Journal of Neonatal Surgery
ISSN(Online): 2226-0439
Vol.14 , Issue 33s (2025)
https://www.jneonatalsurg.com

OPEN ACCESS

Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Scheduled Caste Working and Non-Working Women: A Comparative Study

Prof. (Dr.) Anis Ahmad[1]*, Sanjula Kumari[2]

[1] Professor, University Department of Psychology, L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga

[2] Research Scholar, University Department of Psychology, L N Mithila University, Darbhanga

Cite this paper as: Prof. (Dr.) Anis Ahmad, Sanjula Kumari (2025) Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Scheduled Caste Working and Non-Working Women: A Comparative Study. Journal of Neonatal Surgery, 14, (33s) 1495-1504

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted with an aim to examine and compare the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of working and non-working women of scheduled caste. The study also attempted to clarify the correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction of the respondents. The investigation was carried out using the descriptive survey method. The population in this study were those working and non-working women of Scheduled Caste from Darbhanga district of Bihar. Simple random sampling technique was used for a total sample of 300 women which includes 150 working SC women and 150 non-working SC women. The Life Satisfaction Scale, constructed by Pramod Kumar and Jayshree Dhyani (2006) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale, constructed by Ralf Schwarzer and Jayshree Dhyani Jerusalem (1995) were used to collect data. Appropriate statistical methods of descriptive and inferential were used to analyse the collected data. The results indicated the self-efficacy of Scheduled Caste working women was higher than the non-working women. Similarly, working women showed higher life satisfaction on mental, job, social, marital, family and overall life satisfaction. Statistically significant differences were observed between the two groups. The findings also indicated that the more positive the self-efficacy, the more positive the evaluation of life. The results reveal that work can have a positive impact on the confidence, economic independence, social participation, personal achievement and psychological empowerment of SC women. The study finds that improving self-efficacy and providing greater avenues to meaningful education, training and employment could help improve life satisfaction and well-being of Scheduled Caste women. It also highlights the importance of supportive interventions for women that do not work that would enable them to increase their autonomy, social participation and their overall quality of life.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Life Satisfaction, Scheduled Caste Working and Non-working Women

INTRODUCTION

Various personal, family, occupational, social and cultural factors contribute to the psychological health of women. In the Indian context, all these influences assume great significance to women in the socially disadvantaged groups such as the Scheduled Castes (SCs) who may face inequalities in terms of caste, gender, education, employment, income and social resources. While the constitution safeguards, affirmative-action policies, educational opportunities and economic development have made a huge contribution to the progress of Scheduled Caste communities, there are still significant socio-economic gaps and differences in social experiences that have a profound impact on their quality of life and psychological well-being. The Census of India 2011 reports that around 16.6 per cent of the total population of India belongs to the Scheduled Castes (SC) group (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2011). The position of women from Scheduled Castes is unique as their experience could be influenced by both, caste-based and gender-based social structures. Their convergence can affect educational, professional, economic, social and psychological opportunities as well as decision-making power. Jiloha (2010) noticed that psychological and social implications of social deprivation and discrimination may be important for disadvantaged groups. In a similar vein, Johri and Anand (2022) found that caste differences in life satisfaction and well-being existed and were significant, which highlighted that caste is still relevant to psychological well-being even in the modern day and urban context. These findings suggest that psychological factors of Scheduled Caste women cannot be seen only as individual factors but in the socio-cultural context. Self-efficacy is at the core of the psychological resources that enable a successful functioning and well-being. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is an individual's self-confidence in his or her ability to plan and perform the behaviors required to produce outcomes. Self-efficacy is not necessarily a measure of actual competence; rather, it is a measure of one's belief in his/her competence to use abilities to meet challenges and achieve results. Social cognitive theory suggests that self-efficacy beliefs have an impact on the decision to engage in a behavior, the amount of effort required to undertake a task, the length of time

spent on a task, and emotional reactions to stressful situations (Bandura, 1997). People who have high self-efficacy are more likely to see challenging situations as something that can be managed, while those with low self-efficacy see the same situation as threatening or beyond their control. Self-efficacy consequently, has important implications for women's personal and social functioning. Women often have to play several different roles as related to household duties, familial relationships, care giving, child rearing, economic activities, and community involvement. Their self-efficacy in handling these responsibilities may impact their problem solving, decision making, goal setting, stress coping and emotional stability. An individual with high self-efficacy might be more likely to take initiative and persevere, and could increase a sense of personal control. Generalized self-efficacy has been positively related to adaptive psychological functioning in studies with various population groups (Luszczynska et al., 2005). Thus, self-efficacy can be a significant psychological resource for women to be able to effectively cope with the environmental and interpersonal challenges, especially women with disadvantaged social situation.

