

## Family: A Predictor of Social Competence of Preschoolers

Pushpalata, Bimla Dhanda and Chandra Kala Singh\*

*Department of Human Development and Family Studies, CCS Haryana Agricultural University,  
Hisar 125 004, Haryana, India*

*\*E-mail: chandrak\_singh@rediffmail.com*

**KEYWORDS** Attributes. Environment. Adoptive Behaviour. Family Income. Socialisation

**ABSTRACT** The present investigation was carried out in 2006 in Hisar City of Haryana State to assess effect of family environment on social competence of preschoolers. Experimental material comprised 200 preschoolers selected from both rural (100) and urban (100) during the age of 2-4 years. From rural area anganwadis and homes of two villages namely Mangali and Singhran were visited and from urban area preschools and homes were selected in Hisar city. The children comprised of 25 boys and 25 girls in each age groups, viz., 2-3 and 3-4. Social attribute checklist and Vineland Social Maturity Scale was used to assess social competence of children. Results revealed that Social competence of children were influenced by variables such as family income, mother education, father occupation, family size etc.

### INTRODUCTION

A child's social competence is affected by how well he or she communicates with other children and with adults. Most children's social skills increase rapidly during the preschool years. Research during the past 20 years suggests that children who do not have basic level of social competence by the age of 6 may have trouble with relationships when they are adults (Ladd 2000). Children learn social skills through interaction within and outside his family, peers and teachers gradually learn to share control and influence. Socially competent children possess the skills necessary to get their needs met and accomplish their desired goal. Srivastava (1991) studied the effect of family environment on student's achievement and results showed that families of high achievers were more structured and exercised more control than those of low achievers. Vandell and Ramanan (1992) found that maternal employment had a positive influence on cognitive and social stimulation in the home.

Lata and Chhikra (1995) concluded that socio-economic factors such as education, occupation of parents' family income were significantly associated with adaptive behaviour of children. Keith and Campbell (2000) reported that family was the most important factor-influencing factor for the social and emotional development of a child. Elizabeth (2003) concluded that household income was positively related to the level of learning stimulation in children's home environments, which is responsible for social maturity level of children.

### METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in the year of 2006, on a sample of 200 children in the age group of 2-4 years were selected randomly from two localities i.e. rural and urban areas of Hisar District of Haryana State. For rural sample 100 preschoolers of 2-4 years from anganwadis of two villages namely Mangali and Singhran. For urban sample 100 children of 2-4 years from preschool lab of Department of Human Development and Family Studies CCSHAU, Hisar was selected purposively to meet the required sample. Social attribute checklist developed by Kartz and McClellan (1970) having different Attributes such as Individual Attributes, Social Skills Attributes, Peer Relationship Attributes, Adult Relationship Attributes were studied. Secondly Vineland Social Maturity Scale (Sparrow et al. 1984) containing four sub domains namely communication, daily living skills, socialization and motor was used to assess social competence of children. The tests were individually administered on children in both rural and urban areas.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Association of Social Competence with Mother Education**

Social competence measured by Vineland social maturity scale was significantly related with mother education ( $\chi^2 = 8.72^{**}$ ,  $\chi^2 = 7.87^{**}$ ) in rural areas and in urban areas respectively (Table

1). Relationship of mother education with Social Attribute Checklist was also significantly related ( $\chi^2 = 4.83$ ) in rural areas but not in urban areas. The result is supported by Namita (1992) and Richman et al. (1992) revealing that mother's level of education was positively related with social maturity of children.

#### Association of Social Competence with Father Education

It is evident from Table 2 that there was no significant association between Social Competence scale and educational status of father in rural areas ( $\chi^2 = 0.18$ ) and in urban areas ( $\chi^2 = 0.17$ ). The same variable found significantly related with Social Attribute Checklist ( $\chi^2 = 7.05^{**}$ ) in rural areas. This meant that there was a positive association of father's educational status and social competence of children. Dhanda (2002) in contrary reported that father's education had no effect on social skills of children.

#### Association of Social Competence with Father Occupation

A look at the Table 3 revealed that father occupation was significantly related to social competence in rural areas ( $\chi^2 = 6.01^{**}$ ) and in urban areas ( $\chi^2 = 4.0^*$ ) and also social competence measured by Social Attribute Checklist was significantly related to father occupation in urban areas ( $\chi^2 = 4.17^*$ ). Parcel and Dufur (2001) suggested that family social capital and home could work together to promote child social adjustment.

