

# **No time to quit: Engaging Youth at Risk**

## **Executive Report of the Committee on Young Males and Crime in Trinidad and Tobago**



Car made by a prisoner at Orange Grove Remand Yard from scraps of paper and decorated with coloured pencils

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACTT	Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALTA	Adult Literacy Training Association
CAC	Continuous Assessment Component
CAP	Continuous Assessment Programme
CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CCDP	Collaborative Child Development Programme
CCYD	CARICOM Commission on Youth and Development
CEPEP	Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme
CHDR	Caribbean Human Development Report
CICAD	Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
CIU	Criminal Intelligence Unit
COSTAAT	College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago
CPC	Child Parent Centres
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CSP	Citizen Security Programmes
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECHN	Electronic Child Health Network
ESC	Educational Service Commission
EWMSC	Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex

FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
FPA	Family Planning Association
GAPP	Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programmes
GATE	Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoRTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
GPA	Grade Point Average
HDC	Housing Development Corporation
HDI	Housing Development Index
HYPE	Helping Youth Prepare for Employment
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISER	The Institute of Social and Economic Research
IT	Information Technology
JaM	Jamaat al Muslimeen
LPTA	Local Parents Teachers Association
MIC	Metal Industries Company
MILAT	Military Led Academic Training Programme
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MuST	Multi-Sector Skills Training Programme
MYPART	Ministry Led Youth Programme of Apprenticeship and Re-orientation Training
NACC	National AIDS Coordinating Committee
NAPTA	National Parent Teachers Association
NCPST	National Council for Professional Standards in Teaching
NCSE	National Certificate for Secondary Education
NEDCO	National Enterprise Development Company
NESC	National Energy Skills Centre
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NHS	Non-Hot Spots
NJAC	National Joint Action Committee
NPTA	National Parent Teachers Association
NSC	National Service Scheme
NSO	National Sport Organization
NTA	National Training Agency
NYCTT	National Youth Council of Trinidad and Tobago
NYP	National Youth Policy



OSSD	Ontario Secondary School Diploma
S4D	Sports for Development
SALISES	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies
SEA	Secondary Entrance Assessment
SERVOL	Service Volunteered for All
SIA	Security Intelligence Agency
SOE	State of Emergency
SPORTT	Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago
SSA	Security Services Association
STEP	Sport Training and Enhancement Programme
TEST	Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
TTUTA	Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association
TTPA	Trinidad and Tobago Police Academy
TTPS	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
TVET	Technical- Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USA	United States of America
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	University of the West Indies
VAPA	Visual and Performing Arts
YAPA	Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture
VPA	Violence Prevention Academy
YBM	Young Black Male
YTC	Youth Training Centre
YTEPP	Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The title of this Report, *No Time to Quit: Engaging Youth at Risk*, was inspired by David Rudder's 1996 rendition, "The Madman's Rant", more popularly known as "The Chant of a Madman". The lyrics describe the plight of some "little Trinidad boys" a reference particularly to the young men of African descent who find themselves caught up in this vicious life cycle of desire, destruction and demise.

*The mortuary full with little Trinidad boys  
A bullet start to whine and put an end to their joy  
Now they lying tall for dey Mama to mourn  
Dey Nike gone, dey gold teeth gone  
You see they want dey pocket full with blue, blue silk  
They want dey statue drinking full cream milk  
The little red silk is not dey true friend  
De blue one had two extra nought on the end  
So ah tag on dey toe is now dey ticket to hell  
But look where we reach, well, well, well, well, well, well.  
Ah hear a madman bawl... and he spread out on a wall  
He say, "This is it, this is it, this is it, I've been hit!  
No time to give up brother, no time to quit!"*

This poignant evocation of hopelessness is countered by the hopefulness of the many individuals, organizations, and institutions that recognize and value the contributions that these very youth can make to the development of the society, and which remain determined to help them realize their potential. Though the challenges faced are complex and multidimensional, they are not insurmountable.

*We bright little youths going to waste  
Somebody ding the smile on dey face...  
He say, "This is it, this is it, this is it, I've been hit!  
No time to give up brother, no time to quit!"*  
David Rudder, *The Madman's Rant*, 1996

This report of the Youth at Risk Committee seeks to put in perspective equity vis a vis equal opportunity. It seeks to move beyond the narrow concept of sameness and to embrace the concepts of difference in the multi-cultural, multi-class society of Trinidad and Tobago. The report argues that the young male population that is more at risk of directly being caught in the criminal world of drugs, guns and deadly violent crime are of African descent, especially those located in urban "hotspots" such as Laventille. At the same time, it focuses on the different problems which young Indo-Trinidadian males face in areas of Central Trinidad, their predilection to alcohol and related domestic violence abuse. It also addresses the way in which women and young girls are both drawn into crime or become victims of the effects of male involvement in crime.

The Committee carried out its investigations with individual stakeholders, correctional and training institutions, non-government and government supported organizations. It hosted two National Consultations, one in Trinidad and a second in Tobago; executed a full survey on youth and crime, comparing "hotspots" with other areas and held weekly meetings for a period of eight months. In undertaking this project we joined an ongoing conversation. There are various reports relevant to the topic that date back to the 1990s. We have repeated some of the earlier recommendations that were disregarded.

It became obvious to us that the propensity to crime resulted from certain conditions,

including broken and dysfunctional families, juvenile delinquency, peer rejection, failure or disruptive behaviour at school, gang membership and incarceration. This is matched by the availability of drugs, numerous opportunities for young men

to gravitate to crime as an easy but dangerous way to earn a living, and a marked change in societal values over the last six decades since the promise of independence.



Actors from the Film on Masculinity The Cool Boys 2012 workshop a scene

Photo Courtesy Michael Mooleedhar

The solutions require a commitment to short term actions coupled with sustained long term programmes. They speak to the need for integrated governance, community empowerment, a comprehensive youth development policy and a social contract that espouses poverty eradication, adequate housing, an improved education system, family support, health and wellness and enriching leisure and creative activities. The recommendations address the need for economic equity, differentiated curricula, the importance of basic life skills and the holistic development of the individual. It calls, in particular, for a continuation of the work that was initiated by

the Ministry of Justice that seeks to liberalize the prison system to make it more humane. The Committee presents a comprehensive model of educational reform that features national service and service learning, along with strong parent and community involvement in schooling. Along with the formal system of education, a more imaginative and socially relevant effort is needed. We position the media and those involved in popular culture as partners in this struggle to reclaim the lives of young men. The solutions, therefore, privilege restorative justice and creative approaches at both school and community level.

These solutions need political will at all levels of government. While the study has focused on the male population as the groups most at risk, it does not demarcate all males as violent: some males are victims of violence, and some provide good role models to other males. Stigmatization of one group may result in deepening race, class and gender divisions in the future.

Finally, the Committee places its deliberations and recommendations for development in a concept of human and citizen security, noting that violent crime brings with it a critical cost to society through its loss of human, industrial and social capital and the gradual decay of the quality of human liberties and freedoms that are suffered by all, including those who commit the crimes.



School boys in lively discussion

Photo courtesy Joan Rampersad *Newsday*.



# PART ONE - PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

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## FOREWORD: ANOTHER LOOK INSIDE THE BOOK BAG

*Chair – Selwyn Ryan*

In 1955, as the country stood on the verge of achieving self government and Independence, a number of American anthropologists from Columbia University came together under the leadership of Vera Rubin to conduct a survey on the aspirations and attitudes of secondary school youth in Trinidad and Tobago. The project was titled "Youth's Outlook on the Future". Students in a number of secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago were asked to write autobiographical accounts indicating what they believed were their chances of getting a job, given the cultural complexities of Trinidad and Tobago. Some students were optimistic about their future. Others were more cautious and, in some cases, frankly pessimistic. Most, however, were anxious to succeed. One student of East Indian descent expressed the attitude of many of his co-ethnics when he said that "we wish to be looked upon. I hope the examination would be a further step in my achievement of being someone to be looked upon". An Afro counterpart to our Indo aspirant expressed his views as follows; "Can anyone realize how fervently I desire to succeed in this examination which everyone realises is to be the true test of one's ability. I imagine my whole future life depends upon it and how I pray for that intention".

This was the mood of many young students. Commenting on these expressed wishes, Rubin et al remarks as follows:

*Successful completion of the upper forms opens the avenues to mobility, but it is not yet an "open sesame" available to all. In previous years, less than 3 percent of the enrolment reached the top forms and qualified for taking the examination for*

*a Higher School Certificate. Preoccupation with these decisive examinations is a strong leitmotif that runs through the essays; it is also both the "greatest hope" and the "greatest fear" that students reveal upon direct questioning.*

Dr Eric Williams, a keen student of education in a colonial society amplified the anxieties of the youngsters, telling them that their achievement would determine the fate of the new nation to which they now belonged. As he stated on the eve of Independence in a comment that has become iconic, "each and everyone of you carries the future of the country in your school bags". They also had other roles to play. Williams told them that they must be disciplined, tolerant, and productive. To repeat his injunction "you will have the opportunity [to live and work] in an environment far removed from the conditions experienced by your parents, your grandparents and their grandparents." Williams was anxious that without ethnic exception, they would all grow to be the builders of industries to replace sugar, which had been at once the mainstay and the bane of the Caribbean.

This study has concerned itself largely with the question of whether Williams' young Afro and Indo students realised his hopes and if so, how and why. The committee debated whether the perceived damage to the minds and spirits of young Afro males was irreparable as some have argued. Was Mackandal Daaga correct when he warned that Afro-Trinidadians are in trouble, and that they must "face the facts?" What does facing the facts involve? Should they capitulate or should they fight to be respected and valued

as disciplined, tolerant and productive citizens? This study is in a sense a study of dreams and wishes deferred or foregone. And what of the Indo youth, have they reacted differently and are they, too, in crisis? What factors influence their success or determine their failure?

The papers in this study take the view that young males, particularly young Afro males are

seriously “at risk” and are seriously “in trouble” as Makaandal Daaga suggests; but we argue that the elites and the politicians, Williams included, are largely responsible for outcomes that are by-products of a flawed, class-driven model of development. We accept that reform will be a long and challenging process. However, we strongly assert that retreat is not an option.



Graduating Class at the Kanhai Presbyterian School, Barrackpore, 2010

Photo Courtesy Patricia Mohammed



## 1.2 - COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The research undertaken in this study sought to address a number of questions: first, what social characteristics lead some young males of Trinidad and Tobago, lemming like, to perform at levels considerably lower than expected, given the opportunities available to them? What does this say about the post-independence opportunities for self-actualization, proud nation building, and the goals articulated in the Twenty/Twenty vision for national development? What does increased youth criminality say about the failure of two earlier generations to provide ample role models and institutional supports to guide the current generation?

The Committee also considered the explosion of gangs and the factors which lead them to wage war on each other and adjacent communities of similar ethnic characteristics. Why do they wantonly hurt and even kill each other with seeming impunity, abandon, and amorality? Or, in respect of the drug trade: to what extent is that phenomenon actively fuelling criminal activity in our inner urban centres and their respective diasporas? And, finally, how do the formal and informal structures that comprise our education system serve to either advance or to ameliorate the present emergency?

In sum, our aim has been to explore the principal causes of social dissolution in our cities with an eye to identifying policies that might assist in alleviating some of the crises which we currently face. In pursuit of these goals, we felt it necessary to look first at the genealogy of the problem. In doing so, we acknowledged that the problem had its roots in enslavement and indentureship, and that these systems were pivotal to our understanding of the problems, helping us to determine what might be described in a post-colonial context. However, we chose to focus most, though not all, of our energies on what obtained in the years just before and after political independence.

Our commission from the Cabinet made no reference to the term "Youth at Risk". It referred to a "Team" which was being asked to inquire into the causes of criminality and to propose possible solutions to the challenges. The Team chose to call itself the "Youth at Risk Committee" to make it clear that we would be looking at "at risk" groups in terms of race, age, gender, social class, ethnicity, occupation, and geography. Attention would be given to young males in both urban and rural communities, and those currently residing in correctional institutions.

The term "at risk" required some clarification. The definition of 'at risk' youth is loaded with complexity and some argue that it is a label that may put the individual at even greater risk of failure. The committee spent some time considering/debating who are the youth 'at risk' and 'at risk' of what? It was clear that the term means different things to different demographic groups. In the broadest sense, all social groups are in some way "at risk" even when they seem to be stable, coherent and dynamic. Explicitly or not, formal or informal groups exist for the sake of their continuity/preservation and functional enhancement. Social groups are however always under challenge from competing groups or individuals. The activities of these groups inevitably impact one on the other like pin balls, and as such they are always "at risk", potentially unstable, and forced to defend their "essentiality".

The Committee felt that the current crisis reflected a complex web of historical and social problems that have festered for decades. The problems associated with the spiralling increase in violent crime are numerous and have tended to circumscribe the life chances of youth in depressed communities, youth whose existence includes the experience of hunger, alienation, hopelessness and dire poverty along with poor performance in the academic domain. According to a 2000 World Bank Report, an "at-risk youth" is one who "faces exceptional challenges in the traditional venues of socialization, principally the family, community, school and workplace"

(*Rapid Situational Analysis of Drug Use and Harm Reduction among Young Persons in Tobago, 2008*, p.11). What constitutes “exceptional challenges” therefore remains the telling point.

Our study questioned whether Trinidad and Tobago had a “young *Afro* male” problem or a young poor *male* problem, as some argue. We concluded that while many young Indo males are also at risk, the risk factors vary. The Indo problem is rural and less geographically concentrated. Here, the principal challenges which include domestic violence are rooted in risks such as poverty and unemployment, alcoholism and marijuana consumption. Guns are less frequently used. Indo males also have other pathologies related to parental wealth and their identity in a creolised population. According to one definition (*Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012*) “youth at risk” are “those young people who face environmental, social and family conditions that may hinder their personal development and successful integration into society as productive citizens” (Moser and Van Bronkhurst, 1999).

One of our first tasks was to look at the growth of gangs in the context of the steelband movement. To the extent to which these bands engaged in acts of violence, they might be considered precursors of our contemporary gangs, the main difference being that the steelbandmen waged their “wars” not with guns, but with bottles, sticks, knives and razors. Another contributing factor might be the many conflicts that took place in the interwar years. We also took into consideration the influence of radical political organisations and movements such as the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) which surfaced in the sixties and early seventies in response to the perceptions of black youth that while political Independence had been achieved, they remained economically powerless and culturally deprived<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> These struggles have not been documented in great detail here, since they have already been analysed in several publications including the seminal work by Professor Selwyn Ryan and Dr. Taimoon Stewart, *The Black Power Revolution 1970*, Institute for Social and Economic Research, UWI, St. Augustine, 1995.

### 1.3 - CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE AND PROCESS

Deputy Chair - Indira Rampersad

Between January and July 2012, the Committee met on alternate Wednesdays. Thereafter, extraordinary meetings were convened as required. At the first meeting, the Chair recalled the context in which the Committee was constituted. Prompted by a deep concern over powerful media images of young *Afro* males being arrested during the 2011, State of Emergency, The Prime Minister had asked him to uncover the root causes of youth involvement in crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

As stated earlier, the recommendations of the committee are informed by the experiences of groups in the society in terms of age, gender, social class, ethnicity, religious affiliation, occupation and geography”. The Committee agreed that its task would include an examination of the problem of violence amongst male youth in Trinidad and Tobago, with special reference to gangs; a review of the literature on masculinity and crime, with special focus on Trinidad and Tobago; an account of how the expansion in global travel, advances in information technology, an increase in the flow of goods and services, and the declining influence of religious bodies, coupled with changing ideas of morality, all influence the youthful population; a report on the ways in which different institutions either contribute to or help to alleviate youth violence; and a series of proposals and recommendations for the consideration of policy makers.

The five members of the Committee selected topics for research according to their various areas of expertise and/or interests. The Chair, Professor Selwyn Ryan, had conducted extensive research on gangs and opted to continue this work in progress. The Vice-Chair, Dr. Indira Rampersad, International Relations specialist, chose to explore the transnational, regional and national dimensions of the drug crisis and its impact on crime and domestic violence within both *Afro* and Indo communities in Trinidad and Tobago. Professor Patricia Mohammed,

specialist in Gender and Cultural Studies, focused on the themes of gender and masculinity. Dr. Lennox Bernard and Dr. Marjorie Thorpe examined the challenges related to Education and Training in Trinidad and Tobago.

While the initial mandate was to explore the crisis afflicting young Afro males, the Committee agreed that there were also issues to be addressed within the Indo community. As a consequence, research was undertaken and interviews conducted in Central Trinidad to explore the connection between chutney music, alcohol abuse and domestic violence.

At no time during the course of this study did the members of the Committee seek to avoid even the most contentious issues. Consensus was not always achieved. Nevertheless, the Report represents the collaborative efforts of the five-member team.

#### **1.4 - METHODOLOGY**

The methodology involved collating data already collected by institutions and interest groups on crime and criminality in the country; engaging in public consultations; undertaking a survey to provide empirical data on which new or revised policies could be based; and interviewing more than forty stakeholders nationwide. Information gleaned from these sources provided invaluable insights into the issues and concerns facing the country's youth.

The Report is presented in three parts: PART ONE consists of the Executive Summary and Preliminaries. PART TWO presents the findings and recommendations gleaned from interviews and conversations with stakeholders and representatives of diverse institutions at two national consultations held in Trinidad and Tobago, respectively. The findings of the survey of one thousand persons between the ages of eleven and twenty-nine are also included. PART THREE offers general recommendations and perspectives on implementation.

Most of the studies previously undertaken in Trinidad and Tobago, particularly in respect of the gang problem, have been quantitative i.e. reliant on questions that aggregate individual responses. Discussion groups and stakeholder meetings, however, tend to focus on what is reflected in the qualitative data. Challenges arise when the results of the two exercises – qualitative interviews and quantitative survey findings – either do not reinforce each other, or are in flagrant contradiction, one with the other.

This study does indeed reveal a level of dissonance between what occurs in practice and what emerged in consultations and in the data obtained. By way of example, while school was declared to be a safe and happy place, it was also clear that some students attended school to transact their hidden curricula, including escaping the social and economic pressures of their home environment, or being in a place where they could more easily express their anguish and rage and indulge their fantasies. The Committee's approach, which required the pooling of resources and data with mixed disciplinary expertise, encouraged a great deal of reflectivity, thereby helping the Team to reach consensus in a number of areas. The complexity and interrelatedness of the issues covered, however, may be more readily discerned in the attached **Narrative Portraits: Compendium of Papers**.

#### **1.5 - DEFINITION OF TERMS**

##### **1.5.1 - Youth**

The concept of youth is very recent. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the term was commonly used in European societies. Psychologists theorize that the biological changes marking the onset of puberty are accompanied by emotional and behavioural changes. For sociologists and anthropologists, the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood is influenced by the individual's social experience as a member of a particular generation or group or by individual life events.

The committee agreed that the Report would cover young persons between the ages of 12 to 25, 13 years represented the onset of teenage life and probably puberty, and 25 years the age that is popular for marriage.

### **1.5.2 – Hotspot**

A crime hot spot is generally defined as an area containing dense clusters of criminal incidents. It may extend to an area adjacent to one where criminal activity is geographically concentrated and incidents occur on a frequent or relatively regular basis.

Identification of hotspots helps public safety institutions allocate resources for crime prevention activities. This geographical analysis is usually made based on crime pin maps of reported crime events over a certain period. During the State of Emergency in August 2011, Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, announced a 9am to 5pm curfew in certain hot spot areas which she identified in the City of Port of Spain, the City of San Fernando, the Borough of Arima, the Borough of Chaguanas, the San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation and the Diego Martin Regional Corporation. These areas are listed in Appendix 2. The Citizen Security Programme which is an initiative of the Ministry of National Security has amongst its objectives, the reduction in crime and violence in twenty-two (22) ‘high needs’ pilot communities in Trinidad which may also be deemed hotspots and are listed in Appendix 2.1.

The terms of reference for this study focused particularly on areas of the country that were deemed “hotspots” as defined by the police and based primarily on the incidence of certain crimes, notably homicides and drug trafficking. However, in order to examine whether the conditions that influenced these criminal activities or behaviours were unique to the areas deemed hotspots, it was decided to examine also a sample of non-hot spot areas or areas which would not have been considered “hotspots” based on the methodology used by the police or security forces. Put differently, a comparison of hotspots and non-hotspots enabled one

to identify or isolate the possible factors that predispose youths to engage in what has been defined in this study as risky activities with respect to crime and violence. In this regard, these non hotspots (NHS) included the areas from which 200 persons were sampled, while for the hot spot areas, 800 individuals were sampled. In a sense, the NHS served as a sort of control group although this was not strictly speaking to an experimental type research design or study. The examination of the data from the survey is divided into three major sections which include (i) a description of the sample demographics; (ii) some of the major socio-economic characteristics of both hotspots and non-hotspots and (iii) an examination of the possible role of the variables of race/ethnicity and gender in understanding certain behaviours, values and problems in the hot spot areas under study.

### **1.5.3 - Race and Ethnicity**

In our use of terms that refer to race and ethnicity, the Committee has attempted to combine the vernacular of popular communication with the language of social scientists. While race and ethnicity are sometimes viewed as different sides of the same coin, race is generally used to refer to differences in biological traits or physical attributes. Ethnicity refers to shared cultural practices, perspectives, and distinctions that set apart one group of people from another. Ethnicity tends to be the more “polite” word used in relation to cultural heritage with the distinctive markers being ancestry, a sense of history, language, religion, and forms of dress which are not inherited but learned. Discourses on race, on the other hand, have tended to focus on those biological traits that are deemed to be socially significant, for instance skin colour rather than colour of eyes, where darker skin tones have historically been placed on a lower rung of a social hierarchy. Thus at some level, both discourses on race and ethnicity are socially constituted in each society and across societies. In the context of this study for Trinidad and Tobago, the terms that have been most used and referred to are Black/ Afro to refer to persons of African or African mixed descent and Indian/ Indo to refer to persons of East Indian descent.

#### 1.5.4 - Gender and Crime

The link between masculinity and crime predates this era. Nonetheless, men have conventionally been viewed as the sex more likely to be involved in criminal activities. The fact that, today, many of those engaged in criminal activities are young men, adds an additional and very disturbing element of concern. Some authors have gone so far now as to describe the youthful male population as “the missing generation” (Bailey and Charles, 2008). Thus the population at risk is not only that of the young men. It may be the future of an entire society.

Men in society are expected to be providers, protectors of women, children and the community and to view themselves as strong authority figures. Women, on the other hand, are socialized and expected to be carers and nurturers both in the home and outside of the home. Unlike men, women and girls are allowed to react emotionally to crises and to moments of physical and mental pain. A similar reaction in a man or boy is viewed as soft or, worse yet, effeminate. What this gender role allocation over many centuries has created is a shared understanding of a fairly rigid symbolic gender division of labour that views women as responsible for the domestic sphere and men for activities in the public sphere. Young boys and girls learn this from infancy and discover very soon that if they veer from a set of expected behaviours, roles, occupations and attitudes, they will be ostracised from their peer groupings.

In the Caribbean and in our society of Trinidad and Tobago, there is an additional element that remains doggedly part of our psyches even though many decades separate us from a colonial past and the conditions which operated under periods of African enslavement. In *The Marginalization of the Black Male* (1986), and *Men at Risk* (1991), Errol Miller argues that Afro-Caribbean men are failing to live up to the patriarchal expectations of manhood, failing to adopt the roles of authority figures, providers, parents and protectors in society. Women, on the other hand, are said to be growing more powerful in all these areas at the expense of

men. In respect of the Indo-Caribbean family, Indo-Trinidadian fathers are deemed to have more patriarchal control over their families. Some of these findings were revisited by Professor Barry Chevannes in a publication *Learning to be a Man* (1994). One of the first studies to compare the socialization of Afro and Indo-Caribbean males in order to account for variations in their behaviour, Chevannes contrasted the socialization of boys and girls in Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominica and pointed out that while the subordination of women and domestic violence as control is common to both groups, Indo-Caribbean women were more submissive than Afro-Caribbean women who fought back both verbally and physically. As expected, therefore, patriarchal rule and control was viewed as more effective in Indo-Caribbean households over both women and younger men. Chevannes also noted that in Indo-Caribbean households the institution of marriage and two partnered households were a dominant feature of the family life, while there was a higher incidence of single parent matriarchal households among the Afro-Caribbean community.

What does all of this have to do with gender and crime? Both the popular ideas as well as the statistics confirm that at present more young black males are involved in organized criminal activity with Indo and other males participating in such illegal activities as drug consumption and alcohol abuse. Young women by and large are drawn into illegal criminal activities through their boyfriends or partners and may participate through fear of domestic or physical violence or through their own desire for material comforts for themselves and their families.

Reasons for more intensive male participation in crime have historically been premised on two key ideas, first that families have depended on males as providers and that men are more physically and mentally equipped to deal with fear, tension and the brutality that crime may require. With the development of new technologies of production and access to education and employment, many women have entered fields that were at one

time primarily dominated by men. This has not been accompanied by shifts in education curricula that prepare boys and girls to see that a previously understood strict gender division of labour has broken down of necessity. Society does not change its notions of what culturally constitutes masculinity and femininity in a short period of a few decades. Scholars have argued that young men have inherited a destabilized and disenfranchised masculinity, burdened by the realization that they cannot fulfil the expectations of their masculine role and have turned to crime as a means of fulfilling the demands and expectations of their sex. Thus, the participation of young men in crime is fundamentally still linked to the idea that this group finds itself further marginalized in contemporary society.

While theories of male marginalization and male vulnerabilities to changing gender role expectations are to be taken quite seriously, it is important that we do not make men into recurrent victims nor do we see all men as similarly painted with the brush of criminality. By retaining the idea of an unchanging patriarchy that is accustomed to and only able to function with power over women and over other men, it follows as a critique, that the marginalization thesis also holds both masculinity and femininity as identities that must remain relatively fixed over centuries regardless of changes in technology, enlightened gender consciousness and ideas of equality. This study recognises that there is a current correlation between masculinity and criminality but does not see this as fixed for all time and place in the future of this society.

### **1.5.5 - Human and Citizen Security: A Definition of Development**

Violent and pervasive crime affects countries negatively. It creates more vulnerable economies through the flight of industrial capital and decreased reinvestment into the economy and through the loss of human capital especially of migrating skilled and trained personnel. It involves the state, businesses and household

owners in costly security measures, deploying funds that could be used more effectively and instrumentally in other needy areas of a society. Most distressing is that it leads to a gradual decay in the quality of human life, to an inherent distrustfulness between people, a decline in everyday activities that allow people freedom of space and place. Finally, it impacts on the health status of those who have experienced loss including that of life and limb and has negative psychological effects on both victims and families of perpetrators.

The way a society builds its houses, buildings and gardens, the very architecture of the landscape is itself burdened with the effects of crime. Burglar bars can never lend beauty to a building, while high gates and fences lock people in communities away from each other. Crime therefore retards the development of a people and a society. Those who are involved in criminal activity are themselves victims of the same process as prisons and reform houses are hardly safe houses for redemption. Finally and equally important is the image of the wholesomeness of a society. When violent crime is daily rendered in local and international news, the sense of a society as “dangerous” becomes the common currency of opinion that is shared by local and international populations alike.

The UNDP *Caribbean Human Development Report 2012 (CHDR)* (Harriott et al) subtitled *Human Development with a Shift to Better Citizen Security*, prefaces its focus on Citizen Security with an insightful question that the Youth at Risk Committee has also asked itself.

*...we are confronted by a paradox: Why is it that, despite the democratization process experienced in the region in the last 20 years, citizen security levels, as well as the justice and security institutions in the region, are in crisis?*

We have drawn on the CHDR as it views Human and Citizen Security as a key component in a truly democratized and developed society. It proposes that Caribbean countries need to focus on a model of security based on the human development approach, one that promotes social inclusion and advocates the prevention

of crime and violence alongside effective law enforcement and swift criminal justice. The complementarities of this approach ensure that citizen security and the welfare of people take pre-eminence over the traditional security model which is concerned primarily with the protection of the state.

