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CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TO PARENTING BEHAVIOR IN TRIBAL FAMILIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The present research was undertaken with the following objectives: to examine whether parenting behaviors in tribal families differ based on the gender of the child (boys vs. girls); to analyze how parenting practices vary according to the educational level of children (Std. 9 vs. Std. 12); and to compare parenting behaviors of tribal families residing in rural areas with those living in urban settings. For this purpose, a total of 100 students from tribal families were selected through a random sampling method. Data were collected using the *Children's Perception of Parenting Scale* developed by Kumari Kalra, Anand Pyari, and Raj. Information was gathered from students studying in schools located in Navsari Taluka. For statistical analysis, the t-test was applied.

The major findings of the study indicate that there is no significant difference in parenting behavior between boys and girls in tribal families, as reflected by the non-significant t-ratio (1.44). This implies that tribal parents tend to follow similar parenting practices irrespective of the child's gender. Likewise, there was no significant difference found in parenting behavior between students of Std. 9 and Std. 12 (t-ratio = 1.80), suggesting that educational level does not notably affect parental practices in tribal communities. Furthermore, comparison between rural and urban tribal families also revealed no significant difference in parenting behavior (t-ratio = 1.8), indicating that despite geographical variation, parenting practices remain fairly consistent across rural and urban tribal settings.

Key Words: Parenting Behavior, Tribal Families, Comparative Study

1. Introduction

Parental behavior plays a crucial role in shaping children's emotional, social, and psychological development. In tribal families, where traditional values and cultural norms are deeply rooted, parenting practices often reflect the community's history, beliefs, and environmental setting. These practices differ significantly from those found in urban, non-tribal societies, where modern influences may reshape parenting styles. Understanding these differences requires cultural sensitivity, especially in the context of education and gender roles.

This study focuses on variables such as gender (boys vs. girls), educational level (students of Standard-9 vs. Standard-12), and residential area (rural vs. urban). Tribal communities hold unique social structures and value systems that emphasize collective living, oral traditions, and respect for nature. These aspects influence child-rearing patterns and shape the expectations placed upon children.

By comparing different variables gender, education, and residential area the aim of this study is to provide a nuanced understanding of parenting practices within tribal families. The findings will offer insights into the cultural framework that influences parenting, assisting educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals in supporting tribal children more effectively within and beyond their communities.

2. Significance of the Study

Understanding cultural sensitivity in parenting behavior, especially in tribal families, holds great importance. This research offers valuable insights into the intersections of traditional and modern influences that shape child-rearing practices in tribal communities. By examining variables such as gender, education, and residential area, the study presents a detailed comparative analysis of how these factors affect parenting styles.



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The findings will be beneficial to educators and school administrators working with tribal children, helping them develop culturally responsive teaching methods that respect tribal family values. Recognizing differences in parenting between Standard-9 and Standard-12 students can guide teachers in adapting their approaches to suit different academic stages.

From a policy perspective, this research can assist policymakers in designing social and educational programs suited to the cultural context of tribal families. An understanding of how gender and living environment influence parenting behavior will help frame policies that better support tribal families in both rural and urban regions.

Professionals in social services and mental health can use these findings to deepen their understanding of tribal cultural backgrounds, enabling them to provide more effective counselling and support. Culturally informed interventions aligned with family expectations can enhance the well-being of tribal children.

Academically, the study contributes to scholarship on parenting and cultural sensitivity by offering a comparative perspective on how tribal and non-tribal parenting practices differ and how factors like education, gender, and geography shape these behaviors. By highlighting the specific needs and systems of tribal families, the research serves as a foundation for more inclusive and culturally sensitive support for tribal communities.

3. Problem Statement

Parenting behavior is deeply shaped by cultural norms, traditions, and social structures, particularly within tribal communities. These groups often preserve distinct values and practices passed down through generations, influencing how children are raised. However, as tribal families increasingly interact with mainstream modern society especially through urban exposure and formal education their traditional parenting methods may undergo changes or encounter challenges.

Despite these transitions, research remains limited on how such evolving cultural dynamics impact parenting behavior in tribal families, especially across factors like gender, educational level, and residential area. The unique social, economic, and educational realities of tribal communities are often overlooked in mainstream studies, leading to a lack of culturally responsive policies and support systems for them.

