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## **Social Development of Young Children Belonging to Broken Families - A Study**

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### **Abstract**

*Social development of young children plays an important role in their total process of personality development. Social development is a continuous process which needs a proper home environment. Joint families are considered as ideal that they can provide a better environment for social development of young children. But due to impact of globalisation, westernisation and changes of work culture, the popularity of nuclear families increases day by day. For proper social development of young children need a better home environment with good relationship among each and every members of the family. Broken family environment usually unable to provide a proper home environment for social development of their young children. In the modern day context, number of broken families increases day by day where parents are separated due to death, divorce, remarriage, or unavoidable situations. Young children who expect parental love and care with constant physical and emotional support from their beloved parents are deprived in broken families. This problem is more serious in nuclear broken families than joint broken families. Therefore it is an urgent need to study the problems of social development of such children from various angles. The investigator has selected greater Guwahati as the area of the study where 288 broken families has selected as sample family having school going young children of early childhood. For collecting primary data, the investigator has prepared self-made questionnaire for parents and teachers. Observation method has been used for collecting required data from those sample young children. Statistical methods have been used to analyse the collected data.*

**Key Words:** *Social development, Broken Family, Early childhood, physical support, emotional support, joint family and nuclear family.*

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**Introduction:** Social development is a continuous process covering the total life span of an individual. Young children of early childhood need a proper, healthy and peaceful home environment which may nourish the qualities effective for social adjustment and maintain a good relationship inside as well as outside the home environment. Home is considered as the first 'training centre' of social behaviour where parents play their role as first socialising agent for their children. The customs, traditions, faith and beliefs, norms of our society are first learnt within the family. Parental love & care, their attitude and emotional attachment with themselves as well as towards their children all are the important factors for personality development of early childhood. Within the home environment, the child acquires many of the social patterns, habits and manners which determine his future adjustments. In general, young children's attitude towards people, and life in general, are patterned at their home. It is the home that gives the child his first understanding of the meaning of attitudes such as truthfulness, honesty, sympathy, courage, punctuality, fair dealing, respect for authority and consideration for others. Parents and other elders at home have a direct impact on the development of habitual expressions of the child. Any faulty parent child relationship may lead to maladjustment of the child specially in broken family where children are deprived from proper emotional and physical support from their parents. In such a home environment where their needs are partially fulfilled or unfulfilled due to broken relationship between father and mother, their effective natural nourishment of social values are not totally possible.

**Review of Related Literature:** Nicholson, J., and Mathew, S., (2005) undertook a study about family structure and its impact on child's behavioural characteristics. The title of the study was—"Randomized controlled trial of behavioural family intervention for the treatment of child behavioural problems in broken families." The study revealed that the family structure is most significant predictors of child's behaviour characteristics. Children from broken families often result in feeling of anxiety and loss of control which may manifest into behaviour problems and adjustment problems. Broken families do experience greater conflict than other families resulting behaviour problems and lower self-esteem among their children.

Lidhoo, K., L. (2007), conducted a study to find out the relationship between broken family environment and socio- psychological development of secondary school children. He conducted his study on 300 hundred adolescent students and data and information were collected from them by using questionnaire and interview techniques. The study was cross sectional in nature. The main findings of the study was that home environment plays a significant role in socio- psychological development of adolescent students. Parental love and care as well as their relationship with children act as the driving force for positive socio- psychological development among them. Adolescent students of broken families struggle with various problems of adjustment within and outside the home environment.

**Significance of the Study:** Family is known to be the most important and potent part of children's social network. The total character of the home environment is responsible for early socialisation of a child. Parents must manage the basic education of their children in emotional, personal and social matters. Young children who are raised democratically in normal home atmosphere are active and socially outgoing. But the problem of social development associated with those children who belonging to the broken families is really a very serious matter because in our society, number of broken families increases day by day and so the problem of social development also among such students at an alarming rate. Therefore the investigator has decided to select this area of study to discuss how broken family environment influence on social development of young children.

**Statement of the Problem:** In this high tech. globalized society, the number of broken families increases day by day. Therefore the investigator has decided to study the influence of broken families on social development of young children and the present study was entitled as "Social Development of young children belonging to broken families - a study"

**Objectives of the Study:**

The objectives of the present study are -

1. To study the impact of broken families on social development of young children.
2. To make a comparative study on social development of young children coming from joint broken families vs. Nuclear broken families.
3. To make a comparative study of social development of boys and girls.

Limitations of the study: The first limitation relates to the area under study. Greater Guwahati of Assam has been taken as the field of study.

The second limitation relates to the number of sample children. Only two hundred and eighty eight children of early childhood coming from broken families were selected for the study.

