



Problems in Indian families : a survey of major problems and coping procedures of twenty Indian families residing on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation
by Michael A Emerson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE
in Home Economics
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was first to survey American Indian families on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and identify the major problems and coping procedures of the families interviewed.

Secondly, the purpose was to survey the professional workers employed by the Reservation who were responsible for dealing with Indian problems. This part of the research was conducted to compare their perceptions with that of the Indian families.

The sample included a total of twenty Indian families and five professional workers. The survey was carried out by the use of personal interviews, using questions of open-ended form.

The research disclosed that there were events perceived as major problems by the twenty Indian families and five professional workers within the Indian family structure. These were concentrated within the areas of (1) marital, (2) economic, and (3) occupational.

Coping procedures were used, though it was the general attitude of both the professional workers and Indian families that most coping procedures were not adequate in dealing with the families' problem areas.

In comparing the perceptions of both the professional workers and Indian families interviewed, it was found that the professional workers perceived major problems and coping procedures almost entirely in terms of overt, observable behavior. The Indian families reported some of the same observable behavior but also perceived other behavior that was not overt, i.e., emotional and psychological.

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PROBLEMS IN INDIAN FAMILIES: A SURVEY OF MAJOR PROBLEMS
AND COPING PROCEDURES OF TWENTY INDIAN FAMILIES
RESIDING ON THE FORT BELKNAP INDIAN RESERVATION

by

MICHAEL A. EMERSON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

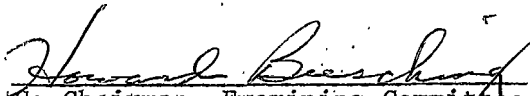
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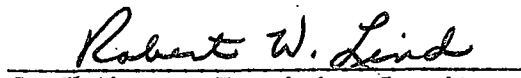
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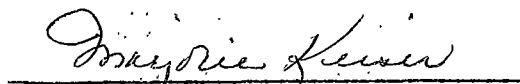
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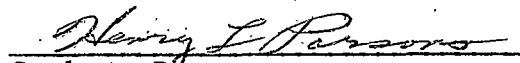
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August, 1975

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Significant contributions by many persons to the completion of this thesis is greatly acknowledged.

I am especially grateful to the three members of my graduate committee: Dr. Howard Busching, Dr. Robert Lind, and Dr. Richard Horswill, for their encouragement, suggestions, and patience. In particular, I wish to thank Dr. Robert Lind, my thesis co-chairman, for allowing me the freedom to develop my own ideas while pointing out areas which needed clarification.

I am gratefully indebted to Mr. William Franks, fellow student and friend, who served as my English consultant at various times during my hours of need. His encouragement and friendship went beyond the norm.

In addition, I gratefully acknowledge the administration and people of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, especially Mr. Elmer Main; without his cooperation, it would have never gotten off the ground.

Last, but most important, I want to thank my wife, Jacqueline. Her patience, understanding, and clerical help was unbelievable. Along with her I wish to show appreciation to my parents, whose encouragement and financial help make it all possible.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was first to survey American Indian families on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and identify the major problems and coping procedures of the families interviewed.

Secondly, the purpose was to survey the professional workers employed by the Reservation who were responsible for dealing with Indian problems. This part of the research was conducted to compare their perceptions with that of the Indian families.

The sample included a total of twenty Indian families and five professional workers. The survey was carried out by the use of personal interviews, using questions of open-ended form.

The research disclosed that there were events perceived as major problems by the twenty Indian families and five professional workers within the Indian family structure. These were concentrated within the areas of (1) marital, (2) economic, and (3) occupational.

Coping procedures were used, though it was the general attitude of both the professional workers and Indian families that most coping procedures were not adequate in dealing with the families' problem areas.

In comparing the perceptions of both the professional workers and Indian families interviewed, it was found that the professional workers perceived major problems and coping procedures almost entirely in terms of overt, observable behavior. The Indian families reported some of the same observable behavior but also perceived other behavior that was not overt, i.e., emotional and psychological.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Until recently many counselors, educators, and researchers seem to have believed that aside from significant language barriers people from different ethnic backgrounds could be helped effectively with traditional methodology. The assumption has been that the way to assimilate people from different cultures or ethnic groups was to Americanize them, that is to wean them from their own cultures and channel them into a melting pot of white middle-class culture and life styles. In the process of implementing this kind of assimilation of divergent ethnic groups, our educational system was designed to mold them into the kinds of people who would fit the prevailing definition of what constituted a red-blooded American. As a result the idea that an individual should be developed into his own racial culture, whether Puerto Rican, Chicano, or American Indian, was never conceptualized as a responsibility of the professional working with these people. Instead, top priority was awarded to the process of Americanization at the expense of the ethnicity of the individual.

In the field of education and counseling, we are presently witnessing the development of an alternative to the traditional theory of practice of assimilation. This alternative is called pluralistic acculturation. This approach calls for educators, counselors and researchers to accept, to understand, and to appreciate the fact that

other cultures function as viable and valuable models of different systems for individual and social life and organization. One way in which to accomplish this is through an investigation of how the ethnic group in question views the particular problem or situation. A definite need exists for this new approach. There is a need to develop within the professionals working with these people a familiarity with divergent cultures, not only to understand each other better but also to understand the rich diversity of human nature. What is being said is that when the professional relates to an individual within a different racial and ethnic inheritance, the professional has an obligation to recognize and evaluate the importance of the other person's culture value system (Palomares, 1971:139-145).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was first to survey American Indian families of the Fort Belknap Reservation and identify the problems and coping procedures of these families. More specifically, the two major areas, problems and coping procedures, were broken down into six parts: (1) marital; (2) parental; (3) interpersonal; (4) economic; (5) occupational; and (6) extended family.

Secondly, the purpose was to survey the five professional people employed by the reservation who are responsible for dealing with Indian problems. This was done to find out if they perceive the family problems and coping procedures to be the same as the families

interviewed perceived them, and to compare their perceptions with the Indian families interviewed.

Justification

Quite often when researchers and agencies in the helping professions are planning special projects or programs for the people they will be serving, they fail to find out how the people in question feel about or view those particular issues. Instead, they decide what is best for the people without any research concerned with the individual's views and wants. Without this information the programs planned would only be speculating on the real needs of the people. As stated by Jack Plumage on Tuesday, November 19, 1974, at the Human Rights Conference, Helena, Montana:

The policy has been--HELP THE INDIAN--we must make him equal to us. I propose that we have been helped too much. Not only that but we have been given the wrong kind of help. No one has ever come to us and said "'WHAT KIND OF HELP DO YOU NEED?" or "WHAT ARE YOUR PROBLEMS?" It has always been the whiteman telling us what our plight was or what our problems are and then their experts helping us to solve our problems in order to civilize us.

Knowledge derived from what the Indian views as a problem and how he copes with it could be utilized in many ways; for example, by the Mental Health Branch of the Indian Health Service. The Indian Health Service would be aided by this information by giving this knowledge to their Mental Health Consultants on reservations, particularly the Fort Belknap Reservation. The information would aid in the consultant's overall view of Indian problems and influence the selection of

the mode in which therapy is to be given.

The Mental Health Consultant on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation has made a request for the information, believing that it might prove valuable to him in treatment.

Finally, this research was addressed to the 36,710 Indian people of Montana whose demand for studies directly concerned with how the Indian himself feels is finally being heard (Office of the Governor, August, 1974).

Limitations and Delimitations

There are three delimitations that the researcher has selected. First, the researcher has delimited his research to Indian families of the Fort Belknap Reservation. Secondly, the researcher has delimited his population by defining "adult" as a person eighteen years and older and also any person under eighteen years who has the responsibility of raising and caring for a family. Third, the researcher has delimited the type of problems to fall within the areas of: (1) marital; (2) parental; (3) interpersonal; (4) economic; (5) occupational; and (6) the expanded family.

The research was limited by (1) those persons taking part in the research and (2) by the total number of professional helpers employed by the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

General Questions to
be Answered

Through personal interviews, the answers to the following questions were sought:

What events are identified as major problems to the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in regard to marital relationships?

What events are identified as major problems to the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in regard to interpersonal relationships?

What events are identified as major problems to the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in regard to occupational situations?

What events are identified as major problems to the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in regard to economic responsibilities?

What events are identified as major problems to the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in regard to parental responsibilities?

What events are identified as major problems to the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in regard to the extended family?

What are the coping procedures used by the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in relation to marital problems?

What are the coping procedures used by the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in relation to interpersonal problems?

What are the coping procedures used by the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in relation to occupational problems?

What are the coping procedures used by the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in relation to economic problems?

What are the coping procedures used by the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in relation to parental problems?

What are the coping procedures used by the Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in relation to problems within the extended family?

Definition of Terms

Major problem. ". . . an upset in a state" In a state of unbalance or having a major problem, by definition, is postulated that the habitual problem-solving activities are not adequate and so do not lead rapidly to the previously achieved balanced state.

With this definition, there are three sets of interrelated factors which can produce a state leading to major problems:

1. A hazardous event which poses threat
2. A threat to instinctual need which is symbolically linked to early threats that resulted in vulnerability or conflict

3. Inability to respond with adequate coping mechanism (Parad, 1973:24-26).

American Indian. Any person, male or female, who is able to claim American Indian heritage, without regard to the per cent of Indian blood.

Adult. Any person, male or female, eighteen years of age and older, or any person, male or female, under eighteen years, who has the responsibility of raising and caring for a family. Under this definition, the adult members of the nuclear or extended family, if living within the family household, were considered part of this research.

T.N.S. Tape Notations Sheet.

Coping procedure. The procedure used by individuals to work out their problems.

Interpersonal area. The area dealing with interactions between the Indian family and other people, i.e., how the family relationships are with their neighbors, friends, community, etc.

Chapter 2

SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Major Problems

A person with major problems is at a turning point. He faces a problem that he can not readily solve by using procedures and coping mechanisms that have worked for him before. The result is that his tension and anxiety increase, leaving him less able to find an adequate solution. A person in this state feels helpless, he is caught in a state of great emotional upset and feels unable to solve his own problems (Aguilera, 1970). Crisis or major problems may occur, as stated by Caplan (1961), when an individual faces problems which he finds himself unable to solve. He goes on to agree with Aguilera, Messick, and Farrel (1961), in stating that there is a rise in inner tension and signs of anxiety and an inability to function in extended periods of emotional upset.

According to Caplan (1964), man is constantly faced with a need to solve his problems in order to maintain some balance to his existence. When he is confronted with an imbalance between the difficulty of a problem and his ability to solve it, or lack of coping skills, a major problem state may evolve. Tension rises and discomfort is felt, with feelings of anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, and helplessness. Caplan (1964) also stated that there are four phases which elicit major problems or a crisis: (1) the initial rise in tension as the habitual problem

solving techniques are tried; (2) a lack of success in coping with the situation as the stimulus continues and more discomfort is felt; (3) an increase in tension which acts as a powerful internal stimulus and mobilizes internal and external resources; and (4) as the problem continues and is neither solved nor avoided, tension increases and major distortion and disorganization occurs.

In Figure 1, page 10, there is shown a Paradigm with the effect of balancing factors in a stressful event, one leading to a major problem state and the other leading, of course, to no major problem. Figure 2, page 11, carries the Paradigm one step further in applying it to a hypothetical situation, and like Figure 1 shows one leading to a major problem state and the other not.

Through an exhausting search of the literature at the Library at Montana State University and Weber State in Ogden, Utah, the researcher found no significant literature on the American Indian family structure or any literature pertaining to the American Indian family per se. Therefore, the researcher structured his review of literature to cover the aspects of the American Indian which were accessible to him; namely, aspects dealing with Indian culture, life style, government, and the American Indian as an individual.

Fort Belknap Indian Reservation

The Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, located south of the Milk River in north-central Montana, is the home of descendants of two

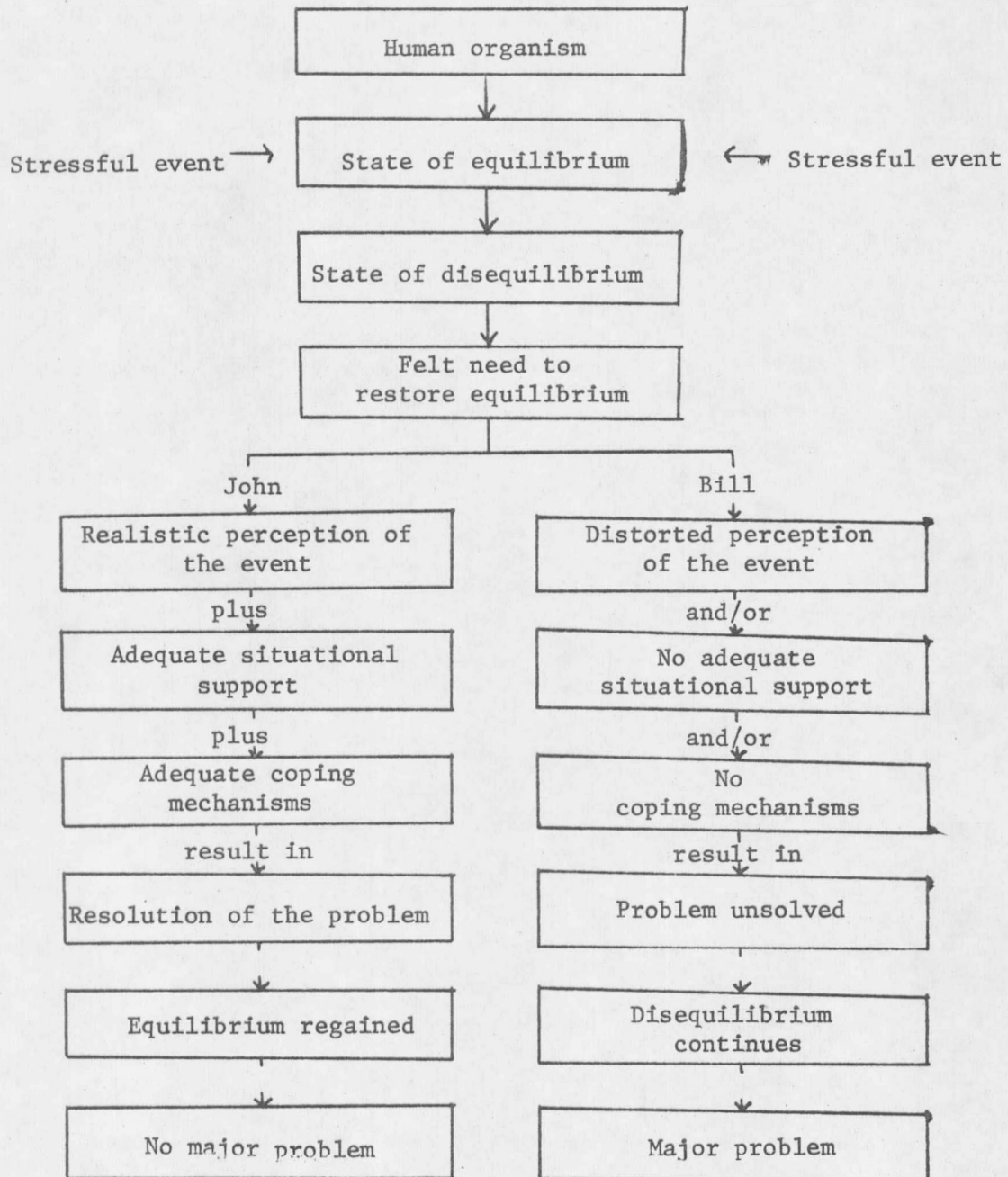


Figure 1

Paradigm: Effect of Balancing Factors in a Stressful Event

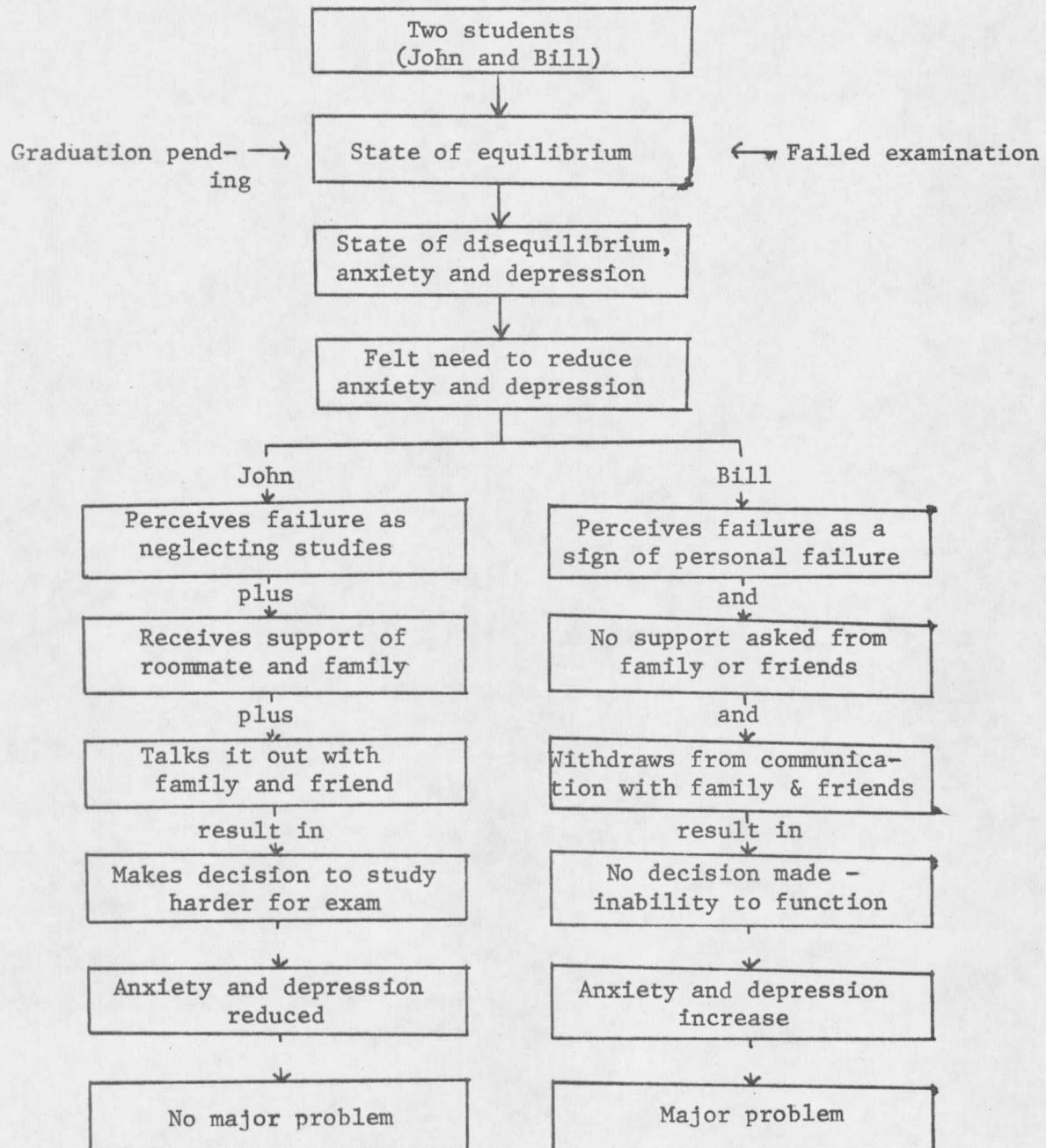


Figure 2

Paradigm Applied to a Case Study

distinct American Indian Tribes--the Gros Ventre or Atsina and the Assiniboiné. Both tribes are plains Indians, but the Gros Ventre were of Algonquin stock, which were closely related to the Arapaho, whereas the Assiniboiné were once part of the Yanktonai Sioux.

