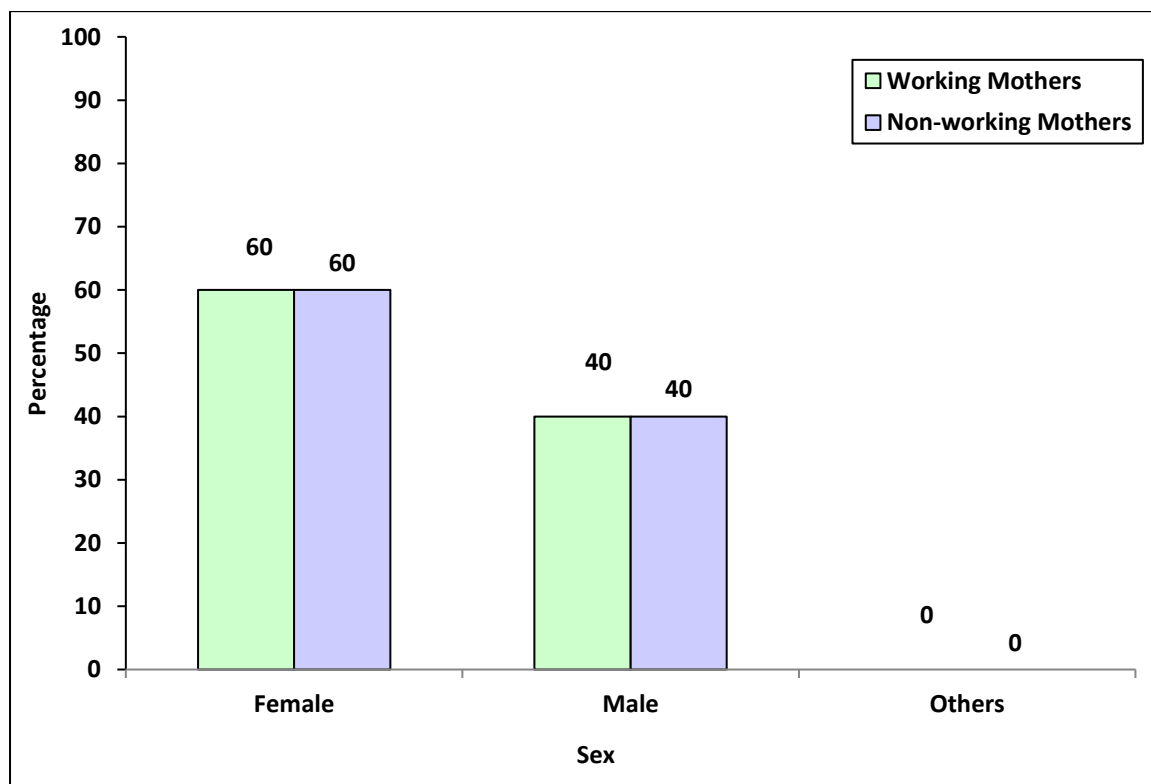


Fig: 2 Percentage distribution of sex of the children of working and non-working mother

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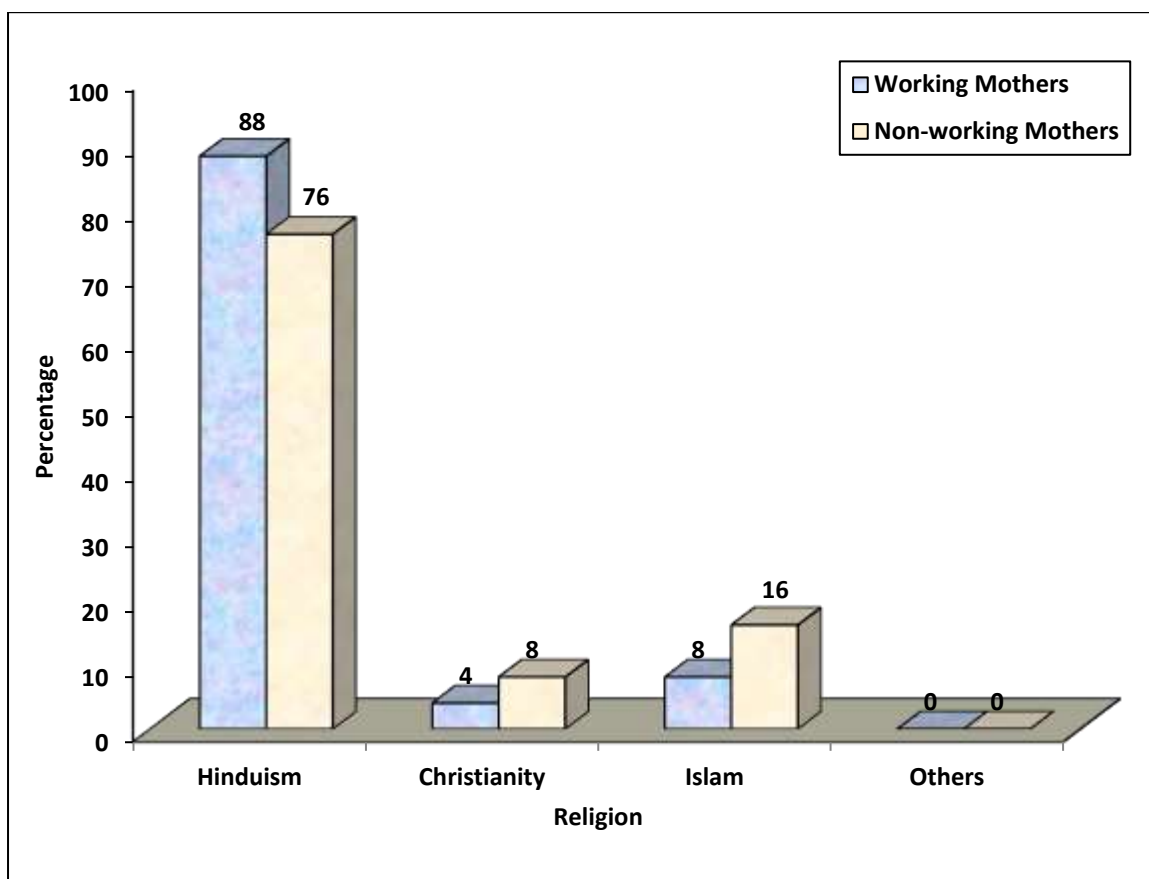


Figure 3: Percentage distribution of religion of the children of working and non-working mothers