**Operational Definitions:-**

**Social Development:** Social development means acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social expectations. It is a continuous process covering the total life span of an individual.

**Broken Family:** Broken Family is a family where the parents (mother and father) of a child or children have split up and no longer share a single family relationship or live. Separately due to divorce, remarriage, death or unavoidable circumstances.

**Early childhood :** Early childhood is considered as the foundation period for social development of an individual. This period begins at the end of the babyhood periods. Educators refer to the early childhood years as the pre-school age and psychologists as pre- gang age.

**Physical support:** Physical support means fulfilment of material needs of a child or children for their growth and development by their parents.

**Emotional support:** Parental Love & care, close attachment with them, sharing of their ideas & problems with parents, a feeling of security and self-contentment of children leads to self-integration as well as emotional adjustment at home and outside the home environment.

**Joint Family:** The joint family unit is that in which the adults and children of more than two generations are closely combined. The family in this system extends vertically over three or more generations. In a joint family the grandfather, grandmother, the cousins and the real brothers and sisters all live under one roof. The eldest in the family exercises control and is respected by all.

**Nuclear Family:** The nuclear family is a small unit consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children. In the nuclear household the parents are sole authorities and emotional relations among family members are concentrated and intense.

**Methodology:** The present study fall under the descriptive survey method. Due to the nature of study, this study also falls under the category of casual comparative studies where an attempt has made to observe the inter-relationship between broken families and social development of children of early childhood. Naturalistic observation technique applied in studying the social development of young children.

**Sample selection procedure:** By using purposive sample method the investigator with the help of her friends, colleagues, relatives tried to identify the broken families having school going children of early childhood. From these families a total of 288 children were drawn out by using the random sampling method.

**Tools used for data collection:** Naturalistic observation technique applied in studying the social development of young children. For the present study the investigator has prepared a self-made questionnaire for parents, teachers and for herself. The required information has been collected from the parents and teachers of sample children by using questionnaire and interview technique.

**Sample Area:** Greater Guwahati of Kamrup District, Assam.

**No. of Sample children :** 288 children of early childhood hood period belonging to broken family.

**Age group of sample children:** The age of sample children are 3-6 years.

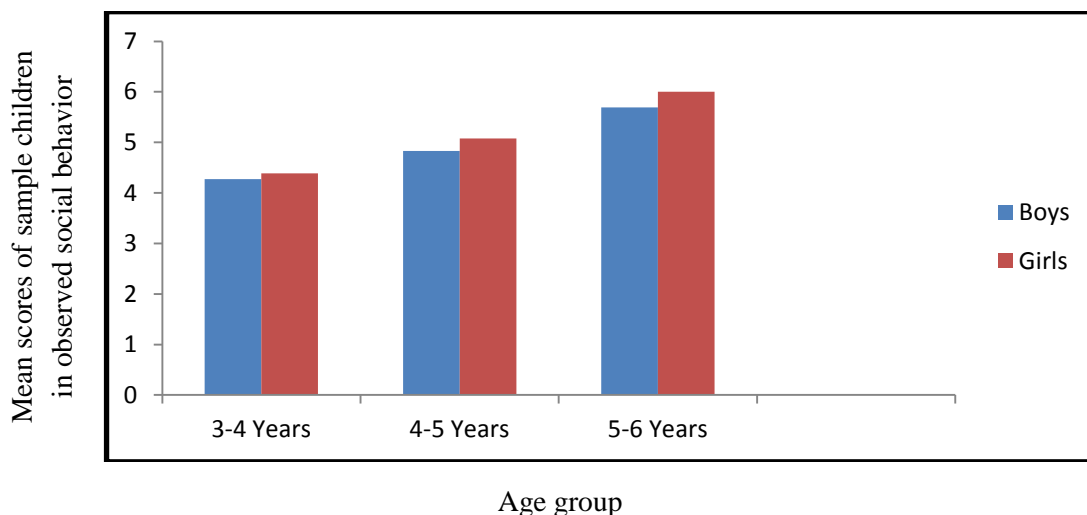
**Aspect of observation :** There are so many factors are related to social development of early childhood period. In this present study the investigator has concentrate only on five aspects of social development of young children. These are – cooperation, friendship, competition, social manners and aggression. These social behaviour of young children are observed by three different angles. Parent, teachers and the investigator herself observe their social behaviour.

**Analysis of Collected Data :** Data were collected from the sample children of 3-6 years of broken families. Collected data were compiled by using statistical analysis. The mean scores of different behavioural aspects of children for joint broken and nuclear broken families evaluated separately by three different evaluators namely teachers, parents and investigator. The following tables with graphs shows the impact of broken families on social development of young children, a comparative study of social behaviour of children belonging to joint broken vs. nuclear broken as well as boys and girls.

