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**'AN ANALYSIS OF DR. MALIK'S STUDY OF SCHOOL
PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES RECEIVING
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IN CANADA'**

A RESEARCH ESSAY

**SUBMITTED TO GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF SOCIAL WORK**

WATERLOO LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

by

THOMAS ROBERT McCOLL B.A.

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work**

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A BRIEF REVIEW OF CONTENT

The central questions in the Study were: a) how public assistance children compare with those of unassisted families in the same social stratum, both as to their school performance and their potential for it; and b) whether public assistance families differ from unassisted families in the same stratum with respect to goals and values that have a bearing on educational attainment.

The three main hypotheses of the study are that:

- 1) recipients of public assistance are characterized by goals and values that differ from those of non recipients of same social stratum
- 2) these goals and values are transmitted to the children of recipients
- 3) these goals and values are associated with lower than average school performance by children of recipients

Data were gathered in the study on an experimental group of 399 families from a universe of families receiving non-categorical public assistance, who had been on assistance for at least six months and had at least one child in grade 7 or higher, and a control group of 181 unassisted families in the same socio-economic stratum. The control group was drawn from a list made up of three "best friends" named by children in the experimental group. The sources of data were public assistance records, school records, interviews with parents in their home and questionnaires administered to the children.

To give wide national representation, four cities, viz. Montreal, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver were selected. Co-operation was extended by the local public welfare departments and school boards of these cities.

The Tie With Existing Knowledge & Research

Families on public assistance are lowest in the socio-economic stratum. It is reasonable to assume that school performance of the children of recipients is affected by the same factors as those of children in low income groups. A brief review of the literature applicable to the understanding of school performance of such families follows.

Factors Affecting School Performance

Intelligence - Good school performance is considered to be measured by good grades and marks and satisfactory completion of a grade each year, with poor performance being the opposite.

Intelligence seems to be the most important factor affecting school performance. Forty to sixty per cent of the variation among students can be accounted for by the variation in measured intelligence levels.¹ However, although geneticists insist that actual intelligence, from low to high, is more or less evenly distributed over the whole population, there is a marked correlation between measured intelligence and socio-economic status. Thus "the research problem becomes one of disentangling the environmental components of social class which are relevant for intellectual development."²

Increasingly, observers argue that I.Q. tests employed by the schools discriminate against lower class children since they require an ability to think abstractly which the lower class child lacks. All

¹Rossi, Peter H. "Social Factors in Academic Achievement: A Brief Review," in Halsey, A.H. et al, eds., Education, Economy, & Society, (New York: 1961) pp. 269-272.

²Halsey, A.H., "Genetics, Social Structure & Intelligence," British Journal of Sociology (1958) pp. 15-28.

studies of school failure and dropouts show a high percentage of deficiency in reading and mathematical skills, both of which require abstract thinking. This deficiency begins to become apparent as early as the third or fourth grade. Such a child is more likely to experience defeats and failures and to withdraw from the school system as soon as legally possible.

Educators are becoming more aware of the I.Q. test limitations and are employing additional discriminating techniques to overcome them. Nevertheless, they still form the basis on which a child's intelligence and school performance are assessed. However, low I.Q. alone does not explain poor performance. Allison³ for example, found that in his sample failing Grade 7, 40% had average or above I.Q.

Socio-Economic Status - Many students have shown that children of the lower class do not perform as well as those of the middle or upper classes and that not all the differential can be attributed to I.Q. test bias. The extent that this holds true for Canada is shown in the studies of Porter⁴ & Hall & McFarlane.⁵ From their findings it would appear that a lower class child is only half as likely to remain in school (at least until the end of high school) as is the upper & middle class child. This is felt to be the result of the "cultural deprivation" a child experiences

³Allison, C.J., "Characteristics of Students Who Failed Grade 7 in Edmonton Junior High Schools, 1951-52", Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 8:1, (1962) pp. 11-24.

⁴Porter, J., "Social Class & Education", in M. Oliver ed. Social Purpose for Canada (Toronto: 1961) pp. 103-129.

⁵Hall, Oswald & McFarlane, Bruce, Transition From School to Work. Report 10 of the research program on the Training of Skilled Manpower, Dept. of Labour (Ottawa: Canada Queens Printer, 1963), Chapter III.

as a member of the lower class. He is handicapped in school because he lacks a home environment which includes books, intellectual discussions and parents who value education. In addition he lacks middle class norms & values which stress educational achievement, success via hard work & occupational mobility.

Walter Miller⁶ has presented the thesis that lower class culture differs in many significant ways from middle class & thus is really "different" culture. Thus by adhering to the norms & values of his own culture, a lower class child becomes a deviant in the middle class oriented school system & is stigmatized for it as for other forms of deviance. Becher⁷ has shown that teachers regard an assignment to a school in a lower class district as a loss of professional prestige & tacit evidence of their own failure, or as an interim assignment until there is a "promotion" to a better school. Their main objective becomes that of maintaining discipline rather than teaching since they feel that their students do not value education anyway. In any case since not all poor school performances are in lower socio-economic class, other factors are involved.

Two obvious factors involved in the performance of lower class students which one would expect to affect children of public assistance families are a) lack of appropriate models of success whose achievement has been attained through education and b) lack of family income to afford to keep a child at school.

Family & Home Environment - While all studies acknowledge a strong

⁶ Miller, W.B., Cultural Features of an Urban Middle Class Community, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Public Health Service (Washington 1969).

⁷ Becher, H.S., "The Career of the Chicago Public School Teacher", American Journal of Sociology, 57 (1952), pp. 473-477.

relationship between home environment & school performance, there is a general disagreement about the importance of this influence. The family is a major institution communicating to the child, the values and norms of the larger community. It may pass on values for education which when associated with the middle class emphasis on the values of individual success, & the deferring of immediate pleasure for long terms gain may provide the motivation for good school performance.

It seems that if a child's parents are the persons most important to him they play a large role in providing or not providing the motivation for good school performance. If, on the other hand, they are not his most important, then their roles are correspondingly reduced. However, desire for achievement could be provided by some other person who becomes sufficiently important to the child in early life, a situation which would explain the success of some lower class children.⁸ Kohl provides an additional explanation for this phenomenon. In his view some lower class parents subscribe to middle class values to which their children become socialized. High value is placed on education which they feel will make possible for their children the class mobility they themselves failed to achieve⁹.

Observers agree that purely physical factors, although not decisive, do play a role. Over-crowding, for instance means lack of space for adequate rest and for doing homework. Lack of such basic essentials as food & clothing will effect the student both mentally & physically.

⁸ Slocum, W.L., "They Find Their Niche". An Excerpt from Occupational Planning by Undergraduates at the State College of Washington, Bulletin 547, 1954.

⁹ Kohn, J.A., "Educational & Occupational Aspirations of Common Man Boys, Harvard Educational Review, 23:3 1953, pp. 186-203. Reprinted in Halsey, et al. Education Economy & Society, op. cit.