The Gros Ventre were living in what is now called Montana when the first white men entered the region. The Assiniboiné, on the other hand, left their mother tribe, the Yanktonai Sioux, shortly before 1640. They followed the Cree northward from the headwaters of the Mississippi toward Lake Superior and the Great Hudson Bay. It was believed that they settled first in the vicinity of the Lake of the Woods, then drifted northwest to the region around Lake Winnepage. The Assiniboiné ranged in Canada and along the Milk River of Montana. Until 1838 they were a fairly large tribe of about 1,000 to 1,200 lodges. Smallpox reduced them to less than 400 lodges, and conflicts with neighboring hostile tribes diminished their numbers still further. Both the Gros Ventre and Assiniboiné shared the vast Blackfeet Hunting Territory which was set aside by the Treaty of 1855. These lands were to be used in common by Indians receiving rations at Fort Browning, Milk River, and Fort Belknap, for a period of ninety-nine years. The area was reduced in 1873. Out of this there evolved three separate reservations--Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Fort Peck. These were established by the Act of May 1, 1888.

In 1937 the enrollment of the Fort Belknap Indian community

was placed at 1,487. By January 1, 1968, the population of the community had risen to a total of 3,608 individuals who were enrolled or eligible for enrollment. This constitutes an increase of nearly 142 per cent in 30 years.

Of the present total membership of the Fort Belknap Indian community, only 1,515--less than half--still live on the reservation during most of the year. Approximately seventy non-enrolled Indians, of various tribes, live on the reservation, although they have no interest in the tribal affairs.

About 37 per cent of the Indian population live along the Milk River on the northern fringe of the reservation in an irrigated area. Most of the others live thirty-five to forty miles to the south, along the base of the Little Rocky Mountains. The area between the Milk River and the Little Rockies is grazing land, and few people live in that region.

There are a total of 651,119 acres within the reservation boundaries, and two-thirds of such is allotted to and owned by individual Indians. Tribally-owned land is leased to either Indian or non-Indian cattlemen. With this and other assets, it produces an annual income to the tribal government of approximately \$38,000, which is used for operating expenses (Indian Club, 1975).

Myths Concerning the
American Indian

To believe that the American Indian not only wants to revere his life in the past but also return to it is a myth that is part of the folklore involving the first Americans. In truth most Indians want to participate actively in the life of the present (Locklear:1972). They do so gladly and willingly if they are accepted and permitted to live in accord with at least some of the ideas they believe to be right and essential for man's well being.

Another myth has been built up around the Indian and his work habits. Many people believe that the Indian will not work, that he is lazy, and all he does is wait around the reservation wasting his time, waiting for the federal government to support him. A common belief is that the Indian is happy doing nothing and that anything calling for active support of the Indian people is doomed to fail because of their lack of ambition, interest, and even skill. First of all, the Indian does not receive financial help or assistance in kind from the state or federal government merely because he is Indian. Most money paid to tribes, or for that matter individual Indians, comes from funds already in existence and belonging to the tribe but held in trust by the federal government (Locklear, 1972).

The Indian aspires to reach a level of comfort comparable to that of others, though not necessarily the same. At present the Indian has not attained this aspiration, though this does not automatically

mean that he lacks ability or ambition. This fact is mainly due to the lack of opportunities not the neglect of them. Many times opportunities for the Indian are controlled and, therefore, kept out of reach by complex governmental structures and paternalistic attitudes.

A major belief, but also another myth, is that all Indians want to regain possession of the land that their great, great-grandfather roamed before white settlers came to the United States. True, a few Indians today may make such a claim, but the struggle of the overwhelming majority is not in regaining the lost land on which their forefathers enjoyed life. The Indians main concern in this area is in retaining the land that belongs to them by right of possession, title, and treaty. As stated by Locklear (1972), most dealings that the Indian has with the federal government involving land are in trying to get the federal government to at least honor the essence of treaties made years ago and in also trying desperately to prevent a complete sellout of the remaining Indian lands to private interests.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was created by acts of congress and supported by legislative and judicial actions. The Bureau's main function was to assist the Indian tribes which fell under its jurisdiction. There are six primary areas under which this function is to be delivered. They are as follows: (1) holding in trust lands and money for the Indian people; (2) helping to establish and maintain economic

projects; (3) helping to develop self-sufficiency; (4) acting as an intermediary or referral source; (5) assisting Indian people with other governmental agencies such as state and federal governments; and finally (6) to provide education, social, and health services.

Basically, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' main aims are to provide a higher standard of living for Indian people, to help develop the Indians' responsibility for managing their own funds and lands, and finally to promote their political and social integration.

As of 1968 the Bureau had an annual operating budget of \$241 million and employed about 16,000 persons with slightly over half of the employees of Indian descent. At that time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs held 50 million acres of land in trust for the various tribes, with an agricultural return of approximately \$170 million per year, which figures out to be less than \$3.50 per acre.

Though many of the programs designed by the Bureau are for the good of the American Indian, many of these are made less effective by the maze of red tape and bureaucracy which plagues the agency. Although slightly more than half of the Bureau's employees are Indian, few Indian persons hold high administrative positions. As of 1968 there were less than twenty. Most programs are primarily administered by persons of white middle-class standing (Bureau of Indian Affairs, May 1968).

Though the Bureau was originally organized to help the American Indian, many Indians believe it is not doing its job, and that it is

really a stumbling block with all the red tape holding them back. Experiencing such exclusion over a period of time, the Indian generates a "What's the use" attitude and feelings of apathy, helplessness, and hopelessness. It is common to hear on reservations that the initials B.I.A. really stand for "Boss Indians Around," and many still feel that "You cannot buck city hall (Indian Club, 1975)."

Alcohol and the American Indian

It is believed that group or gang-type drinking among the American Indian represents a greater problem in terms of crime rates and community disorganization than addicted drinking. Observation of the American Indians' drinking patterns indicate that lone drinkers are rare and that individual addicted drinkers are less common among the Indian than the non-Indian. In most Indian communities, the solitary drinker is considered a deviant by drinkers and non-drinkers alike (Du Toit, 1964:16).

The fact that alcohol is a serious problem has long occupied the attention of both the American Indian and non-Indian. The prohibition of liquor by tribal councils on most reservations after the 1953 repeal of the Indian Intercourse Act of 1832 is indicative of the Indians' own concern about abuses in drinking. Under the Act of 1832, it was illegal to sell or provide liquor to American Indians (Ferguson, 1968).

Stewart (1964:61) demonstrated by well-documented statistics that the proportion of Indians arrested for all alcohol related crimes

is the highest in the nation. The rate of such arrests is twelve times greater than the national average and over five times that of Negroes. A study made in South Dakota (Farber, 1957), where Indians constitute only 5 per cent of the total population, stated Indians comprise 34 per cent of all inmates in the State Penitentiary. Most of the crimes for which the Indians were imprisoned were connected with the consumption of alcoholic beverages. In the southwest, according to Stewart (1964: 63), arrest rates among Indians correspond to the national pattern, and the overwhelming majority of the crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol.

Ferguson (1965), Henderson and Littman (1964), and Stewart (1964) all agree in their studies that the arrest rates for drunkenness and alcohol-related crimes for the American Indian is much higher than for non-Indians in the United States.

Graves (1965) stated that police records indicate that about half of all Navaho migrants were arrested at least once during their stay in Denver, Colorado. Over 95 per cent of these arrests were alcohol-related. Whittaker (1963) found drinking and alcoholism more widespread among the Indians of the Standing Rock Sioux than among the surrounding white population.

Bollinger (1963) reported that nearly half of the adult deaths on reservations were directly or indirectly due to alcoholism, and that one-third of all the children on the reservation had one or both parents

with a drinking problem. Harris (1968) reported that in 1966 the Indian death rate from cirrhosis of the liver, a disease frequently resulting from alcoholism, was three times the rate for the total population of the United States.

The social characteristics of American Indian drinking have been well illustrated in studies of the drinking patterns of the northwest coast Indian by Lemert (1954, 1958). In his report on three Salish groups, Lemert (1958:99) noted that the drinkers formed a kind of social solidarity in the presence of the white society. While sober they were restrained, impassive, even shy and timid; but their drinking behavior was marked by rolling, laughing, shouting, and general boisterousness. Under the influence of liquor, they actively accompanied drunken excursions to find more liquor when their supply was used up.

Du Toit, in a study of the Klamath Indians, also commented on the group or gang nature of the Indian drinking pattern:

In lieu of social gatherings and institutions, and in the presence of stress and growing anxiety, young (Klamath) people started to organize drinking parties. They would meet in the tavern, and when it closed buy enough alcohol to last them all night or for the next day, and then meet in the house of a participant or in a vacant house where they, as Indians who shared common interests and fears, could be together and enjoy the stimulating experience of oneness. This gave them confidence. They forgot the fact that whites were moving in, that they were losing "their reservation," because here they were together as a group, and drank to excess, often for days at a time (1964:18).

Ferguson discussed some reasons for the use of alcohol among the American Indian. He stated them to be:

1. relieve psychological and social stress produced by their own tribal culture;
2. facilitate the release of repressed hostility and aggression;
3. help attain a state of harmony with nature;
4. make for more pleasant social interaction with friends, particularly where people live in relative isolation as on the Navaho Reservation;
5. relieve psychological pain because of pressure from acculturation (1966:64).

Whatever the reasons, there appears to be general agreement that: (1) no social stigma or moralistic attitudes are connected with Indian alcoholism (Bollinger, 1966; Daily, 1966; Ferguson, 1968, 1966; and Whittaker (1963); (2) there is no evidence of any unusual physiological sensitivity toward alcohol or predisposition toward alcoholism on the part of any ethnic group, including American Indians (Jellineki, 1960; Stewart, 1964); and (3) most Indians drink in groups and solitary drinkers are rare. Daily (1966) also described American Indian alcoholism as a unique pattern of use in which drinking is periodic and explosive but non-addictive.

Horton (1943) stated that the degree of alcoholism in a primitive society corresponds to the degree of anxiety generated among its people because of lack of food and acculturation. Hortons' theory has come under much scrutiny by other anthropologists (Lemert, 1954; Whittaker, 1963), who have observed an increase in alcoholism with an increase in prosperity. Field also rejected Horton's theory and stated that:

Drunkenness in primitive societies is determined less by the level of fear in a society than by the absence of corporate kin groups with stability, permanence, formal structure, and well-defined functions (1962:24).

Field concluded that "Horton's measure of an insecure food supply and acculturation indicated a loose social organization rather than fear"

The impact of culture conflict has long been considered a major cause for Indian alcoholism (Horton, 1943). Whether or not acculturation can take place without leading to cultural conflict and without producing anxiety while weakening the tribal social structure appears questionable (Field, 1962). In spite of this, we cannot always account for alcoholism on the basis of cultural stress. Graves (1967) demonstrated that while acculturation for Spanish-Americans was consistently associated with higher rates of drinking, the opposite held true for American Indians. Unacculturated Indians had higher rates of drinking behavior than acculturated ones, except for the acculturated Indian without satisfactory employment.

American Indian and Suicide

Suicide behavior among American Indians has been receiving increasing attention within the past few years from both mental health professionals and the news media. High suicide rates of small populations have been reported among Indian groups, and they have been widely publicized. There is a great danger that incomplete epidemiological data in suicidology will portray a stereotype of the suicidal Indian. At present, reliable data on suicide and suicidal attempts are lacking, though studies on Indian suicides are constantly under way (Shore, 1972).

Levey (1965) has reported that suicide rates among the Navaho Indian are no higher than those for other populations. Levey concluded that the typical Navaho suicide was essentially an aggressive act by either a spouse or consanguinal relative. Males, he found, attempted suicide thirteen times more frequently than females, and the age range was between twenty-five and thirty-nine years. Most of the individuals were young and married. The most frequent method of suicide was by gun or hanging. Though Levey reported that suicide rates among the Navaho people were no higher than those of other populations, he found the Navaho suicide rate to be rising.

Under the Navaho religion, suicide is an unnatural death (Ladd, 1957) and is generally condemned. The act of suicide is universally condemned by the Navaho people, but the reason given most for this is not that it is an unnatural act, as one might suppose. The reason is less complicated than that. The Navaho believe suicide has an adverse effect upon the living. In other words, the Navaho fear the ghosts (CHINDII) of the dead. To look upon the suicide victim would result in illness, accident, or even death. Suicide, then, transgresses the moral code primarily because it hurts others (Kluckhohn, 1962). It is interesting then that possible reasons for suicide given by informants do not mention the desire to hurt relatives or others as reason for the act.

Barter and Weist (1970) traced the historic pattern of Northern Cheyenne suicides. They concluded that although suicide has persisted

among the Northern Cheyenne from the pre-reservation period to the present, changes in suicidal behaviors have largely reflected the changes that occurred in the total Cheyenne culture. Here, again, as with the Navaho, men have committed suicide much more frequently than women, and also in direct correlation the suicides have tended to be associated with a conflict with an affinal cross-sex relative, particularly a spouse. It was found overall that the pattern of suicide in the Cheyenne culture resembled suicidal behavior found in the white society. Men were completing the suicide while women were attempting it.

Dizmang and his associates found in their study of Bannack and Shoshone Indians that the suicide victims under study had significantly more arrests, more loss by desertion or divorce, went to federal boarding schools more frequently and at earlier ages than those Indians not attempting suicide. They went on to conclude that the American Indian's way of relating to the world had been significantly disrupted by the white man's intrusion, resulting in cultural and family disorganization. The four researchers went on to say that there is no simple solution, and that every tribe must work out its own sense of identity and pride that "I am an Indian (1974:49)."

Havighurst (1971) agreed, in part, when he stated that in general Indian suicide rates are closely correlated with disorganized family life, alcoholism, and loss of friends and relatives by death.

Ogden (1970) and Resnik (1971) both agree that the overall

suicide rate for the American Indian is only slightly higher than the national average of 11 per 100,000 per year. Although it usually ranges from 100 per cent to 120 per cent of national norm, in 1967 the suicide ratio was 60 per cent higher for Indians. For some individual reservations, the suicide rate grossly exceeds these figures, sometimes going as high as five to ten times that of the national average. It is interesting to note then that some reservations must have a much lower suicide rate than the non-Indian population.

Resnich (1970) agreed with the statement previously made by Levey when he said that the occurrence of suicide usually takes place with those individuals thirty-five years or younger, which is in sharp contrast to figures on completed suicides among the non-Indian population in the United States.

If an attempt were made to use suicide rate as an index of mental health, one could conclude that the Indian youth and young adults have poorer mental health than the average for the American population, but on the other hand Indians over forty-five have better mental health than the average American. It could also be stated that Indian females are more emotionally secure and of better mental health than the non-Indian female in the United States (Havighurst, 1971).

In analyzing the epidemiology of suicide in Indians or for that matter any population, Indian or non-Indian, it should be remembered that suicide or attempted suicide goes greatly unreported. Cultural,

religious, and moral taboos against taking one's life are such that grieving relations and even physicians are quite reluctant to brand a relative or patient a suicide victim (Ogden, 1970:76).

General Views and Cultural Aspects
of the American Indian

Some of these wise book-learned men claim that our red brothers come from China but they can't prove it . . . these folks ain't got no history, barring a few paintings or carvens' on rocks. They don't write--these folks ain't got no books, an books are back-tracks of man. An Injun can't tell you further back than his grand-dad told him, an' you can't back-track far on grass and most Injun trails are grass-grown.

If I told only what I know about Injuns, I'd be through right now. I run on to a beaver house last fall. It looked the same as the first one I ever saw--that's over fifty-five years ago. The Injun is no different--the buffalo skin lodge of long ago is the same thing as the canvas lodge of today. What changes the red man has made, he took from his white brothers.

. . . . If an Injun likes you he'll go to the end of the trail for you, if he don't, he'll go further the other way. If he is a friend, anything he's got is yours. If he don't like you, anything you got is his if he can get away with it.

The old-time Injun didn't pack much fat. He didn't work, but he was busy findin' meat and dogen' enemies. Civilization didn't agree with him; he ain't got room. A few more generations an' there won't be a full-blooded American left (Charles M. Russell, 1927:25-28).

This brief excerpt taken from Charles Russell's book Trails Plowed Under has merit in the telling and prophesying how the Indian was and what he would become. The Indians' number has sharply diminished. From a people who once ruled what is now the United States they have gone to a minority not even ruling their own reservations.

Christopher Davis commented:

They do exist, half a million of them, and exist is for the majority, the appropriate word, living and partly living in the broken jaw of their lost kingdom. They have shuffled into the twentieth century, reluctant to assume a mantle other than their own, and the conflict has increased within them. On the one side, the future beckons them to be assimilated in the mainstream of the great Society; on the other, their Indian nation's pride retains them, with all its privacy and introspection . . . (1972:85).

Perhaps the Indian wants to remain an Indian, but this does not necessarily mean he wants to be the Indian of his father's, grandfather's, or great-grandfather's generation. Some Indians of today are "New Indians." The "New Indians" as described by Steiner are Indians who have significant contributions to make to the American way of life. Steiner writes of these "New Indians":

The young educated Indians are not seeking to hold to the tribal past Rather they wish to live as contemporary Indians in the modern world; to modernize the old tribal ways so they will not only survive but be revitalized.

The love of life, the love of every living thing, the communal brotherhood of the tribe, the free spirit of the individual, the loving--not prohibitive--care of children, the larger love of the kinship family, the concept of justice, not punishment, the root and identity of the soul--these are some of the things that tribal society might bring to technological society in spiritual payment for its material goals and services (1968:155-57).