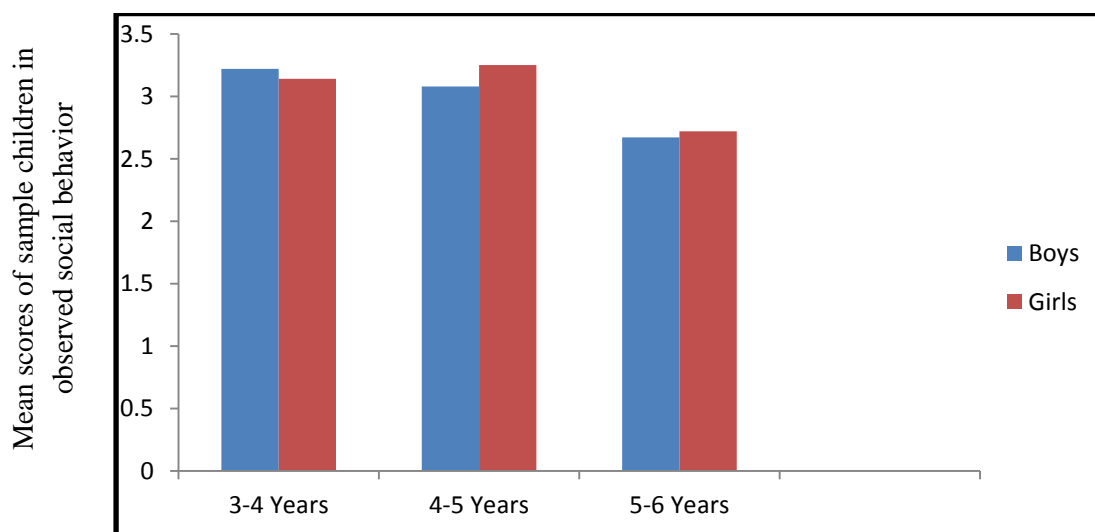
**Table No.1**  
Mean scores of sample children in observed social behavior

Name of the observed social behavior	Types of family	Sex	Age group								
			3-4 years			4-5 years			5-6 years		
			Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator
Co-Operation	Joint Broken (JB)	Boys (B)	4.00	4.75	4.08	4.75	5.00	4.75	5.58	5.83	5.67
		Girls (G)	4.17	4.67	4.33	5.22	5.25	5.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
	Nuclear Broken (NB)	Boys (B)	3.08	3.58	3.00	3.00	3.25	3.00	2.58	2.67	2.75
		Girls (G)	3.00	3.42	3.00	3.00	3.67	3.08	2.67	2.97	2.58

Graphical representation of Table No.1  
GRAPH OF JOINT BROKEN FAMILIES



GRAPH OF JOINT BROKEN FAMILIES



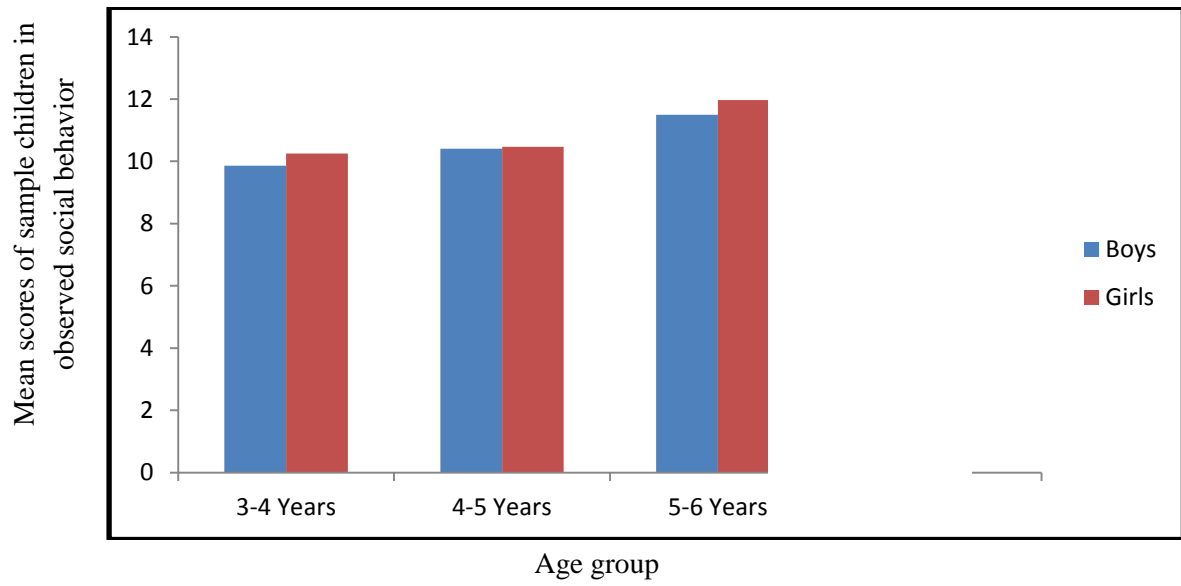
**Analysis of Table No.1:** From table no. 1 it is found that the children of joint broken families scores better than the children of joint nuclear families in co-operative behaviour. It is observed that with the advancement of age the children of joint broken families shows better social behaviour. It is also observed that the girls social behaviour are better than boys in cooperative behaviour except the scores of 3-4 years children of nuclear broken families. The above graphs of joint broken and nuclear broken families shows a comparative study on cooperative behaviour of young children.

