



## A CROSS CULTURAL STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADJUSTMENT OF STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** *An empirical study was conducted on 100 tribal and 100 non-tribal students with a view to examining the effect of cultural affiliation on mental health and adjustment. It was hypothesized that the non-tribal respondents would show better mental health and adjustment (all dimensions) than their counterparts tribal students. The sample was drawn from Ranchi (Jharkhand) and Muzaffarpur (Bihar) through incidental-cum-purposive sampling technique. Mental Health scale of Langner's (1962) adapted by Ahmad (1983) and Aligarh Adjustment Inventory Qadri (1964) adapted by Ahmad (1982) was used for mental health and adjustment of the respondents. The obtained data were analysed with the help of 't'-test.*

*Thus, the results revealed that non-tribal students excelled their tribal counterparts in respect of Mental Health and all dimensions of Adjustment.*

**Keywords:** *Culture, Cross Culture, Mental Health.*

### Introduction:

The present study intended to ascertain and compare tribal and non-tribal students in terms of Mental Health and Adjustment. The concept of mental health has been vaguely defined by psychologists and psychiatrists. Schultz (1977) writes "... the concept of healthy personality is vitally important. The content is difficult, challenging, complex and full of unknowns and half truths and no doubt some fade and fancy as well. As such, it reflects the topic it tries to encompass – the human personality. It is very difficult to determine the cut point of mental health and mental illness. As Ionesco (1960) says "You seem very sure of yourself. Who can say where the normal stops and abnormal beings? Before the second half of the twentieth century, mental health was considered as the absence of mental disease.

Researches conducted in academic context reveal that such forces which interfere with interpersonal relationships, which do not provide the opportunity for self development and which make demand on the students beyond their individual capacities present threats to mental health. A mentally healthy student has no special problem with his study, no worry about things related to the

study, no reporting of getting angry over little things related to the academic situation and no feeling of worthlessness. Certain characteristics have been cited in the following statement . . . in so far as his entire life situation facilitate and support such feelings of adequacy, inner security and meaningfulness of his existence, it can be presumed that his mental health will tend to be good." (Kornhauser, 1965).

After reviewing the literature related to specific that poor mental health was associated with:

- **Conditions at academic institution:** Exposure to mental health hazards and unpleasant-conditions; necessity to achieve a goal and to expend a lot of physical effort excessive and inconvenient hours of study.
- **Study itself:** Lack of use of modern skills and abilities; perception of academic condition as uninteresting; repetitious teaching; lack of modern method of teaching; overload both qualitative and quantitative study involving generally a discrepancy between sources and demands.
- **Expert Teachers:** Study demands which are unclear or conflicting; lack of proper feedback from teachers; reports of problems with teachers.

## Adjustment

Adjustment is second component of the present study. Reber and Reber (2001) defined adjustment as social or psychological adjustment when used in this sense it carries clear positive correlation. The implication is that the individual is involved in a rich, on going process of developing his or her potential reacting to and in turn changing the environment in healthy, effective manner. On the other hand, a subtle, negative connotation of the term can be found.

There are several dimensions of adjustment, namely, home adjustment, health-adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and total adjustment. Home adjustment refers to the process through adjustment with the members of the Family is maintained. Health adjustment refers to the process through which an individual is capable of maintaining his or her health. Social adjustment is the process. Through the individual maintain his or her relationship with members of the society in a satisfactory manner. Emotional adjustment means the process of maintaining control over one's emotions, while dealing with people in general. Total adjust includes on the dimensions of adjustment in an integrated form.

Culture is another component of the present study Chris Evans (2004) defined culture as those aspects of life of a society which are shared by all members of that society and are normally handed down from generation to generation.

Some empirical studies have been in India and abroad in the field of adjustment. Verma (2001) examined the effect on intellectual level on adjustment patterns. It was found that person having I.Q. of normal range are better adjusted thus those of higher level of I.Q. or lower level of I.Q. Singh (1994) found that persons of advantaged group are better adjusted than those of disadvantaged group. Lipson (1975) found that familial factors such as type of the family and size of the family are important determinants of adjustment.

In the light of the above studies it is obvious that the present study is high significant and warranted in the Indian context.

## Purpose of the Study:

The following were the objectives of the present endeavour:

- (i) It was intended to compare the tribal and non-tribal students in terms of mental health.
- (ii) It was intended to compare the tribal and non-tribal students in terms of adjustment patterns.