Regional Factors - Academic achievement varies throughout areas & communities of a country. In Canada, children in Newfoundland, Quebec & the Maritimes do not remain in school as long as children in the other provinces. Urban children usually stay longer than rural, while the schools of large suburban areas seem to provide the best educational experience. Thus school performance will be affected by the various attributes of a given community which may function to provide a wide or narrow field of opportunity for educational achievement.

Assistance Status - None of the studies reviewed so far are concerned with children of public assistance families. However, most of the factors identified as affecting school performance relate to socio-economic class & most, though not all, public assistance families are in the lower class. Thus the task of this study is to determine to what extent these factors are accentuated, if they are, by the fact of receiving public assistance.¹⁰ That they may indeed be so is suggested in a recent study of Rochester, New York which revealed:

- a) one third of the dropouts come from families with a history of public or private assistance
- b) a majority of all dropouts, including those from public assistance families, scored well within the range of average intelligence, with 9% in the upper quarter of high or very high I.Q.
- c) there were more girl dropouts than boys from families on public assistance, a reversal of the general pattern of a higher dropout rate for boys than girls.

A study in Toronto in 1963 of 74 families in which the father had been unemployed for varying lengths of time, reports:

The long term unemployed father tended to make unrealistic demands of the child (with respect to school performance) which either expected

¹⁰State of New York, Division for Youth, The School Dropout Problem, Part 1, (Rochester: 1962).

more or less academic performance from the child than the child was capable.... As length of unemployment increases, the father may make some attempt at compensating for his own failure by expecting more achievement from the child. On the other hand, the father may project feelings of failure upon the child & expect less from the child than the child is capable.... Length of unemployment does affect the school aspirations of the fathers in an unhealthy way.¹¹

As mentioned previously, Porter,¹² & Hall & McFarlane¹³ reported from their findings that the lower class child is only half as likely to remain in school as the upper & middle class child, & they felt this to be the result of the "cultural deprivation" suffered by children from assistance families. A book with a dramatic & suggestive title of "Pygmalion in the Classroom" considers the poor school performance to be the result of another variable, namely, the expectations & personality of the teacher in the school setting.

The authors, Jacobson & Rosenthal¹⁴ in their study, told the elementary school teachers that they intended to administer a test to their students which had 'prophetic powers' in that it could predict the likelihood that a child would show an 'inflection point' or 'spurt' in intellectual development within the near future. In other words, this test would allow the teacher to predict which student would be most likely to show an academic 'spurt'. The test was administered & the results

¹¹Bates, W.P., Aspirations of the Unemployed Father for the Eldest Public School Child, Masters Thesis, University of Toronto, School of Social Work (1963), p. 74.

¹²Porter, op. cit. pp. 103-129.

¹³Hall & McFarlane, op. cit., Chap. III.

¹⁴Jacobson, & Moore & Rosenthal, Robert, "Pygmalion in the Classroom", Holt Rinehart & Winston (1964).

tabulated. Naturally the teachers believed that they would become privy to interesting & important information. The test supposedly supplied lists of students in three achievement levels: fast, medium & slow. But what really happened was that the test given was incidental & the results were designed solely to prejudice the teachers opinion of the students.

The schools involved went about their business for a year, interrupted only by two more bouts with the "prophetic test". Then the authors returned to the schools to determine the reliability of the 'test'. The teachers were asked how the students had fared over the yearly period, & the observations were of great significance. Those students who had arbitrarily been chosen as 'fast' achievers made astonishing gains in later tests. Over half of the students labelled as 'fast' gained twenty I.Q. points or more.

The lesson in the book is clear: All sorts of young children did much better in school than others like them presumably because of their teachers 'expected' them to become 'fast' achievers & the 'tests' prophecy was fulfilled so conclusively that even hard core scientists were startled.

Outside of Becher's¹⁵ remarks concerning teacher' attitudes towards assignments in lower class districts, Dr. Malik's study has not considered the factor of 'teachers' expectations' as a major variable affecting the school performance of children from assistance families. Judging from the observations made in Jacobson's study its importance as a variable could possibly surpass that of the inequity of family incomes between the control & experimental families as well as the variable that three-quarters of the assistance families had no male head present in the home.

¹⁵Becher, op. cit. pp. 473-477.

Problem Formulation: Scope & Origin of the Study

This study grew out of a concern on the part of the Public Welfare Division of the Canadian Welfare Council, now the Canadian Public Welfare Association, of the possibility that children of public assistance families are "being prohibited" from taking full advantage of educational opportunities. If this assumption is correct, we are continuously generating a stream of inadequately educated people into the labour market. This can be shown by the fact that in 1963 there were 800,000 families who received Mothers' Allowances & Unemployment Assistance. If the average number of children per family is three, these families alone involve about 2 million children. These figures do not take into account the families on social allowance & general welfare which comes under provincial & municipal jurisdiction.

The relationship between inadequate education & unemployment has been well documented & authorities agree that the situation will intensify as automation proceeds. Jobs for the unskilled & uneducated will decrease while the need for skilled & educated workers will become acute. The Economic Council of Canada has warned that failure to meet the demands for such a labour force could seriously retard our economy.

Accompanying this situation is the belief that there are factors associated with public assistance status which create a self perpetuating cycle of dependency on assistance. It was with this background that the Canadian Public Welfare Association proposed a study to establish the extent to which members of these families are committed to the general societal norms & values with respect to achievement, occupational mobility & orientation to success & their behavior with respect to central aspects

of success. Specifically, they wished to explore the relationship between factors associated with the receipt of public assistance and the school performance of the children of public assistance families.

Hypothesis & Scope

Considering the concerns mentioned under problem formulation, it becomes necessary to know with as much scientific precision as possible a) how public assistance children compare with those of unassisted families in the same socio-economic stratum both as to their school performance and their potential for it; and b) whether public assistance families differ in any significant way from unassisted families in the same socio-economic stratum with respect to norms and values that have a bearing on educational attainment.

Thus the central hypotheses of this study are that:

- 1) Recipients of public assistance are characterized by norms and values that differ from those of non-recipients
- 2) These norms and values are transmitted to the children of recipients
- 3) These norms and values are associated with lower than average school performance by children of recipients

While the hypotheses are clear cut when considered on their own, their pertinence to the findings of the study and relevance to the policy recommendations are questionable and shall be dealt with under the discussion of major variables.

Although many studies have investigated some aspect of the questions suggested above, no study of the association of the above mentioned factors has been done anywhere in Canada, the United States, or Great Britain.

Definition of Major Variables

According to Malik's study, the 399 families in the experimental group and the 181 control families differed first off in that all of the former had been on public assistance six or more months, while the latter were not on public assistance. Most of the families in both groups had 3-5 members in the core family - 62.2% in the experimental group and 57.5% in the control group. The experimental families tended to be larger in size.

Although the extended family has disappeared to a great extent in Canada, in the sample 12.3% of experimental families and 15.0% of control families had other relatives living with them. In another 7.6% of experimental families and 12.2% of control families, non-relatives were sharing the home. The differences in the number in the extended families of the two groups is not significant enough to be considered as a major variable.