Plumage agrees with Steiner in a speech given on November 19, 1974 at the Human Rights Conference in Helena, Montana:

A practical solution is with the Indian people and tribes furthering their formal education and their goals. Doing this will cause a great change, but it must come, we no longer have the Economic System, the Political Social System, or the Religious System that was needed in order for our system to operate. The old ways are gone, and as much as we would like to return to them, we can't. There are only parts of the old system left to return to. If you will remember, I said that we, as Indian people, are presently oriented and change when the realm says we must. That

is why we are still Indians. We have changed as change was forced upon us. This doesn't mean that we are not Indians. It simply means that we are a different kind of Indian, and future generations of Indians will be different from us. . . . In today's setting we are changing. We must in order to survive (1974).

The American Indian is standing on a narrow line, his past and heritage pulling on him from one side, the affluent technical society from another; the old and wise men of his race holding him still, while the young and educated are pushing him onward. It is inevitable that the Indian will change, but how he changes is important. He can withdraw into his colorful past and perish, he can submit to an alien culture and exist; or he can regain his pride, keep his heritage, and live with the advantages of both societies. For the latter to happen, there is much to be done to help and understand the Indian.

There are problems among the Indian people, but little has been done to find out what they are. Most studies have dealt with the Indians' colorful past, but the Indians' present is not colorful. On the contrary, it is a dark gray world of unhappiness compared to what it once was. Herbert Locklear stated:

It is true that Indian people are oriented to the past, but this does not mean that they expect or even want to return to the ways of living three centuries ago. Nor does it mean that their usefulness and interest in the present and future are necessarily limited. Their orientation to the past is not surprising. With rare exception, the only achievement that Indian people in this country can point to with pride occurred long ago. It was in earlier centuries that the Indians' life-style provided a sense of heroism and adventure and brought them satisfaction and tranquility. As a people they have been able to make little or no contribution to the present. Therefore, their future seems vague and uncertain (1972:72).

In less than two hundred years, the Indian has been pushed from a stone-age environment into a technical society. It should not be too difficult to see how this adjustment is affecting their mental stability. Davis (1972) stated that the Indian suicide rate is more than three times higher than the United States average in the fifteen to nineteen age group, four times higher in the twenty to twenty-four age group, and more than twice as high in the group between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age. There have even been suicides recorded among eight year olds. Davis also showed this in the educational process:

. . . the child doesn't have the appreciation or desire for success in school that the average non-Indian child is going to have when he goes—but when he comes he usually finds it very interesting. He is attracted by it and by tests we find that, while at the start he will fall below the norms of the National Education Tests, as he moves up to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, he not only achieves the norms, but he will overachieve . . . then we find when they reach the junior high level, a gradual decline in his showing in the tests, and if the child is going to decline he will fall further and further below the national norms as each year goes on It is a basic psychological problem (1972:114).

McDonald (1970) agrees with Davis in saying that the achievement level for Indian students lags two or three years behind that of our national norms, and that the Indian student falls progressively behind the longer he stays in school. Farb (1968) is in agreement when he states that according to 1968 statistics, the average American Indian completes approximately five years of schooling compared with the national norms of eleven point two years for other Americans. Farb also went on to say that the problem concerns the quality of education as

well as the amount, for the longer an Indian child stayed in a conventional Indian school, the farther behind he was in achievement compared with other non-Indian children. Resnik (1971:62) calls this the "cross-over effect" and recognizes it as a phenomenon among Indian students.

The Indian is basically and fundamentally different from the white man. He does not share the white man's values or generally believe in the white man's goals. Chaloupka (1970:5-7) wrote that in most instances basic Indian values are diametrically opposed to the basic white American values. She stated them to be:

<u>INDIAN</u>	<u>VS.</u>	<u>WHITE</u>
1. present oriented		1. future oriented
2. giving and sharing of wealth		2. accumulation of wealth
3. deference to aged and the equating of age with wisdom		3. glorification of youth
4. cooperation		4. competition
5. nature for its own sake		5. the control and harnessing of it
6. extended kin		6. nuclear family

Jack Plumage, an Indian from the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, put it yet another way while making a speech at Montana State University to the Intercultural Communications class on January 21, 1975.

Traditionally, we, as Indian people, had a good way of life. We lived in a "Hoop" as Black Elk would say. Everything was dependent upon the other, and we did live in harmony with nature. Basically, we had three things that formed our hoop--an Economic System that was geared to those times; a political social system; and a religious system. Each one was necessary to keep the other parts functioning, because they were, in fact, one

The Indian world and the White world have different value systems. White society is forward-oriented. That is why they

are always pushing forward. Advance, Advance--Manifest Destiny. The Indian world is Presently-oriented. This is, we are oriented to the now. We live in the present realm and change when that realm says we must. The white world is a society of Production. Their goal is towards a Gross National Product. They see the trees as lumber; the water as power; etc. They must utilize these things as well as everything else that is here for production. The Indian world was a consumption-oriented society. We saw the trees as homes for many animals. What nature provided was utilized for consumption. Every part of an animal nature provided we used. Great care was taken to insure that this was done. This wasn't dictated just because of the economics of the time, but utilizing every aspect of the game was essential for religious purposes also. The white world looks at nature as something to be exploited. A fish hatchery is an example of this. Get the fish; milk them for their eggs; put them in the proper surroundings and hatch as many as they can. Exploit nature. Don't worry about the balance that nature has provided The Indian world was one of harmony with nature. An example of this would be the fish runs. During the runs, they would catch as many fish as they could. Many years they couldn't catch enough, but that was all nature provided so they lived with that fact. An Indian would come into an area which might contain only one mountain. The Indian would say, "Mountain, how can I live with you?" A white man could come into the same area and he would say, "Mountain, how can I change you to live with me?"

The concept of time in the two worlds is completely different. Indian time is anytime. Work when there is something to do that is important. Don't work just to be working. In the white world time is regimented. Everything is run on an hour to hour basis, you have a time to work, a time to play and they even tell you when its time to pray.

Locklear brings to light a different aspect from several years experience in working with Indians. He notes the Saint Augustine Indian Center in Chicago who assembled a list of six attitudes and values of Indian people.

1. Generosity is still the paramount virtue among most Indians. Accumulation of wealth is not a major motivating factor. An Indian cares more about being able to work at a satisfying occupation and earn enough extra to share with relatives and

friends than about putting money in the bank and purchasing a home in the city.

2. Many Indians continue to hold the concepts of time. For them, time is circular rather than horizontal. Past, present, and future are all one. Living and working by the clock, as the white man does, are not considered important.

3. For most Indians work must be more than a steady job. It must be a vocation providing inner satisfaction as well as income.

4. Family and interpersonal relationships have priority over all else. An Indian's first responsibility is to relatives, wherever they may be.

5. The extended family system continues to operate in many tribes, thus providing an enlarged sphere of family relationships as well as family responsibilities. Keeping both tribal and Indian identification continues to be important for the majority of first Americans.

6. Many Indians are basically noncompetitive in their relationships to non-Indians. However, they continue to be intensely competitive with each other (1972:148).

Spindler and Spindler listed a total of nine attributes or psychological features found in the American Indian:

1. Nondemonstrative emotionality and reserve, with a high degree of control of interpersonal aggression within the in-group.
2. A pattern of generosity.
3. Autonomy of the individual.
4. The ability to endure pain, hunger, hardship, and frustration without external evidence of discomfort.
5. A positive valuation of bravery and courage.
6. A generalized fear of the world as dangerous.
7. A practical joker strain that is highly institutionalized.
8. Attention to concrete realities of the present.
9. Dependence on a supernatural power that controls one's life (1957).

Dizmag brought out a pertinent conclusion when he stated:

It is accurate but insufficient for the Indians to blame many of their problems on the white man at this point. Just as an individual in psychotherapy may have had a "bad mother" on whom he can blame his present trouble, it is only though at this point he is able to "work through" the past traumatic experiences that he becomes able to stand on his own and deal with current reality

more effectively. Once the individual or cultural pattern has been set it becomes the problem of the individual or cultural group to work through those problems that were forced upon them at a point in their existence where there were problems to alter the course of events (1974:48).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study was twofold. The first was to identify major problems within the Indian family, and secondly to identify the coping procedures used by the family in dealing with these problems.

It was not the desire of the researcher to test any hypothesis or demonstrate any thesis. Rather, his method was the use of a questionnaire and self-report. The report by all respondents was subjective, given in open-ended form. In Chapter 4, the method was to explore and discuss the data rather than demonstrate any conclusion.

It was the researcher's desire to illuminate major problems in Indian families rather than demonstrate a particular problem area. Demonstration calls for generalizations and assured generalizations would be impossible in a study involving a rather limited number of families which have the possibility of containing a large amount of variables. Koos stated, "It is impossible to control variables affecting family life as the physical scientist controls the conditions of his experiments. We are often unable to do more than illuminate our thesis (1950:2)."

SAMPLE

Definition of Sample

The sample for this study consisted of fifty-two adult Indians from twenty American Indian families on the Fort Belknap (Montana) Indian Reservation, and the five professional people employed at the reservation. The fifty-two Indian respondents were asked to state their percentage of Indian blood, and this is reported in Appendix A, page 83.

Selection of Sample

The total population was the census list of American Indian families currently residing on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. It was felt that with the lengthy personal interview method a total of twenty families would be adequate for the scope of this study. From the census list every other name was drawn until an N of forty was reached. Then those families were personally contacted until a total of twenty families had agreed to participate. The five professional helpers who participated were the only ones employed at the reservation, so this portion of the sample contains the entire population.

Communication with Sample

Each family was contacted individually to ask for their cooperation and to explain what the study was for, the areas of knowledge

that would be investigated, the number of other Indian families asked to participate, and, last but most vital, to insure absolute confidentiality. The five professional people were contacted personally and asked if they would participate in the study.

Instrument

Because of the type of data researched and the difficulty of getting reliable and valid results by questionnaires, the data was gathered by personal interviews with each family, following an interview schedule designed by himself (Appendix B, page 86). Because of his knowledge of the Indians of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, it was believed that this was the best method for obtaining the desired information. The six particular categories of the instrument were chosen with the help of the graduate co-chairman and fellow graduate students. It was believed that these six categories would best get to the problem area of the family structure.

The researcher grew up on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, and he or his family was known to most of the people living there. Because of this fact, and also the fact that he is part Indian, the researcher believed that through personal interviews he would be able to bridge a great deal of the "TRUST BARRIER" which is quite strong between the Indian and white cultures. Through this method, he was able to make his interviewees more comfortable and to stress the aspect of confidentiality.

Validity

Members of the department of Home Economics faculty, fellow graduate students, and members of the Montana State University Indian Club reviewed the interview schedule for comprehension, subject matter, pertinence, and interpretation. Their suggestions were reviewed, some implemented, and after much contemplation and revision the researcher was satisfied that the instrument would obtain the desired information.

Method of Data Collection

Each individual of every family and professional helper was interviewed through the use of a cassette tape recorder. Each individual interview was coded as to (1) what family, (2) number of individuals within the family, and (3) whether or not the interview was completed. During the interview the researcher had in his possession a checklist (see Appendix C, page 89) comprised of the six major areas and probable major problems and coping procedures within those six categories. As the interview progressed with the subject, the researcher marked, whenever possible, the items cited by the Indian as a major problem or coping procedure within each category. The checklist was also used for additional notes that the researcher felt pertinent concerning the interview.

Directly following each interview, so as not to lose any substance of the conversation which might occur if left undone over an extended period of time, the data was recorded on to separate sheets

of paper for each Indian family and professional worker interviewed. This will be referred to as the Tape Notation Sheet, or T.N.S.

Using both the checklist and the T.N.S., the researcher compared the data on both sheets in order to make sure that all essential information was received from the interviews. The researcher also used the checklist and T.N.S. were also used as checks against each other.

The responses of individual family members were used to comprise the total family problem and coping procedures. If only one individual cited a particular problem or coping procedure, the response was reported as a family response.

Also, some fortuitous information concerning coping adequacy was given to the researcher in the interviews which was not asked for in the interview schedule but which was reported in the findings and conclusions.

Data Analysis

A frequency distribution tabulated the number of times an item was cited as a major problem or coping procedure within the six categories.

From the frequency distribution, percentages were compiled to show the relationship between the items cited by both the Indian families and professional workers within the six major categories.

Using the frequency distribution and the percentages, a percentage polygram was compiled in the form of Tables 1 through 24, pages 96 through 119.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Subjects

Participating in the study were fifty-two adult American Indians comprising a total of twenty Indian families in residence on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, located in North Central Montana. Appendix A, page 83, and Figure 3, page 40, provide descriptive information about the sample concerning the degree of Indian blood, and Appendix A, page 83, also shows the sex of the individual. The population happened to be distributed even sex wise, having a total of twenty-six females and twenty-six males, though family size ranged from one Indian adult to the largest of four Indian adults. Appendix D, page 93, provides information showing the location and size of the reservation in its relation to Montana. There were five professional workers interviewed from the same reservation to find if they perceived the Indian families' problems and coping procedure the same as the families interviewed.

The Indian families and professional workers were questioned as to their perceptions of major problems and coping procedures in relation to six areas dealing within the family structure. These areas were (1) marital, (2) interpersonal, (3) economic, (4) parental, (5) extended family, and (6) occupational.

The sample included a total of twenty American Indian families living within the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation which were members of

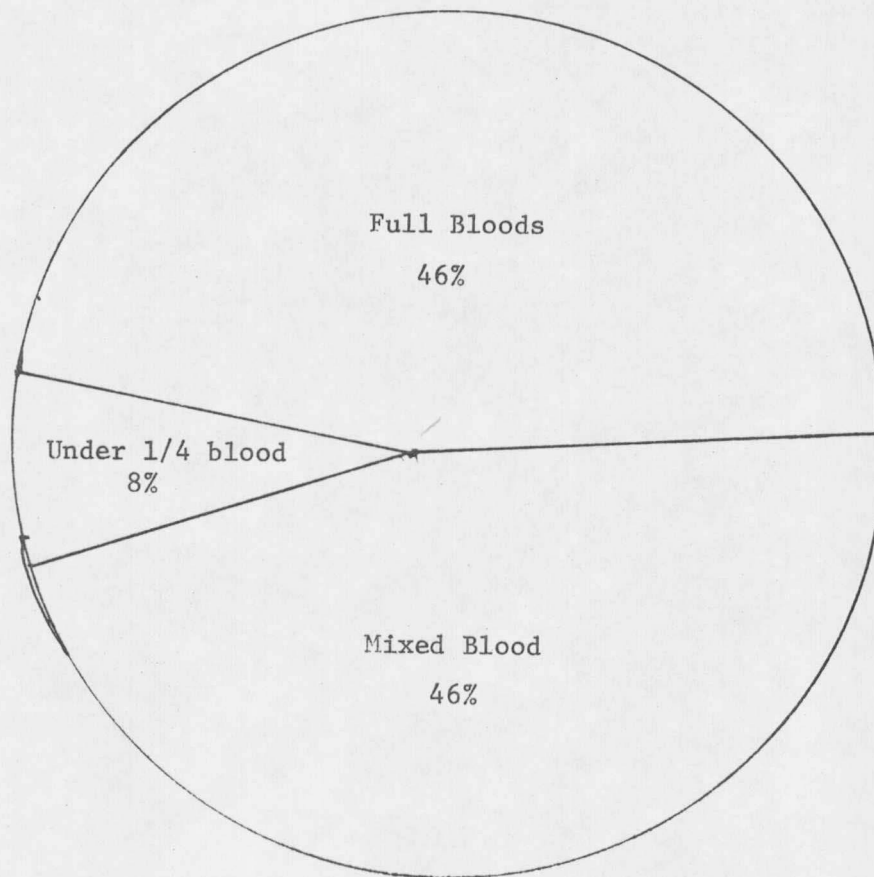


Figure 3

Per cent of Indian Blood for Individuals Interviewed

either the Assiniboine or Gros Ventre tribe. There were a total of fifty-two individual Indian people interviewed in the twenty family units, with exactly half of the individuals of the male gender and the other half female. The range of Indian blood, within the sample, was from $4/4$ to $1/8$, with an average of $13/20$. In other words, twenty-four Indians, or 46 per cent, were full-blooded having three-fourths or more Indian blood; twenty-four, or 46 per cent, were mixed blood having one-fourth to three-fourths Indian blood; and four, or 8 per cent, had less than one-fourth Indian blood.

Although the descriptive information on the percentages of Indian blood was not directly used, its value is important in describing the sample for following researchers.

Findings

It is next to impossible to describe American Indian family problems and coping procedures because there is no uniform pattern. Each tribe has certain unique characteristics, and there are variations of these characteristics within each tribe. This becomes evident when working with Gros Ventre and Assiniboine people of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

In the final analysis, the implications drawn can only be applied to those Indian families that have been interviewed. Therefore, one must come to know and accept the uniqueness of the individual or specific family.

Because of the conflict between the way the Indian was raised and what he was taught by living in association with a predominantly white society, the researcher feels that one must view the Indians' major problems and coping procedure in the context of cultural differences between the Indian and non-Indian.

Though most of the residents on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation are not bilingual, they are bicultural, and it is essential to be aware of the special blending of cultures a person can encounter in an individual or Indian family in order to acquire a realistic understanding of their problems and coping procedures.

The discussion of results that follows is based upon the findings shown in Tables 1 through 24, pages 96 through 119.

Marital Area

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the Indian families interviewed. It is interesting to observe from Table 1, page 96, that jealousy and alcohol seem to be more prevalent as major problems within the Indian families' marital relationship. Jealousy was cited by 50 per cent of the families interviewed and alcohol by 55 per cent of the sample.

In viewing the percentages of alcohol and jealousy, it was found that a total of ten families cited jealousy as a major problem and eleven families alcohol. Within the eleven families perceiving alcohol as a

major problem, the underlying theme of "too much drinking" was cited as the main cause in most all of the marital conflicts. The belief was that if either or both partners would stop drinking they would have no more problems.

Many times the feelings of jealousy was laced within their drinking excursions, and both male and female viewed their jealous nature as a major problem within their marriage. The researcher has no ideas on what the families called their jealous nature, only that they did see themselves as jealous and did view this as a major problem within their marriage.

The following quotes are from family members expressing their views on the major problems within their marital relationships. One is dealing with the aspect of alcohol and the other with jealousy.

. . . alcohol, yes drinking seems to be the main problem in our marriage. We spend too much money on it. Money we don't always have and it in turn leads to other problems. Hell, I know we should do something about it but we don't.