## Hypothesis of the Study:

The following hypothesis was formulated for empirical verification:

- (i) The non-tribal respondents would shows better mental health than their tribal respondents.
- (ii) The non-tribal students would show better adjustment (all dimensions) patterns that their tribal respondents counterparts.

## Methodology:

The methodology of the study included the following steps:

### (a) Sample:

An incidental-cum purposive sample was used. The sample consisted to 200 students belonging to tribal culture and non-tribal culture in equal number. In other respects they were matched as far as possible.

### (b) Research Tools:

- (i) PDS: A personal data sheet prepared by the researcher was used for collecting necessary information of the respondents such as cultural affiliation, sex, age SES and the like.
- (ii) Mental health scale of Langner's (1962) (adapted by Ahmad, (1983) for Hindi speaking population specially Bihar & Jharkhand.)
- (iii) Aligarh Adjustment Inventory (Qadri 1964) adapted by Ahmad, (1982)

### (c) Procedure:

The procedure of the following included different steps given below:

- (i) In the First Step scales along with PDS were employed on the tribal respondents (N=100)

(ii) In the second step the scale along with PDS were employed on the non-tribal respondents (N = 100)

The data collected were both tribal and non-tribal respondents as per instructions mentioned in the manual of the test concerned.

**Result and discussion**

**Table I: Showing the significance difference between tribal and non-tribal students in term of mental health**

(N = 100 in each group)

Group	Number	Mean	S.D.	t	P
Tribal	100	19.34	5.19	6.26	<.01
Non-Tribal	100	23.65	4.64		

In the light of the findings recorded in Table-I the respondents of non-tribal group having a mean score of 23.65 showed superiority over those of tribal group having a mean score of 19.34 in terms of mental health. The difference between two means was found significant at 0.01 level of confidence.

On the basis of the findings, it may, therefore, be said that the students of different culture differ in terms of mental health. Mental health is closely related with economic condition and growth of the society. The outcome of high mental

**(d) Statistical treatment of data:** A parametric test namely ‘t’ test was used for the statistical analysis of the obtained data. Thus, obtained results were recorded in Table I and Table- II given below :

health is generally positive in a success oriented society.

In terms of mental health, the result is consistent with studies done in the past. It leads us to believe that non-tribal students have better economic conditions and more social freedom than tribals students.

Thus, the first null hypothesis the non-tribal students would shows better mental health than their tribal student counter parts is confirmed.

**Table II: Showing the significance difference between tribal and non-tribal students in terms of all dimensions of adjustment patterns**

Dimensions	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t	dF	p
Home	Tribal	100	13.25	3.51	6.57	198	<.01
	Non-Tribal	100	10.16	3.20			
Health	Tribal	100	20.15	4.11	19.53	198	<.01
	Non-Tribal	100	10.19	3.01			
Social	Tribal	100	15.71	4.25	8.51	198	<.01
	Non-Tribal	100	11.20	3.11			
Emotional	Tribal	100	19.15	5.22	10.67	198	<.01
	Non-Tribal	100	12.11	4.09			
Total	Tribal	100	45.16	10.19	5.80	198	<.01
	Non-Tribal	100	37.85	7.41			

The results displayed in above table - II showed that the non-tribal respondents excelled their tribal counterparts in home adjustment where as the mean score of tribal students 13.25 and non-tribal students 10.16 ( t = 6.57, df = 198, p = <.01), health adjustment where as mean scores of tribal students 20.15 and non-tribal students 10.19 ( t = 19.53, df = 198, p = <.01), social adjustment where as the mean

score of tribal student 15.71 and non-tribal students 11.20 ( t = 8.51, df = 198, p = <.01). Emotional adjustment where as mean score of tribal students 19.15 and non-tribal students 12.11 ( t = 10.67, df = 198, p = <.01), and in total adjustment where as the mean score of tribal student 45.16 and non-tribal students 37.85 ( t = 5.80, df = 198, p = <.01).

On the basis of the findings, it may, therefore, be said that the students of different cultural settings differ from in terms of all dimension of adjustment.

In Fact, the area of residence indicates the place of dwelling of an individual as tribal and non-tribal area. Adjustment pattern may vary as there exist difference in infrastructure among the areas. Thus, the null hypothesis non-tribal students would

show better adjustment (in all dimensions) patterns that their tribal students counter parts. The second hypothesis is confirmed.

#### Conclusion

- (i) Non-tribal students are better mental health than their tribal counterparts.
- (ii) Non-tribal students are better adjustment than their tribal counterparts in all the dimension.

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