The Committee has been cognizant of the increasing fear of law-abiding citizens as a result of criminal violence, the impact this

has on current attitudes to the employment of young men looking for jobs, or the rehabilitation possibilities for those who having committed crimes and would like to find legal gainful employment. Thus any attempt to impact on crime must take into account a holistic view of the relationship between crime and development. High rates of violent crime and gender violence may be regarded as the outcome of a wrong approach to development that marginalizes large sections of the population.



Participants at the Youth Consultation National Gender Policy in Tobago 2004

Photo Courtesy Patricia Mohammed

## 1.6 - VISION OF THE COMMITTEE

A review of the literature suggests that youth who experience a sense of hopelessness, who believe that they are oppressed, unfairly treated, and neither belong to or have a stake in broader society, are most likely to be at immediate risk

of involvement in serious crime. After months of interaction with the youth at consultations in Trinidad and Tobago, at stakeholders' meetings, and on visits to correctional institutions, including the Remand Yard at the Golden Grove Prison, we noted a number of recurring tensions and value frames: ambivalent self-regard:

low aspirations, including anger, a sense of dispossession and victimhood; impulsivity and lack of empathy. Some male youth stated that their fathers had been absent from an early age; their mothers had experienced domestic abuse in their presence; a sibling had been murdered in their presence; they had been initiated into a life of crime by a close relative or neighbour; they had been physically and sexually abused regularly by male relatives; they were induced to use alcohol and illegal drugs at an early age. They felt that society looked down on them and pre-judged them based on their place of abode or their low level of academic achievement. They believe that they are oppressed by the system, unfairly treated by the law and have no channels for communicating their plight. Only in the gang do they find solace, recognition and respect.

As the report seeks to put in perspective the debate on equity vis a vis equal opportunity, it asks us to move beyond the narrow concept of sameness and to embrace the concepts of difference and fittedness. It speaks to economic equity, differentiated curricula, the importance of basic life skills and the holistic development of the individual.

The growing influence of Western capitalism has meant that wealth and the things that money can buy are increasingly perceived as conferring merit and social acceptance. In such a situation, there is less reluctance by young people themselves to engage in illegal practices, less interest in striving for excellence; and those who, earlier, may have served as exemplars, find their values discarded, their influence and authority compromised, even negated. A decline in civility is apparent everywhere. But in depressed areas where core social bonds are already weakened by poverty and substandard services, criminal activities -- including the most egregious acts of violence -- become normalized, and society's civilizing influences are rendered negligible. We may begin to address this challenge by reshaping ideas and discourses, especially popular ones that are the hardest to dislodge. Ours is a vision that extends beyond the immediate challenge of curbing youth criminality and establishing a safe society. It encompasses approaches and responses that facilitate our young men's attempts at self-actualization, their realization of an enhanced sense of dignity, self reliance and self-respect.



## PART TWO - FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Part Two of this report comprises the findings of the committee based on our investigations over the past eight months. The findings are summarized under the main themes which emerged in our deliberations. Each set of findings is followed by the recommendations that apply to the specific theme. Detailed analyses under each of these themes may be found in the attached **Narrative Portraits: Compendium of Papers**.

### A - RACE, ETHNICITY AND GENDER AND THE CRIME QUESTION

#### **A 1 - Masculinity and Crime in Trinidad and Tobago**

##### **Findings**

The fundamental reason put forward for a disenfranchised younger masculinity who turn to crime is that men are in general, as a sex, marginalized in society. At the same time, although Caribbean historiography and sociology has unfolded around a meta-narrative of male marginalization and female dominance, this discourse has differed for different ethnic groups; and thus we have competing explanations on the marginalization thesis of the male and dominance of females in the family or society. Various scholars have argued that not all men are marginalized from production, authority, power or influence. There are claims that there is no single definition of masculinity or a homogenous masculinity that fits all men of all ages, ethnic groups or classes. On the one hand contemporary black men are viewed as the product of an undermined masculinity during enslavement, one that continued during the post colonial reclaiming of nationhood and self-governance. Black working class men in particular are perceived as the most vulnerable in society compared to other men, and in comparison with all women. The possibilities for transformation and the fact that many black men are not among the marginal and vulnerable are rarely developed as an alternative discourse that may serve itself as a message to displace a popular view. Instead, the ideas of underperformance and underachievement have proliferated so much that it has become

synonymous with masculinity, particularly black masculinity. The term “underperformance” is popularly interpreted as males not performing to the degree that is expected, or possibly to their full capacity – in comparison to girls who are thought to be outperforming males and exceeding themselves. Yet women are also drawn into other webs of criminality through the drug trade, mostly as couriers/carriers. By and large they are victims of criminal activity and outcomes rather than perpetrators in that many are subjects of domestic abuse, prostitutes or HIV positive. They have histories of sexual and emotional abuse, mental illness and, at the same time, have families for whom they are responsible (Rampersad, 2012). There is a confirmed relationship between violent behaviour and lower educational attainment among boys, that domestic violence within the homes is experienced by females more than males and may again be linked to cycles of poverty leading to early sexual initiation of girls, high HIV rates and high teenage pregnancy rates among girls.

*Youth violence definitely possesses a gender dimension.* The majority of aggressors as well as victims are young men who use violence for protection against real or perceived threats or have been socialized to resolve conflicts and differences through violence. David Plummer and Stephen Geofroy’s article entitled “When Bad is Cool: Violence and Crime as Rites of Passage to Manhood” (2010), focuses primarily on masculinity in Trinidad and Tobago and looks at the range of ethnic groups and classes that comprise the population. They support the finding that peer groups have a primary impact

on the codes of masculinity that many boys aspire to and found that it is this group that plays a central role in policing which masculinities are considered acceptable. Young men are not attracted to education in the current period. The apparent concerns with the “nerdishness” of doing certain subjects, with remaining in the school system and appearing to be disciplined and interested in reading and writing like girls, masks one of the more important reasons why educational attainment is not important to young men. Reddock’s findings suggest that “women get a larger return on their investment in formal education than do men” or as the current economist’s mantra has it, “Women Learn – Men Earn.” Despite women’s higher access to formal and higher education, men overall still earn more than women, however, as many of the jobs they undertake require risks. The promises inherent in the wage gap acts as a further disincentive for males to remain in school as without putting in the years of hard mental labour, they can earn far more at an earlier age. So why endure the drills of the classroom and the censure of one’s peers, particularly when there are few checks and balances on the home front?

In a recently published study on *Race, Ethnicity, Crime and Criminal Justice in the Americas* (2012), Anita Kalunta-Crumpton presents an analysis of race and ethnicity in the perpetration of crime and violence in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The picture emerging for Trinidad is not a happy sight for ethnic marking of categories. A case study on crimes committed by Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian youth provides an understanding of and explanations for acts of crime and violence dominated by a particular ethnic group. Shaped by a colonial past, Trinidad and Tobago developed concentrations of crime and violence within urban centres, primarily among Afro-Trinidadians. The book highlights the rise in gang violence in Trinidad and Tobago as being concentrated in predominantly African communities. Supporting data suggested that 83% of the gangs in Trinidad were African while 13% were East Indian. Increases in violent crimes were also linked to drug trafficking. A 2006 report of the Ministry of National

Security indicated that 65% of the serious crimes in Trinidad were linked to the drug trade. Additionally, data on the race of those arrested for narcotics trafficking identified Afro-Trinidadians as being disproportionately involved in this crime. Between 2008 and 2009 half of the persons arrested for narcotics trafficking were of African descent. Studies on gang crime also revealed that African youth and those belonging to the race labelled ‘other’ were most likely current gang members, followed by East Indians. Afro-Trinidadians were also found to be more likely to report carrying a gun than East Indians. Studies of juvenile homes reveal that more Afro-Trinidadian youth are living in juvenile homes than East Indian youth. Of all convicted inmates, at all six prisons in Trinidad in 2007, 61% were African while 26% were East Indian. The data further revealed that 36% Afro-Trinidadian inmates were incarcerated for narcotics related offences, compared to 33% East Indians. Conversely, Afro-Trinidadians were identified as victims of shootings at a disproportionate rate based on police data.

An undated but recent study carried out on the Youth Training Centres of Trinidad and Tobago under the auspices of the National Drug Council and the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service on the *Detection and Prevalence of Substance Abuse and Related Issues among Juvenile Offenders at three juvenile centres* – the Youth Training Centre (YTC), St Michael’s Home for Boys and St Jude’s Home for Girls, provided the following statistics by gender and ethnicity on its inmates. The total number of inmates at the YTC was 201, at St Michael’s Home for Boys, 50 and at St Jude’s Home for Girls, 49. Of the total population in the facilities, 251 or 83.7% were males and 49 or 16.3 % were females. While the age grouping spanned under 14 to 19 years, 63% of the population were between 14 and 17 years of age. A larger proportion of East Indians (81%) tended to be over 15 yrs old compared to Africans (68%) and those of “other origins” (71%). However, proportion-wise there were notably more Africans (7%) under 14 yrs old compared to both East Indians and those of “other origins”.

The report noted that: "Of this group, sixty-one percent (about six in every ten) of respondents in the study were of African descent and 12% were of East Indian descent. A further 22% were classified as "other origins". The vast majority of the population at each institution was of African descent - more than half (58%) the population at the YTC, eight of ten (88.9%) at St Michael's Home for Boys and six often (63%) at St Jude's Home for Girls. East Indians made up 15% and 16% of the population at the YTC and St Jude's respectively and a very small proportion at St Michael's Home for Boys (2%)". Results of the study confirmed perceptions about ethnicity. It was found that boys and girls of African descent were significantly more likely to be sent to these institutions compared to boys and girls of East Indian or "other origins".

The Summary of the *Drug Abuse Monitoring Project Among Inmates from all Prisons in Trinidad and Tobago* supports these findings: "A typical male inmate was a single person of African origin, about 34 yrs old working in the service industry or as a labourer, completed high school or a lower level of education; that all age groups were more or less equally distributed among the ethnic groups; that about twice as many East Indians compared to those of African and mixed origin had no formal schooling; that half of all respondents of African origin, 56% of East Indian and 49% of those of mixed race were in full-time employment before incarceration; that a little more than half of those offenders of African origin were on remand and that convicted offenders were more likely to be East Indians (51.3%)".

There is obvious justification for the focus on young black males as a group particularly at risk, but the mandate with which the committee is charged i.e *To Identify the at-risk groups in the society in terms of age, gender, social class, ethnicity, occupation and geography* also needs to ensure that other at risk groups, young men of other ethnic groups, and the young women who are by definition caught in this growing spiral, young women are considered for holistic solutions. The following data confirms the need to scrutinize the condition of other populations

in this age group, including non-nationals who are excluded in the definition of citizen but who live and work in the territory. Survey data from the National Drug Council *Youth Training Centres of Trinidad and Tobago and the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service on the Detection and Prevalence of Substance Abuse and Related Issues among Juvenile Offenders* reveals that substance use and abuse affects all youth. While there appeared to be no current marijuana use or abuse reported for girls, one-third of males at the YTC and one quarter at St Michael's reported marijuana use in the month prior to the survey. Current cigarette use was slightly higher among East Indians (60%) compared to Africans (58%) and those of "other origins" (55%). However, current alcohol use was slightly higher among Africans (11%) compared to the others. In terms of current marijuana use, it was slightly higher among those of "other origins" (27%) compared to Africans (24%) and East Indians (22%).

While young African males are a primary category at risk, the issues pertaining to criminal or potentially harmful involvement of Indo-Trinidadian males remain on the agenda of masculinity and crime. In an attempt to explain the Indian male involvement, Selwyn Ryan suggests that in the past, Hindu family networks helped to attenuate the problems faced by the pathologies of indenture. But that family resource is now under more economic and social stress than was traditionally the case. He noted that there is also said to be an unacceptably high incidence of spousal abuse.

A successful Hindu businessman may sponsor a *puja*, it is said, but beyond that, it is "everyman for himself". Gangs are also beginning to appear in the schools and "warm spots" located in areas of central Trinidad which have large Indian populations. It is further argued that unlike what obtains in many Christian and Muslim communities, there are few institutions- temples and mosques- which have rehabilitation as their core mission and which encourage miscreants to modify their behavior. The "crabs in the barrel" syndrome is also said to be much in evidence. Instead of cooperating to achieve certain goals, Indians,

so it is said, pull each other down and have difficulty working together, since success is taken to indicate that those remaining behind are underachievers. The successful are pulled back into the barrel.

Young Indian males are also patterning their behavior on Afro-youth and are themselves mimicking the music and other cultural behaviors imported from Jamaica, Black America and urban Trinidad. The Indian family however remains more resilient and risk resistant than its Afro-Trinidadian counterpart and has so far been better able to address the issues that afflict the creole family. The “evidence”, such as it is, points to the conclusion that the Indian family, extended and nuclear, is still viable and support their young members, while the single parent is still prevalent in “Hot Spot” type communities where Afro-Trinidadians predominate.

The statistics indicate that all groups and genders face challenges, even if some are more represented than others and that while we focus on masculinity and crime, the recommendations must embrace the wider catchment of a youthful population.

### **Recommendations – Masculinity and Crime**

1. We recommend the development of vibrant community-driven male organizations which are co-ordinated through a self selected National leadership that promotes empowerment for men and boys and takes account of differences in community needs.
2. We recommend the strengthening of male action initiatives that are already in place eg Men Touring through the Division of Gender Affairs, and the quantitative and qualitative assessment of achievements of such initiatives annually to ensure that they are responding to the concerns of young at risk male populations.
4. We recommend a series of major public debates on national television, including telephone call-ins so that the concerns of young males and crime is openly aired and discussed with officials and the general population. We further recommend that male discussants are the majority resource

persons in these discussions. This will serve to both sensitize and educate the public and parents and perhaps engage the society itself as a positive change agent.

### **A-2 - Are Young men of African Descent more at risk than those of Indian Descent?**

#### **Findings**

Little Black Boys were not always the problem which they have recently become. Perhaps they suffered in silence. Either that or the national consciousness became sharper around the turn of the millennium. In response to this sharpened consciousness, a suite of programmes were put in place by competing political parties, since both parties recognized that electoral victory was largely determined by how well each responded to the problems which had become visible to all. Some of the programmes proposed focused on reforming the schools which had become “armed” camps, while others involved the setting up of “alternative” training schemes to encourage young drop-outs to complete their schooling by taking remedial programmes, all with the aim of enhancing their marketability and their knowledge of life enhancing skills.

If there is an “at risk” element, the paradoxical causes have to do with increasing family wealth and the relaxation of effort that is associated with this wealth. The young are not as motivated as were their parents, and more likely to be seduced by risky life styles, conspicuous and instant consumption, substance abuse (ganja, powdered cocaine, alcohol, and heavy partying).

A great deal of attention has been given to the factors which nourish and facilitate gang activity in Laventille and Morvant. The employment and gang crisis in the Beetham Gardens and Sea Lots, however, also demand attention since the areas are “home” for many young black males and contribute significantly to the crime statistics which concern us. At the time of this study, residents of Beetham were insisting amidst smoke from burning tyres that

they wanted jobs and community facilities and not hand outs or jails.

Prison data help to throw further light on the issue of ethnicity and crime. We note that while there are many more Afro-Trinis in the prison population, there is a growing Indian presence there as well. In 2011, twenty-eight (28) percent of the prison population were Indian. At the Golden Grove remand yard, there were 493 persons waiting to have their matters determined. Two hundred and sixty-six (266) were African, 145 were mixed, and 82 were Indian. The percentages of Indians in relation to Africans might well have been significantly different were it not for the fact that Indians find it easier to access bail since they command more movable wealth than do Afro-Trinis. Of the convicted "lads" at YTC, 19 were African, 11 were mixed, and 6 were Indians. About 10 percent of the inmates at St Michael's Boys Home at the time of our visit on March 27, 2012, were Indian. Most were committed for drug offenses. Some were from homes that were well off.

Indians have consistently complained that they were victims of material and cultural marginalization. It was also claimed that because they were located mainly in the centre and south of the island, Indo Trinidadian youth was not able to access the newly established welfare and other remedial programmes that were put in place in the eighties as readily as would those who lived in the urban areas of the north. The fact, however, is that similar complaints were made in respect of Laventille, Morvant, Beetham and Sea Lots which also had to bear the economic and social costs associated with downsizing the Port Authority, the Telephone Company and the migration of industries which once provided jobs for the people of those areas. The data are indeed varied, and the most that one can say is that while there are indeed many clusters of economically poor and dispossessed Indian youth in parts of the country, especially in the deep rural areas of central and south Trinidad, there are few, if any, that resemble what obtains in Laventille and Sea Lots where poverty is generic, widespread, and concentrated. One can of course point to recently developed squatter

settlements like "Bangladesh," and to areas which have had to bear the burdens associated with the closure of the sugar cane industry at Caroni Limited which led to considerable job loss, both in the factory and in industries or enterprises which catered to the industry.

Indira Rampersad<sup>2</sup> has argued that the "notion that young black males alone constitute at risk youths is an erroneous one. The tendency to focus primarily on young Black males has ignored the dynamics in other ethnic communities, particularly the Indian community in central Trinidad". Research on Edinburgh 500, a community created in Central Trinidad some 15 years ago, revealed that it was occupied mainly by people who came from outside the area. These residents were now claiming "liming" space in the streets and are committing petty crimes and displaying aggressive behaviour in the community.

This concern about people from 'outside' coming into Central to settle and commit crimes was supported by a senior police officer. The officer further added that Edinburgh has one gang while the housing scheme in Pt. Lisas Gardens has five rival gangs. In all cases, the ethnicity of the gang members is primarily Afro-Trinidadians while ninety percent of the victims are of non-African descent<sup>3</sup>. He also explained that those coming from outside are involved in the use and sale of drugs - mainly marijuana and cocaine - and are the same persons involved in the home break-ins. In addition, he noted that one bar, ironically nestled between the Chaguanas Police Station and the Court was patronized mainly by Afro-Trinidadians from Enterprise who, over time, have been charged with over thirty offences including firearms, murder, violence and robberies.

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<sup>2</sup> Indira Rampersad "The Indian Dilemma" Compendium of Papers on Youth at Risk, 2012

<sup>3</sup> Interview with police officer.

The Senior Superintendent continued that the problem in Central including Felicity is not one of drugs but rather one of alcohol abuse particularly amongst the Indian community. He noted that several Hindus have gravitated towards other religions like Pentecostal, Church of the Nazarene and Jehovah Witness so that Felicity is now an area comprised of Hindu Temples, Mosques and churches of various Christian denominations. He emphasized, however, that alcohol consumption is most prevalent amongst the Hindu community in Felicity as it is in the rest of Central. "Everyone is consuming alcohol", he affirmed. "One may even argue that women are consuming more than men". The superintendent observed that the bars and pubs are frequented by more women than men as "every man has a few women around him in these drinking places". The lower classes tend to frequent the less luxurious "rum shops" but the more affluent can be found in the posh pubs which have sprouted up throughout Central in recent times.

The crisis amongst East Indian then, is generally one of alcohol abuse and domestic violence. This is compounded by a burgeoning middle-class spawned by the education achieved by the generation of parents of today's youths. The parents of the current generation of Indo-Trinidadian youth sacrificed tremendously to ensure that their children do not suffer the hardships they did when they were growing up. Now, qualified professionals such as lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs and teachers, tend to have just two or three children, in contrast to their parents who generally had half a dozen or more. They endow their children lavishly with every material comfort and luxury including cars, computers, cell phones, iPads and even apartments. Though some of these youths do well in school and even attend university, they lack the sense of values that accompanies hard work and sacrifice. Those employed have all their salaries to themselves which they use as spending money. As such, they frequently operate in party mode, heavily involved in alcohol and drug consumption. This negates the view that involvement in drug activity is a feature of poverty or lack of employment

opportunities. Indeed, it is only the more affluent youths who can regularly afford to consume cocaine powder.

Rampersad's research supports the notion that the problems being experienced by the two ethnic communities differ and that perhaps we do not need to approach the problem as an either/or but as two different kinds of problems which require different cultural and economic strategies. While we can argue that Indian males are perceived as being less at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity. In addition, the two parent patriarchal Indian family, challenged and stressed as it is, is still the dominant archetype, and is unable to provide anchorage and support for sons who are economically and socially in danger.

With regard to young black males, Ryan<sup>4</sup> has noted that there has been much debate as to who or what is responsible for some of the economic, social and cultural problems being experienced by the black community, whether the problems have been accurately diagnosed, whether the decline is irreparable, and if not, what was to be done or could be done by the community as a whole and black youth in particular. Many blame slavery for some of the ongoing problems of male marginalization. Some felt that slavery was abolished 174 years ago, and should be relegated to the archives of history. Others argue that other individuals and communities had survived similar experiences and had moved on, and that it was time for blacks to stop blaming others and projecting themselves as victims to whom reparation is owed. Shelby Steele, an Afro-American, drawing on the experience of blacks in the United States, has argued in that vein that blacks are their own worse enemies, and that racial victimization is not our real problem.

If conditions for most of us have worsened as racism has receded, then much of the problem must be of our own making. To admit this fully would cause us to lose the innocence that we

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<sup>3</sup> Selwyn Ryan The "Passing of Afro-Hegemony" *Compendium of Papers on Youth at Risk*, 2012.

derive from our victimization. And it would jeopardise the entitlement we've always had to challenge society. We are in the odd and self-defeating position in which taking responsibility for bettering ourselves feels like a surrender to white power....So we have a hidden investment in victimization and poverty. These distressing conditions have been the source of our only real power, and there is an unconscious sort of gravitation towards them...About 70 per cent of the black students at my university drop out before graduation- a flight from opportunity that racism cannot explain. (Shelby Steele, 1990 *The Content of Our Character*.)

The community of Laventille features prominently in the pages of this report and we thus need to say more about it in this Executive Report. The conventional view is that Laventille is the deadliest place in the country, its "Killing Fields". However, only 10 to 20 per cent of Laventille constitutes a hard core problem. The other 80 per cent is stable and relatively crime-free "except when war breaks out." There are indeed many "success villages" in Laventille. There are also many young persons of both sexes and age groups who perform acceptably in school, notwithstanding the fact that they live under challenging circumstances. We note however, that a majority of our sample - 59 per cent - would move out of Laventille if they had an opportunity to do so. Laventille is certainly not beyond redemption, despite the many past efforts that were made for effective transformation. The "real" Laventille is however different from the stereotyped or mythical version. Laventille consists of several communities which vary in their physical and social endowment.

The Minister of National Security estimated that 68 percent of the murders that took place, occurred in Laventille, Trinidad and Tobago July - August 2012. These figures were challenged by PNM spokesmen who claim that they were manufactured to justify repressive policies that were being planned by the security authorities. This has been denied. Whatever the facts, the data suggest that Laventille has to be viewed as the "chevaux de bataille" of the city and treated with circumspection. The Minister of National

Security has vowed to confront and take out the "bandits" if necessary. As he declared "I am here to clean up Laventille. You have two choices. Let me tell you what they are. Put down your guns and re-enter society or keep it and there will be a fight to the finish. And my law enforcement will not lose that fight. We are here already and we are not leaving Laventille until all is cleared up. We know how and where it will end. I will get rid of all of you, OK?" (*Express*, September 14, 2012).

Another dimension of the "Crime Plan" was the rehabilitation of the housing stock of Laventille. As the Minister announced, "I will pay you for your houses. I want to open Laventille. I am coming to build roads, so I need the roads. You have too many tracks and paths where bad boys hide to trouble you. So I will buy your houses. You will have to move out to some other places to start a new life and Laventille will be cleaned up and be peaceful. Keep your gun and we will have a war. We taking no captives." There are others who worry about a *mano dura* approach. The Defenders of Laventille argue that it is the "poorest of the poor" a "poor spot" and not a "hot spot". Only parts of it are challenged and these give the community a bad name. The media also generate moral panic. The core problem is illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, a dearth of social capital and an absence of political will on the part of all governments.

But these are not the only causes of Laventille's predicament. It should be recalled that Port of Spain has had slum removal exercises before. The problem with slums is that they tend to grow back as we have seen the world over, whether those outgrowths are in the tropics or in the inner cities of the northern metropolises. Those who succeed, eventually secede, leaving their garbage and broken windows behind. There are few economic or human poles to pull the weak willed along. There are few mentors, few successes, who tell them directly or indirectly, "Yes You Can". The cumulative problems, the social overload which they have to carry each night as they compete for space in crowded yards or cots to sleep,

sometimes in shifts, require heavy lifting. Loud noises, children's voices, and music keep many awake or make it difficult to do homework, providing that a literate parent is there to assist. Breakfast is limited, when available at home or at school, and drinking water may or may not be accessible. What they see each morning are their same old associates who have dropped out from school or training institution, who are hustling to get a little "end" or a "ten days" or something which the gang leader has organized. A good job is hard to find. It is harder if you come from Laventille. Joblessness becomes a way of life.

The problem is that Laventille and its diaspora is now more a matter of class than one of race. Race is not an unerasable birth or tattoo mark as it is in the USA. Neighbourhoods do not become contaminated and change character when a Black or Indian person moves in as occurs in the USA. That migrant is swallowed by the newcomer and thereby hangs a tale. The middle class migrants who against all odds have become certified, change their addresses and take flight to avoid stigma. A recent study of population movement in East Port of Spain shows a sharp decline of population in the order of 32 per cent. In Laventille itself, the negative change was 48.9 per cent; in Beetham and Sea Lots, 35 per cent, East Port of Spain, 31 per cent, Success Village, 11 per cent and Down Town, 36 per cent<sup>5</sup>.

The problem thus becomes a recurrent one. The people who can help to raise standards and inject social capital and present the young with alternatives to that of the gang leaders, leave whenever they can. The poverty trap is thus hard to avoid.

Prime Minister Patrick Manning is often blamed for the loss of Afro-hegemony in Trinidad and Tobago.

The fact of the matter, however, is that most of what is generally said to be indicative of the

"decline" and loss of mandate became evident long before former Prime Minister Patrick Manning came to power in 1991. The thrusting for a proportionate share of political and cultural power was very much a part of what took place in the nineteen seventies (1970's). The Black Power Movement aroused counterpart demands for Indian power and identity by Indian cultural nationalists. Further evidence of what was taking place became manifest when one examined the performance of students in the Common Entrance Examination and the secondary schools, particularly young black males who were mainly to be found in certain types of institutions owned by denominational bodies (Ryan, La Guerre, Jules 1991). Little black males and females who were attending comprehensive state owned schools invariably did less well than those attending the so called "prestige schools" run by the denominational bodies (those owned by the Catholics, the Presbyterians, the Muslims and the Hindus). Results of the CAPE examinations (2011, for example,) indicated that 62 per cent of the students who won scholarships had Indian surnames while the others collectively had Christian surnames.

The political, economic and social factors identified in our study point to an inescapable conclusion, viz, that Afro-hegemony is nearing an end, fifty years after independence was won. This diagnosis has been proclaimed before by black intellectuals like Courtenay Bartholomew, Selwyn Cudjoe, LeRoy Clarke, Makandal Daaga and many others who prefer to whisper within the tribe rather than lament publicly. It was possible to disguise the reality or conceal it because Afrocentric parties held power and Afro bureaucrats were the beneficiary of great patronage. Now that that is no longer the case, what becomes clear when the lights are lit, is that the Emperor now has nothing standing beneath his clothes. Even if an Afro-based party were to regain power through the ballot box, the reality will not change much. The growth and structure of the economy has been changing inexorably and impersonally. The balance of power is there for all to see. Commercial real estate and urban and conurban

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<sup>5</sup>Figures calculated from Census data and supplied by Dr. Roy McRee, Department of Behavioural Sciences, UWI, St. Augustine.



economic power generally are firmly in Indian and Syrian hands; bureaucratic power has also become entrenched or is close to becoming so. The continued dominance of the two major conglomerates and the growth in importance of the social media notwithstanding, control of the electronic media have also passed into other hands. The media are no longer the rampart of creolism it once was when the last study in 1995. The gains that have been made and which continue to be made in education and the elite professions generally, medicine, law, accounting, engineering, computer science etc are unassailably in the hands of citizens of Indian origin. In sum, if one does an audit of what gains have been made and are in the process of being reproduced, what the Afros have lost and what is not being replaced, what one stares at is a yawning, zero-sum chasm. Only in the area of popular culture, music and sport is there any resistance given, and as we will see below, much of that is in Jamaican and American hands and has dysfunctional and negative consequences.