#### Association of Social Competence with Family Size

Table 4 highlighted non-significant association of Vineland Social maturity scale with family size ( $\chi^2 = 1.25$ ) in rural and ( $\chi^2 = 1.53$ ) in urban areas. Social Attribute Checklist had non significant association with family size ( $\chi^2 = 0.78$ ) in rural and in urban ( $\chi^2 = 2.51$ ).

**Table 1: Association of social competence with mother education**

| Variables                             | Rural     |           |       |                | Urban     |           |       |                |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
|                                       | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value |
| <i>Social Competence</i>              |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| <i>Vineland Social Maturity Scale</i> |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 38(77.56) | 11(22.44) | 49    | 8.72**         | 32(62.75) | 19(37.25) | 51    | 7.87**         |
| High                                  | 25(49.02) | 26(50.98) | 51    |                | 17(34.70) | 32(65.30) | 49    |                |
| Total                                 | 63        | 37        | 100   |                | 49        | 51        | 100   |                |
| <i>Social Attribute Checklist</i>     |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 43(71.67) | 17(28.33) | 60    | 4.83*          | 26(52.00) | 24(48.00) | 50    | 0.36 NS        |
| High                                  | 20(50.00) | 20(50.00) | 40    |                | 23(46.00) | 27(54.00) | 50    |                |
| Total                                 | 63        | 37        | 100   |                | 49        | 51        | 100   |                |

\*\* Significant at P=0.01 with 1 d.f.\* Significant at P=0.05 with 1 d.f. = Non significant

**Table 2: Association of social competence with father education**

| Variables                             | Rural     |           |       |                | Urban     |           |       |                |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
|                                       | First     | Second    | Total | $\chi^2$ value | First     | Second    | Total | $\chi^2$ value |
| <i>Social Competence</i>              |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| <i>Vineland Social Maturity Scale</i> |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 40(61.54) | 25(38.46) | 65    | 0.18 NS        | 32(64.00) | 18(36.00) | 50    | 0.17 NS        |
| High                                  | 20(57.14) | 15(42.86) | 35    |                | 30(64.00) | 20(36.00) | 50    |                |
| Total                                 | 60        | 40        | 100   |                | 62        | 38        | 100   |                |
| <i>Social Attribute Checklist</i>     |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 31(75.60) | 10(24.40) | 41    | 7.05**         | 35(57.38) | 26(42.62) | 61    | 1.42 NS        |
| High                                  | 29(49.15) | 30(50.85) | 59    |                | 27(69.23) | 12(30.77) | 39    |                |
| Total                                 | 60        | 40        | 100   |                | 62        | 38        | 100   |                |

\*\* Significant at P=0.01 with 1 d.f.NS= Non significant \*Significant at P=0.05 with 1 d.f.

### Association of Social Competence with Family Income

Vineland Social maturity scale was significantly related to family income in rural areas ( $\chi^2 = 4.23^*$ ) and also was positively associated to family income ( $\chi^2 = 4.00^*$ ) in urban areas (Table 5). The same variable was found non significantly related with Social Attribute Checklist ( $\chi^2 = 1.46$ ) in rural areas and ( $\chi^2 = 0.39$ ) in urban. Baharudin and Luster (1998) reported a positive relation

between family income and social and cognitive development of child. Elizabeth (2003) concluded that household income was positively related to the level of learning stimulation in children's home environments, which is responsible for social maturity level of children.

### CONCLUSION

A total of 200 children during the age of 2-4 years were selected randomly from two localities

**Table 3: Association of social competence with father occupation**

| Variables                             | Rural     |           |       |                | Urban     |           |       |                |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
|                                       | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value |
| <i>Social competence</i>              |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| <i>Vineland Social Maturity Scale</i> |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 23(65.71) | 12(34.29) | 35    | 6.01**         | 20(40.00) | 30(60.00) | 50    | 4.00*          |
| High                                  | 26(40.00) | 39(60.00) | 65    |                | 30(60.00) | 20(40.00) | 50    |                |
| Total                                 | 49        | 51        | 100   |                | 50        | 50        | 100   |                |
| <i>Social Attribute Checklist</i>     |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 30(44.12) | 38(55.88) | 68    | 2.02 NS        | 35(58.33) | 25(41.67) | 60    | 4.17*          |
| High                                  | 19(59.37) | 13(40.62) | 32    |                | 15(37.50) | 25(62.50) | 40    |                |
| Total                                 | 49        | 51        | 100   |                | 50        | 50        | 100   |                |