**Table No.2**  
Mean scores of sample children in observed social behavior

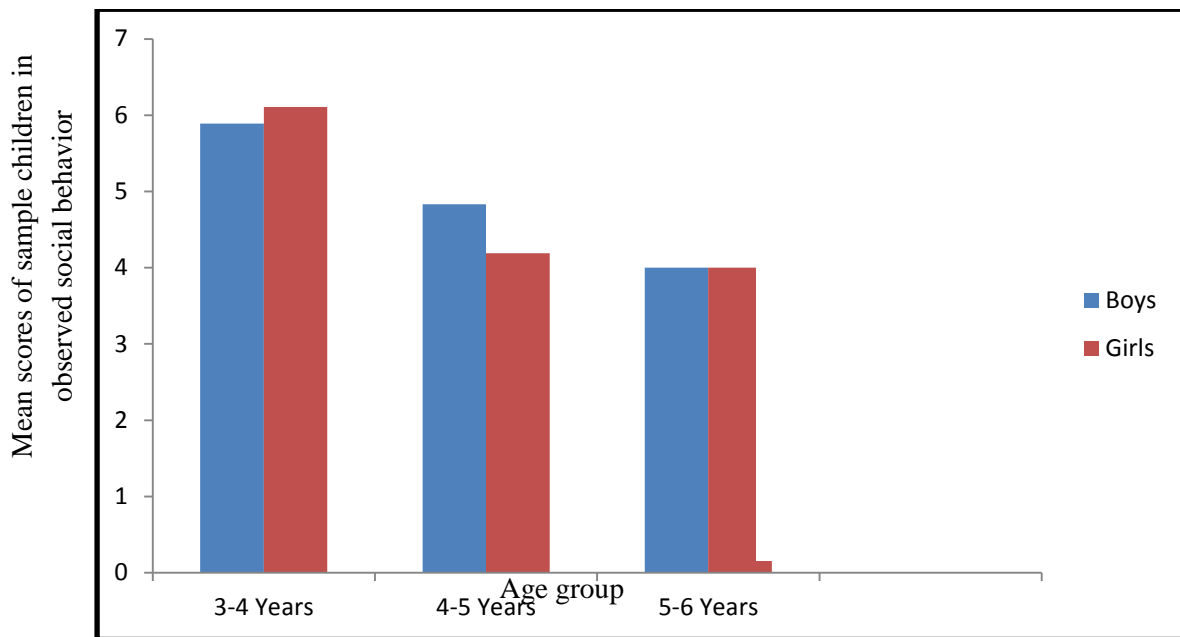
Name of the observed social behavior	Types of family	Sex	Age group								
			3-4 years			4-5 years			5-6 years		
			Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator
Friendship	Joint Broken (JB)	Boys (B)	9.75	10.08	9.75	10.33	10.58	10.33	11.50	11.58	11.42
		Girls (G)	10.17	10.33	10.25	10.25	10.83	10.83	12.00	12.00	11.92
	Nuclear Broken (NB)	Boys (B)	6.00	5.67	6.00	4.75	5.00	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00
		Girls (G)	6.00	6.33	6.00	4.25	4.33	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

**Analysis of Table No. 2:** From table no. 2, it is found that children of joint broken families scores better than children of nuclear broken families in maintaining good friendship with other children and other persons within and outside the home environment. Girls of joint broken families' scores better than their counterparts. In nuclear broken families boys scores better than girls in each age group and in 5-6 years of age group both boys and girls obtained equal scores. It is observed that boys and girls of nuclear broken families are less friendly as compared with the children of joint broken families. With the advancement of age, children of joint broken families scores gradually higher but a different picture shows in case of nuclear broken families. The children of nuclear families scores gradually (as increases their age) lesser means less friendly than the children of joint broken families. The following graphs shows the comparative picture of girls and boy's social behaviour and year wise scores of children belonging to joint broken and nuclear broken families on the social aspects of 'friendship'. Following graphs of joint broken and nuclear broken families shows the comparative picture of social development of children on the observed aspect of 'Friendship'.