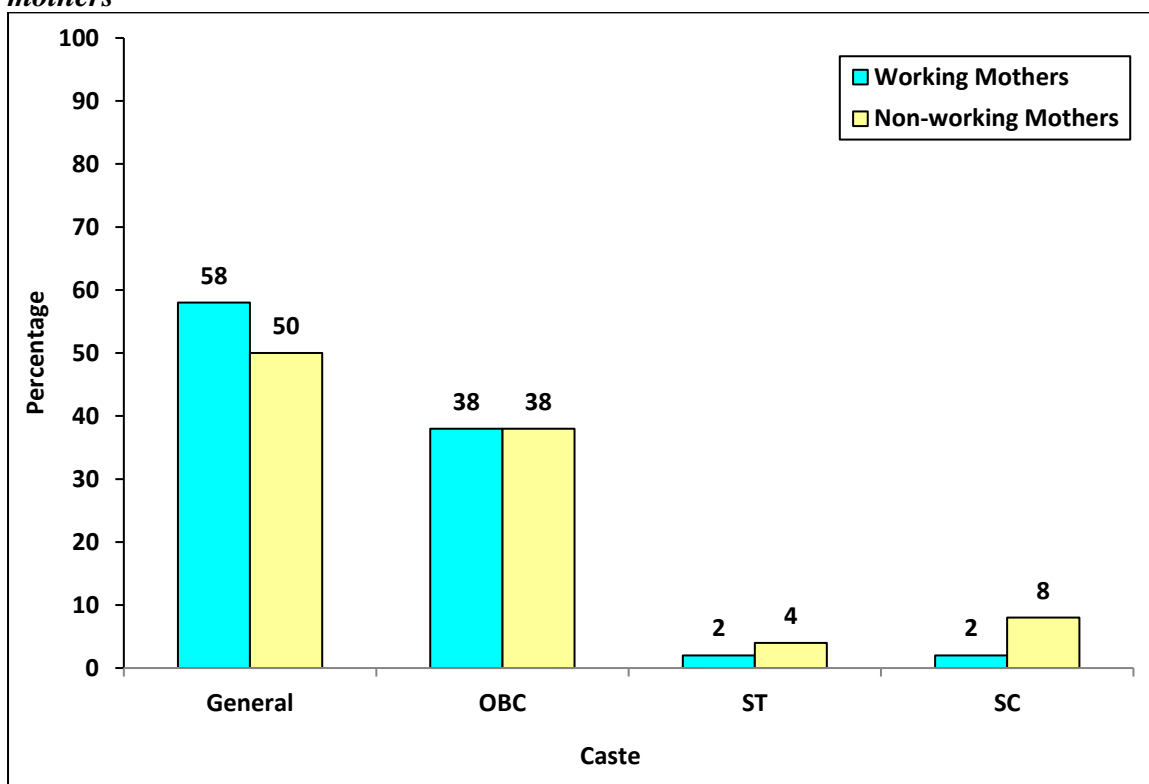


Fig: 4 Percentage distribution of caste of the children of working and non-working mothers

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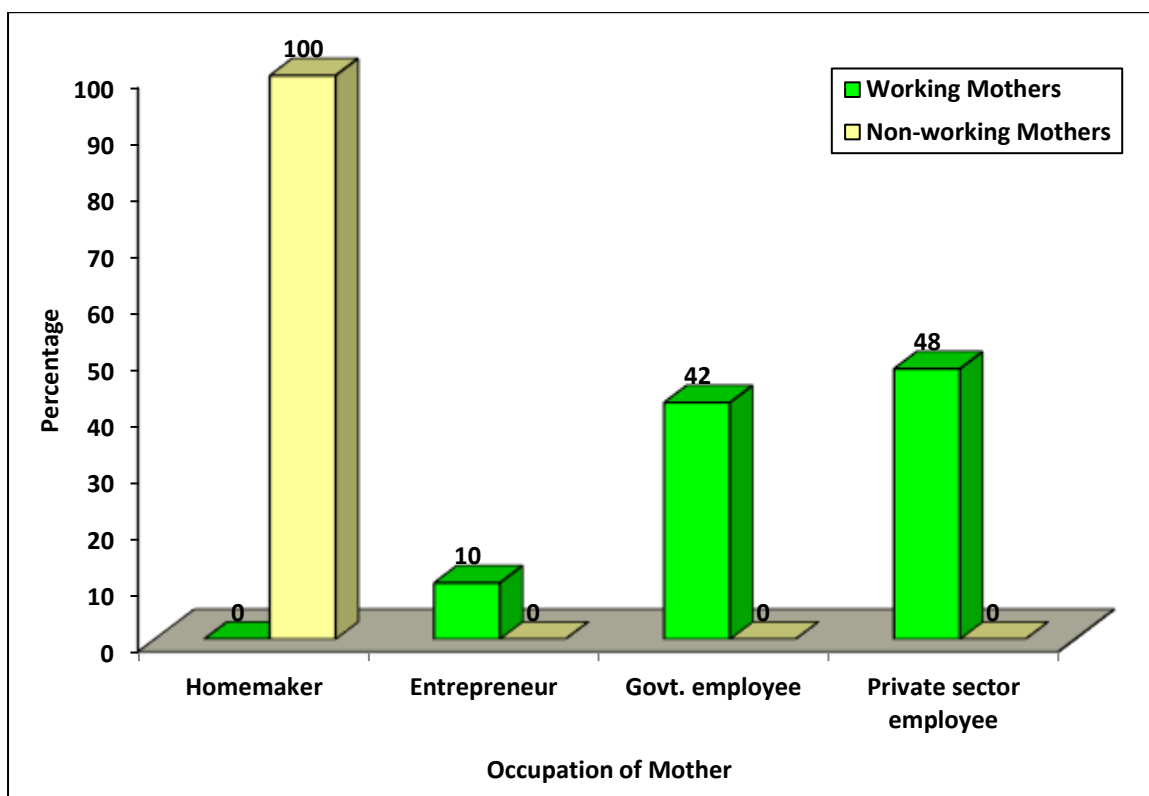


