RESEARCH/POLICY REPORT

PRISON RECIDIVISM:
TOWARDS REDUCTION,
REHABILITATION
AND REFORM

by

Ramesh Daosaran, Ph.D.
Professor of Criminology and Social Psychology

and

Ian Ramdhanie, B.Sc., M.Sc.

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PHASE I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

What proportion of prison inmates has been to prison more than once? What
proportion of prison inmates is in prison for the first time? How similar or
different are characteristics such as age, ethnicity, religion, marital status, social
class, literacy, etc. amongst prison inmates and to what extent? What is the most
common crimes/offences committed by them? What is the average length of time
an inmate spends in prison? Why do some inmates repeatedly commit crimes and
return to prison? What is the state of our prisons? Should additional resources be
devoted to upgrade prison conditions and increase the number and quality of
rehabilitation programmes? How effective have been such programmes thus far?

This project seeks to answer some of these questions. As Phase I of the overall
mission, we of necessity concentrate on establishing an appropriate database and
social and demographic configuration of those now in prison. Apart from its
usefulness for prison management, this database should also assist the current

1 This research/policy project was at the request of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and was
mentioned in the National Budgets for 2001/02 and 2002/03 by the relevant Ministers of Finance. A grant
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express our deep appreciation to former Minister of Finance, Mr. Gerald Yettning and present Minister of
Finance, Hon. Patrick Manning and Sen. the Hon. Conrad Enil1, Minister in the Ministry of Finance for
allowing us the opportunity to carry out this important work.
work of the Cabinet-Appointed Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation headed by former Commissioner of Prisons, Mr. Cipriani Baptiste.

The prison service is an important component of the criminal justice system. In the past, a few studies were conducted on the prison service in Trinidad and Tobago. However, these focused on problems within the prison service, such as administration, prison conditions, etc. Usually, much of the emphasis was placed on the police service. As such, there was little focus on the issue of prison recidivism and what can be done to reduce this phenomenon.

Therefore, to help lay a foundation for further research and policy development, this study was developed as a multi-phase project and titled "Prison Recidivism: Towards Reduction, Rehabilitation and Reform." This is the first time such a study is being conducted in this country and by extension the wider Caribbean. Conducted by the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, UWI, St. Augustine Campus, the first phase was done during the period April 2002 and December 2002.

**Overall Objectives**

This study has four major objectives. These are:

- To gather data on the demographic, social, and economic status of the prison population in the country’s adult prisons,
- To gather data on the criminal and conviction status of such inmates,
- To examine the potential for rehabilitation and civic re-integration within society, and
- To propose programmes and policies that can help improve prison conditions and reduce the rate of recidivism within the prison population.
This first phase of the project (260 pp) accomplished the first two objectives outlined above. Depending on financial support, Phase II will deal with the other objectives.

**Specific Objectives**

Further, there are eight specific objectives of this study:

- Identify how many of the prison inmates are in fact recidivists for the total prison population as well as for individual prisons.
- Identify how many times prison inmates have been in prison for the total prison population as well as for individual prisons.
- Categorize prison inmates in terms of type of offence committed, length of sentence, age, sex, educational level, marital status, religion, trade, level of literacy, residence, etc. for the total prison population as well as for individual prisons.
- Bring all of the relevant stakeholders of the prison system together to discuss prison recidivism, rehabilitation and reform, and
- Identify the scope for rehabilitation and the training skills required for building civility at the various prisons.
- Establish a strong empirical rationale and platform for prison reform.
- Establish a much-needed database on the prison population.
- Contribute to the formulation of policies and strategies that will address a reduction in prison recidivism, rehabilitation of prisoners and reform of the penal system.

As indicated earlier, this first phase of the project accomplished the first four objectives, and with this report contributed towards the accomplishment of the last objective.
How was the study conducted?

In undertaking this project, several meetings were held with the relevant authorities as well as visits made to all of the seven prisons. Interviews were held with the officers in charge of each prison. Further, a data collection drive was implemented in all of the prisons whereby the records of all convicted inmates who were in the prisons from January 1, 2002 to May 31, 2002 were examined, that is, for 4,449 inmates (prisoners and convicts) by a team of researchers. This was a most challenging experience given the state of the required records for our database. An analysis of the data was then conducted. Additionally, a national forum was held in which all of the major stakeholders of the prison were invited to a one-day workshop session held at the Trinidad Hilton on August 21, 2002.

Visits to Prisons

All of the nation's seven prisons for adult inmates were visited: Carrera Convict Prison, Port of Spain Prison, Golden Grove (Convicts-Males), Golden Grove (Convicts-Women), Golden Grove (Remand), Maximum Security Prison and Tobago Prison.

These visits were eye opening in that we saw the actual living conditions of inmates, the state of the prison facilities, the types of programmes carried out, the interactions of inmates, etc. From the visits, it is clear that there are similarities and differences amongst prisons. For instance, there are common problems across prisons, some prisons are better off than other prisons in some aspects but worse off in other aspects, some prisons lack basic items, etc. (See the section on these visits for each prison for further details.)
Stakeholders’ Forum: August 21, 2002

This event was extremely useful as we were able to bring the major stakeholders of the prison together to discuss this particular issue of prison recidivism and repeat offending. Participants came from the various sections of the country, for example, government ministries and agencies, NGO’s, private sector, religious groups, university, prison service, etc.

In addition to the discussing the many critical issues, this forum also served the purpose whereby all participants were made aware of what each other was doing with regard to the prisons. Further, common problems were identified as well as solutions were proposed. Also, the project itself benefited as it helped informed the direction it should take. See section on this forum in the report for further details.

Analysis of Prison Records

After the analysis of prison records for all convicted inmates in all of the adult prisons using statistical analysis, an assessment of the situation with regard to inmates can now be made.

But first, what definition of recidivism was used in this project? In the international literature on recidivism, there is no one way to define recidivism as several measures have been used. (See section in report for this debate.) As such, in this first phase of the project, the system that exists in the nation’s prisons with regard to recidivism was used. That is, inmates are classified as to whether they are in prison for the first time (Star), the second time (Special) or the third or more times (Ordinary).
Recidivists vs. First Timers

Overall from the data, over fifty-five percent (56%) of inmates can be deemed to be recidivists, that is, two times and more in prison whilst 39% were in prison for the first time. Five percent had other “statuses.”

Inmates’ Ages

Younger inmates as compared to older inmates comprise the highest proportion of inmates in the nation’s prisons. For instance, 81% of all inmates were between the ages of 17 – 41 years. Further, 78% of recidivists were also from this age group (17 – 41 years). Additionally, 85% of those inmates in prison for the first time also came from the age group.

Sex of Inmates

Overall, 98% of inmates in prison were males and 2% were females. Of those inmates who were males, 56% were recidivists and 39% were in prison for the first time. In comparison, of those who were females, 71% were in prison for the first time and 24% were recidivists.

Types of Crimes/Offences Committed by Inmates

The highest proportion of inmates in the nation’s prisons was there for narcotic-related crimes/offences (35%). This was followed by 27% who were there for larceny, housebreaking and breaking crimes/offences. A further 8% were in prison for robbery-related crimes/offences. Ten percent of inmates were in prison for person-related crimes/offences such as murder/manslaughter, rape, grievous bodily harm, assault. Three percent was incarcerated for arms and ammunitions, 4% for maintenance-
related offences and 1% for white-collar crimes. The remaining 12% comprised “other” crimes/offences.

With regard to recidivism, whilst 44% of the recidivists committed larceny, robbery and housebreaking, 26% of inmates in prison for the first time committed such crimes/offences. Similar proportions of recidivists and inmates in prison for the first time committed narcotic-related crimes/offences, that is, 38% and 37% respectively. Whilst 6% of recidivists committed person-related crimes/offences such as murder/manslaughter, rape, grievous bodily harm, etc., 18% of inmates in prison for the first time committed such crimes/offences.

**Length of Sentences Given to Inmates**

Overall, almost two-thirds of all inmates (65%) are serving sentences of five years and less with 20% serving 5 – 10 years sentences, 6% serving 10 – 20 years sentences, 3% serving 20 years and more to life imprisonment, 5% serving Simple Imprisonment and 1% “other” types of sentences. (See Figure 4) With regard to recidivists, the distribution is quite similar, for example, 70% were serving sentences of five years and less.

**Type of Sentences Given to Inmates**

Overall, the vast majority of inmates were serving sentences of hard labour (94%) whilst 6% had other types of sentences. Of the 94% that were sentenced to hard labour, 73% were given pure hard labour, 12% hard labour or a fine, 6% hard labour and a fine and 3% hard labour and strokes.
Ethnicity of Inmates

The overall pattern of the ethnic breakdown of inmates was: African descent (61%), East Indian descent (26%), “Mixed” ethnic background (13%) and less than one percent had “other” ethnic backgrounds. When recidivists were considered, they followed this overall distribution.

Inmates’ Residences

For ease of analysis, the Trinidad and Tobago was divided into nine geographic areas (using CSO classification according to Wards) of where inmates were residing before they were sent to prison.

From the data, the highest proportion of inmates in prison (26%) came from the North West area of Trinidad comprising the Wards Diego Martin and St. Anns. This was followed by: the North Central area of Trinidad comprising three Wards (Tacarigua, Arima and Manzanilla) with 17% and the South Central area of Trinidad also comprising 17% with the Wards Point-a-Pierre, Savana Grande and Naparima.

Inmates from the Central West area of Trinidad comprising the Wards Chaguanas, Monserrat, Couva, Cunupia contributed to 13% of the inmate population. This was followed by the 10% of inmates who came from the South West area of Trinidad with the Wards - La Brea, Siparia, Erin and Cedros.

Of the inmate population, 4% each came from the Central East area of Trinidad and the South East area of Trinidad. The former area comprised the following Wards (Tamana, San Raphael, Turure, Charuma and Cocal) whilst the latter area included the Wards Guaguayare, Trinity, Moruga and Ortoire).
In the North East area of Trinidad comprising the Wards Blanchisseuse, Toco, Valencia and Matura, 3% of the inmates in the nation’s prisons were residing in this area. This was followed by 5% of inmates who was residing in Tobago. Further, 1% of inmates in the prisons were residing in other countries.

**Religions of Inmates**

Roman Catholics accounted for the highest proportion of inmates in the nation’s prisons (29%). This was followed by: Baptists (14%), Hindus (13%), Muslims (12%), Anglicans (8%), Seventh Day Adventists (7%), Pentecostals (6%), Presbyterians (1%), Jehovah Witnesses (1%), “Christians” (2%), other (1%) and nonconformists (6%). With regard to recidivists, they followed the overall distribution.

**Marital Statuses of Inmates**

Of all the inmates, the vast majority was single (84%) whilst 15% were married and 1% had “other” statuses. For the recidivists, they followed the overall distribution.

**Number of Children of Inmates**

The vast majority of inmates had between 1 – 3 children (49%) whilst 37% had no children. However, 10% had 4 – 6 children and 4% had seven and more children. The pattern for the recidivists was quite similar.

**Inmates’ Social Classes**

Almost all of the inmates belonged to the lower social class group (97%) whilst 2% were in the middle social class category. The remaining one
percent comprised the upper class, unemployed, student, housewives and retired/pensioner. For recidivists, the pattern was the same.

**Reading, Writing and Arithmetic Abilities of Inmates**

The prison records revealed that 98% of all inmates were able to read, write and perform arithmetic.

**Proportions of Inmates in the Various Prisons**

Which of the prisons had the highest proportion of inmates? The Golden Grove Prison for male convicts accounted for 37% of all convicted inmates. This was followed by: Port of Spain (30%), Maximum Security Prison (19%), Carrera Convict Prison (10%), Golden Grove (Women's Prison) (2%) and Tobago Prison (2%).

**Further Analysis of Inmates**

Further analysis was conducted on all inmates according to several factors such as age, religion, sex, ethnicity, social class, marital status, number of children, type of crimes/offences committed, length of sentences and type of sentences. See the relevant sections in this report for such analysis.

The first phase of this project represented an important step in the initial study on "Prison Recidivism in Trinidad and Tobago." The groundwork has thus been completed. The next step is the creation of a database on the inmates, a questionnaire/interview assessment of inmates and the subsequent development of programmes to deal with this phenomenon. At all points during this project, consultation with the relevant stakeholders took place and will continue to take place.
This project is quite important to the national community in dealing with the burning issue of crime as it deals with a critical aspect – the criminals themselves. A relatively small proportion of society commits crimes, as the majority of the population is generally law abiding. As the data highlighted, almost sixty percent of inmates are recidivists. It is everyone’s responsibility that recidivism be reduced.

**Recommendations**

The following is a list of 42 recommendations that follow this first phase of the project. Some recommendations are derived from our analysis of the prison records, others are from our on-site visits to the seven prisons, meetings with key stakeholders, consultations with prison officers and interviews with some prisoners. All in all, these 42 recommendations are designed not only to make the work of prison officers more effective, but also to make prison conditions more amenable to prisoner rehabilitation and as such, reduce our level of crime.

1. The present system of classifying inmates into the various categories of Stars (first time in prison), Specials (second time in prison) and Ordinaries (third or more time in prison) should be revisited, in particular, the category of “Ordinaries.” A more detailed system should be developed to capture and distinguish inmates who have been in prison three times vs. five times vs. ten times vs. fifteen times, etc. In other words, there is the need to get into the degrees of recidivism more specifically.

2. With regard to inmates who are Specials and Ordinaries, a system whereby data on their past crimes/offences should be readily available to enable analysis. For instance, for each of the times they were in prison before, what were the specific offences committed, how long ago were the offences committed (dates), etc. For example, their files could be kept together for ease of reference, or a computer
A more accurate and reliable system of recording information on inmates should be instituted, for example, the number of times an inmate has been in prison before. During our interviews with prison officers, we were informed that an inmate is asked when he is sent to prison via the court whether he has been in prison before and how many times, thereby leaving it up to him to provide such vital information. Further, sometimes a prison officer may recognize that an inmate has been in prison before and then check his records to ensure that it is correctly inputted. Overall, this system is too vulnerable for incorrect information to be recorded on an inmate. Therefore, a new system must be devised and implemented.

The situation is quite similar for other information that is recorded on inmates, for example, his correct name, address, religion, occupation, marital status, number of children, ability to read, ability to write, ability to do arithmetic, etc. More specifically, we were informed that once an inmate could sign his name or scribble something on his prisoner or convict record sheet, he is deemed literate. More reliable systems should be devised and implemented to obtain these items of information.

A networked computerized system should be devised and implemented for the entire prison service as a matter of urgency. This will possess all of the advantages of such systems, for example, long term cost savings, removal of redundant work, speedy access to information, sophisticated analysis of data, security of information, physical storage space savings, ability of sharing information amongst prisons. The main system could be located at the Prison Headquarters with terminals at the various prison stations.

A clearly defined national policy to deal with prison recidivism should be developed with consultation with the various stakeholders. Further, a coordinated unit should be established to monitor its implementation. A
benchmarking component that will serve as an evaluative mechanism should be instituted and regularly utilized.

7. An increase in the number of prison officers is needed at this point in time to enable more adequate supervision of inmates.

8. Regular training sessions should be held with prison officers to upgrade their skills and abilities to be better able to participate in rehabilitation programmes. Prison officers should not see their job as only to supervise inmates but also to be part of the rehabilitative process that aims to prevent inmates from committing crimes/offences when released from prison.

9. A psychological assessment of inmates should be carried out to identify how they rate on the likelihood to respond positively to rehabilitation programmes. Subsequently, from this ranking, specific rehabilitation programmes should be developed and implemented to the various groupings of inmates according to their likelihood to respond positively to rehabilitation programmes.