GRAPH OF JOINT BROKEN FAMILIES



GRAPH OF NUCLEAR BROKEN FAMILIES

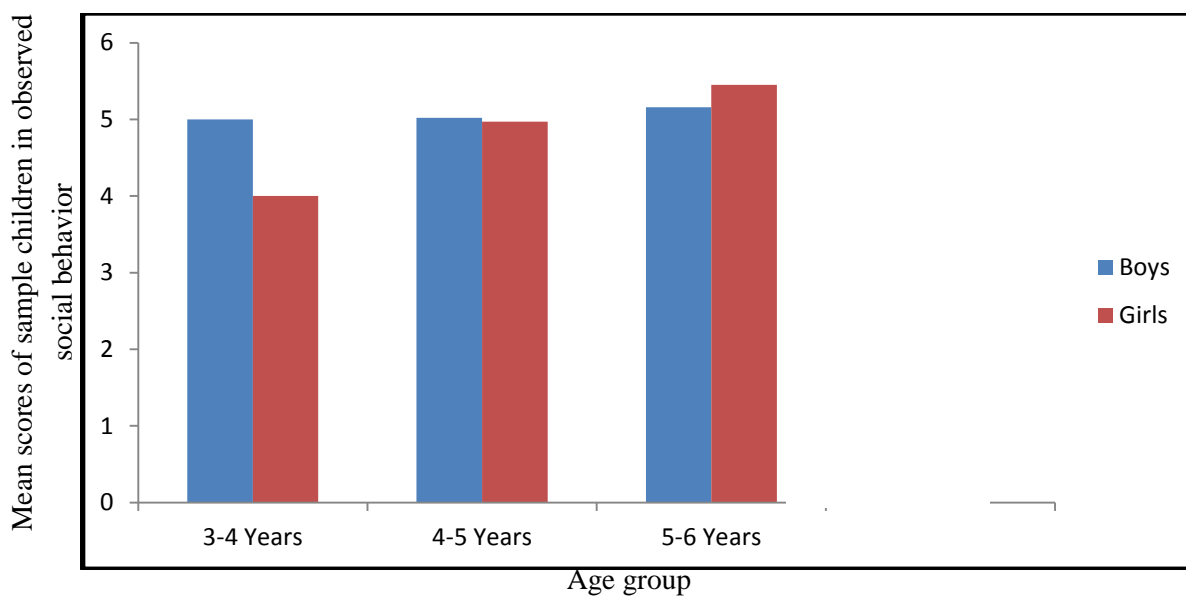


**Table No.3**

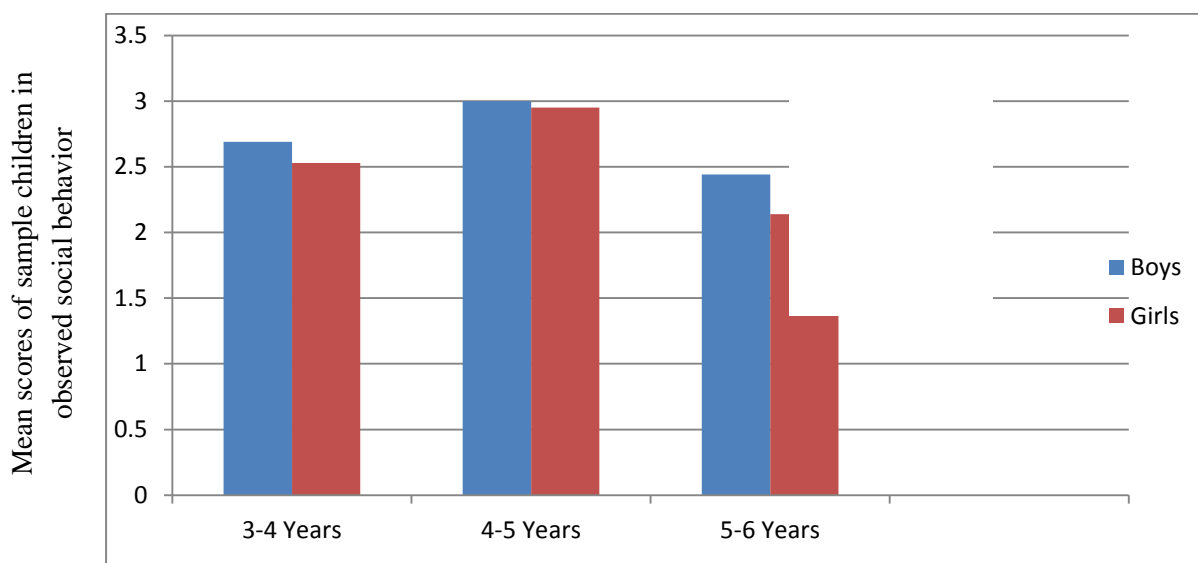
Name of the observed social behavior	Types of family	Sex	Age group								
			3-4 years			4-5 years			5-6 years		
			Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator
Competition	Joint Broken (JB)	Boys (B)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.08	5.00	5.58	5.67	5.58
		Girls (G)	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.92	5.00	5.50	5.42	5.42
	Nuclear Broken (NB)	Boys (B)	2.58	2.92	2.58	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.33	2.58	2.42
		Girls (G)	2.58	2.58	2.42	2.92	3.00	2.92	2.08	2.17	2.17