Fig: 5 Percentage distribution of occupation of mothers of the children

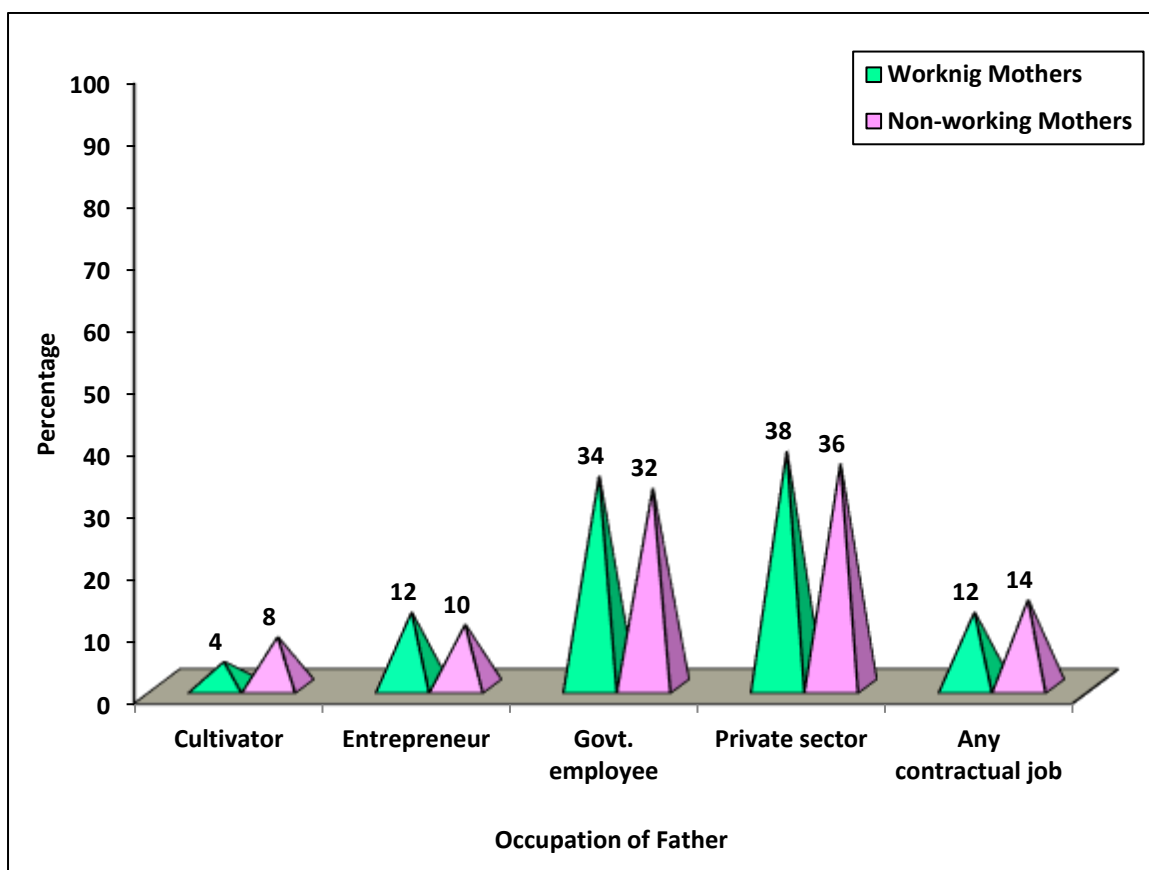


Fig: 6 Percentage distribution of occupation of fathers of the children

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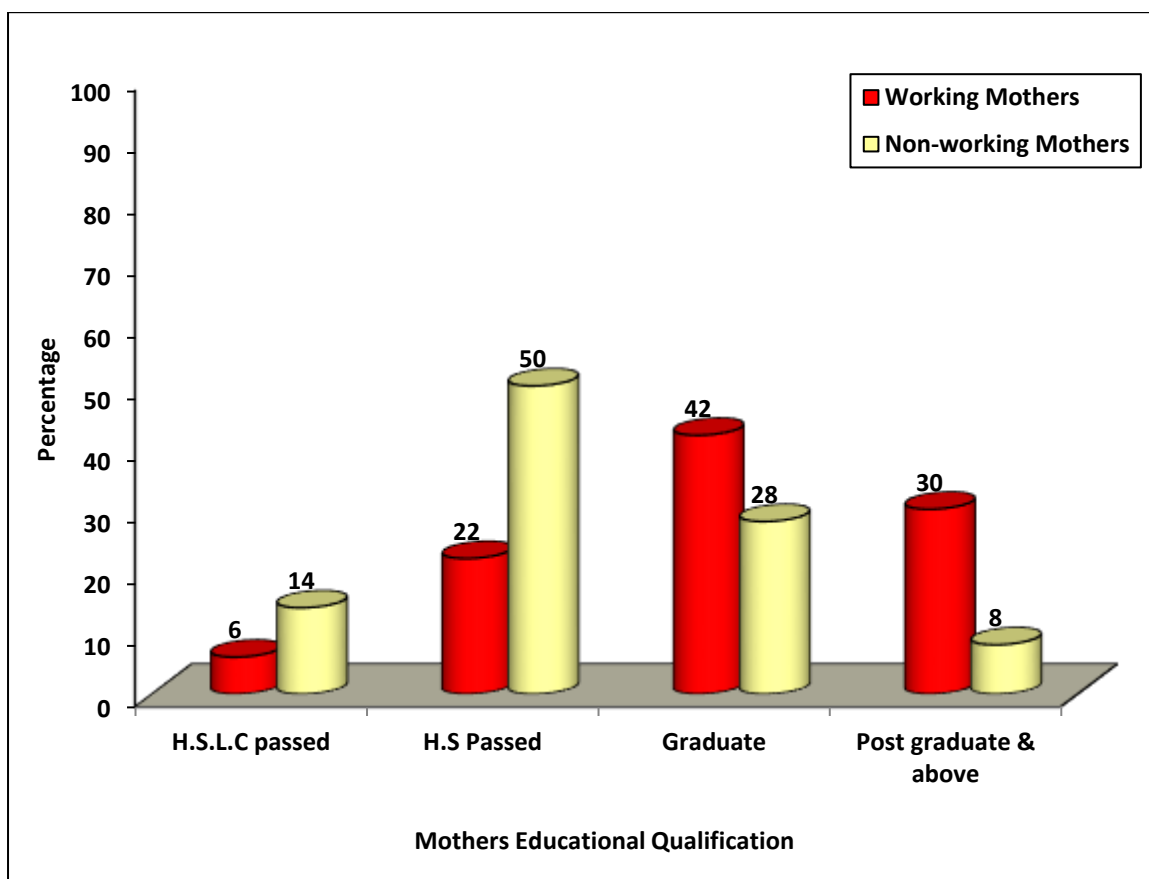


Fig: 7 Percentage distribution of mother's educational qualification of the children