10. Regular meetings should be held with the relevant stakeholders in the prison system including NGO's, religious bodies, private sector, governmental ministries and agencies, etc. to obtain information as to their programmes being conducted in the prisons. Reports of these meetings should be compiled. Further, discussions on the effectiveness of the programmes should be encouraged (evaluative component) and appropriate adjustments should be made which should also be evaluated at the correct times. During these meetings, critical information on the inmates not easily obtained by prison officers can be obtained and acted upon in a timely manner.

11. In the prisons themselves, there should be a physical separation of inmates who came there for the first time, the second and the third time and more. This aim of this is to prevent the mixing of inmates in prison for the first time with seasoned criminals. Further, there should be a separation of inmates according to the seriousness of crimes/offences, that is, rapists should not be allowed to mix with inmates charged for housebreaking.
12. There is an urgent need to address the physical conditions of the nation's prisons in particular the inmates' areas. From our visits to all of the prisons, with the exception of the Women's Prison and Maximum Security Prison at Golden Grove, the rest are in a dire state of disrepair. For instance, in cell areas, the lighting, the foul odour, the ventilation, the overcrowding, the broken and distasteful toilet and bathing facilities, the lack of beds and mattresses, leaking roofs must be immediately addressed. In the Port of Spain Prison, the presence of a drain running alongside the cells with urine and faeces described by an inmate "as the smallest and nastiest drain the country" should be removed. This poses a health hazard to inmates and prison officers who work in that section of the prison.

The dormitories of prison officers should all be brought to an acceptable standard of comfort with all of the basic items in place, for example, beds, showers, change rooms, lockers, kitchen, etc.

Despite public sentiments which may not necessarily fully support the channeling of funds to improve prison conditions in this country, it will be better in the long term for both inmates and prison officers to be in a clean, healthy environment. As such, funds should be sought to accomplish this exercise. There is a view that a clean and comfortable environment will facilitate the rehabilitation aspect of imprisonment.

13. The health system that exists in the prison service needs to be revisited seriously. The number of doctors assigned to the prison should be increased as well as the infirmaries should be upgraded. Those prisons without an infirmary should be provided with one as soon as possible whilst drugs, beds and isolation cells should be made available. Further, training of additional prison officers to work in the infirmary is strongly recommended. For each prison, there should always be a medical doctor present at all times. Every effort should be made to prevent health hazards and epidemics.

14. In addition to AIDS, homosexuality in prisons should be dealt with as a matter of serious concern in that systems should be put in place to identify and treat with
such problems. Furthermore, to help reduce such incidents and support the prison rehabilitation programme, we recommend urgent consideration be given to a well-regulated system of conjugal visits – at least for certain categories of inmates and under certain conditions. As a result, official policies and plans should be developed to deal with these issues. This should be done with consultation with the various stakeholders in the national community. For instance, what is the position of the prison service on the distribution of condoms in prisons?

15. The area where meals are prepared in some of the prisons should be more sanitary, for example, these areas should be free from flies and other contaminating elements.

16. The problem of overcrowding in the nation’s prisons especially Port of Spain and Golden Grove is at a startling position. Steps should be taken to alleviate this situation where inmates are sleeping in cardboard boxes on the floor, no beds, no mattresses, etc. There were even cases where inmates were sharing cardboard box beds on the floor. Further, inmates were seen hanging on hammocks in their cells sleeping as there was no more space on the ground. Other inmates reported that they remain standing most of the time and sometimes sit on the floor and sleep. This situation is unacceptable and must be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

17. It was also disturbing to witness that inmates in the Remand Section were held in such deplorable conditions as convicted inmates. Inmates on remand are awaiting trial and/or in the process of being tried. They are presumed innocent until proven guilty in accordance with the laws of the land. It is grossly unfair that they are housed in those conditions. As such, as a matter of urgency, this situation must be addressed.

18. When inmates are sentenced to prison, they are first sent to the Port of Spain Prison before a decision is made as to what prison they would serve their sentence. In the reception area in Port of Spain where they must pass through before being placed in a cell, the inmates are searched physically. Further, every
time an inmate leaves prison to attend court and returns to the prison, he is also searched. It is being recommended that this searching process whereby the inmate is asked to take off his clothes and squat in the presence of other inmates be done in a more private setting. This setting should include prison officers and the inmate but not in an open area with other inmates. Though very essential, this search conducted in the open can be very dehumanizing and degrading to an individual and if we are about rehabilitation, it must be addressed.

19. The prison service should devise programmes of activities in which all inmates can participate in while in prison. These should include educational, recreational, cultural, social, sports, religious, ethics, etc. All inmates should be given an opportunity or encouraged to participate. Given the limitations of number of officers to supervise inmates, the space to hold such activities as well as the costs, systems should be devised to rotate access to such activities amongst the inmates.

20. A comprehensive pre-release programme should be developed, funded and implemented for inmates who are close to completing their sentence term. They should be prepared for re-entry into the wider society.

21. Further, a post-release programme should be developed as well. Amongst its aims will be the keeping of contact, the provision of assistance for example, employment, references, referrals to other governmental agencies and NGO's for assistance, etc. This post-release programme will also have components such as: a resettlement programme, graduation centres in the various communities (i.e., where inmates can stay for a period of time before release from prison), accommodation centres for inmates in the various communities (i.e., where inmates can stay for a period of time), etc.

22. The idea of a "prison industry" should be developed further and implemented with the cooperation of the private sector. That is, inmates should be provided with an opportunity to work in the prison, which some of them are already doing, for example, in the areas of pottery, wood working, tailoring, electronics, joining, art and craft, auto mechanic, cooking, baking, etc. This can provide inmates with...
a skill as well as some money that they can use when released from prison. This will also help in the rehabilitation of inmates. The sum of money that inmates currently earn per day (i.e., under one dollar) should seriously be revisited.

This idea of a "prison industry" will also create an opportunity for the prison service or the government to gain some revenue from the manufacture and sale of the products, for example, furniture, clothes, etc.

23. It was reported to us that it is sometimes difficult to implement programmes in the Golden Grove Prison for example, because there is high turnover of inmates due to short-term sentences. We wish to recommend that in this light, special short-term programmes could be developed and implemented. These may provide such inmates with an insight into different useful and productive activities that they can become involved in after release from prison.

24. It is a fact that being incarcerated in prison is an unpleasant experience for most people. It is recommended that special tours be arranged with members of the public for example, students, community groups, youth groups, interested persons, etc. to visit the prisons to see firsthand what it's like to be imprisoned. As a result, this should act as a deterrent to most people as well as it can stimulate ways in which they may wish to assist inmates whilst in prison and when released.

25. Orderlies are inmates who have earned the trust of prison officers to assist them in some tasks. As such, it is recommended that orderlies be given some form of recognition when they are released from prison, for example, certificates. This will serve as a reward for work performed as well as to encourage other inmates to win the trust of the officers. Inmates who were orderlies can provide such certificates to prospective employers (who have the knowledge that they were imprisoned) indicating that they had gained the trust of prison officers.

26. The prison service visitation policy should be revisited to take into consideration particular situations. For example, inmates (both male and female) with children
should be given additional visits, special visits for birthdays and anniversaries, etc.

In addition to reviewing the frequency of visits, the duration of visits (length of time) should also be addressed.

In some of the prisons, the area where visits are conducted needs to be upgraded to allow both parties to hear and see each other properly. They should be allowed to carry out proper conversations. For example, in the Port of Spain Prison, it is quite similar to a market place with people shouting at each other to communicate.

27. A review of the Prison Act and the Prison Service Act should be conducted with widespread national consultation. This will attempt to bring it in line with the contemporary thinking of penal reform and rehabilitation.

28. The use of work gangs in the various prisons should be complemented and further encouraged. This is an opportunity for inmates to do something productive with their time rather than just spending time behind bars. Further, inmates should be rotated in such gangs enabling as much inmates as possible to benefit from such activities. A formula should be worked out to make such work economically beneficial to the inmate and his family.

29. Inmates who are involved in the teaching and training of other inmates, for example, with regard to academic classes, crafts, pottery, wood working, joining, tailoring, etc. should be rewarded for their efforts. This can be in the form of certificates, awards, prizes, etc. This will certainly go a long way in encouraging them and enhancing their self-esteem.

30. The Welfare Unit in the prison service is a very critical Unit. This Unit should be supported by: increasing the number of officers as well as improving the physical conditions in which they work. Further, since it is deeply involved in the implementation of the various programmes in the prisons, additional resources should be made to its disposal.
31. Sporting and cultural events are huge items in the prisons' list of activities in which a large proportion of inmates participate and look forward to. As a result, funds should be directed towards these ventures. Further, the facilities in which these are held are quite poor, for example, in open areas exposed to rain, no seating facilities, makeshift stages, etc. Corporate donations could be solicited to upgrade such facilities.

32. The continuance of the training of inmates in skills such as pottery, wood working, electronics, academic classes, etc. is at times threatened when the inmate who performs this function is released from prison. In some cases, there is no one to continue the work. As such, it just discontinues. Therefore, a succession plan should be devised and implemented to ensure that this does not occur. There will always be inmates who are willing to learn the necessary skills and these should be sourced before the main inmate leaves the institution. Further, prison officers should also be trained in this aspect so they can substitute temporarily when necessary.

33. Literacy programmes should be strongly emphasized for all inmates in the various prisons. Further, certificates should be distributed to all inmates when being released from prison stating their level of competence.

34. Relevant books at the libraries in various prisons should be acquired. From our interviews and visits, we saw that many of the books were way beyond the comprehension of the vast majority of inmates. For example, there were books on advanced algebra, astronomy, macroeconomics, chemistry, human and social biology, etc.

35. With regard to the Women's Prison, inmates who are between the ages of 16 years to 18 years are mixed with adult inmates. This situation does not exist for similar aged male inmates as there is a separate institution for them. As such, a system should be put in place whereby the young female inmates are separated from the adults. If the costs are prohibitive to establish a separate institution or compound, at least they should be held in different areas and refrained from interacting with the adult inmates.
36. Regular joint meetings amongst prison officials, members of the judiciary, the protective services and the legislature should be held. These will serve amongst other things, to discuss common issues at hand with the aim to arrive at consensus policy directions that will benefit all of the concerned stakeholders with regard to penal policy. For example, the use of community mediation centres and night courts to reduce the backlog of cases in the magistrates courts, community service orders, the introduction of parole, probation and several of the problems identified in studies conducted on the prisons.

37. Public awareness and education programmes should be developed and implemented on the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago. This should be done in conjunction with the media, that is, print, audio and visual. Such programmes should be extended to schools at all levels and the wider public and the corporate sector should be invited to get involved by sponsoring essay competitions, projects, debates, etc.

It is important that public awareness is heightened because the communities are where the criminals come from (the supply side) and where they will eventually return (the receivers). The communities must be prepared as well as the inmates for the re-introduction of inmates into society.

38. From the data collected in this phase of the prison project, the vast majority of inmates can be considered youthful, that is, 81% are between 18 and 41 years of age and further, 78% of recidivists are in this same age group. As a result, specific programmes should be developed and implemented to take this fact into consideration. Further studies should be done to ascertain why people of this age group tend toward criminal activity and what steps should be taken to prevent this.

39. Most of the inmates identified a particular religion which they follow or supposed to follow. Therefore, the various religious bodies in this country should take up the responsibility of at least taking care of their own. For example, a particular religion could divide itself into different zones in Trinidad and Tobago. These zones can then be subdivided into smaller zones or areas
which can be further broken down into villages or streets. Then there can be a person from the particular religion responsible for the village or street. They will be charged with the responsibility to meeting with the people with the aim of encouraging and keeping them in line with the law. They will be able to quickly identify if any person is going in a wrong direction and try to nip it in the bud. Further, community leaders for example, can be utilized to assist in this regard.

40. The data revealed that most of the inmates are single in marital status (84%). As such specific programmes should be developed with this in mind. In addition to having marriage counselors, agencies should also offer counseling to unmarried people. For example, the community policing sections in the various police stations should be aware of this fact and thus respond accordingly.

41. The data also revealed that half of the inmates had 1-3 children. As such, they do have a certain responsibility to these children. Certain programmes should be put in place to take care of these children when the father is imprisoned. We should not want a situation where the main breadwinner is unable to provide for his children and they or other persons are left uncared for. This may in turn have further negative consequences. The state and/or corporate or community agency should intervene to stabilize the situation at least for a while.

42. The data revealed that narcotic-related crimes were responsible for the highest proportion of inmates being in prison. As such, this should be tackled at the two levels – supply and demand. As such programmes should be instituted in schools, communities, religious, media, street corners, bars, transshipment points, ports, users, etc.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This research/policy project on "Prison Recidivism in Trinidad and Tobago: Reduction, Rehabilitation and Reform" is the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. There are several phases to this pioneering project which is being conducted by the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The first phase was conducted during the period April 2002 - December 2002.

Background

Against the background of five (5) major issues, this research project was conducted. These issues are:

1. The adverse impact of crime, and especially repeated crime, on the social and economic well being of the country,

2. Prison overcrowding and hardened criminality,

3. A high rate of recidivism,

4. The need for effective rehabilitation programmes and the social reintegration of prisoners, and
5. The need for appropriate training and re-tooling of prison officers to meet the imperatives of prison reform.

**Overall Objectives**

Four (4) major objectives of this project on prison recidivism are:

1. To gather data on the demographic, social, and economic status of the prison population in the country's adult prisons,

2. To gather data on the criminal and conviction status of such inmates,

3. To examine the potential for rehabilitation and civic re-integration within society, and

4. To develop programmes and policies which can help reduce the rate of recidivism within the prison population.

**Specific Objectives**

More specifically, this project attempts to do the following:

1. Identify how many of the prison inmates are in fact recidivists for the total prison population as well as for individual prisons,
2. Identify how many times prison inmates have been in prison for the total prison population as well as for individual prisons,

3. Categorize prison inmates in terms of type of offence committed, length of sentence, age, sex, educational level, marital status, religion, trade, level of literacy, residence, etc. for the total prison population as well as for individual prisons,

4. Identify the scope for rehabilitation and the training skills required for building civility at the various prisons,

5. Establish a strong empirical rationale and platform for prison reform,

6. Establish a much-needed database on the prison population,

7. Bring all of the relevant stakeholders of the prison system together to discuss prison recidivism, rehabilitation and reform, and

8. Contribute to the formulation of policies and strategies that will address a reduction in prison recidivism, rehabilitation of prisoners and reform of the penal system.
The Prisons

In this first phase of the project, the adult prisons were our focus. In Trinidad and Tobago, there are seven (7) adult prisons. These are:

1. Carrera Convict Prison
2. Port of Spain Prison
3. Maximum Security Prison
4. Golden Grove – Remand
5. Golden Grove – Convict Prison
6. Golden Grove – Women’s Prison
7. Tobago Prison

Prison Recidivism: The International Perspectives

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, recidivism refers to the “tendency to relapse into a previous undesirable type of behaviour, especially crime.” Though this definition is straightforward to understand, when it comes to its operationalization in the prison context, it is not that simple in that several competing interpretations could be made.

For instance, how many more offences must a person with a prior conviction commit to be considered a recidivist? Is it one, two, three, five, ten or more offences? In fact, can there be degrees of recidivism? Re-offending, it should be noted, includes prison recidivism but also includes those who commit crimes but are not sent to prison.