Similarly, the education of parents of both groups was similar enough so as not to constitute a major variable. The education of both fathers was low, though the control group had a slight edge. The majority in both groups had left school before they were sixteen - 81.0 percent in the experimental group as compared to 69% in the control group.

A similar pattern existed in the education of the mothers. The majority of them left school before the age of sixteen in both groups. Sixty per cent of mothers in the experimental group as compared to 53% in the control group had grade 8 or less education. About 23% mothers in the control group as compared to 15% in the experimental group had completed Grade 11 or more.

As mentioned under 'Summary' in Malik's project the experimental

families and the control families were supposedly of the same socio-economic background. The occupation of the head of the family is usually considered a key index in determining social class. Occupation and education jointly determine the stability of one's employment and future prospects. The two groups of parents, as expected, differed with respect to employment and occupation but the difference cannot, because of the definition of eligibility for assistance, be taken as an indication of class difference. The head of the families on assistance is unemployed, or engaged in very low paying jobs or is not present at all. In 26% of the assisted families in the Study, the father was either absent or unemployed. Eleven out of sixteen fathers who were working were doing semi-skilled or unskilled manual labour. The fathers in the control group held jobs ranging from professional or skilled level to unskilled and manual jobs. Almost 95% of the fathers were working and only 5% were unemployed. Only 5 out of 153 fathers held professional jobs. With the overall low level of education, half of the employed fathers were in low paying jobs, such as clerical, semi skilled, unskilled and manual jobs. As previously mentioned, because of the definition of eligibility the two groups cannot be considered to be of a different social class, however, there is an important variable that is not directly considered. In about 75% of the public assistance families and 10% of the control families, there was no male head present due to death, divorce or separation of the husband. While 'no male head present' may be a common factor among many assistance families in general, considering this factor has not been significantly considered

in comparing the two groups, I would suggest the experimental group should have been selected such that a comparable number of 'male heads' were to be found in both the control and experimental groups.

Both groups were supposedly from similar socio-economic backgrounds and it would seem reasonable to assume that the incomes of the control families would be on similar plane. However in essence this is not true. As would be expected within welfare policy, the families on public assistance had the lowest income. About 83% of these families had incomes of \$300 a month or less. Slightly more than half of these families had total family incomes from all sources between \$151 and \$250 a month. In contrast to this group, 78.4% of the families in the control group had incomes over \$300 a month and about a quarter of these families had over \$600 a month.

Malik rationalizes this discrepancy as follows: "Families in the control group cannot be called poor per se on the basis of income data. In the Research Design it was hypothesized that children of public assistance families would associate themselves with the children of low income groups and for this reason they were chosen as reference group for selecting low income families by asking them to name three of their best friends. A cursory observation of the employment and income data of control families would lead one to reject the basis of control. But this would be incorrect. As it would be observed, almost half of the heads of the control families units were in low prestige, semi-skilled and manual occupations and more than three quarters occupied blue collar jobs. The comparatively high family income in the control group is explained by the fact that in these families the wages of the husband which are in any case

usually higher than public assistance rates, were supplemented by the earnings of the wife and grown up children. But if the supplementary sources of income were eliminated, and only husband's wages taken into account, then almost 70% of the heads in the \$400 or less a month category and about 40% in \$300 or less a month. Having in mind their inadequate education and the fact that they were in blue collar occupations, our sample of control families clearly fits into the low-socio-economic category.

The principle variable which is avoided here and seems to be of important relevance, as is also shown in the policy recommendations, is the total family income. As mentioned previously 83% of assistance families had incomes of \$300 month or less and slightly more than half of these families had total family incomes from all sources between 150 and 250 dollars/month. In contrast 78.4% of control families had incomes over \$300 month and about 1/4 had incomes over \$600 a month. Taking into account that the experimental families were larger on the whole along with the obvious difference in total family income, it would seem as though less emphasis should have been placed on the fact that the family was receiving public assistance and more of an emphasis upon total family income.

Research Design and Methodology

Having examined existing knowledge and research, it is suggested that very little is known about the school performance of children of public assistance families. Also, the administration of public assistance, amount of assistance, eligibility requirements and the provision of other services, such as casework or medical care, vary from province to province and from place to place. For Malik's study, only the recipients of non-categorical assistance programs which go by different names across the country, are included because these programs are directed towards alleviating the needs of families. The recipients of categorical assistance are excluded because the beneficiary is usually an individual.

The main consideration was that the families should be on public assistance long enough for this experience to have some impact on their children and perhaps their school performance. For what reasons, I do not know, how Malik and his colleagues chose a minimum of 6 months on assistance to be enough to have the above mentioned impact. The study gives no further information on how this length of time came to be accepted nor are there any studies indicating that at least six months on welfare is long enough for the experience to have some impact on the children and their school performance. It appears to be entirely an approximated subjective decision not based on any scientific experimentation.

With this criterion in mind, only those families were included which had been on assistance for at least six months or more on Oct. 1/65. The second criteria for selection of the families was that they

should have at least one child who was going to school and whose performance would be recorded. This naturally seems appropriate considering the goals of the study. Further criteria specify that the child should be at least twelve years old and intelligent enough to understand questions and reply to them as objectively as possible. For the study, a child who was in Grade 7 or higher and attending school was selected. Any child who was attending special classes due to physical, mental or emotional reasons was excluded from the study.

To give a wide and adequate representation, four cities, viz. Montreal, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver were selected. The four cities selected represent a cross-section of the country and take into account the ethnic representation.

Sampling

Experimental and Control Families - From each of the four cities, 100 families on public assistance with the above criteria were to be selected comprising a sample of 400 experimental families. To provide meaningful interpretation and comparison, the school performance of children of parents on public assistance should be compared to a control group i.e. to the children whose parents are not on assistance, but who belong to the same socio-economic group as the experimental group. It was intended to select fifty families from each of the cities mentioned above in such a group, making a total of 200 families in four cities. It was felt possible to use a control group only half the size of the experimental group because the variables of the assistance experience are not dealt with in the control group. It was expected that the total for the four cities might be combined for analytic purposes. The advantage of keeping the number of families small were anticipated because a relatively small research team with correspondingly few controls on quality and uniformity of the interviewing techniques could be applied.

The selection of the experimental families was completed with the co-operation of the local welfare departments which provided the lists of families who had been on public assistance for six months or more and who had one or more children in Grade seven or over and attending school at that time. The 100 families in each city were selected from these lists by random method. When there were both boys and girls who met the criteria for selection two children, one boy and one girl, were selected. The selection was done by random method by the toss of a coin, taking two

names at a time in such cases. If the eligible children in a family were only of one sex, then only one child was selected. The children thus selected formed a sample for studying the school performance. It was expected that the sample of children would vary from a minimum of 400 to a maximum of 800 since not every family would have two children who would qualify for inclusion in the sample. (The actual size of the sample of experimental families and children in each of the four cities is shown in Table 1). Introductory letters asking permission to interview were sent to the families selected in the sample by the public welfare departments with telephone follow-up for appointments by the interviewers. This reduced the refusal rate considerably.