This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining differences in parenting behavior within tribal families based on gender (boys vs. girls), educational level (Standard-9 vs. Standard-12), and residential area (rural vs. urban). Understanding these variations will help highlight the cultural sensitivity required to effectively engage with tribal families and support the development of their children in a rapidly changing social context. Without such understanding, initiatives aimed at assisting tribal families may fall short, failing to acknowledge the cultural values that are integral to their parenting systems.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the differences in parenting behavior in tribal families based on the gender of the child (boys vs. girls).
2. To analyze how parenting practices vary in tribal families according to the children's educational level (students of Standard-9 vs. Standard-12).
3. To compare parenting behavior of tribal families living in rural areas with those living in urban settings.

5. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in parenting behavior between boys and girls in tribal families.
2. There is no significant difference in parenting behavior in tribal families based on the educational level of children (Standard-9 vs. Standard-12).



3. There is no significant difference in parenting behavior between tribal families residing in rural areas and those in urban areas.
4. **6. Variables**
5. In the present study, the following variables were examined, and the nature of these variables is presented in the table below.

6. Table: 1.1
Nature and Level of Variables

No.	Name of Variable	Nature of Variable	Levels	Level Names
1.	Gender	Independent	2	Boys / Girls
2.	Education	Independent	2	Standard-9 / Standard-12
3.	Residential Area	Independent	2	Rural Area / Urban Area
4.	Parenting Behavior	Dependent	—	Scores obtained through the test

7. Sample

Considering the objectives of the present study, a total sample of 100 students from tribal families was selected. Random sampling method was used for selecting the sample.

8. Tools for Data Collection

For data collection in the present study, the *Children's Perception of Parenting Scale* developed by Kumari Kalra, Anand Pyari, and Raj was used.

9. Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected from students studying in schools located in Navsari Taluka. For gathering information, the *Children's Perception of Parenting Scale* by Kumari Kalra, Anand Pyari, and Raj was administered.

10. Statistical Analysis

For statistical analysis in the present research, the t-test was used.

11. Results and Discussion

The results of the present study are presented in the table below.

Table: 1.2

Difference in Mean Scores of Parenting Perception among Children of Tribal Families

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Gender	Boys	50	25.72	6.42	1.44 NS
	Girls	50	27.89	8.47	
Education	Standard-9	50	26.28	8.24	1.80 NS



	Standard-12	50	29.24	8.22	
Residential Area	Rural	50	22.32	8.74	1.8 NS
	Urban	50	24.29	7.99	

The table provides a comparative overview of parenting behavior across three variables: gender, education, and residential area. The statistical indicators include sample size (N), mean, standard deviation (SD), and t-ratio for each group, where the notation NS indicates a non-significant result.

• Gender:

The sample consists of 50 boys and 50 girls. Boys have an average parenting behavior score of 25.72 with a standard deviation of 6.42, while girls score slightly higher at 27.89 with a standard deviation of 8.47. The t-ratio of 1.44 shows that the difference in mean scores is not statistically significant, indicating that parenting behavior does not differ meaningfully between boys and girls.

• Education:

This comparison includes 50 students each from Standard 9 and Standard 12. Standard 9 students have a mean score of 26.28 (SD = 8.24), whereas Standard 12 students show a higher mean score of 29.24 (SD = 8.22). However, the t-ratio of 1.80 reveals that this difference is not statistically significant, meaning that educational level does not contribute to notable variation in parenting behavior perception.

• Residential Area:

The dataset includes 50 participants from rural areas and 50 from urban areas. The mean score for rural participants is 22.32 (SD = 8.74), while the urban mean score is 24.29 (SD = 7.99). With a t-ratio of 1.8, the difference between rural and urban tribal families is not statistically significant, suggesting that place of residence does not significantly influence perceived parenting behavior.

In conclusion, none of the three variables gender, education, or residential area show a statistically significant difference in parenting behavior, as all t-values fall within the non-significant range. This indicates that parenting patterns in tribal families remain largely consistent regardless of these demographic differences.

12. Findings

The key findings of the study are presented below:

I. Gender and Parenting Behavior:

No significant difference was found in parenting behavior between boys and girls in tribal families, as indicated by the non-significant t-ratio (1.44). This suggests that tribal parents tend to exhibit similar parenting practices irrespective of the child's gender.

II. Education and Parenting Behavior:

The study revealed no significant difference in parenting behavior between students of Standard-9 and Standard-12, reflected through the non-significant t-ratio of 1.80. This indicates that the educational level of children does not greatly influence parenting practices in tribal families.



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III. Residential Area and Parenting Behavior:

A comparison between rural and urban tribal families showed no significant difference in parenting behavior (t -ratio = 1.8). This implies that despite geographical differences, parenting approaches in tribal families remain fairly consistent in both rural and urban environments.

13. Conclusion

The findings indicate a strong cultural uniformity in parenting behavior among tribal communities, which appears to remain unaffected by factors such as gender, educational level, or residential setting.

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