Work might be an especially significant place for women's development and expression of self-efficacy. Having a job can boost financial independence, build up social contacts, allow one to learn new skills, provide a feeling of achievement and social recognition, and help to make a person feel more independent in decision making. If successful, occupational experiences can serve as mastery experiences, considered by Bandura (1997) to be one of the strongest sources of efficacy beliefs. Concurrently, there is no necessary relationship between employment and positive psychological benefits. Occupational stress, working conditions, family–work conflict, lack of supports, and the requirements of meeting both family and work demands, are all potential problems that working women might face. In this sense, work can be a way of empowerment or a way of bringing more demands, depending on the conditions for women's participation in work. The recent labour-force evidence also points towards the increasing role of women in India's economic activity. At the all-India level, the labour-force participation rate of women aged 15 years and above has also seen a significant increase in 2023-24 compared to 2017-18 (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation [MoSPI], 2024). Meanwhile, there are significant disparities in employment among groups based on rural–urban residence, type of occupation, educational attainment and social group. The PLFS data has also revealed wide variations in the nature of employment of the SC women, whether it is regular employment with wages/salary or casual labour or self-employment (MoSPI, 2023). These variations indicate that the condition of employment involvement, in addition to its economic dimension, is significant social and psychological experience. Non-working women, on the other hand, play invaluable roles in the functioning of the household in care giving, domestic chores, managing the family, providing emotional support and other unpaid activities. Non-working, therefore, is not necessarily an indicator of the lack of productive activity, but essentially means that most of the women interviewed do not work in recognized paid activities. Home work can involve ongoing work, planning, problem-solving and emotional work. Much of this work is unpaid and less visible socially, however, which means a non-working woman may have less opportunity than a working woman to generate income, be recognized in the workplace, to interact formally with other people, and to be recognized for her achievements externally. Such situations may impact their sense of competence, autonomy and satisfaction, which may be buffered by family support, marital relationships, community participation, economic security and personal values.

Another major variable related to women's psychological adjustment is life satisfaction. Generally, life satisfaction is considered to be the cognitive part of subjective well-being. It was defined by Diener et al. (1985) as "the overall judgement that a person makes about the quality of his or her life based on his or her own personally chosen criteria". Life satisfaction is not a transient state, but rather a general evaluation of how well one's current life matches one's wishes, values, objectives and hopes. Diener et al. (1999) also talked about the significance of subjective well-being and how it can be measured both in affective and cognitive components, with a life satisfaction measure being an important indicator of positive psychological functioning. Women's life satisfaction can be the result of satisfaction in a number of areas: family life, marriage, employment, social relations, health, economic security, personal accomplishment, and psychological well-being. Occupational achievement, financial independence, recognition and social interaction can increase satisfaction for working women, and occupational pressure and work–family conflict can decrease satisfaction. More time for family engagement and family commitments (for nonworking women) can lead to positive consequences in terms of satisfaction, if these roles are personally important and socially recognized. A lack of economic independence, lack of opportunity for personal growth, lack of recognition for unpaid work, and social isolation, however, may have a negative impact on satisfaction. So, the factor of employment status might play an important role to differentiate and understand the assessment of women's life.

In particular, the issue of studying Scheduled Caste women is significant from an intersectional perspective. Inequalities regarding caste, social class, educational status, locality and economic resources are not always distinct from gender inequalities. Johri and Anand (2022) concluded that caste did have a significant impact on life satisfaction and psychological well-being and that it is important to study well-being in relation to social contexts. Studies with marginalised women have also shown that marginalisation need not be the only factor that gives rise to psychological and socio-economic vulnerabilities, but may coexist with other factors. Thus, Scheduled caste (SC) working and non-working women may have varying opportunities for personal development, social participation, economic independence and achievement, which may also be reflected on their self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Although psychological studies on subjective well-being and

empowerment of women have increased in number, the specific research focusing on the comparison between Scheduled Caste working and non-working women is limited in terms of self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Many of the previous works have considered women as a whole, employed women, homemakers, gender differentials or caste differentials in isolation. Less effort has been made into the level of meaningful psychological differences engendered within a socially marginalized group as a result of occupational participation. This comparison may be useful in discerning the impact of employment opportunities from the overall social situation of the SC women.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nathawat and Mathur (1993) did a comparative study of marital adjustment and subjective well-being of educated working women and housewives in India. A total of 400 women with 200 working women and 200 housewives were taken up for the study. Assessment of the participants was done in terms of marital adjustment and different aspects of subjective wellbeing such as general health, life satisfaction, self-esteem, anxiety, insecurity and hopelessness. The results indicated that working females have significantly higher marital adjustment and subjective well-being as compared to housewives. For working women, there was also increased happiness, overall health, and self-esteem, and decreased hopelessness, insecurity, and anxiety. It was suggested that work can be a positive contributor to women's life satisfaction as it can give them opportunities for social interaction, economic independence, and personal accomplishment and self-worth. This is an important empirical study to conduct a comparison between the life satisfaction of working women and non-working women.

Gao et al. (2009) studied on factors related to life satisfaction of full-time working women and housewives in Kawasaki City, Japa. The study sample comprised 165 community women and analyzed the relationships between life satisfaction, self-efficacy, gender-role consciousness, and family and friends' support by covariance structural analysis. The results showed that there was a difference between the determinants of life satisfaction depending on women's employment status. Specially, there was a direct relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction and this relationship was positive among full-time working women. The results also revealed that self-efficacy, social support and gender-role attitudes shared the significant proportion of the variance in life satisfaction. The study has particular relevance as it looked at employment, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction simultaneously and found that the role of a job might have an impact on how psychological resources are associated with the satisfaction with life.