On the basis of data obtained in the Table No. 3 following graphs are drawn

**GRAPH OF JOINT BROKEN**



GRAPH OF NUCLEAR BROKEN FAMILIES



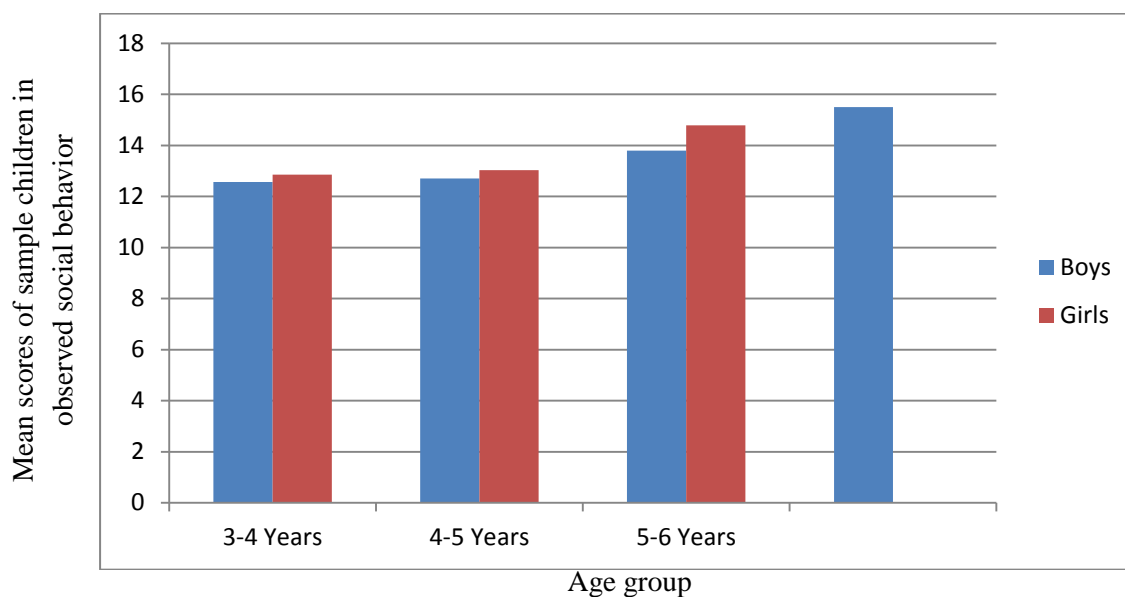
**Analysis of the Table No. 3:** From table no.3, it is found that the children of both joint and nuclear broken families scores very poor in competitive behaviour . In comparison to the children of nuclear broken families ,children of joint broken families scores better and it is observed that they are more competitive in nature . In comparison to boys and girls ,boys are more competitive than their counterparts. In joint broken families, competitive nature of children increases with advancement of their age.