We are both overly jealous. It took a long time for us to admit this but we are. I can't stand it when he is talking to someone and leaves me out. It's worse when its a girl. We get into some really big fights over it.

The table also shows that 45 per cent of the families stated that there were no major problems within their marital relationships. An example of the attitudes of the nine families, stating no major problems, might well be summarized by the following quotes by two members of separate Indian families. "I don't believe that we have

any real difficult problems in our marriage. Sure, there are times when we disagree, but no real big problems." And the other stated, "No problems at all. We have gotten along good for the last thirty years, and I believe it will continue."

It was stated, by family members, that what might look like a problem marriage by an outsider, namely a non-Indian, might not be a problem to that particular family. The researcher was continually told that maybe the Indians' way of marriage and relating to each other was different than the non-Indian. But it does not necessarily mean that it is wrong and therefore full of problems.

It is important, in viewing Table 3, page 98, that the highest percentage of families citing a single response was 40 per cent, or eight families. These families stated that they had no coping procedures available. Their feelings of frustrations and hopelessness were sensed in the following statements. "Cope you say. I don't know what the word means. I don't do nothin'. It's just the way it is, you can't change. What would I do any way?" Or "I don't do nothin'. What can I do?"

Thirty per cent, or six families, stated that this question was not applicable to them or that it just did not apply. Perhaps the family believed that because they had no major problems within their marriage that they therefore had nothing to cope with. The situation might be looked at in another way, such as the families were either confused by the questions and did not know how else to answer or that

they might have been ashamed of their response. At this particular point, the researcher can only speculate at the reasons, for no reasons were given to the investigator.

While viewing Table 3, one other aspect seems important to discuss. That is that 30 per cent, or six out of the twenty families, stated that they coped with their marital problems by seeing a professional counselor. Though 30 per cent does not seem relatively high, it would seem to be high for that particular means of coping. One might explain this high percentage in that mental health services are free. That is to say every Indian on the reservation has as his right the privilege to see a professional counselor at the reservation hospital if he chooses to do so, free of charge. Though the professional counselor was seen by 30 per cent of the families, he was only seen as a last resort when all else failed.

Though some items were cited by a small percentage of the families as coping procedures, it was the major belief of almost all families interviewed that their coping procedures were far from adequate.

Major problems and coping procedures perceived by the professional worker interviewed. With the observation of Table 2, page 97, it was found that three events were considered of primary importance to the professional worker viewing Indian marital problems. These were (1) physical abuse, 60 per cent; (2) alcohol, 100 per cent; and (3) instability of the father, 60 per cent.

Though other items were stated, these three were the only ones stated by three or more of the five professional workers. Therefore, it is believed that they should be more fully discussed.

The major belief of the five professional workers was that alcohol was a major problem within the Indian marriage. They stated it to be prevalent in almost all of the problem marriages they had worked with. As stated by one professional worker, "Alcohol is by far the major problem within the Indian family and their marriages. Alcohol seems to be the start of most of their domestic and non-domestic troubles."

In discussing the instability of the father, it was disclosed to the researcher that three professional workers perceived the father as constantly moving around and hardly ever home with his family. This they stated was not usually the desire of the family or the father, but through the necessity of finding employment the father was forced into that role. Nonetheless, they felt it caused major conflicts with the family and the marriage.

Three out of five professional workers also perceived physical abuse as a major problem of the Indian marital relationship. This was not to say that only the man inflicted abuse upon the woman, but the woman also inflicted abuse upon the man. Interestingly enough, although the professional worker perceived this as a major problem within the marriage, they stated that few divorces resulted from these factors. This might be explained by looking at it from a different viewpoint.

This last statement might mean that the Indian family does not consider it a problem. Perhaps the professional worker is applying his own value system on the Indian. It is not to say that physical abuse is not a major problem, only that there seems to be room for doubt.

In discussing coping procedures perceived by the professional workers, it can be seen by viewing Table 4, page 99, that only one item was stated by three or more of the five professional workers. This seems to be most dramatic for they perceive the Indian family as having no coping procedures at their disposal. It was believed by the majority of professional workers that even when coping procedures were used, most were not adequate.

The two remaining professional workers perceived the Catholic priest and counselor as most helpful. The other coping procedures used were viewed as inadequate in helping the family or individual.

Maybe the reason for the success of the priest and counselor can be seen in terms of their confidentiality. The Indian is very skeptical and the ethics of both professionals are one of confidentiality, which is of prime importance to the Indian.

Perhaps the Indian families' major problems and coping procedures might be viewed in terms of bicultural values. That is to say, major problems and inadequate coping procedures may arise with the roles the family members are to play opposed to the white non-Indian roles they are compared to. For example, the Indian wife and mother is supposed

to be completely devoted to her husband. Her role is to serve his needs and support his actions. In substance, she represents the nutrient aspect of the family life. The Indian women's personal needs are considered secondly next to that of her husbands. Her life tends to revolve around her family and few close friends. This value of the Indian is in direct opposition to that of his white brother. In turn, while trying to adjust to the pressures of the two cultures, problems and inadequate coping procedures may arise.

In the observation and discussion of Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4, the evidence available suggests that there are events perceived by the Indian family and professional worker as major problems within the Indian marital relationship. Though there are items used as coping procedures, the Indian family is in much need of adequate coping procedures.

Interpersonal Area

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the Indian families interviewed. From the observation of Table 5, page 100, it is possible to see that 60 per cent, or twelve Indian families, viewed their interpersonal relationships as problem free. It was quite common while conducting the research to hear statements such as, "We don't have any problems with that. Hell, we know most everyone. Besides that we seem to be related to almost everyone on this reservation." Or, "No, it's no problem. Though I believe it could stand improving in some situations."

Although the majority of Indian families interviewed stated that their interpersonal area was problem free, there were two other events which the investigator felt needed clarification. These two events were jealousy, cited by seven families, and land disagreements, viewed by eight families.

The feelings of jealousy were felt by both the male and female; therefore, it would not be possible to say that this was strictly a female trait or only a male trait. Both genders seemed to react to many social situations in a jealous manner. Perhaps it is possible to say that the Indian is a very emotional and possessive being. In his relationships with other people, he might feel insecure and somewhat alone; therefore, in order to receive a sense of well being, the Indian attaches himself emotionally to another person. When this attachment is threatened by any outside force, conflicts occur, feelings of jealousy rise, and he reacts. This reaction in turn might force him into a problem situation.

This might well be viewed in the statements made by family members. One example of these statements can be seen by a quote made by one member of a family interviewed:

Our whole family seems to have an extremely possessive nature. I guess you might say, we are overly jealous. I always thought everyone else was and not me; but I've come to know different now. This is especially true when we are around a lot of different people."

Again, as with jealousy, land disagreements were felt to be a

major problem to both genders. This was not just the problem of the male, as many might come to expect. Both male and female Indians own reservation land and, therefore, make bids on leases and also receive lease money for their land. This is where the problems arise. A common reaction of Indians can be shown in the following quote, "I guess we try and take care of our relationships, but the biggest thing I can think of is land. Grass rights, lease money, things like that."

In viewing Table 7, page 102, it is possible to observe that 60 per cent, or twelve Indian families, felt that this question on coping procedures did not apply to their family. The majority of these families stated that since they had no major problems within that area, how could they have any coping procedures.

It is important to observe that 35 per cent, or seven, of the families interviewed stated that they had no coping procedures available to them. One fact was pointed out repeatedly throughout the interviews; i.e., although problems did arise, they arose less frequently than in other areas. Many of the families were hesitant in stating any problems or coping procedures, because they seemed so trite in comparison to their other problems. Even while stating they did not have any coping procedures to use, it was indicated that it really did not matter; problems did not arise that frequently to be bothered by it.

One response on Table 7 is not surprising, i.e., the use of the

tribal council as a coping procedure. The tribal council was used mostly in the settling of land disputes, dispersal of lease money, and taking bids on reservation land. Although the tribal council was used, few families held respect for the office and many felt that the Council did not help.

Although some items were cited by the Indian families as coping procedures, the major attitude from this area was that the question did not apply to their families.

Major problems and coping procedures perceived by the professional worker interviewed. It is interesting to observe from Table 6, page 101, that the professional worker perceived inter-tribal difficulties as a most prominent major problem of Indian families. Sixty per cent, or three out of the five professional workers, perceived this aspect of the Indians' interpersonal relationships as a major problem. This can be seen clearly in a statement made by one of the workers. "The only problems I see are with each other. I mean, the Gros Ventre does not like the Assinaboine. The Assinaboine tolerates the Gros Ventre, and neither one like the Cree."

Interestingly enough, this observation was made only by the professional workers. The Indian families made no mention of it. One might speculate and say that maybe this is the cultural heritage of the Indian still in existence, which was prominent with their forefathers. It is possible that they still hold on to that form of prejudice and

consider it part of their social interaction. On the other hand, maybe it is a problem, only the Indian is not consciously aware of it.

From the observation of Table 8, page 103, it may be possible to say that the professional worker perceives only two events as pertinent to the coping procedures of the Indian families. Forty per cent, or two professional workers, agreed that (1) the Indian family had no coping procedures to deal with major problems within their interpersonal relationships and (2) 40 per cent, or two professional workers, agreed that the question did not apply to Indian families.

The discrepancy in responses given by the professional workers cannot be readily explained. Perhaps the only explanation is in the individual personality and viewpoint of each professional worker affected by how they perceived the interpersonal area of the Indian.

It is the belief of the researcher that maybe the Indian families, in dealing within their interpersonal area, feel a sense of frustration and failure in communicating their thoughts or feelings. Although the majority of Indian families and professional workers felt this area was problem free and coping procedures fairly adequate, perhaps the Indian feels frustration when they are expected to communicate well and cannot. Maybe it is difficult for the Indian family to meet new acquaintances, and they are often reluctant to do so for the fear of being misjudged by others. This fear could be

partly symptomatic of additional problems but perhaps remains a primary focus of concern for the Indian family, though it is not perceived as a major problem within the family unit.

In the observation and discussion of Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8, available evidence suggests that there are events perceived by both the Indian family and professional worker as major problems, but the overall attitude seems to conclude that this is a problem-free area.

Economic Area

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the Indian families interviewed. By observing Table 9, page 104, it is possible to see that 80 per cent, or sixteen, of the families interviewed viewed money as a major problem within their economic area. Interestingly enough, this event was divided into specific problem areas within most families. Those areas centered around (1) overspending, (2) not having enough money, and (3) dispersal of lease money.

Most families stating money as a major problem felt that their income was not enough to meet their needs. It was the consensus of many families that even though they had trouble making ends meet, it was a habit to overspend.

The dispersal of lease money seemed to be another matter.

This was the only income of many of the families, and they felt that either there was not enough money involved or that they never received their checks on time. To the non-Indian, the dispersal of lease money might not seem like a major problem, but to the Indian it may cause many hours of worry. Consequently, when the money is late for any reason, justifiably or not, it may put a great strain on the families.

The following quote appropriately shows the concern of Indian families over money, "The main problem, as I see it with us, is money: not enough of it, and not knowing how to spend it. We are always running short."

Perhaps the problem is deeper than what was actually stated. A basic explanation could be the Indian families' inability to budget. The Indian may have a poor sense of finance, therefore, he might be unable to handle financial needs. Perhaps the Indians' basic belief system in satisfying immediate wants and needs might possibly hamper his ability to financially function adequately. Therefore, without the basic understanding of finances, the Indian is unable to assess the needs of his family and to budget successfully with the little money available.

Table 9, page 104, also shows that 45 per cent, or nine Indian families, perceived the consumption of alcohol as a major problem

within the family unit. The attitudes of these families might well be summarized in the following statement made by an interviewee, "The way I see it, is that we spend too much money on partying, we haven't got much, and it seems that when we have a little it is spent on booze."

The major belief of these nine families was whenever the family had extra money, it would be spent on a party. Although the majority of the families believed that this behavior was wrong, they saw no way in which to change it. Interestingly enough, the family seemed to believe that if they could only somehow stop drinking, their problems would be solved. Though they recognize the problems involved, few of the families seem willing to do anything about it. One might conclude that the Indian does not want to change and that he is satisfied with his drinking ability and the problems arising from it. The researcher believes that this is far from the truth. Through contact with individual families, he tends to believe that the Indian does care and wants to change behavior which negatively affects his family. It is possible that the Indian does not know how to change to a different economical life style that is conducive to growth. Perhaps he does not trust existing facilities for helping him. Conceivably, if this is the case, he might again rely on himself, bringing himself back to where he started without the knowledge to help himself.

From the observation of Table 11, page 106, the researcher

believed it pertinent to note the consistently low percentages within the coping procedures. The highest is 40 per cent, which is only eight families. This seems significant because it shows that eight Indian families stated that the question on coping procedures did not apply to their particular family. It is difficult for the researcher to say why the question was not applicable. It is possible that all eight families believed that the question did not apply because they could not see any problems within their economical area. This, however, is not acceptable to the researcher. Only four families out of twenty stated that the economical area of their family was problem free; consequently, this leaves another four families, or 20 per cent, who do not fit within this category. Perhaps the question was difficult to understand, so they said the question did not apply. It might be possible that the families felt guilt and, therefore, did not want to share their real coping procedures or lack of one. Whatever the reason, it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions as to why four of the families stated the question did not apply.

Table 11, page 106, also shows that 35 per cent, or seven, of the Indian families stated that they had no coping procedures available to them. A sense of helplessness was evident throughout these seven families and a belief that nothing could help was prominent throughout their interviews. Coping with the problem was something the families had difficulty in understanding. Their problems were something which

were endured; and enduring, it was told, was part of their Indian heritage.

Events were cited as coping procedures, though it was the general consensus that few of these procedures were helpful. The only coping procedure which seemed to be beneficial for the family as told to the researcher was the use of the professional counselor. Although the family received help from talking to a counselor, only two families of the twenty interviewed took advantage of the counselor expertise.

It was the general attitude of the Indian families that there was little the family or individual member could do concerning their economic problems. A fatalistic attitude was prevalent within most of the families interviewed. Many of the families lived in poverty compared to that of average Americans, and it was a major belief that this condition could not and would not change.

It is possible that the Indian family has lived so long within the conditions of poverty that the family may have come to perceive it as their normal life style--a style in which they may be comparatively comfortable. Although their condition is not fully adequate and conducive for growth, it may be a less fearful situation compared to the anxiety and fear which might be present by moving into a less known life style.

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the professional worker interviewed. From the observation of Table 10, page 105,

it is possible to see that 100 per cent, or all five of the professional workers, perceived money as a major problem within the Indian family unit. Within this category, the professional workers believed that (1) lack of money and (2) the mismanagement of money were the main causes of the families' financial problems. The professional workers' general attitude was that the average Indian family did not have enough money to adequately meet his families' needs. Another point raised by the professional workers was that once the Indian family had money at his disposal they did not know how to manage it. The worker viewed the family as buying many unnecessary items, while going without the basic necessities.

Table 10, page 105, also shows that 60 per cent of the professional workers perceived unemployment as a major problem within the economical area of the Indian family. It was the view of three professional workers that there was not enough employment available to the Indian and, consequently, if the Indian cannot work it could drastically affect his earning potential.

In viewing Table 12, page 107, only one professional worker perceived the family as having no coping procedures, while four of the professional workers believed the consumption of alcohol was used as a coping procedure. The professional workers believed that due to a sense of frustration and helplessness, the Indian tried to drown his troubles in alcohol. Although they stated that the consumption of alcohol was

not adequate as a coping procedure, the members of the family frequently found a false sense of temporary relief from the bottle.

Table 12, page 107, also shows that three of the five professional workers perceived the Indian family trying to cope by finding seasonal employment. It would seem that this coping procedure was viewed to be adequate but temporary. The work was primarily fire fighting in the summer and payed well enough to help relieve the families' problems. The major fault perceived by the professional worker was that employment was selective so that many family members could not qualify, and also it was very limited, lasting two weeks at a time throughout the summer.

The general attitude of the professional workers was that adequate coping procedures were needed for Indian families within the reservation. The families were viewed as trying to cope with the economical problem, but unless more jobs become available little would change.

Perhaps the only way to alleviate the families' economical problems is through employment and the availability of more jobs. But it would seem there could be something done to help the Indian family cope until then. Maybe if more emphasis was placed upon helping the family unit emotionally cope instead of waiting for an overt action, such as employment, the family would be able to function more adequately when an employment opportunity arose.

In the observation and discussion of Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12, the information leads one to believe that there were events perceived by the Indian family and professional worker as major problems within the Indian families' economic areas. Though there were items used as coping procedures, the Indian family is in much need of adequate coping procedures.

Parental Area

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the Indian families interviewed. From the observation of Table 13, page 108, it is possible to see that 90 per cent, or eighteen, of the families interviewed perceived the parental area within the family unit as problem free. The following quote appropriately shows the attitude of these eighteen families. "Ya' know the 'Indian' raises his child different than most. He loves them and they play a central part in his life. There is no problem."

In dealing with parental responsibility or subjects within the parental area, the Indian system may be quite unique, whereas they perceive no real major problems or difficulties. It would seem that during the early childhood years the Indian home is very child-centered. The researcher was told that the parents tend to be permissive and indulgent with the younger children. Perhaps if a major problem does exist, it may be in a lack of discipline to the point of spoiling the

child. This could possibly make it difficult for him to deal adequately with life situations outside the reservation.

The families reported that like any other American family they have minor problems with their children. One family member exclaimed, "Heavens, NO! My kids aren't angels, but they are certainly no problem. We get along just fine."

It is shown in Table 15, page 110, that sixteen Indian families believed the question on coping procedures did not apply to their family.

The four remaining families felt they had adequate coping procedures in dealing with their parental problems. Perhaps, the close family relationship that exists between family members could account for these responses of the Indian family. It would seem with sixteen families believing they had no reason to use any coping procedures and four families with the belief their coping procedures helped, everything would be well within this area. However, this is not necessarily so. Many of the Indian families felt apprehension and fear for their children. How were their children going to get along after they left home? Were they prepared for life outside the reservation? Could they make it on the "outside"? Questions like these seemed to haunt many families. Perhaps they feel a change within their life style, so they consequently worried about the unknown, which may seem inevitable to some.

The families view their parental area problem free and coping procedures adequate, but many still feel afraid for their childrens' future.

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the professional workers interviewed. By observation of Table 14, page 109, it is possible to see that three, or 60 per cent, of the professional workers reported that they perceived no major parental problems within the Indian family. The professional worker perceived the Indian as a good parent and their coping procedures, when needed, quite adequate, as can be seen on Table 16, page 111.