Further, does recidivism include the relapsing of a person with a previous conviction into committing the same type of offence previously committed or
other types of offences or does it matter what type of offences is committed? For example, if a person with a previous conviction of a robbery offence commits rape, would this be considered recidivism or only if he commits another robbery?

Then, what relapse time frame should we take into consideration? Should a person be considered a recidivist if he/she commits another offence two years, five years, or ten years after the first offence?

Three other scenarios that must be considered when deciding what recidivism measures should be used include:

- Should recidivism consider re-arrests of persons with a prior conviction?
- Should recidivism consider re-conviction of persons with a prior conviction?
- Should recidivism consider re-commitment of persons to prison with a prior conviction?

As it can be seen in the above, there is no fixed way of defining recidivism. From a perusal of the literature on recidivism in several studies, different measures were used.

**Prison Recidivism: The Trinidad and Tobago Scenario**

This project on prison recidivism in Trinidad and Tobago is the first of its kind in the country as well as in the Caribbean region. Given that the project has to have a starting point, it utilizes the system that exists in the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service at least in this first phase of the project, that is, it examined the prison records.
For instance, the prison records categorize prison inmates into two basic groupings, that is, “prisoner” and “convict”. Then, for each of these two categories, it classifies inmates into three other groupings, that is, as being in prison for the first time (Star), the second time (Special) or the third time and more (Ordinary). This is as far as the level of classifying inmates and recidivism in Trinidad and Tobago goes.

It is against this background, that this phase of the project is conducted. See subsequent sections in this report for further analysis on prison recidivism.

**Prison Recidivism: This Study**

In the first phase of this study, only convicted inmates are studied, that is, inmates who have been convicted by a court and sentenced to prison for a particular length of time. Persons on remand were not studied in this phase of the project.

A simple definition of recidivism is utilized in this project. That is, this definition was guided by the existing system of classification of inmates we found in the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago. A recidivist can be expressed as an inmate who has been in the prison at least once before or is his/her second time in prison at least. This system of classifying inmates was standard across all of the seven prisons and thus quite suitable, at least at this stage, to make some comparisons.

**Explanation of Major Terms**

At this stage, it is quite useful that some of the terms used in the prisons in Trinidad and Tobago be explained. This will allow us to understand how inmates are classified and why it was done in that manner.
In the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago, a first-time offender is called a "Star", a second-time offender is called a "Special" and a third-time or more offender is called an "Ordinary."

Taking the two set of classifications described above together, they can now be combined to create a third classification for each inmate. That is, each inmate in prison at any point in time is classified as one of the following:

1. **Star Prisoner**
   This is an inmate who is in prison for the first time as a result of a sentence by a magistrate.

2. **Star Convict**
   This is an inmate who is in prison for the first time as a result of a sentence by a High Court judge.

3. **Special Prisoner**
   This is an inmate who is in prison for the second time as a result of a sentence by a magistrate.

4. **Special Convict**
   This is an inmate who is in prison for the second time as a result of a sentence by a High Court judge.

5. **Ordinary Prisoner**
   This is an inmate who is in prison for the third time or more as a result of a sentence by a magistrate.

6. **Ordinary Convict**
   This is an inmate who is in prison for the third time or more as a result of a sentence by a High Court judge.
Other Classifications

There are also other classifications of inmates that we will get into in a later chapter on data analysis. For example, inmates can be classified as being “on remand” or “awaiting appeal”, “President’s pleasure”, “adjourned case” etc.

Methodology

To undertake this research/policy project, the following methodology that was adopted by the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, is described briefly in this section. Details will follow in subsequent chapters.

First, several meetings were held with the various authorities in the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago. These meetings fulfilled the primary purposes of informing the relevant personnel about the project, as well as, seeking their support in the project and gaining access to the prisons and records. See Appendix D for letters of Approval.

Second, site visits and interviews were conducted by the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice in all seven of the adult prisons in Trinidad and Tobago.

Third, the data collection exercise took place in six out of the seven prisons in this study, that is, a mentioned earlier, remand inmates were not studied in this phase of the project. As such, data was not collected from the Remand Prison at Golden Grove.

Fourth, a forum in which most of the key stakeholders in the prison system, were brought together to discuss some of the issues in this project – prison recidivism, reform, and rehabilitation, etc.
Fifth, data analysis and the generation of results took place.

Sixth, a computer database template for inmate records was created from the interviews, stakeholders’ forum and data analysis stages.

Seventh, important recommendations arising from our meetings, interviews, site visits, stakeholders’ forum and the data collected were documented.

It should be reiterated at this juncture that this first phase of the project did not examine juvenile prisons, as well as, inmates on “remand” in the adult prisons. On the latter point, as it was the intention to examine recidivism in prisons in this project, only “convicted” inmates were subjects. Inmates on “remand” are those that have not been convicted by a court and therefore are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Our study focused on those that were found guilty by the courts in this land.
CHAPTER II
MEETINGS, INTERVIEWS, SITE VISITS AND DATA COLLECTION

Meetings

As stated in an earlier section, a number of important meetings were held during the period of this project April 2002 – December 2002 with several key authorities in the prison system. Amongst those met included:

1. Minister of National Security
2. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security
3. Commissioner of Prisons, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service
4. Deputy Commissioner of Prisons, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service
5. Assistant Commissioners of Prisons, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service
6. Chief Welfare Officer, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service
7. Prison Officers in Charge of Prisons, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service
8. Heads of Sections, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

These meetings were held for several reasons. These included:
1. To inform the relevant persons about the nature of the research/policy project, as well as, its benefits to the inmates, prison officers, prison system and the wider national community.

2. To acquire the support of the key personnel in the prison system for this research/policy project.

3. To involve the key personnel of the prison system into this research/policy project.

4. To obtain access to the various prisons for site visits, interviews and information on inmates.

5. To obtain information on the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago.

6. To keep the relevant personnel updated on the progress of the research/policy project.

7. To discuss any issues regarding the prison system and the research/policy project that arose from time to time.

The Commissioner of Prisons made available two senior officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service to work alongside the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice on this project. They are:

- **Mr. John Rougier,**
  
  *Assistant Commissioner of Prisons ‘Operations’*
• Mr. Gordon Husbands,
  Chief Welfare Officer

The Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice is very grateful for the immense assistance that they both rendered during the course of this phase of the project.

Interviews and Site Visits

After the initial set of meetings with key personnel of the prison system, approval for access for visits, interviews and prisoner information was gained. The Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice then embarked on its journey to conduct the said research/policy project.

As mentioned earlier, there are seven (7) adult prisons in Trinidad and Tobago. As such, interviews and site visits were made in all seven prisons though the data analysis part of this project focused on six of the prisons (that is, those that are for convicted inmates).

A schedule was arrived at (see Table 1 below) in which research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice shall perform the following tasks. That is, they shall:

• Visit each of the seven prisons in this study.
• Interview the prison officer in charge of the seven prisons in this study.
• Tour the facilities of the seven prisons in this study.
• Speak to some of the prison officers in the seven prisons in this study.
• Speak to some of the inmates in the seven prisons in this study.
### Table 1
Schedule of Prison Visits and Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PRISON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 10, 2002</td>
<td>Carrera Convict Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 2002</td>
<td>Golden Grove - Convict Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 2002</td>
<td>Golden Grove - Remand Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 2002</td>
<td>Golden Grove - Women’s Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12, 2002</td>
<td>Maximum Security Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12, 2002</td>
<td>Port of Spain Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 27, 2002</td>
<td>Tobago Prison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following sections, a report on the interviews conducted, as well as, on the tour of the facilities will be presented for each prison separately.
CARRERA CONVICT PRISON

Introduction

On June 10, 2002, research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice visited the Carrera Convict Prison, one of several islands off the northwest coast of the mainland Trinidad.

Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service who was assigned to work the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice on this study and the Assistant Superintendent of Prisons, Carrera Convict Prison, Mr. Kenrick Martin were interviewed by the research staff of the UWI Centre. The following information was gathered from such interview.

The Prison

Carrera Convict Prison, on June 10, 2002, houses five hundred and twenty-six (526) inmates. (It should be noted that the population of prisons changes often because of discharges, arrival of new inmates, hospitalization of inmates, transferal of inmates, etc.) This prison is referred to as an “Activity Based Prison.” Essentially, this means that the system in place should allow prisoners to be afforded the opportunity to perform or engage in some kind of activity during their time incarcerated.

The running of the prison by prison officers is based on a shift or batch system. That is, officers are based at a prison for a twenty-four hour period. However, this is broken down into several batches or shifts. For each prison, there are three batches / shifts, that is, Batch A, Batch B and Batch C and a Main Shift. Officers on the Main Shift work from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and normally perform
administrative and trade duties. There are two (2) possible ways in which a twenty-four hour shift can be broken down to accommodate the three batches. See Table 2 below.

### Table 2
Carrera Convict Prison: Prison Officers Working Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BATCH SYSTEMS</th>
<th>SHIFTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batch System I</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 p.m. - 6:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batch System II</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the First Batch System above, each of the three batches of prison officers on a twenty-four hour shift are assigned to one of the three time periods.

In the Second Batch System above, the three batches of prison officers are allocated amongst the four time periods.

**Orderlies**

Orderlies, that is, chosen inmates trusted by prison officers to carry out certain tasks, play an important role in the running of the prison. Of importance, is the ability to distinguish such inmates from other inmates. Orderlies are identified by their clothing which is either white or blue outfits with a red band across the sleeve of their shirts. These prisoners act as a “third eye” for the prison officers.
In some instances, they protect officers by providing information officers may not otherwise know. Those orderlies with red bands across their sleeves work in the Superintendent's Office.

**Offences and Sentences**

Sentences to Carrera Convict Prison may range from 2 – 5 years for property crimes. The shortest sentence an inmate can serve at Carrera is six months whilst, the longest is life imprisonment. Persons may be sentenced to Carrera for crimes ranging from rape, armed robbery and drug trafficking.

**Classification and Separation of Inmates**

Even though inmates should be separated in “blocks” according to the prison classification of stars, special and ordinary, this is not done at this prison primarily due to the lack of space.

**Remission**

A remission system exists in the prison system whereby all convicted inmates can spend a lesser time in prison than the prescribed length of their sentence. In other words, they qualify for a remission on their sentence. For instance, inmates who are sentenced to “more than thirty days but less than one year” are allowed a half (50%) of their sentence off whilst inmates who have sentences “longer than one year” qualifies for one-third of their sentence to be remitted. Though inmates are automatically entitled to such remissions, these are granted based on good behaviour, etc.
Inmates sentenced to six years and more can qualify for Special Remissions. For instance, inmates with a sentence of six years and more but less than seven years qualify for a special remission of three days. And, inmates with a sentence of more than seven years qualify for a special remission of seven days.

It is important to note that remissions can be used as a form of punishment to inmates who misbehave or breach prison rules. That is, the Supervisor, Superintendent or Inspector can revoke all or some of the remission days as a form of punishment. If an inmate breaches the prison rules, he is taken to the Supervisor by the junior Prison Officer. The Supervisor investigates the allegations and then assigns a punishment which is then checked by the Superintendent to assess whether the punishment is suitable. Depending on the seriousness of the prison offence, the matter may be forwarded to the Commissioner of Prisons and even further to the Inspector of Prisons. The Inspector thus has the greatest power, with the authority to change the punishment to be more severe than initially given by the Superintendent and the Commissioner.

There is only one (1) Inspector of Prisons serving all of the prisons and he is required to visit all prisons at least once a month. Incidentally, the Inspector of Prisons is a lawyer.

**Work Gangs**

There are several work gangs in the Carrera Convict Prison, each assigned different tasks. These gangs include:

- *Water gangs*
- *Out gangs*
- *Superintendent quarters*
• Acting Superintendent quarters
• Maintenance Field (NB one of the most important aspects of prison)
• Miscellaneous gang (function to keep main prison clean)

The allocation of inmates to the various gangs (or activity groups) is made through a meeting of a Board which consists of the Labour Supervisor, Acting Superintendent, Superintendent, Welfare Officer and the Trade Officer. This Board would review the inmate’s records and then allocate him to a particular useful prison labour best suited for that individual.

Because of obvious supervisory constraints and the fact that not all inmates are suited to be in a work gang, those inmates not assigned to a work gang remain in the Labour Yard.

One of the gangs is called the “Out Gang”, that is, their primary task is to work on the mainland – Trinidad, mostly in the Coast Guard area. They usually leave the Carrera Island every morning and return in the evening. They basically perform maintenance duties on the premises.

The “Water Gang” consists of those inmates who go to the mainland (Coast Guard area in Trinidad) every morning and fill buckets, containers, kegs, etc. with fresh water to take back to Carrera. It was noticed that names of inmates, usually nicknames, were written on these water vessels as an identifier.

Ration Room

This department at the Carrera Convict Prison prepares three (3) meals per day, that is, breakfast, lunch and supper. Inmates who are trusted are also involved in this task as cooks, cooking assistants and cleaners. The preparation of breakfast commences at 4:00 a.m. each day and the cooking exercise continues throughout
the day to 2:00 p.m. preparing the other meals. The following is a schedule of the meal times:

- **Breakfast** 6:00 a.m. – 6:30 a.m.
- **Lunch** 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
- **Supper** 3:00 p.m.

Whatever the inmates prepare, everyone partakes of it. We were informed that it is the procedure for the officer in charge of the prison to taste all meals prepared before inmates partake of it.

**Activities for Inmates**

The following is a list of the major activities that inmates can partake in:

- Joining
- Electrical
- School
- Church services
- Counseling
- Anger management
- Appliance fixing shop
- Tailoring
- Pottery
- Sports
- Drug rehabilitation
- Curricular Educational Program
- Cultural programs
- Barber shop

**Formal Educational Opportunities**

The School Programme at Carrera Convict Prison offers the following courses:

- **Literacy**

There is a literacy programme for starters or beginners at this prison. This programme is implemented by Adult Literacy Tutors Association...
There are approximately fifty (50) inmates in regular attendance.

- **C.X.C.**

Seven (7) C.X.C. O'Level subjects are undertaken at Carrera with approximately sixty (60) inmates. These subjects are:

  - Mathematics
  - English A
  - Principles of Business (P.O.B.)
  - Principle of Accounts (P.O.A.)
  - Information Technology (I.T.)
  - Social Studies
  - Technical Drawing

Special arrangements have been made with the Caribbean Examinations Council (C.X.C.) and the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago for these examinations to be undertaken at Carrera.

At this prison, there is a system whereby inmates assist other inmates in these areas of study. As such they pass on the knowledge they have gained to other inmates in these classes. For example, we met one inmate who received seven C.X.C. O’ Level passes whilst at this prison. He is currently writing the GCE A’ Level Examinations and seeking entrance at a university in the United Kingdom to study counseling.

- **School Leaving**

School Leaving classes are offered for inmates who are interested in pursuing such academic qualifications.
- **Computer Skills**

Also at Carrera, there is a satisfying level of competence in computer skills by some of the inmates. For instance, eighty-six inmates (86) have passed through the programme gaining certificates. Such computer programme incorporated Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access and Visual Basic.

Currently, there are five (5) inmates undertaking the Information Technology (IT) programme and one (1) inmate is currently completing his School Based Assessment (SBA) for A' Level GCE Computer Studies course. There is also a computer class being taught on Visual Basics. It was drawn to our attention that previous inmates who completed computer courses at Carrera were successful in securing jobs when released.

These courses taught at Carrera have a mixture of both young and old inmates who have volunteered or expressed a desire to join a particular class. There is no discrimination in the selection of inmates to attend classes. These classes are open to all inmates who want to attend. Those inmates who work in the various gangs during the day while classes are in progress are given special concessions to attend classes. It is made clear that classes take precedence over chores and other manual tasks. However, orderlies are at a disadvantage in that they are more occupied with work and are not available for classes.

