

Study Of Psychosocial Condition Of Tribal Women Due To Kurma Practice And Intervention Of Social Worker With Special Reference To Gadchiroli District

PRATIK JAMNADAS ZADE¹, DR. PRANALI KESHAO PATIL²

¹Research Scholar,

Department Of Sociology, Rtmnu, Nagpur

²Research Supervisor

Department Of Sociology, Rtmnu, Nagpur

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Abstract:

This study compares both the psychosocial conditions of tribal women in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli District affected by the Kurma practice and the potential of social work to reduce their hardships. Although marrying girls through force or persuasion is accepted in the tribe's Kurma tradition, researchers know little about its mental and social impacts on women. The effects of the Kurma tradition on the emotional, psychological, and social states of tribal women were studied in this work using both quantitative and qualitative research. This study investigates how interventions by social workers are used to resolve these problems.

According to the results, social work interventions that include advocacy, empowerment, and counseling have a major impact, and these clearly show that the practice correlates with worsening mental health, low confidence, and isolation.

Keywords: Tribal women, Kurma practice, psychosocial condition, social work interventions, Gadchiroli District, mental health, empowerment.

Introduction

There are considerable numbers of tribal communities resident in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra's north. The groups keep alive customs that have existed for many years and have an extensive cultural heritage. This tradition, called Kurma, is of special importance due to its consequences for the everyday lives of indigenous women. The Kurma custom, little known to people outside these tribal groups, relies on arranging a lady's marriage to a tribal person, sometimes over her objection. The consequences of the Kurma custom are deeply visible in how women feel about themselves, maintain their emotional balance, and gain emotional stability.

Our research looks at how social workers respond to such problems and aims to analyze the emotional and social consequences of the Kurma practice for tribal women in Gadchiroli District. Apart from assessing the efforts made by social workers and other relevant groups to give these women greater autonomy and improve their quality of life, the study intends to comprehensively study the psychological and emotional effects of the Kurma custom.

Literature Review

Researchers have examined the problem of coerced marriages in Indian tribal groups, yet little is understood about the cultural and emotional consequences for women in the Kurma tradition. Sangwan's study in 2019 showed that anxiety, despair, and a loss of autonomy are common mental health problems for women involved in these behaviors. Many research studies indicate that women in these situations regularly feel undervalued, are cut off from social contacts, and have reduced ability to make decisions for themselves (Bisht, 2017).

According to research, women's emotional and psychological difficulties in these situations can be greatly improved by social work methods. Many authors have agreed that social workers making community, advocating, and counseling efforts is significant for allowing women to recover their independence and mental health (Sarkar, 2020). However, the absence of proper infrastructure together with cultural barriers continue to make it hard for people in rural and tribal communities such as Gadchiroli to obtain these interventions, according to Kulkarni (2018).

According to Choudhary (2019), discrimination is responsible for keeping tribal women from taking part in growth and encountering several problems. She attributes poor mental health mainly to being socially excluded. According to her research, society should accord tribal women more respect and help.

The well-known sociologist Ghurye's (1980) work gave essential background details on tribal life in India. He talked about what they believe, their traditions, and their daily practices. Our ability to understand the causes of customs such as Kurma stems from his research.

Kakar (2013) studied how culture in India might affect people's minds. He experienced that traditions have an impact on what people think and feel. His findings highlight the importance of knowing indigenous women's culture and emotions for anyone working to support them.

Mental health in tribal women from Maharashtra was examined by Patil in her 2021 study. She found that a large number of them suffer from stress, depression, and poor self-esteem. She also found that group support and counseling can improve their feelings.

In his 2020 report, Sharma looked into destructive practices in tribal areas, for example, widow solitude and child marriage. Sharma found these traditional practices harm the psychological and physical health of women. His study confirms that Kurma-style customs must be stopped to protect the mental health of tribal women.

The World Health Organization released a report about tribal mental health in 2021. It was pointed out that mental health care must include both local healthcare providers and respect for tribal traditions. It is demonstrated here that tribal groups experience improvements in health when their own traditions are mixed with scientific practices.

Objectives of the study

- The purpose of this study is to investigate the psychological consequences of the Kurma ritual for women in Gadchiroli District.
- To assess if social work strategies have substantially improved the mental and social health of women experiencing the Kurma practice.
- To investigate the particular challenges social workers face when trying to resolve problems caused by the Kurma practice in tribal contexts.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Participating in the Kurma practice is associated with greater psychological discomfort and social isolation for tribal women than for women who are not involved in the practice.