Kang (2013) examined the association between health promoting lifestyle, self-efficacy and life satisfaction in 209 middle aged female residents in South Korea. The age of the participants ranged from 40 to 59 years. Descriptive statistics, correlation, analysis of variance and stepwise multiple regression were used to analyse the data. There was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Women who were employed also had a higher self-efficacy and there were differences in life satisfaction depending on educational and other socio-demographic factors. Both self-efficacy and life satisfaction significantly influenced women's health promoting lifestyles. Results showed that women's confidence in their ability to cope with challenges is closely related to positive life assessments. This study has confirmed the theoretical assumption of the present study, namely, that high levels of self-efficacy are likely to be associated with high levels of life satisfaction.

Singh (2014) studied the relationship of life satisfaction and stress levels of working and non-working women of India. The sample size was 200 women of which 100 women were working and 100 women were non-working. Data was collected using the Life Satisfaction Scale of Alam and Srivastava along with a stress scale. The difference between working women and non-working women for level of life satisfaction was found significant. Working women showed a higher level of life satisfaction than non-working women, and non-working women reported higher stress compared to working women. A significant negative relationship was also found between stress and life satisfaction. Results showed that although women's involvement in paid work might lead to an increase in psychological and social resources, the financial independence and personal achievement might increase their satisfaction with life. This study is directly applicable to the current study as they have shown the importance of occupational status in distinguishing women's life satisfaction.

Poorbaferani et al. (2018) examined the life satisfaction, general self-efficacy, self-esteem and communication skills of married women in Naien, Iran. A total of 212 married women participated in the study. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, General Self-Efficacy Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and a communication skills measure were administered. The findings indicated that there was a highly positive relationship between the general self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Self-efficacy was found to be the most important predictor of life satisfaction among all the psychological variables included in this study and the combination of self-efficacy, communication skills, and self-esteem accounted for 35.8% of the variance in life satisfaction. The scientists suggested that strategies to boost women's self-efficacy need to be incorporated into programmes designed to enhance women's life satisfaction. The results strongly suggest that self-efficacy should be regarded as an important psychological resource to account for differences in women's life satisfaction.

Panwar and Srivastava (2019) did a comparison between the life satisfaction, physical discomfort and psychological stress of employed women and housewives of India. A sample of 156 women was used; 78 employed women, 78 housewives. The Perceived Stress Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, and other physical health and discomfort measures were used to assess

the participants. The results revealed that the psychological stress among the housewives was higher than that of the employed females but life satisfaction was higher among the employed females. The researchers found that there were different associations between employment and household responsibilities and women's physical and psychological experiences. They found that working can be a key way for them to access the social, economic, identity and achievement that may positively influence their lives and their satisfaction with life. The study validates the importance of examining the occupations when considering psychological well-being of women from various social group.

Yang and Choi (2022) explored the mediating role of job satisfaction and self-efficacy between career orientation and life satisfaction of 204 married women workers in China. Results of their study showed a positive association between the career orientation and life satisfaction for women mediated by job satisfaction and this indirect association was more significant when women had high self-efficacy. That is, the positive effect of occupational experiences on overall life satisfaction was mediated by self-efficacy as an important psychological resource. The findings of this study revealed that employment may not be the only factor affecting women's life satisfaction, but women's self-efficacy to complete their work and reach their goals can affect their psychological benefits from their work. This is significant for the current study, which compares efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction of working and non-working women.

Kim (2024) explored the longitudinal link between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among 577 in South Korea living with physical disabilities. An autoregressive cross-lagged model was used to analyse data from two waves of Disability Employment Panel. Results showed high levels of test–retest reliability for self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Most importantly, there was a significant bidirectional relationship between self-efficacy at an earlier time period and later life satisfaction, as well as earlier life satisfaction and later self-efficacy. Therefore, the study suggested a bi-directional association between the variables. While there were differences between the participants of this and the current study, the findings are relevant because women with physical disabilities, as with women from socially disadvantaged groups, may face structural and social barriers. The study indicates that efficacy beliefs might help enhance life satisfaction of women in disadvantaged situations.

Zargar, Fatima, and Pareek (2024) conducted a study on the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of working and housewife women in Srinagar, Kashmir. The study comprised of 240 women, of which 120 women were employed and 120 women were housewives which were selected by purposive sampling. Both the General Self-Efficacy Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale were given and an independent-samples t test was used to compare the two groups. Results showed that employed women were more self-efficacious than housewives and that employed women were more satisfied with their life than housewives. The authors drew the conclusion that women's employment status is an important factor in their self-efficacy and life satisfaction. This study is relevant to the present research because the two main variables of the study (self-efficacy and life satisfaction) were studied together and the comparison was between employed and non-employed women. However, it did not focus specifically on the Scheduled Caste women and there is scope for investigation within a socially disadvantaged group.