There is the possibility of introducing evening and night classes. Mr. Clyde Haynes, an ex-inmate, who now runs his own school, conducts classes at Carrera. Prison officers as well as fourteen (14) inmates who were trained by ALTA also conduct teaching.
At this prison, there is a room specially allocated for the computers and in which several such computers are lodged. Private sector companies have donated these computers.

Overall, there are approximately one hundred and thirty (130) inmates currently involved in these various programmes in Carrera.

**Religion**

Religion is a major aspect of prison life at the Carrera Convict Prison as almost all of the major religions are catered for in this prison. A chapel exists which allows the various religious denominations to practice their faith, that is, Pentecostals, Muslims, Hindus, Spiritual Baptists, etc. Spiritual counseling is also available to inmates.

It was reported to us that religious groups receive some financial support for visiting the prison and it has led many to believe that some of the groups visit Carrera for the sole purpose of acquiring the said funds and having a lesser interest on the inmates. However, it was reported that some of these groups do have a genuine concern for the inmates.

**Sports**

Sports are an essential component in the prison life at Carrera. The prison offers inmates the opportunity to play football, cricket, and basketball. Inmates also have the choice to exercise in a small gymnasium. On occasions, cricket and football teams from outside the prison are invited to play matches against inmates. Also, the prison also invites teams from other prisons to engage in inter-prison matches. Inmates have the task of maintaining the cricket pitch and football
grounds on which these matches are played. After the interview, we witnessed inmates “rolling” the cricket pitch for an upcoming match.

Culture

There is a strong cultural programme at the Carrera Convict Prison. All inmates are allowed to participate in such cultural programmes which are usually held for the major national holidays and festivities, for example, Carnival, Divali, Christmas, Easter, etc.

Riots

With regard to prison riots at Carrera, it was reported to us that over the past fifty years there have been three riots or major violent events. The first occurred in the 1960’s between prisoners and prison officers that lead to the burning down of a cellblock. The second riot took place in 1988 in which one prison officer was killed by an inmate, and on May 19, 1991, the third riot took place.

Escapes

It was reported to us that one inmate, Michael Haygew, managed to escape from the island. In order to escape, we were told that inmates use a technique called “conditioning” to manipulate the system, that is, they may be extra nice to prison officers, they may be seen exercising and training hard daily preparing themselves for that particular day to escape.
Currently, there were no inmates housed in the Escape Division at the Carrera Convict Prison. However, in the 1970’s and 1980’s, this Division was usually occupied.

**Visits**

Inmates at Carrera Convict Prison are allowed one visit and one letter every six weeks according to the length of sentence that a particular inmate is serving. A maximum of three persons are permitted to visit an inmate at any one visit. The procedure for visits normally warrants an inmate to write a letter to a person indicating his wish for that person to visit him.

Inmates with short sentences are allowed a fifteen-minute visit, whereas inmates serving a two-year sentence are allowed a thirty-minute visit, and inmates with a sentence of four years and more are allowed a forty-five minute visit.

Inmates of Carrera Convict Prison conduct their visits daily at the Port of Spain Prison in the afternoon period.

**Homosexuality**

In our interview, it was revealed that homosexuality is not a major problem at Carrera Convict Prison. We were informed that most of the times if there were homosexual acts, they were of a consensual nature. If prison officers found inmates engaging in these activities however, they were punished. We were told that even though homosexuality in the prison maybe a reflection of what occurs in the outside society, there is no room for it in the prison.
We were informed that those inmates who are openly gay or suspected to be gay are separated from the rest of the prison population. At the Carrera Convict Prison, there are no formal means of checking to see if an inmate was raped by another inmate. It was mentioned that the doctor would simply check the inmate’s anus to see if there was bleeding to confirm or verify whether or not there was entry to determine if the prisoner was raped. There is no saving of evidence, that is, the inmate’s clothes, etc. to send to forensic to scientifically verify that the inmate was in actuality raped.

Tour of the Prison

The research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice was taken on a tour of all of the facilities of the Carrera Convict Prison. The following is a brief description of what was witnessed.

Living Arrangements

There are three dormitories that house inmates in addition to the cells. In the dormitories, there are televisions, toilet facilities and bathing areas. However, these toilet and bathing facilities were in an open area at the entrance of the dormitory. Inmates usually use buckets of seawater to bathe. Outside each of the dormitories, there were large barrels lined up to collect rainwater.

In one dormitory, there are approximately seventy-two inmates housed and in the others there are about sixty inmates each. Each inmate is assigned his own bed. In the inmates’ bed space, there is a small area where he keeps all of his toiletries (for example, soap, toilet paper, deodorant, etc.). This space may have a mat or some piece of covering on the floor. On the walls in the dormitories, there are
posters created mostly from newspaper clippings, magazines, etc.), of most, pictures of women.

We were informed that mirrors were recently placed in the dormitories enabling inmates to view themselves, something they were unable to do for several years.

We also saw video recorders in dormitories in which inmates were watching a box match that they videotaped a few days before.

With regard to prison cells, there are three or five persons housed in each. The size of these cells is just large enough to accommodate three beds. Two beds are on top of each other lengthwise (double-decker) and the third bed runs width wise. There are no shower or toilet facilities within these cells. However, there is a small pail (size of a paint bucket) that prisoners may use to excrete whilst locked in.

Some of the cells that we were taken to, have a little opening at the top which is about 7 feet above the ground. Very little light filters through this opening. There is one small peephole in the door that is just big enough to push one of a person's fingers through. Inmates who are claustrophobic are placed in cells with bars for the door. At the time of our visit, there was only one inmate placed on a restricted diet (RD) of bread and water in a separate cell.

Walking around the premises of Carrera Convict Prison, it is noticeable that efforts are made to live up to the name of an activity-based prison. There are inmates who are working on carpentry, tailoring, fixing appliances, playing football, a barber saloon.

Upon interviewing some of the inmates, we were exposed to the claim that they (the inmates) were working so hard producing beds, cupboards, etc. but were not receiving any compensation for it. They reported that when they leave the prison
and return to normal society they have no savings or any means for initial capital to start or continue their trade that they have learned or developed in prison. This they believe is one of the reasons why past offenders ended up in prison on several occasions.

**Recommendations**

Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer, noted that a resettlement programme should be developed and implemented to deal with prisoners' reintegration into society. This, he added, could act as a support system that is much needed for inmates upon leaving the prison.

Another part of this resettlement programme is the use of education and a prison industry, that is, setting up an "industry" within the prison, and allowing inmates to be remunerated for their work which can provide gate money for themselves when released.

Further, there is a need for the prison to provide "Accommodation Centres" for inmates upon their release.

Another recommendation deals with the setting up of "Graduation Centres" within communities, that is, centres built to allow inmates before the end of their term of sentence to interact within the community with the purpose of re-familiarizing themselves with the outside society. This will be part of the re-integration phase.
GOLDEN GROVE CONVICT PRISON

Introduction

On June 11, 2002, the research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice visited the Golden Grove Convict Prison (for Adult Males) in Golden Grove Road, Arouca. Mr. Errington St. Louis, Superintendent at Golden Grove and Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service were interviewed by the UWI staff. These officers then accompanied the research staff on their tour of the facilities.

The Prison

Originally, this prison was designed and built as a World War army facility. As such, there are no real structures in place for a prison.

Currently, thirteen dormitories that houses approximately 968 inmates are in use. However, in the past, there were fourteen dormitories but due to the dilapidated state of one, no inmates are presently placed there.

At present, there are 273 prison officers that run this institution. As with Carrera, Golden Grove Prison is divided into three shifts (A, B, and C) and a main shift. It should be noted that at full staff at any given point in time, there are approximately 40 prison officers active in any batch.

The current system in place at Golden Grove does not allow all inmates to enjoy some sort of activity outside of their quarters. A large proportion of inmates are locked in their dormitories for the major part of day. It has been indicated that the ideal situation requires all inmates to be involved in some sought of activity.
However, due to inadequate number of prison officers to supervise the number of inmates, it is not possible. Instead, many inmates are allowed only approximately 1 hour for airing each day (that is, they are taken out in the open air to get sunlight).

The point was made several times by the Superintendent of Golden Grove that “our prisoners are good.” He stated that there has been a very low incidence of violence among inmates over the years and further, this is so even though the conditions under which inmates are housed would warrant rebellious acts. He also attributes the “good behaviour” of inmates to the orientation programme where inmates are sensitized about the prison environment and asked for their patience and respect for other inmates. A strong emphasis on religion can also be attributed to the low levels of violence amongst inmates.

The Emergency Response Unit (ERU) is a special unit in this prison and as its name suggests, this Unit is ready to respond at any time to any emergencies that may arise on the prison premises (for example, riots, fires, etc.).

Other sections in this prison are the cold storage which houses all items that need to be kept frozen for longevity, the garage, and pens which have pigs, cows, goats and sheep.

**Orderlies**

A system whereby trusted inmates are used to assist the prison officers in the execution of some of their duties exists at the Golden Grove Prison. These inmates are called orderlies. They are distinguished from other inmates by their clothing. The orderlies wear either white or blue outfits but with red tags across their sleeves.
Offences and Sentences

Inmates who are sent to this prison are there for a range of crimes/offences although a large proportion of them are there for drug-related crimes and for failure to pay maintenance. From our interviews, we were informed that there is a high rate of repeat offenders at this prison often for crimes such as robbery and drug related.

Inmates who have been sentenced for short terms are directly assigned to the Golden Grove Prison. Most inmates who are housed at the Golden Grove Prison are serving sentences of 5 years or less. As a result of these short-term sentences, implementation, continuity and effectiveness of any training and rehabilitative programmes become problematic.

Prisoners who are serving longer sentences are only placed or assigned to Golden Grove when they are almost at the end of their sentence. Usually these inmates are discharged from the Port of Spain Prison and then sent to the Golden Grove Prison to serve the latter parts of their sentences (N.B. these inmates can also be from Carrera who are re-boarded to Golden Grove).

Classification and Separation

Inmates, though classified according to “Stars”, “Specials” and “Ordinaries”, are not housed separately due to inadequate space. As such the mixing of first-time offenders and seasoned criminals take place.
Remission

The remission system as identified and discussed in the section on Carrera is applicable to Golden Grove as well.

Gangs

Several gangs exist in this prison and they are responsible for various activities within the prison. For example, some of these gangs include construction, painters, carpenters, grass-cutting, cow pen, etc. Inmates are carefully selected before being placed in one of these gangs.

Ration Room and Bakery

Inmates are also involved in the preparation of all of the meals for the inmates in this prison. Once again, trusted inmates are recruited to assist in this task. The meal times are similar to that of Carrera Convict Prison.

A unique element at Golden Grove is the presence of a bakery once again manned by inmates. This unit supplies all of the other prisons with their supply of bread for their meals. The bakery is a hub of activity with inmates mixing, stacking and carrying bread.

Activities

There are several types of activities present at Golden Grove in which inmates can partake. For example:
• Woodwork Workshop: Inmates were seen working on cabinets during our tour of the facilities. We were told that there is only one skilled inmate in cabinet-making who in turn trains the other inmates.

• Tailoring: The emphasis is on the production of uniforms for prison officers

• Animal husbandry, that is, sheep, cows, pigs, and goats: Both the milk and meat are consumed by inmates. Golden Grove boasts of having their own cattle that are used for Christmas meals. The milk from the cattle is used to service Golden Grove Prison, Women’s Prison, Port of Spain Prison and Carrera Prison. Currently, there are 5 inmates helping a prison officer in the caring of the animals at the prison. The officer teaches these inmates on rearing cattle and on the maintenance of pens and sheds. We were told that the prison officer spends many hours beyond his stipulated working hours ensuring that the livestock is properly taken care of. This, we were told, is done without any compensation monetarily or otherwise.

• Construction: The adjacent Women’s Prison was entirely constructed by inmates of the Golden Grove Prison. Currently, the inmates are still working on finishing a section of the prison that will be allocated to house the condemned inmates. Funding and materials for this exercise were provided from development programmes.

• Pottery: During our tour, we saw a large number of pots stacked on top of each another. However, on enquiring about the programme, we were informed that currently there is no pottery programme. This activity ceased since the inmate who was skilled in this area was discharged.
- Cultivation of prison land

- Landscaping of prison premises

One of the common problems highlighted with these programmes by Mr. Gordon Husbands is the dependence on the officers themselves or the inmates. For instance, in the case of the inmates, when they leave the prison, the programme normally ends if there is no other inmate to fill the void.

**Formal Education**

Three basic types of formal education programmes are offered at the Golden Grove Prison. These are:

- **C.X.C. O' Levels**
  
  There are both morning and evening classes offered for inmates who are interested in pursuing these areas of study. At present, there are approximately 15 inmates involved in this programme.

- **School Leaving**
  
  There are approximately 16 inmates participating in this programme.

- **Adult Literacy**
  
  The organization, Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA), conducts classes at this prison in which approximately 29 inmates participate.

It was reported to us that at the Golden Grove Prison, the programmes are unable to have a great impact on the inmates as most of their terms/sentences are for...
short periods. Programmes are suffering not only due to the high turnover rate of inmates in the prison but more so a lack of space to carry out the current programmes as well as future programmes.

**Culture**

As mentioned earlier, this prison was initially designed as an army base and not as a prison facility. For this reason there is a lack of proper infrastructure to facilitate both the officers as well as the inmates. As such, the inmates carry out their activities in the open on a small makeshift wooden stage. The stage is constructed from a few pieces of ply board supported by some empty drums. This area is known as the “all-purpose cultural place”. Inmates are noted to be very active in the cultural proceedings of the prison.

**Funding**

Mechanisms currently in place for allocation and disbursement of funds were an area of concern for the prison service in that the Ministry of National Security is the agency that determines how the monies are allocated to the various prisons, how the monies are spent and on what programmes the money is used for. It is argued that the prisons should be allocated these funds and should have the freedom to spend them on the programmes they see fit. As such, prison funds would more likely be used for programmes that are working for the inmates, that is, more effective use of limited funds.
Prison Officers’ Dormitories

The dormitories that accommodate prison officers were built in the 1970s. Due to the lack of funding and maintenance, they are in a serious state of disrepair. We were told that they could no longer accommodate officers stationed at Golden Grove Prison.

Currently, there are inmates who are working on repairing the roof of the officers’ dormitory. On viewing the said dormitory, we saw some of the unpleasant conditions that prison officers endure. The mattresses designated for officers to sleep on were tattered and the rooms are small and hot.

Need for Prison’s Public Relations Department

There was an expressed need for a public relations section of the prison service to respond to publications in the country’s print media and other comments made by or through other media (for example, television and radio). We were informed that most of the times issues that are not true are written or said via the media and the prison staff is unable to respond. As such, these statements do further damage to the public’s perception of the prison system.

Electrical Fluctuations

The fluctuation of electricity at this prison was noted as another problem that faces the prison regularly.
Tour of the Prison

After conducting the interview, the research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice embarked on a full tour of the Golden Grove Prison.

Surveying the grounds revealed well-kept surroundings with the lawn and plants well trimmed. The premises were maintained by inmates who were referred to as “one-stroke lawn mowers”, that is, all of the grass is maintained by inmates with cut-lasses).

The accommodations for inmates are grossly inadequate. Visiting the dorms one immediately becomes aware of the serious problem of overcrowding within the prison. Approximately 60 to 85 inmates are housed within each dorm. These dorms are equipped with open shower and toilet facilities that greet you on entering.