TABLE 1
SIZE OF SAMPLE OF EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES
AND EXPERIMENTAL CHILDREN FOR FOUR CITIES

SEX OF CHILD		CITY							
		MONTREAL		WINNIPEG		EDMONTON		VANCOUVER	
IN FAMILY		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Only	child	45	44.1	38	38.3	34	34	36	36.7
Only	child	44	43.1	45	45.5	40	40	43	43.9
Both	and	13	12.7	15	16.2	26	26.0	19	19.4
Total Experimental Families		102	99.9	99	100.0	100		98	100.0
Total Experimental Children		115		115		126		117	

The size of the sample of experimental families varies from 98 in Vancouver to 102 in Montreal. Out of 399 families in four cities, 38.3% had only a male child eligible for the sample, 43.1% had only a female

child and 18.5% had both ♂ and ♀ children. The total number of children in the experimental group was 473, out of which 227 were boys.

Control Families - It is generally believed that for reasons of geographic and social proximity, children in any socio-economic group associate with the same class. This assumption mainly governed the procedure in selecting the control families. The selection of control families was delayed until after the child's questionnaire was administered to the experimental group. In the child's questionnaire, he was asked to name his three best friends and their addresses. From these names so provided, a list of all eligible families was compiled which comprised the population for control families. Their names were checked against the public assistance rolls to be sure that they were not assisted families. From these names, fifty families were selected in each city which had at least one child in Grade seven or more and attending school. The procedure of selecting children in the sample was similar to that for the experimental group. The size of the sample of children in the control families is shown in table 2.

TABLE 2
SIZE OF SAMPLE OF CONTROL FAMILIES
AND CONTROL CHILDREN FOR FOUR CITIES

SEX OF CHILD IN FAMILY		CITY									
		MONTREAL		WINNIPEG		EDMONTON		VANCOUVER		TOTAL	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Only	child	17	36.2	19	45.2	14	28.0	15	35.7	65	35.9
Only	child	21	44.7	14	33.3	18	36.0	13	31.0	66	36.5
Both	&	9	19.1	9	21.4	18	36.0	14	33.3	50	27.6
Total Control Families		47	100.0	42	99.9	50	100.0	42	100.0	181	100.0
Total Control Children		56		51		68		56		231	

The procedure of using the names of friends was probably one of the most difficult specifics of the administration of the study as some children were reluctant to provide addresses and telephone number of their friends. Also, all children did not furnish three references as provided in the design. Sometimes misinformation was supplied and in some instances interviewers felt that they could not press any further to obtain details.

It may be observed that only in Edmonton could 50 families be selected. In Vancouver and Winnipeg only 42 families were selected. The overall low rate of response is attributed to the fact that participation was voluntary as compared to the experimental families who were requested to participate by the welfare departments.

Out of a total of 181 control families in the four cities, 35.9% had only male children in the sample, 36.5% had only female children and 27.6% had one male and one female child. In the control group the number of families with two children in the sample was higher by 7% as compared to the experimental group. Total number of control children in the sample was 231 and was equally distributed among boys and girls - with 115 boys. This can probably be explained by the fact that the girls gave references a little more readily and, in a greater majority of cases, boys provided references of the opposite sex which helped balance the composition of sexes.

Data Collection Methods

In Malik's Study, four main sources of gathering information and data were used: 1) Parents' Questionnaire 2) Students Questionnaire 3) Family Public Assistance Record Sheet and 4) School Record Sheet.

Parents Questionnaire: This was an interview schedule which was administered to the parents by trained interviewers, in most cases to the mother. It was the principal source of information on most variables to be studied. Mainly the questionnaire elicited demographic information about the family, its income, household composition, religion, ethnic origin, level of education of the parents, extent of parents' occupational mobility and employment history. Questions to ascertain parents' norms and values with respect to education, achievement, and occupational aspiration and expectation of the child and views on public assistance in general were included. Additional questions on educational and occupational achievements of the oldest son or daughter out of school were also included.

Students Questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed to elicit information on:

- a) child's attitude towards school in general
- b) child's educational aspirations
- c) child's occupational aspiration
- d) child's orientation to cultural values of "success" as defined in the general society
- e) child's perception of parents' aspirations and expectations with regard to his educational achievements and his occupational future.

This questionnaire was completed by the child in his own home in the presence of the interviewer. The child was instructed not to get any

help from his parents in answering the questions. He could, however, ask for explanations of the questions which were difficult to understand from the interviewer.

Family Public Assistance Record Sheet: This sheet asked for basic information about the family on public assistance and was completed by the local public welfare department in each city. It asked for the reasons for providing assistance, complete record of public assistance from October 1, 1962 to October 1, 1965, dates when the family was granted assistance for the first time, present employment and weekly wages, if any, the number of dependents and marital status of the recipients. This information proved useful as a reliability check on the information supplied through the parents interview.

This information was easily obtained except in the case of Montreal where 32 public assistance record sheets were lost in the mail somewhere between Quebec City and Montreal.

School Record Sheet: It was believed that in almost every school system, every child in school has a cumulative record file which is started when he enters Grade one and follows him from grade to grade and from school to school. It was intended to gather information on age, school grade, academic achievement in terms of good, average and poor grades attained for three years and specifically for the 1965-66 school year when his parents were on public assistance. His failure, acceleration, attendance record and teacher's ratings for the last two years were also to be recorded.

In spite of the cooperation of the school boards in each city, information on school records was the most difficult to obtain. The children

in the sample were scattered all over the city and were attending almost every school in the city, both public and parochial. In Montreal, the form had to be revised because of non-uniformity in the record-keeping system and because some information was just not available.

The appropriateness of the data collection methods at a cursory glance seems to be acceptable due to the broad but specific content which was collected. Further analysis of data will no doubt confirm such an observation. The validity and reliability of the collection methods are best confirmed by the efficiency and expertise of those carrying out the methods.

In each of the four cities, Local Directors were appointed. M. Maurice Gill, Directeur de Recherches, Conseil des Oeuvres de Montreal, Montreal, Quebec; Professor D. Rennie, Sociology Department, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Prof. William Nicholls, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.; and Mr. G.A. Clarke, Project Secretary, Edmonton, Welfare Council, Edmonton, Alberta. They had considerable experience in research and were sufficiently familiar with the public welfare system, school systems and community.

Prior arrangements were made with the local social welfare planning councils, local public welfare departments and school boards for the necessary use of their records and staff time. They were requested to extend full cooperation to the Local Directors. The Local Directors recruited the interviewers who were mainly graduate students in sociology or social work and had some prior experience in interviewing. In Montreal, trained interviewers who had experience in conducting opinion surveys were used through the cooperation of M. Yvan R. Corbeil, of C.R.O.P. Inc. All the

interviewers were given training in the use of various research instruments by the Project Director, who visited each city for this purpose. Data were processed through the courtesy of the University of Ottawa Computing Centre which was helpful throughout the tabulation.