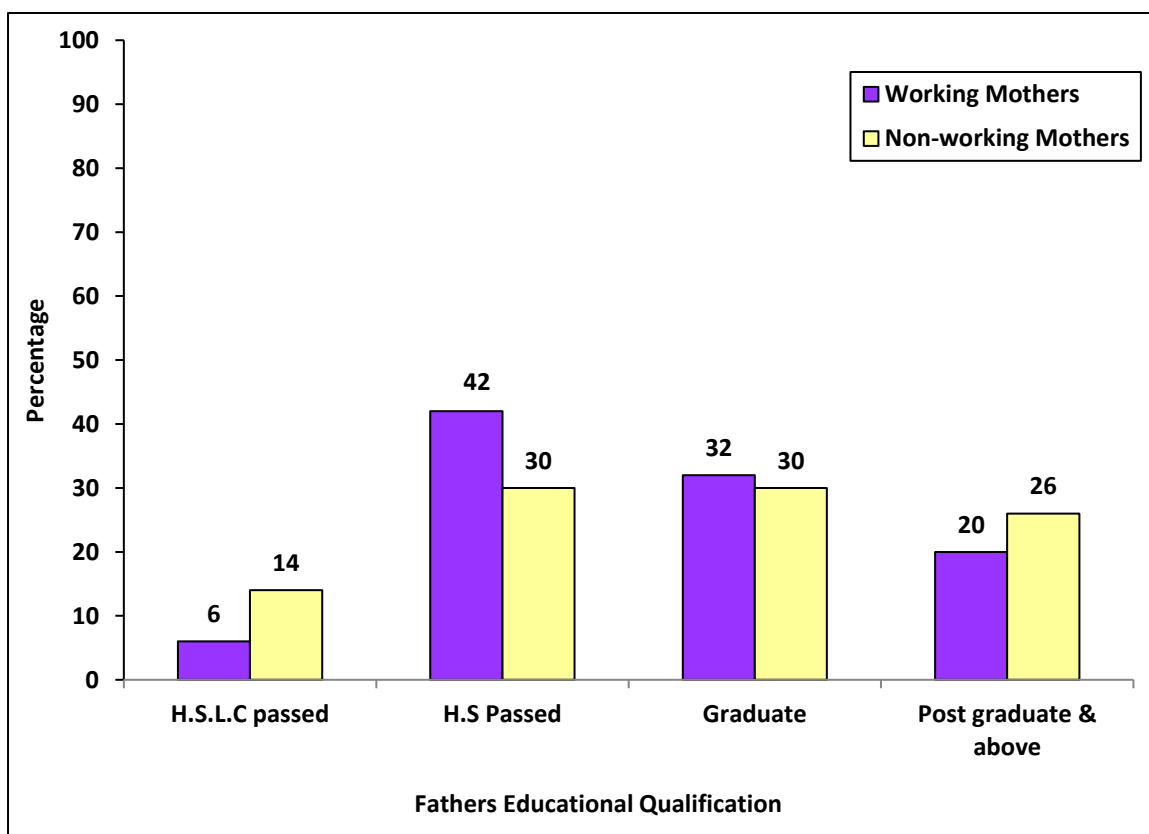


Fig: 8 Percentage distribution of father's educational qualification of the children

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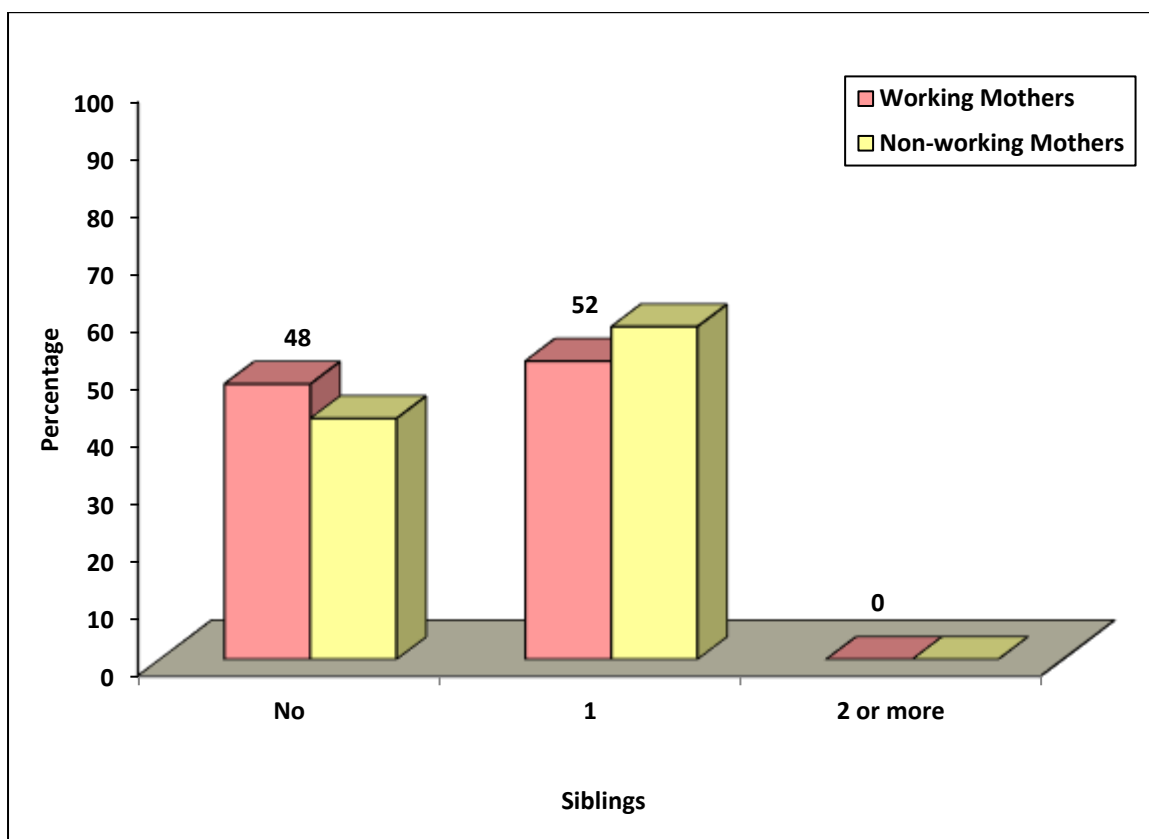


Fig 9: Percentage distribution of presence of siblings among the children of working and non-working mothers