While there are obvious reasons for investigating why different groups by race, class and gender resort more to criminal activity, the Committee's mandate must extend beyond the current assumptions which have misguided the multi-cultural society of Trinidad and Tobago since the early 20th century.

**Recommendations: Are Young men of African Descent more at risk than those of Indian Descent**

1. Given the perception of Indian males that many of them are poor and economically marginalized, programs similar to that being offered by the state in Laventille and other 'hotspots' should also be offered to areas like Bangladesh and pockets in Central Trinidad.
2. A specific policy should be designed for job creation for those who suffered job loss with the closure of Caroni 1975 Ltd. This could include an employment agency specifically geared toward this group.
3. A counselling centre with trained psychologists/psychiatrists should be

established in Central Trinidad to facilitate traumatized former employees of Caroni 1975 Ltd.

4. Consideration of squatter regularization or an alternative housing development scheme for residents in squatter areas like Bangladesh. There is an urgent need to hasten squatter regularization including alternative housing development schemes for residents in squatter communities including newly created ones.
5. There should be parental guidance via state-sponsored centres or paid community leaders (of the temples, mosques or churches), for middle-class parents who indulge their children with luxurious material comforts. This, as an attempt to inculcate the need for them to impart the values of hard work and sacrifice to their children.
6. We endorse the comment of the East Port of Spain Heritage Association that if the bulk of the gun shots come out of Laventille, which it did not doubt, it behoves the Minister to go after those who imported the guns and the illicit drugs which come into Laventille as well as the "big ones" who import these commodities into the country. As they argue, "if these measures cannot drastically decrease the importation and distribution of drugs and guns into our country, we cannot stop "the guns being fired from Laventille. As the Heritage Association also asserts, "what Laventille and the rest of East Port of Spain needs is a programme which would generate jobs and begin to restore needed social and fiscal capital. Long-term joblessness ultimately leads to permanent joblessness and a culture of poverty. The initiation of programmes which generate jobs and provide other community pillars could well serve to change the ecology of the townships. That change of environment may serve to change the dynamics of the space and help reconnect the ghetto to the mainstream.
7. We endorse the comments of the East Port of Spain Heritage Association that the Ministry of National Security should interdict those who import guns and illicit drugs into Laventille and the rest of East Port of Spain.

8. We endorse the position of the East Heritage Association that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago should initiate programmes that generate sustainable jobs and provide social services that could well serve to change the ecology of the townships. That change of environment may serve to change the dynamics of the space and help reconnect the ghetto to the mainstream.
9. The response to this comes mainly from persons who believe that Port of Spain's cultural contribution to Trinidad is unique, and that it is being undervalued. Greater Laventille, in this perspective, has made a distinctive contribution to the national culture of Trinidad and Tobago and must be

rehabilitated and helped to rise again as has happened to old cities like Harlem, Bahia, Birmingham, Baltimore and parts of New York. There are, however, other compelling reasons to resuscitate East Port of Spain, and it has to do with the strategic location of Laventille. Laventille, one is warned, is like a "dagger" pointed at the "soft underbelly" of the capital city, and it would be irresponsible and negligent for those responsible for strategic planning to ignore the possibility that Laventille could in time be the weak link in the urban chain. One thus has to do whatever is necessary to "silence the guns" of Dorata Street, Laventille, Beverly Hills, and John John amongst others.

## B - THE DYNAMICS OF GANG BEHAVIOUR AND THE DRUG TRADE



Effort at Reconciliation, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Port of Spain, 2002

(Courtesy Express Newspapers Limited)

### B-2 - The Dynamics of Gang Behaviour

#### Findings

Why do people join gangs? Do they do so for money, fellowship or just because they have nothing better to do? Figures provided by Katz and Fox in the Trinidad Youth Survey in 2007 indicate that some 15.6 percent of those who join a gang did so without perceived coercion. They were either “born” into the gang or joined as a matter of course. Other reasons for becoming a member was “beaten up” (6.7 percent) to commit a crime, (5.9 percent) “get sex” (5.5 percent) to kill a rival or someone (5.5 percent) or some other (17.7 percent).

Not all gangs have formal structures. Most Trinidad gangs had little formal structure. Only 64 percent had a name, 62 percent a turf, 42.6 percent had colours or insignia, 49 percent had a leader, 48 percent had rules, and prescribed punishments for breaking rules. Gangs seem to form less for criminal activity than for friendship. Less than 50 percent – (44) joined for friendship, 22.2 percent for protection, and 7.1 percent because their parents or siblings were in it. Only 12.7 percent said they joined to make money.

In terms of activities undertaken for financial gain, it would seem that many were not involved

in money earning activities. Of those who did, 37 percent gave more to the gang, 31 percent earned money from drug sales, 10 percent from kidnapping and 30 percent from other crimes. Gang membership, however, clearly leads to delinquent behavior and criminality. Gang membership or association is positively correlated with marijuana use (32.6 percent) and heavy alcohol use (89 percent). About 38 percent reported suspension from school in the past 12 months, while about 17 percent said drugs, 11 percent stole a vehicle, and 27 percent a gun. Fifty-nine (59 plus percent) reported attacking someone with intent to harm them, while twenty-three (23 percent) reported that they had taken a gun to school.

Turning to gang involvement, the researchers found that Afro-Trini students were more likely to belong to one (28 percent), followed by 27 percent for Indians, 30 percent for douglas. These differences were not as significant as we had assumed. Forty-seven percent of Afro-Trinis said that guns were available to them, compared to 29 percent of Indo-Trinis, 41 percent of "others," and 47 percent from douglas. In terms of drugs, 50 percent of the Afros and douglas said that drugs were available to them if they wished, compared to 32 percent of the Indo-Trinidadians. Availability is in part determined by where one lives and whether one neighbourhood or community made it easy or difficult to purchase drugs. Afro-Trinidadians were more likely to be living in neighbourhoods in which it was easier to purchase drugs – 47.8 percent compared to 47 percent for douglas, 44 percent for others and 32.4 percent for Indo-Trinis.

## **Recommendations – The Dynamics of Gang Behaviour**

1. We endorse plans identified in 2005 to regenerate East Port of Spain, and make it the "core" of the "hot spot" landscape. As we have indicated, there already exist strategic plans to operate those projects if funds are forthcoming as we trust they will. We are aware that questions have been asked in the past as to why should Laventille be singled out for special and exceptional treatment. In the view of critics, the constituency currently contributes little more than has other constituencies and should be treated as an equal and not a special unit. Its contribution to the country's cultural heritage is noted, but the counter claim is that with the exception of the steel band, the contribution has not been exceptional. Additionally, it is argued that Laventille has helped to shape the very values that the nation does not want to celebrate or promote – the entitlement syndrome, the "laziness", the irresponsibility, the ferality. In this view, Laventille constitutes a convenient myth which is employed to hijack and extract a disproportionate share of resources from the wider community. It is, however, a wounded community, a society that is dying and which should not be allowed to die a natural death. The response to this is that the cultural contribution is unique and is being deliberately undervalued. Greater Laventille has made a unique contribution to the national culture of Trinidad and Tobago and should be rehabilitated and helped to rise again as has happened in old cities like Harlem, Bahia, Birmingham, Baltimore and parts of New York.

## B-2 - The Drug Crisis and Crime



Cocaine stash, Point Lisas Port,

Source Trinidad Express September 2011

### Findings

The drug crisis is three-fold and includes transnational, regional and national dynamics. This study examines these three dimensions and explores the connections to crime.

There is a high global consumption of illicit drugs and an increasing consumption of cannabis and synthetic and non-medical prescriptive drugs even though the statistics reveal stable or declining use of cocaine and heroin globally. However, other contentions are that cocaine consumption has declined in the U.S. but increased in Europe.

Globalization has spawned a lucrative criminal industry which is fuelled by the drug trade. This in turn poses a serious threat to global stability and security as the operations of transnational drug networks are enhanced as drug production are no longer the specialization of a few countries.

Regionally, Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, and Haiti, located along major cocaine transit routes, reflect increasing consumption of cocaine. In Central America, the operations are controlled by powerful Transnational Crime Organizations (TCOs) which provide an alternative governance space for places not under government control. Central America has replaced South America and Mexico as the new “superhighway” providing the many transit routes for drugs entering the United States.

Amongst the reasons espoused to explain Latin America’s critical role in the drug-trafficking market are its geographical location; its capacity to grow coca; its proximity to the United States; the lack of viable opportunities for farmers and youths which fosters poverty, inequality and unemployment; weak institutions such as police and prisons; insurgent activities; geographical impediments to interdiction; uneven political support for counter drug

efforts and the high level of sophistication of some groups possessing extensive paramilitary and counterinsurgency techniques.

Thirty percent of drugs entering the U.S. is shipped via the Caribbean. The U.S. has identified four countries of critical concern, namely the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica. It has responded with the creation of the Caribbean-U.S. Security Cooperation Dialogue which created the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). The critical link between drugs and crime in the Caribbean is a major cause of concern especially with murder rates standing at 30 per 100,000 annually. The drug trade spawns “guns for hire” and contract murder industries thereby perpetrating violent fire-arms related crimes.

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs asserts that drug-trafficking has increased in the Caribbean. This has been refuted by the 2007 UNODC/World Bank Report which insists that there may be a decrease in the flow of drugs in the region. The alleged decline is attributable to the contention that Mexican drug cartels have now replaced Columbian groups.

From all indications, the Caribbean will continue to be a major transshipment point for drugs. Strong historical, linguistic, financial, commercial and diaspora ties continue to bind the United States with the Caribbean. This is buttressed by regular flights to North America and Europe and continuing remittances to the region, particularly from the United States. However, the region is extremely diverse and analyzing specific country cases may prove more useful for future research.

Trinidad and Tobago’s geo-strategic location presents it as an ideal transshipment point for drugs supplied by South America and demanded by Europe and the United States. The main routes are via air through courier ingestion, secret luggage compartments, parcel delivery services, loose cargo shipping services, false bottom suitcases and commercial aircraft. Pirogues, pleasure boats and loose cargo vessels are employed for sea transportation. The main

drugs trafficked from South America to the Caribbean are cocaine and marijuana and smaller quantities of heroin. The island’s domestic drug production and illegal drug use concentrate on marijuana. Contraband prescription drugs are also becoming increasingly available. In recent times, notable seizures of cocaine and marijuana have been made.

The nexus between drugs and crime have become an issue of major concern and have been confirmed by several government officials over time. This includes former Attorney General, Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, current Prime Minister, Kamla Persad Bissessar, during the 2011 State of Emergency and former Minister of National Security, John Sandy. The critical issue is the involvement of youths in gangs who use firearms to commit drug-related crimes. The drug trade has spawned lucrative “guns for hire” and contract murder industries as couriers, dealers and drug barons seek to protect their turf and the traded contraband. Firearms are used to attract new recruits into the distribution process by empowering them with weapons and maintaining discipline and for assassinating enemies and informers who could be ordinary citizens, competitors, defectors or state officials, including members of the police and armed forces.

One school of thought is that the main imperative for youth involvement in gang activity is economic. The most vulnerable are young men just out of prison with low employment prospects. When approached with a quota of drugs and the necessary weapons to protect their turf, they are hardly left with a choice for the option is continued hardship. The lucrative profits from the sale of narcotics are very attractive and irresistible even with the knowledge of the danger involved. The “hot spot” communities like Laventille from which they originate and operate bear an uncanny resemblance to other like areas across the hemisphere.

Non-economic factors like culture also drive these youths to drug and gang activities. The possession of firearms fosters a sense of

empowerment and their association in gangs engenders a sense of identity and belonging. It is also linked to notions of manhood and maleness. The firearms and violence speak to constructed notions of masculinity with the young man finally feeling like a “real man”.

Youths are also propelled into crime because of a sense of entitlement inherited from their forebears. Laziness and a “gimme gimme” syndrome drive the desire for material luxury objects like gold chains and Nike shoes.

Women are also drawn into the drug trade, mostly as couriers/carriers. Their plight is different from that of men as many are victims of domestic abuse, prostitutes or HIV positive. They have histories of sexual and emotional abuse, mental illness and have families for which they are responsible. Allegations are often made of white collar criminals and the involvement of public figures and law enforcement officials in the drug trade. Current Minister of National Security, Jack Warner, has threatened to go after the “big sharks” which are a rallying cry of the population.

The findings of a CICAD Report, 2010, indicate that there is a high prevalence of alcohol, marijuana and inhalant consumption in Trinidad and Tobago amongst high school students. Alcohol is more prevalent amongst females with an overall first use age of eleven. Males dominate (double) with respect to marijuana with the highest prevalence rate reflected amongst the 15-16 age group. Interestingly, Trinidad and Tobago is not considered a major producer or consumer of marijuana and the prevalence of cocaine use is also quite low. However, the prevalence of inhalants use is amongst the highest in the region, even doubling that of the United States according to a 2007 survey. In all cases, there is a direct correlation between frequent behavioural problems in school and alcohol, marijuana, cocaine or inhalant use amongst students.

Research undertaken amongst residents of the Youth Training Centre, the La Horquetta Community, the La Brea Community and the St. Jude Home showed the initiation into drugs

from as early as age five though this varied up to age fourteen. In most cases, respondents were driven to drugs because of abuse, peer pressure, family stress, financial stress, homosexuality and unemployment. Interestingly, respondents did not perceive alcohol or marijuana as either dangerous or illegal since it gave them status and marijuana, in particular, had medicinal value and healing powers. Conversely, cocaine was more likely to engender crime and was the drug of the pipers and vagrants.

The data suggest that drug trafficking is closely linked to urbanization as crime usually occurs in big cities and urban areas. In Trinidad, few areas can be deemed truly rural given the rapid rate of infrastructural development that has occurred in the post-Independence era. It can be argued that the highest rates of crime occur in Port of Spain and environs, particularly Laventille which is considered the primary hot spot in the country. In the less urbanized areas and in the suburbs, the issues of alcohol abuse and domestic violence also prevail.

A consultation in Tobago revealed widespread sale and use of marijuana. One respondent affirmed that “marijuana is sold openly in almost every street corner in Tobago” though the same is not true of cocaine. The gang syndrome associated with the drug trade and the related use of firearms and violent crime were notably absent in Tobago as Tobagonian respondents could not even identify with the gang phenomenon. This may account for the much-reduced crime rate in Tobago in comparison to Trinidad.

This study underscores the connection between drugs, gangs and guns or firearms. It naturally raises the question of whether a reduction in firearms will result in a corresponding reduction in crime. One may surmise that it would result in a reduction in illegal drug-related crime but may not in crimes associated with domestic violence which can be linked to alcohol abuse.

Several institutions and legislations have been established to treat with the drug trade

though their success is debatable. Nonetheless, the country is not considered a narco-state, so optimistically, it can be rescued from the menace of drugs and crime. This however, would require extensive cooperation and collaboration amongst the local, regional and international stakeholders.

Not only is there a crisis amongst young Black males, there is also a problem amongst Indian youths, an issue which requires much more in-depth research. The problems are multi-fold from the lack of human values amongst rich, middle class Indo-Trinidadian children to alcohol consumption and domestic violence in Indian communities.

Residents in Central Trinidad live in abject fear of newcomers to the area who are responsible for crimes committed particular in hotspot areas like Enterprise and Edinburgh 500. Interviews reveal that the crimes committed in Central include robberies and house break-ins mostly committed by newcomers of African descent against victims of non-African descent. The interviews also dispelled the myth that drug trafficking or consumption is rampant in the area known in Felicitey or any part of Central Trinidad.

Like alcohol, marijuana is not really perceived as a drug amongst many Indians in Trinidad. It is not seen as a "hard drug" like cocaine and is perceived as having both medicinal, religious and spiritual values. But neither drug trafficking nor drug abuse is considered a major problem in Central. Rather, alcohol abuse seems to be the main issue amongst Indians and it is argued that it is closely linked to the scourge of domestic violence.

Moreover, alcohol has always been present in both the home and community environment via cultural festivities such as weddings and in the village "rum shop". It evolved during indentureship and estate labour as an integral aspect of Indian culture. The home was also a natural environment for drinking, exposing Indian children to alcohol consumption from an early age. In Central Trinidad, alcohol

consumption is widespread and the contention has been made that consumption is higher amongst females than males. Furthermore, alcohol consumption has been frequently linked to the issue of domestic violence in Indian communities and families and has sparked a debate on whether one naturally leads to the other. It also engages the notion of masculinity particularly as it speaks to maleness and manhood of traumatized Indian males. The Afro-dominated political landscape throughout history has also shaped notions of masculinity and maleness amongst Indian men. Because of the limited opportunities and facilities for recreation, the rum shop serves as a convergence point and frequent "liming spot" for neighbours, friends, families and relatives.

The perceived self-emasculatation of Indo-males has in recent times been compounded by the now highly educated population of independent, Indo-Trinidadian women who threaten the stability of the traditional Indian home where the women were predominantly housewives. The men frequently turn to alcohol to evade the frustration of their own insecurities and threats posed by their educated, professional wives.

### **Recommendations - The Drug Crisis and Crime**

1. The Ministry of National Security should diligently pursue white collar criminals from all sectors of the society including law enforcement officials
2. Laws should be instituted to deal with campaign financing whereby there would be limits to financing, transparency in recording financing thus holding political parties to greater accountability.
3. More resources should be deployed for fighting corruption, money laundering and embezzlement and checks and balances instituted to keep high-ranking officials, including politicians, in line.
4. National and regional policies which facilitate in-depth financial investigations and asset-seizures to seize profits from corruption rings, drug traffickers and organized crime groups should be created



5. A system of systems should be instituted involving more integration, cooperation and collaboration at several levels including national institutions, non-state actors and regional and international stakeholders. This include more intense interaction between government agencies such as those under the Ministry of National Security like the National Drug Council and the Security Services Agency (SSA) with civil society including NGOs, such as religious and faith-based organizations and the private sector. Regional bodies such as the Organization of American States and CARICOM need to collaborate within nations, across the region and across the globe with international bodies like the United Nations and the World Bank, to establish dense but manageable networks for implementing projects which are relevant to the particular needs of the society. A transnational approach of collective responsibility from the supply, transshipment and the demand side is needed to treat with this complex international problem.
6. Context relevant projects appropriate to the at risk communities are necessary as experiences vary in different areas of the island. Middle class communities in the West may be more prone to the consumption of the expensive cocaine powder while poor and underprivileged communities in East Port of Spain, Central and South Trinidad, may be involved in the trafficking and consumption of marijuana and gang activities.
7. Incentives should be provided for more comprehensive and in-depth research to identify the at-risk communities and their causes and consequences. Such initiative should be promoted by the state, the private sector, NGO's and regional and international organizations. The research itself should be relevant to the idiosyncrasies of a plural society and the regional differences which characterize the different ethnic enclaves in the island.
8. Advanced technology should be employed to intercept air and sea drug traffickers. This may necessitate the engagement of scientific researchers to invent and test appropriate devices such as detectors which would facilitate detection of illegal drugs. Advancements in computer and communication technology could also be utilized for the dissemination of information across national, regional and international networks and to encourage victims of drugs and crime to seek assistance. Employment of E-Governance can facilitate monitoring and control of borders.
9. Employment creation should be considered to compensate for job losses in Central Trinidad due to the closure of Caroni 1975 Ltd, recreational facilities, and education and training to alleviate a growing alcohol abuse and domestic violence problem in Central Trinidad.
10. The Ministry of Education through its Curriculum Development division should monitor curriculum implementation and delivery of substance abuse content in the syllabus at the ECCE, primary and secondary level.
11. Strict adherence to the schools' Codes of Conduct re drug abuse should be practised by administrators, teachers and other staff members at primary and secondary schools.

## C - PRISON REFORM, THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND POLICING



Search and Arrest during State of Emergency Trinidad and Tobago 2011

Photo Courtesy Express Newspapers

### **Findings**

Research has shown (2006) that participation by offenders in correctional education programmes would result in reduced rates of re-arrest, re-conviction and re-incarceration as compared to non-participants. For people who did recidivate, they committed less serious offences and resulted in higher rates of employment for participants as well as higher wages than those of non-participants.

In our discussions with correctional officers, they see the education of young inmates as having three main objectives, namely, converting deviants to acceptable norms, providing coping

mechanisms including skills and competencies for re-entry into society and the promotion of values related to self worth, cooperation and resilience. The committee noted that there has been a modest increase in the provision of correctional education in terms of relevance of programmes, expenditure and educational providers, but there are serious concerns regarding the control and harmonization of curriculum, the quality of delivery and the adequacy of teaching spaces.

Technical/vocational studies are more highly favoured, but are expensive to mount and provide challenges for practical assessment and

external validation that compete with internal pressures in the institution. Physical Education and Sport appear to have a lower rating among staff and inmates but should become major elements of a National Service Scheme curriculum. Rehabilitative features including psychological assessment and counselling cannot gain the necessary importance as one psychologist is attached to eight correctional facilities. Other complicating factors include convicted, non-convicted young offenders, short stay, long stay, and current debates on the relationship between treatment and training, or whether correctional institutions like these should give way to home/community type rehabilitation. There is also the general shortage of resources that may be related in part to the philosophy of the political directorate and technocrats that consider these institutions as places for incarceration and retributive justice rather than for rehabilitation and restorative justice.

The committee makes a case for the retention of young offenders correctional institutions with the necessary disciplinary rules and sanctions but for young offenders accused of serious crimes. However these institutions should be divorced from other adult penal institutions, serviced by specially trained correctional officers and with an ambience that reflects a safe, secure and humane environment. Emphasis should be placed on a seamless system of education with the provision of primary education up to higher education, and with vocational studies that may lead to the award of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ)- levels 1&2. Crucial to the development of such a curriculum must be remediation programmes to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Our concern for the education of the underprivileged and second chance education suggest that the young offender should see himself as a student rather than an inmate. But educational reform in our correctional institutions cannot be an end in itself as scope must be given to young offenders for gainful employment on their return to society.

The police are generally not trusted and snitching is an offence punishable by death. Police are frequently accused of being responsible for much of the corruption that exists in the drug economy. Some of our informants believe that between 30 and 40 percent of the members of the Police Service are corrupt and that policemen themselves were either invisible members or associates of gangs or controllers of their activity. In the responses to what is alleged about the police, it is widely agreed that while there are many honest and competent officers in the service, much is “wrong” about the service and that lawlessness is not only limited to gangsters. Police are also involved (*Express*, July 7 2012). It is generally agreed that they are poorly trained and lack the forensic skills needed to fight white collar or blue collar crimes, whether major or minor. Visibility and mobility are also low.

It is said that few young men join the service, and that most of those who do so are not choosing it because they see it as a worthwhile career, but as a “job”. Many of the recruits are poorly educated and unable to read, write and communicate in English. Their language is that of the cell phone. Recruits come from the same constituency as the gangs. Training methods, particularly in intelligence gathering are now being put in place, but it will take years before these become routine. Steps are being taken to increase the number of recruits and to make police more visible and better trained. The Police Service, notwithstanding the cynicism with which it is viewed, has also been persuaded to mount programmes that target fathers. The army and the Minister of National Security have likewise engineered mentorship programmes to encourage young men to adopt positive attitudes about themselves, their parents and their communities.

The quality of life in Trinidad and Tobago is dependent to a large extent upon the way in which the police function. Indeed, the entire nation is at risk if the police fail to function well. Policing has expanded from crime fighting to

include maintaining order and dealing with new anti-social behaviours. Given the complex nature of policing, it follows that designing training programmes to carry it out must be equally complex for it to be effective.

### **Recommendations - Prison Reform, the Justice System and Policing**

1. The entire system of correctional education should be reviewed in light of the recommendations made regarding National Service.
2. In that regard data on young offender population characteristics should be collected and used in strategic planning and program development.
3. There is a variety of extremely valuable programmes offered to young offenders at these institutions but they should be streamlined to provide a meaningful set that is coherent, is built on the philosophical principles of the institution, differentiated to satisfy varying ability levels and is owned by the programme unit of the institution.
4. Such ownership should provide scope for the training of instructors in pedagogical and andradogical principles, methods of delivery, orientation exercises and timetabling, formative and summative evaluation and research.
5. An integrated approach to curriculum development that includes key developers as YTEPP, SERVOL and ALTA should assist in reducing recidivism and increase employment opportunities for young offenders.
6. Training plans should be a collaborative effort between the custodial units and welfare, training, counselling and psychology departments and the correctional institution.
7. Members of staff at all of our correctional institutions should be reclassified and should be provided adequate remuneration in keeping with the greater demands of legislation related to the rights of the child e.g. Children Bill, and must deal with young offenders who are more violent and more likely to be associated with gangs.
8. In that regard the YTC should not be staffed by Prison Officers but individuals specially trained in youth development and sensitive to the objectives of YTC.
9. The St Michael's School for Boys should be refurbished in the shortest possible time and should take into account, the erection of a Manager's House, dormitories, a classroom bloc and library a multipurpose indoor court, a space for worship. Secure fencing and well kept playing fields should be included. It should be conceived as a model secure environment for young offenders and staffed accordingly.
10. A similar institution should be established for young female offenders who are currently housed at the Women's Prison at Golden Grove. The secure environment should be located at a site away from Golden Grove.
11. Government should increase their subventions to young offenders' institutions for girls such as St. Judes' School; and St. Dominic's School and assist in their upgrade.
12. An Inspectorate of Young Offenders' Institutions should be established to regulate standards, codes of conduct and curriculum delivery and to conduct performance appraisals of staff of these institutions including those run by NGOs and CBOs. The Inspectorate should be under the control of the Ministry of Justice.
13. A calling card system should be instituted at correctional institutions in order to reduce the illegal use of mobile phones
14. There is massive overcrowding at the Remand Yard of the Golden Grove Prison. This should be addressed immediately with the transfer of some individuals to the Maximum Security Prison while refurbishment is undertaken in phases at existing spaces.
15. A parole system should be instituted in the shortest possible time.
16. A special agency is needed to deal with the burgeoning issues of maintenance payments.

17. The concept of Family Courts should be established in other communities.
18. Legislative changes are necessary to place students that breach serious school rules at youth correctional institutions with mandatory mediation thereby keeping them from the criminal justice system.
19. We found that the Judiciary and the bureaucracy in what is now the Ministries of Justice and National Security are sensitive to the needs of the prison service not only in terms of better wages, better training and better working conditions, but also better conditions and facilities and living conditions for prisoners, particularly those in the remand yards.
20. We note that the legislation which was recently introduced to deal with persons who have been charged and whose matters clog up the courts for years did not deal with persons on remand and who in many cases are "invisible". A mechanism must be found to address what in some cases is flagrant abuse.
21. Without elevating the status of training officers, there will be no effective police training. In that regard, police officers on the staff of the Police Academy should be paid an Instructor's/Faculty allowance commensurate with the level of training offered and satisfactory enough to allow for the purchase of research materials.
22. If the concept of "Policing For People" is to be the guiding strategy of the Police Service, it must be reflected not only in its recruiting but in all the training programmes of the Police Academy. This should include recruits as well as the veterans of the department who should be retrained in the philosophy and practices.
23. Despite the range of topics designed for in-service training, it appears that a follow-up mechanism that would enforce systematic updated training does not exist. This curriculum activity should be equally important for the Police Academy.
24. Although law enforcement is a core function of policing, the committee believes that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service should evolve and embrace a community policing culture.
25. It should be possible to start a police career directly at a higher rank. The individual with added qualification will have to fulfill the same requirements as a trainee of the lower ranks as well as complete the Police Leadership Development Programme (PLDP), Advance Programmes and Field Training Programme.
26. There is insufficient analysis on the weaknesses of the criminal justice system or on finding criminal justice solutions and insufficient research and understanding in the literature of the failures or strengths of the criminal justice system in Trinidad as it relates to the problem of youth and crime. This needs to be addressed in a systematic way by persons trained to analyse these areas, such as lawyers, criminologists and persons who work within these systems. This recommendation calls for a serious research agenda perhaps partnering with the Criminology Department but with a sound research team and leader who is well qualified to lead this research.
27. A definite effort has to be made to ensure that resources for a now expanding female prison population should not be secured at the expense of male prisoners.