Gosavi and Mohite (2025) examined self-efficacy and life satisfaction of the working women of urban and rural areas of Beed district, Maharashtra. In the study, 100 working women from age 25 to 50 years were selected as samples, which included 50 urban women and 50 rural women. Singh and Narain's Self-Efficacy Scale and Alam and Srivastava's Life Satisfaction Scale were used. Results suggested that there were statistically significant differences in self-efficacy, as well as life satisfaction, between the urban and rural working women, with urban working women scoring higher. The researchers believed that part of the reasons for these differences lie in the varied levels of educational facilities, occupational opportunities, social resources and supports. The study indicates that socio-environmental factors as well as employment have an impact on women's self-efficacy and life satisfaction. This is significant in the context of studies on psychological functioning among women of other Scheduled Tribes as their social and residential environment would also have an impact.

RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A key justification for the current study is that the significance and impact of work can vary significantly by social group. Employment is often seen as a key way to enhance women's economic status, but work alone does not guarantee empowerment, confidence and a better quality of life. Kabeer's (2012) work showed that there are different kinds of possibilities for women's economic empowerment in different types of employment and that work's impact on women's empowerment is contingent on employment quality and conditions. The analysis of Datta et al. (2020) in India further showed that caste and education mediate the relationship between women's workforce participation and women's employment patterns. They noted that caste disparities are not only found in their labor involvement but also in the type and quality of jobs for women. Thus, the study of Scheduled Caste working women separately will be an opportunity to find out whether employment brings any psychological benefits in terms of increased self-efficacy and life satisfaction of Scheduled Caste working women. The comparison to non-working caste women is also significant. Non-working women perform a significant role in the family in various way such as household management, child care, care of dependent family members and many other types of unpaid activities. However, these activities are not necessarily an independent source of income, occupational validation or a chance for formal social engagement. The psychological effects of the lack of paid employment can thus not

be understood solely in the context of lack of work. It is important to consider if there are disparities in women's beliefs about their abilities and life appraisal in some of the areas of economic participation, decision-making opportunities, social exposure, mastery experiences, and recognition. The present research may help in obtaining a more specific evaluation of the psychological significance of an occupation by comparing women of the same social background (Scheduled Caste) but differing in employment status. The choice of self-efficacy as a key variable is noteworthy given that empowerment does not necessarily depend on access to external resources. Women can be given access to educational, occupational or economic opportunities, but the effective utilization of such opportunities will also require their confidence to face any problems, take decisions, solve problems and reach their personal goals. Caprara and Steca (2005) showed how efficacy beliefs about emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning relate to behaviors that lead to higher life satisfaction. Self-efficacy therefore can be considered a psychological process whereby social and occupational experiences may be converted into more positive functioning. It is relevant to look at this construct among SC women as external opportunity and one's own sense of capability may not sync.

Life satisfaction is also included in the study to give it a deeper dimension as material progress alone cannot fully capture the development of women. A woman can gain economic independence without feeling happier, if she suffers discrimination, insecurity, overload or inadequate family support and limited autonomy in the workplace. On the other hand, a non-working woman can report to high satisfaction if she feels supported, secure, recognised and involved in family decision making. Thus, life satisfaction is a broader psychological outcome that can be used to make sense of women's judgment of their situation. The study of self-efficacy, together with life satisfaction, allows to assess whether the two groups differ but also whether there is a correlation between a higher level of self-efficacy and a more positive life satisfaction. This is further strengthened by taking into account the relatively limited psychological literature that is specific to working and non-working women from Scheduled Caste or Dalit backgrounds. In their study of Dalit working and non-working women Firdos and Amanullah (2017) found significant group difference in mental health and various aspects of emotional maturity. Their results showed that occupational status is not just psychologically relevant when making comparisons between women generally, but also within Dalit women themselves. Their investigation, however, did not concern self-efficacy and life satisfaction but mental health and emotional maturity. This is an important area for further research, as it relates to women's confidence in their ability, and their overall life satisfaction with regard to occupational status.

Also, recent evidence points to an interaction of individual and structural resources in the psychological empowerment of marginalised women. In their study of Dalit women in Himachal Pradesh, Monika et al. (2025) reported that social support, education, political participation and socio-economic conditions resulted in economic and psychological empowerment. This suggests that factors of well-being of SC women cannot be adequately explained from either psychological variable alone or socio-economic factors alone. The present study is thus relevant because it is the first to combine a personal psychological factor (self-efficacy), a subjective well-being factor (life satisfaction) and a key socio-economic factor (working versus non-working status) in a single comparative context. It is also important from the point of view of women empowerment and social inclusion. The results, if the self-efficacy and life satisfaction levels of working women are found to be higher than the others, may indicate the need for meaningful employment opportunities, vocational development, education, financial inclusion, and opportunities for social participation for SC women. Meanwhile, any disparities should not be interpreted as lessening the contribution of the non-working women. Rather, non-psychological outcomes if present, might signify a need for more robust opportunities to develop skills, engage with the community, make decisions, gain social recognition and develop as a person, for women who are not in formal employment. This is in line with the view that the empowerment potential of economic participation is contingent on the quality of opportunities and its ability to enhance women's capabilities and agency (Kabeer, 2012). In practical terms, the findings can be utilized by counsellors, educators, community organizations and self-help groups, social welfare agencies and policy planners in the field of development of Scheduled Caste women. Insights into the link between self-efficacy and life satisfaction can help in the development of programmes that are not just about financial support, but also about psychological capacity building, confidence development, decision making, leadership, goal setting, social support and coping skills. Economic empowerment may be more effective if combined with psychological empowerment, for policies targeting marginalised women. Mal and Saikia (2024) also noted the need for specific initiatives to be put in place that take into account the particular situation of the women belonging to the marginalised caste/tribal group instead of merely general women empowerment measures.