Climbing a short flight of stairs in one of the dorms reveals a long corridor filled with inmates and cluttered cardboard cuttings used to divide personal sleeping and living space. Staring upwards reveals a galvanize roof filled with holes with the scattering of buckets below in an attempt to catch the water. One also hears the flapping of many pigeons overhead their numbers evident by the newspaper print filled with bird droppings hanging from the ceiling.

As we step out of the dorm we are beckoned by officers to see another dorm, on entering the gates of the dorm one already sees that it is an identical replica of the first dorm visited. We are told that persons sometimes on viewing the conditions that these inmates are subjected to have fainted.

On our tour we were taken to a small shed like place where about 6 inmates were engaged in playing various musical instruments. Most of the inmates indicated
that they came into the prison with the knowledge of how to play the instruments. We were also treated to a taste of the inmates' musical abilities.

The library is housed in a small room with a couple shelves decorated with old tattered books. The officer present in the library tells us that the books are mostly donated outdated books that the inmates have little or no use for.

Our tour ends at the welfare office where all inmates with problems or concerns bring them to the officer. The welfare officer is considered as their contact with the outside world.
Introduction

On June 11, 2002, the research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice visited the Golden Grove Prison for Remand inmates. This prison is situated on the same compound of the Golden Grove Convict Prison at Golden Grove Road, Arouca.

The Prison

The UWI Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice was informed via an interview that the daily average count of inmates at the Golden Grove Remand is approximately 650. However, this figure can fluctuate between 662 to 596 inmates per day. Further, it was reported that it seems the daily intake of inmates is falling.

Classification and Separation of Inmates

Inmates are kept in separate sections according to their classifications even though officers are restricted by the limited physical space.

Staffing

There are approximately 35 officers working on staff on each of the three (3) batches.
**Offences/Crimes**

This Remand Prison houses First Division inmates, persons awaiting trial and adjourned cases, that is, basically those persons who are not yet serving a sentence are housed in this prison. The majority of inmates that are in Golden Grove Remand Prison are those who were charged for drug-related offences.

**Fights and Disturbances**

It was reported that there are few fights in this prison. When such fights do occur, they usually stem from old grievances from outside the prison. Currently, there is one inmate under separation for a 1-month period as a form of punishment for such activities.

**Visits**

Inmates in the Remand Prison are allowed 2 visits per week.

**Meals**

Inmates are fed three times a day and at times similar to the other prisons.

**Airing and Exercise**

Inmates are allowed airing and exercise daily.
Religion

It is felt that the presence of religious programmes effects a positive change in the mindset of the inmates. Due to this instrumental role that religion is believed to play in the changing of the inmate, the prison has 8 chaplains to service these inmates. Recently, there have been 15 inmates who have been baptized by the Pentecostal faith.

With regard to religious activities in the prison, the prison would usually provide the equipment whilst the church assists in the other areas, for example, the organization and holding of concerts.

Education

The prison is unable to offer academic programmes since inmates are in transit and they would not benefit from any long-term programme/s. However, books have been obtained to start a library in the prison so inmates would have the opportunity to access such while in prison.

Sports

We were informed that the inmates themselves organize sporting activities at the prison.
Tour of the Prison

On entering the main part of the Remand Prison, the research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice witnessed the presences of cells on either side of us.

Looking into one cell, one can clearly see approximately 7 adult males inside the cell. During a brief conversation with some of them, they complained about the present conditions that they are held in. Some complained that their joints hurt from lying on the bare floor. Others complain of the little or no airing time that they are allowed. Another popular complaint is the number of men that they have to share their cells with. We are told that the average number of men in a cell during the day is about 7 to 8 men in a cell whilst in the evening this number goes up to about 10-12 men.

There are no toilet facilities within the cells so once locked down inmates have to excrete in a bucket/pail. A strong foul odour is present when one passes next to the cells. Further, the cells are usually dark inside.
GOLDEN GROVE WOMEN’S PRISON

Introduction

On June 11, 2002, the research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice visited Golden Grove’s Women Prison. This prison is situated on the same compound of the Golden Grove Convict Prison at Golden Grove Road, Arouca. An interview was conducted with Mrs. Judith Headley, Supervisor of the Women’s Prison and Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service.

The Prison

On entering the Women’s Prison, one is immediately aware of the newness of the facility and the stark difference to that of the male prisons in Port of Spain, Carrera and the neighbouring Golden Grove – Convict and Remand.

The surroundings as well as the inside of the prison are clean and neat. The administrative office is air conditioned with comfortable sofas and other furniture. Walking through the hallways one observes the terrazzo tiled floors as well as the clean deodorizing scent.

Classification and Separation of Inmates

The Women’s Prison currently houses 107 inmates, which comprises of 9 convicts (stars), 55 prisoners of which 37 were stars, 14 ordinary and 4 special, 27 adjourned case, 6 awaiting trial, 2 awaiting appeal, 2 prohibited immigrants and 6 condemned. The facility has 6 divisions with a total of 48 cells. Each cell is
ideally suited for occupation by 3 inmates. As is evident by the number of inmates housed at the Women’s Prison and the maximum capacity the facility was designed to accommodate (230 inmates), there is at present no problem of overcrowding.

Currently, both convicted inmates and inmates not convicted are housed in the same dorm. This is a short-term arrangement given that there is work currently being done on 2 dorms in an effort to separate the two sets of inmates.

**Crimes/Offences**

A large percent of the inmates are incarcerated for crimes relating to drugs. There are also a relatively large number of persons incarcerated for larceny, breaking and entering and murder. Inmates’ ages range from 14 years to 72 years with the larger percent of inmates aged between 22 to 35 years. There are very few repeat offenders and those who are repeat offenders are usually with relation to drug matters.

**Staffing**

There are at present 60 members of staff serving the Women’s Prison.

**Programmes Offered**

Mrs. Judith Headley stated that there are, like the other prisons, programmes in place for the inmates of the Women’s Prison. Programmes offered range from academics to development of handicraft skills.
• **Educational Programmes**

Within the academic programmes, C.X.C. classes are offered in the following fields:

1. Mathematics  
2. English Language  
3. Principles of Accounts  
4. Computer Science  
5. Principles of Business  
6. Art

Other classes offered within the academic area are in literacy and school leaving.

• **Handicraft Programmes**

Handicraft programmes offered include sewing, crochet, needlework and bottle painting. There were classes offered in small appliance repairs but these have been discontinued.

• **Other Programmes**

Other programmes currently existing within the Women's Prison are horticulture, agriculture and cultural, singing (choir) and dance groups. Most of these classes are facilitated/conducted by persons outside of the prison service, however, in certain instances officers do help in the teaching or facilitation of the programmes.
Just recently the Women's Prison held its own beauty pageant for the inmates where they were the major organizers of the pageant. This event was highlighted in the daily newspapers.

**Sports**

The prison although attempting to offer a well-rounded inmate through the provision of various programmes has been unable to offer programmes in the area of sports, mainly due to the absence of grounds.

**Religion**

Religious activities incorporate the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Full Gospel, Pentecostal and the Jehovah Witnesses faiths. The spiritual aspect is seen as fundamental in being a part of the prison life of the inmate. Incarcerated women are also offered classes in Yoga and within the prison there is also the provision of counselling services to inmates.

**Non-Governmental Organizations**

Several non-governmental organizations assist in the provision of various essential social services to the prison. The AAA (Alcoholics Anonymous Association) provides a drug rehabilitation programme, Women's Aglow facilitates group meetings where inmates are allowed to share their experiences in these sessions with others in an effort to build cohesion and reduce alienation and Soroptimists International of St. Augustine also provides aid in anything the prison may be in need which includes medical needs.
Violence

General violence amongst inmates is very low with only two (2) incidents occurring last year. The inmate-officer relations are described as very good whereby the officers try to take good care of inmates.

Problems Identified

During the interview, some problems experienced and solutions expressed at the Women's Prison were noted. These are:

1. The length of visit times are short especially in the case of women who have children and are only allowed to see them once for the month. More specifically, remand inmates are allowed 2 visits per week for 15 minutes and convicted inmates are allowed 1 visit per month. This can be very traumatic for both parties involved in this arrangement.

   Suggestions to this is that there need to be a re-visitation of the prison rules and regulations and a updating of these archaic rules that were less focused on reforming the inmate but more on punishment. There is also a need for the rules and regulations to take into account the gender issue and become more sensitive towards those needs required by the female prison.

2. There are no recreational facilities for women to exercise or play any sport.
The Prison Tour

Walking through the cellblocks apart from the cells with barred gates, it is very easy to forget that one is in a prison. At the end of the corridor, there are on either side shower and toilet facilities. Both bathing and toilet areas are very clean. Inside the cells, it is clear to see that overcrowding is not an issue, with one to two inmates in a cell.

As we are taken to the kitchen area, we pass through a large room with a television. We are told that this room is used as a lunch hall. The kitchen is spotless with few inmates working over some pots. Exiting the kitchen, it opens up into a small open area with grass.

Next we went to the visiting area. This area is situated in a separate building on the eastern side of the main prison. The facility is equipped with very modern equipment, e.g., surveillance cameras, handsets and soundproof glass. On leaving the Women's compound, one can't help but draw comparisons to the superior conditions experienced by the prison officers stationed there as well as the inmates as compared to their counterparts (officers and inmates) at the Golden Grove Prison.
MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON

Introduction

On June 12, 2002, the research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice visited Maximum Security Prison in Arouca. An interview was conducted with Mr. … and Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service.

The Prison

At present there are approximately 834 inmates incarcerated at the Maximum Security Prison with a staff of 300 prison officers. The current facility can hold approximately 2000 inmates.

There are various levels of security throughout the prison, with levels of security ranging from minimum, medium to maximum. The prison K-division consists of lifers and important prisoners. A maximum of 43 persons can be accommodated in this division; currently there are 22 under report and 14 awaiting reallocation currently.

In addition to the K-Division, the prison has the cellblock area, food area, church, Training Research Development (TRD) area and the visiting area.

An officer in a kiosk automatically controls all gates for the cells. All officers are trained to work in this kiosk, which is strategically located in the centre of the cell divisions. This allows the officer to have an advantageous view of all who are attempting to enter or leave various areas in the cells. The kiosk is also equipped with surveillance cameras to further aid officers in monitoring the various cells.
Staffing

Officers are divided into three shifts, A, B and C and a main shift with the aim to keep security at a high level.

Types of Inmates

At the Maximum Security Prison, there is a screening committee that divides inmates into certain groups. The following are the groups that inmates are divided into:

1. Inmates who have been in the system a while and have long sentences
2. Inmates who are mid-stream
3. Inmates who have now entered the system and have long sentences
4. Inmates who have other pending matters. These inmates are separated from other inmates.

The composition of the prison inmate population with respect to crimes/offences committed by inmates varies. Some of the crimes that inmates at this institution are perpetrators of include murder, manslaughter, robbery with aggravation and fraud. However, inmates found guilty of maintenance-related offences would not be found in this prison.

Housed at the Maximum Security Prison are also inmates who are deemed to be high-risk. This refers to high profile persons who may have some form of political affiliation, e.g. Ministers, or persons who are influential and may be able to manipulate the system even whilst incarcerated e.g., drug dealers and those
with financial power. It is based on these criteria (type of crime and status of person) that persons are sent to the Maximum Security Prison.

**Visits**

Inmates are allowed to have 1 visit per month. During these visits, the inmate may see up to 3 persons at that particular time. They are also allowed to communicate with foreigners, lawyers and family. There is some flexibility in the system in that one is allowed other visits outside the stipulated time.

**Programmes**

- **The School**

  The Maximum Security Prison has a dedicated area called the Training, Research and Development, (TRD) where all schooling is conducted. This area consists of five (5) classrooms, a computer laboratory, a music room and a library. At present, the school has 352 inmates all of which requested to be in classes. The maximum number of programmes any one inmate can be involved in at one time is 4 because of clashes of times of classes. It was reported that after inmates finish classes there is a visible positive change in their attitudes.

- **Academic Programmes**

  The prison welcomes all literacy tutors and their services. These voluntary tutors alongside prison officers, who also volunteer their time, run these classes. The literacy programme caters to the needs of the
various levels of literacy of inmates, that is, there is an absolute beginners class, a regular beginners class, level 1, level 2 and level 3 (school leaving level).

Three (3) types of literacy programmes are offered to inmates. These programs are:

1. Prison Fellowship deals with both literacy and numeracy. There are approximately 189 inmates involved in this programme.
2. ALTA (Adult Literacy Training Association) Literacy Programme. This is divided into Regular Beginners, Level 1 and Level 2.
3. Ms. Skinner aids in the absolute beginners class as well as the development of the spiritual /self esteem and value system.

- **Caribbean Examinations Council**

Inmates are afforded the opportunity during their stay at the Maximum Security Prison to invest their time into obtaining Caribbean Examinations Council (C.X.C.) qualifications in five (5) subject areas. Classes are offered in Mathematics, English Language, Social Studies, Principles of Business and Principles of Accounts. At present, there are several inmates who are preparing to write the C.X.C exams.

Inmates also assist with some of the training and classes, for example, inmate Neptune Watson who teaches classes in Social Studies and English Language.
• **Computers**

There are 4 computers in the prison and twelve (12) inmates are currently preparing to write exams for Information Technology (IT) in June 2002. There are plans, however, to add 12 more computers to the current count.

• **National Examination Council**

A further boost in the way of education for inmates starting September 2002 is the offering of eight (8) National Examinational Council (N.E.C) subjects which will be run by Sheldon Harripaul.

• **Library**

There is a library facility that is well organized and catalogued. However, there is a lack of books that inmates can make use of. There is a need for more up-to-date books, especially those that deal with current issues and problems. A major complaint by inmates and prison officers seems to be that the books that are donated to the prison are either not relevant for the C.X.C or other classes that are offered or they are outdated. The books that are at present in the library are always in full demand by the inmates.

• **Skills**

Currently there is an art class conducted by Bill Trotman though the course is not taught for the C.X.C. level as yet. Craft and other technical programmes are in the pipeline but the building is not yet in place for
these programmes. Music is another skill that inmates can acquire at the prison. Presently, 14 inmates are involved in music.

Currently, an ongoing assessment is taking place in the prison and soon inmates who are equipped with particular skills can earn money (which would be credited to their account for use when they are released) when they come in to the prison.

**Religion**

Religious groups pay regular visits to the prison and show inmates, for example, the way of Christ. It is believed that this is very important for inmates to have something to hold on to, the Supreme Being.

The prison encourages all religious denominations to come in to the prison, like the Muslims, Baptists, Pentecostals and Catholics. Primarily, because of lack of space, the prison cannot facilitate all groups at the same time so a timetable is established to prevent clashes.

Inmates are also offered a bible programme (currently run by persons outside of the prison system) that allows them to receive a certificate after one (1) year.

**Sports**

Inmates are allowed to play various sports (e.g. football, cricket, basketball) between 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. These outdoor activities allow inmates time to release some of their unused energy since there are few jobs at the Maximum Security Prison for inmates to engage in. There is a scheduled football competition on Friday 3rd at the prisons’ annual sporting event.
Health

There are other groups that deal with sickly inmates who are ailing with HIV, Tuberculosis, and other diseases. They visit these inmates and talk to them to offer some sort of support that would not have been offered otherwise.