## D - THE INFLUENCE OF POPULAR MUSIC CULTURE ON CRIME



Steelband performance

### Findings

In Trinidad and Tobago, the steel band and the calypso were always seen as the basic ingredient of the creole culture, and to this must be added the various versions of calypso, soca, and in recent years, the influence of Indo-Trinidadian music in chutney and chutney soca. All of these music forms have served the community both for entertainment and for social mixing across race and class, as well as to record events and to air grievances among others.

One of the most memorable discussions in which the status of the young male in society was dissected was that related to the calypso sang in 1997 by Winston Peters, known in the calypso

world as “Gypsy”. The calypso in question, “Little Black Boy” was a “giant of a song” which aroused a great deal of passion because of the starkness in which the issues were framed, predating Rudder’s “Madman chant” quoted above which again drew attention to the plight of young men. It is helpful to quote some of the lines of the song.

*He never learn how to read,  
He never learn about math  
He never learn how to write,  
He never learn about that  
All he study was he sneakers,  
He sneakers and clothes  
So he learn how to dress and he learn how to pose  
Now he can't get no work,  
He can't get no job*

*So he decide to steal and he decide to rob  
But little Black boy couldn't last long at all  
The police put a bullet through his duncey head skull.*

While the calypso as an art form has been influential in drumming up social awareness of issues, the impact of calypso has since declined. What has been happening in the last two decades is a massive shift to Jamaican genres which have eroded the popularity of other Caribbean music. It is now considered "disrespectful" for DJs to play music other than soca, chutney and calypso during the carnival season when one is urged to "wine," simulate sexual activity and drink "buckets" of alcohol. Outside of the season, however, dancehall and Black American music are played loudly, and their messages are "heard" and "read" by those who patronize it. Carolyn Cooper claims that Jamaican and American dancehall is "lyrical" and not literal. She complains that the lyrics of Jamaica's dancehall DJs are taken all too literally, and have increasingly come under attack at home [in Jamaica] and abroad". According to Cooper, they are not meant to be read literally. But one wonders whether the lyrical does not in time come to be taken literally and acted upon.

Much of the work on Jamaican music has focused on the relationship with violence in the society. In making this link between musical culture and violence in Trinidad and Tobago's music, what seems to typify the music of this society is that it is fast paced and driven by a frenetic energy that is at the same time mindless, yet controlling of the emotions and energy of the crowd. The themes in the music of Trinidad tend to be rather repetitive, associated with sexual prowess and pushing sexual boundaries on stage or off, with issues of tabanca and complaints about the lack of control over one's woman. These are rather mundane themes compared to the ideas of poverty and the raw violence that is characteristic of Jamaican dancehall. We might ask of the music produced in Trinidad and Tobago - is this the music of a generation drawn to criminality? Is this a music expressing the violence of the Jamaican or New York street reality or one simply driven by the commercial instincts of a commercially driven

nation tapping equally mindlessly into the nothingness required for temporary oblivion?

While it is impossible to draw a definitive correlation between the violence or explicitness of lyrics and the level of criminality of youth, the lyrics of popular Soca hits in 2012 do tend to support the idea of a contemporary youth culture that is very consistent with the rebellious behaviour of previous generations of youth. For example the era of the sixties was well known in the west for the anti-war protestations and a musical revolution replete with drugs, sex and rock and roll. Doctors are aware that drugs, drinking, and risky sex go together, and new studies have shown that loud music should be added to that potent mix (*Newsday*, May 13, 2012). There is little doubt that American and dancehall music has been having their impact on Trinidad's young black males. A small pilot survey of 50 students undertaken in two schools by Marc Jackman in Eastern and Central Trinidad revealed that 81 percent of the students had a preference for dancehall and hip hop music as opposed to other genres. A majority of them were not aware that their sexual ideation was influenced by hip hop and dancehall music. Nevertheless, the author of the study believes that the statistics "can confirm the powerful effects of dance hall and hip hop music on perceptions of sexuality and an association with violent behavior in Trinidad". (Marc Jackman, *Caribbean Dialogue*, January-March, 2010).

The lyrics of the most popular music artistes by the first decade of the twenty first century in Trinidad and Tobago reveal that young men and women have certain freedoms that were not permitted in previous generations. If female artistes have become more explicit, the male response has taken this as licence for an enhanced directness about gender, sex, sexuality, invariably with overtones of violence. A vibrant and shared musical culture among youth is reinforced and supported by the ubiquitous availability of various digital technologies including television, Facebook, Twitter and mobile devices. By 2010, the global measure of media reach noted that 87.52% of the households in Trinidad and Tobago had

television sets (Phillips). We need to examine the relationship between the current musical culture of youth and its relationship to violence and criminality and its potential for co-optation by the seedier elements of society that draw young impressionable minds.

Even if not definitive as a finding, there is a relationship between the media, including musical media, their influences in shaping the popular culture of a period, the effect this has on the way a generation views their prospects for life, love and happiness and how they formulate goals and visions for their future. After all, if we can take for granted that media affects us all in this or that way, in terms of our political views, our attitudes to class or ethnic groups and our reading of different nationality traits, then why should we assume that adolescents remain unmoved by the plethora of images and sexual messages that are beamed to them incessantly. This inability to make a definitive correlation between a popular musical culture, crime and violence is sustained by the findings of the *Youth at Risk Survey*. A vast majority of respondents in both hot spot and non-hot spot areas rejected the idea that there was any link between musical preferences and personal aggression; the figure was almost the same, (70.1%) in hotspots and (70.5%) in non-hotspots. Only a minority in both areas agreed with this idea (27.1% in hotspots vs. 26.8% in non-hotspots).

The theme of alcohol or the more popular “rum” which has been quite pervasive in the chutney genre in the last decade or so has been seen as responsible for the perpetuation of crime in the society, more so, domestic violence in the Indian home and community. Commentators have strongly criticized what they perceive as base, demoralizing and uncouth lyrics. This however, is not true of all chutney songs as recognized by singer, Drupatee Ramgoonai and several male chutney singers who have also addressed the issue of domestic violence.

Aisha Mohammed<sup>6</sup> has noted that domestic violence has an uneasy place in chutney-soca,

<sup>6</sup>Aisha Mohammed “Love and Anxiety: Gender Negotiations in Chutney-Soca Lyrics in Trinidad” *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, Issue 1, 2007

since it is a fête and dance genre affirming that the subtext of violence is often masked by humour. The dissonance between the genre and the topic leads to trivialization, which occurs in two ways. If the song has a subtext of violence, it is masked by humour, usually of the slapstick kind, as in the case with Rikki Jai’s “Dulahin”, Videsh Sookhoo’s “Dhal Belly” or Edward Ramdass’ “Bailna”. If violence is the main theme, then the juxtaposition of abuse with cheery melodies and lilting rhythms serves to undermine the gravity of the issue. Domestic violence is quite prevalent in the Indian community and is linked to alcohol abuse. Whether music perpetuates this practice, or more specifically, whether chutney lyrics promoting alcohol is responsible for this form of violence is still to be determined. The survey undertaken by the Youth at Risk Committee revealed that in both hotspot and non spot areas, a vast majority of respondents rejected the idea that there was any link between musical preferences and personal aggression.

A growing body of research points to the important role of the arts in improving students’ achievement and preparing them for an economy that demands creative solutions to challenging problems. Newman et al (2010), tell us that studies in the past several years have found that the arts-whether as part of the curriculum or as supplementary programmes- can have the following benefits:

- Promote students’ self confidence
- Improve cognitive skills in reading, language development, and mathematics
- Develop problem solving and critical and creative thinking skills
- Reach and increase the performance of students who often struggle to succeed in school, including disadvantaged students
- Provide new challenges for those students already considered successful
- Increase students’ attendance and engagement

Rather than seeing popular culture and music as an enemy in the fight against crime, we need to build on past tradition and examples where



these have been used effectively for change. The still debated discourse on the possible impact of music and popular culture challenges policy makers and planners to create partnerships between popular musicians and the education system. In this way, the energies of the young men and women may be channelled into more conscious lyrics and a more conscious musical culture without necessarily tampering with

the freedom of creativity that is required in the industry. We may think, for instance, of the kind of music produced by 3 Canal and Brother Resistance in Trinidad as examples of progressive music that build on the best traditions set by the calypso form. There is an increasing menu of musical genres among the Chutney, Chutney Soca and Pitchikaree for young men to select from to create music and positive messages.



Atakan performs at UWI Student Orientation

Photo Patricia Mohammed Photo Library

## Recommendations - The Influence of Popular Music Culture on Crime

1. Cultural Literacy should be a major component of the Social Studies syllabus at the primary and secondary level.
  2. A range of cultural sources and forms such as drama, Ramleela, dance and storytelling should be employed as key media in social education.
  3. *The Pan in School Coordinating Council* should be encouraged to pursue the use of panyards as extension of schools and community-based centres of learning of the music of the pan, especially in disadvantaged communities.
  4. We encourage the implementation of a programme of enrichment activities in the
5. Arts with provisions for transportation and admission for youth in disadvantaged communities to gain exposure to excellence in the arts at venues where these are being displayed or performed.
  5. The Media should become a major partner in a “Music for Change” campaign. The media has a crucial role to play as an institution that has a great deal of influence on the young and should be invited to provide suggestions for interventions
  6. Programmes modelled on the highly successful Venezuelan Mentors in Music initiative and already piloted in a few secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago and at the University of Trinidad and Tobago should be expanded.



Young tassa drummer featured in the film *Coolie Pink and Green*, 2009  
Courtesy Patricia Mohammed Photo Library

## E – EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

### E-1 - Early Childhood Care and Education- Social Inclusion and Strengthening the Care Environment

#### Findings

During the first five years of life children develop basic learning patterns and abilities that they will use for the rest of their lives. Evidence that good early childhood experience can make a positive difference to the mental health of individuals born into poverty, underscores the importance of investing in high quality early experiences for poor children (Reuter, 2007). Quality ECCE will allow for early and easy identification of children with special needs because of disabilities and for vulnerable “at risk” individuals.

To its credit, there are plans by the Ministry of Education to establish five Diagnostic Centres for screening vision, hearing and other development issues including cognitive development. The Ministry of Gender and Youth Affairs plans to establish diagnostic centres to examine the social aspects of development but a major diagnostic centre capable of training the various service providers while engaging in diagnostic work and research should be revisited.

The Committee examined Early Childhood Intervention Programs initiated in the USA to prevent or decrease the level of juvenile delinquency in the context of best practices. The programs highlighted the effects of successful experiences that “snowballed” to generate further success in school and other social contexts. The involvement of parents helps to establish a supportive home environment and effective home-school linkages which may lead to a reduction in delinquent behaviour. Interest was shown in the ‘Key to Learning Programme’, a unique educational programme in Britain. It is based on Vygotsky’s (2011) social/cultural theory of cognition but with input from the latest world-wide research into children’s learning.

Children who attend quality intervention programs are better prepared socially and academically when they begin primary school. This enables them to interact positively with teachers who, in turn, relate positively to them. This tone of adult-child relationships continues in progressive years of schooling. The SERVOL’s “Parent Outreach Program” is a good local example whereby the teachers work with children and their families from birth to three years, offering support in their homes and communities.

The transition from ECCE to primary schooling according to Logie (2008) may still be difficult in T & T because of the emphasis placed in primary schools on academic training, as well as the challenges posed by sparse resources and family structural organizations.

#### Recommendations - Early Childhood Care and Education

1. An institutional strategy for the ECCE Division as contained in the Moore Report (2011) and the Franklyn report (2010) that provides a framework to support the transition of children from ECCE to Primary Education should be given full consideration by the Ministry of Education in keeping with its quest for a seamless education system
2. Every child deserves a good start in an environment that is safe, healthy, emotionally supportive and cognitively stimulating. In that regard, a child with a learning disability or with social and emotional needs should be screened by age 5 for remedial intervention. The original CCDP initiative should be revisited; with its goals to establish an assessment programme for children, create an appropriate and integrated response to the identified needs and to build a network of collaborative, health service providers throughout Trinidad and Tobago. There should be an added goal that provides a health registry and allows for research activities, some of a longitudinal nature.

3. The development of an Electronic Child Health Network (ECHN) to link hospitals, health care professionals and other organizations providing maternal, newborn, child and adolescent services should be considered
4. The Ministry of Education should examine closely the 'Key to Learning' curriculum with the possibility of adapting it for our use in our ECCE Centres.
5. The National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education should be re-established to provide guidance to the Minister of Education on all matters related to ECCE.
6. The Ministry of Education should regularize the status of SERVOL's ECCE teachers to bring them on par with public ECCE teachers.
7. The committee gives major importance to the provision of quality early childhood care and education that includes the provision of day care centres and seeks a massive intervention in this regard.
8. Emphasis should be given to the expansion of our limited external care capacity by the establishment of Child Parent Centres (CPCs).
9. There should be as well a multi-disciplinary team of ambulatory experts working in cooperation with those of the CPCs.
10. Home visitation by ECCE teachers should be a common necessary feature of curriculum delivery.
11. Because of the grave importance of ECCE, child care loans should be granted to needy parents (after applying a means test) to a maximum sum of fifty thousand dollars payable after ten years at an interest rate of 6% per annum.
12. A Workplace Child Care Tax Incentive should be established whereby businesses are given a 30 per cent tax deduction to create on site child care facilities or to improve existing community child care facilities for children of working parents This incentive recognizes the important role that employers can play in providing child care.

## E-2 - School as a Safe Place



Location shot from film *Coolie Pink and Green* at Primary School in El Dorado

Courtesy Patricia Mohammed Photo Library

### Findings

A safe school must provide a physical and social environment in which students are able to learn and achieve to their fullest capacity. It must also enable teachers, administrators and other staff to support students in their pursuit of learning without violence, the threat of violence and other safety concerns. This is at the heart of inclusive education.

Inclusive education supports and concentrates on the educational needs of every pupil in the social context of the school by ensuring accessibility of education to everyone. In Trinidad and Tobago, the policy of inclusion in schools is vague. The prevailing policy appears to be directed to only special needs children. Even so, the “special needs approach” has not moved from policy to practice to any great extent. A clear link has not been established between the policy document on inclusive education and documents to regulate it in the school system.

It is not enough to acclaim that all children have access to schooling (equality of opportunity) while some children because of poverty and social dislocation cannot benefit from it (equity). There are thousands of studies that show a correlation between poverty and academic performance. Some of the literature suggests that it might be better to direct resources and attention to helping needy families [escape poverty] than attempting to fix what goes on in low performing schools when the cause of low performance may reside outside the school.

In the last decade, numerous reports both local and foreign have been submitted to authorities on the nature and extent of the problems faced by school-aged youth in Trinidad and Tobago. Some of the major recommendations contained in these reports have not been implemented and are here repeated. One progressive development in 2008 was the introduction of the Violence Prevention Academy (VPA). The VPA was designed to

develop comprehensive, integrated evidence-based violence-prevention plans tailored to the specific needs of participating schools in 'high risk' communities. The programme has not progressed beyond the pilot phase.

The Committee supports the Ministry of Education's decision to outlaw the use of violence as a form of discipline. There are alternative sanctions to corporal punishment available to the school system. Linda Albert (1996), has expounded on cooperative discipline that seeks to match the discipline and punishment of the school with that of the home. It is not an easy arrangement.

Some youth have been suspended or expelled from school without adequate support to maintain their learning, occupy their time or obtain the necessary counselling. Any safe school policy that fails to take these aspects into account will impact negatively on the individual, his family and the community. Bullying as a form of anti-social behaviour has gained prominence in Trinidad and Tobago and needs to be addressed through a range of policies, strategies and approaches.

It is felt that one of the ways of dealing with a culture of violence among youth is for educators to provide activities that will create caring and secure 'communities of learning'. In that regard, schools must incorporate a culture of love, mutual respect, humility and cooperation. A wide range of recommendations is provided with many of them requiring parent and community involvement.

School must also be a safe haven, so that old, dilapidated building hazardous to health and well-being are unacceptable.

### **Major Recommendations – School as a Safe Place**

1. Schools should be learning communities of differentiated curricula, remediation programmes, accelerated learning, therapeutic settings, afterschool programmes, mentorship, empathetic teachers, student councils and service learning.

2. Schools should be community schools that utilise the resources within the community and should have new roles as 'neighbourhood learning centres' that seek to bring parents into the school.
3. Home visitation by teachers at primary schools should be encouraged, especially visits to delinquent parents.
4. There are currently only two Student Development Centres to cater for students suspended from secondary schools because of 'bad behaviour'. The Ministry of Education should move swiftly to establish Student Development Centres in all educational districts in Trinidad and in Tobago.
5. Student Development Centres should experiment with alternative forms of schooling including technical vocational skills development, open spaces learning, job shadowing and inter-generational learning.
6. The Ministry of Education should institute in all secondary schools a first period of 20 minutes a day when an assigned tutor/teacher will partner with students on psycho/social/learning issues applicable to the group of students. The tutor/teacher should have a mentorship role.
7. Character education is a useful additive to the primary school curriculum but the Committee felt that it should be infused across the curriculum at every age level and be grass-rooted and non-examinable
8. The Ministry of Education through its Curriculum Development Division should monitor curriculum implementation and delivery of substance abuse content in the syllabus at the ECCE, primary and secondary level.
9. Strict adherence to the Schools' *Code of Conduct* re drug abuse should be practised by administrators, teachers and other staff members at primary and secondary schools.
10. Programmes of the Cadet Force should be expanded to all male students at secondary schools
11. The Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Brownies and 4 H Clubs should be established at primary schools

12. Pre-Independence day school rallies should be held at venues throughout Trinidad and Tobago and should form part of the school calendar even if it falls in the vacation. Such rallies should showcase the talents of our youth in the community.
13. The designs of new or renovated schools must take into account the teaching/learning and administrative needs of the school community and should include facilities for students with special needs, ergonomically appropriate seating arrangements, ICTs, open

spaces, advanced technology laboratories and equipment, library and information centre, multi-purpose halls, counselling rooms and teachers' and administrators' rooms.

14. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) should establish a prevention and intervention programme that will help teachers identify when children, especially in primary years may be at risk of neglect or physical or emotional harm.

### E-3 - Reforming Our Education System

#### Findings

Education is generally regarded as the principal means of socio-economic development. It is seen as one of the best ways out of poverty and as a sound investment in the future of individuals, families and communities. Since independence, the country has built a complete education from pre-school to university post-graduate studies. With universal education achieved at the primary and secondary levels, and early childhood education forecasted by 2015. Roughly one fifth of the national budget is allocated to education annually. And this is the largest single item of the budget.

The relationship between poverty and lack of school achievement is well established. Ennals and Bradshaw (2005) have noted that in Britain, policy initiatives have had partial success and many children are still trapped in a cycle of deprivation, educational underachievement and failure. The Committee makes a strong case for social and academic interventions that could have a positive effect particularly for at risk students. Too many of our children in communities located in parts of Port of Spain, Diego Martin, Belmont, Laventille, Morvant, St. Joseph, Arima, Sangre Grande, Chaguanas, San Fernando and South Western Tobago (*Human Development Atlas*, 2012) are growing up in or near poverty putting them at risk for failure at school. Overall Sangre Grande, Mayaro/Rio Claro had the lowest National Human

Development Index in the three areas: long and healthy life style measured by the percentage of population suffering from chronic illness, knowledge dimension measured by indicators of primary and secondary educational attainment and standard of living measured using household income per capita per year.

Local researchers DeLisle, Smith, Jules (2005, 2010) provided a re-analysis of our national assessment data and focussed on the magnitude of the inequalities for gender and rurality and in the 2010 study, poverty. The study found an association between rurality, poverty, gender and low performance and concluded that the differences across geographic locations were relatively persistent.

The expansion of the secondary school system under the 1968-1983 Education Plan was achieved to some extent at the expense of the primary school system, resulting in a fall in the quality of output from primary schools. Dilapidated schools, especially in our rural areas, are still relics of that neglect. So too is the professional development of primary school teachers. The expansion of the secondary school system, including the cessation of the post primary system in 2000, caused a widening in the ability range of the student population at that level. But the offerings have not been sufficiently wide and differentiated, nor has the method of instruction been diverse enough to accommodate differences in aptitude, academic ability and interests of students, nor is

remediation a standard feature. Many children are unable to cope with secondary education because of weak literacy and numeracy skills. They have little interest in the various disciplines as designed in the curriculum. There may be genuine disconnect with the secondary school system. As early as Form I, some students are at risk, before they are mechanically tracked to Upper Secondary school. All of this has contributed to a high failure at the CSEC. Many of the secondary schools to which students in disadvantaged communities are assigned were underperforming and had a low level of achievement at the CSEC level. There is a wide variation with the best performing schools in each educational district. It is clear to us that a disproportionate number of failing schools serve the poorest and most disadvantaged children. We are also aware of the fact that schools no matter how good they are or become, cannot reduce the entire achievement gap if the state does not establish safety nets for families and children in need.

Some 5,000 students out of 17,000 students writing the SEA each year do not make it to the CESEC level. And every year approximately 80% of students preparing to write the SEA choose no more than 25-30 secondary schools as their first choice. Using 2011 figures, that could amount to 14,000 seeking to gain an available 4,000 places. These figures show that there has persisted significant difference in the academic performance between the so-called "prestige" schools and the rest of the secondary school system. Those who do not succeed in gaining admission to those "prestige" schools generally have to cope with the psychological trauma of a deep sense of failure, which some never overcome. Those who graduate from secondary school with five full passes generally have to content themselves with filling clerical positions, [or joining] the military, the police service or the hospitality industry. The implications of this wide-ranging low level of achievement, especially among our male youth, provide a risk factor to crime. From an early age boys are introduced to a culture that is still based on a hierarchy of power and strength governed by often stringent rules for becoming men. There is

need for greater focus on how males learn in an attempt to deal with the level of disconnectedness that exists at school. We need to recognize that developmental stages differ between males and females, with females maturing earlier cognitively as well as physically.

Many of our primary schools do not offer enough hands-on learning opportunities. Many of the technical/vocational programmes seem to be quite promising on the basis of the positive outcomes for participants. Even among individuals in so-called "hotspots", the attrition rate was a modest 22.6%. There is hope in after-school programmes that can partially compensate for the inequities that currently plague our schools and can assist in narrowing the gaps between the high-achieving and less advantaged students. Full reform of the education system requires that it be community based and equitable, giving greater focus to differentiated curricula, and taking into account the needs of every student, especially those identified as having "learning difficulties".

### **Recommendations - Reforming our Education System**

1. The recommendations listed here should be applied in tandem with the recommendations on National Service, ECCE, Parent and Community Involvement in Schooling, School as a Safe Place, Teacher Professionalism, Give a Sporting Chance, and The Arts in Human Development.
2. All major policies in education should be seen within the framework of other social dimensions including housing, transportation, economy, income distribution, labour market needs and globalization.
3. The Concordat of 1960 that relates to the delivery of primary and secondary schooling between religious institutions and the State should be reviewed to provide for greater equity in the education system.
4. Standards based reform is necessary at all levels of the education system. This reform would allow for clarity of mission, clear academic goals for students in each subject at each level of school, annual



- measure of progress against those goals and accountability for results placed on administrators.
5. The Government should re-examine its policy as it relates to the numerous subject silos and the inordinate number of high stakes testing at the primary level, including the Secondary Education Assessment (SEA).
  6. The Ministry of Education should create smaller learning communities within secondary school that aim to engender a more supportive, personalized learning environment where students may take a range of specialized courses with peers and receive customized instructional support and academic advising.
  7. The National Certificate of Secondary Education should become the official record of students' performance throughout their period of secondary schooling and should include academic and social learning.
  8. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) should address poverty levels in Trinidad and Tobago including indicators of growing impoverished communities in places such as Sangre Grande, Arima, Mayaro/ Rio Claro.
  9. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) should recognize the special circumstances faced by working single parents and introduce a new benefit for single parents.
  10. Single parents with disabled children face unique obstacles. Increased funding is needed.
  11. There should be a clarity of mission and purpose for schools. Schools should have clear academic goals for students in each subject and at all levels of the school. Progress should be measured annually against those goals and school administrators should be held accountable for results.
  12. The school should be the focus point for reform and networks should be built among schools sharing common principles and practices, this is especially important for schools in 'high risk' areas.
  13. Education and schooling should be marketed including social networking with parents made fully aware of their need for involvement and by transferring the power that duly belongs to them.
  14. The Ministry of Education should restructure larger schools into organizational and thematically small schools or academies using programmatic themes built around broad career clusters.
  15. The Ministry of Education should create smaller learning communities within secondary schools that aim to engender a more supportive, personalised learning environment where students may take a range of specialized courses with peers and receive customized instructional support and academic advising.
  16. These smaller learning communities or cluster academies should allow for participation in other general courses at school, job shadowing activities during the year and the long vacation
  17. After school programmes should evolve into community schools, 'free' schools, neighbourhood learning centres that would allow out of school youth and parents to access learning.
  18. Skills training programmes mounted by the state should be mounted as in-school and after-school programmes.
  19. The SERVOL Adolescent Development Programme should be a core unit of most of the skills training programmes
  20. There should be mentoring programmes through supportive relationships with adults and or older peers.
  21. Schools of education must be able to offer useful research and intellectual leadership to help in solving the problems confronting our nation's schools
  22. Schools of education and universities they belong to, must also have a clearer sense of how to develop a meaningful partnership with schools and the Ministry of Education if they are to play a positive role in advancing reform.

## E-4 - Technical and Vocational Education and Training

### Findings

A review of the curriculum delivered by four (4) of the principal local purveyors of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)-SERVOL, YTEPP, HYPE and MuST - suggests that the system can serve as a practical and strategic instrument for addressing the diverse challenges of the disadvantaged youth who are the principal beneficiaries of the programmes. On the one hand, a reformed TVET system can play a critical role in realising/promoting the vision for sustainable development defined by the Ministry of Planning and Development.

A major focus of the Ministry's Policy Framework is people-centred development, specifically improving the education system and maintaining a seamless level for continuous learning. The TVET system helps trainees to acquire/improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Graduates of the TVET system can earn the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) which certifies the attainment of a set of core, regionally-approved qualifications in a number of occupational areas. In this way, the CVQ allows successful candidates to expand their access to the world of work regionally and internationally. The Certificate also offers an alternative route to higher/further education and complements the academic track. Walker (1997), commenting on the development of technical vocational education noted that vocational education in the US was developed in response to the rising education expectation of the working class and the decreasing opportunities for young college graduates to find employment. The Government is also engaged in establishing Work Assessment Centres where work experience and skills acquired through non-traditional modes would be made to count towards the CVQ. Since many of the youth at risk community are, for various reasons, academically underprepared, this aspect of the TVET system provides a second chance for those who wish to engage the "legitimate opportunity structure".

Sustainable Human Development includes strategies to reduce the income inequality that exists and to provide a social safety net for the poor and vulnerable. The decision of the MSTTE to publish sector analyses and other data on a regular basis would allow graduates of the TVET system to compete in areas where "high demand skills and quality education and training meet the needs of existing and emerging industries", thereby offering historically-disadvantaged youth further opportunities to engage in "decent", productive, income-earning work. As the Director of the ILO, Juan Somavia, has observed "Decent Work" meets people's basic aspirations, not only for income but for security for themselves and their families, without discrimination or harassment, and providing equal opportunities for women and men.

But while the purveyors of TVET are alert to the educational needs of their trainees, they appear for the most part to be less effective in preparing candidates to meet the psychosocial challenges to which they are exposed.

In her study *Not for Profit*, the American scholar and educator Martha Nussbaum observes that, in their thirst for national profit, "nations, and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the *significance of another person's sufferings and achievements*. The future of the world's democracies hangs in the balance" (my emphasis, p. 2)

The "Green Paper on Life Skills Development" produced by the current administration refers to the United Nations statement on Life Skills education as education designed "to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way; it contributes to the promotion of personal and social development in the prevention of health and social problems and the protection of human rights" (1988). The

Green Paper goes on to state: “Such education and training enhances decision-making skills and improves an individual’s ability to benefit from opportunities. In particular, the approach is expected to increase self-esteem and self-responsibility, encourage self-development and emotional intelligence and develop critical thinking and decision-making skills to discourage indulgence in high-risk behaviours”. (p. 16) The recommendations for improving the delivery of Life Skills education advanced in the Green Paper are comprehensive, specific and achievable. In respect of the length of hours allotted to Life Skills instruction, however, the plan may be thought to be less than adequate.