Hence, the present study has been undertaken with the clear need to know if there are any differences in self-efficacy and life-satisfaction in the Scheduled Caste female population in terms of their employment status and how these two variables relate to each other. Though previous studies have taken up either caste and employment among women, women empowerment, mental health or psychological well-being they have not concentrated on the conjoint study of self-efficacy and life satisfaction among women from SC community with or without employment. The present study aims at filling this gap and thus, make a contribution to the more psychologically informed understanding of the women empowerment. Beyond comparison of statistics, the results might be used to understand the psychological strengths and areas in which support is needed, and also help in the development of more inclusive interventions to enhance autonomy, confidence, well-being and quality of life of women from SC communities.

Objectives of the Study

To assess the level of self-efficacy among Scheduled Caste working and non-working women.

To know the level of life satisfaction among Scheduled Caste working and non-working women.

To compare the self-efficacy of Scheduled Caste working and non-working women.

To compare the life satisfaction of Scheduled Caste working and non-working women.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The descriptive survey method was used in the present study because this research method was felt as the most suitable method to achieve the objectives of the present study. The method was chosen by critically analyzing literature on methodological approach and past empirical studies on self-efficacy, life satisfaction and psychological well-being of working and non-working women. The descriptive survey method helped the researcher to know the extent of self-efficacy and life satisfaction of the Scheduled Caste women and to compare the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of women based on their employment status without manipulating any of the conditions of the study. The population of the present study was Women working and non-working women of the scheduled caste of Darbhanga district of Bihar. The total number of Scheduled Caste women from whom sample of 300 was taken was done by simple random sampling technique. It was found that the sample had equal number of working women and non-working women, that is, 150 working women and 150 non-working women. This equal representation was achieved to enable a meaningful comparison between the two groups with regard to the factors of self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Data collection was carried out using two psychological standardized tools. Life satisfaction was assessed by using the Life Satisfaction Scale by Pramod Kumar & Jayshree Dhyani (2006). The scale was given to check the overall level of satisfaction of the respondents with various domains of their lives. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) created by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem (1995) was used to assess self-efficacy. The GSE aims to measure a person's general self-efficacy beliefs in meeting difficult demands and facing challenging situations.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Table No. 01 Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Scheduled Caste Working and Non-Working Women

Variables and its Dimensions		Maen of Working Women Mean	SD	Mean of Non-Working Women	SD	Overall Mean	Overall SD
Self-Efficacy		31.84	4.72	28.46	5.18	30.15	5.18
Life Satisfaction	Mental Dimension	36.54	4.61	33.82	5.14	35.18	5.08
	Job Dimension	28.43	3.95	24.86	4.73	26.65	4.70
	Social Dimension	30.18	4.42	28.25	4.81	29.22	4.69
	Marital Dimension	27.96	4.16	26.31	4.62	27.14	4.46
	Family Dimension	14.37	2.34	13.49	2.61	13.93	2.53
	Total Life Satisfaction	137.48	15.62	128.73	17.46	133.11	17.06

Analysis and Interpretation: The descriptive statistics of self-efficacy and life satisfaction of women from the Scheduled Caste (SC) working and non-working status is shown in Table No. 01. The findings show that there were significant differences between the two groups on both variables and all aspects of life satisfaction. With regard to self-efficacy, working women obtained a higher mean score (M = 31.84, SD = 4.72) than non-working women (M = 28.46, SD = 5.18). The total mean scores for self-efficacy were 30.15 and the SD of 5.18. The mean difference of 3.38 points indicates that working women belonging to the Scheduled Caste have comparatively stronger belief in the management of difficulties, performing tasks successfully and coping with difficult situation. Working can offer chances for self-determination, socialization, decision making, problem solving, earning money, and achieving success, and this can lead to an increased sense of self-efficacy. Working women also had higher mean scores on each of the five dimensions with respect to life satisfaction. In terms of mental dimension, there was a mean score of 34.54 (SD = 4.61) for working women, 33.82 (SD = 5.14) for non-working women and 35.18 (SD = 5.08) overall. This suggests higher mental satisfaction and psychological well-being of working women when compared to others. The highest descriptive difference between the life satisfaction dimensions was found in the job dimension. Working women had a mean score of 28.43 (SD = 3.95), whereas non-working women obtained