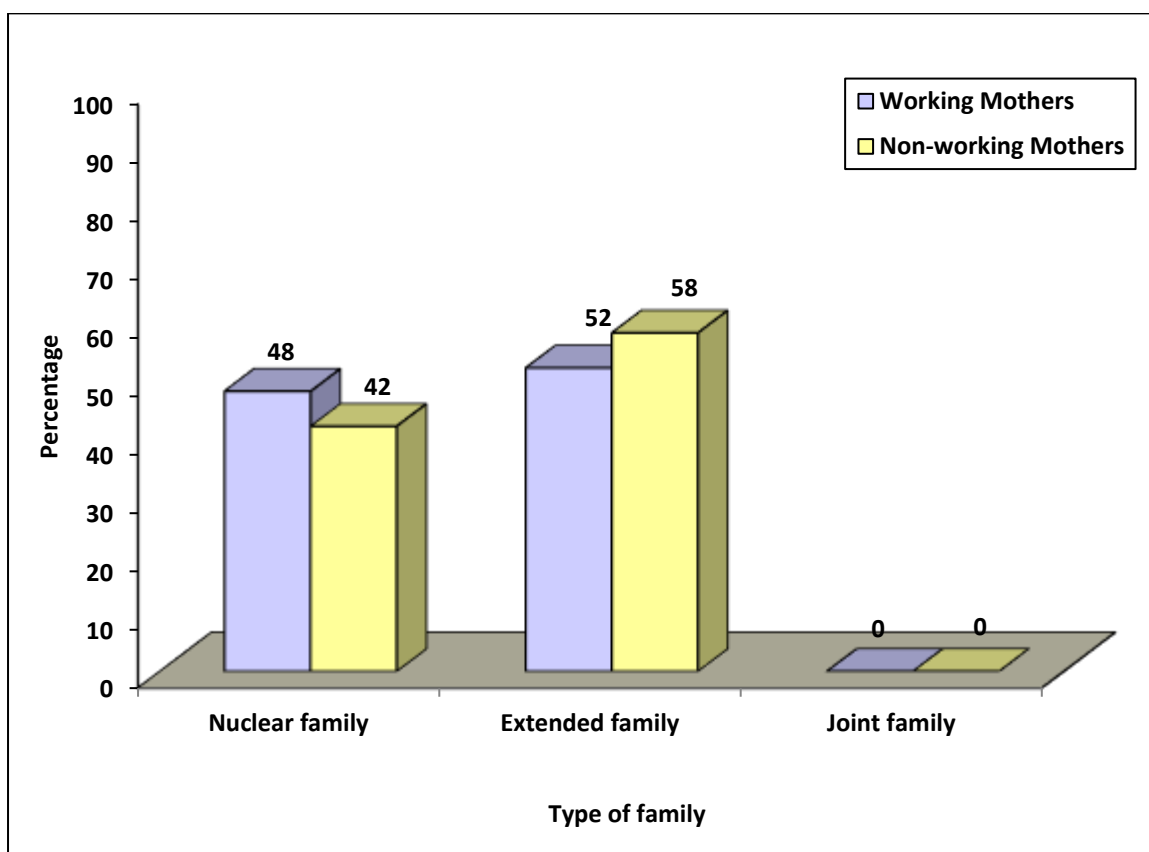


Fig 10: Percentage distribution of type of family of working and non-working mothers

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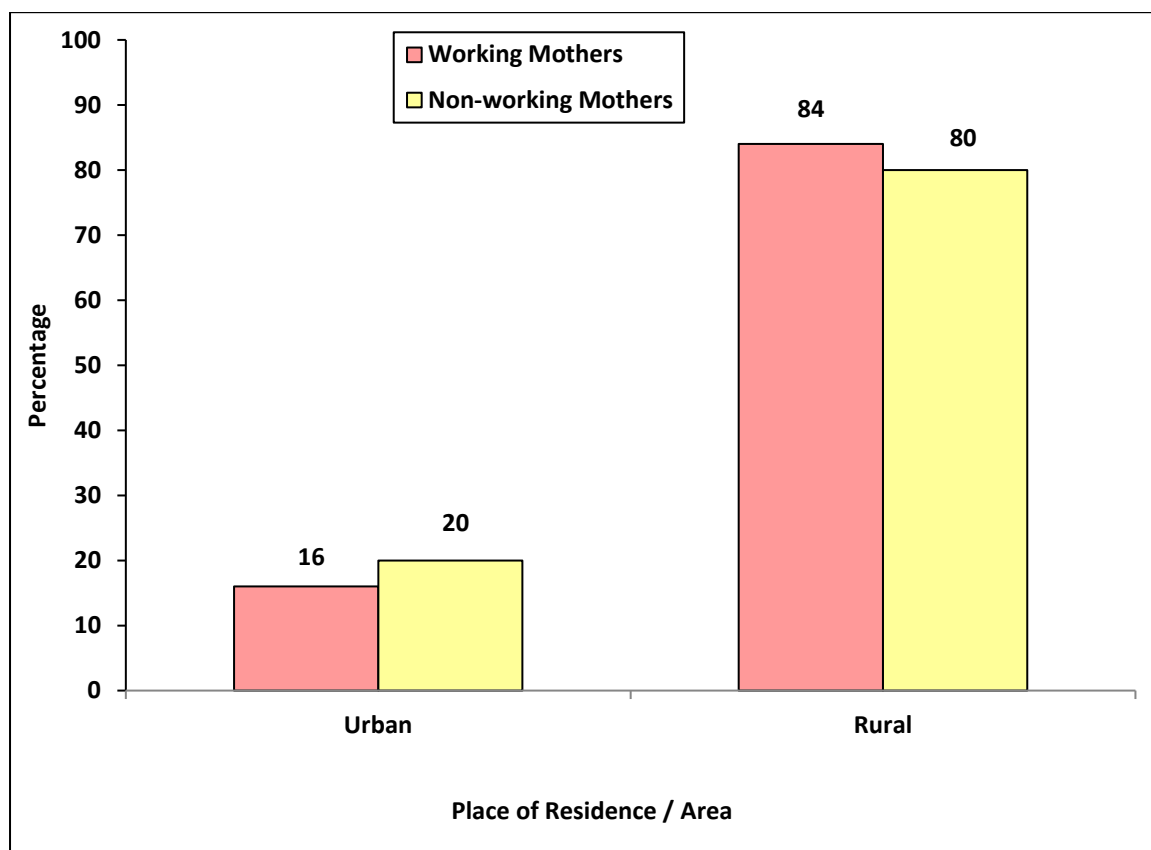


Fig 11: Percentage distribution of place of residence /area among the children of working and non-working mothers



Fig 12: Percentage distribution of parental marital status of children of working and non-working mothers