### **Recommendations - Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

1. Age-appropriate versions of the Life Skills Programme should become a compulsory part of the reformed educational curriculum in ALL primary and secondary schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago: Government, Government-assisted and Private. The curriculum should be standardized as proposed.
2. The time allotted to Life Skills training at TVET institutions should be extended to at least the 240 hours proposed in the Green Paper. The highly successful, indigenous SERVOL model makes completion of a Life

Skills course a prerequisite for entry into occupational training. The primary and secondary schools are the source from which TVET trainees are drawn. An intensive six-week programme would strengthen/build on what TVET trainees have learnt at the primary and secondary schools level, and offer an appropriate segue into the world of work.

3. The decision to establish and maintain a National TVET System to harmonize, standardize, monitor and evaluate all formal and non-formal national efforts in the field of TVET Training should be implemented speedily.
4. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has extended the GATE programme to the TVET system. Additional forms of financial and non-fiscal support would have to be developed since time spent in these programmes would have to be extended to include adequate exposure to Life Skills and Literacy training.
5. The proposal to establish a Labour Market Information System should be prioritized, and mechanisms for assessing and certifying skills acquired through non-traditional modes expanded to facilitate the employment of TVET graduates.
6. Quality work-site learning should be linked to school-based activities.

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### **E-5 - Teacher Professionalism**

#### **Findings**

“Quality Teachers Key to Success” attributed success in the school systems of four countries that consistently outperform the rest of the world to quality teachers equipped with the requisite skills to teach, motivate and inspire their classes.

Numerous studies conclude that the teachers’ use of classroom time affects student achievement. Poor classroom management can account for a regular loss of academic time and subsequent low academic achievement.

A low academic achiever is at risk of being disruptive, dropping out of school, becoming unemployable, being uninterested in any form of meaningful learning and engaging in deviant behaviour.

There is an urgent need to establish standards and systems for certifying accomplished educators and for programmes and policies that support excellence in teaching and learning.

The issue of absenteeism resulting from the abuse of sick and casual leave was raised at the consultations. It was also considered normal practice for teachers to engage in private study

during class time to the detriment of students who were “waiting” to be taught.

Any attempt at educational reform that seeks to address crime must take into account the professional upgrade of teachers. A common feature of reform is teacher quality. In the literature review of the report the Committee

advanced the argument that countries that were successful in their educational endeavours, that include high performing schools and a high percentage of high achieving student, had highly professional and competent teachers. Finland is a good example of a progressive education system where teachers are well paid thereby attracting the best talent.



Trinidad and Tobago Teacher Training

Courtesy Patricia Mohammed Photo Library

Major recommendations are submitted that seek to address the professional worth of the teacher that includes greater accountability through a system of licensure but with increased benefits and professional mobility. These far reaching recommendations will require major changes to the Education Act (1966) after wide ranging consultations with TTUTA, other stakeholders and the general public. Despite the positive position taken by students, when asked in the Committee’s survey, whether teachers make learning interesting 76.7% gave strong support for teachers Notwithstanding this, we had to take into account the views tabled

at the consultations and vociferously so in Tobago. There were some who felt that some teachers were not ‘on task’ in the classroom with indicators of poor preparation for teaching and poor classroom management skills. There were others who felt that there was general apathy and disinterestedness by teachers in the progress of students and their general welfare and an unwillingness to cooperate with the administration for the general good of the school community.

The National Council for Professional Standards in Teaching should be the self

regulatory arm of the teaching profession and should have as its remit not only the certification, registration and renewal of licences of teachers for two periods of five years each before being tenured, but should develop a code that defines essential values, attitudes and beliefs and ethical standards expected of the teacher. The Council will ensure that continual professional development is a priority and will independently monitor the standards of teaching in the school system. As with all professions, the rapid pace of social change, makes it absolutely necessary for professionals to engage in lifelong professional learning. A failure to do so will make the teacher's knowledge and expertise obsolete. We strongly believe that the contemporary teacher is involved in a process of continuous change and reflection and must accept this fact. The teacher is reassured of all existing benefits once they are committed to professionalism and the national community will benefit from this approach to accountability.

### **Recommendations - Teacher Professionalism**

1. New attention to raising the quality of the teaching profession must become a national priority. A new approach must set out rigorous standards that teachers must meet.
2. All teachers should be certified and licensed by a self-regulatory body of teachers and other educational specialists called the National Council for Professional Standards in Teaching (NCPST).
3. The NCPST licence should be awarded for two periods of 5 years each with an initial application after one year of internship. Candidates should be expected to submit a portfolio of entries of teaching and classroom interaction, including direct evidence of teaching (work samples or video recordings), and an evaluation report based on classroom observation by Principal and her appointees (in-house model). The NCPST should be expected to do checks on a sample basis.
4. Assessment is based on the evidence candidates submit. There should be scope for appeal.
5. Teachers should be offered opportunities for renewal of licence for a second five

year period after which time the teacher becomes tenured. All benefits that would have accrued over time will be retained once the teacher can maintain the professional standards required by the state.

6. The NCPST, because of its knowledge base of its candidates, should assist in creating a more professionally and educationally sound teacher, thereby ultimately improving student learning.
7. The Teaching Service Commission should be restructured and renamed the Educational Service Commission (ESC) to reflect the new structure. The ESC should now be engaged in recruitment, selection, and review of personnel at higher levels of the educational service- that will include Vice Principals and Principals. This would relieve that agency (ESC now the Teaching Service Commission) from some of the time consuming tasks such as interviewing which can be competently handled at the level of the Ministry of Education. The public interest should continue to be well served as the certification principle would provide greater transparency (taken from the Education White Paper 1993-2003 with minor adaptation).
8. The National Council for Professional Standards in Teaching should be a self-regulatory body comprised of renown teachers and educational specialists.
9. Major recommendations related to performance appraisal, standards-based teaching, networked-based management and other employment arrangements will require open discourse with all stakeholders including the Tobago House of Assembly, TTUTA, NPTA, Religious Denominational Boards and the general public.
10. Such recommendations will require the establishment of a special committee to investigate all aspects, including the important amendments that will be needed to the Education Act.
11. There should be mandatory accreditation of all teacher training programs by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago.

## **E - 6 Parent and Community Involvement in Schooling: A Partnership in Learning**

### **Findings**

During the first five years of life children develop basic learning patterns and abilities that they will use for the rest of their lives. Evidence that good early childhood experiences can make a positive difference to the mental health of individuals born into poverty underscores the importance of investing in high quality early childhood experiences for poor children (Reuter, 2007). Quality ECCE will allow for early and easy identification of children with special needs because of disabilities, and for vulnerable “at risk” individuals.

There are plans by the Ministry of Education to establish five Diagnostic Centres for screening vision, hearing and other development issues including cognitive development. The Ministry of Gender and Youth Affairs plans to establish diagnostic centres to examine the social aspects of development.

The Committee examined Early Childhood Intervention Programs initiated in the USA to prevent or decrease the level of juvenile delinquency in the context of best practices. The programs highlighted the effects of successful experiences that “snowballed” to generate further success in school and other social contexts. The involvement of parents helps to establish a supportive home environment and effective home-school linkages which may lead to a reduction in delinquent behaviour. Children who attend quality intervention programs are better prepared socially and academically when they begin primary school. This enables them to interact positively with teachers who, in turn, relate positively to them. This tone of adult-child relationships continues in progressive years of schooling. SERVOL’s “Parent Outreach Program” works with children and their families from birth to three years, offering support in their homes and communities.

Logie 2008, reminds us that the transition from ECCE to primary schooling may still be

difficult in Trinidad and Tobago because of the emphasis placed in primary schools on academic training, as well as the challenges posed by sparse resources and family structural organizations. Almost every study of school achievement has included the importance of positive relationship between families and school. But because of the widening gap between the rich and the poor, changes in family structure, the increased number of women in the workplace, the consumer oriented approach to schooling and the speed of technological changes, encounters between families and schools are complicated and need to be reshaped. Educators have recently place renewed importance on parents involvement in schooling and have posited that their productive engagement with the teacher is essential for the child’s learning and growth and for the parent’s peace of mind (Lightfoot 2004). Strong parental involvement in both students and schools is perceived to be a powerful deterrent to anti-social behaviour of student. However, teachers have complained that their education does not offer them a conceptual framework for envisioning the crucial roles of family in the successful schooling of children (p. 7). A wide range of recommendations and initiatives is provided, including parenting programmes for ‘at risk’ families, counseling for families of children who are habitually truant, disruptive, disrespectful or violent at school, or are substance abusers.

### **Major Recommendations – Parent and Community Partnership**

1. An industrial law should be established whereby parents are entitled to one to two hours per month to visit the child’s school and consult with the teacher.
2. The government should engage post haste in public education campaigns and media blitz on responsible parenting; pamphlets, brochures, CDs, DVDs and websites should be available to parents at hospitals, health centres, government offices and at popular locations in banks, shopping areas and malls throughout the country.
3. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago should establish Child Parent Centres (CPCs) which provide comprehensive educational

support and family support to poor children and their parents.

4. Our National Parent Teachers Association should re-examine its involvement in the education of the children in Trinidad and Tobago and give credence to its efficacy and advocacy based on strong pedagogical principles.

## E-7 - Give a Sporting Chance

### Findings

Research suggests that participation in structured recreation contributes to the psychosocial development of young persons, teaching them basic values and life skills, including hard work, team work, discipline, fairness and respect for others. Criminologists argue that social development programmes that offer youth opportunities to interact positively with their peers and supportive adults, encourage the development of problem-solving skills and help to reduce the risk factors associated with crime. Regrettably, the World Summit on Physical Education held in Berlin in 1999 called attention to the serious decline and status of physical education and sport all over the world.

Our major tertiary level institutions offer a range of courses in Physical Education for secondary school teachers. The Primary School syllabus has been reviewed and, at the secondary level, physical education is examinable by CXC. Additionally, there are many sporting organizations and clubs that provide effective service at the non-formal level of education and training for students, out of school youth and young adults. The Government has also been using sport as a social intervention mechanism; but it is important that such programmes be subject to rigorous evaluation. Best results may be realized from combining sport and physical activity with other interventions and strategies to reduce crime in particular groups and communities.

There is evidence that youth engaged in organised sport are not likely to participate in

criminal activities (Carmichael 2008). According to the HMSO (2011 p, 95) the acquisition of motility and body mastery allow children to experience as active agents within their world, promoting confidence, awareness, control and communication.

“Life Sport” is a programme in which the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of National Security seek to use Sport as an activity which would help to wean young males 16-25 away from the gangs by providing a legitimate non-violent alternative to crime and community rivalry. Community Inter Sports is not only seen as a positive activity in its own right, but also as a channel through which life skills and vocational skills can be taught. These skill training programmes are to be run in conjunction with other agencies such as YTEPP and COSTATT.

One of the high profile activities being introduced is “Hoops for Life”. It uses football, cricket and basketball as the vehicles through which these goals are to be achieved. The basketball programme involves the creation of a national competition between 33 communities for prize money ranging in amounts from one million dollars for the winning team to \$500 and \$250 for teams coming second and third. The programme will be an annual event over a 3-year period.

There has been much criticism of the US borrowed programme. The claim is that the criminal elements would insert themselves into the programme and eventually capture it. Instead of bringing the communities closer together, the competition might well give rise to gang ridden turf wars and rivalries between “hotspots” that would eventually become destructive. The claim is further made and gang leaders would capture and organize the teams which take part in the competition. The programmes would be self-defeating. The argument is that the alternative prize money should be used to empower existing groups or new ones. In short, the fear is that instead of changing the communities, it would be subverted by the culture of the communities.

These programmes actually have the potential to increase juvenile crime and delinquency by concentrating young people who are potentially at risk together, reinforcing antisocial tendencies and facilitating deviant peer group subcultures. In the US, similar programmes have erupted into violence if there is a lack of visible police

presence and security. There have also been situations of placing bets on teams and players, threatening players with violence not to perform to ensure an opposing team wins, match-fixing and a host of other illegal activities which could turn good intentions into deadly dealings.



Keshorn Walcott – Olympian of Trinidad and Tobago 2012

### Recommendations - Give a Sporting Chance

1. A primary means of socialization for boys is organized sport. In that regard, a massive intervention should be attempted by all the respective Ministries (Education, Sport and Community Development) to upgrade the status of Sport at ECCE, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary educational institutions, out of school youth, correctional institutions, and community based organizations.
2. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should lend support to the re-engineering of state programmes such as CCC, YAPA, MILAT, MYPAT, YTEPP etc to form an integrated national youth training and service programme.
3. Such a massive campaign to promote sport throughout Trinidad and Tobago will require the professional and technical development of local governing bodies for Sport. By extension, these registered bodies should be provided with increased financial and technical resources and its members given regional and international exposure in their sports discipline



## E-8 - National Service: A Growing Imperative

### Findings

As we face the onslaught of juvenile crime and delinquency linked to an altered value system, there is growing need for a national/community service to repair the erosion of trust and ensure that all young citizens, regardless of race, gender or economic status, invest some of their time, skills and experience in the development of the country.

Fukuyama (1995) argues that when trust is eroded, social capital withers away. Social capital is the glue that binds the human capital together. It provides the cultural networking that reminds us of our duty to society. It allows us to affirm love, loyalty and, at the highest level, a willingness to sacrifice for physical and social space called Trinidad and Tobago.

Not too long ago, this social capital found clear expression in our activities and social behaviours which include story-telling and neighbourhood gatherings; the shared spaces of barrack-yards, village streets and community centres; concepts such as "lend hand". "sou-sou" "gayap" and "panchayat" -- all these reflected a sense of cooperation, community and togetherness that sustained us in tough times. Today, these social behaviours, spaces and concepts are disappearing and there is an urgent need to replace them with something that can sustain us as a society. A model of national/community service is offered as one means of meeting this need.

The model presented is an amalgam/adaptation of five models drawn from across the globe. They are the Ghana National Service; the Singapore National Service; the India National Service, the Jamaica National Service and the Ontario Canada Secondary Schools Diploma Requirements. It proposes that in Trinidad and Tobago, the process should begin with the secondary school-age population; and students should be certified on completion of the programme which may include a minimum of 40 hours of community service. The community service project would constitute part of

the existing CXC school-based assessment. Community service coaches would provide the adult leadership crucial in communicating the civic principles of tolerance, service and social justice.

There are, however, three categories of youth that cannot be accommodated in the community service programmes of the secondary-schools: (i) those who have chosen the technical/vocational stream and are engaged in on-the-job training and apprenticeship schemes mounted by state or private agencies; (ii) 12-18 year olds who have dropped out of the secondary school system; and (iii) young offenders at correctional institutions. The first group can access voluntary community project services through the agencies to which they are attached by offering technological and vocational skills required by a community. Youth camps could provide an avenue for those who have "dropped out" of the secondary school system, but are not part of any voluntary programme offered by state or private agencies. In the case of young offenders, national/community service would be a pivotal part of the curriculum, with a special approach that includes some form of restorative justice.

The model of national/community service proposed is not the quasi-military form practised in some jurisdictions. Rather, it comprises a set of activities designed to promote the renewal of society by inculcating a sense of civic and social responsibility and fostering those qualities that promote good citizenship.

Education, if it promotes social change, must provide not only for personal development, but for personal development within the collective context of community and cultural development. For years there have been proposals by some sectors of the society for some form of national service. Some detractors have been strong in their condemnation of it no doubt with images of quasi-military camps, programmes of vocational studies to the detriment of academic pursuits and cultural assimilation to the point of 'dougularization'. Many societies are struggling with the issue of compulsory service versus volunteerism but more and more,

as individualism envelops most societies, the concept of national service is fast becoming a reality. The province of Ontario, Canada, has sought a reprieve by introducing a form of service learning that is compulsory within the context of formal schooling, but in fairness to the province, volunteerism is standard fare from as early as primary schooling so that the required 40 contact hours at the completion of secondary schooling are generally doubled or tripled. In the USA, where volunteerism is popular, there is a growing call for compulsory service mainly in the military. Jamaica has been relatively comfortable with its National Service Scheme based on a voluntary vocational programme. The recommendation for Trinidad and Tobago is for the definite consideration of national service based on our socio-cultural landscape taking into account academic rationalism, social reconstruction and humanism and the personal development of the individual. Young offenders will be expected, however, to give back more to society and within a secure environment of rigid, disciplinary settings. National certification beyond CXC should be finally addressed. In the Committee's survey, the recommendation received a 69.1% support from individuals in 'hot spot' areas and slightly less support of 59.5% in 'non hot spot' areas. We note that it was opposed by 20.5% and 24% respectively. This could pose challenges to its implementation.

The National Service Scheme does not require major capital and recurrent expenditure but on the good will of various state agencies to allow for the development of service learning projects and for the monitoring and assessment of these projects. In 2010, the British Government began a pilot scheme aimed at getting more young people involved in the community. The scheme called the National Citizen Service Scheme was launched during the election campaign and was a central plank to the PM's mission to empower communities and encourage volunteering. The Scheme includes two weeks away from home during the summer and includes a curriculum of team building exercises, leadership skills and individual challenges. Teeside was one of the 12 UK wide areas to pilot the Scheme which was

open to 16 year olds and second year school leavers. It is a voluntary scheme where students are encouraged to join the plan on Facebook. On the website (2011) we are told that the scheme started with 600 students and was expected to reach 30,000 in 2012. According to the PM, it is expected to have national coverage. This is another attempt at service learning.

### **Major Recommendations - National/Community Service**

1. A National Service Scheme (see Appendix 3) should be established in the shortest possible time in Trinidad and Tobago.
2. The NSS should consist of a compulsory community based project/service learning for secondary school students (a minimum of 40 contact hours), a compulsory community based project/service learning for volunteers at the various state agencies' vocational courses (a minimum of 40 contact hours), a compulsory community based project/service learning for young offenders at youth correctional institutions (a minimum of 120 contact hours), a compulsory community based project/service learning for individuals who have dropped out of the school system, a minimum of 120 contact hours at a youth camp.
3. The National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) should be a national record of assessment of all individuals at levels 2, 3 and 4 of secondary education.
4. A record of service should be included on an individual's National Certificate of Secondary Education.
5. No individual should be considered for scholarships, fellowships, other awards, job placements or any other national recognition unless there is a valid record in the NCSE of national service rendered to Trinidad and Tobago.
6. The National Service Scheme should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Community Development, with support from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Gender and Youth Affairs and other key Ministries that may be included to make the Scheme effective.

## **F - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF SURVEY ON YOUTH AT RISK**

### **1. Introduction**

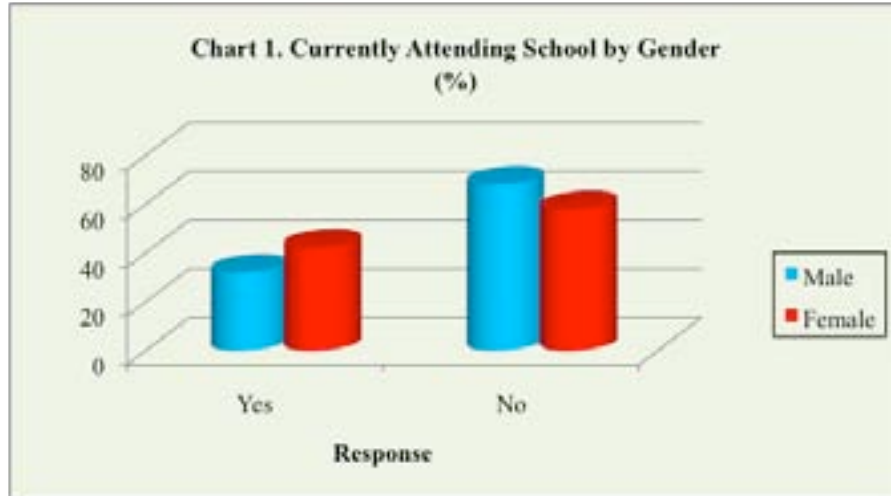
The terms of reference for this study focused particularly on areas of the country that were deemed “hotspots” as defined by the police which was based primarily on the incidence of certain crimes, notably homicides and drug trafficking, in these areas. However, in order to examine whether the conditions that influenced these criminal activities or behaviours were unique to the areas deemed hotspots, it was decided to examine also a sample of non-hotspot areas or areas which would not have been considered “hotspots” based on the methodology used by the police or security forces. Put differently, a comparison of hotspots and non-hotspots enabled one to identify or isolate the possible factors that predispose youths to engage in what has been defined in this study as risky activities with respect to crime and violence. In making this comparison, however, we found marginal statistical variations between hotspots and non-hotspots on some of the major socio-economic issues examined. The issues where we found major differences between hotspots and non-hotspots included notably, family back ground, education, training and economic activity. In addition, since these factors are crucial to resolving some of the problems facing at risk youths, we decided to subject them to further examination by looking for possible variations by gender and race/ethnicity. Consequently, consistent with the terms of reference of this exercise, the examination of the data from the survey focused particularly on the possible role of the variables of race/ethnicity and gender in understanding certain behaviours, values and problems in the hot spot areas under study. This formed the basis of recommending possible strategies for dealing with the problems that beset the communities in question.

### **1.2 Family Structure**

With respect to family structure, a majority of Mixed (52.3%) and Afro Trinidadians (50.2%) belonged to single parent families followed by a minority or one third among Indo Trinidadians (33.1%) and Douglas (31%) (Table 1). Of these single parents, however, it was the mother who was dominant across all racial/ethnic groups, compared to fathers. In this regard, mothers who are single parents were more predominant among youths of African descent (42%) followed by the Mixed (36.9%), Douglas (28.6%) and Indians (23%), who had the least association with single mothers although 23% cannot be easily discounted. The nuclear type family with both father and mother represents a minority across all racial/ethnic groups but was still higher among Indo-Trinidadians (38.7%), followed by Douglas (28.6%), Mixed (21.5%) and Afro-Trinidadians (20.9%) with whom it was least associated based on these frequencies. In addition, it is also important to note that the category of ‘other relatives’ which included grandparents, mothers in law and aunts also represented a significant minority with whom many youths live. This type of family form was more predominant among Douglas (35.7%), followed by Afro-Trinidadians (24.3%), Indo-Trinidadians (23%) and Mixed (21.5%).

### **2.1 Schooling and Educational Performance**

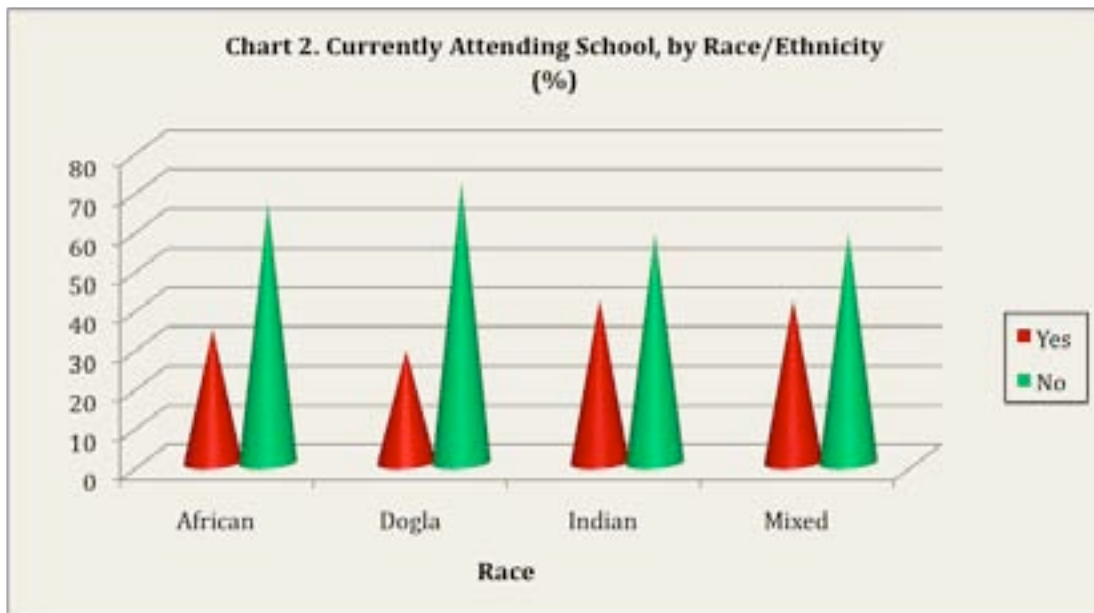
As regards school attendance, while a minority of both males and females were currently attending school, the proportion of females (42.2%) was still greater than that of males (31.9%) by 10.3 percentage points (Chart 1). Conversely, a majority of both males (68.1%) and females (57.8%) were not currently attending school but more males were not attending by some 10.3 percentage points.

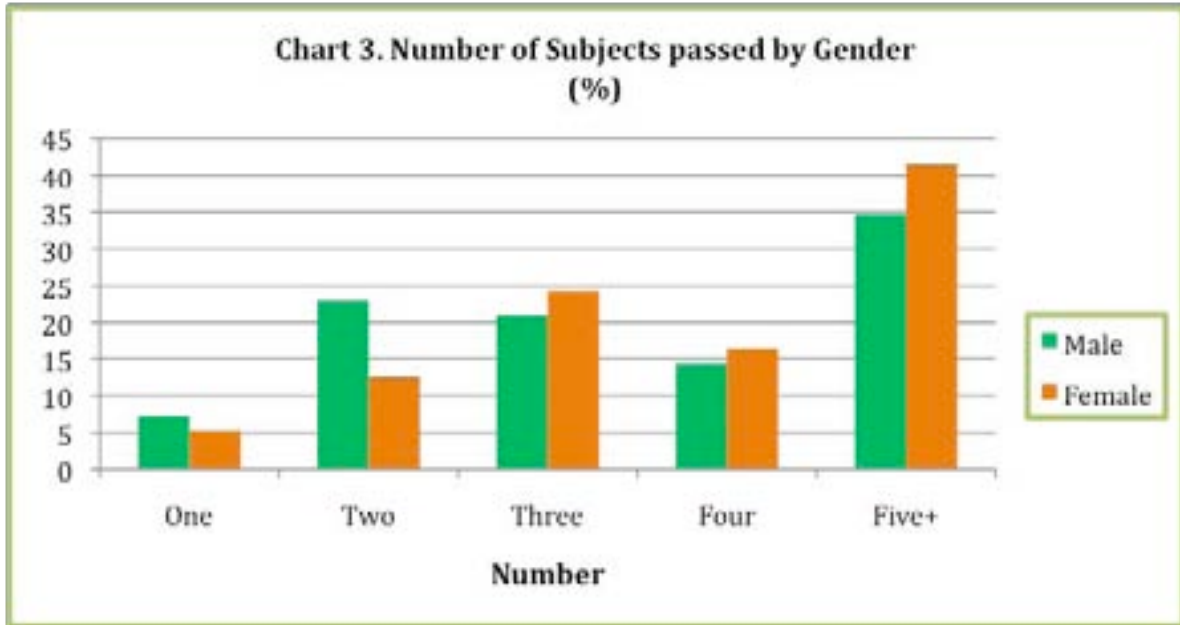


When examined by race/ethnicity, it was found that a varying minority across all racial/ethnic groups were currently attending school (Chart 2), but this was greater among Indo-Trinidadians (41.5%) and Mixed (41.5%) followed by Afro-Trinidadians (34%) and Douglas (28.6%). Conversely, a majority across all groups were also not attending school which was greatest among Douglas (71.4%) and Afro-Trinidadians (66%) followed by Indo-Trinidadians (58.5%) and Mixed (58.5%).