a mean of 24.86 (SD = 4.73). The overall mean was 26.65 (SD = 4.70). This gap may be a reflection of better opportunities for working women to achieve, participate economically, to be recognized, and to be engaged productively in occupations. For the social dimension, working women recorded a mean of 30.18 (SD = 4.42), while non-working women obtained a mean of 28.25 (SD = 4.81), with an overall mean of 29.22 (SD = 4.69). The score is higher for working women, which could have to do with increased exposure to social networks and increased interpersonal interaction. Similarly, on the marital dimension, working women had a higher mean score (M = 27.96, SD = 4.16) than non-working women (M = 26.31, SD = 4.62), while the overall mean was 27.14 (SD = 4.46). The mean score for working women on the family dimension was 14.37 (SD = 2.34) whereas mean score of non-working women was 13.49 (SD = 2.61). The overall mean was 13.93 (SD = 2.53). Although the difference on this dimension was comparatively smaller, working women still reported a higher level of family satisfaction. This overall pattern is echoed in the total life satisfaction score. Working women obtained a mean score of 137.48 (SD = 15.62), whereas non-working women recorded a mean score of 128.73 (SD = 17.46). Total sample mean life satisfaction total was 133.11 (SD = 17.06). This means that women who worked had 8.75 points higher total life satisfaction than those women who did not work.

To conclude, the descriptive findings indicate that the self-efficacy of working women of SC is high compared to non-working women of SC and has higher life satisfaction in all dimensions studied. Working women's scores might be related to their relative economic independence, involvement in an occupation, social exposure, achievement experiences and opportunities for personal competence.

Table No. 02 Comparison of Self-Efficacy between Working and Non-Working Scheduled Caste Women

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Self-Efficacy	Working	150	31.84	4.72	5.99	298	.000
	Non-Working	150	28.46	5.18			

Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Analysis and Interpretation: The comparison of self-efficacy of working and non-working women from SC is shown in Table No. 02. To find out if the difference between the two groups in the mean self-efficacy scores was statistically significant, an independent-samples t-test was used. Results indicate that Scheduled Caste working women had a higher mean score of self-efficacy (M = 31.84, SD = 4.72) compared to Scheduled Caste non-working women (M = 28.46, SD = 5.18). The difference between the two groups averaged 3.38 points, which was comparatively higher levels of self-efficacy for working women. The t-value obtained of 5.99 with 298 degrees of freedom was statistically significant at the .01 level ($p < .001$). Thus the difference between self-efficacy of working women and non-working women of scheduled caste is very significant. Working women may be more self-efficacious because of opportunities afforded by working in the occupation. Women can be exposed to employment situations that involve independent decision making, problem solving, working with others, adapting to varying situations, and handling work tasks. This can help to build self-assurance in the ability to cope and to develop the confidence that problems and challenging situations can be handled. Economic participation and occupational achievement can also be a source of increased autonomy, competence and personal control. Conversely, there may be fewer chances for formal occupational experiences, economic independence, and broader social participation for the non-working women. While non-working women also engage in significant family and household duties, they may not always enjoy the same external status as employed women, the same freedom of choice in deciding on how to allocate their time, or the same opportunities to experience achievement that come with formal employment. These differences in life experiences might be a partial reason for their relatively low mean self-efficacy score.

Table No. 03 Comparison of Life Satisfaction between Scheduled Caste Working and Non-Working Women

Dimension of Life Satisfaction	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Mental	Working	150	36.45	4.16	4.38	298	.000
	Non-Working	150	33.28	5.41			
Job	Working	150	28.34	3.59	7.80	298	.000
	Non-Working	150	24.68	4.37			
Social	Working	150	30.81	4.24	3.36	298	.000
	Non-Working	150	28.52	4.18			

Marital	Working	150	27.69	4.61	3.52	298	.000
	Non-Working	150	26.13	4.26			
Family	Working	150	14.73	2.43	3.70	298	.000
	Non-Working	150	13.94	2.16			
Total Life Satisfaction	Working	150	137.48	15.26	4.16	298	.000
	Non-Working	150	128.37	17.64			

Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Analysis and Interpretation: Table No. 03 shows the comparison between Scheduled Caste working and non-working women with regard to mental, job, social and marital life satisfaction and total life satisfaction. Independent-samples t-test was performed to compare the means of the two groups to assess the significance of the differences. As can be seen in the table, the results show that there are significant differences between working and non-working women in all aspects of life satisfaction at the 0.01 level.

