



## A Study on Adverse Effect of Broken Families on Children's Well-being

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### Abstract

*Family structure affects the emotional and psychological development of children, and whenever family breakdowns such as separation, divorce, or conflict between two parents occur, children are usually thrown into navigating complex landscapes that lead to worst developmental outcomes. This research seeks to investigate harmful effects brought by broken families to the well-being of children about stability of their emotions, mental health, social relationship, and academic performance. These children are often more predisposed to emotional problems, psychological disorders, and social isolation-the effects of which extend to their academic prowess and social relationships. This study points to the need for interventions and interventions that will help children weather the emotional fallout of family breakup. Findings highlight children of dysfunctional families are most affected in various contexts such as emotional distress, anxiety, and depression with problems of attachment that greatly challenge healthy social relationship and also the ability to deal with behavioral needs. Instability associated with family breakdown often leads to decrease in academic performance and participation in school.*

**Keywords:** Broken Family, Developmental Outcomes, Family Structure.

### 1. Introduction

Family is the most basic social unit that provides the initial environment in which a child grows. The stability of the unit and the operation of that unit have a deep influence on the psychological, emotional, and social growth of children. It is only when family breakdowns arise in the form of separation, divorce, or persistent parent-to-parent conflict that children are thrust into complex landscapes of emotions. Such disturbances could lead to adverse effects in development, especially as regards to emotional security, psychological well-being, social bonds, and academic performance. Furthermore, the emotional outcomes of divorce might manifest in a variety of ways. Children whose families are broken or dysfunctional might become more prone to emotional distress and anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Effects are not limited to their mental health but extend to other key areas of their lives, such as the ability to develop and maintain healthy social

relationships, coping with behavioral challenges, and performing academically. The instability and uncertainty associated with family breakdown often disrupt a child's sense of security, as a result of which there would be reduced participation and achievement in school, thus compounding the negative effects. The paper seeks to establish the destructive patterns of family compositions on the welfare of children, particularly their emotional and mental health, social contact, and academic achievement. In doing so, this research highlights the need to address specific interventions designed to counter the long-term consequences of family dysfunctionality. It is important that children are equipped with support systems for navigating such challenges, which in the end helps keep the children resilient and therefore healthier in emotional and social development despite the difficulties of family instability. The study shall, therefore, be able to

contribute to an even deeper understanding of how broken families affect children through the analysis of various psychological, social, and academic outcomes. In doing so, it seeks to guide future interventions and policies that can work in the interests of children in dealing with the emotional-psychological effects of family breakdown [1-3].

## **2. Definition**

### **2.1. Broken Family**

A broken family is generally defined as that family unit having break down due to the separation, divorce, or death of a parent. It may also be described as a situation whereby the family is not operating well due to conflict and poor relations amongst its members, or by neglect or other forms of social and emotional problems. Relations within such families are usually broken, and relationships are disrupted, in the case of children, this can give rise to a great deal of psychological, emotional, and social stress.

### **2.2. Emotional Development**

Emotional development in children is the process through which they learn to recognize, understand, express, and control emotions. This further incorporates a child's capacity for healthy relationships, empathy, and social interaction. The entire development dimension determines how a child will handle stress, conflict, and emotional tests throughout their lifetime.

### **2.3. Psychological Development**

Psychological development in children refers to the mental, emotional, and social capabilities that evolve through the growth of a child's mind from infancy to adolescence. This defines how children learn the ways of thinking, feeling, and relationships with the world around them. It relies more on genetics, environment, social interaction, and experience with caregivers. [4]

### **2.4. Social Relevance of the Study**

The study is very relevant in today's society since family breakdowns frequently take place due to divorce, separation, or conflict. Children tend to go through emotional stress and psychological problems and face social relationships that might impact their academic performances and welfare.

## **3. Review of Literature**

In this paper "The impact of family structure on the

health of children: Effects of divorce" investigates that Divorce and parental separation are damaging to children, families, the economy, and society as a whole, and this paper outlines these adverse effects. While recognizing that not all children or parents will experience every negative consequence listed below, given the seriousness of these adverse outcomes and the magnitude of the issue, it is important that pediatricians support public policies that promote the health and preservation of the child's biologic family. In the study "Psychological Well-Being in Broken Home Students" mentions that according to Willis (2013), the formation of a happy family involves several factors that are interrelated with one another, namely (1) Good communication: Open and honest communication between family members is an important factor for creating strong bonds and strengthening family relationships; (2) Mutual respect: Family members need to value and respect each other. This will help create a positive and mutually supportive family environment; (3) Maintaining trust: Trust is an important factor in forming healthy and happy relationships in families. Each family member must maintain trust in one another and avoid behavior that could undermine that trust; (4) Handle conflict well: Conflict is normal in families. However, it is important for family members to learn to deal well with conflict and not let conflict ruin family relationships; (5) Prioritizing time together: Prioritizing time together as a family is important for creating strong bonds and forming fond memories; and (6) Maintaining a balance between individual and family needs: Each member of the family has individual needs that need to be accommodated, but it is important to maintain a balance between individual needs and the needs of the family as a whole. Santrock (2011) states that broken or separated families have a significant psychological impact on children up to student age. Some of the psychological impacts that can occur include (1) Emotional disturbances: Children from broken home families tend to experience emotional disturbances such as anxiety, depression, and emotional instability. This can happen because of feelings of insecurity and uncertainty experienced by children; (2) Low self-esteem: Children from broken

home families may feel inferior because they feel that their family's condition is not the norm or standard recognized by society. This can have an impact on a child's social and cognitive development; (3) Disturbances in interpersonal relationships: Children from broken home families may have difficulty forming healthy and well-established interpersonal relationships. This can happen because children lack experience and skills in building relationships with other people; and (4) Risk of unhealthy behavior: Children from broken homes tend to be more prone

to developing unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and using illegal drugs. This can happen because children are looking for ways to overcome the insecurities and uncertainties they experience.