It was interesting to find that 40 per cent of the professional workers perceived the lack of discipline as a parental problem. Two professional workers reported to the researcher that although the Indian family took great care in raising and loving their children, the lack of discipline made it difficult for the child to function in a more strict environment. Perhaps this perception is what the families themselves observed when they felt fear and worry for their childrens' future. It is possible, then, that this aspect of the Indian families' actions could evolve into a more overt problem. As it is, no direct correlation can be drawn as to any major problems of the family.

Therefore, in the observation and discussion of Tables 13, 14, 15, and 16, one might conclude that the majority of Indian families and professional workers perceived no major parental problems within the

family unit. Coping procedures, when needed, were also viewed to be adequate.

Extended Family

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the Indian families interviewed. As within the parental area, it can be seen by viewing Table 17, page 112, the majority of Indian families perceive the area around the extended family as problem free. Ninety per cent, or eighteen of the twenty families, reported there were no major problems within the extended family relations. It can also be observed from Table 19, page 114, that eighteen families reported that the question did not apply to their family. The major belief of the families interviewed was that they did not have to try and cope, for there were no major problems within the aspect of the extended family. Statements such as the following were repeatedly made to the investigator. "You've got to be kidding. In the summer we have half of the county living with us. You've got to remember the 'Indian' family is close." Or, "Everyone is welcome at our place; kin or not."

The Indian families' tie with his extended kin or family play an important role in the life structure of the family. It is possible that the family needs and demands have the highest priority and consequently receive it.

Therefore, perhaps major problems within the area of the extended family are practically nonexistent and coping procedures adequate. In

other words, if help is required by the family, including the extended family, an individual of the family may temporarily forego his job, school, or other activities that might prevent him from meeting family obligations. Consequently, through actions such as this, the family may be drawn closer as a unit and able to live in close proximity without turmoil.

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the professional workers interviewed. The majority of the professional workers, like the Indian families, believed there were no major problems in relation to the extended family. Three out of the five professional workers perceived this area as problem free, as shown on Table 18, page 113. It is also shown that the remaining two professional workers believed that there was too much responsibility placed on the nuclear family. This, they stated, placed the family in dissension, and it in turn caused emotional problems. The attitude of these two professional workers may be attributed to the fact that they were new to the reservation and perhaps extended their own value system onto that of the Indian family. Throughout the investigation, it was the primary belief that this area was problem free. The researcher tends to follow that major premise.

From the observation of Table 20, page 115, it can be found that

80 per cent of the five professional workers believed that the question on coping procedures did not apply to the Indian family. It was the primary belief that major problems did not occur within the extended family relations, and when they happened to occur they were dealt with adequately and effectively.

Again, as with the parental area, from the observation and discussion of Tables 17, 18, 19, and 20, it might suggest that the majority of Indian families and professional workers perceived no major problems in the families' relation with their extended family. It was also viewed that the families' coping procedures, when needed, were adequate and effective.

Occupational Area

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the Indian families interviewed. Table 21, page 116, shows 95 per cent of the families interviewed perceived work as a major occupational problem. The families reported few jobs available on the reservation and work difficult to obtain. Consequently, many families held no permanent employment. Once employment was received, it was difficult for the male members to retain their position. Alcohol was reported by seven families to be a major occupational problem and was stated as the main cause of many males losing employment. Here, again, alcohol seemed to be perceived as a basic problem in bringing about family difficulties. Few families perceived the Indian male as unwilling to work or the male

being concerned over his wife being employed.

In observing Table 23, page 118, it can be seen that 45 per cent, or nine Indian families, reported they believed the question on coping procedures did not apply to their family. Seven, or 35 per cent, reported their family had no coping procedures available to them.

It is difficult to assess why so many Indian families reported the question on coping not applicable to their family, since 95 per cent of these families perceived work as a major occupational problem. Again, as was reported in other areas, maybe the families had difficulty understanding the question. Perhaps the design of the question was faulty and the family perceived the question as prying. It is impossible, with the data available, to assess the reasons properly.

Although 20 per cent of the Indian families did report coping procedures, few families believed their coping procedures were adequate. Few families were found who were completely dissatisfied with their life. Life was accepted without much thought on change. Even though employment was difficult to find and jobs hard to keep, the family did not view their occupational problem with much concern. Work meant money, money bought material objects, and most families seemed satisfied with what they had.

It is a common belief that one works in order to acquire material objects and possibly acquire a better station in life. To the Indian, material objects are usually necessity things and not an end in

themselves. Much higher value is assigned to other life activities in the Indian culture. Perhaps it is through physical and mental well-being and the ability to experience, in response to the environment, emotional feelings and sharing them, that the Indian experiences the greatest rewards and satisfaction in life. Possibly, to the Indian family, it is much more valuable to experience directly through emotional experiences than indirectly through past accomplishments and an accumulation of wealth.

Perhaps, then, conflict between the Indians' belief system and the imposed white culture has been one cause of major problems and inadequate coping procedures.

Major problems and coping procedures as perceived by the professional workers interviewed. Table 22, page 117, clearly reveals that all five professional workers perceived the lack of employment and only the lack of employment as a major occupational problem within the Indian family unit. Table 24, page 119, shows 60 per cent of the professional workers perceiving the Indian family as having no coping procedures available and the other two professional workers reporting seasonal employment as a coping procedure used by the Indian family.

Seasonal employment was the main coping procedure available to the Indian family in helping alleviate his problems. Ranch work and firefighting were the usual two sources available to the Indian. Both of these part-time jobs usually took the Indian off the reservation.

and, therefore, did not help alleviate the lack of employment on the reservation. It was the belief of the majority of professional workers that there were no coping procedures available to the Indian family on the reservation. It was brought to the attention of the researcher that it may be possible for the Indian to find work outside of the reservation and many do, but eventually most of the families return.

In the observation and discussion of Tables 21, 22, 23, and 24, it can be concluded that there are events perceived by the Indian family and professional worker as major occupational problems. Although there were items used as coping procedures, the Indian family is in much need of workable solutions.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was first to survey twenty American Indian families of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and identify the major problems and coping procedures of these families, as viewed by the Indians themselves. More specifically, the two major areas, problems and coping procedures, were broken down into six parts:

- (1) marital, (2) parental, (3) interpersonal, (4) economic,
- (5) occupational, and (6) the extended family.

Secondly, the purpose was to survey the five professional people employed by the reservation who are responsible for dealing with Indian problems. This was done to compare their perceptions with the Indian families interviewed.

The data collected during the summer of 1973 through the spring of 1975 by individually taped interviews with individuals from each family and professional worker. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire designed by the researcher using questions of open-ended form. The data were classified under each of the six categories for every family and professional worker and then coded for future reference. The data were then transcribed from every recording into sub-sets under each category and labeled as to definition and frequency.

It should be noted that the researcher used the responses of individual family members to comprise the total family problems and coping procedures. If only one individual cited a particular problem or coping procedure, the response was reported as a family response family unit.

Conclusions

The results of the study showed that there were events perceived as major problems by the twenty families and five professional workers within the Indian family structure. These were concentrated in the areas of (1) marital, (2) economical, and (3) occupational. Within the parental areas, there was concern expressed, though it was generally thought to be free of any real major problems. This also seemed to be true within the interpersonal area and the extended family area. Though there were underlying feelings of frustration and failure about this particular category, it was generally agreed that this area was problem-free. At least there seemed to be no concern of major problems within it.

In viewing the aspects of coping procedures used within the six areas of (1) marital, (2) interpersonal, (3) economic, (4) parental, (5) the extended family, and (6) occupational, there seemed to be a slightly different perception. In all six categories, the major belief of both the professional worker and Indian family was the

family had no adequate means of coping with their problems or that the question on coping procedures did not apply to Indian families.

Within the three categories which were found to be problem areas within the Indian family unit--(1) marital, (3) economics, and (3) occupational--the consensus of both the Indian family and professional worker was that the Indian family was in need of better and more adequate coping procedures. Either the family was viewed as having no coping procedures available or what was available and used was not effective. Therefore, it would seem there is a need for the use of adequate coping procedures in relation to problem areas within the Indian family unit.

Comparison of Perceptions Made by
Professional Workers With That
of the Indian Families

In comparing the professional workers' perceptions of major problems and coping procedures with those of the Indian families, it was found that the professional worker viewed the Indian families' major problems and coping procedures in strictly overt, observable behavior, while the Indian family also perceived some dealing with emotional and psychological factors.

This is shown in items cited by the professional workers, such as land disagreements, physical abuse, and lack of discipline. The Indian family cited these and similar items but also stated more

emotional and psychological factors such as jealousy, affection, trust, feelings of shyness, hope, love, and pride.

In other words, the emotional aspect of the individual Indian carries over into his family relationships and structure. It is also evident that the Indian family is not divulging to the outside professional worker any emotional aspects of the family, and perhaps it is only through overt signs displayed by the Indian family that the professional worker is able to come to understand some aspects of the Indian family.

In most areas, the professional workers' perceptions of the Indian families' major problems and coping procedures seemed similar with that of the Indian families interviewed. In other words, when it came to perceiving an area as problem-centered or problem-free, both the Indian family and professional worker perceived the same areas. This can be clearly shown in that both the professional worker and Indian family perceived the three areas--(1) occupational, (2) marital, and (3) economic--as problem areas within the Indian family unit, and the three areas--(1) parental, (2) extended family, and (3) inter-personal--as more or less free of major problems.

Although both the professional worker and Indian family agreed upon which areas were problem-centered or problem-free, there were differences in perception of the type of problem and coping procedure used. The Indian family usually reported more diversity of problems

and coping procedures, with many problems overlapping into each other. The professional worker, on the other hand, continually reported what they considered the main problem or coping procedure of the Indian family; incorporating many smaller problems in one category, they considered hampering the function of the Indian family.

Within most areas, both the professional worker and Indian family reported the same item with high percentages. The only difference would be the number of professional workers or Indian families reporting the area. For example, 60 per cent of the professional workers might report an item as a major problem, while 70 per cent of the Indian families perceived the same item as a major problem.

In comparing the perceptions of the professional worker and Indian family, perhaps it can be stated that Indians have not yet come to trust the professional worker with his emotional feelings. The professional worker, therefore, may be forced into viewing the Indian family in terms of overt, observable behavior. It may be possible that the Indian family is not ready to risk their emotions to what may be considered an outsider. It is important to understand that these comparisons are only speculative in nature and that it would be impossible to draw any definite conclusions from the data. Other research would have to be completed within the specific area for concise descriptive conclusions.

General Implications and Suggestions
for Further Study

At the present there is much interest in the American Indian, his life style, his goals, and his achievements. If correctly predicted, the future will show even a greater degree of interest in these native Americans. People want to know if the American Indian is different, how he is different, why he is different, and how these differences affect his life in the two societies of which the American Indian has been a part.

As with any other person, the Indian's character, values, and life styles are shaped by his environment. The environment during the early formative years of the Indian child is his home and his family. Therefore, to gain greater insight and information pertaining to these areas of Indian life, what better way is there to gain information than by an investigation of the family?

Thus, an attempt has been made with this study to focus on one area of life that affects the development of character, values, and life style: namely, what events constitute major problems in an Indian family and how the family copes with these particular problems. Although this study was an investigative study, an investigation of this type is a start in helping people understand some aspect of our Indian population.

It must be emphasized that caution should be used in making generalizations derived from this study to a larger population. This

study was confined to Indians on the Fort Belknap Reservation and would not suggest comparisons to other reservations in or out of the state of Montana. Furthermore, this investigator feels a hesitancy in making broad generalizations about all the Indians in his area of study, the Fort Belknap Agency, because generally speaking there are two different tribes which make up the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation population--the Assiniboiné and the Gros Ventre. However, technically one can also find Cree, Sioux, Blackfoot, and even an Alaskan Indian. Because of such a mixture of Indian people, a generalization about a tribe or populace as a whole would require data beyond this study.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration is the location of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in northern Montana, a prosperous farm and cattle region. The Indians living here are in close contact with a more or less affluent white society which might not be typical of the Indian society as a whole. Furthermore, because the Indians at the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation have lived closely with this white society, the Indians have in many ways adapted themselves to the white man's culture. With only the data available from this investigation, it would be impossible to state how this fact may or may not have affected the investigation. It is only important to consider while observing the data.

Basically, the Indian is socially and economically different from the white man. He does not share the white man's value system nor

does he believe in the white man's goals. As an Indian child, he has been taught his heritage by his elders and consequently the Indian culture, values, and goals have been instilled within him. Thus, hopelessness and frustration result when the Indian comes to realize that his life is pervaded by the white man's way of life and that he cannot dream the dreams of his forefathers nor live the type of life of which he has been taught.

Because of this frustration, hopelessness, and the every day stress of life, Indian families within the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation were found to have events occur within their lives and family structure that they termed as major problems. This study revealed what they were and how the Indian families dealt with these problems. The Indian families' major problems and coping procedures were explored, though no correlations were made between the Indian and white man.

The Indian home has been the object of some interest, speculation, and observation; but most research has dealt with the Indian's colorful and historic past, which in turn delves quite deeply into his battles, religious rites, and anthropological structure. Rare are the studies which deal with the Indians of the present, and rarer yet are studies which involve research concerning the Indian home and family life. We need to know what the Indian is like now, at this time and place. It is time we, as researchers, stop looking into the Indian's past to see his present, but to look at the present to help the Indian

help himself in the future.

Perhaps the most significant finding of the research was that many of the interviewees responded to the various questions with "does not apply" or "this is not a problem area to us." This seems to suggest that the traditional family problem areas do not apply to the Indian family. While it is not proper to impose upon the Indian standards of a white middle-class society, and the values of the Indian way of life must be respected, some problems must inevitably result from family living and from the cultural conflict which the Indian faces.

Another way to account for this kind of response would be to ascribe the results to poor questions, and to communication and shyness barriers which might not have been sufficiently overcome by the methodology employed in the investigation. Although the data show specific events as not applicable, this may not mean that the traditional problem areas of the family do not apply to the Indian. Responses in the "does not apply" or "this area is not a problem to us" category might have been significantly reduced through some alternative form of questioning or by having alternative categories for the classification of responses made by family members to the questions asked. By this conjecture, if the methodology had been more refined, improved, and consistent, there could possibly have been more extensive classification of data around

this particular area.

Most approaches, in dealing with the American Indian, have been viewed and dealt with in a value system foreign to his. Perhaps it is time to start approaching the Indian in terms of his values and beliefs. Instead of trying to Americanize and assimilate the American Indian, perhaps the alternative approach, pluralistic acculturation as stated in Chapter 1, would be more effective.

Consideration, tact, and great care must be used in approaching an Indian community for the purpose of an investigative study. Most Indians tend to be reserved, untrusting, and speculative toward most white people. At the present, the Indian society has been poked and prodded to such a great extent with questionnaires and interviews, even from their own people, that the Indian is justifiably wary of investigations.

It is of utmost importance that a bond of trust and friendship be established between the researcher and his prospective subjects if his study is to have any validity at all. It must be established that the researcher is not conducting the study out of mere curiosity or for monetary self-gain. An underlying trust that the project will help in some way to improve the Indian's relationship with the world outside the reservation should be the researcher's prime objective. Full cooperation and support of the tribal council and personnel as well as the families utilized in the survey is an absolute necessity. It would

be helpful if the researcher lived among the Indians and attempted to establish a close rapport with them. If possible it would be best if the interviewers and researchers could be Indian in order to help overcome the trust barrier. The researcher believes he has conducted the investigation within the framework stated above. A rapport was established from the twenty-five years of contact the researcher had with these Indian people, and a bond of trust was quite evident between the investigator and Indian families. (This particular investigator is part Indian and has lived on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation for twenty-five years. He or his family was known to most of his interviewees. Even with this close association, there is a possibility of distorted evidence.)

This study has been only a modest beginning, and it has raised more questions than it answered. However, there has to be a beginning, and it is to be hoped that studies such as this one will lead others into this area to expand and improve upon the existing knowledge.

Research is needed to provide answers to questions such as:

1. What is the meaning of the phrases "does not apply" or "not applicable" when used by Indians of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation?
2. Would an intensive pilot study, conducted within the area of study, improve the chances of getting more reliable results?
3. Does the use of language affect the Indians' understanding of questions given during an interview?

4. How important is being of Indian descent in gaining reliable information from Indian people?

To have a wider perspective on the major problems and coping procedures in Indian families, it would be helpful if this study could be replicated on other reservations in the United States. A replication of the study on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation would also help test the reliability of this study.

A need for other studies that are investigative and descriptive is great, not only in the area of family relations, but in all aspects dealing with the Indian of the present. Though research is needed, it is needed only to the extent that the Indian people be the primary concern.

Epilogue

The attitudes toward the Indian way of life which centers around his family and the Indian's visions of a trouble-free existence is expressed well by two long-dead Indian chiefs and serves to summarize the general feeling that emerges from the people interviewed from this study. One cited by Cohen (1969:192-193) was written in a declaration by the five county Cherokees:

Now we shall not rest until we have regained our rightful place. We shall tell our young people what we know. We shall send them to the corners of the earth to learn more. They shall lead us! Now, we have much to do. When our task is done, we will be ready to rest. In these days, intruders, named without consent, speak for the Cherokees. When the Cherokee government

is the Cherokee people we shall rest. In these days, the high courts of the United States listened to people who have been wronged. When our wrongs have been judged in these courts and the illegalities of the past have been corrected, we shall rest.

In these days, there are countless ways by which people make their grievances known to all Americans. When we have learned these new ways that bring strength and power and when we have used them, we shall rest. In these days, we are losing our homes and our children's homes. When our homeland is protected for ourselves and for the generations to follow, we shall rest.