Analysis of Data Including Statistics

The description of families in the experimental and control groups reveals that they shared quite a few homogeneous characteristics - the control group being always slightly better equipped to meet economic problems. In both the groups, families tended to be larger than average in size. The education of the father was inadequate in both groups, but experimental families were even more inadequately equipped with education. In this group not only was there a higher percentage of fathers in the control families who had completed eleven or more grades of education. Half of the fathers in both groups gave financial and family problems as reasons for leaving school early. Similarly, the mothers were slightly better educated in control families as compared to experimental families. The occupation data are not strictly comparable because almost all of the fathers in experimental families were unemployed. In the control families almost half held low status, semi-skilled, unskilled and manual jobs. There was not much difference in the religious denominations of these groups. The two factors on which the two groups diverged significantly were family income and marital status. It is not surprising to note these differences because they are basically inherent in the kind of sample each group represents. The large proportion of broken families is the main reason for financial dependency in the public assistant group, whereas stable marital status and adequate income are the main characteristics of the other group.

For the 399 families on public assistance from four cities, each city welfare department was requested to supply basic data on the Family Public Assistance Record Sheets on age, sex and marital status of the

recipient, kind of assistance, et cetera. The important point being that most of the information was already obtained through the interviews with these families and consequently a check on the reliability of responses was possible.

With few exceptions which were subsequently rechecked, the responses elicited during the interviews accurately matched those observed on the Public Assistance Sheets. The statistics on marital status clearly bring out the fact that almost three-quarters of the families on public assistance are broken families and public assistance records indicate that half of these families were chronically dependent with five or more years experience on assistance.

As seen from Table 28 almost 60% of the families applied for assistance because of family disorganization resulting from factors such as desertion, divorce or death of the husband. In 28.3% of the families; the wife or husband was classified as unemployable. In only 2.2% of the families, public assistance was granted to supplement inadequate income of the breadwinner.

TABLE 28
ESTABLISHED REASONS FOR GRANTING PUBLIC
ASSISTANCE FOR EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES
IN FOUR CITIES

REASONS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Husband unemployed	6	1.6
Husband or wife unemployed	104	28.3
No Maintenance from husband deserted or separated	168	45.8
Widow with children	45	12.3
Unmarried mother	3	0.8
Supplementation of inadequate income	8	2.2
Others	31	8.4
Don't know	2	0.5
	367	99.9

The children's sample does not need any separate discussion in detail because children constitute a part of the family. The strength and weakness of the family contributes directly to the formation of the personality of the child. For example a child who is brought up by a poorly-educated mother and whose income is minimum by any standards, is more vulnerable than others to the vicissitudes of life. Furthermore, his chances of getting a good education are poor. "He receives less than normal encouragement and enrichment in the home, and possibly less than normal in school, for cultural deprivation may give an appearance of stupidity even to a bright child."¹⁶

The statistics show that there were specifically 473 such children, 227 male and 245 female in four cities whose families were chronically dependent on public assistance, their parents had no jobs and no education or training to provide a likelihood of their returning to work.

In contrast, there were 231 children in the control group, 115 male and 116 female, who came from relatively stable families; both parents were present in most cases and had not good but steady jobs and relatively sufficient income to maintain a reasonable standard of living. The number of children in the control group was slightly less than half of the experimental children in four cities. The distribution of children in the four cities is presented in Table 30.

About 95% of the children in both experimental and control families were between the ages of 12 and 17 and according to table 31 about three-quarters of the children in the control families were somewhere in Grades

¹⁶ Glasser, P.H. and Navarre, E.L., "The Problems of Families in the A.F.D.C. Program", Children, July - August 1965, p. 153.

TABLE 30
DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN BY SEX FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL
GROUPS FOR FOUR CITIES

EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES										
SEX	TOTAL		MONTREAL		WINNIPEG		EDMONTON		VANCOUVER	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
BOYS	227	48.0	58	50.4	54	47.0	60	48.6	55	47.0
GIRLS	246	52.0	57	49.6	61	53.0	66	52.4	62	53.0
TOTAL	473	100.0	115	100.0	115	100.0	126	100.0	117	100.0

CONTROL FAMILIES										
SEX	TOTAL		MONTREAL		WINNIPEG		EDMONTON		VANCOUVER	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
BOYS	115	49.8	26	46.4	28	54.9	32	47.1	29	51.8
GIRLS	116	50.2	30	53.6	23	45.1	36	52.9	27	48.2
TOTAL	231	100.0	56	100.0	51	100.0	68	100.0	56	100.0

7 and 10 as compared to 84 percent of children in the experimental families. In other words, almost 9% more children were in higher grades in the control group compared to the experimental group. The detailed distribution of children by the grade is given in Table 31.

TABLE 31
DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE CHILDREN BY GRADES FOR EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR FOUR CITIES

GRADE	EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES		CONTROL FAMILIES	
	NO	%	NO	%
7	124	26.2	49	21.2
8	107	22.6	45	19.5
9	84	17.8	37	16.0
10	82	17.8	40	17.3
11	47	9.9	38	16.5
12	27	5.7	20	8.7
13 & over	2	0.4	1	0.4
Don't know	-	-	1	0.4
TOTAL	473	99.9	231	100.0

With the exception of 'Condition of the Household', all data gathered from either the control or experimental families was obtained by way of questionnaires or direct questions. In certain question areas, for example, Occupation of Parents, Education of Parents and Children, Age and Grade Difference, or Unemployment Experience of Parents, the information is usually factual and consequently easy to tabulate. Where the information required involves 'attitudes' or 'aspirations', the element of interpretation is sometimes unavoidable.

There were three areas where the information gathered was concerned with aspirations, attitudes or subjective estimation of effects: a) Parents Attitudes Towards School Teachers b) Attitudes Towards Public Assistance and Social Workers, and c) Effect of Public Assistance on Children in School.

Following the hypotheses that children share the scholastic values held by their parents, as demonstrated by Kohl¹, i.e. that children are generally responsive to the values held by parents regarding school teachers and generally build up their image in positive or negative terms, it was felt that the most accurate way of eliciting an appropriate response was by asking in terms of what was 'least' or 'best' liked about school teachers. The results were easily tabulated as can be seen from Table 32.

About 50% of the experimental families and 28% of the control families expressed their general confidence and satisfaction in teachers. About one-quarter of the parents in both groups liked the teachers because of their personality and felt that they were always nice, kind and

¹Kohl, J.A., "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of 'Common Man' Boys", Harvard Educational Review 23:3 (1953).

TABLE 32

NUMBER & PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY
REASONS FOR LIKING SCHOOL TEACHERS FOR EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR FOUR CITIES

REASONS FOR LIKING TEACHERS	EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES		CONTROL FAMILIES	
	NO	%	NO	%
Personality	91	22.8	44	24.3
Professional Competence	40	10.0	51	28.2
General Confidence and satisfaction	197	49.4	50	27.6
Don't like them	3	0.8	1	0.6
Nothing to say don't know	68	17.1	35	19.4
Total	399	100.1	181	100.1

patient. Control families were somewhat more specific in their rating of competence as a desirable quality in teachers. About 10% of the experimental families and 28% of the control families liked teachers for this reason. About 17 percent of the families in the experimental group and 19% in the control group had either nothing to say or did not know what to say about school teachers.