Table No.4

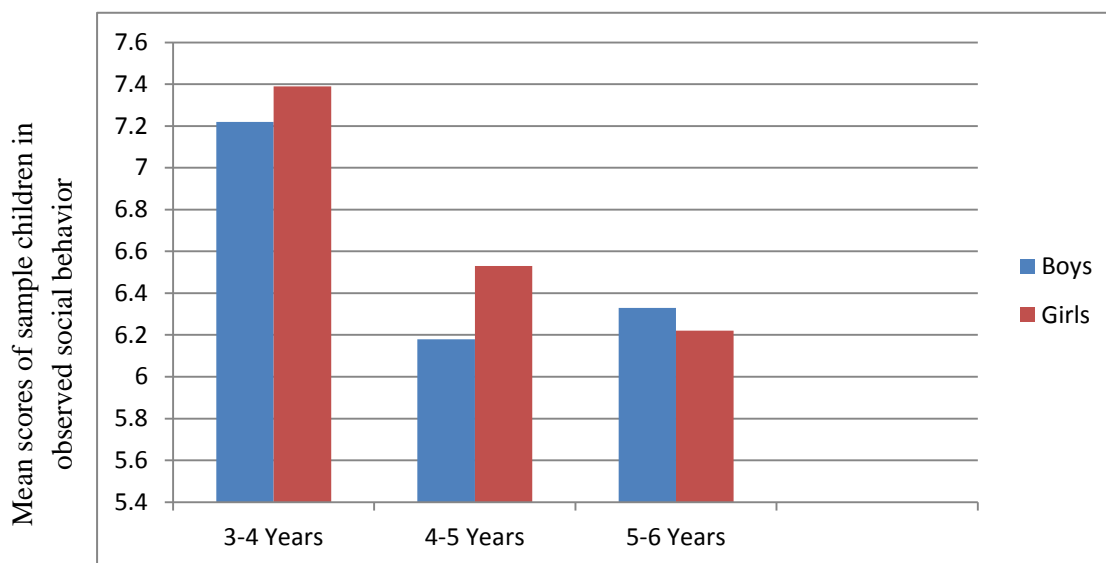
Name of the observed social behavior	Types of family	Sex	A s s e s s o r								
			3-4 years			4-5 years			5-6 years		
			Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator
Social Manners	Joint Broken (JB)	Boys (B)	12.67	12.58	12.42	12.67	12.67	13.75	13.75	13.92	13.75
		Girls (G)	12.92	12.92	12.75	13.00	13.08	13.00	14.75	14.75	14.83
	Nuclear Broken (NB)	Boys (B)	7.25	7.08	7.33	6.17	6.33	6.08	6.25	6.42	6.33
		Girls (G)	7.25	7.50	7.42	6.42	6.67	6.50	6.25	6.17	6.25



GRAPH OF JOINT BROKEN FAMILIES



GRAPH OF NUCLEAR BROKEN FAMILIES



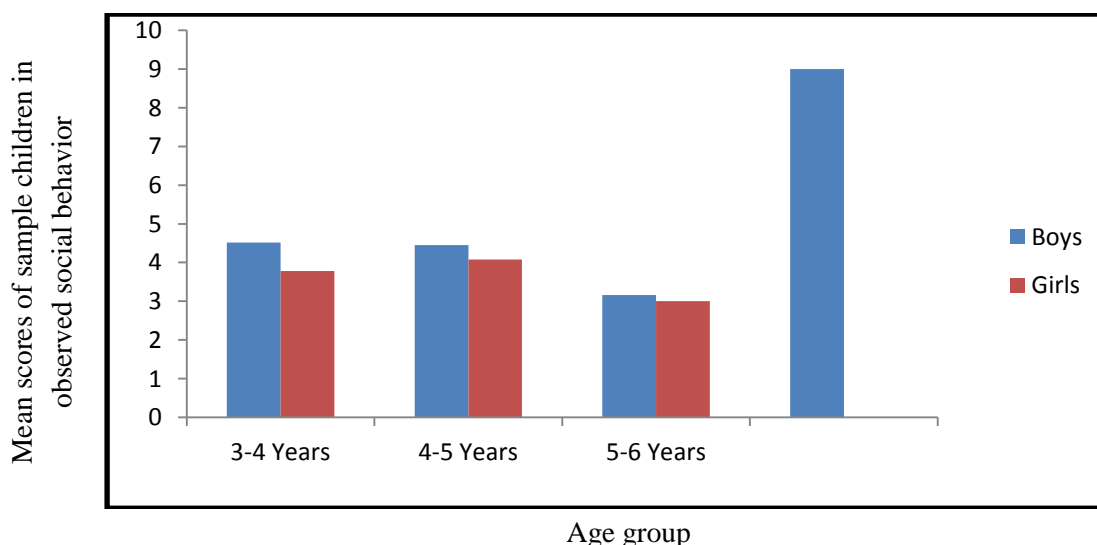
**Analysis of the Table No.4:** From table no. 4 , it is found that children of joint broken families scores better than the children of nuclear broken families. With the advancement of age , children of joint broken families gradually increase their scores and exhibit good social manners where children of nuclear broken families unable to maintain their consistency in social manners with the advancement of their age. Girl children of joint broken families scores better than boys in maintaining good social manners with others.