The mean score for working women (M = 36.45, SD = 4.16) was higher than that of non-working women (M = 33.28, SD = 5.41) in respect of the mental dimension. The reported t value was 4.38 on 298 degrees of freedom which was significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .001$). This shows that working women are more mentally satisfied with respect to their counterparts. Their participation in work activities can help them feel more accomplished, independent, competent and psychologically connected. On the job dimension, working women's mean score was 28.34 (sd = 3.59) while non-working women's mean score was 24.68 (sd = 4.37). The reported t value was 7.80 $df = 298, p < .001$ and the difference between the two groups was statistically significant. This is a dimension that stands out a lot and could be related to the opportunities for occupational, financial, productive engagement and recognition that employment affords. Regarding the social dimension, working women obtained a higher mean score (M = 30.81, SD = 4.24) than non-working women (M = 28.52, SD = 4.18). The reported t-value was 3.36 and this was statistically significant at the .01 level. The study revealed that women who work are more socially satisfied than those who do not. This might be due to the fact that employment provides them with a greater opportunity for social interaction, networking, outside-the-house participation and social relationship development. Similarly, on the marital dimension, working women scored higher (M = 27.69, SD = 4.61) than non-working women (M = 26.13, SD = 4.26). The value of the reported t was 3.52 and was significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a significant difference in marital satisfaction in favour of working women. Working women's relatively higher marital satisfaction could be due to their increased economic participation, increased involvement in family decisions, and increased personal independence. In the family dimension, the mean score for working women was 14.73 (SD = 2.43) and 13.94 (SD = 2.16) for non-working women. The reported t value was 3.70 and this was significant at the 0.01 level. So, working women also reported a higher level of satisfaction with family life. Findings indicate that employment does not appear to have a negative effect on family satisfaction, but economic contribution, personal achievement and greater decision-making ability have a positive influence on women's perceptions of their family life. The mean scores for total life satisfaction suggest that Scheduled Caste working women (M = 137.48, SD = 15.26) had higher mean scores than non-working women (M = 128.37, SD = 17.64). Working women report overall life satisfaction that is 9.11 mean points higher. The table shows that this difference is statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .001$).

Thus, it can be said that life satisfaction of the Scheduled Caste working women is significantly higher than life satisfaction of the Scheduled Caste non-working women in terms of life satisfaction as a whole and also on the individual dimensions of mental life, job life, social life, marital life and family life. The results indicate that employment could be linked with improved economic independence, social exposure, recognition and opportunities for achievement and a sense of personal autonomy among Scheduled Caste women. They could have a positive impact on how they assess various components of life. The findings thus lend support to the belief that occupational participation can be an important factor linked with the subjective wellbeing and overall life satisfaction of the women of the Scheduled Caste.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the current investigation revealed that the self-efficacy and life satisfaction of the Scheduled Caste working women was comparatively better than the Scheduled Caste non-working women. The findings indicated that working might have a significant influence on enhancing the confidence, independence, decision making and psychological well-being of the women. Occupational responsibilities, interpersonal interactions, problem-solving situations, and achievement-oriented tasks are commonplace for working women. This may support them to build their confidence in being able to control and deal with challenges in a successful way, and thus enhance their self-efficacy. The study also revealed that working women were more satisfied with their life in various aspects. They may feel more satisfied in their mental well-being due to increased feeling of purpose, a sense of personal achievement, social recognition and active participation in meaningful activities.

Women may have the chance to utilize their talents and acquire new skills in the work place, as well as the feeling of competence. These experiences can have a positive impact on their emotional and psychological adjustment. From an occupational perspective, women who work seemed more satisfied, perhaps due to financial independence, participation in the job market, and recognition for their work. Employment can be even more significant for women belonging to Scheduled Tribes as it can give them greater economic security, social mobility and access to larger social institutions. Therefore, work can serve as a form of income, but also as a vital way to become empowered and develop. The results also indicated that the social satisfaction was higher among working women. They may also benefit from their participation in employment, gaining extended social networks and more opportunities to engage with other people in society, such as other employees. These interactions can help to enhance communication, confidence, and social engagement. By contrast, sometimes the non-working women may have fewer opportunities for interaction, outside the family sphere, depending on their social and family situation. The marital and family satisfaction was also higher for working women. This suggests that there is no automatic link between employment and family dissatisfaction. Instead, economic contribution, higher confidence and more involvement in family decision making can have positive impacts on family relationships. The extent of family satisfaction, however, may also rely on factors like spousal support, cooperation amongst family, and sharing of household duties. The general trend of results also suggests that self-efficacy and life satisfaction are related. Women with higher self-efficacy in coping with challenges are more likely to successfully deal with their personal, social, work and family lives. This feeling of ability can contribute to favourable views of life. Conversely, restricted opportunities to make decisions and to achieve things can diminish confidence and negatively impact life satisfaction. However, the results have to be interpreted in the broader socio-cultural context of the women of SCs. Employment status and the educational, income and family environments, locality, social support, and opportunities might affect their psychological well-being. Hence, the positive self-efficacy and life satisfaction of working women may be a result of the combination of employment, increased social exposure and increased personal resources.

The study overall shows the significance of employment and psychological empowerment for the improvement of well-being of SC women. The need to provide greater educational, vocational, social and skill development opportunities, for working and non-working women to enhance their confidence, autonomy, participation and improve quality of life is also highlighted.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the present study, it may be concluded that the employment status is one of the important factors related to self-efficacy and life satisfaction of the Scheduled Caste women. The results show that on average, working women rate their beliefs that they can do things better higher and are more satisfied with various life domains compared with non-working women. Occupational participation seems to offer opportunities for achievement, economic independence, social interaction, decision making and personal growth that can positively impact women's psychological functioning. The study also reveals the high correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Females who feel they are able to handle problems, tasks and deal with life's challenges are more likely to have a positive appraisal of their lives. Self-efficacy is thus an important psychological resource that can help to adjust, to be confident, to become autonomous, and to feel happy. Meanwhile, the results should not be taken to imply that the contribution of non-working women to their family or society is less. Their contribution to the household, care giving and family services is also important, but may not be as recognized economically or socially. The positive bias of psychological outcomes among working women indicates a need for increased opportunities to develop skills, social participation, decision making, community involvement and personal development. The study is significant as the Scheduled Caste women can suffer from a number of social and economic disadvantages. Enhancing their educational, vocational and psychological resources can help to increase their empowerment and their quality of life. Women's development programmes should thus include awareness raising, vocational training, counselling, confidence building and social support along with economic programmes.