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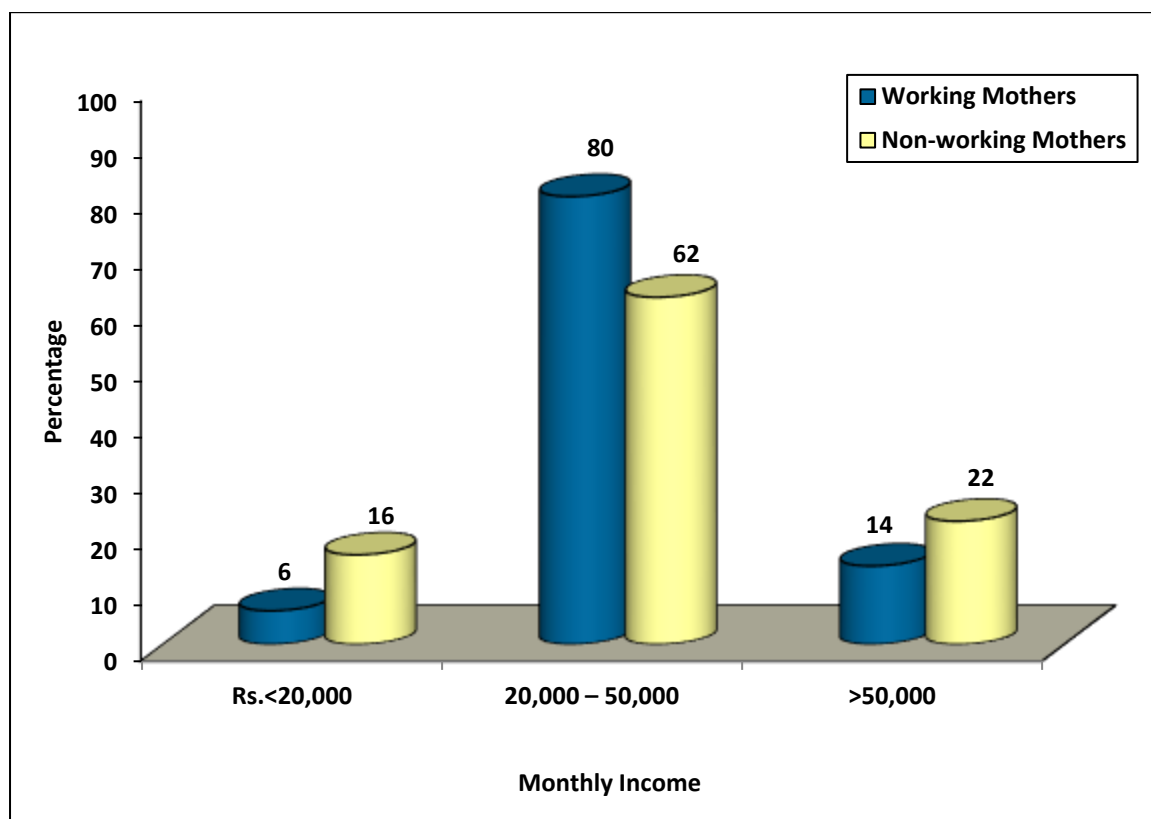


Fig 13: Percentage distribution of monthly income the children of working and non-working mothers

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of adjustment of children of working and non-working mothers.

N = 100(50+50)

Level of Adjustment	Working Mothers		Non-working Mothers	
	F	%	F	%
Low adjustment problem (0 – 90)	9	18.0	15	30.0
Moderate adjustment problem (91 – 180)	40	80.0	35	70.0
Severe adjustment problem (181 – 270)	1	2.0	0	0

Table 2 depicts the frequency and percentage distribution of level of adjustment of children of working and non-working mothers. It shows that, with respect to children of working mothers, 80% had moderate level of adjustment problems, whereas 18% had low level of adjustment problem followed by 2%, those who reports severe adjustment problems. Among the children of non-working mothers, 70% had moderate level of adjustment problems and 30% reported to have low level of adjustment problems.

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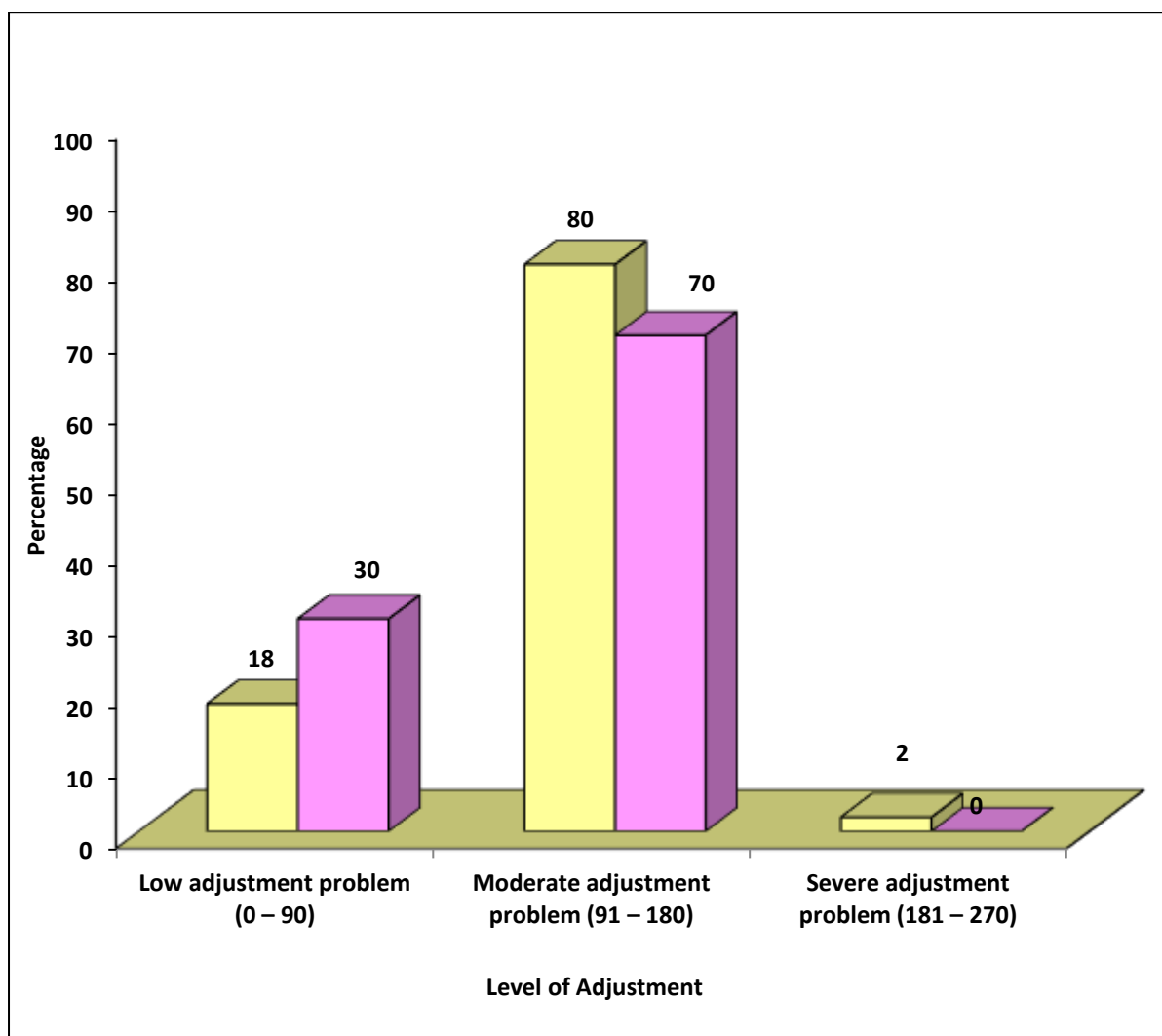


Fig 14: Percentage distribution of level of adjustment of children of working and non-working mothers

Table 3: Comparison of adjustment problem among children of working and non-working women.