The main negative comments on the personality traits of the teachers, by the experimental families, suggest greater resentment and sensitivity towards teachers among the assistance group. They are less discriminating about teacher competence than control families but more aware of teacher attitudes.

Another area where a larger degree of subjective interpretation must have been necessary was under the 'Effect of Public Assistance on Children in School.' In order to have a direct response, parents in the experimental group were asked the following question: "How about the children? Do you think it is harder, or easier, for them at school now

that you are on public assistance, or do you think it is about the same for them as it was before?" Table 35 indicates the responses of the parents.

TABLE 35
EFFECT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ON CHILDREN OF
EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES FOR FOUR CITIES

EFFECT	NO. OF FAMILIES	PERCENTAGE
Harder	139	34.8
Same	164	41.1
Easier	66	16.7
Don't know, no response	30	7.5
	399	100.1

About 58% of the families indicated that being on public assistance was a blessing for their children; of this group 16.7% implied that assistance made it easier for their children in school and 41.1% felt that it helped maintain the status quo. These families thought that their children were happier and better off than they were previously. These were the families who indicated that their being on public assistance has either increased their income level or maintained it at the same level as when they were working full time.

About 35% of the families indicated that it had been harder for their children since they were on public assistance. About 69% of these families complained that their children had less material goods, fewer clothes and less money than their classmates. The rest of the 31% stated that the stigma of welfare was real and people looked down upon the kids.

It should be noted, that where there is a dearth of information from

the statistics, direct quotes of interviews are added to support interpretation. For example, the concern felt by welfare recipients for their children is difficult to feel through statistics, consequently Malik states: "...feelings of concern about the needs of the children may be observed from the following statements:

'She cannot dress as well as she used to.'

'Have less material goods & money available than schoolmates'.

'Because they are unable to participate in some school activities which require extra funds.'

No specific questions were asked from the parents regarding the conditions of the household, but the interviewers made observations of cleanliness and furniture in the home. Most of the comments were favourable. The experimental families tended to live in older houses or apartments but maintained them well. Some of the typical comments of the interviewers were as follows:

"The house was big & very old. The house was clean but had a very run down look, with faded paint on the walls and worn-away floor tile. The furniture was adequate but again old."

"In regard to the state of the household, it was quite clean. However, the walls were dirty with age, it was fairly well furnished with rather cheap-looking furniture."

"Very old 'row' house with neglected exterior. Interior freshly painted and clean, but very sparsely furnished - viz kitchen table, studio couch, two chairs and refrigerator were the living room furniture. House kept very neat & clean."

The observations of the interviewers found that the families on assistance had to find accommodation in very old houses where the rents were probably low, but kept them nice - clean and moderately furnished. There were, however, some exceptions where the houses were dirty inside,

but it was a reflection on the family's individual taste and could not be attributed as one of the characteristics of sample families.

The families in the control group were comparatively living in well furnished, new homes with good furnishings. There were, however, exceptions in these families. Some of the families lived in old, small, poorly furnished and poorly kept houses.

The majority of the families in both groups had comfortable homes to live in, but comparatively the control families were living in better neighborhoods, well furnished and clean homes. The experimental families were living in old and worn-out buildings with old but comfortable furnishings.

Conclusions

The main purpose of the study was to examine the school performance of children who were attending school concurrent with their parents being on assistance.

The data provided by the schools supports the hypothesis that children on assistance perform poorly and boys even do worse than girls. More of the children in assisted families than control families failed in their academic career. More children in the experimental group were behind in grade as compared to their chronological age and the data on school performance of the sample child supports the hypotheses that children on assistance perform relatively poorly.

The evidence on "oldest child out of school" is that the parents own educational levels and occupational aspirations are followed by their children, even if the parents aspirations for the children are higher. Parent's goals and values are not formally deviant from societal values but parental example is evidently a powerful force in moulding children's behavior. Thus the hypothesis that goals and values of parents are transmitted to the children is supported by both the attitudes and behavior expressed by the children.

More children in the control families than in the experimental families expressed their admiration for persons who were professional and businessmen, and their desire and expectation to be a professional. The experimental children were more realistic about expecting a lower occupation. As with their occupational expectations, the educational aspirations and expectations of the children of assisted families were lower than those of the control children. The second hypothesis is also supported

by the actual educational and occupational achievement of the oldest child out of school in both groups of families.

The study has demonstrated that the children of public assistance families perform at a lower level in school than do their close friends of similar social background. Boys do more poorly than girls. Their older brothers and sisters achieved a lower educational and occupational level than did those in the control group. The educational and occupational aspirations and expectations of the assistance children are lower than their friends. In general, it is found that in every area examined poor performance and receipt of assistance are related, but this does not necessarily imply that being on assistance is as such, the cause of poor school performance.

The only valid conclusion that can be made is that there is an 'association' between poor school performance by children of recipients and the fact that the family is receiving public assistance. The reason that such a conclusion is so 'non specific' is due to the vast number of factors and variables involved. The fact that such a high percentage of the children from the experimental families had no father present in the home, the gross inequity of incomes between the control and experimental families, the fact that the experimental families were larger on the whole than the control families, and the strong possibility that the teachers expectations of children of welfare families may have been inhibiting - all or some of these factors may have direct or indirect effects upon the children's school performance, and all of them are related to welfare assistance but none were dealt with directly in Malik's Study.

An alternative hypothesis is that assistance status and poor performance are both the result of other factors; perhaps the social alienation of the parents. From the information available it appears as though poor school performance and welfare assistance are far from a 'cause-effect' relationship. It is too narrow an outlook to assume that only 'goals and values' can be the attributed cause of poor school performance of children from public assistance families. The study supports the hypothesis that attitude and performance are transmitted between generations, but the child must be seen as responding to all the factors of the environment and particularly to the family, not just to limited aspects of welfare or school programs.

Style of Writing

Dr. Malik's 250 page study is clearly and conveniently tabled and the style of writing is easily read and comprehended. The first chapter summarizes content of the study along with policy implications. It was intended to be a quick resume of the Study for the reader who has little time and cannot go through the detailed contents and tables.

Subsequent chapters cover

- (a) Scope & Origin of the Study
- (b) Research Design and Methodology
- (c) Characteristics of Sample
- (d) Data for Individual Cities
- (e) Research Instruments
- (f) Bibliography

Implications for Social Work Practice

Dr. Malik's study points out the gross disadvantages suffered by families forced into receiving public assistance. These disadvantages could in many cases be alleviated by an expansion of services, improved communication between assistance families and professionals i.e. teachers social workers, policy changes, development of new services, better quality services, and greater concern regarding teachers expectations of children from assistance families.