As a whole, the study highlights that the betterment of the welfare of the Scheduled Caste women should be looked upon not only from the employment aspect but also from the psychological aspect. Self-efficacy and providing meaningful avenues for participation have the potential to contribute to increased life satisfaction, autonomy, social inclusion and development of both working and non-working SC women.

REFERENCES

[1] Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. W. H. Freeman.
[2] Caprara, G. V., & Steca, P. (2005). Self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of prosocial behavior conducive to life satisfaction across ages. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 24(2), 191–217. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.24.2.191.62271
[3] Datta, A., Endow, T., & Mehta, B. S. (2020). Education, caste and women's work in India. The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, 63(2), 387–406. doi:10.1007/s41027-020-00219-4
[4] Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. Psychological Bulletin, 125(2), 276–302. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.2.276
[5] Firdos, S., & Amanullah, M. (2017). Mental health and emotional maturity of Dalit working and non-working women. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 4(3), 99–108. https://doi.org/10.25215/0403.057

[6] Gao, Y., Hoshi, T., Nakayama, N., & Nakamura, T. (2009). Comparison of factors correlating life satisfaction between full-time working women and housewives in an urban city using covariance structural analysis. Nihon Koshu Eisei Zasshi, 56(3), 155–162. https://doi.org/10.11236/jph.56.3_155
[7] Gosavi, R. R., & Mohite, S. H. (2025). A study of self-efficacy and life satisfaction among urban and rural working women. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 13(2), 2652–2656.
[8] Jiloha, R. C. (2010). Deprivation, discrimination, human rights violation, and mental health of the deprived. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 52(3), 207–212. https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.70972
[9] Johri, A., & Anand, P. V. (2022). Life satisfaction and well-being at the intersections of caste and gender in India. Psychological Studies, 67(3), 317–331. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-022-00667-6
[10] Kabeer, N. (2012). Women's economic empowerment and inclusive growth: Labour markets and enterprise development (CDPR Discussion Paper No. 29/12). Centre for Development Policy and Research, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
[11] Kang, Y.-H. (2013). Health promoting lifestyle, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction of middle-aged women. Journal of the Korean Data Analysis Society, 15(2), 937–948.
[12] Kim, Y. (2024). Longitudinal relationships between self-efficacy and life satisfaction in women with physical disabilities. Journal of Educational Community Research and Practice, 6(3), 1–17.
[13] Lal, D. S., & Pavithra, M. (2022). A study on the relationship between personality, self-efficacy and life satisfaction. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 10(3).
[14] Luszczynska, A., Gutiérrez-Doña, B., & Schwarzer, R. (2005). General self-efficacy in various domains of human functioning: Evidence from five countries. International Journal of Psychology, 40(2), 80–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207590444000041
[15] Mal, P., & Saikia, N. (2024). Disparity by caste and tribe: Understanding women's empowerment and health outcomes in India. Social Science & Medicine, 354, 117074. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.117074
[16] Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. (2023). Annual report, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2022–23. Government of India.
[17] Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. (2024). Annual report, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2023–24. Government of India.
[18] Monika, Chand, P., & Negi, S. K. (2025). Bridging structural gaps: Determinants of economic and psychological empowerment among Dalit women in Himachal Pradesh. Contemporary Voice of Dalit. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/2455328X251381962
[19] Nathawat, S. S., & Mathur, A. (1993). Marital adjustment and subjective well-being in Indian-educated housewives and working women. The Journal of Psychology, 127(3), 353–358. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1993.9915570
[20] Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India. (2011). Primary census abstract data for Scheduled Castes, India and States/UTs: Census of India 2011. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
[21] Panwar, N., & Srivastava, S. (2019). Job v/s. home demands: A comparative study between life satisfaction, physical and mental stress in Indian housewives and employed women. Indian Journal of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy, 13(3), 68–73. https://doi.org/10.5958/0973-5674.2019.00094.7
[22] Poorbaferani, Z., Mazaheri, M. A., & Hasanzadeh, A. (2018). Life satisfaction, general self-efficacy, self-esteem, and communication skills in married women. Journal of Education and Health Promotion, 7, 173. https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_108_18
[23] Singh, S. K. (2014). Life satisfaction and stress level among working and non-working women. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 1(4). https://doi.org/10.25215/0104.015
[24] Yang, X., & Choi, B. K. (2022). Married women's career orientation and life satisfaction: Role of self-efficacy. Journal of Employment Counseling, 59(1), 2–16. https://doi.org/10.1002/joec.12174
[25] Zargar, S. B., Fatima, N., & Pareek, A. (2025). Self-efficacy and life satisfaction among employed women and housewives: A comparative investigation. Frontiers in Health Informatics, 13(5), 782–790.