The Prison Tour

On entering the prison compound there were inmates (gang) outside working on the shrubs and grass on the pathway leading to the gate to the prison. These hedges and grass were well kept. On surveying the premises outside the gates, the landscaping was beautiful. On the other side of the gates, the security measures in place appeared to be a bit stricter than the other prisons we visited. We passed through a metal detector and were asked to leave all cell phones and pagers, etc. with the officer. We were then escorted to the visitors’ area.

The visiting area is a large air-conditioned room with a canteen where visitors could purchase food items for inmates. The prison does not allow visitors to bring food from outside of the canteen. The inmates are separated from visitors by a sound proof glass, disallowing any physical contact between inmate and visitor. Communication between visitors and inmates are conducted via a phone handset.

We were taken from the visitors’ area to the main area where inmates are housed as well as the administrative building. The inside of the prison is huge in terms of space. There are several buildings that were identified to us as the dorms for prison officers, the administrative office/s, the cell blocks and the Training, Research and Development area.
On tour we were taken to the section that houses special inmates, that is, those who need to be separated from the rest of the prison population, e.g., high profile individuals. One person is assigned to a cell of his own in this section. These cells contained a bed, shower, toilet and face basin. The toilet and face basin both appeared to be made out of stainless steel. These cells were well lit and very neat. The officer who took us for the tour mentioned that these inmates are brought into the courtyard for airing by themselves after the general prison population is locked in.

As we toured the facilities further, we were taken to the cell area where the general population is housed. Within each cell there were usually 2 to 3 inmates. These cells were a little more cluttered with items, e.g., tin foods and bottles of water as compared to the cells holding high-risk persons. However, the accommodations for inmates were very well kept.

Whilst touring the facilities, most of the inmates were out of their cells playing basketball, relaxing in the courtyard, or involved in some other programme that was offered. To experience firsthand what the inmates did with their day, we were escorted to the Training, Research and Development area.

The first room we visited in this area was the library facility. The library is small but there were many books on the shelves. However, we were informed that these books were not suitable to fill the needs of most of the inmates. The reason we were told is that most of the inmates who come in to the prison were at the basic literacy level whilst the books in the library were more suited for persons at an advanced literacy level leading to the problem of supply not meeting demand. For example, there were books on calculus etc. which would hardly be used by inmates. However, inmates seemed very interested in the books the library had to offer (even if sometimes it was just for the pictures within the book).
Speaking to the librarian, Prison Officer Bedeau, he told us that he is currently working on a database that could be used to show what books were loaned to which inmates. The system would also show when completed which inmates were enrolled in particular classes.

Our next destination within the Training, Research and Development area was the rooms in which classes were taught. These rooms were just like any classroom you would see in secondary school. No classes were in progress whilst we were there.

Other sites visited were the music room, the drug rehabilitation class (large number of persons), the computer laboratory (which is equipped with 4 computers) and the kitchen.

A Brief Interview with an Inmate: Neptune Watson

Background

Neptune Watson is an inmate currently serving a life sentence for murder. He noted that he was employed as a personnel manager at West Indies Tobacco Company (WITCO) before being committed. He is also fluent in Spanish.

Addressing some of the problems within the Prison

He noted that the major problem most inmates had was that of illiteracy in that approximately 60% -70% of persons committed to the prisons were illiterate. Therefore, he said, there is the need to implement a 4 to 5 year programme within the prison to address this problem.
The inmate also told us that the library may be able to help but given the fact that its resources were obtained through begging persons and organizations, the books were over the literacy level of the inmates.

With regard to the issue of recidivism, he expressed that “recidivism cannot be cured unless you deal with the people who are caught.” He claimed that he could identify 100 persons who were back to this prison more than 2 times over the last 18 years. He added: “If I had to guess, I would say there is about a 65% rate of recidivism here at the Maximum Security Prison.”

He recommended that in order to tackle this problem, reformation and re-socialization of the inmate must be done. He said that this problem stemmed from a structural problem where the inmate is seen as socially dead. Further, he said, the private sector could play a part in both the pre-release of inmates as well as the post release through the setting up of industries/businesses that utilized the inmates.

The inmates also stated that administratively there is a need for commitment and involvement in Prison reform that must be at all levels throughout the prison system. He noted that the Prison Officers I and II if they get support from those at senior level could make a difference.

With regard to the diet in the prison, he exclaimed that currently the food provided covers the requirements for the essential nutrients. However, there is no variety in the meals. A suggestion may be to use the external lands to create supplemental for diets creating a little variety in the food received as well as utilizing inmates in a productive manner.
PORT OF SPAIN PRISON

Introduction

On June 12, 2002 the research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice visited the Port of Spain Prison on Frederick Street, Port of Spain. There, we interviewed senior prison officers as well as Mr. Gordon Husbands. We were then taken on a tour of the prison facilities.

The Prison

The number of inmates housed at the Port of Spain Prison fluctuates between 800 to 900 inmates daily, with approximately 250 prison officers currently charged with the responsibility of these inmates.

The prison was originally built to hold between 200 to 300 inmates. When one looks at the current daily population of 800 to 900 inmates housed at this prison and the capacity it was originally designed for, it is apparent that the prison is grossly overpopulated. Some simple arithmetic reveals that the prison is currently housing approximately 3 times more than its maximum capacity. This leads to the problem of the inability of the officers to separate inmates into various cellblocks according to their classification (ordinary, star, special etc.). However, efforts are made to separate homosexuals from the general inmate population.

In the section of the prison for condemned inmates, there are 78 inmates.
Classification and Characteristics of Inmates

Inmates at the Port of Spain Prison can be classified into convicted, remanded or immigrants who have overstay their time. Further, convicted inmates are classified into Stars, Specials and Ordinaries.

We were informed that most inmates in this prison were between the ages of 19 and 30 years. However, if one had to further narrow it down, one can say that the largest percent of inmates fall within the 19 to 25 years age group.

Crimes/Offences Committed

We were also told that a large percent of the offenders were in prison for drug related crimes.

Length of Sentences

The average term being served by these inmates were usually between 1 to 3 years.

Recidivism

During our interview, we were told that repeat offenders were estimated to be between 35 - 45% of the overall prison population. Of these repeat offenders, it is estimated that 85% are in prison on marijuana, coke and robbery/arms charges. It was argued that these high recidivism rates could be somewhat attributed to the lack of support systems to help inmates when discharged from prison.
We were informed that there was a male hostel situated on Henry Street, Port of Spain and the Salvation Army that did some work with discharged inmates but otherwise, there are no formal system in place to deal with released inmates which would facilitate their reintegration into society.

In addition, there are no programmes in place for early releases. Further, Prison Welfare Officers have to go beyond the duties to act as placement officers in an effort to get jobs for these inmates.

Programmes

The following list of programmes exist at the Port of Spain Prison:

1. Drug Rehabilitation
2. Literacy
3. Self Esteem / Awareness
4. Religious Meetings (Daily)
5. Sports (e.g. football, basketball, cricket)
6. Music (steel pan and Indian orchestra)

Unfortunately, no Caribbean Examinations Councils (CXC) courses are offered to inmates at this prison despite the fact that most of the inmates are school dropouts.

One activity that some inmates are assigned includes taking around the meals to the various cells. Other activities inmates are involved in are: tailoring (4 inmates), cooking (36 inmates), and fixing small appliances (5 inmates).
Problems within the Prison

The following is a list of some of the problems that this prison faces:

1. **Violence**
   There is to some extent violence within the prison between gangs.

2. **Contrabands**
   There have been some reports of contra bands coming into the prison.

3. **Utilities**
   The prison suffers from water and electricity problems and there are no standby generators.

4. **Medical**
   a. There is a lack of resources in the infirmary.
   b. There is no permanent doctor.
   c. There are inmates who are suffering from dermatitis and hypertension.
   d. The Port of Spain Prison receives its medical supplies are received from the Golden Grove Prison. However, it usually takes about 2 weeks to one month to get a prescription filled.

Improving the Quality of the Prison

During our interview, the following was suggested as ways to improve the quality of the prison:
1. Making the public more aware of the conditions of the prison by opening it up a bit.

2. Increasing the number of prison officers assigned to the Port of Spain Prison.

3. There is the need to modernize the prison.

4. Need for better medical services in the prison, for example, a permanent doctor to replace the present situation of having a doctor in the prison for one hour per day.

5. Improve the physical conditions of the prison, for example, the infrastructure, sanitation, etc.

The Prison Tour

As one entered the visiting area, there were persons (members of the public) buying items from the canteen for their friends/relatives who were inmates. The visiting room is a relatively large room with wooden benches and chairs. The room itself was very noisy with persons shouting and cross talking. It took a while to figure out why this occurs but it was evident when one sees the distance between inmates and the visitors.

For visits, inmates were brought out to a section with cubicles with wire restraining the inmates from going further. Beyond the wire, there is a two-foot alley that separates inmates from the visiting area. In the visiting area, there is a wire separating inmates and visitors and avoiding any physical contact. Visitors have to shout to outdo those next to them talking to other inmates.

On entering the main prison area, we observed the proximity of the toilet facilities to the kitchen. There was a strong stench emanating from this area despite the fact that inmates’ meals were being prepared there. We also witnessed the presence of many flies in this area.
A little further into the main prison revealed a courtyard with many inmates relaxing. In this same area, inmates were seen showering nude in open view to all.

We also saw a small room that was dedicated as the “fix it shop.” This room had about 4 inmates working at the time.

The cells and prison area that housed the convicted inmates were noisy with about 6 - 7 inmates occupying one cell. Further unpleasant conditions were witnessed when we were taken to the Remand section of the prison. This section is for the holding of inmates awaiting their trial who have not yet been found guilty by the court of law and sentenced. However, this section of the prison had the worst conditions. It looked almost like a dungeon. The floor was wet which we were later told was from human urine and possibly faeces.

On peering into the cells, it appeared as if the cells were empty. However, as our eyes adjusted to the lighting, many figures were made out within the confines of the cell space. When asked how many inmates were in there, we heard shouts of 10 and 12 inmates with the promise of more at the end of the day when all returned from court trials.

In one instance, we saw hammocks hanging high in the air to facilitate new space for inmates. Inmates in this cell found it necessary to hang such hammocks as to them it was impossible to find a space on the ground. However, dangers lie in this method of space consumption in that inmates fell from these perches unto the ground, damaging themselves.

There were no toilet facilities and inmates complained that they were not allowed their mandatory one-hour airing each day. Small pails the size of one-gallon paint buckets substituted for toilets inside of the already cramped cells. When these
buckets become filled which occurs regularly given the number of inmates in the cells on a daily basis, they were emptied into the small drain that runs in front of the cells on either side. One inmate referred to this drain as the "smallest but most nastiest drain in Trinidad." This practice accounted for the smell of the Remand section as well as the wetness of the floor. The lack of toilet facilities coupled with the substitute method institutionalized by inmates creates a grave danger to both inmates and prison officers in terms of health hazards and the spread of diseases.

Inmates in the Remand section complained on the length of time that they spend awaiting the completion of their case before the courts. It was not uncommon to hear that some of these inmates were waiting between 3 - 4 years on their trial.

After this experience, we were taken to see how the prison receives inmates. Talking to officers before the arrival of inmates, we were briefed on the procedures each inmate must perform every time he leaves the prison and enters. The officer explained that the inmate must be checked thoroughly to ensure that he does not have any items hidden on his body. We were shown some the items that were found on inmates, for example, a toothbrush with a sharpened end, pocket knives, drugs, etc. Further, we were told that inmates have been known to hide these instruments in their anuses.

Around 5:00 p.m. we witnessed this procedure ourselves. Inmates who had been to court for the day were lined up outside the office and were called by name to enter the office area to be checked. Most inmates already knew what to do so there were little instructions that were passed out by officers. The checking procedure required inmates to open their mouths to be checked by officers, they then lifted their tongues. Their upper body was checked requiring them to remove their clothing leaving them only with their underwear. After checking their chest and back areas, they were then required to take off their underwear and squat. The squatting ensured that no concealed objects were in their anuses.
Incidentally, this goes on in the presence of all other inmates being received as well as prison officers.
TOBAGO PRISON

Introduction

On June 27, 2002 research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice visited the Tobago Prison in Scarborough, Tobago. Interviews were conducted with Mr. McPherson, Supervisor of the Tobago Prison and Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer. We then proceeded on a tour of the prison facilities.

The Prison

Compared to all of the prisons in Trinidad, the Tobago Prison is much smaller in size and thus has a smaller inmate population. Also, it seems to be in a better physical condition that the other prisons as well as it appears to be cleaner.

The Tobago Prison offers the facility whereby inmates from Tobago who are serving sentences in Trinidad, their friends and relatives can send items to them (e.g., toiletries, etc.). These can be dropped off at the Tobago Prison where it is then shipped to Trinidad daily via the inter-island ferry.

The research staff was informed that inmates in the Tobago Prison enjoy the presence of local and cable television in their cell area for their entertainment. This was later confirmed during a tour of the facilities.

Transportation problems are common in the Tobago Prison in terms of the number of vehicles available and their reliability. In times when the vehicles are non-functional, the police and the army provide assistance.
Another problem facing this prison is the lack of space. This has resulted in a number of activities being curtailed. For example, the library area for inmates now shares the same space (i.e., very small space) as the Store Room. As a result, it is very difficult for inmates to access books.

**Prison Officers**

Presently, there are approximately 30 prison officers attached to the Tobago Prison who perform their duties in the same shift arrangements as the other prisons in Trinidad.

**Classification of Inmates**

Like the other prisons, inmates are classified according to Stars, Specials and Ordinaries. However, due to the limited space available, they are not separated accordingly.

**Type of Crimes/Offences Committed**

It was reported that most of the inmates are in this prison for crimes/offences that include possession of drugs, housebreaking and larceny.
Sentences

Generally, we were informed that the sentences of inmates in the Tobago Prison are not more than two years in duration. Inmates with longer sentences are transferred to prisons in Trinidad and Carrera.

We were informed of a practice that exists which allows inmates from Tobago who are serving their sentences in Trinidad to complete their sentences in Tobago. We were also told that inmates prefer to serve their sentence in Tobago rather than in Trinidad. Inmates normally state that: “incarceration in Trinidad prisons is further punishment.” As such, inmates in the Tobago prison are “informed” that if they are troublesome they will be transferred to Trinidad to serve their sentence.

The Inmates

It was reported to us that many of the inmates have talents in folklore, singing and even in the spiritual aspect of life. Further, we were informed that the highest proportion of inmates is from the 18 – 25 years age group.

As in the other prisons, the system of inmates functioning as orderlies exist in the Tobago Prison as well.

Inmates who assist in the kitchen as well as inmates who are orderlies sleep in separate cells from the other inmates.
Work Gangs

We were informed that inmate work gangs exist in the Tobago Prison as well as the other prisons in Trinidad. However, it is difficult to implement in Tobago because of the limited number of prison officers assigned to the prison. In addition to the gangs that work within the prison compound itself, there are also out-gangs who perform duties on premises outside of the prison. Usually, it is one prison officer to 10 - 12 inmates in these out-gangs.

Recidivism

It was reported to us that the recidivism rate is about 20% to 30% at the Tobago Prison.

Programmes

Programmes offered at this prison can be classified into academic and non-academic programmes. With regard to the academic programmes, literacy, school leaving, Mathematics and English classes are provided. Pottery, crafts (floral), tie-dye, woodcarving, painting, jewelry-making and steel pan classes are some of the non-academic classes available to inmates. Further, members of the public usually donate the materials used in some of these crafts.

Further, it is customary that cultural shows are held for the various national cultural events. Inmates normally participate fully in these events.