The general orientation of low income families toward education is formally the same as that of the middle class in the sense that it is valued. But the translation of their aspirations into reality is beyond their ability, and call for special educational and welfare supports. Many experimental ventures are being tried in the United States to bring educational and counselling help to low income people. Means should be found in Canada to bring the best in facilities and teaching to the school in low income areas. School Social Workers who can help assistance recipients to realize the uses of education are one possible resource. Most Canadian school systems lack such workers. Social Workers likewise have a part to play in the development of new curricula both for children and adults in order that it can realistically meet the pragmatic expectations of low income families, replacing middle class academic formulas that are not realistic to them.

Eventually perhaps the professional social worker will also become a professional teacher in certain areas. Dr. Malik's study suggested that School Social Service Departments should be organized in all metropolitan

and industrial cities. Social workers who have been in direct contact with welfare recipients are sensitive to their needs, familiar with their value and goal orientation, and realistic in terms of the type of education that would be most beneficial - these social workers would be most valuable in the setting up of special classes and programs for tutoring children whose homes do not provide educational stimulation and support.

The social worker has a responsibility to be instrumental in the setting up of a range of services to help the assistance families in caring for children, handicapped persons and the aged. The one parent family is especially in need of these community resources, which include services such as Day Care Centres, Homemaker Services, recreational programs and family counselling.

Welfare payments should be related to an adequate standard of living based on family need rather than any arbitrary criteria such as the minimum wage levels in a jurisdiction. In Dr. Malik's study over half the assistance families had incomes between \$150 and 250 dollars a month. Over 80 per cent had less than \$300 month. Three quarters of control families had over \$300 a month. Yet assistance families were larger than control families. Two-thirds of the families reported difficulty in paying for children's clothing and school necessities and one-third reported their children experienced social stigma.

This finding is a simple statement of the low levels of assistance provided under traditional welfare policy. Usually, it is the social worker who is the administrator of the welfare policy and he is in a position to recommend and see that welfare payments be related to an adequate standard

of living. Even the needs-test program such as is contemplated in the Canada Assistance Plan is meaningless unless a more generous philosophy is brought to the concept of 'need'. This implies that those involved in social welfare should consider anew the relationship that welfare assistance should bear to earnings and employment.

Keeping in mind that total family income wasn't the only variable relating to poor school performance in children from assistance families, we should refocus upon the possibility of teachers expectations of such children having an inhibiting effect upon their school performance. As most teachers in elementary and secondary schools are from a middle-class background perhaps their orientation towards students from the lower socio-economic class is somewhat distorted.

While not directly implied from Dr. Malik's Study, the reorientation of teachers to a different socio-economic environment may well be co-ordinated with the social work profession. The implication here may be for group sessions or encounter groups with teachers in order to increase their sensitivity to and knowledge of the problems encountered by those from a different class level. This perhaps could be carried a step further and involve group sessions for social workers.

In reply to the question, 'what do you like least about social workers?', respondents were generally not willing or ready to give precise replies. About 60% of the families had nothing to say or did not comment. Only 28.3 per cent of the families had generally negative attitudes about social workers. From the earlier analysis of the similar question about school teachers, it leads one to assume that the experimental group felt safer about expressing negative comments about school teachers. It may

have been that the experimental families were identifying the interviewer as a social worker or someone doing investigation from the welfare department although an attempt was made to eliminate this fear in the rapport.

This possible fear, while only speculative according to Malik's study, is not uncommon among many welfare families. This merely reaffirms the general notion that the welfare policy has been set up in a pitifully paternalistic fashion. This fear of the 'welfare department' is in effect a fear of its' representative i.e. the social worker and this consequently does not say much for the relationship established between the client and the social worker.

Most of the comments offered by assistance families regarding the social worker suggest a greater need for understanding, mature and skilled professionals to deal with the most sensitive and intimate problems of families.

As determined from the data, in about three-quarters of the public assistance families there was no male head present due to death, divorce or separation of the husband. It was observed that boys performed at a lower level than girls in the experimental group as well as the control group and generally those children from experimental families were less productive in the educational system. While a direct causal relationship was never established between school performance and 'lack of male head' it cannot be discounted as a contributing factor. This has supportive implications for the social worker who is setting up, administering, and taking part in a Big Brother Organization. Specifically, it may be

more appropriate for the welfare departments to have a closer affiliation with the Big Brother Organization or at least set up one of their own within their own department.

The major recommendations of Dr. Malik's study are directed at Social Welfare Policy. For example, he suggests a more realistic payment of public assistance to maintain family dignity and combat social deterioration, an immediate need in welfare administration to develop a reliable case classification system to provide the appropriate service to the family, and incentives to keep the children in school including higher family income, higher levels of exemption of family earnings and extra supplements. One of the major implications these recommendations have for social work practice is the actual implementation. This may well involve further research, and the organization and preparation of an amendment of present welfare policies but if it isn't instigated and initiated by social workers, who else should be held responsible. The welfare recipients would be further ahead to do their own lobbying.

Dr. Malik's study was specifically concerned with the school performance of children from assistance families in the elementary school system, however, his observations and policy recommendations indicate an obvious shortsightedness in his perspective of the school system and its influence upon school performance of children from deprived backgrounds.

In view of Jacobson's¹⁷ study regarding teachers expectations affecting school performance of children and the suggestion that teachers would benefit from sensitivity sessions and encounter groups, we could

¹⁷ Jacobson, op. cit.

further suggest that social workers may be hired in a teaching capacity in Teachers Colleges and Colleges of Education.

Not only could they offer material regarding group and classroom dynamics, but more important, especially in view of Malik's study, social workers would be in a position to point out the pitfalls or unreasonable and unrecognized prejudice, the consequences of the middle class value system being imposed upon the lower class value system in the classroom setting, and the dangers of a curriculum that expects a lower class child to think in abstract terms and be able to conceptualize in terms of time.

As mentioned previously there is a basic dirth of understanding of the dynamics of the hardships suffered by those who are forced to conform to a different value system from which their whole life style has been modelled.

Under "Tie With Existing Knowledge & Research" as mentioned above even the main instrument of measuring academic ability has been shown to have a jaundiced perspective. Here again, with the middle class I.Q. tests affecting such a high percentage of the elementary schools population and consequently the teacher's expectations perhaps a different form of intelligence tests should be administered: 1 for the middle class, 1 for the lower class.

The situation is not dissimilar with the general emphasis on the middle class curriculum. A more realistic curriculum should be designed so that middle class and lower class children could share equally, the values of education. Social workers in colleges of education, teachers colleges, serving as members of Boards of Education have a responsibility

as well as the ability to change and alter the elementary school curriculum.

Hopefully more social workers will be employed in the school system not only to assist teachers with the appropriateness of the curriculum but to take up positions as qualified guidance counsellors. This would encourage a closer teacher -social worker rapport and consequently provide a more efficient system of assisting problem children. Having a social worker in the school would insure proper referrals to psychologists, psychiatrists and special educational facilities, & possibly uncover a number of problem home situations which could be dealt with through the school or by way of referral.

It doesn't take a great deal of imagination to visualize with time the possibility of group sessions run by social workers for teachers, parents, and students within the school setting. A further consideration might be the incorporation of day care centres and homemaker programs into the educational centres under the supervision of teachers and social workers. At such an early age, diagnosis of potential problem children could result in special classes being developed to head off some of the more serious problems, that manifest themselves more obviously during adolescence.