The ethnic and gender differential in educational achievement was again evident

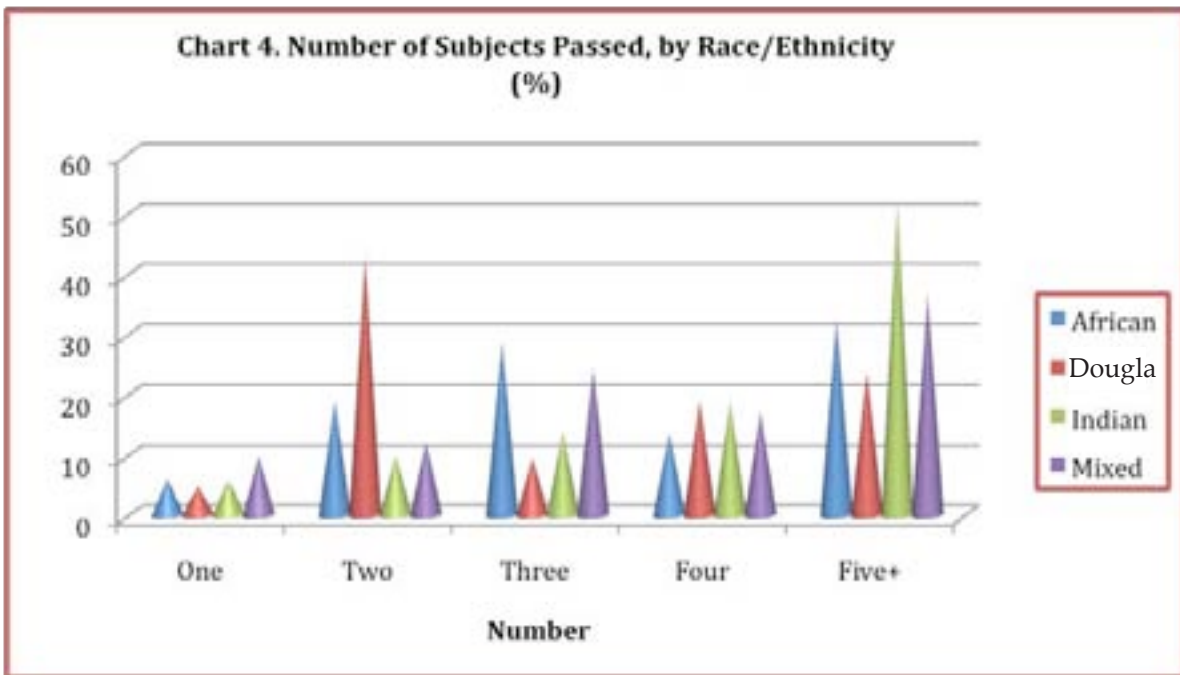
when we examined the number of subjects passed at the final examinations of secondary school at CXC/CSEC or Cambridge Ordinary Level. In this regard, we found that while 41.5% of females had attained a full certificate measured in terms of 5 or more passes at final secondary school examinations, the corresponding figure for males was 34.6%, a difference of 6.9 percentage points (Chart 3). Although this difference might be considered statistically marginal, it is still consistent with wider national and global trends with respect to gender and educational performance.





In terms of race/ethnicity, the percentage difference between some groups with respect to the attainment of full certificates was even greater (Chart 4). For instance, while a majority or 51.5% of Indo Trinidadians had attained full certificates (bear in mind that they only

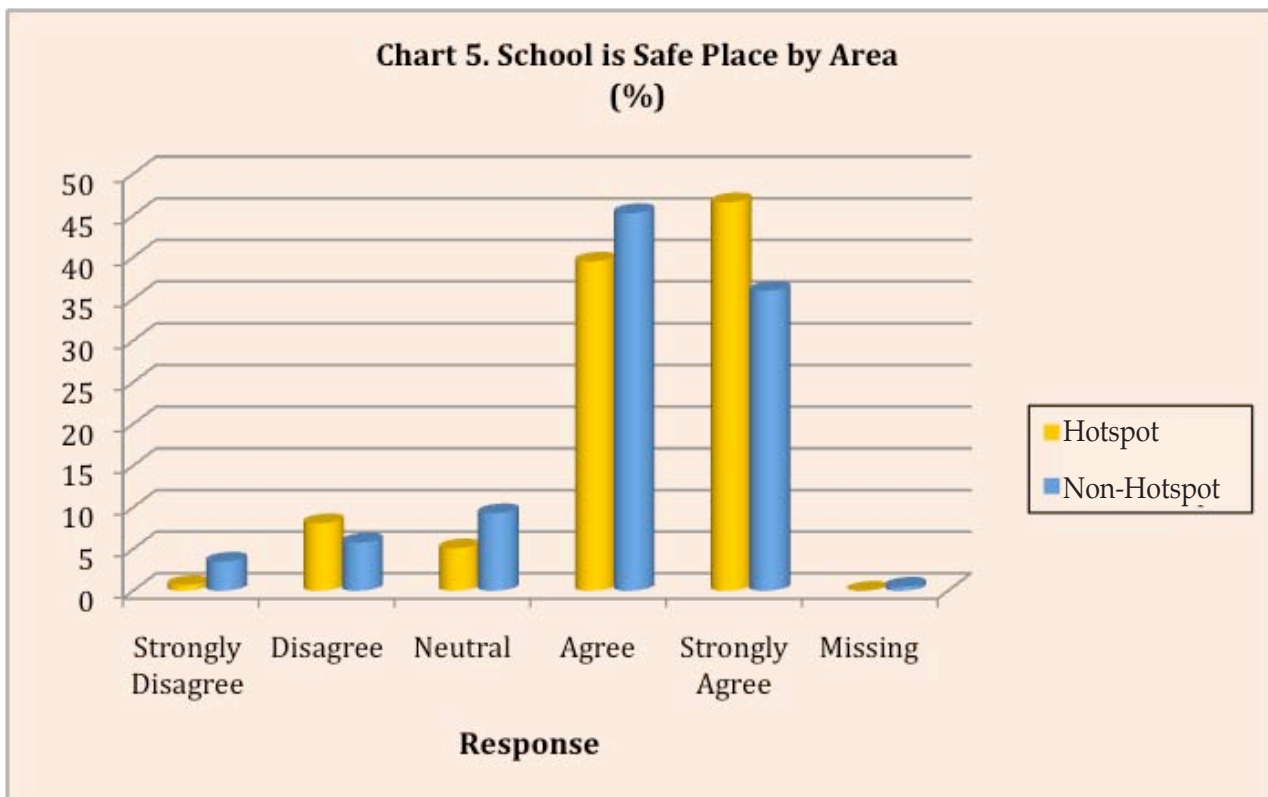
represented 27.1% of the population in the hotspots sampled compared to 55.1% for Afro Trinidadians), this was followed by the Mixed with 36.6%, Afro Trinidadians (32.6%), and Douglas (23.8%).

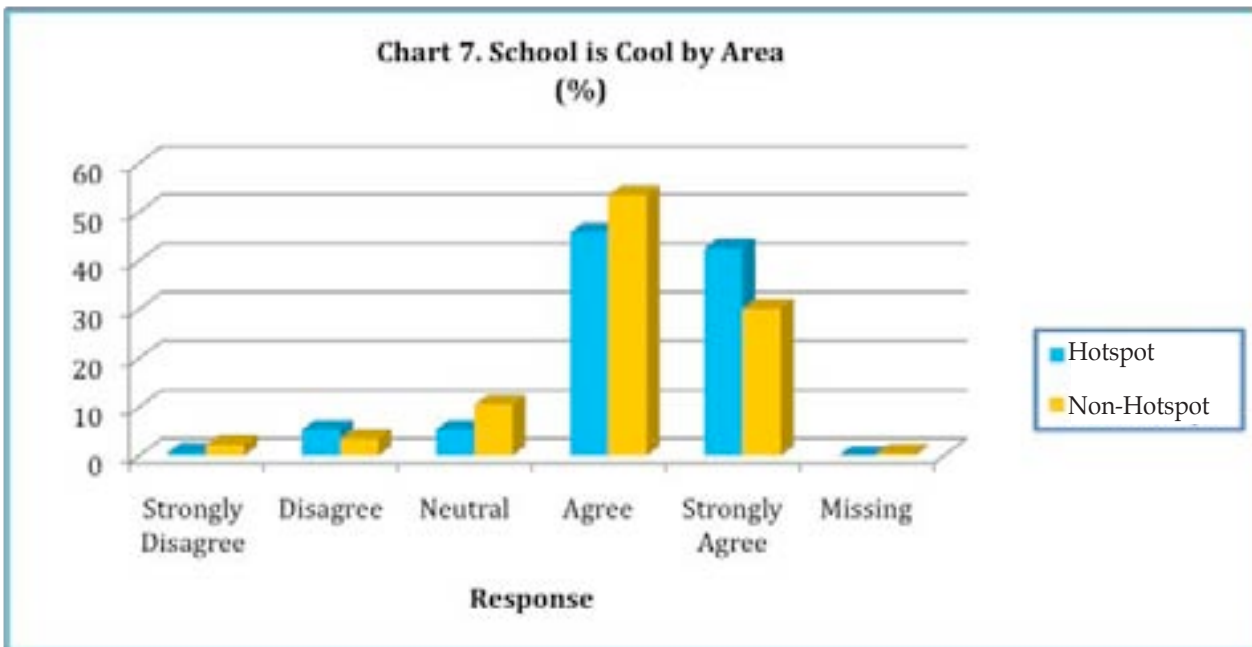
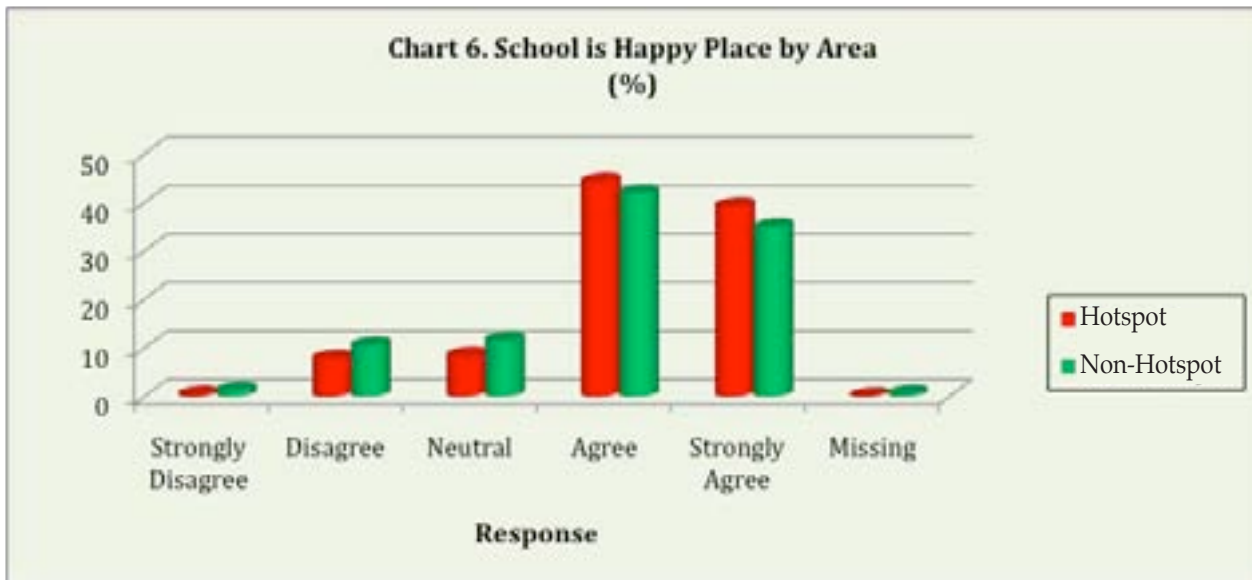


## 2.2 Views of School and Self Esteem

In an attempt to explain the prevalence of less than desirable social behaviours among the nation's youths, many have historically pointed fingers at the education system questioning the content and relevance of its curricula particularly in relation to the world of work as well as the formal learning process in general. In order to probe the validity of this view, respondents were asked to give their views on seven major dimensions of schooling. The findings here might be considered startling since they did not support the dominant narrative as majorities in the hotspots as well as the non-hotspots responded positively to what was asked. Even more, when compared to the non-hotspot areas, the hotspot areas scored marginally better on three of the questions

asked and had the same proportion of responses on one. In these respects, the comparison of hotspot to non-hotspot responses for 'school is a safe place' was 86.1% vs 81.3% (Chart 5); "school is a happy place," 83.5% vs 76.8% (Chart 6); "school prepares you for work," 91.6% vs 89.5%, "teachers make learning interesting," 76.7% vs 76.7% and "school is cool," 88.5% vs 83.7% (Chart 7). However, on the other two indicators which dealt with having "interest in most subjects" taught and whether the principal was "strong and effective" marginally more in the non-hotspot areas agreed which were 91.8% vs 89.2% and 75.6% vs 70.3%, respectively. The above findings in relation to views of school strongly suggests that there may be a serious need to reconsider a dominant view that the education system has failed or is failing our children.





In order to explain the problems of violence, indiscipline and low levels of academic performance among young black males and males in general, many have pointed fingers at the relevance of the school curricula and the quality of teaching and leadership in the school system. In this regard, respondents were asked to state their views on six different dimensions of their schooling experience. The examination of the findings here by gender

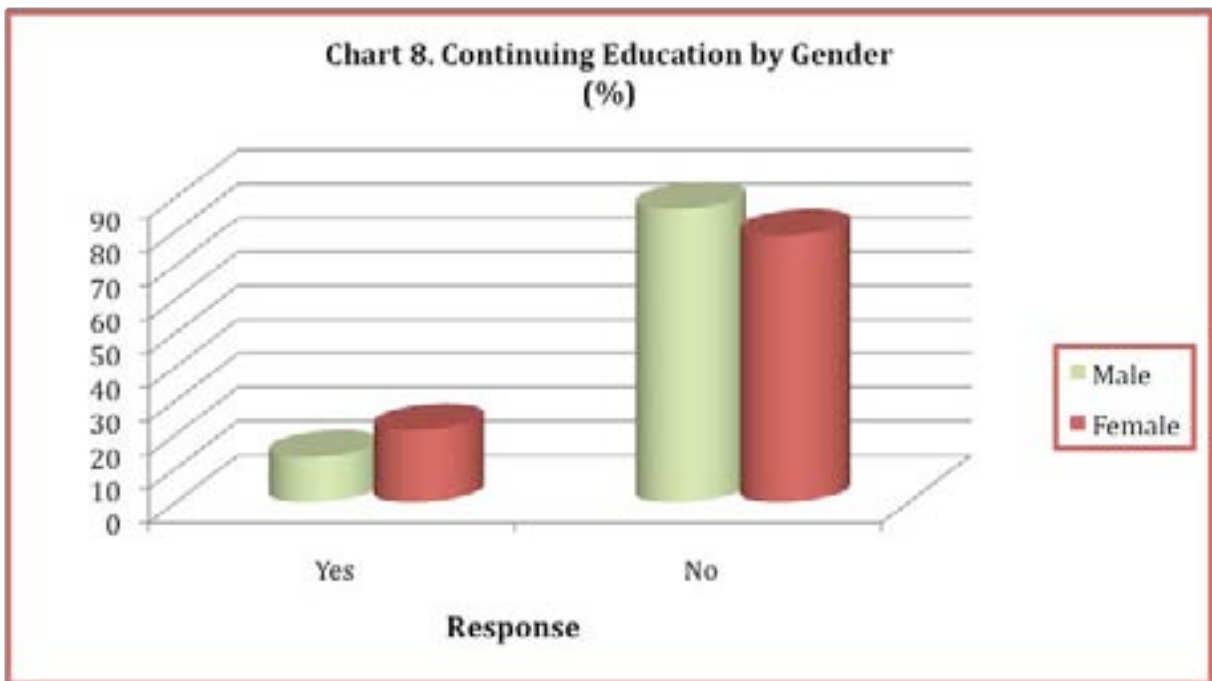
and race/ethnicity were based on the mean responses which ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 representing Strongly Agree, 4 Agree, 3 Neutral, 2 Disagree and 1 Strongly Disagree. The findings revealed no major difference based on either gender or race/ethnicity on five of the seven dimensions examined. Put differently, both males and females responded favourably to the statements that 'school is a safe place,' 'a happy place,' 'they are interested in their

subjects,' 'school prepares them for work,' and 'school is cool.' However, on the question of whether "teachers make learning interesting" and the "principal is strong and effective," one notes a slightly lower mean for males (3.97) on the former compared to females (4.05) and a slightly lower mean for females (3.85) on the latter compared to males (4.05) although these differences cannot be considered substantial in any way. With respect to race/ethnicity, Afro-Trinidadians had a slightly lower mean score for 'teachers make learning interesting' (3.90) and 'principal is strong and effective' (3.73). A lower mean translates into less stronger agreement since as we noted above, the responses were based on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 representing

Strongly Agree, 4 Agree, 3 Neutral, 2 Disagree and 1 Strongly Disagree. These slightly lower means, however, are still not statistically substantive and in any event, they can still be seen as representing borderline agreement with the statements in question.

### 2.3 Continuing Education and Skills Training

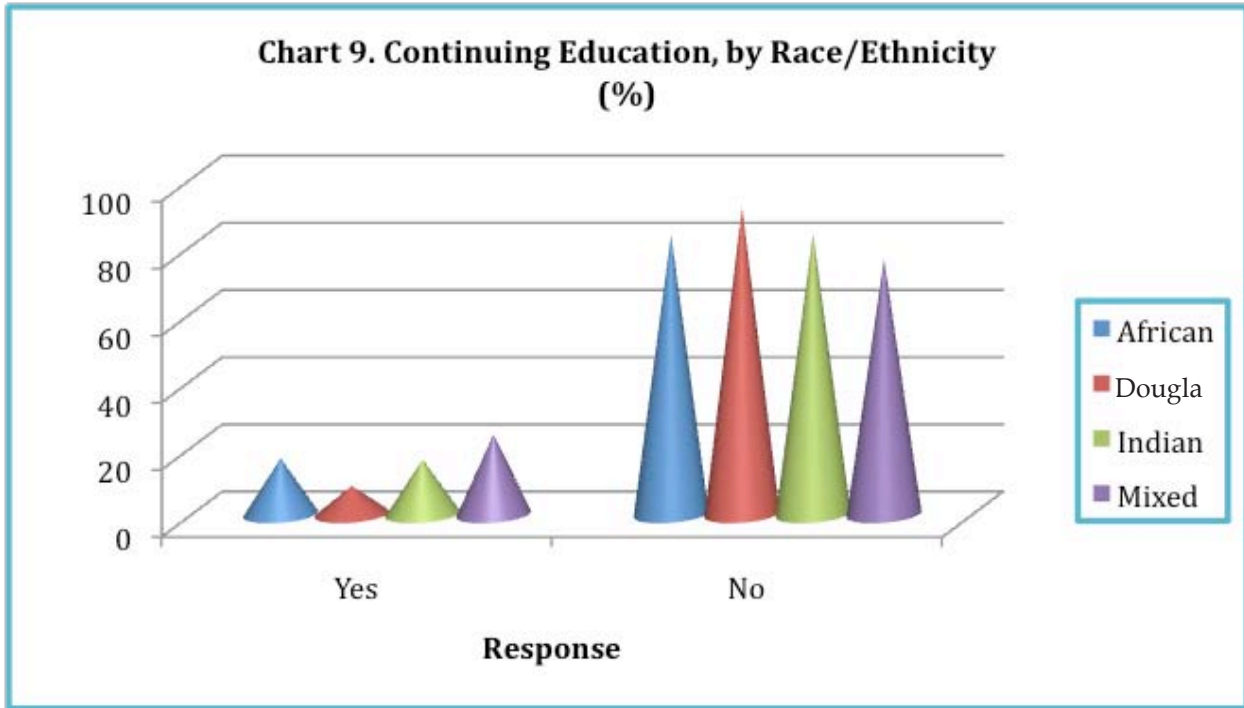
Continuing education also reflected a marginal gender differential (Chart 8). In this regard, while a minority of both males (13.4%) and females (21.3%) pursue continuing education, the figure for females was greater by some 7.9 percentage points. A large, varying majority of males (86.6%) and females (78.7%) however, do not pursue continuing education.



When examined by race/ethnicity, a varying small minority across all groups said that they were pursuing continuing education but this was highest among the Mixed (23.9%) followed by Afro Trinidadians (16.7%), Indo Trinidadians (16.3%) and Douglas (8.5%). Conversely, majority of youths ranging between 76.1% among the Mixed to 91.5% among Douglas were not pursuing continuing studies (Chart 9).

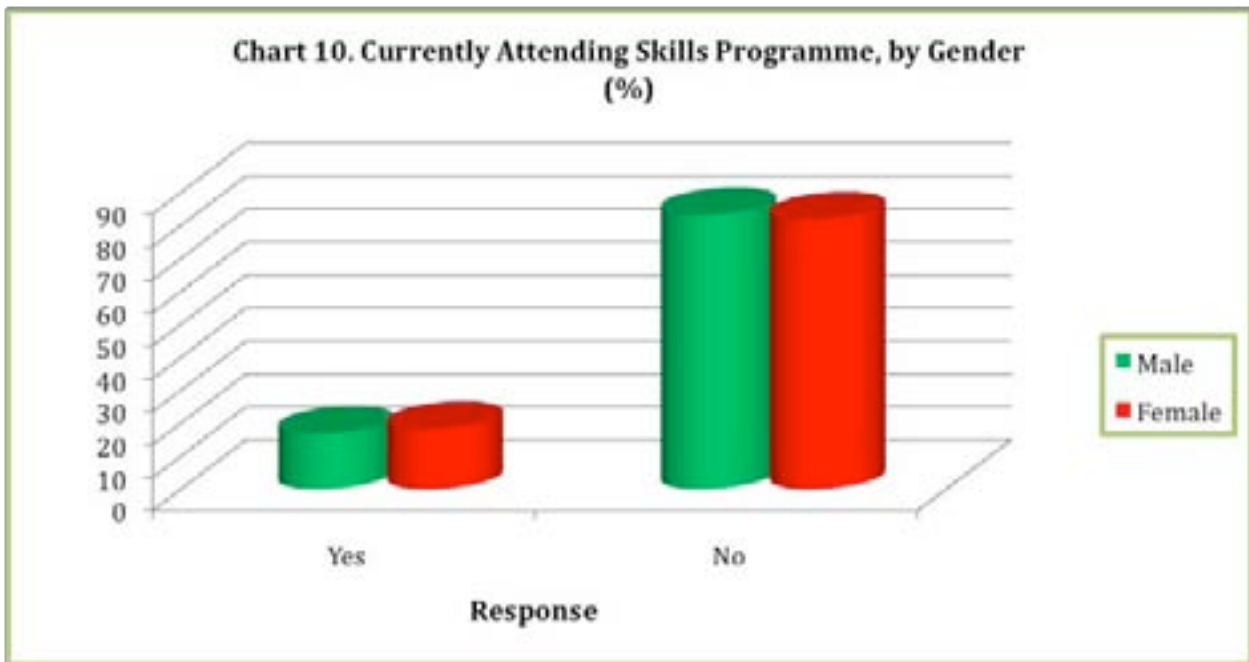
Over the last 25 years, various governments have invested in various social programmes aimed particularly at youths as part of a policy strategy to help deal with a range of social challenges that include notably crime and unemployment. These programmes include, for instance, Youth Training Employment and Apprenticeship (YTEPP), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Helping Youth Prepare for





Employment (HYPE), and Multi Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST). In conducting this study therefore, one of the objectives was to ascertain the extent of youth involvement in these programmes as a measure of their reach, accessibility and possible success. In relation

to gender, a small minority of females (18.2%) and males (16.8%) were currently attending such programmes, a marginal difference of 1.4 percentage points, while a vast majority, 81.18% and 83.2%, respectively, were not currently attending (Chart 10).



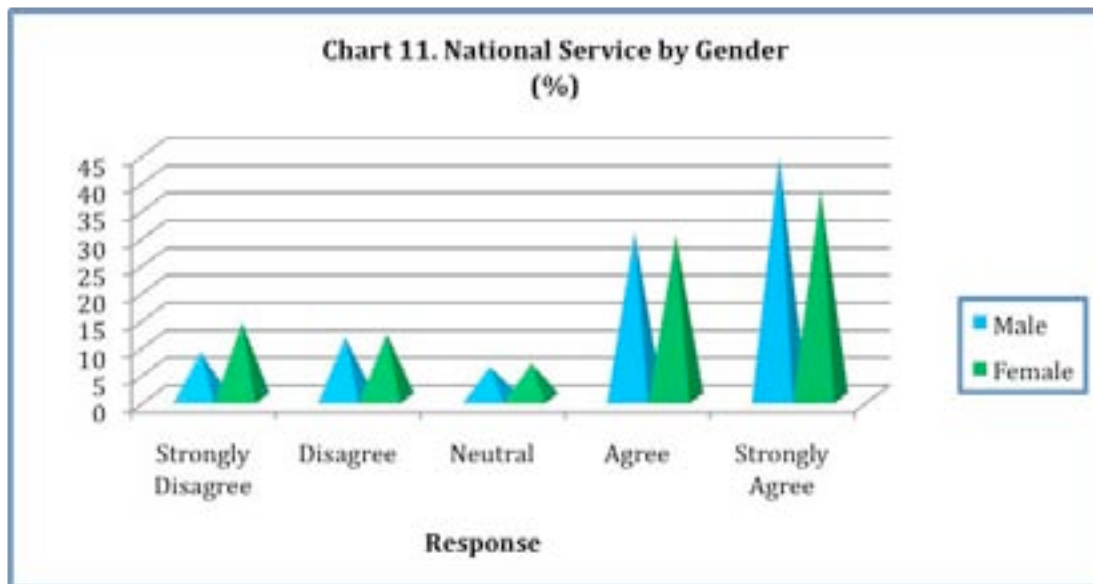
In relation to race/ethnicity, a similar small minority across all groups were participating in these programmes which was greater among Indo-Trinidadians (21.6%), followed by Douglas (17.4%), Afro-Trinidadians(16.8%) and Mixed (11.9%) who had the least involvement. Conversely, a majority across all groups were not currently involved in these programmes which was led by the Mixed (88.1%), followed by Afro-Trinidadians (83.2%), Douglas (82.6%), and Indians (78.6%). Whether in terms of gender or race/ethnicity therefore, a small minority of youths were currently attending skills programmes, while the vast majority were not. Relatedly, the figures also show that there is no substantive difference between males, females and various ethnic groups in their involvement or non-involvement in the existing skills programmes.

Respondents were further asked to give the reason(s) for their non-involvement in the

programmes. In respect of gender, a minority among males and females were not currently attending skills programmes because they either dropped out (7.7% vs 5.6%) or had completed the programme (23.8% vs 23%). For the majority, however, which amounted to 69.6% among females and 67.2% among males, they were not currently attending programmes for 'other reasons'.

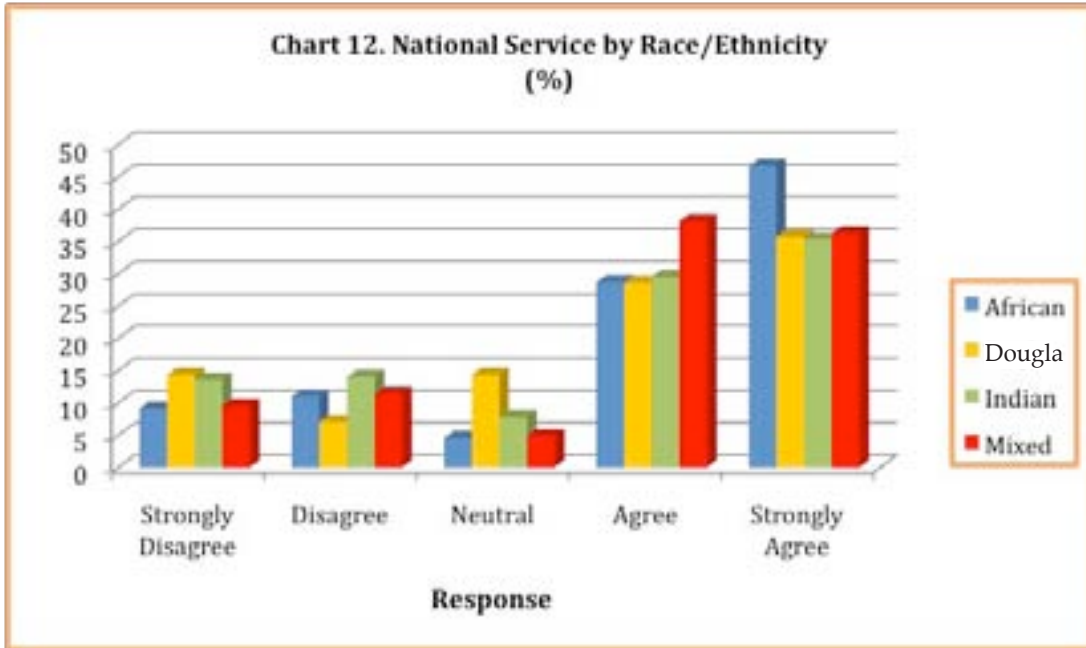
#### 4.1 - Resolving Crime, National Service, Standard of Living and Future Outlook

While a majority of males (74.6%) and females (67.8%), supported the idea of national service, more males marginally supported it by 6.8 percentage points (Chart 11). Consequently, while a minority of males (19.6%) and females (25.7%) opposed the idea of national service, more females marginally opposed it by 6.1 percentage points.