N = 100(50+50)

Adjustment	Working Mothers		Non-working Mothers		Mean Difference	Student Independent test Value “t”
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Home	26.66	5.73	25.30	8.17	1.36	t = 0.963 p=0.338, N.S
Health	21.92	6.94	22.12	7.99	0.20	t = 0.134 p=0.894, N.S
Social	37.48	8.67	36.08	8.62	1.40	t = 0.809 p=0.420, N.S
Emotional	27.34	11.06	22.36	8.97	4.98	t = 2.472 p=0.015, S*
Overall Adjustment	113.40	25.31	105.86	25.07	7.54	t = 1.496 p=0.138, N.S

*p<0.05, S – Significant, N.S – Not Significant

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Table 3 shows that the calculated student independent “t” test value for adjustment level in home domain ($t = 0.962$, $p=0.338$), health domain ($t=0.134$, $p=0.894$), social domain ($t=0.809$, $p=0.420$) and for overall adjustment ($t=1.496$) was not statistically significant at $p<0.05$ level. This shows that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of adjustment between the children of working and non-working mothers. But significant difference was observed with the emotional adjustment domain with “t” value of ($t=2.472$, $p=0.015$) which was statistically significant at $p<0.05$ level.

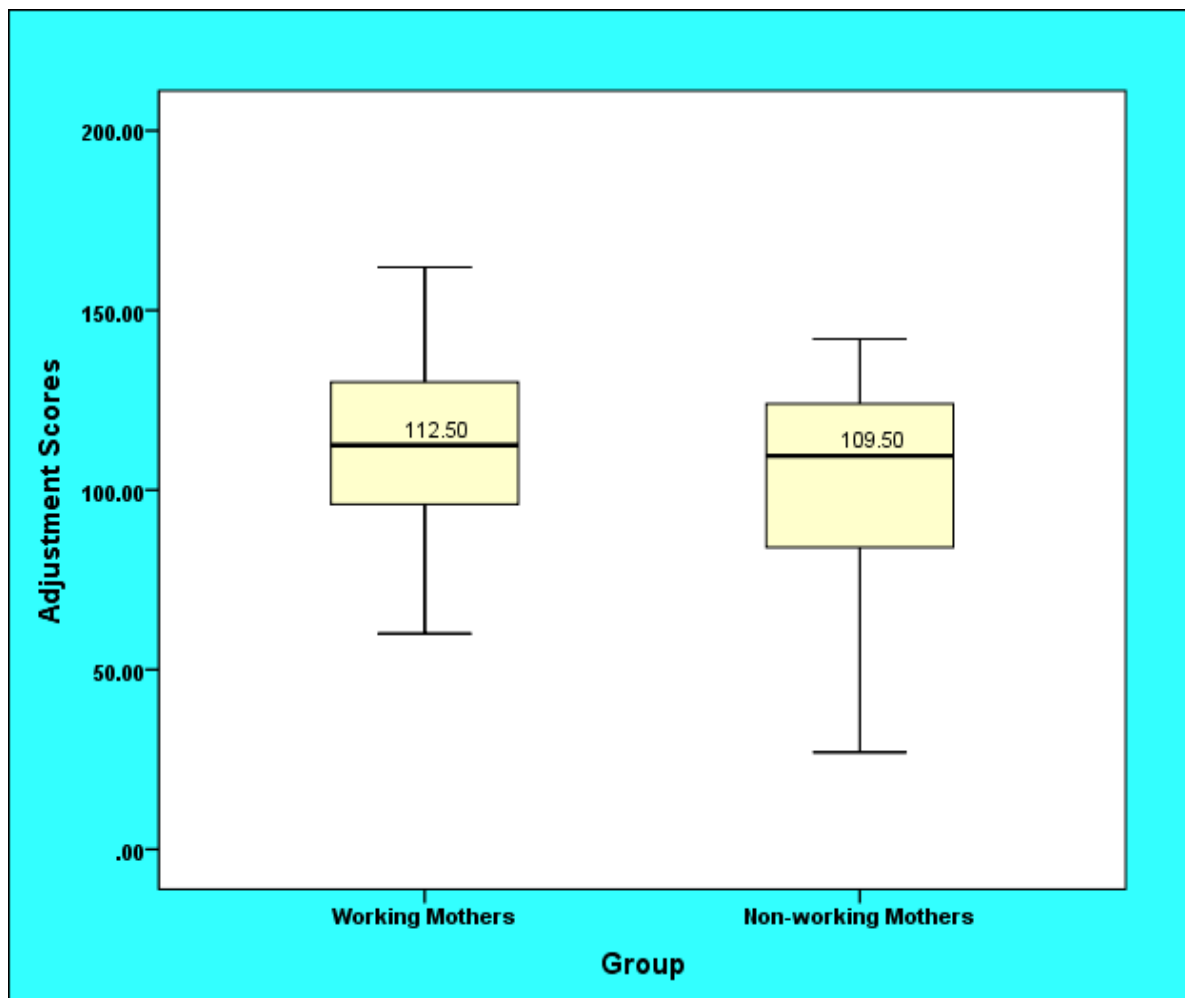


Fig 15: Boxplot showing the comparison of adjustment problem among children of working and non-working women
(Median: Working Mothers – 112.50, Non-working Mothers – 109.50)

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Table 4: Association of level of adjustment among children of working mothers with their selected demographic variables.