#### 4. Methodology

##### 4.1. Aim of The Study

The aim of the study is to investigate how effects of broken families cause emotional, psychological, social development problems as well as poor academic performance among children.

**Table 1 Finds of The Study**

S:NO	FACTORS	MEDIUM	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Age	12-18 years	54	75
2	Gender	Female	42	71.7
3	Educational qualification	Below +2	44	73.3
4	Marital status	Unmarried	60	100
5	Type of family	Nuclear family	42	71.7
6	Residential background	Semi urban	15	38.3
7	Family income	Rs.25000 to Rs.60000	41	58.3

##### 4.2. Objective of The Study

- To examine the emotional and psychological effects that family breakups have on children.
- To assess the effect of broken families on the social relationship and ability to form healthy attachments.
- To measure how the effects of family instability affect the academic performance as well as the engagement of children at school.
- To identify common behavioral and developmental issues caused in children by their dysfunctional family structure.

The research design adopted by the researcher is descriptive in nature. From non-probability sampling, purposive Sampling method was used and the sample size was 60 consisting of children aged between 12 - 18 belonging to Coimbatore district. Self-structured Interview Schedule was used by the researcher to obtain Socio-demographic and data from the respondents. The statistical tools applied by the researcher Percentage Analysis, Chi-square, T-test, and ANOVA, Shown in Table 1, Table 2 & Table 3.

**Table 2 Distribution of The Respondents by Levels of Children Affected by Broken Families**

S. No	Children Affected by Broken Families	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	High	42	70.0
2	Moderate	10	16.7
3	Low	8	13.3
TOTAL		60	100

### 4.3. Findings

1. Majority (75%) of the respondents were 12 to 18 years of age.
2. Majority (71.7%) of the respondents were female.
3. Majority (73.3%) of the respondents were below +2 education.
4. (100%) of the respondents are unmarried.
5. Majority (71.7%) of the respondents were from nuclear family.
6. Less than half (38.3%) of the respondents are from semi-urban.

7. More than half of (58.3%) of the respondents have Rs.20000 to Rs.30000 family income.

### 4.4. Interpretation

The above table depicts that (70.0%) of the respondents are high level of children affected by broken families, (16.7%) of the respondents are moderate level and (13.3%) of the respondents are low level of children affected by broken families.

**Table 3 Influence Of Broken Family In Emotional Well-Being Of The Children**

VARIABLES	STATISTICAL TOOL	VALUE	RESULT
Age & emotional well-being of the children	ANOVA	$P = .006 < 0.05$	Significant
Gender & emotional well-being of the children	t-test	$P = .101 < 0.05$	Significant
Educational qualification & emotional well-being of the children	t-test	$P = .031 < 0.05$	Significant
Marital status & Self-disclosure and emotional well-being of the children	t-test	$P = .614 > 0.05$	Not Significant
Type of family & Self-disclosure and emotional well-being of the children	t-test	$P = .008 < 0.05$	Significant
Residential background & Self-disclosure and emotional well-being of the children	ANOVA	$P = .537 > 0.05$	Not Significant
Family income & Self-disclosure and emotional well-being of the children	ANOVA	$P = .000 < 0.05$	Significant

1. There is significant difference in the age and emotional well-being of the respondents.
2. There is significant difference in the gender and emotional well-being of the respondents.
3. There is significant difference in the educational qualification and emotional well-being of the respondents.
4. There is no significant difference in the marital status and emotional well-being of the respondents.
5. There is significant difference in the type of family and emotional well-being of the respondents.
6. There is no significant difference in the

residential background & emotional well-being of the respondents.

7. There is significant difference in the family income & occupational stress of the respondents.

### 4.5. Recommendation

- Children who belong to broken families face significant social emotional psychological as well as academic challenges to address these issues the researcher recommends several interventions such as, providing school counselling services to children to cope with these challenges and enhance their overall performance.
- The researcher recommends to provide



training to the teachers with collaborating with mental health professionals to identify the signs of distress.

- The research recommends to organize programs that promote healthy social interaction and to conduct parental support initiatives.
- The researcher also recommends to conduct public awareness campaigns to mitigate the adverse effects of family instability and its effects on children's development.

### Conclusion

Children who belonging to broken families are often vulnerable to social psychological and emotional academic challenges due to distribution and instability within their family. The findings of the study underscore the need of intervention that address these challenges. Schools can play a vital role in helping children from broken families by providing counseling services academic support and promoting healthy social interactions. Parental support programmes' and public awareness campaigns are essential to mitigate the negative impact of family breakdowns. These measures can reassure that children from dysfunctional family reserve care and resources they need for healthier social psychological, emotional as well as academic development.

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