The second quote was taken from Cohen (1971:175):

You will forgive me if I tell you that my People were Americans for thousands of years before your people were. The question is not how you can Americanize us, but how we can Americanize you. We have been working at that for a long time. Sometimes we are discouraged at the results. But we will keep trying. And the first thing we want to teach you is that in the American way of life, each man has the respect for his brother's visions. Because each of us respected his brother's dream, we enjoyed freedom here in America, while your people were busy killing and enslaving each other across the water. The relatives you left behind are still trying to kill each other because they have not learned that freedom is built on my respect for my brother's vision and his respect for mine. We have a hard trial ahead trying to Americanize you and your white brothers. But we are not afraid of hard trials.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Fraction of Indian Blood of Population

<u>Subject Code</u>	<u>Fraction of Indian Blood</u>	<u>Sex</u>
1	7/8	F
2	1/2	M
3	1/4	M
4	15/16	F
5	15/32	F
6	7/16	M
7	4/4	M
8	3/8	M
9	5/16	F
10	29/32	M
11	3/4	F
12	7/8	F
13	13/16	M
14	1/8	F
15	3/8	M
16	4/4	M
17	3/4	M
18	3/4	F
19	3/4	F
20	13/16	F
21	5/16	M
22	29/32	F
23	1/4	M
24	3/8	F
25	7/16	F
26	7/8	M
27	15/16	F
28	3/4	M
29	3/4	M
30	3/4	F
31	11/16	M
32	5/16	M
33	1/2	F
34	45/64	M
35	1/8	M
36	1/8	F
37	3/8	F
38	1/4	M
39	1/4	F

<u>Subject Code</u>	<u>Fraction of Indian Blood</u>	<u>Sex</u>
40	3/16	M
41	13/16	M
42	3/4	M
43	7/8	F
44	3/4	M
45	29/32	F
46	15/16	F
47	1/2	F
48	1/4	M
49	3/4	F
50	3/4	F
51	3/4	F
52	3/4	M

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MARITAL

Major questions:

1. What do you view as a major problem(s) within your marriage or relationship?
2. How do you cope with or resolve these problems?

INTERPERSONAL

Major questions:

1. What major problems do you see in your relationships with other people (such as neighbors, friends, and community)?
2. How do you cope with or resolve these problems?

ECONOMIC

Major questions:

1. How do you view financial difficulties within your family and to what extent does it present a problem?
2. How do you cope with or resolve these problems?

PARENTAL

Major questions:

1. What do you view as major problems with regard to children in the household (such as generation gap, discipline, new additions to the family, children as bothersome, children coming between spouses)?
2. How do you cope with or resolve these problems?

EXTENDED FAMILY

Major questions:

1. How do you view the role of the extended family (relations living within the household) and does it present any major problems?
2. How do you cope or resolve these problems?

OCCUPATIONAL

Major questions:

1. What major problems do you see arising from areas of work (such as lack of work, type of job held, family members working or not, liking a job)?
2. How do you cope with or resolve these problems?

APPENDIX C

Checklist

1-A: Major problem(s) within the marriage or relationship.

- a. jealousy _____
- b. infidelity _____
- c. physical abuse _____
- d. children _____
- e. employment _____
- f. alcohol _____
- g. intercultural relationship _____
- h. money _____
- i. sex _____
- j. dominance _____
- k. other _____

1-B: Coping procedures

- a. none _____
- b. priest _____
- c. friend _____
- d. relative _____
- e. counselor _____
- f. tribal council _____
- g. keep it to self _____
- h. hope it will go away _____
- i. other _____

2-A: Major problem(s) within the interpersonal area

- a. none _____
- b. prejudice _____
- c. marriage to non-Indian _____
- d. land disagreements _____
- e. too shy, afraid of people _____
- f. no reason people just don't like me _____
- g. jealousy _____
- h. other _____

2-B: Coping procedures

- a. none _____
- b. priest _____
- c. friend _____
- d. relative _____
- e. counselor _____
- f. tribal council _____
- g. keep to self _____
- h. hope it will go away _____
- i. other _____

3-A: Major problem(s) within the economic area

- a. not enough money _____
- b. spend too much on alcohol _____
- c. spouse can't keep job _____
- d. overspending _____
- e. lose money _____

f. none _____

g. other _____

3-B: Coping procedures

a. none _____

b. priest _____

c. friend _____

d. relative _____

e. counselor _____

f. tribal council _____

g. keep it to self _____

h. hope it will go away _____

i. other _____

4-A: Major problem(s) within the parental area

a. children not respectful _____

b. not enough time to self _____

c. too much responsibility placed on one parent _____

d. too many children _____

e. can't have children _____

f. none _____

g. discipline _____

h. other _____

4-B: Coping procedures

a. none _____

b. priest _____

c. friend _____

- d. relative _____
- e. counselor _____
- f. tribal council _____
- g. keep to self _____
- h. hope it will go away _____
- i. other _____

5-A: Major problem(s) within the extended family area

- a. too many people in the house _____
- b. not enough time to be left alone _____
- c. not enough money to feed everyone _____
- d. can't raise my own children _____
- e. too much responsibility _____
- f. disrupts home life _____
- g. none _____
- h. other _____

5-B: Coping procedures

- a. none _____
- b. priest _____
- c. friend _____
- d. relative _____
- e. counselor _____
- f. keep to self _____
- g. hope it will go away _____
- h. other _____

6-A: Major problem(s) within the occupational area

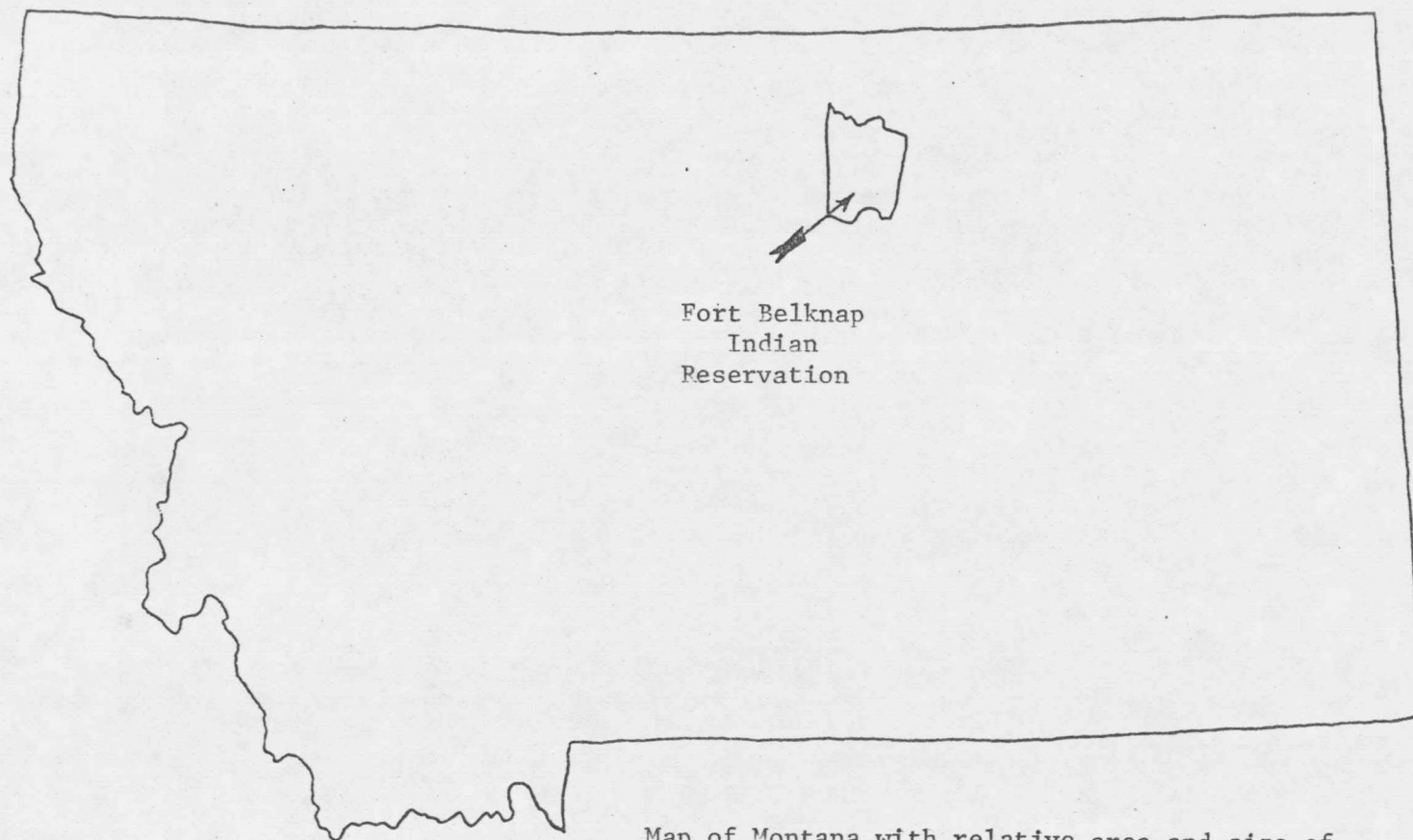
- a. can't get a job _____
- b. can't keep a job _____
- c. alcohol _____
- d. don't want spouse to work _____
- e. don't want to work _____
- f. work when I want _____
- g. no problem _____
- h. other _____

6-B: Coping procedures

- a. none _____
- b. priest _____
- c. unemployment services _____
- d. friend _____
- e. relative _____
- f. counselor _____
- g. tribal council _____
- h. hope it will go away _____
- i. keep to self _____
- j. other _____

APPENDIX D

Map



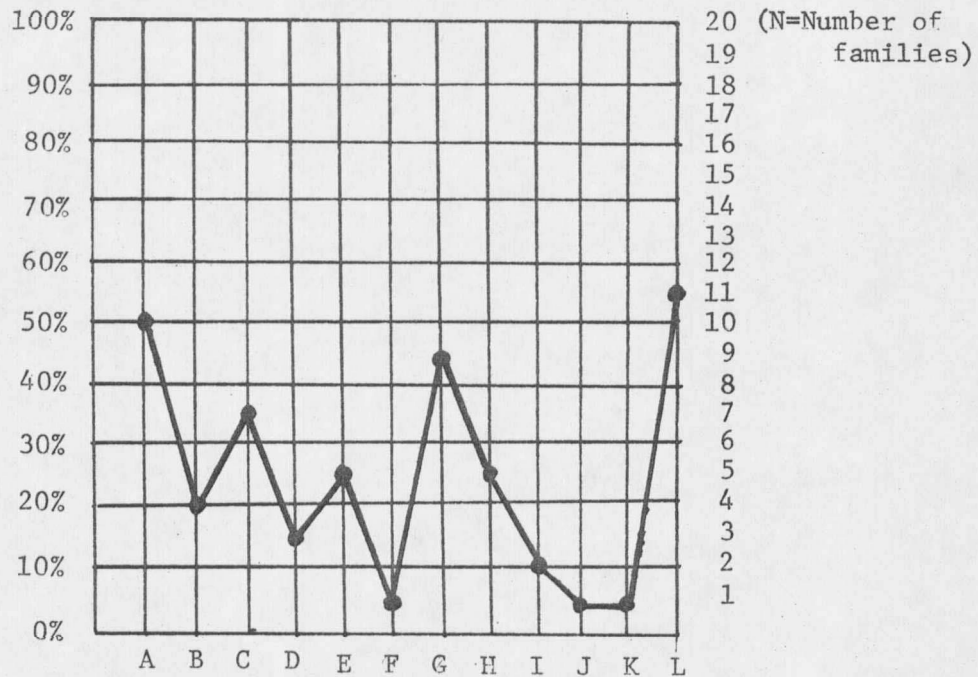
Map of Montana with relative area and size of
Reservation located within the State

APPENDIX E

Tables

Table 1

Events Perceived as Major Problems by Indians in the Marital Area

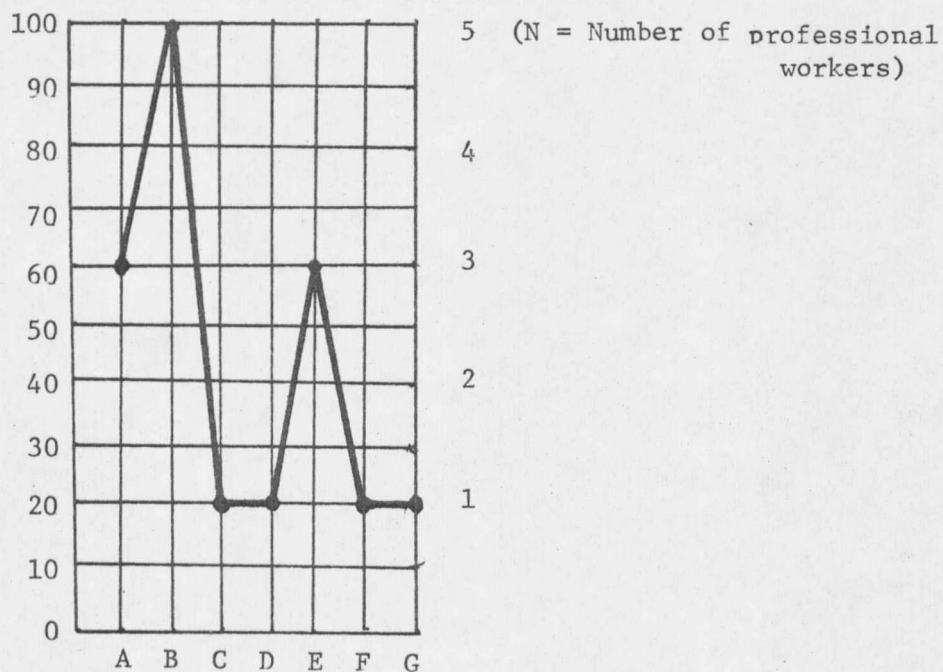


Key:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Jealousy | E. Sex | I. Money |
| B. Infidelity | F. No affection | J. No trust |
| C. Physical abuse | G. None | K. Intercultural relationship |
| D. Employment | H. Dominance | L. Alcohol |

Table 2

Events Perceived as Major Problems by Professional
Workers in the Marital Area



Key:

A. Physical abuse

D. Children

G. Women's Lib

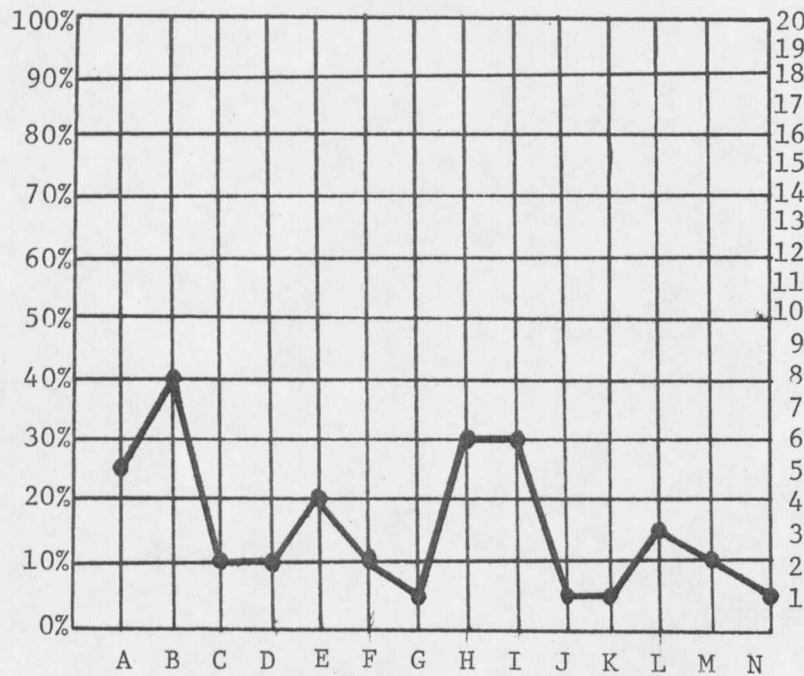
B. Alcohol

E. Instability of father

C. General poverty

F. General way of life

Table 3

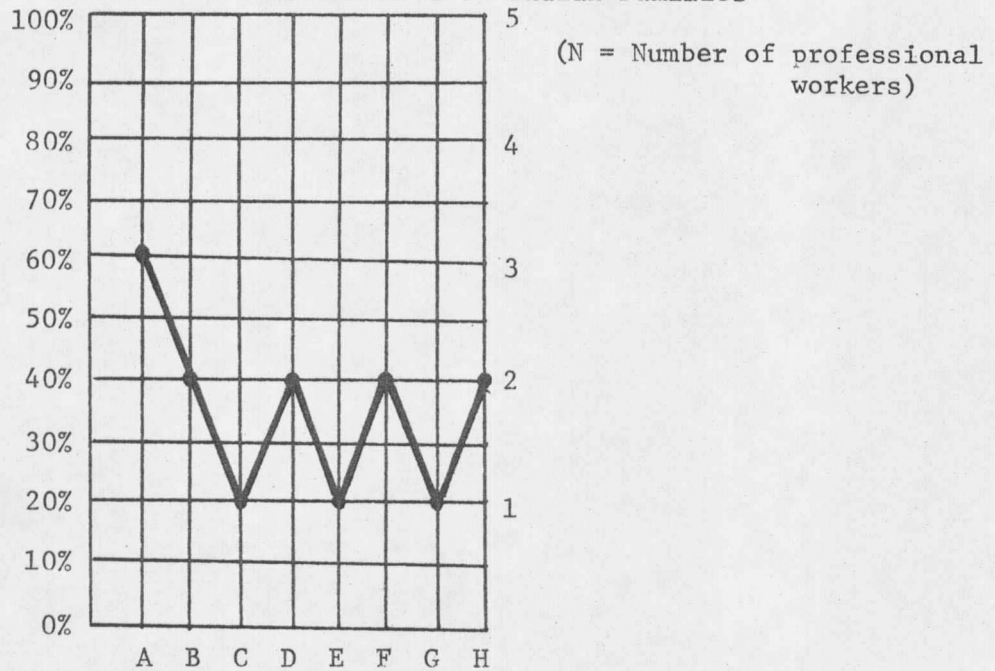
Coping Procedures Used by Indian Families in
Relation to Marital Area(N=Number
of
families)

Key:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| A. Friend | F. A.A. or 1/2-way house | K. Separation |
| B. No coping procedure | G. Talk it out | L. Divorce |
| C. Keep to self | H. Not applicable | M. Relative |
| D. Alcohol | I. Counselor | N. Job |
| E. Priest | J. Physical abuse | |

Table 4

Coping Procedures Perceived by Professional Workers in
Relation to Marital Area of Indian Families



Key:

A. No coping procedure

B. Separation

C. Medical drugs

D. Alcohol

E. Relative

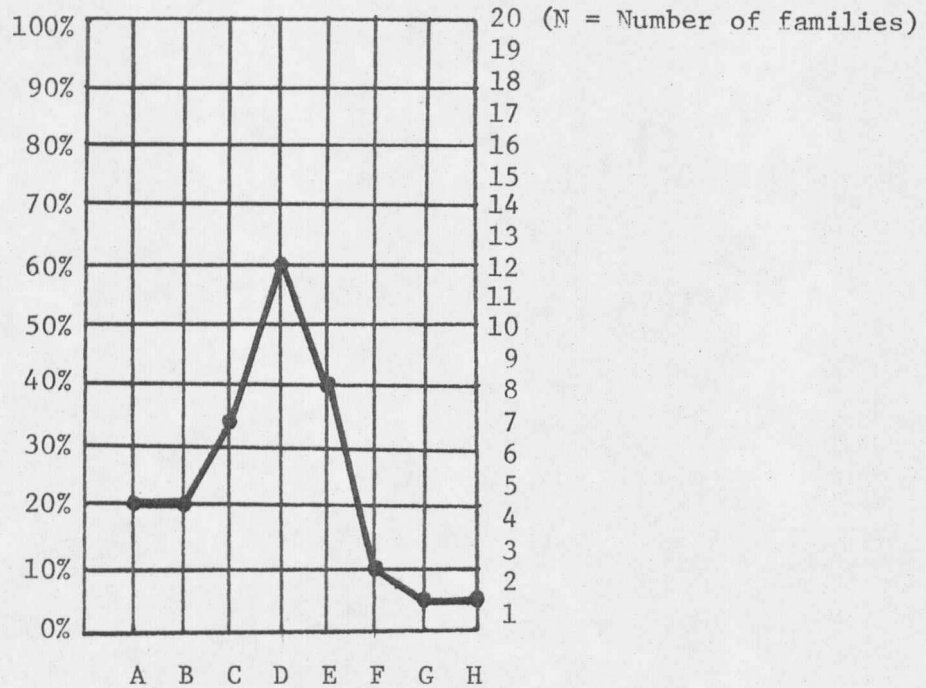
F. Counselor

G. A.A. or 1/2-way house

H. Priest

Table 5

Events Perceived by Indian Families as Major Problems
in Interpersonal Area



Key:

A. Shyness

D. None

G. Didn't like each
other's friends

B. Prejudice

E. Land disagreements

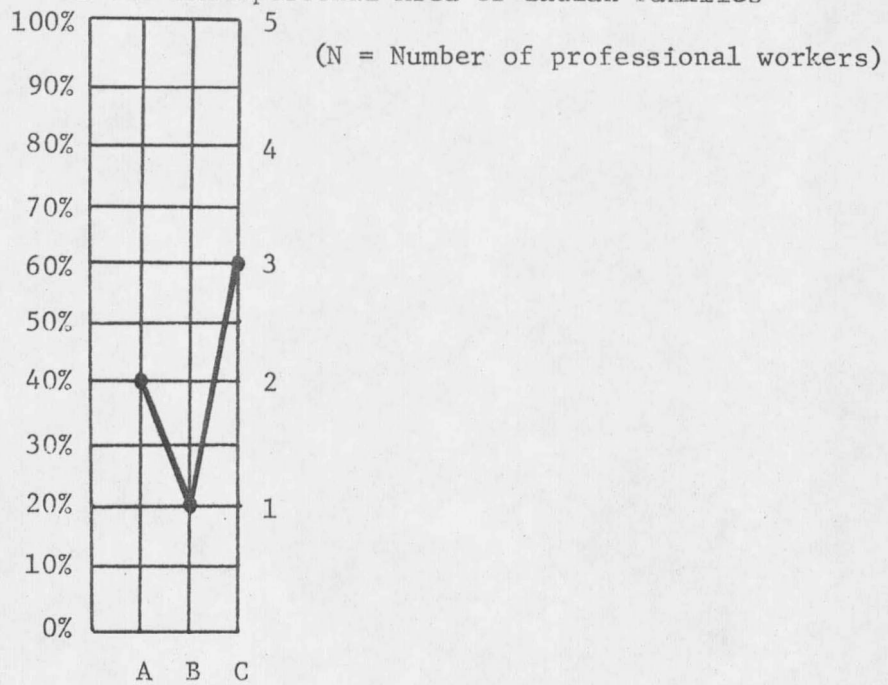
H. No mutual friends

C. Jealousy

F. Marriage to
non-Indian

Table 6

Events Perceived by Professional Workers as Major Problems
in the Interpersonal Area of Indian Families



Key:

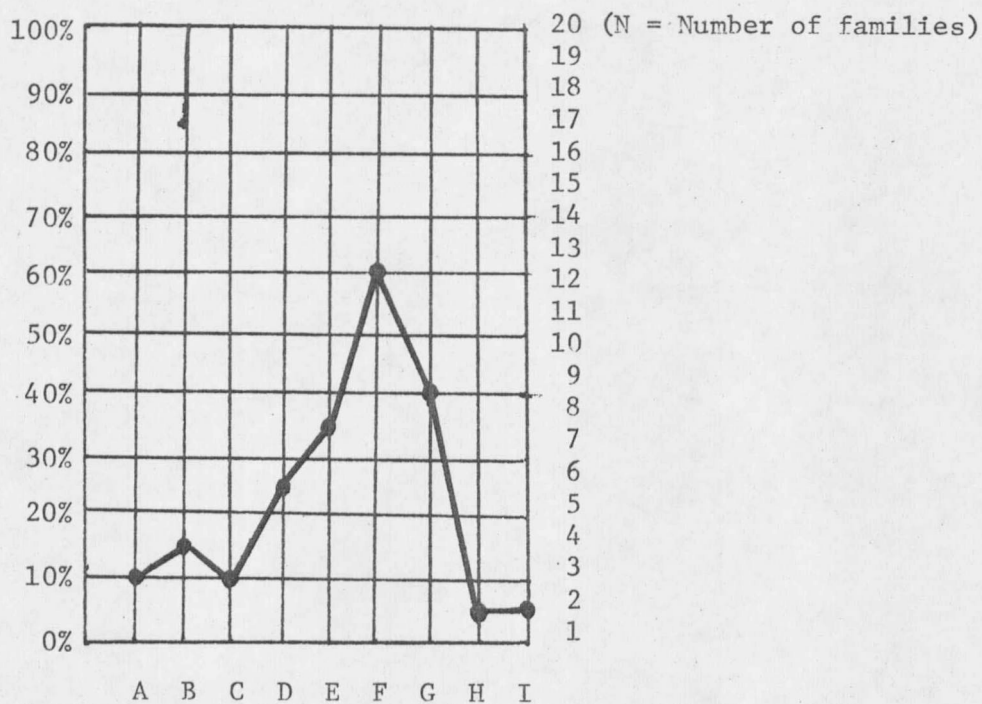
A. None

B. Land disagreement

C. Inter-tribal difficulties

Table 7

Coping Procedures Used by Indian Families in Relation to
the Interpersonal Area

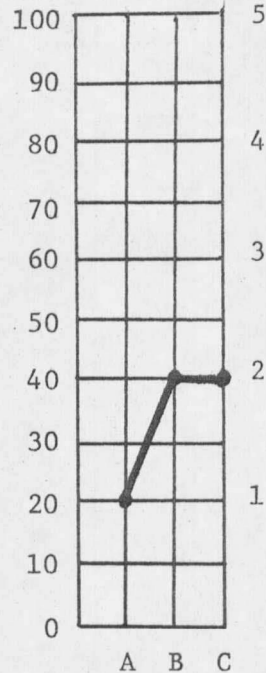


Key:

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| A. Priest | D. Keep to self | G. Tribal council |
| B. Friend | E. No coping procedure | H. Divorce |
| C. Counselor | F. Not applicable | I. Complain |

Table 8

Coping Procedures as Perceived by Professional Workers in
Relation to the Interpersonal Area of Indian Families



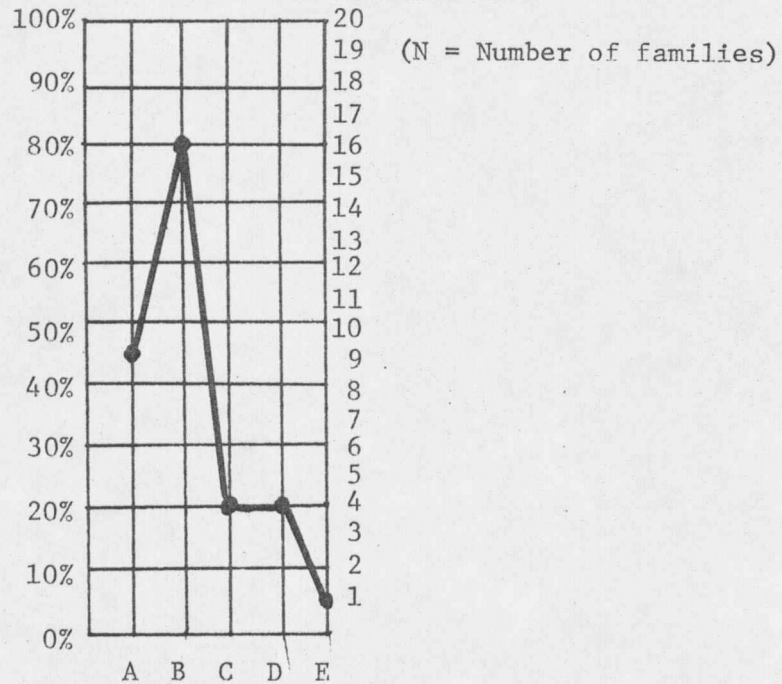
(N = Number of Professional Workers)

Key:

- A. Counselor
- B. No coping procedures
- C. Not applicable

Table 9

Events Perceived as Major Problems by Indian Families
in the Economic Area



Key: A. Alcohol

B. Money

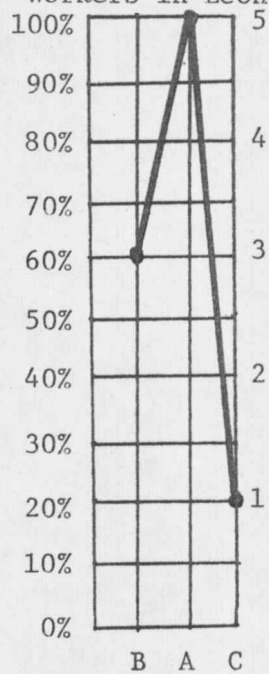
C. None

D. Husband can't keep job

E. No job available

Table 10

Events Perceived as Major Problems by Professional
Workers in Economic Area of Indian Families



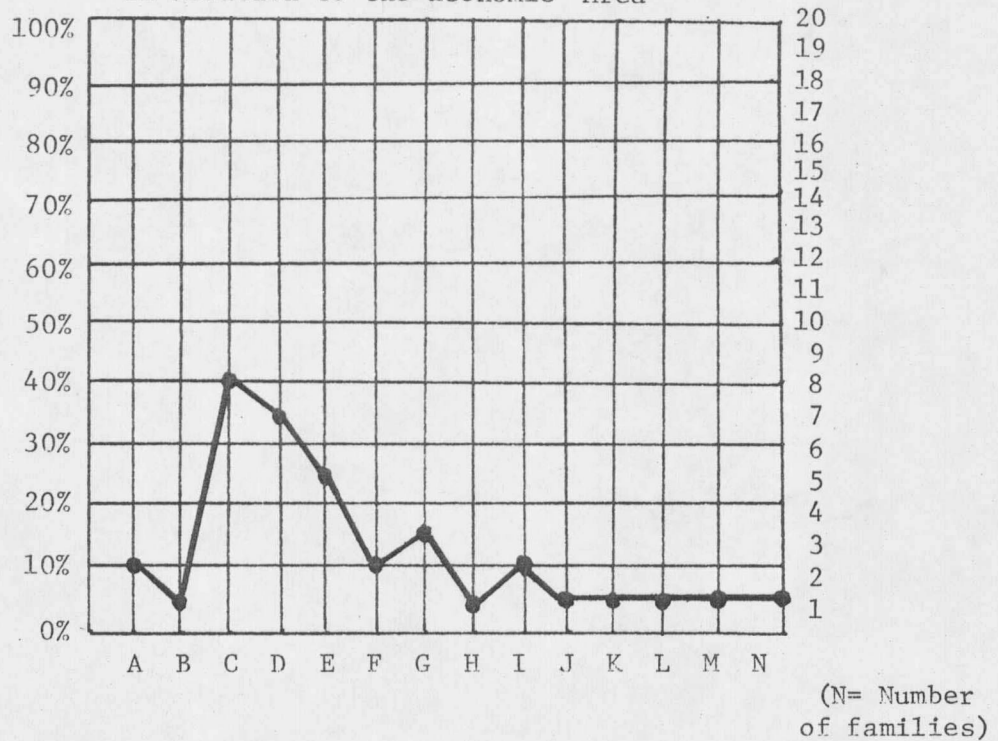
(N = Number of professional workers)

Key:

- A. Money
- B. Unemployment
- C. No goals as individuals

Table 11

Coping Procedures Used by Indian Families
in Relation to the Economic Area

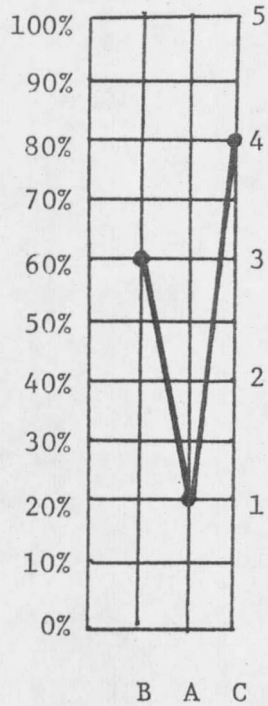


Key:

- | | | |
|---|---------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Tribal Council | F. Counselor | K. Relative |
| B. A.A. or 1/2-way house | G. Alcohol | L. Stretch the dollar |
| C. Not applicable | H. Separation | M. Get individual checking account |
| D. No coping procedures | I. Friend | |
| E. Keep to self & hope it will get better | J. Divorce | |

Table 12

Coping Procedures Perceived by Professional Workers in
Relation to the Economic Area of Indian Families



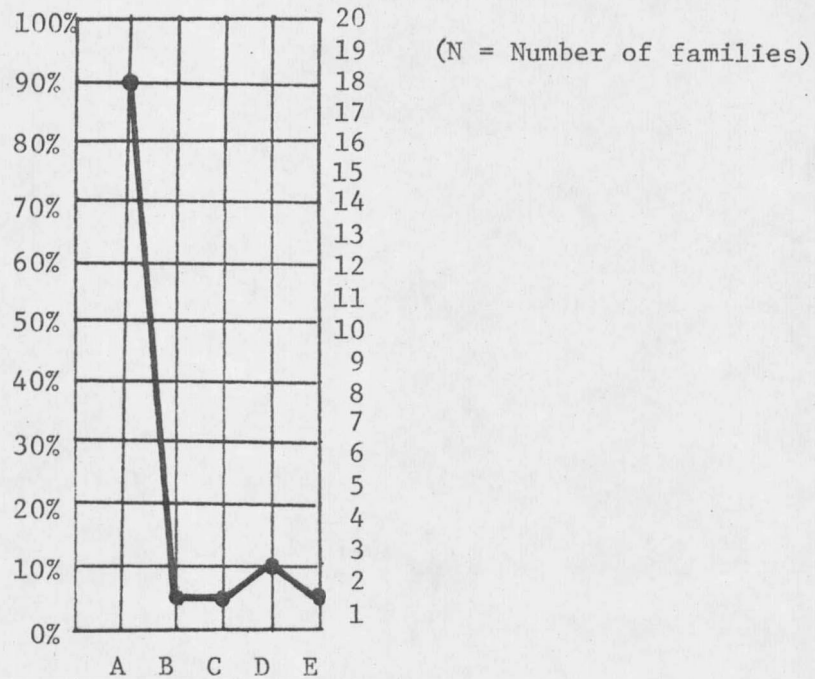
(N = Number of professional workers)

Key:

- A. No coping procedures
- B. Seasonal employment
- C. Alcohol

Table 13

Events Perceived by Indian Families as Major Problems
in the Parental Area



Key:

A. None

B. Not enough time to self

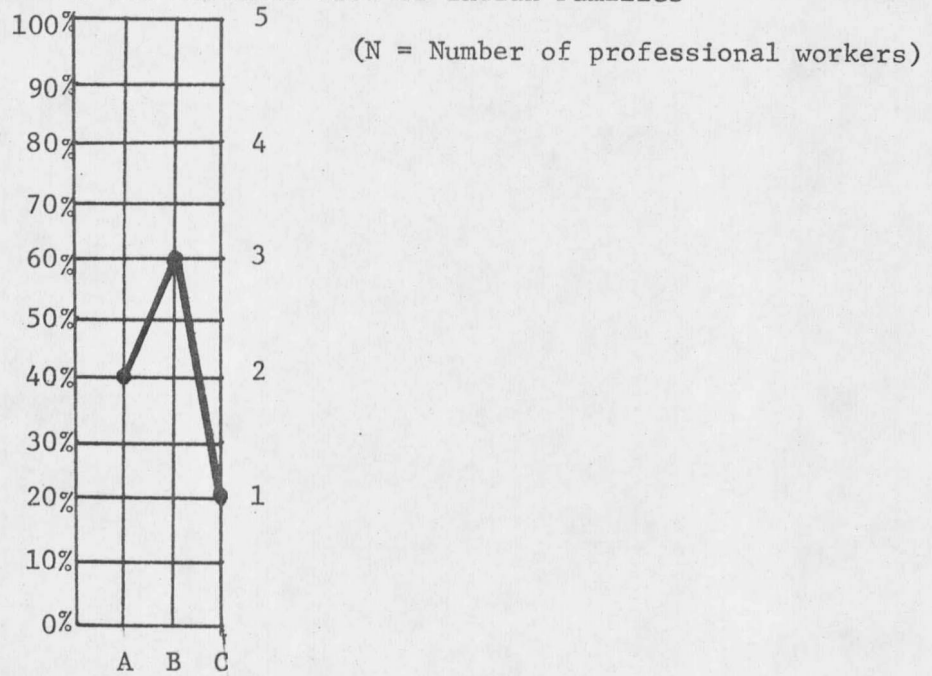
C. Children not respectful

D. Discipline

E. No father figure

Table 14

Events Perceived by Professional Workers as Major Problems
in the Parental Area of Indian Families