N = 50

Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		Severe		Chi-Square p-value / Fisher Exact test p-value
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Age							
13 years	0	0	4	8.0	0	0	p=1.000 N.S
14 years	7	14.0	28	56.0	1	2.0	
15 years	2	4.0	8	16.0	0	0	
Sex							
Female	7	14.0	22	44.0	1	2.0	p=0.347 N.S
Male	2	4.0	18	36.0	0	0	
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Religion							
Hinduism	8	16.0	35	70.0	1	2.0	p=1.000 N.S
Christianity	0	0	2	4.0	0	0	
Islam	1	2.0	3	6.0	0	0	
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Caste							
General	2	4.0	26	52.0	1	2.0	p=0.051 N.S
OBC	6	12.0	13	26.0	0	0	
ST	0	0	1	2.0	0	0	
SC	1	2.0	0	0	0	0	
Occupation of mother							
Homemaker	-	-	-	-	-	-	p=0.737 N.S
Entrepreneur	0	0	5	10.0	0	0	
Govt. employee	4	8.0	16	32.0	1	2.0	
Private sector employee	5	10.0	19	38.0	0	0	
Occupation of father							
Cultivator	0	0	2	4.0	0	0	p=0.714 N.S
Entrepreneur	1	2.0	4	8.0	1	2.0	
Govt. employee	3	6.0	14	28.0	0	0	
Private sector	4	8.0	15	30.0	0	0	
Any contractual job	1	2.0	5	10.0	0	0	
Mother's educational qualification							
H.S.L.C passed	1	2.0	2	4.0	0	0	p=0.684 N.S
H.S Passed	1	2.0	10	20.0	0	0	
Graduate	4	8.0	17	34.0	0	0	
Post graduate & above	3	6.0	11	22.0	1	2.0	
Father's educational qualification							
H.S.L.C passed	0	0	3	6.0	0	0	p=0.883 N.S
H.S Passed	5	10.0	15	30.0	1	2.0	
Graduate	2	4.0	14	28.0	0	0	
Post graduate & above	2	4.0	8	16.0	0	0	

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Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		Severe		Chi-Square p-value / Fisher Exact test p-value
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Any siblings							
No	7	14.0	22	44.0	1	2.0	p=0.480 N.S
1	2	4.0	17	34.0	0	0	
2 or more	0	0	1	2.0	0	0	
Type of family							
Nuclear family	4	8.0	19	38.0	1	2.0	p=0.857 N.S
Extended family	5	10.0	21	42.0	0	0	
Joint family	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Place of residence / area							
Urban	2	4.0	6	12.0	0	0	p=0.687 N.S
Rural	7	14.0	34	68.0	1	2.0	
Parental marital status							
Married	9	18.0	40	80.0	1	2.0	-
Widowed	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Separated	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Single parents	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Divorced	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Monthly income							
Rs.<20,000	0	0	3	6.0	0	0	p=0.832 N.S
20,000 – 50,000	7	14.0	32	64.0	1	2.0	
>50,000	2	4.0	5	10.0	0	0	

N.S – Not Significant

Table 4 shows the association of level of adjustment among children of working mothers with their selected demographic variables. None of the demographic variables statistically significant association with the level of adjustment among children of working mothers at $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 5: Association of level of adjustment among children of non-working mothers with their selected demographic variables. N = 50

Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		Chi-Square p-value / Fisher Exact test p-value
	F	%	F	%	
Age					
13 years	4	8.0	4	8.0	p=0.413 N.S
14 years	8	16.0	23	46.0	
15 years	3	6.0	8	16.0	
Sex					
Female	7	14.0	23	46.0	p=0.228 N.S
Male	8	16.0	12	24.0	
Others	-	-	-	-	

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Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		Chi-Square p-value / Fisher Exact test p-value
	F	%	F	%	
Religion					
Hinduism	13	26.0	25	50.0	p=0.508 N.S
Christianity	0	0	4	8.0	
Islam	2	4.0	6	12.0	
Others	-	-	-	-	
Caste					
General	9	18.0	16	32.0	p=0.562 N.S
OBC	6	12.0	13	26.0	
ST	0	0	2	4.0	
SC	0	0	4	8.0	
Occupation of mother					
Homemaker	15	30.0	35	70.0	-
Entrepreneur	-	-	-	-	
Govt. employee	-	-	-	-	
Private sector employee	-	-	-	-	
Occupation of father					
Cultivator	2	4.0	2	4.0	p=0.252 N.S
Entrepreneur	2	4.0	3	6.0	
Govt. employee	3	6.0	13	26.0	
Private sector	4	8.0	14	28.0	
Any contractual job	4	8.0	3	6.0	
Mother's educational qualification					
H.S.L.C passed	3	6.0	4	8.0	p=0.132 N.S
H.S Passed	5	10.0	20	40.0	
Graduate	4	8.0	10	20.0	
Post graduate & above	3	6.0	1	2.0	
Father's educational qualification					
H.S.L.C passed	3	6.0	4	8.0	p=0.899 N.S
H.S Passed	4	8.0	11	22.0	
Graduate	4	8.0	11	22.0	
Post graduate & above	4	8.0	9	18.0	
Any siblings					
No	5	10.0	7	14.0	p=0.330 N.S
1	9	18.0	20	40.0	
2 or more	1	2.0	8	16.0	
Type of family					
Nuclear family	7	14.0	14	28.0	p=0.759 N.S
Extended family	8	16.0	21	42.0	
Joint family	-	-	-	-	
Place of residence / area					
Urban	3	6.0	7	14.0	p=1.000 N.S
Rural	12	24.0	28	56.0	
Parental marital status					
Married	15	30.0	35	70.0	-

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Demographic Variables	Low		Moderate		Chi-Square p-value / Fisher Exact test p-value
	F	%	F	%	
Widowed	-	-	-	-	
Separated	-	-	-	-	
Single parents	-	-	-	-	
Divorced	-	-	-	-	
Monthly income					
Rs.<20,000	2	4.0	6	12.0	p=0.909 N.S
20,000 – 50,000	9	18.0	22	44.0	
>50,000	4	8.0	7	14.0	

N.S – Not Significant

Table 5 shows the association of level of adjustment among children of non-working mothers with their selected demographic variables. None of the demographic variables had statistically significant association with the level of adjustment among children of non-working mothers at $p < 0.05$ level.

CONCLUSION

The process of adjustment is a universal sequence that can be identified in the behavior of organisms, spanning from the lowest species to humans. Whether observed in simple organisms or complex human beings, the ability to adjust to environmental conditions, changes, and challenges is a common thread. This universal adaptation sequence highlights the significance of the adjustment process as a fundamental and shared characteristic that contributes to the survival and functionality of living organisms across different levels of complexity in the natural world.¹¹ Adjustment is essentially the naturalized relationship that develops between an individual and their environment. Each person occupies a specific position within their social relations and is trained to fulfill their role in a manner that maximizes the satisfaction of their needs. Failure to adhere to the standards may lead to disappointment, as the individual may find that their needs are not adequately met. Therefore, the process of adjustment involves aligning oneself with the expected norms and roles within a given environment, ensuring the fulfillment of personal needs and avoiding potential dissatisfaction.⁸ Children should adapt the habit of self –efficacy, irrespective of their adjustment issues. Self-efficacy represents the power or strength of one's belief in their own ability to successfully complete tasks and achieve set goals. It reflects a person's confidence and conviction in their competence to effectively handle challenges, master new skills, and accomplish objectives. This psychological concept plays a crucial role in shaping behavior, motivation, and overall personal development, as individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy are generally more inclined to take on challenges, persist in the face of obstacles, and strive for success in various endeavors.¹²

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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