Present in the Tobago Prison is agricultural activities and the rearing of rabbits, chicken and sheep.
Health Matters

During our interview, we were told of the dire situation facing the Tobago prison, that is, there is no infirmary officer are attached to the prison as well as there is no functioning infirmary and also no isolation cells.

Disciplinary Matters

It was reported to us that fights among inmates and other disciplinary problems have become more manageable now as the number of inmates have been reduced as well as inmates have more confidence in officers to report matters before they get out of hand.

Recommendations

Some of the major recommendations made during the interview include:

1. The building of a larger prison.
2. The allocation of an infirmary officer to the Tobago Prison.
3. The establishment of a functioning infirmary.
4. The creation of isolation cells.
5. The need to acquire additional vehicles that are in proper working condition.
6. The development of programmes for inmates after their release from prison to keep them away from a life of crime.
Data Collection

After interviewing the relevant prison officers and touring the various facilities in all seven (7) adult prisons, the next stage in this phase of the research/policy project was the collection of the relevant data on inmates. As mentioned earlier, six out of the seven adult prisons were used in this stage of the project as they primarily deal with convicted inmates. These six (6) prisons are:

1. Carrera Convict Prison
2. Port of Spain Prison
3. Golden Grove – Convict Prison
4. Golden Grove – Women’s Prison
5. Maximum Security Prison
6. Tobago Prison

This study on “Prison Recidivism in Trinidad and Tobago: Reduction, Rehabilitation and Reform” looks at all of the convicted inmates in Trinidad and Tobago who are in the six prisons designated for such inmates. It examines all of those inmates who were present in the six prisons from January 1, 2002 to May 31, 2002. That is, it considers the following convicted inmates:

- All inmates present in the six prisons on January 1, 2002,
- All inmates who came into the six prisons between January 1, 2002 and May 31, 2002,
- All inmates who left the six prisons between January 1, 2002 and May 31, 2002,
- All inmates present in the six prisons on May 31, 2002.

In other words, convicted inmates who were part of the prison system on January 1, 2002 through to May 31, 2002 were subjects in our study.
A schedule was arrived at in which research staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice went to each of the six prisons and extracted the relevant information for each inmate who was there on January 1, 2002 through to May 31, 2002. This was a long and meticulous exercise.

However, it must be noted that both the senior prison officers as well as the administrative prison officers in each of the six prisons facilitated and supported the staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice quite well. Not only were they all very cooperative and courteous, some of the prisons even prepared lunches and refreshments.
CHAPTER III

STAKEHOLDERS’ FORUM

Introduction

Another component of this research/policy project on “Prison Recidivism in Trinidad and Tobago: Reduction, Rehabilitation and Reform” involved the bringing together of the various stakeholders of the prison system into one forum to discuss the specific issues of recidivism, re-offending, rehabilitation and reform. In this light, the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice in conjunction with the Cabinet-Appointed Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation held a one-day Stakeholders’ Forum on “Breaking the Cycle: Prison Recidivism and Re-Offending in Trinidad and Tobago – Towards Reduction, Rehabilitation and Reform.” This meeting took place on Wednesday August 21, 2002, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Scarlet Ibis Room, Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre, Port of Spain.

Some of the major objectives of this stakeholders’ forum were:

- To bring together in one forum many of the stakeholders of the prison system
- To allow stakeholders to be informed of the various views of each other on the specific issues at hand
- To hear the position of the officials of the prison system on these specific issues
- To discuss the issues raised in a professional and guided manner
- To determine the roles stakeholders play in the prison system and the problems they encounter
• To utilize these various views to inform the progress of this project

This forum was comprised of five (5) segments. These were:

1. **Formal Opening Session**
2. **Presentations**
3. **Panel Sessions**
4. **Workshop Sessions**
5. **Plenary Session**

A summary of these segments is provided in the following sections.

**Formal Opening Session**

The Minister of National Security, the Honourable Howard Chin Lee delivered the Feature Address in the Formal Opening Session. Other distinguished speakers included Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal, UWI, St. Augustine, Mr. John Rougier, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons ‘Operations’ and Professor Ramesh Deosaran, Director of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, UWI. Bishop Clive Abdulah of Anglican Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago served as Chairperson.

**Chairman’s Opening Remarks**

In his opening remarks, Bishop Clive Abdulah noted that the truth about prison recidivism has finally been recognized. He made the call for a balance approach to be adopted between protecting the society and rehabilitating the offender.
However, Bishop Abdulah cautioned that the limitations of locking up offenders must be looked at whilst there is a need to be creative in the type of punishments given.

Opening Address

Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal, UWI, St. Augustine Campus in delivering the Opening Address began by revealing some startling statistics on the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago. For example, he noted that for the period 1980 – 1990, the increase in the number of inmates is six-fold. He further stated that in 2000, the total prison population is approximately 4,800 and is expected to increase to more than 5,000 this year.

The high incidents of rage among the youths, gang violence, drug abuse and AIDS were also issues that Dr. Tewarie dealt with. For example, he noted that Trinidad and Tobago’s AIDS rate is the second highest in the Caribbean. He further pointed out that there are economic costs to these alarming statistics, for example, the crime rates have resulted in low revenues from the tourism sector as well as lost investments.

Dr. Tewarie noted that as a society, there is a need to rehabilitate those who have been sentenced and an emphasis should be placed on education programmes and religious activities. For instance, with regard to education programmes, he said that this would help alleviate the high unemployment and under-employment rates and that education and re-education is an important form of rehabilitation.

Another area that Dr. Tewarie touched dealt with poverty and crime. He said that the poor is more likely to commit crime and be convicted thus the need to assist the economic depressed ones in society. In conclusion, he expressed the need for
inter-connected, integrated and knowledge-based strategies as a way out of these problems.

Address from the Prison Service

Mr. John Rougier, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons ‘Operations’ delivered an address on behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service on this occasion. He expressed the view that this attempt to look at prison recidivism is long overdue as the prison population has dramatically increased. He stated, for example, that for the period 1991 – 2000, there has been a more than 31% increase in the prison population that has lead to an overcrowding problem.

Mr. Rougier stated that the prison system is informed by the “Restraint policy” which has a low concern for the prison population and the community. However, he said that there is a need for a new system that is similar to the “Restorative Justice System” which will allow offenders to accept responsibility and make new relations with their community. He also called for a penal policy and model to complement this. This he said should focus on the community and the offender. Mr. Rougier also claimed the need for a re-integration policy and a shared responsibility model.

In his address, the need for programmes that focus on attitudes, motivation, skills and opportunities for the inmate were itemized which can be achieved through a re-integral policy and a shared responsibility model. This, Mr. Rougier said, should link offenders with resources needed to accomplish their goals. Also on the list of programmes for the prison industry are cognitive programs/services, as well as, after-care services.

He indicated that the criminal justice system need to be reconsidered as the overcrowding problem is a representation of the fragmentation of the criminal
justice system and must be dealt with. Mr. Rougier said that by identifying exactly who should go to prison and the length of time necessary for those persons to spend in jail can alleviate this problem. The need for proper communication systems was also identified, that is, both public and private networking is needed. This, he claimed can be achieved by adopting an integrated approach consisting of top administrators.

Project Presentation

Professor Ramesh Deosaran, Director, Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, UWI, St. Augustine Campus delivered a project presentation on the topic “From Recidivism to Rehabilitation: An Empirical Approach.” Professor Deosaran as head of the overall project on prison recidivism first attempted to place the project in perspective. He presented to the audience through a powerpoint presentation an overview of relevant statistics on the prison population as well as on the prison system itself over a number the years. In other words, trend analysis was the major tool utilized to present the data.

Amongst other things, Professor Deosaran’s presentation dealt with:

- The percentage of inmates with no previous conviction, one previous conviction and two or more previous conviction for each year from 1962 – 1997
- The number of persons sentenced to death for each year from 1962 – 1997
- The number of persons committed to prison during each year from 1962 – 1997
• The daily average number of prisoners in prison during each year from 1962 – 1997

• The total serious crimes reported for each year from 1962 – 2001

• The approximate daily expenditure (TT$) per prison inmate during each year from 1962 – 1997

• The ages of all inmates for each year from 1991 – 1998

• The total number of the various types of offences committed by males and females from 1990 – 1998

• The number of the various types of offences committed by males for each year from 1990 – 1998

• The number of the various types of offences committed by females for each year from 1990 – 1998

• The daily average prison population of convicted inmates by prison for each year from 1990 – 1998

• The religions of inmates for each year from 1984 – 1998

• The lengths of sentences of all inmates for the period 1991 – 1998

• The lengths of sentences of male and female inmates for the period 1991 – 1998
Further to this holistic view of the prison situation, Professor Deosaran presented data on one of the seven adult prisons in Trinidad and Tobago, that is, the Maximum Security Prison at Golden Grove. For example, he discussed the following:

- **The percentage of crimes committed by inmates at the Maximum Security Prison for the period 1998 – 2002 by crime type**

- **The terms of sentences of inmates at the Maximum Security Prison for the period 1998 – 2002**

- **The religions of inmates at the Maximum Security Prison for the period 1998 – 2002**

- **The marital statuses of inmates at the Maximum Security prison for the period 1998 – 2002**

Professor Deosaran concluded by informing the audience about the project on prison recidivism that the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice is currently engaged in.

**Feature Address**

In his Feature Address, Minister of National Security, the Honourable Howard Chin Lee revealed that there is a 65% recidivism rate in the Trinidad and Tobago prisons and that the community must play an integral role in reducing this phenomenon. He noted the need to address the hate that has developed within the inmates who have been incarcerated.
Minister Chin Lee made the call for a paradigm that will incorporate the inmate with the community that will serve to reduce the stigmatization of crime offenders and promote the re-acceptance of the ex-inmate. Importantly, he clamoured for the need to set up support systems for ex-cons so that their practical everyday needs can be met. He noted the need for their systematic reintegration into society and suggested the parole system may be one way to accomplish this objective. He ended by stating that to reduce prison recidivism, we have to look at the root causes.

Presentations

Two (2) presentations were part of this one-day stakeholders’ forum. This item on the day’s activities was chaired by Ms. Vidya Lall of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Presentation I

Views from the Cabinet-Appointed Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation

Mr. Cipriani Baptiste, Chairman, Cabinet-Appointed Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation and Former Commissioner of Prisons

Similar to Mr. John Rougier’s position, Mr. Baptiste suggested that there is a need to review the existing criminal justice system’s philosophy and penal policy. He said that a correctional orientation whereby inmates can be rehabilitated in an open and accountable manner is necessary. Further, he noted, the prison system must be more just, effective, hopeful and the Restorative Justice model must be high on the agenda.

He indicated that a system of rehabilitation should focus on change within the inmate as opposed to changes between the inmate and the social environment.
Mr. Baptiste expressed that in order to reform an inmate, the rights and dignity of the inmate must be upheld and communities need to get involved as well. He claimed that inmates need to lead a normal life too and, as a result, certain features should be provided, that is, visitation rights, correspondence, medical services, healthy food preparation, work programmes within the community, earnings scheme and even incentive programmes.

The former Commissioner of Prisons said that there is also a need for better classification / re-classification of inmates, for instance, by age, gender, level of offence committed, the mentally disabled, sex offenders, drug offenders, those sentenced to death, etc. He informed the audience that the Task Force at present is currently using rules set in 1838 and thus there is a need to review such rules in order to be efficient in our prison system. However, he said, the Draft Bill was amended in the 2000, but this is still not enough.

**Presentation II**

*The Status of Rehabilitation in the Prisons in Trinidad and Tobago and Its Effects on Prison Recidivism and Re-Offending*

*Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer and Member, Cabinet-Appointed Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation*

Mr. Gordon Husbands early in his presentation noted that the prison adopted and implemented a shared responsibility model of rehabilitation and a reform strategy based on correctional education, cognitive development and religious restoration programme. He further added that there is a need for reform and rehabilitation, that is, the re-tooling the spirit of the individual which is necessary for the rehabilitation of the inmate. However, he said, it only comes from within the person.
Another of Mr. Husbands' point was rehabilitation can be measured by the skills of the inmate whilst reform cannot be measured. He said that correctional education refers to the critical thinking skills of the inmate and this can be done on a procedural approach.

There is also the need for the prison system to be transformed. He claimed that offenders should develop a new perspective on life and we need to change the lives of the inmates from within. Correctional and social reform education should also be developed. He advocated for the pre-release programme to incorporate skills that would teach inmates how to re-integrate into society and lead a legal life. However, he said, this will not be possible unless the persons feel responsible for their actions.

Mr. Husbands noted that a correctional educational curriculum that focuses on social education and even culture should be created and that prisons should become schools and assist in educating the prisoner, involving them in religion, culture and other programmes. This, he said, can lower the recidivism rate. For example, in 2000 there were 78 inmates within the school system and only one inmate returned to Carerra. Mr. Husbands ended by noting that there is still the need for innovative ways to reduce recidivism.

**Panel Sessions**

Two panel sessions were held, the first being moderated by Mr. Ian Ramdhanie, Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice and the second by Bishop Clive Abdulah of the Anglican Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago.
Panel I

Strategies for the Reduction of Prison Recidivism and Re-Offending in Trinidad and Tobago

Seven panelists comprised this panel and included:

- Mr. Donald Berment, Secretary, Men Against Violence Against Women
- Mr. Dennis Brown, Research Officer, Ministry of National Security
- Mr. Wayne Chance, President, Vision on Mission
- Dr. Jason Hernandez, Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce
- Ms. Alice Lucas, President, Soroptomists International of St. Augustine
- Ms. Paula Lucie-Smith, President, Adult Literacy Tutors Association
- Mr. William Latchman, Public Relations Officer, Downtown Owners and Merchants Association

In the following, a brief summary will be presented of the contribution of each panelist.

Mr. Donald Berment
Secretary, Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW)

Amongst many things, Mr. Berment expressed the opinion that we need to change the way we think about inmates since society plays an important role in creating the inmate. He added that our beliefs and behaviours should also be changed. He envisioned that the prison should be a behavior management institution. He claimed that his organization is promoting a healthy relationship curriculum with the inmates by helping them to manage their manhood by dealing with their sexual power.
Mr. Dennis Brown  
Research Officer, Ministry of National Security

Mr. Brown expressed the view that there is a need for a collective community approach to reintegration. He said the de-mystification of the concept of crime must be addressed and that the retributive system is not working for all the citizens in the country.

Other points Mr. Brown made concerned the need to review the prison system and the need for a greater level of rehabilitation within the prison system to accommodate the re-socialization and re-education of inmates.

He said that it is also important that there should be a changed societal approach to re-acceptance and we need a change in the private and public sectors’ approach to the hiring of ex-cons. As a result of the above strategies, he said there is a need to address the whole process of the restorative justice system.

Mr. Wayne Chance  
President, Vision on Mission

Mr. Chance stressed that a certain amount of awareness in society is important for reducing prison recidivism, for example inmates need to be positively accepted when released. He provided an example in which his organization has been working to develop this positive awareness in society, that is, the “Sure With The Law” programme which sought to increase awareness in five communities. In this programme, there is the showcasing of inmates, that is, inmates are given the opportunity to interact with other inmates and communities to see what changes have taken place.

He called for businesses to align themselves with Vision on Mission by employing credible inmates who are recommended by the organization. He noted...
that their aim is to provide facilities that will assist in the reformation of inmates who can then be employed. For instance, he said, they have job training, agriculture, and supervision of inmates on the job. Therefore, the aim is to help in the re-integration of inmates into society.

Mr. Chance clearly stated that inmates need a lot of encouragement to withstand criminal elements in society. As a result, a system that will encourage ex-inmates and provide them with positive advice is crucial, a system in which Vision on Mission is already engaged in.