In the United States, social workers were actively involved in organizing and participating in the 'Head Start' program where 'socially deprived' children from assistance families of pre school age were given special educational classes in an effort to boost their performance. Possibly a similar program could be initiated by social workers, psychologists in conjunction with teachers and school administrators, particularly

in areas of Canada like Newfoundland, Quebec and the Maritimes where it has been observed that children perform very poorly in school in relation to Canadian youngsters on the whole.

Along with the employment of social workers with professional staff of the educational institutions, I would suggest that field placements for graduate students in social work be made available within both the elementary and high school settings with supervision from the professional social workers.

Hopefully we shall never reach the stage where our students merely become mechanical information reservoirs, ready to regurgitate facts at the touch of a button, or the point where all of us are subjected to mass education with the consequent loss of creativity and spontaneity. This is doubtful as the educators now seem to be focusing on a newer problem: i.e. that of disseminating information pertinent to a meaningful existence. But to bring such an objective to reality, a corps of mature teachers who have views and imagination is essential. Not only must these teachers bring to their teaching a thorough knowledge of the subject to be taught, but they also must have a deep understanding of the potential drives and capabilities inherent in man. It is this deep sensitivity and understanding which a social worker can help develop in a teacher, and help him realize that he has the responsibility to establish an atmosphere that is conducive to each individual member becoming a more satisfied person - a person more in love with life.¹⁸

The social worker can assist the teacher in realizing that he must

¹⁸ L. Wilson, Leisure. Published by the Canadian Conference on Aging, The Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa: 1965.

never see his class as an anonymous mass. His responsibility to understand each individual and to help each individual in regard to his own specific needs as well as in regard to the needs of the total class and the society in which it exists.

It is interesting to note the general implications of the recommendations which have come out of Dr. Malik's study. The recommendations include policy changes, higher welfare payments, development of a classification system, development of new programs and departments and material incentives to encourage children from assistance families to stay in school. While all of these are of concern for the professional social worker there is only moderate involvement of the classical casework and group work techniques, with the most emphasis on administration, community organization and social policy. Naturally the former are, to varying degrees, concomitant with the latter, however, there isn't much point in offering psychotherapy to a welfare recipient whose main concern in obtaining enough food for his or her ten children.

Implications of the Research for Social Work Knowledge

The study of school performance of children from assistance families, rather than uncover any new insights for social work knowledge, has confirmed many common but undocumented observations of families receiving assistance.

In three-quarters of the assistance families there was no male head, and in 96% the father was either missing or unemployed. This absence or financial dependence of the father means that children are deprived both of marginal income and of a normal social role image of the adult male, and the mother and children are compelled to assume some of the father's functions. Dr. Malik's study points out that public welfare policy cannot supply this lack, but it may in cases prevent its occurrence. Fathers may desert because of frustrations arising from their sense of inadequacy which is often, in turn, due to lack of education, of skill, of security, of income. Lack of work and lack of income are two major marks of the family's loss of status. The study emphasizes the fact that whether the father is dead disabled, or has deserted, or is unemployed, a rate of assistance sufficient to maintain family dignity should reduce social deterioration.

One of the observations made from the data was the large number of male children from assistant families that were married and an even higher proportion that were living away from home. Heavy pressures fell on the older male children in families that are on assistance, both because of inadequacy of family income and, often, abrogation of the fathers functions. Early school leaving and early marriage have been

shown elsewhere to be closely related to low skills and high unemployment rates. According to Malik then, public policy should be concerned as much with reducing the pressure on children to leave home as with inducements for educational upgrading or retraining and it could possibly aided by the provision in welfare policy of higher family income, higher levels of exemption of family earnings and extra supplements to allow children to stay in school.

Dr. Malik makes the recommendation that adult educational programs should be emphasized and special literary classes started for the families with low educational achievement. This, of course, was based on his observations that educational experience of the fathers in the experimental group was worse than the control fathers and that basic education programs for adults (other than language classes for immigrants) are almost entirely lacking in Canada.

Only half as many assistance fathers as control fathers had any occupational training. In both groups, half of the men had dropped out of school for family and financial reasons.

The experience of the fathers proved to anticipate that of the older children. Boys are especially affected by the model of the fathers and Malik found that most assistance fathers lacked even the basic education for admission to available training courses. Since continuing education is a luxury reserved for the very few in our society, Malik recommends that special courses be provided, and strong inducements are needed to make it socially and financially possible or worthwhile for men to attend if their readiness for work is to be improved.

In many jurisdictions, as pointed out in the study, welfare policy

does not encourage or even permit supplementation of earnings by welfare payments. The effect is that recipients choose the security of even inadequate welfare and lose contact with the world of work. In theory and hopefully in practice, welfare policies should be designed to make it possible to combine security with improvement of skills and responsibility, and support should go beyond income flexibility to provision for care of children and other family members, especially in families where the burden rests on one parent.

One of Dr. Malik's observations was that the present welfare policy has not taken into account the various causes of dependency that gives rise to dependency. He found that a majority of welfare recipients had less than six months' experience of assistance, but if they need aid as long as six months, the situation tends to keep them in need for very much longer. Public welfare policy has not taken account of differences in the circumstances that give rise to dependency as they relate to differences in the duration of need, nor is it designed to offset cumulative psychological and social effects of receipt of welfare such as loss of job skills, work references, and the sense of security that further separate the long term recipient from independence and hampers his re-entry to work. According to Malik the present policy lacks the required analysis of such differences, and should undergo changes directed towards provision of services with more precise relevance to these differences in need.

Changes are needed to make it possible to bring effective help in time of crisis, to avoid longterm breakdown, and specific aids, like money for leisure periods, are needed to free parents for self development.

These services must be readily available, according to Malik, and must be freed of the conditions placed on their use that contribute to rather than combat dependency.

As mentioned previously, the comments from the assistance families regarding social workers implied there was a shortage of mature and skilled professionals to deal with the problems of the families. It is also of note that more than 54 per cent of the public assistance families in the sample had 'very little or no contact at all' with the social worker. This seems to have the implication, that many public assistance families, who probably have as much if not more to glean from certain services offered by the social worker, rarely, if ever, come in contact with a member of the helping profession. This, of course, merely confirms the fact that few social welfare agencies employed trained social workers.*

From Dr. Malik's study, as has been noted previously, it could not be shown that being on assistance was as such the cause of poor school performance. He suggests that an alternative hypothesis may be that assistance status and poor performance are both the result of other factors; perhaps the social alienation of the parents, but the causal connection can only be established through further study. This is the only suggestion regarding further areas of research, however, the study findings imply the possibility that a large number of factors contribute to poor school performance of children of assistance families. Three of the most important variables are gross family income, presence of a male head, and teachers expectation affecting school performance of children. If further research were done using these factors as single variables perhaps a more accurate causal connection could be established with poor school performance of children from assistance families.

*trained social worker for the purpose of the study is: B.S.W., M.S.W. or doctrate of Social Works.

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