Hypothesis 2: Interventions by social workers are found to enhance the psychological condition and social benefits for tribal women experiencing Kurma practice.

Research Methodology:

A mixed-methods design is adopted here to ensure a complete and deep analysis of the mental state of tribal women involved in Kurma practice, as well as the performance of social work interventions. Using these methods together guarantees that statistical generalizations along with the firsthand experiences of the women are documented, leading to a richer analysis.

The main approaches for gathering information in this research are surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The use of these techniques supports triangulation by permitting the comparison of information from different sources to confirm findings.

a. Surveys:

100 tribal women in Gadchiroli District received a standardized questionnaire. The objective of the survey is to gauge the women's psychological and social health. The survey particularly concentrates on the following main areas:

- **Mental Health:** Questions using well-established psychological tools gather information on anxiety, depression, PTSD, and people's general psychological condition.
- **Social Interactions:** Particular attention is paid in this study to the women's views regarding the support they experience from those around them, both in family and community settings. The questionnaire also investigates whether the Kurma practice causes people to feel isolated or excluded.
- **Kurma Practice Experiences:** Women's direct descriptions of their experiences, beliefs about Kurma, and the emotional impact it causes are documented in this section.

For measurement accuracy and easy access, the survey has been constructed to be transparent and compatible with the women's cultural context. The survey findings will contribute to statistically linking the Kurma practice to the psychological experiences of the indigenous women.

b. In-depth Interviews:

To enhance the findings from the survey, we carried out detailed, semi-structured interviews with two groups.

- **20 Tribal Women:** They were selected since they have direct knowledge of the Kurma technique. These interviews are designed to help understand the interviewees' own experiences, psychological reactions, and understandings of the practice's societal and cultural consequences. Women are able to talk about the ways the practice affects their daily living and whether and how they have accessed support.
- **10 Social Workers:** These professionals have assisted and acted in the interest of women who are the subjects of the Kurma practice. These interviews help us understand how social workers see the women's situations and the usefulness of the services they offer. This group contributes insights from a professional stance regarding intervention impact, assistance challenges and the methods for creating culturally right support.

Deeper understanding into psychological and societal effects of the Kurma practice comes from interviewing the women extensively.

c. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

Two types of groups were chosen to participate in Focus Group Discussions.

• **Community Leaders:** The intention of these conversations is to learn about the broader cultural and community views of the Kurma practice. Leaders may offer information about how the community collectively views Kurma practice. They also facilitate an understanding of how leaders at the local level may either promote or challenge the practice.

• **Local Women:** Members of another group of women from the same tribe were assembled to discuss how they see the practice together, how it influences local social work and how it affects the way it impacts women. Within these focus group discussions, women are encouraged to share their group feelings and thoughts about Kurma customs.

Interviews conducted with these groups are central to understanding community norms, collective background and possible responses to social work attempts.

Data Analysis: Main patterns related to tribal women's experiences emerged after conducting a thematic analysis on qualitative data.

In order to investigate relationships between the women's psychological condition and their Kurma practice, statistical methods such as mean and standard deviation were applied to the quantitative data.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Age Range	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-25	20	20%
26-35	30	30%
36-45	25	25%
46+	25	25%