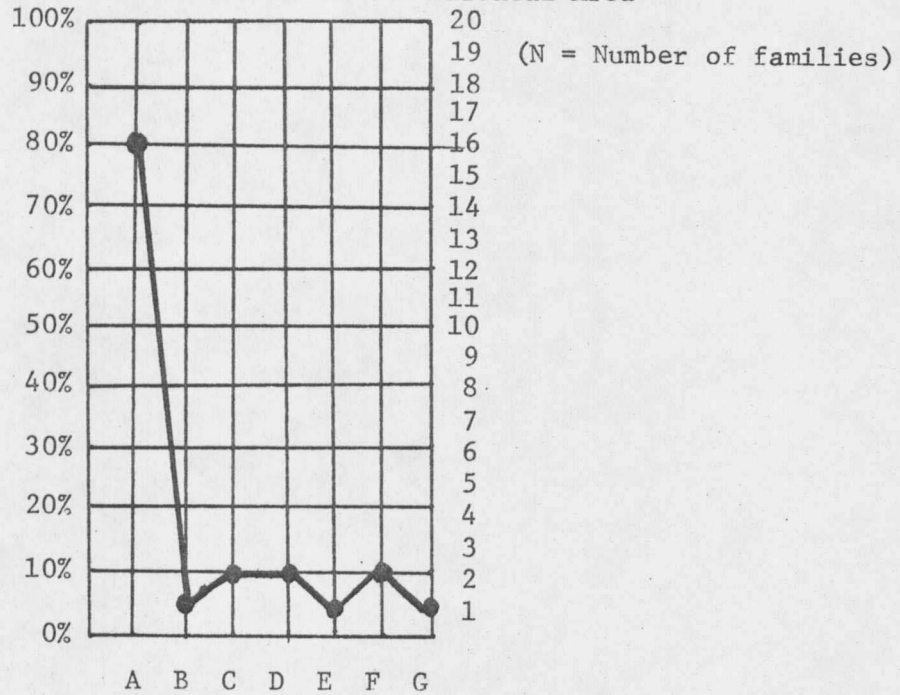


Key:

- A. Lack of discipline
- B. None
- C. Not enough stress on education

Table 15

Coping Procedures Used by Indian Families in
Relation to the Parental Area



Key:

A. Not applicable

D. Relative

G. Give more love

B. Keep to self

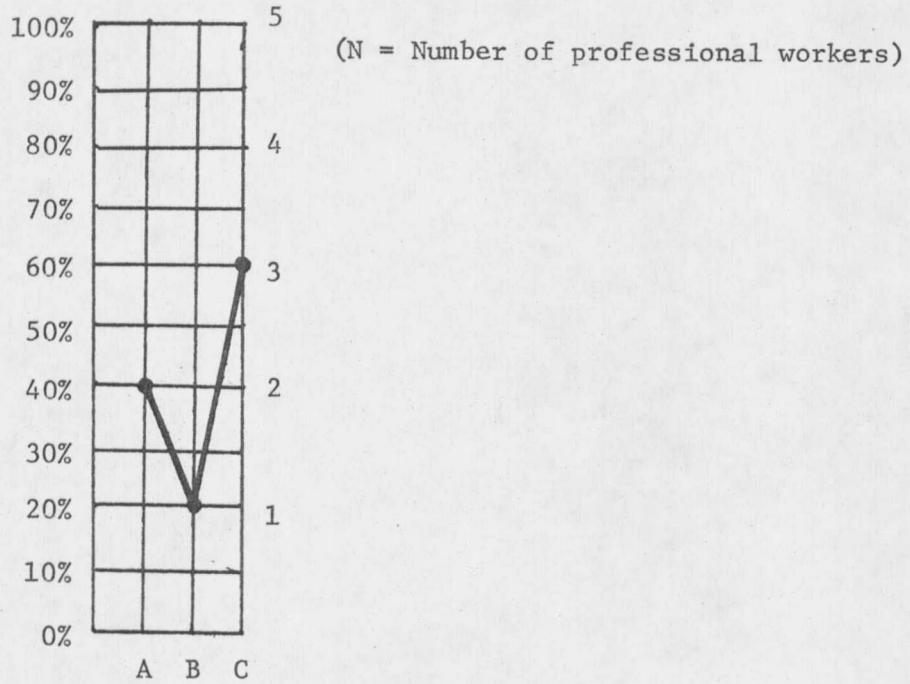
E. Priest

C. No coping procedures

F. Friend

Table 16

Coping Procedures Perceived by Professional Workers in
Relation to the Parental Area of Indian Families

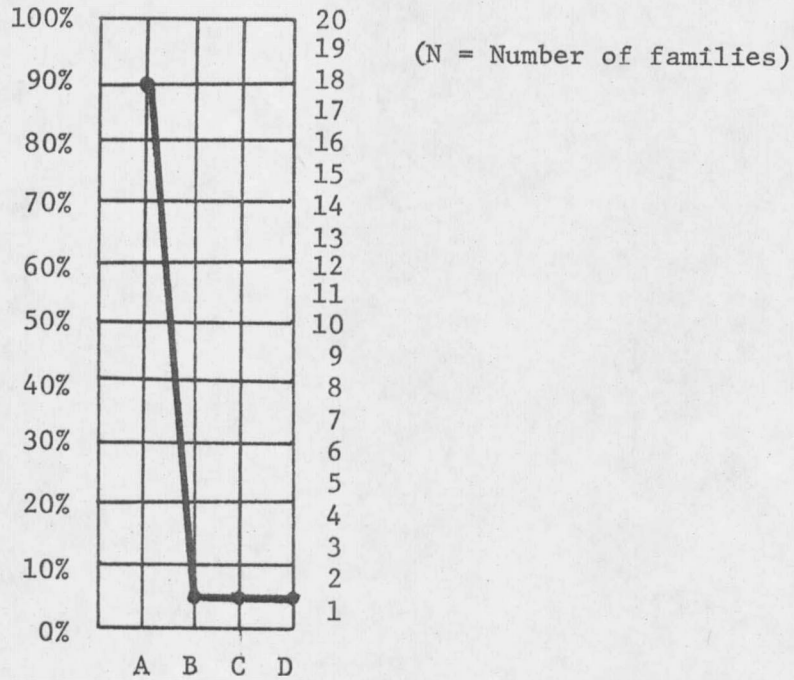


Key:

- A. Relatives
- B. Boarding schools
- C. Not applicable

112
Table 17

Events Perceived by Indian Families as Major Problems in
the Area of the Extended Family



Key:

A. None

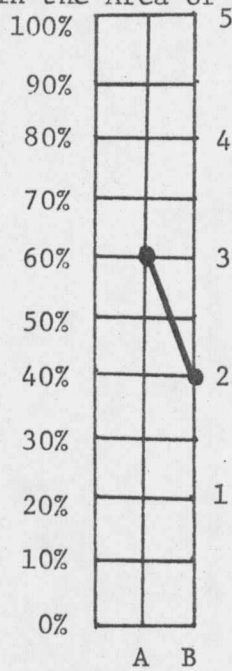
C. Not applicable

B. Not enough money for food

D. Personality differences

Table 18

Events Perceived by Professional Workers as Major Problems
in the Area of the Extended Family of Indian Families



(N = Number of professional workers)

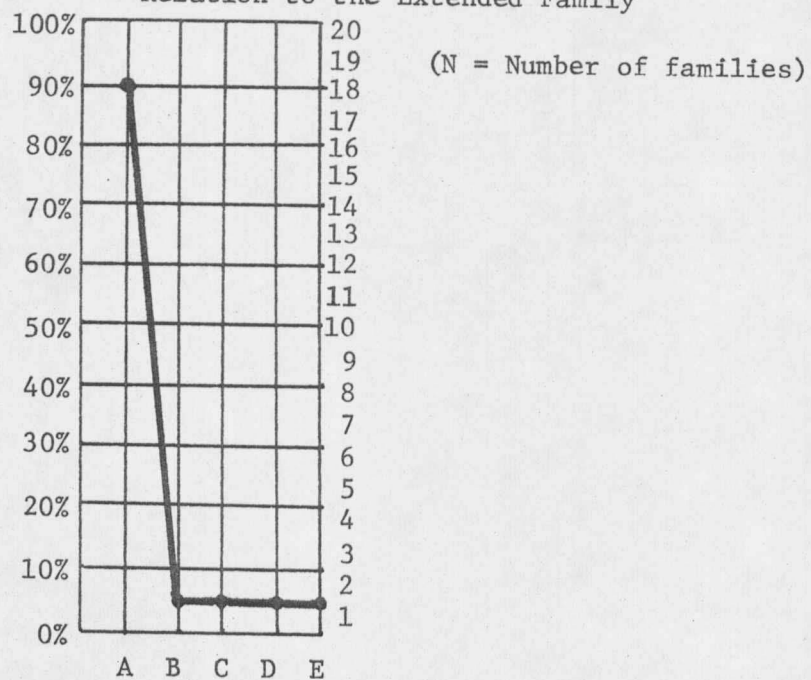
Key:

A. None

B. Too much responsibility for members of the family

Table 19

Coping Procedures Used by Indian Families in
Relation to the Extended Family



Key:

A. Not applicable

D. Bitch

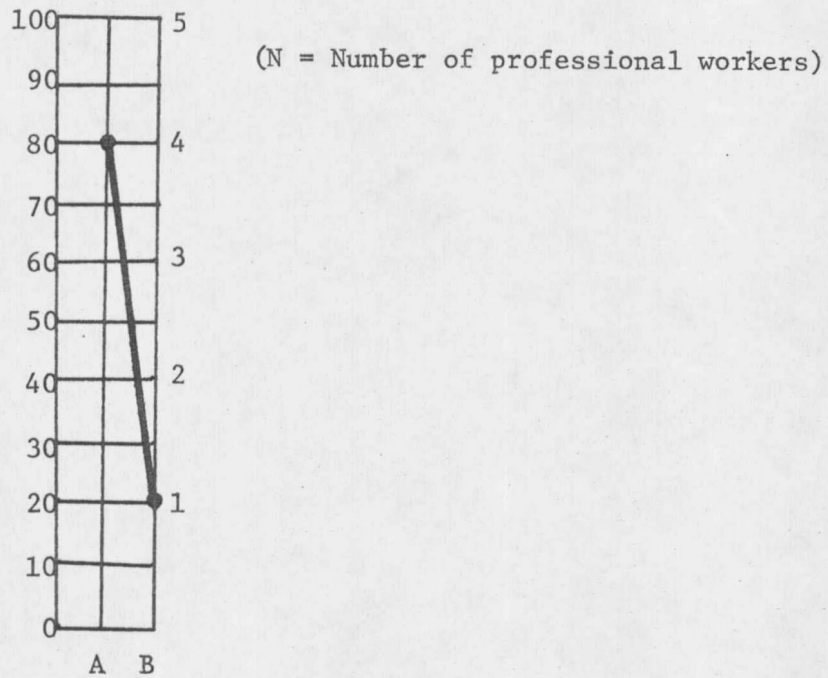
B. No coping procedures

E. Friend

C. Relative

Table 20

Coping Procedures Perceived by Professional Workers in
the area of the Extended Family of Indian Families

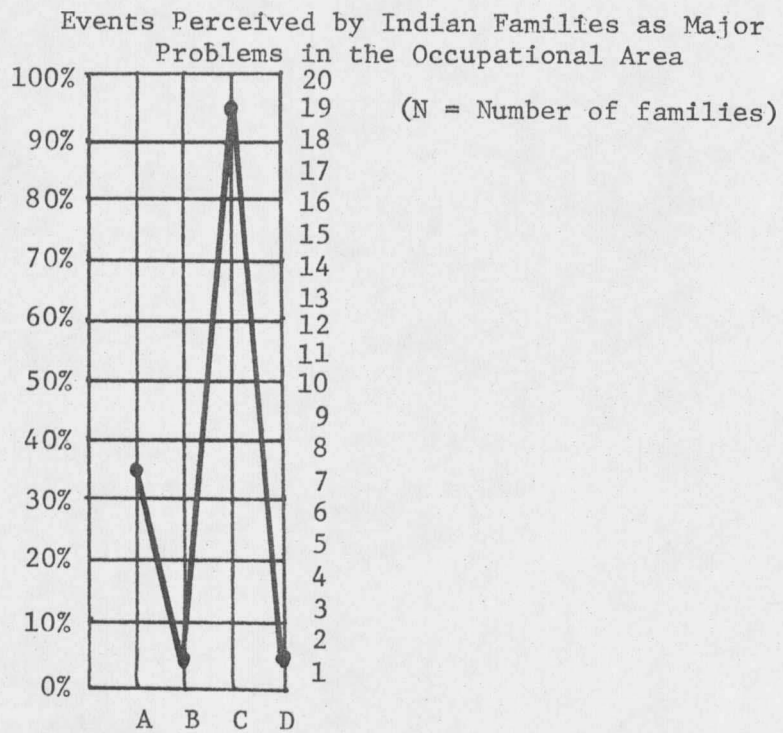


Key:

A. Not applicable

B. No coping procedures

Table 21



Key:

A. Alcohol

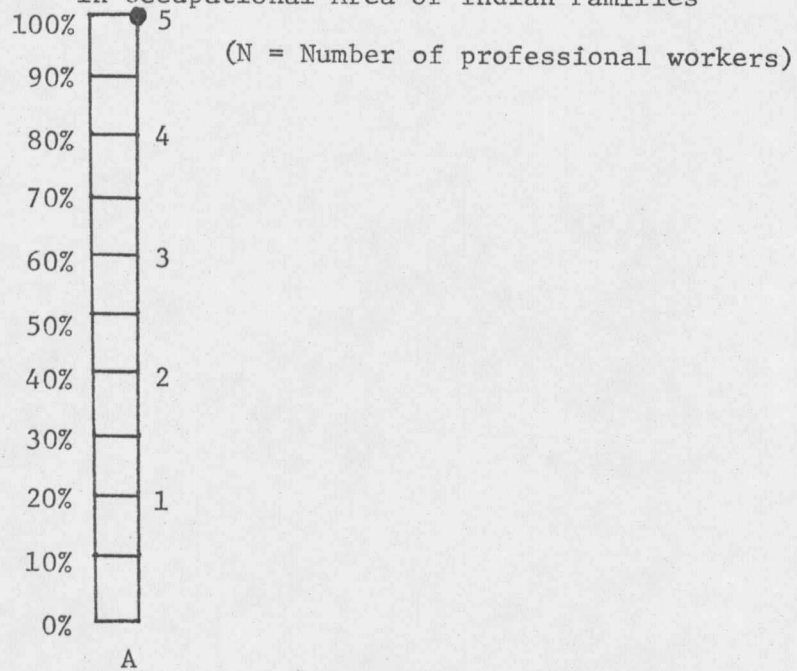
B. None

C. Can't find a good job

D. Not any good jobs on the reservation and too proud to take other available employment

Table 22

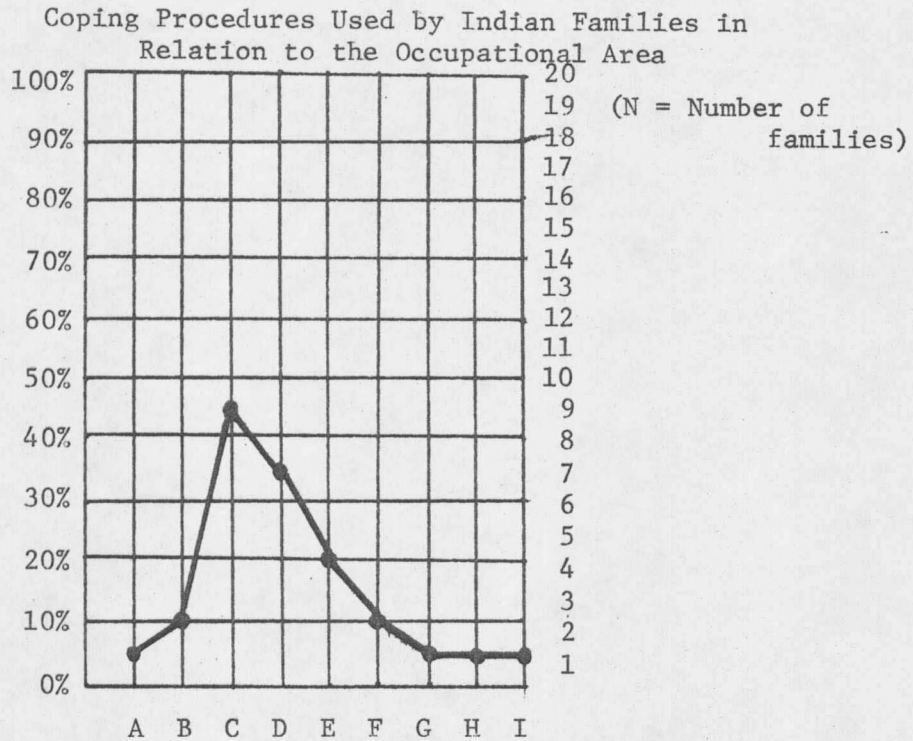
Events Perceived by Professional Workers as Major Problems
in Occupational Area of Indian Families



Key:

A. Lack of job

Table 23

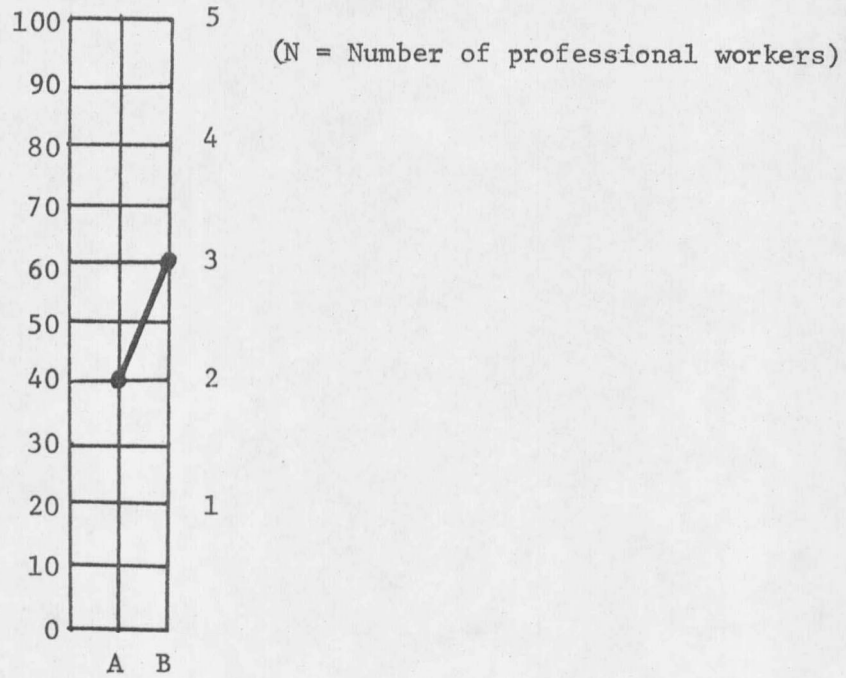


Key:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| A. A.A. or 1/2-way house | F. Alcohol |
| B. Friend | G. Separation |
| C. Not applicable | H. Divorce |
| D. No coping procedures | I. Any kind of a job |
| E. Unemployment service | |

Table 24

Coping Procedures Perceived by Professional Workers in
Relation to the Occupational Area of Indian Families



Key:

- A. Seasonal employment
- B. No coping procedures

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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