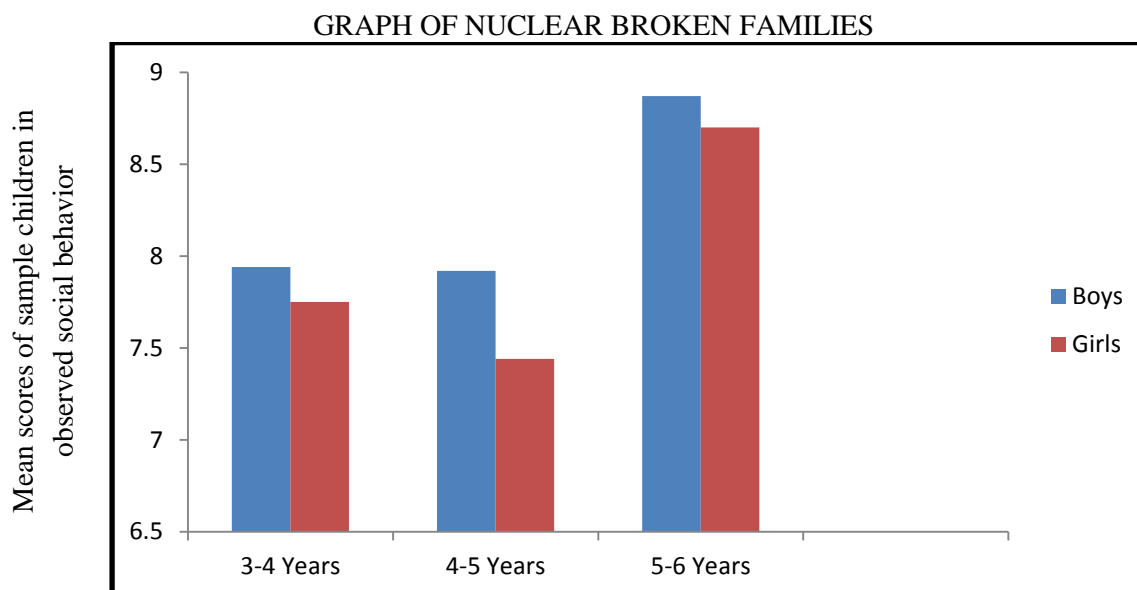
**Table No.5**

Name of the observed social behavior	Types of family	Sex	Age group								
			3-4 years			4-5 years			5-6 years		
			Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator	Teachers	Parent	Investigator
Aggression	Joint Broken (JB)	Boys (B)	4.50	4.33	4.75	4.50	4.42	4.42	3.25	3.08	3.17
		Girls (G)	3.92	3.58	3.83	4.17	4.08	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
	Nuclear Broken (NB)	Boys (B)	8.00	7.83	8.00	7.92	7.92	7.92	8.83	9.00	8.83
		Girls (G)	7.92	7.42	7.92	7.33	7.42	7.58	8.67	8.75	8.67

**Analysis of the Table no5:** From Table no. 5, it is found that children of joint broken families scores lesser than the children of nuclear broken families which indicate that the children of joint broken families are less aggressive than the children of nuclear broken families. Among the children of both the families ,it is found that girls are less aggressive as compared to their counterparts in each broken (joint & nuclear ) families. In joint broken families children are gradually obtained lesser scores means their aggressive behaviour decreases with the advancement of their age. On the contrary, aggressiveness increases with the advancement of age among the children of nuclear broken families. It is observed that due to the less amount of emotional support from parent , children of nuclear broken families are found more aggressive as compared with the children of joint broken families where children got scope of self expression among their relatives. Following graphs shows a comparative study on aggressive behaviour of boys and girls belonging to joint broken families and nuclear broken families.

**GRAPH OF JOINT BROKEN FAMILIES**





### Findings of the study:

On the basis of the results and observations the following findings were drawn from this study:

1. Joint broken family environment has a more conducive and positive impact on the social development of young children than the nuclear broken family.
2. In joint broken family, social development of children increases with the advancement of their chronological age.
3. In joint broken family, girls were found to be more cooperative, friendly and well social mannered than their counterparts (the Boys).
4. Boys were having more competitive qualities than girls.
5. Children of nuclear broken families were more aggressive than the children of joint broken families.
6. Boys were more aggressive than the girls in each broken families.

**Conclusion:** Social development of human being is known to be a very delicate process which begins right from the birth and continues throughout the life span of an individual. Childhood period is said to be the foundation period for social development of an individual where home environment plays a significant role. Parental love and care & their guidance and constant supervision help in moulding the personality of young children. But in broken family such type of ideal home environment difficult to managed for their proper social development. Within the broken families joint broken families are found more conducive for social development of young children than nuclear broken families. There is a very little scope for self-expression of children for their proper social development in nuclear broken families. It is well recognized that a favourable home environment is likely to produce a child with favourable social attitudes. Within the home environment, the child acquires many of the social patterns, habits and manners which determine his future adjustments. Young children's attitude towards people, and life in general are patterned at their home. Therefore it is an urgent need to understand by each parents the importance of good democratic home environment for social development of their young children .

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