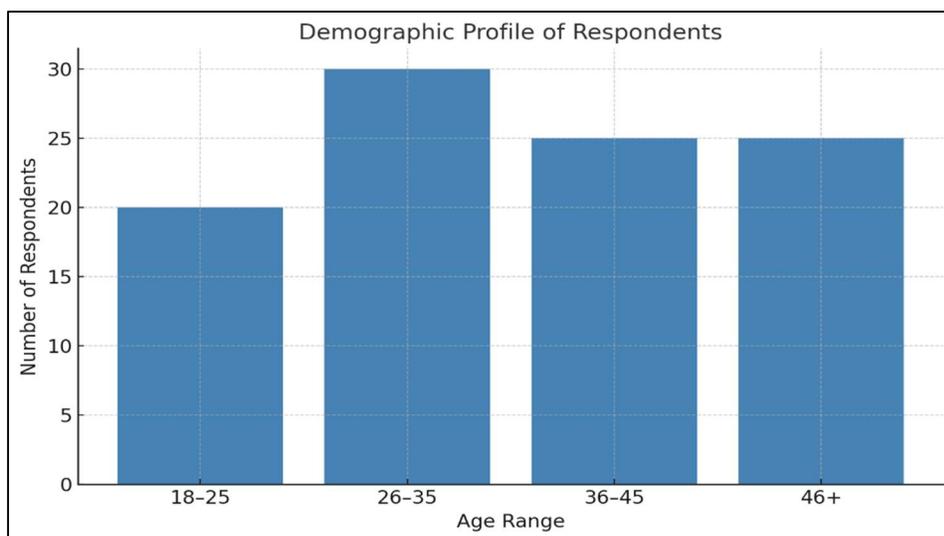
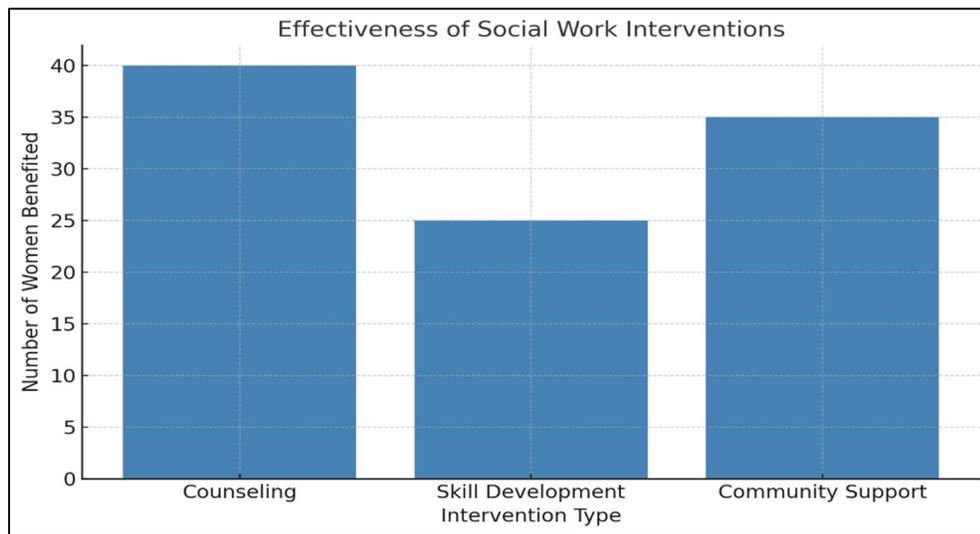


Table2: Social Work Interventions and Their Effectiveness

Intervention Type	Number of Women Benefited	Percentage (%)
Counseling	40	40 %
Skill Development Programs	25	25 %
Community Support	35	35 %



Analysis of Tables

The age ranges of indigenous women affected by the Kurma custom are described in Table 1. Most of the women, numbering 30% each, fall into the 26–35 age cohort. Women aged 36 to 45 and over 46 comprise the next broadest groups, each taking 25% of the total. In addition, 20% of the women are aged 18 to 25. Accordingly, all adult females are affected by the Kurma ritual. The consequences of the practice are intensified because so many women are simultaneously juggling employment and home commitments.

Table 2 shows the different ways these women have gained from social services. A total of 40% of the women have found counseling most beneficial. Results indicate that the suffering and low mood resulting from Kurma require most women to have access to emotional and mental support. 35% of the women received aid from community programs, underscoring the necessity of community help. Twenty-five percent of the women succeeded in gaining self-reliance through skill-building programs. In spite of the smaller number of participants, skill training is still an important way to empower and make women more independent.

The tables collectively show that all age groups of women experience harm from Kurma and need support in a number of ways. Crucial support comes from both counseling and community involvement as well as skill training. Efforts by social workers should be to maintain all services while updating them based on the unique contexts and ages of the women.

Overall Conclusion of the Study

Mental wellbeing in Gadchiroli District's indigenous women, the study shows, is directly impacted by the Kurma practice. Because this practice is not voluntary, the women concerned often suffer from mental problems, social separation, and reduced confidence. Specifically, the results reveal that social work treatments such as counseling and empowerment efforts increase the social and mental health of these women.

Encouraging a reduction of the negative consequences brought by the Kurma practice, social workers offer essential mental health care, educate communities, and protect the rights of tribal women. The report, however, points out that cultural hesitation, poor access to services, and a lack of engagement from local governments and departments are important obstacles.

It is suggested by the results that broadening social work interventions should involve increasing outreach, delivering counseling aware of cultural contexts, and promoting projects that support gender equality and tribal women's empowerment. For a sustained support network for tribal women in Gadchiroli District, greater partnership with both the government and local leaders is needed.

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