**Table 4: Association of social competence with family size**

| Variables                             | Rural     |           |       |                | Urban     |           |       |                |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
|                                       | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value |
| <i>Social competence</i>              |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| <i>Vineland Social Maturity Scale</i> |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 19(43.19) | 45(56.81) | 64    | 1.25NS         | 38(73.08) | 14(26.92) | 52    | 1.53NS         |
| High                                  | 7(19.44)  | 29(80.56) | 36    |                | 40(83.34) | 8(16.66)  | 48    |                |
| Total                                 | 26        | 74        | 100   |                | 78        | 22        | 100   |                |
| <i>Social Attribute Checklist</i>     |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 18(29.03) | 44(70.97) | 62    | 0.78NS         | 42(72.41) | 16(27.59) | 58    | 2.51NS         |
| High                                  | 8(21.05)  | 30(78.95) | 38    |                | 36(85.71) | 6(14.29)  | 42    |                |
| Total                                 | 26        | 74        | 100   |                | 78        | 22        | 100   |                |

\*\* Significant at P=0.01 with 1 d.f. \* Significant at P=0.05 with 1 d.f. NS= Non significant

**Table 5: Association of social competence with family income**

| Variables                             | Rural     |           |       |                | Urban     |           |       |                |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
|                                       | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value | Low       | High      | Total | $\chi^2$ value |
| <i>Social competence</i>              |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| <i>Vineland Social Maturity Scale</i> |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 50(76.92) | 15(23.08) | 65    | 4.23*          | 29(58.00) | 21(42.00) | 50    | 4.00*          |
| High                                  | 20(57.14) | 15(42.86) | 35    |                | 19(38.00) | 31(62.00) | 50    |                |
| Total                                 | 70        | 30        | 100   |                | 48        | 52        | 100   |                |
| <i>Social Attribute Checklist</i>     |           |           |       |                |           |           |       |                |
| Low                                   | 40(64.52) | 21(35.48) | 61    | 1.46 NS        | 21(44.68) | 26(55.32) | 47    | 0.39 NS        |
| High                                  | 30(76.92) | 9(23.08)  | 39    |                | 27(50.94) | 26(49.06) | 53    |                |
| Total                                 | 70        | 30        | 100   |                | 48        | 52        | 100   |                |

\*\* Significant at P=0.01 with 1 d.f. NS= Non significant \* Significant at P=0.05 with 1 d.f.

i.e. rural and urban areas of Hisar District of Haryana State to assess the effect of family environment on social competence. Results revealed that Social competence of children were influenced by variables such as family income, mother education, father occupation, family size etc.

### REFERENCES

- Baharudin R, Luster T 1998. Factors related to the quality of home environment and children's achievement. *Journal of Family Issues*, 19: 375-403.
- Dhanda B 2000. *Intervention Programme for the Mothers of Babies with Developmental Deficiencies*. Ph. D. Thesis (Unpublished), CCSHAU, Hisar.
- Elizabeth, V, Drazal 2003. Income changes and learning stimulation in young children's home learning environment. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65(2): 82.
- Kartz, L.G., and McClellan, D.E. 1997. *Fostering Children's Social Competence: The Teacher's Role*. Washington, DC: National Association for the education of young children, pp. 1-4.
- Keith L, Cambell J 2000. Assessment of Social and Emotional Development in Preschool Children. The Psycho-Educational Assessment Of Preschoolers: 3rd Edition, Nerdham Heights: Allyn and Becan, pp. 364-382.
- Ladd GW 2000. The fourth R: Relationships as risks and resources following children's transition to school. *American Educational Research Association Division Newsletter*, 19(1): 7-11.
- Lata, Chhikara S 1995. Adaptive behaviour of children and related factors. *Hitotsubhashi Journal of Social Studies*, 27: 27-28.
- Namita S 1992. *Child Rearing Practices in Village Community of Haryana*. M.Sc. Thesis (Unpublished), CCSHAU, Hisar.
- Parcel TL, Dufur MJ 2001. Capital at Home and at School: Effects on Child Social Adjustment. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63: 32-47.
- Sparrow SS, Balla DA, Cicchetti DV 1984. *Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale*. Circle Pines Munesota, USA: AGS.
- Srivastava U1991. A study of effect of family environment on students achievement. *J Psychological Research*, 36(2): 87-91.
- Vandell DR, Ramanan J 1992. Effects of early and recent maternal employment on children from low-income families. *Child Development*, 64: 638-649.