**Dr. Jason Hernandez**  
*Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce*

In his contribution to this panel discussion, Dr. Hernandez noted a proposal made by Amalgamated Security Services in Trinidad and Tobago for the establishment of a multi-purpose rehabilitation and correctional institute. He said that facilities have also been provided for classes, counseling, and other social activities.

Dr. Hernandez stressed that inmates need to develop good working habits, saving skills, etc. and that vital services needed by inmates are there, such as meeting with their lawyer, social workers, etc. He added that Amalgamated Security Services have also constructed a halfway home whereby inmates who have been discharged are allowed to stay up to a period of six months until they are prepared to return to society.

**Ms. Alice Lucas**  
*President, Soroptomists International of St. Augustine*

Ms. Lucas' presentation focused on her organization's role in working with the Women's Prison at Golden Grove, that is, they provide counseling, handicraft
classes, sewing classes as well as other activities. She added that her organization have also installed programmes for females who have left the prison however, due to geographical reasons, it has not been as productive as expected.

Ms. Paula Lucie-Smith  
President, Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA)

Ms. Lucie-Smith expressed the need for literacy instructions that would cater to inmates’ needs. She informed the audience that they are presently training inmates to teach fellow inmates and that there are more than forty trained inmates in the prisons nationwide.

Additionally, she saw the need for education programmes in prison that cater for inmates who have no education at all as approximately 8% of the population are at the beginner’s level of literacy and as a result, 50% of the literacy prison programme is at the beginner’s level.

Ms. Lucie-Smith called for continuity of the literacy programmes for inmates who are being transferred as well as those inmates leaving the prisons as this will assist better re-integration into society. Finally, she noted the need for a budget to continue the literacy programmes as there are not enough businesses that respond favorably to funding such programmes for inmates.

Mr. William Latchman  
Director and Public Relations Officer  
Downtown Owners and Merchants Association (DOMA)

Mr. Latchman expressed the view that the system of governance is accountable for the dilemma that we have found ourselves in today for the political system is too confrontational as opposed to being solution-oriented. He further noted that the people who are actually affected are inmates and that their needs must be
considered. For example, it must be asked, what do such people want, how these must be provided for them, etc.

He informed all that DOMA is working together with Vision on Mission because they strongly feel that people who have offended must be brought to the forefront to have an input into what must be done to remedy the situation.

**Audience participation**

Several members of the audience made important contributions to this panel discussion making it a lively debate on the said theme. Several views were obtained on the many issues raised most of which were valuable points.

For instance, Mr. Gregory Aboud, President of DOMA speaking from the audience expressed a deep concern on how inmates are treated whilst in prison as well as when they are being transported from prison to court and back. He called for the criminal justice system to be more humanized and for the overcrowding situation in prisons to be immediately dealt with. However, officials from the prison responded by saying they are mandated to carry out the law by housing all the inmates sent to them via the courts in the existing prisons available.

Other suggestions included:

- *The implementation of preventive measures at the school level such as moral guidance, counseling and drug prevention programmes.*

- *The adoption of a holistic approach to targeting societal ills such as risky sexual behaviour, drugs, stealing.*
• The channeling of youths into productive avenues.

• The role of the media in the promotion of the positive aspects of individuals.

• The role of the private sector in employing ex-cons.

• The role of the Government in the provision of incentives to the private sector to employ inmates upon their release from prisons.

• The role of the communities in dealing with the prison problem as well as the drug problem.

• The role of NGO’s with regard to inmates upon their release from prison.

• The training of individuals on parenting skills.

• The issue of poverty, the cycle of poverty and poverty eradication.

Panel II

Reducing Prison Recidivism and Re-Offending in Trinidad and Tobago: Views from the Church

Six panelists comprise this panel. These were:

• Bishop Clive Abdulah, Anglican
• Pastor Lloyd Cadogan, Seventh Day Adventist
• Mother Ann Cadore, Baptist
• Father Lumsden, Roman Catholic
• Dr. Rampersad Parasram, Hindu
• Reverend Paul Rufus, Prison Fellowship of Trinidad and Tobago

In the following, a brief summary of each panelist’s presentation will be made.

**Bishop Clive Abdulah, Anglican**

Concisely, Bishop Abdulah spoke about the need to focus on three points. These are the Home, the School and the Community. He made a passionately plea for the introduction of morally strong education programmes in schools.

**Pastor Lloyd Cadogan, Seventh Day Adventist**

Pastor Cadogan made the point that inmates first need to recognize that there is a God. He further stated that society has to listen to the voice of inmates, recognize what they are saying, establish confidence in inmates and merge our will with their will.

He said his church has built a relationship with the families of inmates and have taken inmates to their homes once released thus assisted inmates in being positively accepted by their families.

Pastor Cadogan noted that inmates should be taught a way of life and respect for God in their homes. Touching on parenting, he also said that parents must teach their children respect for God in order for them to get respect in return and parents need to know their responsibility and function as well.
Mother Ann Cadore, Baptist

Amongst many things, Mother Cadore stressed that people need to have a personal relationship with God. She raised a highly debated issue with the participants by suggesting that criminals were born.

Father Christopher Lumsden, Roman Catholic

Father Lumsden expressed the opinion that inmates must have respect for themselves. This, he said, can be achieved by making them aware that God loves them and, that they too are humans. He called for the creation of a new person by assisting them to forgive themselves for the offences they have committed. He saw the need for religion to be further incorporated into the homes as well.

Father Lumsden made a plea for the support of inmates when they are released from prison and there is the also the need to minister to their families as well.

Dr. Rampersad Parasram, Hindu

Filling in for Mr. K. Dubay, Hindu Chaplain for the Prisons who was unavoidably absent at the last minute, Dr. Parasram noted the very crucial role that religion has to play to prevent prison recidivism. He made an interesting point that religious people should practice religion and should not do too much of the social work.

Reverend Paul Rufus, Prison Fellowship of Trinidad and Tobago

Reverend Rufus stated that as the prison community is a part of our society, we must not stigmatize inmates as lesser people. The society must be educated of the
life and the work of the inmate that he engaged in while reforming himself. For rehabilitation to be successful, this must be done.

He noted that the family of the inmate, his children and the community he came from must be addressed so that stigmatization and labeling are minimized. Maintaining linkages between inmate and family are crucial, he claimed. He indicated that the church plays an integral role in helping the inmate to recognize his spirituality, that is, he will be able to recognize his errors and choose a life where he has an identity. Inmates also need to be prepared to deal with society before they are actually released from prison was another important point made by Reverend Rufus.

There was great participation by members of the audience on the many issues raised in this panel.

Workshop Sessions

Three workshop sessions were held, the first moderated by Mr. John Rougier, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons ‘Operations’, second by Mr. Gordon Husbands, Chief Welfare Officer, Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service and third by Mr. Dennis Brown, Research Officer, Ministry of National Security.

As there were three workshop sessions, participants were divided into three groups. Each group was then assigned a workshop theme.
Workshop I

The Prison Service: Problems and Prospects in Reducing Prison Recidivism and Re-Offending in Trinidad and Tobago

The following is a summary of the main points made by participants in this workshop.

Reduction Strategies

To reduce prison recidivism, several reduction strategies were suggested which were based along the lines of the family, the prison system, the laws, the inmate, schools, social problems, government and NGO’s and discrimination. These are described in the following.

Family

- Family life of inmates needs to be improved
- Introduce Employee-Family-Assistance programmes
- Family planning needs to reach out to the people, that is, inmates and their children
- Improved parenting skills needed

Prison System

- Need for correctional prison officers as opposed to military-like prison officers
- Better recruitment, that is, the education status required for prison officers should improve. This will ensure better-trained staff
- Shortage of staff problems
- Overcrowding problems
- Basic facilities are needed
• Rules need to be updated

• Better visitation system needed, that is, this will maintain the family life of inmates since they are the ones the inmate has to return to. Also, more visitations for inmates with children.

• Improvement of the pre-release programme

• Focus on the continuance of the existing good efforts

**Laws**

• Laws need to be changed

• Alternatives to imprisonment and family courts should be considered

• Criminal justice system needs to be more equitable, that is, sentencing should correlate with the crime committed

**The Inmate**

• Create a school-like atmosphere in prisons

• Ensure education is incorporated

• Make the prison process more educational, for example, literacy programmes

• Need for extensive programmes, for example, culture programmes as well

• Need to change the behaviour and belief systems of inmates

• Ensure proper etiquette for inmates

• Record those inmates who make positive contributions and compensate them for it, for example, those involved in craft

• Help curb violence through conflict resolution, anger management, self-esteem programmes, etc.

• Provide all the necessary information on services available to assist inmates when they are released
- Introduce an after-care service, for example, someone to give spiritual guidance
- Provide a follow-up system for inmates that provide for the holistic person
- Establish a 10-days employment system that belongs to inmates when they are released

**Schools**

- Ensure good communication at schools, that is, with parents, teachers and students
- Focus on school violence to help curb convict rates

**Social Problems**

- Target drug leaders
- Reduce poverty
- Focus on the depressed areas

**Government and NGO's**

- Government/organizations need to provide funding to assist inmates
- Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Works and NGO's need to assist as well.

**Discrimination**

- Ensure acceptance of ex-cons by educating the population on the activities they undertake at prison
Workshop II

Corrections as a Part of Social and Penal Policies in Trinidad and Tobago: Towards a Reduction in Prison Recidivism and Re-Offending

In this workshop, several issues were discussed as the following indicates.

Criminal Justice Policies

- Re-Integrative Model (Restorative Justice)
- Post-Arrest Diversion - Community policing
- Profiling - Gender, Geographical/Residence
- Pre-Conviction Diversion - Other options may be available such as therapy
- The Use of Community Service or Probation
- Need to reduce the crime rate in order to reduce recidivism

Sentencing

- There are some offences that one does not need to go to court for. You can warn them instead of convicting them, for example, family disputes
- Seek other alternatives to sentencing
- Concurrent sentencing
- Consistency in sentencing
- Training for magistrates and judges in sentencing, for example, law school curriculum

Assistance From External Parties

- Support from other stakeholders needed
- Public Policy - Public correction vs. conviction
- Social policies to deal with families, schools and social environment
- Other social agencies need to look at prevention vs. penal policies
- Restitution vs. state assistance
- Public education for pre-conviction reform

**Laws**

- Review laws
- Magistrates need to be aware of the prison conditions
- Penal policy of re-integration

**Social Problems**

- Illiteracy
- Poverty
- Constructive regimes - academic, health, vocational training, cognitive development, value system, moral reasoning
- Accredited programmes
- Re-settlement programmes - self-esteem, anger management, family ties, jobs, graduation centre
- Payroll system needs to be reviewed
- Earning should be shared between victim and inmate’s family
**Workshop III**

**NGO's and the Private Sector: Problems and Prospects in Reducing Prison Recidivism and Re-Offending in Trinidad and Tobago**

This workshop looked at some problems and possible solutions to them.

**Problem: Drugs**

*Solutions:*

- Send drug addicts to rehabilitation instead of prison
- Prevent the start of drug use by integrating drug education in the school curriculum
- A holistic approach is needed since drugs are linked with sexual offences and HIV
- Identify positive role models
- Remove the profitability of drug trafficking

**Problem: Work Discrimination (i.e. of Ex-Convicts by Businesses)**

*Solutions:*

- Offer tax incentives or economic benefits to private companies who hire ex-convicts
- Offer a more attractive financial package to ex-convicts because of their responsibilities
- Create programmes that train and monitor ex-cons. This will give businessmen some level of guarantee
Problem: Inefficient Services from NGO's

Solutions:

• NGO's need to be more professional so as to attract funding from businessmen
• They need to account for the monies spent

Problem: Social Problems

Solutions:

• In this case, locking up offenders make it worse
• Provide adequate facilities that assess and enhance such individuals

Problem: The Home

Solutions:

• Focus on parenting
• Reduce poverty since the level of income correlates with the level of crime

Other Solutions:

• Focus on religion
• Lack of proper facilities for inmates
• Social equity planning
- Form support groups for inmates being released
- Society's acceptance of reformed inmates

**Plenary Session**

At the end of the workshop sessions, all of the participants from the three sessions reconvened as one group whereby the moderators of each workshop presented a summary of their discussions. This proved to be quite informative as participants benefited from what other groups discussed.

**Participants**

Representatives from key non-governmental organizations, religious bodies, private sector, Government Ministries, prison service, university, etc. participated fully in this important one-day exercise. These included:

**Prison Service**

- *Deputy Commissioner of Prisons*
- *Assistant Commissioners of Prisons*
- *Prison Officers in Charge of the Seven Prisons in this Study*
- *Inspector of Prisons*
- *Chief Welfare Officer*
- *Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service Association*
The University of the West Indies

- Campus Principal
- Director and Staff of the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice
- Member of Crime Advisory Committee to Cabinet-Appointed Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation

Private Sector

- Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Owners and Merchants Association

Religious Bodies

- Roman Catholic
- Anglican
- Hindu
- Baptist
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Jehovah Witness
- Prison Fellow of Trinidad and Tobago

Government

- Ministry of National Security
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education
- Cabinet-Appointed Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation

**Non-Governmental Organizations**

- Vision on Mission
- Men Against Violence Against Women
- ALTA
- Soroptomists International of St. Augustine
- International Institute of Self-Esteem, Health, Peace and Anger
- Rebirth House

**Media**
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF PRISON DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Records of all convicted inmates housed at the six (6) adult convict prisons (Port of Spain Prison, Golden Grove Prison, Maximum Security Prison, Carrera Convict Prison, Tobago Prison and Women’s Prison) in Trinidad and Tobago over the period January 1, 2002 to May 31, 2002 were collected and analyzed.

This analysis included:

1. Convicted inmates who were in the various prisons on January 1, 2002
2. Convicted inmates who were in the various prisons on May 31, 2002
3. Convicted inmates who were sent to and discharged from the various prisons during January 1 – May 31, 2002.

In other words, all convicted inmates who were in the prison system during the stated period were used in this study. This number of inmates totaled 4,449.

The Three Classification Systems For Inmates

At this point, we wish to re-state briefly how inmates are classified in the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago. This will enable a better understanding of the information presented in the following sections.

Firstly, convicted inmates can be classified into three basic categories, that is, prisoner, convict or other. A “prisoner” is an inmate whose crime/offence that
brought him/her to prison had been dealt with by a magistrate of a Magistrate Court. A "convict" is an inmate whose crime/offence that brought him/her to prison had been dealt with by a judge of a High Court. The "other" classification comprises convicted inmates who are in prison and are awaiting appeal, have adjourned case, are in prison at the President’s Pleasure, etc.

Secondly, convicted inmates can be classified as being any of three categories. These are Stars, Specials and Ordinaries. A "Star" is an inmate who is in prison for the first time, a "Special" is an inmate who has been in prison one time before and is in prison for the second time and an "Ordinary" is an inmate who has been in prison at least two or more times before.

A third classification is where the first two above are combined resulting in six categories of convicted inmates. These are: Star Prisoners, Star Convicts, Special Prisoners, Special Convicts, Ordinary Prisoners and Ordinary Convicts. The following is a brief description of each:

**Star Prisoner**
This is an inmate who is in prison for the first time as a result of a sentence by a magistrate.

**Star Convict**
This is an inmate who is in prison for the first time as a result of a sentence by a High Court judge.

**Special Prisoner**
This is an inmate who is in prison for the second time as a result of a sentence by a magistrate.

**Special Convict**
This is an inmate who is in prison for the second time as a result of