The breakdown by race/ethnicity also revealed that a varying majority across all groups supported national service (Chart 12) but this support was greatest among Mixed (74.3%), Afro Trinidadians (65.4%), Indo Trinidadians (64.8%) and Douglas (64.3%). For the three latter groups, however, we cannot exactly say that it is an overwhelming majority although it is

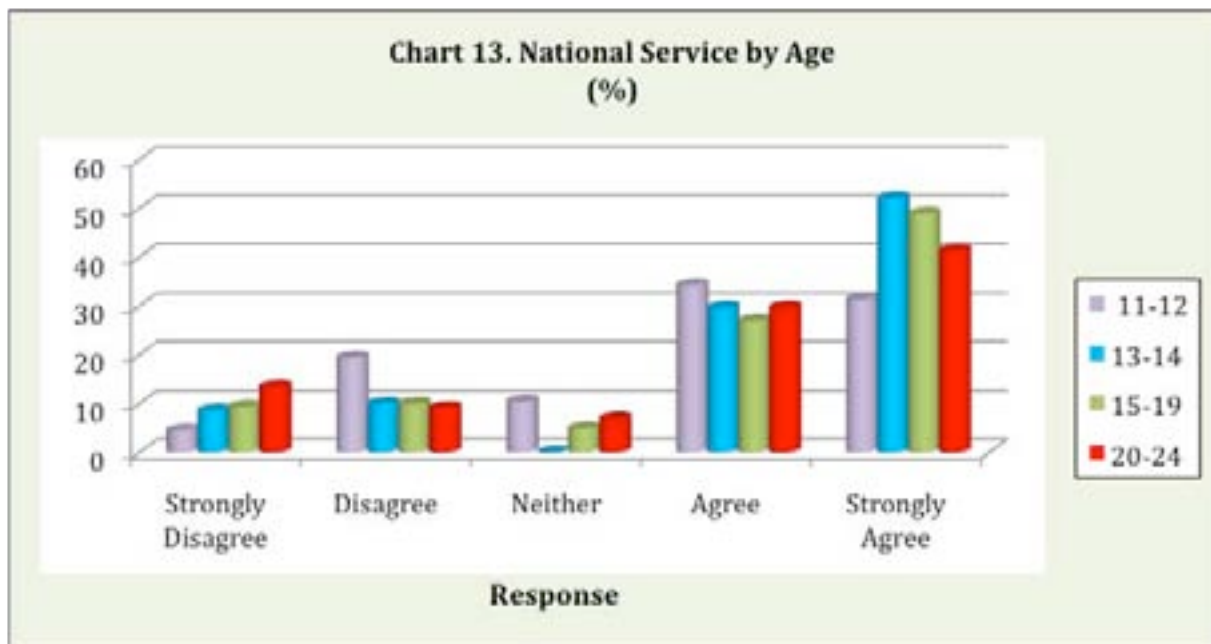
a majority all the same. Conversely, a varying minority across all groups opposed the idea of national service, which was greatest among Indo-Trinidadians (27.6%), followed by Douglas (21.4%), and Mixed (20.9%). The promotion of national service therefore as a strategy of youth and national development, has to keep in mind pockets of opposition although it does have



majority support across all the groups examined here.

Since National Service is aimed particularly at youths, we decided to disaggregate this category in order to probe any possible differences on the subject among youths themselves (Chart 13). In this regard, it was found that a majority across all

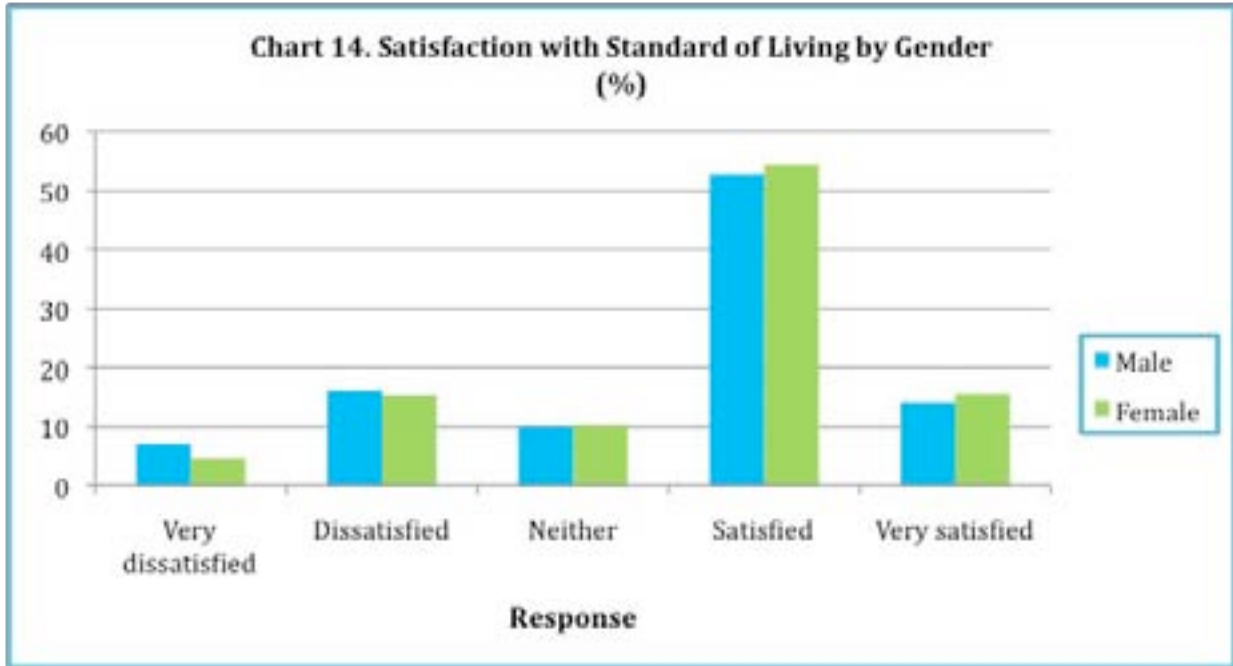
the age cohorts supported the idea of National Service which was highest among teenage youths 13-14 (81.7%), followed by those 15-19 (75.8%), 20-24 (70.8%) and 11-12 (65.6%), who showed the lowest level of support. Conversely, the idea was opposed by a minority which was greatest among those 11-12 (23.9%), followed by those 20-24 (22.3%), and 15-19 (19.2%) where



opposition was the lowest. Notwithstanding this opposition, youths of all ages showed a majority support for the idea of National Service.

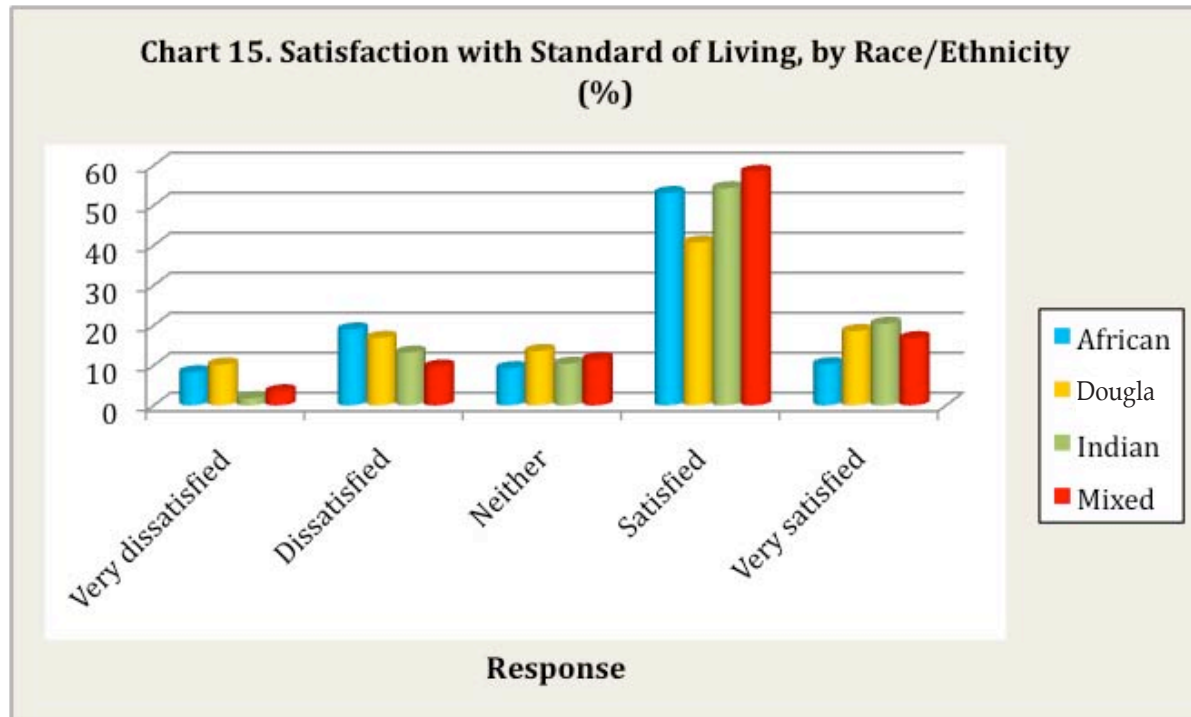
Given the socio economic challenges with which these communities are associated, questions were also asked about their self rated standard of living, future outlook as well as

their views on moving out. With respect to their standard of living, contrary to what might have been expected given the perceived realities, a varying majority among males (66.9%), females (70.3%) (Chart 14) and the various race/ethnic groups (Chart 15) expressed satisfaction with their present standard of living.



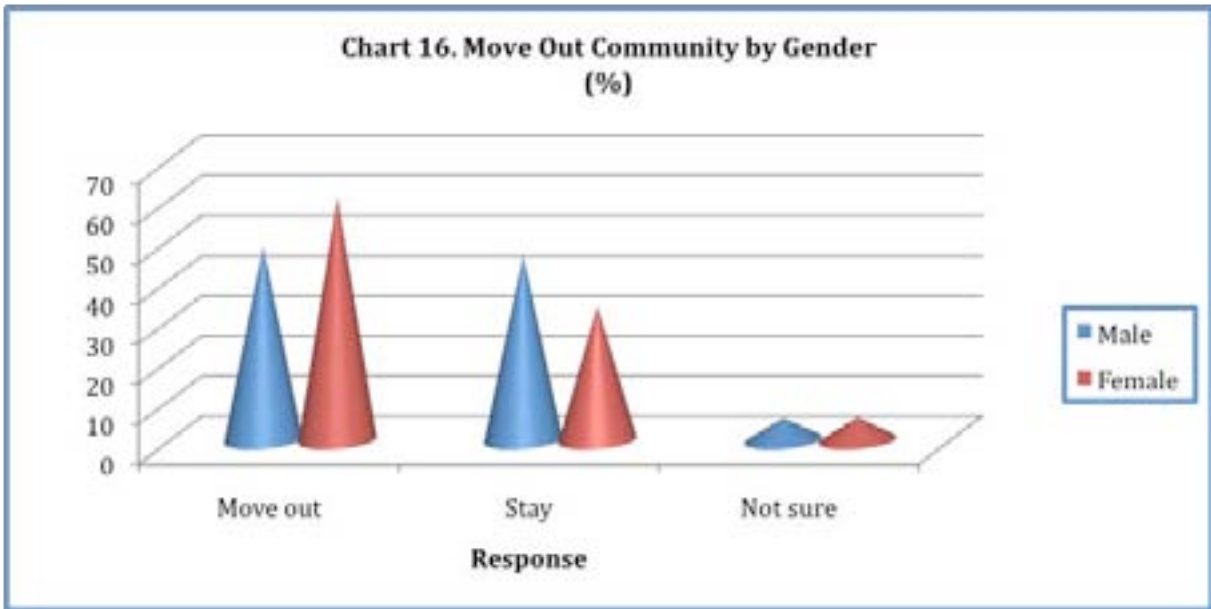
In terms of race/ethnicity, while a majority among the Mixed (75.2%), Indo-Trinidadians (74.3%), Afro-Trinidadians (63.4%) and Douglas (59.3%) in that order were satisfied with their present standard of living, we note that more of the Mixed and Indo-Trinidadians were satisfied than Afro Trinidadians and Douglas by some 12 to 15 percentage points (Chart 15). Invariably, while a minority across all groups were dissatisfied with their standard of living, this dissatisfaction was greatest among Afro-

Trinidadians (27.3%), Douglas (27.1%) compared to Indo-Trinidadians (15%) and Mixed (13.2%) where there was least dissatisfaction. While it is not clear from this study whether this greater measure of dissatisfaction among these groups could be at the root of certain disruptive behaviours in their communities, we surmise that it may serve to increase their predisposition to risky behaviour that brings them into conflict with the law.



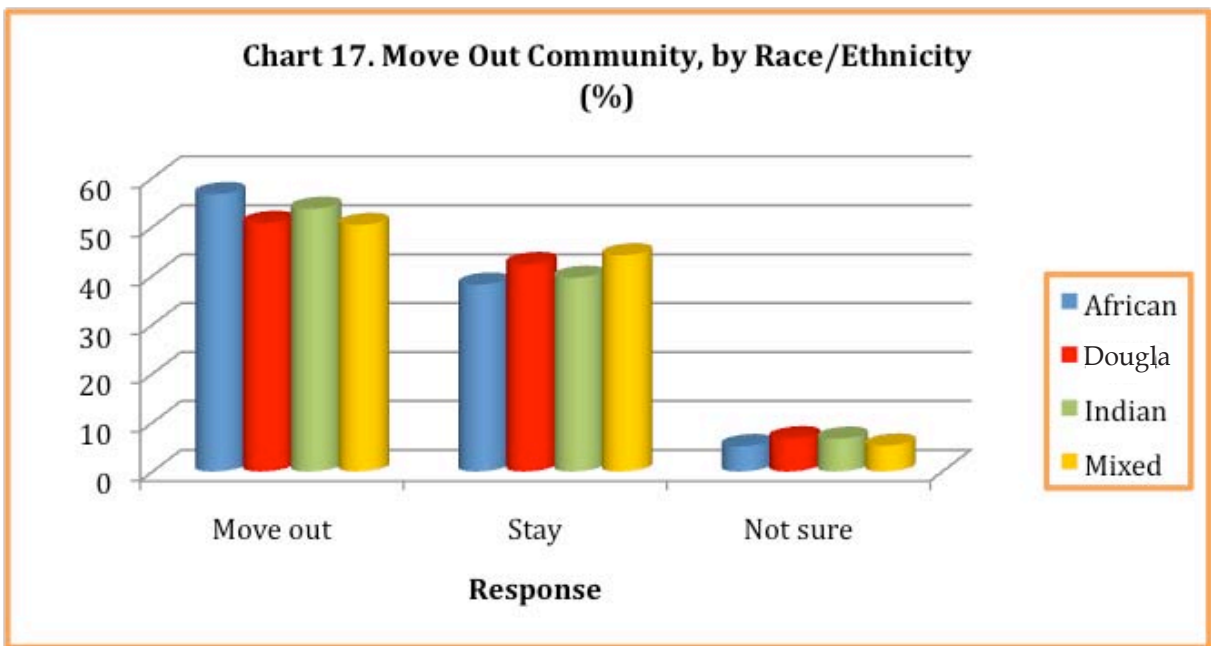
However, although a majority across gender and race/ethnicity expressed satisfaction with their present standard of living and were optimistic towards the future, it was important to note that a majority would move out of their community if they get the opportunity to do so. In terms of gender, females were more inclined to move out as a majority or 60.7% expressed this preference compared to males (48.4%) by 12.3 percentage points (Chart 16). The finding was also statistically significant at the .05 level

of significance. Alternately, more males or 46.1% were inclined to stay in their communities compared to 33.5% of females by a margin of 12.6 percentage points. We can only speculate as to the reasons for this gender difference which might be due to a host of factors. For instance, it could mean that males identify more strongly with their community; that they cannot leave out of fear of being attacked by rivals, or out fear of losing the particular rewards, benefits and protection that their community affords them.



However, no substantive difference was found by race/ethnicity in relation to moving out of the community as a majority across all groups expressed this desire (Chart 17), which was

led by Afro-Trinidadians (56.7%) followed by Indo-Trinidadians (53.7%), Douglas (50.8%) and Mixed (50.4%).



The examination by age revealed three major findings. Firstly, except among those 11-12 (45.6%), a small to moderate majority among those 13-14 (54.1%), 15-19 (57.7%) and 20-24

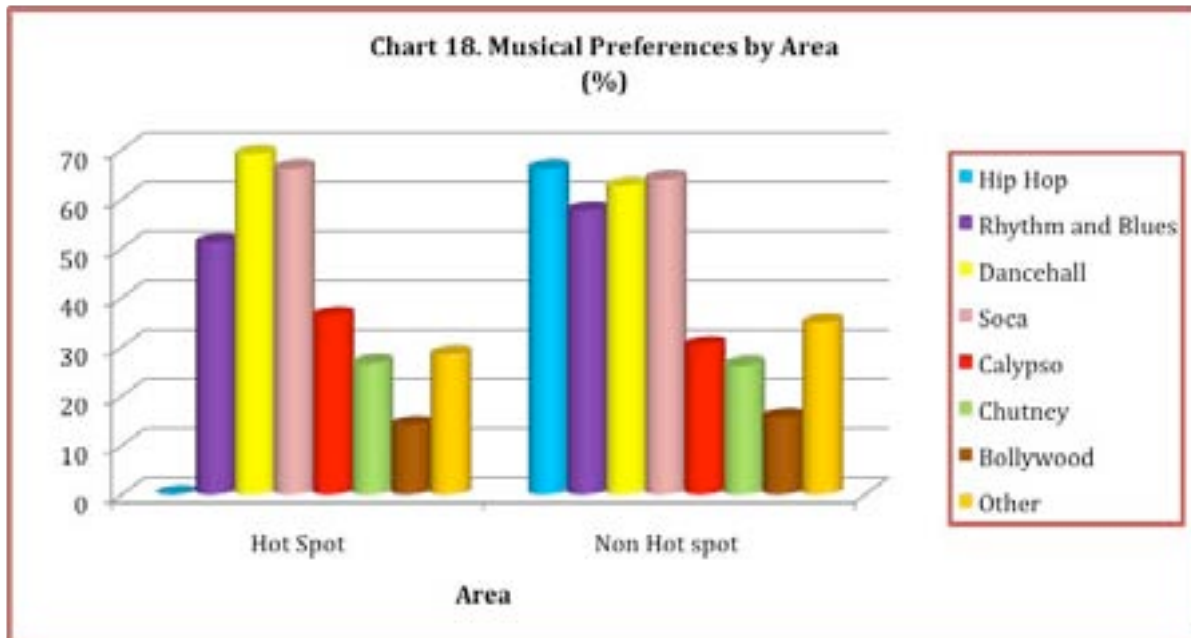
(62.1%) expressed a willingness to move out of the community. Secondly, the proportion of those willing to move out increased progressively the older the age group. Thirdly, the youngest

group (11-12) was less inclined to move out (45.6%) while the oldest group (20-24%) was more inclined to do so by some 16 percentage points. Fourthly, the corollary of these findings is that a varying minority across all age groups expressed a preference to stay in the community which was led by those 11-12 (48.5%), followed by those 13-14 (40.5%), 15-19 (35.6%) and 20-24 (32.8%). The variations on this question should help confirm the view that all youths are not the same and strategies for change need to be mindful of these differences.

### 5.1 - Music, Aggression and Crime

In order to explain the incidence of violence and aggression among contemporary youth, there has been a contested view or assertion that the music that they listen to might have a role to play in their behaviours with the three major musical culprits often identified being: dancehall, hip hop and soca music. In order to probe this perspective, respondents were first asked to indicate the various forms of music

that they listened to; secondly, indicate the two forms which they preferred the most and thirdly, whether they felt that the music they listened to made them aggressive or not. With respect to one and two, it should be noted that the question was not open ended as the respondents were provided with a list of seven musical forms from which to choose. In this regard, we found that across both hotspots and non-hotspots, there were four major musical forms (hip hop, rhythm and blues, dancehall and soca) which were listened to by a varying majority between 51.1% and 69% in both areas while the other three (calypso, chutney and Bollywood) were listened to by a varying minority between 14.1% and 36.3% (Chart 18). Of the four musical forms listened to the most, this was led by dancehall (69%), followed by soca (66.2%), hip hop (65.7%) and rhythm and blues (51.1%) in hotspots, while in non-hotspots, the corresponding order was hip hop (66.2%), soca (64.1%), dancehall (62.6%), and rhythm and blues (57.6%).



**G. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**



National Gender Policy Consultation on Masculinity 2004

Courtesy Patricia Mohammed Photo Library

**G-1-RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. There is an urgent need for integrated governance that in the long term will allow various Ministries and state agencies to collaborate on matters related to crime.
2. There is need for an Inter-Ministerial Committee with a mandate to deal with recommendations from the Youth at Risk Committee as well as other measures contained in its National Planning Framework 2010-2014. This Inter-Ministerial Committee should have its own secretariat, and report to Parliament. Initiatives taken by the Inter-Ministerial Committee should have a budget to deal with disadvantaged communities.
3. There should be a comprehensive review and evaluation of all national social programmes to determine their effectiveness in reducing crime.
4. Drug Treatment Courts should be established in Trinidad and Tobago in the shortest possible time.
5. Mediation centres should be strengthened/ established especially in disadvantaged communities to help young people (11 to



25) manage and resolve the daily conflicts in their lives, supporting them to become leaders of positive change.

6. Policies should include both short-term and long-term measures that are specific,

measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound

7. Given its dangerous nature, the government and state must undertake/actively support the dangerous research on the organization of crime that attracts youth.



Location Shot for film *Coolie Pink and Green* at El Dorado Primary School      Courtesy Patricia Mohammed Photo Library

## G-2-PERSPECTIVES ON IMPLEMENTATION

As discussed throughout the report, we believe that a comprehensive and coordinated plan is essential for dealing with youth at risk, considering the complexity of the problem. We are aware that our report is being submitted at a point in time when the country faces economic challenges and when it must deal with multiple priorities. We are also alert to the fact that the Government working with its partners is best placed to determine the optimal timing and sequencing of our recommendations. However,

in light of the severity of the problems, we are hopeful that the Government will act proactively and give some considerations for priority implementation.

1. Inter-Ministerial Committee to deal with all recommendations of the Committee
2. National Service Scheme including service learning (See Appendix 3)
3. Refurbishment of all young offenders institutions especially the Youth Training Centre

4. The establishment of the Collaborative Child Development Programme and major diagnostic centre for remedial intervention prior to age five.
5. The establishment of student development centres in every educational district for serious offenders who are suspended from school.
6. The promotion and coordination of partnerships with foreign and local faith-based and secular NGOs working in the field of youth delinquency and crime prevention.

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# Appendices



## APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF INDIVIDUALS, INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

Adult Literacy Tutors Association, Brian Skinner	Morvant Laventille Improvement Organization (Lennox Smith)
Chief Education Officer, Acting	Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism
Chief Justice, Ivor Archie	Ministry of Community Development
Citizen’s Security Programme	Ministry of Education, Planning Division
Civil Society Work Group (Citizen Security Programme)	Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development
Clyde Harvey, Fr., Parish Priest, Holy Rosary Church (Roman Catholic)	Ministry of the People and Social Development
Community-Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme	Ministry of Sport
COSTAATT	Multi-Sector Skills Training Programme, Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education
CREDO	MYPART and MILAT
Crime and Problem Analysis Branch, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	National Drug Council
De Living Room Youth, Family Planning Association	National Entrepreneurship Development Company Ltd.
Deputy Commissioner of Police	National Parent/Teacher Association
Family Court	National Training Agency
Franklyn Dolly and Associates	National Youth Council
Golden Grove Prison and Remand Prison	Non Governmental Organization- Education Discussion Group
Head, Student Support Services	Office of the Prime Minister
Helen Drayton, Independent Senator	Port of Spain Magistrate’s Court
Helping Youth Training Employment Programme, Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education)	Public Information Division, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
Karl Muckette.	Rubadiri Victor
Leslie Ann Whiteman	SERVOL

St. Jude's School for Girls  
St. Mary's Children's Home  
St. Michael's School for Boys  
The Caribbean Association for Feminist  
Research and Action  
Tobago House of Assembly  
Trinidad and Tobago Alliance for Sport and  
Physical Education  
Trinidad and Tobago Film Company

Trinidad and Tobago Police Academy  
Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service  
Unemployment Relief Programme  
Vena Jules  
Vision on Mission  
Wayne Patrick Jordan – Founder of School  
Youth Training Centre  
Youth Training & Employment Partnership  
Programme Ltd.

## **APPENDIX 2 – LIST OF HOTSPOTS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AS IDENTIFIED BY PRIME MINISTER, KAMLA PERSAD BISSESSAR DURING THE 2011 STATE OF EMERGENCY**

### **The City of Port of Spain**

St. James East  
St. James West  
Woodbrook  
Northern Port of Spain  
Belmont East  
Cocoyea/Tarouba  
Les Efforts East/Cipero  
Les Efforts West/La Romain  
Marabella East  
Marabella South/Vistabella  
Marabella West  
Mon Repos/Navet  
Pleasantville  
Spring Vale/Paradise

### **The Borough of Arima**

Calvary  
Arima North East  
Arima West  
Arima Central  
Malabar  
Tumpuna  
O'Meara

### **The Borough of Chaguanas**

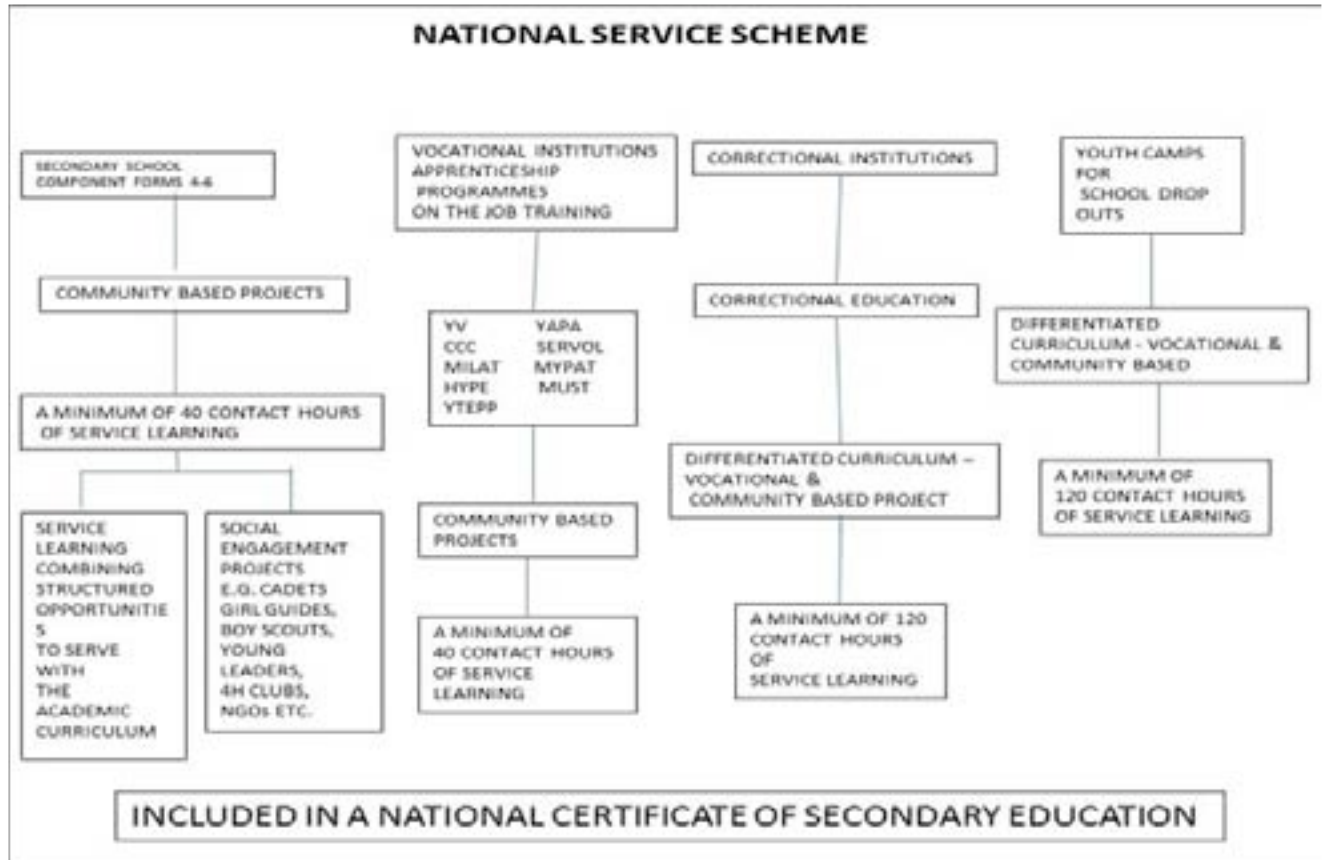
Charlieville  
Edinburgh/Longdonville  
Enterprise North  
Enterprise South  
Cunupia  
Montrose

Felicity/Endeavour	Petit Bourg/Champ Fleurs/Mt. Lambert
Munroe Road/Caroni Savannah	San Juan East
The San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation–	The Diego Martin Regional Corporation -
Maracas Bay/Santa Cruz/La Fillette	Chaguaramas/Glencoe
Febeau/Bourg Mulatresse	Goodwood/La Puerta
Morvant/Upper Malick	Covinge/Richplain
San Juan West/Caledonia	Diamond Vale
St. Ann’s/Cascade/Mon Repos West	Morne Coco/Alyce Glen
St. Barb’s Chinapoo	Petit Valley/Cocorite
Beetham/Picton	St. Lucien/Cameron Hill
Success/Trou Macaque	Belle Vue/Bossiere #1
Aranguez/Warner Village	Moka/Bossiere #2
Barataria	

**APPENDIX 2.1 – SOME HIGH RISKS PILOT COMMUNITIES OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION’S CITIZEN SECURITY PROGRAM: TRINIDAD**

Beetham Gardens	Enterprise, Chaguanas
Cocorite	Farm Road, St. Joseph
Covigne Road, Diego Martin	Gonzales, Belmont
Dibe/Belle Vue/Dundonald Hill	La Romaine
Embacadere, San Fernando	Mon Repos, Morvant

## APPENDIX 3- NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME





## **NARRATIVE PORTRAITS:** Compendium of papers





## Chairman's Acknowledgements

This collection of papers is an attachment to the Executive Report of the Youth at Risk Committee and presents the full research findings. They comprise individual essays written by each member of the Committee and include the findings of a national survey on "Youth at Risk" undertaken in sites that are deemed crime hotspots and non-hotspots areas. The research sought to address a number of questions: what social characteristics lead some young males of Trinidad and Tobago, lemming like, to perform at levels considerably lower than expected, given the opportunities available to them? What does this say about the post-independence opportunities for self-actualization, proud nation-building, and the goals articulated in the twenty/twenty vision for national development? What does increased youth criminality say about the failure of two earlier generations to provide ample role models and institutional supports to guide the current generation?

In researching and preparing this report, we were obligated to many persons and stakeholders. Firstly, we owe a debt to the persons who helped us to access the funds which were required from Cabinet to allow us to begin work on the project. Particular thanks in this regard were due to Samraj Harripaul of the Office of the Attorney General and Mr Reynald Cooper, Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister. We are also grateful to Professor Patrick Watson who kindly agreed to allow us to use the facilities of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute

of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) for our regular meetings, and an office to house our secretariat. We are deeply indebted to Ms. Petal Thomas who agreed to serve as secretary/consultant without receiving any remuneration for the five months before funding was available. Unfortunately, Ms. Thomas had to leave us to take up another appointment in New York. Her services were missed.

Thanks are also due to Dr Roy Mc Cree, Fellow at SALISES, who worked with us to produce the questionnaire for the Opinion Survey and writing-up of the results of the Survey. Dr Mc Cree also worked closely with HHB @Associates Ltd and Mr Louis Bertrand who designed the sample and executed the field work and assisted in editing the document. Deep appreciation, also, to Gloria Lawrence who assisted me in typing my essays.

During the course of our research, we visited several institutions and officials who provided valuable services and information. Most are listed in our Executive Report.

Personally, I wish to record my deep appreciation for the expertise in the preparation of the report provided by Prof. Patricia Mohammed, Dr Marjorie Thorpe and my co-chair, Dr Indira Rampersad, who also assisted in editing the compendium of papers. Finally, I wish to thank Dr Lennox Bernard who never faltered in the energy and expertise which he brought to bear on the problems facing our educational system.



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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **RACE, ETHNICITY AND GENDER: THE CRIME QUESTION**



# THE STATE OF EMERGENCY AND YOUNG BLACK MALES

*Selwyn Ryan*

The State of Emergency (SOE) which was put in place with much drama on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 shocked and traumatized the sensibilities of the community and served to focus national attention on young black males. Many saw them as being the “cause” of Trinidad’s national predicament. Hundreds of cowering young men, mainly black, and wearing oddly fitting pants were arrested and herded into police vehicles to be carted like sheep to makeshift detention centres. What had given rise to this dramatic development? Were young black males an endangered or near extinct species? Who or what was to blame for these developments?

A widely held view was that the drug trade was the tap root of the evil that plagued and beset the country, and that the gangs which had proliferated in the past few years were at the epicenter of the turf wars that were breaking out all over the country in so called “hot spots.”

The Prime Minister noted that 11 murders had been committed on just one day, and speculated that the spike in the murder rate was related to the disappearance of some TT\$20m from the drug trade. The Prime Minister told Parliament that the government could not sit idly by in the face of the blood that was being shed. One had to act to prevent the on going crime spree. The eleven murders in a day constituted the “breaking point.”

The Minister of National Security blamed the crisis on the drug trade which he declared was the “prime driver” of crime in Trinidad and Tobago and the region. It was, he said, the best example of the “free market” at work”.

It was truly international in its reach. The Caribbean was seen as a prime transshipment point from which drugs were distributed to larger metropolitan areas from South America to North Atlantic. The guns entered through the same routes as the drugs and was fostering the spread of crime, armed violence, money laundering, addiction and broken families, all of which posed a critical challenge to the region’s safety (*Newsday*, September 14, 2011)

The Prime Minister expressed similar views, but put particular blame on her predecessor in government, Mr Patrick Manning, who had made deals with gang leaders whom he had baptized as “community leaders.” Manning allegedly “wined, dined, and feasted” with the drug lords who were seen as “heroes” and virtually given a share of state power and funds sourced from various “make work” programmes. The Prime Minister complained that “the decision to negotiate with criminal elements in exchange for political support set off a dangerous course of events from which the country is still reeling today....You have ceded constitutional power and legal authority to the gang leaders. How can any government sit and talk about coexisting with criminals?” (*Newsday*, Sept 6 2011)

Mr Manning explained that he was not in fact sharing power, but was adopting a different strategy for dealing with the gang leaders with whom he held negotiations. He would get the gang leaders to negotiate and agree among themselves as to how the turf and the booty would be shared. He would give them incentives to resolve the problem themselves!

The Prime Minister also replied to critics who had accused her government of “profiling” blacks who were picked up by the security forces in the wake of the State of Emergency as being persons belonging to a “gang.” The Prime Minister counter charged that this was a “mischievous attack on the security services,” who were using the same “hot spot” maps that were used by the PNM for locating and charging persons who were engaging in illegal activity. The critics had complained that gang members who were based in “hot spots” occupied by gangs of Indo and other ethnic origin were not being picked up. This was indeed the case, but what in fact happened was that the police were familiar with the gangs and their memberships and sought “fishes” where they were more easily caught.

The Prime Minister counter accused the opposition, telling them that it was the PNM leadership which had neglected to deal seriously with the problem when they were in office. As she said provocatively, “although the PNM identified as early as 2003 that there was a problem with young Afro males and a consequent need to pay attention to this group, it did nothing. If the PNM had done something about the problem, its members would not have to cry now, some eight years later, that this was profiling and targeting Afro-Trinidadians male.”

The Prime Minister also noted that when Minister Sandy laid bare before Parliament the ethnic statistics on the incidence of homicidal crime, she “felt it in her stomach,” and wondered, “what could we do?” It was in this context that a team of analysts led by Professor Selwyn Ryan was appointed “to enquire [into] the root cause of the problem identified as shown by the statistics.” The statistics revealed that the majority of murders were committed by Afro-Trinidadians who were also the main homicidal victims. Minister Sandy noted that there was a “black on black” pattern to the homicides. Between 2006 and 2010, there were 2300 murders of which 1668 or 70.3 were Afro-Trinis. Of the 390 persons who were murdered in 2006, 228 or 51 per cent were Afros. In 2007, 391 were murdered of which 306 were Afros; of the

547 murdered in 2008, 427 were Afro. The pattern was the same in 2009. Of the 506 murders, 383 were Afros while in 2010, of the 473 who were killed, 320 Afros were murdered’ (September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011).

The leader of the parliamentary opposition, Dr Keith Rowley apologized for the PNM’s earlier failure to act when the matter of the “Little Black Males” was brought to Parliament in 2003. “It was cowardice,” he conceded. “The very same young black males are now deemed to be “too far gone,” and their neighbourhoods labelled as hot spots.... But the [truth] was that the PNM did not implement [the policies] because they tried to please the Opposition.... And the moral of the story is that the Government of the time should have had the courage and conviction to stand by that [affirmative action] programme”. (*Express*, September 5, 2011). It is however doubtful that the policies referred to would have been enough to prevent what was taking place. The incidence of violent gang related crime had increased quite dramatically, and Trinidad was in fact been described in some reports as the “murder capital of the world.” This was not literally the case. Trinidad was behind Jamaica, Mexico, Venezuela, Honduras, Nicaragua, and many American cities.

Many theoretical explanations have been offered by criminologists, other analysts and policy practitioners for the phenomenon. The explanations were speculative, subjective, and sharply contested. Some urged tough minded suppression involving extended periods of incarceration, while others stressed what they deemed to be “holistic” alternatives. The latter argued that the problem was driven by demography, history, poverty, alienation and other structural and cultural factors. Atlantic slavery was also said to be a contributory factor.

Given the plethora of explanations offered, and the fact that practice is often informed by theory, demography and ideology, even if unconsciously, it was felt that there was need to understand the phenomenon from other perspectives, focussing on the young black males who seemed to require special attention. This

was the point that Dr Rowley and Mr Imbert had made in 2003 and which had not been pursued. Minister Sandy's analysis seem to indicate that one had to identify those solutions or combinations of policies which the PNM had tried and which had failed completely or those which had not been tried at all or only cursorily. Where failure was seen as being evident, there was need to determine whether the policies ought to be reengineered or abandoned completely, and if so, what was to be put in their place. All of these goals were indicated in our Terms of Reference which were broad. In hindsight, they were much too broad; we however felt that we could not understand the young black male unless we looked at his genealogy, his social and economic history beginning with emancipation, the physical spaces in which he lived, went to school, worshipped, worked, hustled, limered, partied, became a parent, consumed or sold drugs, went to prison, voted, the various ethnic groups with which he had to interact over time, and the structures and institutional networks within which he had to function. All these activities served to construct his identity, or more accurately, his various identities as they revealed themselves through the prism of race, class, and gender.

As we pursued our research, we became firmly convinced that the problems facing our

inner city could not be solved overnight by crafting or importing crime plans, throwing money, security uniforms and fast boats at the problem. Nor can they be solved by gimmicks meant to "distract the people" in the hope that the gangs and the threats which they pose will disappear. They won't! The gangs are here to stay since for many, they constitute social capital which was leached from other parts of the system. We are facing a crisis of trust which is serving to undermine the pillars of good governance. We recall the famous words of Thomas Hobbes, the English philosopher who argued that when the Leviathan, the "mortal god" fails, and cannot provide the security for which men gave up their natural rights, the people are entitled to resort to self help and opt to return to a "state of nature" in which "the life of man is poor, nasty, brutish and short." For many who are trapped in criminal gangs as opposed to neighbourhood type alternatives, life is already controlled by bandits and has become "nasty, brutish and short." One is not being alarmist when one warns of the spread of the phenomenon of the narco-state in Mexico, South America and Central America which have the resources to capture the formal structures of the existing state which it hollows out and controls in all but name.

# MASCULINITY, CRIME AND YOUTH AT RISK: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

*Patricia Mohammed*

## Introduction

The link between masculinity and crime predates this era. Nonetheless, men have conventionally been viewed as the sex more likely to be involved in criminal activities. When we think of crime today there is an additional and very disturbing element of concern - that a significant number of young men are involved in criminal and illegal activities at all levels. Those who are immediately affected by the young men engaged in criminal or illegal activity of any sort, as well as the youth themselves suffer considerably in different ways. Some authors have gone so far now as to describe the youthful male population as "the missing generation" (Bailey and Charles, 2008). Thus the population at risk is not only that of the young men, but it may be the future of an entire society.

The fundamental reason put forward for a destabilized and disenfranchised younger masculinity that may turn to crime is embedded in the ideas that have circulated and continue to circle on the marginalization of men in the society. Many of these ideas are contained in the fictional literature of the Caribbean, are discussed in various media and are part of the everyday understanding of youth behaviour. Of course this is also blended with a good dose of commonsense attitudes about all youth - that youth are unmindful of dangers and the readiness of mortality, that they are ignorant of the implications of a life of crime for their futures, that youth are by nature risk takers, that the "youth of today just want easy money without working hard for it" and that young men must learn from experience also pervades the popular notions that are discussed on talk shows, rum shops, classrooms and over dinner

tables. In Trinidad, the differences and potential for different classes or ethnic groups of young men to make something of themselves has been for the past decades a recurrent subject of concern as the trends in Trinidad are parallel with other societies like Jamaica where there is a significant black population. What is rarely discussed analytically other than in gender circles or among academic researchers, is that gender role expectations of male and female in society have set up men as the providers, protectors and authority figure and women as the carers and nurturers. To fulfil the role of provider and protector and to live out the cultural expectations of masculinity in the eyes of other men, have according to theoretical explanations, created profound burdens on those who cannot meet these expectations. In addition to and building on gender theories of differences between the sexes, the marginalization theory provides a reason as to why black men in particular have not been able to be good fathers, adequate providers, protectors or role models for their sons. Nor have they according to the marginalization thesis been equipped to achieve a confident gender identity that withstands the slings and arrows of misfortune, or the stings of peer group pressure. Yet women seemed to have achieved this despite experiencing a similar history. In a recently completed Ph.D thesis on the knowledge economy of feminism and gender studies over the last four decades, Tonya Haynes raises a very pertinent question "What is troubling, is that Afro-Caribbean masculinity is presented as an incipient fragile thing, vulnerable to emasculation by any assertion of black female liberation. Hilary Beckles argues that slavery denied Caribbean men access to

patriarchal masculinity but socialized them into hetero-patriarchal values. Beckles is indeed correct that black men under slavery could not access patriarchal masculinity. However, his analysis conceals an implicit assumption that patriarchal masculinity should be the birthright of all males and that the absence of it is collectively damaging to men and to community” (Haynes, 2012).

By retaining the idea of an unchanging patriarchy that is accustomed to and only able to function with power over women and over other men, it follows as a critique, that the marginalization thesis also holds both masculinity and femininity as identities that must remain relatively fixed over centuries regardless of changes in technology, enlightened gender consciousness and ideas of equality. This critique has not been understood or appreciated as widely nor gained similar popular foothold. Ideas in gender are admittedly difficult to accommodate. Gender beliefs and symbolisms are firmly entrenched. The biological script of maleness and femaleness is supported by a parallel set of attributes attached to each sex that are themselves maintained by a range of social and cultural institutions and networks. People feel far more secure knowing that there is a rightful place for both sexes and that both sexes have a specific role in production of goods and services, in the reproduction of the species, and in the care and protection of new generations. When these set of ideas are challenged and a natural progression of continuous change and development is presented, then the natural seems “at risk”. People become fearful of consequences for the future, although the concrete nature of this fear is never really articulated.

The predominance of young men engaging in anti-social behaviour such as criminal activities, belonging to gangs, drug abuse, being violent to their women is, however, understandably, very disturbing to populations. As a real problem that is manifested at present and that we must seek its causal explanations as well as find solutions is taken as given. While we enumerate and dissect the causes of young male criminality and examine its cost to the nation and to a process

of development that is deemed to enhance the quality of human life in a society, the subjects of this review – the young men involved in crime themselves or those who are perceived as criminals, remain statistical entries rather than real young men whose misfortunes or illegal acts affect many around them. To begin this review I draw on several case studies between 2009 and 2012 from Trinidad and Tobago newspapers to be able to fully consider the “youth” who are at risk. Since they are drawn from the newspapers, they have tended to be ones associated with homicides which are generally highlighted in the print media. The case studies how young men are also sometimes the unwitting victims, while at other times, they are heavily involved. The reasons why these are used for this general review is that they are culled from journalistic entries which are a primary source through which the general population understands the issues surrounding crime and the perpetrators of crime.

**Case Study 1:** Headlined *Bloody weekend* by the *Trinidad Express*, Monday, June 15 2009, journalists Onika James and Marissa Williams wrote that seven murders — six in Trinidad and one in Tobago — had been committed between Friday and Sunday of that week. This figure brought the total number of murders committed so far for 2009 to 253, with just over half of the year 2009 ending.

*The bloody weekend began with four murders between Friday night and Saturday morning. The victims are 18-year-old Israel Mayhew of Romain Lands, Morvant; Jevon Simms, 16, of New Grant, Princes Town; Darren Grant, 32, of Nimblet Street, Enterprise in Chaguanas and Brian Mathura, 47, of Surrey Village, Lopinot. The death of Mayhew, police have already described as a case of “mistaken identity”. Police said at about 6.15 pm on Friday, Mayhew was at Eastern Quarry, just off Pump Trace in Laventille when he was gunned down. Simms was gunned down at about 7.10 pm Friday while in the company of fish vendor Paul Chester, at a parlour in Sixth Company Village. Police said three masked men approached Simms and Chester and shot them both. Simms died on the spot, while Chester remains warded. Grant, a PH taxi*

driver was killed in the garage of his Chaguanas home. According to police, the incident occurred at about 4.20 am on Saturday. Grant's wife told police she heard several loud explosions. Grant was rushed to hospital but died on arrival. And at 5 am, Mathura, a barber, was stabbed to death on the compound of Lopinot Drugs in Arouca. Police sources said they are expecting a very busy day today at the Forensic Science Centre where autopsies are expected to be carried out on the murder victims.

Half an hour before Munroe was gunned down, Tobago recorded its seventh murder for the year when a 42-year-old welder of Old Clarke Road in Barrackpore was found bludgeoned to death. According to police reports, Kooldip Maharaj aka "Rishi" Maharaj arrived in Tobago earlier on Saturday and was staying at a house at All Fields Crown Trace in Lowlands. Police said residents reported hearing a loud commotion at about 9.30 pm and on checking, saw Maharaj's body on a bed with the claw end of a pig-foot (a heavy metal tool in the shape of an inverted "j") smashed into his face near the jaw. Witnesses told police they saw a 47-year-old man leaving the scene of the crime. This man has since been arrested. No motive was given for the murder.

The sixth murder took place when at 11 pm on Saturday, police found the body of Quasi Munroe, 21, in a pool of blood at Branch Trace in El Socorro. According to police, Munroe was wanted in connection with two murders but they could not say if him being wanted for those murders was the reason for his murder. An hour before his body was found, police said, residents had reported hearing gunshots from near his apartment home at Bourg Terrace, Barataria. His brother Jason Munroe claimed Quasi was not involved in any murder. He also claimed the police turned away an ambulance from the scene of the shooting even while his brother was still alive. "When the police arrived on the scene, my brother was still breathing. The ambulance arrived soon after. The police told the paramedics that the man done dead and don't bother to come out of the ambulance. But he was still alive," Munroe said.

Yesterday, Kevin Crichlow aka "Alley Cat" was shot and killed near his Port-of-Spain home. According to police, at about 11.15 am, Critchlow and Dean Dubary were at the home of their friend Ted Superville at McShine Lands, East Dry River, Port-of-Spain watching television when two gunmen stormed the house and opened fire. Dubary and Superville scampered to safety while Crichlow was shot several times and died instantly. Crichlow's mother Carol Critchlow, who lives a short distance away, made it clear to police and reporters that, "My son ain't no gang member or bandit." She described him as hardworking and one who liked to earn his own money. The grieving woman shouted to reporters, "My son used to work as a security guard at Angostura Ltd. When they sent them home about a month ago, he got a job in the URP. This was his second fortnight. He used to work for his own money and when he did not have any, I would give him. He did not have any children. He was a good man and was not affiliated with any gang."

Of the seven men, four were 21 years or age or below and none over 50. Six of these were of African descent, and six of the murders were carried out in Trinidad. Apart from one murder carried out with a heavy tool, the rest of the men were all killed by gun shots, with the murderers escaping. The reasons for the crimes are never clear. Family members are always shocked by the circumstances of these deaths. But Kevin Crichlow's nickname, "Alley Cat" gives one pause, despite his mother's understandable protestation.

Case Study Two gives more insight into the background of the murdered young man. Reported in the *Trinidad Express* on 6 February 2011 by Keino Swambe, Jevon Simms a 16-year-old murdered was deemed to have predicted death by the gun.

Sixteen-year-old Jevon Simms told a relative last week that he was destined to die by a gun. These words came true on Friday night when Simms was gunned down a short distance away from his home at Church Street, Sixth Company Circular, New Grant. Left nursing gunshot wounds is Simms' 25-year-old friend Paul Chester of



*Beckles Trace, Penal. Police believe Chester might have been the intended target of the three masked gunmen who walked up to him and Simms and started shooting. Simms was shot in his back and abdomen and died on the spot while Chester was shot in his chest, abdomen and left foot. It was only in October last year that Chester narrowly escaped an attempt on his life when he was shot in his right leg while at Church Street, Penal. Angela Simms, mother of the dead youth, told Sunday Express yesterday that she last saw Jevon, the fifth of her nine children, at around 7.30 a.m. on Friday. "He bathe and told me he going up on the block to lime," Angela said. "The next time I saw him he was dead on the road." The distraught mother said she was cutlassing some grass in her yard when her nephew called out to her and told her that Jevon was shot. "I leave and went in a car. When I gone I meet him lying down on the ground. I don't have any idea who would want to shoot him." Admitting that her son used to smoke marijuana, Angela said he was not one to interfere with people. The single mother described Chester as someone her son looked up to and loved. "He loved this mister because that is the life he always wanted. Last week he told his uncle he had to die by a gun. (It seems as if) he was done prepared for whatever was to come. But that is my child and I loved my child. I tried my best with him and I tried to keep him out of danger. You can love them but you can't choose their path sometimes. "I don't know if I could move on," Angela said before bursting into tears.*

*Angela said in order to provide for her children, who now range between eight and 26 years, she used to travel to the United States of America where she would work and send money back to Trinidad. "I fight and I mind them. I now have to find money to bury him and you (the shooter) sit down home safe?"*

There is no father figure in this tale, and a mother who has had nine children for which she provided. Jevon appears to have a 25 year old male role model who seemed to have been the prime target of the shooting.

Case Study Three was carried in the *Newsday* and headlined "Pharmacist shoots robber" on Wednesday, January 25 2012

*An intruder who broke into the home of a pharmacist was shot and killed by the pharmacist who used his licensed firearm to carry out the act. The dead man remained unidentified up until late yesterday, but police described him as being of African descent, and in his early 30s. According to police reports, at about 2.45 am yesterday — Garvin Sobie, 33 of Cherrie Drive, Edinburgh 500, was asleep when a cutlass-wielding bandit entered his house and announced a hold-up. It is alleged that as the robber began to ransack Sobie's bedroom in search of money and jewelry, he ordered Sobie to turn over other valuables. It is reported, as the bandit attempted to chop Sobie, Sobie drew his licensed firearm and fired two shots hitting the man in his chest. It is reported that the bandit ran out of the house and collapsed in Sobie's yard, where he died. Officers of the Chaguanas Police Station were alerted and district medical officer, Dr St Bernard visited the scene and pronounced the unidentified man, dead. As officers emptied the bandit's pockets, several items belonging to Sobie were retrieved. Police officers are appealing to members of the public for help in identifying the body of the man. Anyone with information can contact the nearest police station.*

The *Trinidad Express* had more details on the murdered man as reported by Susan Mohammed on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Mohammed reported that the Nicholas Saunders, 21, who police said lived a life of crime. Saunders was identified through the fingerprint database of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. He was reported to have two addresses, Arima and Carapichaima, and several outstanding warrants for break-ins and robberies at the Freeport Police Station. He also had 15 pending matters before the courts for similar matters and previously spent time in jail.

The Blog entries to the *Express* newspaper reports give an insight into popular opinion on young men and crime.

### **Blog entry - Short-lived?**

This career bandit had "several outstanding warrants for break-ins and robberies, 15 pending matters before the courts for similar matters and previously spent time in jail." All at the ripe age of 21.

This guy has to be the perfect example of "criminals starting young" mentioned by the police earlier.

### **Blog entry -Wisdom 4U**

15 pending matters before the courts- Had the justice system been working properly, perhaps this would not have reached to this stage that he was shot. It also brings into perspective the thought of whether the prison reform system is working or not, or is functioning like a motel for criminals who want a place to stay and some food. At 21 years and so many offences - something wrong with the present system.

Case Study Four, *Trinidad Express*, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012 by Gyasi Gonzales was headlined - 2 men shot dead, left in car Cops: Man seen running into getaway vehicle:

*Two men were shot approximately ten times each and their bodies left in a car parked along a secluded roadway in Lopinot yesterday afternoon, bringing the year's murder toll to 123, according to the murder toll compiled by the Express. According to police investigators on the scene yesterday, around noon, residents of McDavid Trace, Surrey Village, Lopinot, found a blue Mitsubishi Lancer (PCA 7586) with the bullet-riddled bodies of the two men. The car was parked in front of a gate leading to a large estate in the area. Up to press time last night, the men had not been identified. (They were identified in later press releases as Ashton "Bobo" Douglas, 26, and Hayden Williams, 28).*

*They were described as being of African descent... Residents told reporters they did not hear any gunshots, and they speculated the men may have been shot elsewhere and their bodies brought to the area and left there.*

*Police however said they had information that two cars (including the Lancer) were seen driving*

*through the area. The Lancer was left parked on the road, and a man was seen running away from the car and into the other vehicle which then sped off.*

### **Blog entries**

Good Lord everyday is murder, the magnitude of this crime, is very vicious, both men were shot 10 times. Those killers clearly wanted to convey, a serious message, Here. It is very disturbing how these youth are killing each other, like this.

### **Lost trini**

Life has become a video game, our young people are lost. Think the police solving this one? what is their detection rate?

### **Proud proud trini**

Since I know the 2 victims of this crime I will comment on this. Firstly the 2 victims were already identified apart from Newsday giving a wrong name for one of them. These 2 are known drug dealers from my community. One of them recently served time in jail and was released approximately 2 months ago and also have a case pending in another court. The 2 are jointly charged for a firearm offense and had a court hearing yesterday morning, then left to go purchase 'drugs' from whoever. This surely is a drug deal gone wrong but this is the life they lived and this is what eventually will happen. I am stating facts so who vex loss. Nevertheless, R.I.P Aston and Marvin.

Case Study Five brings in the point of view of the family and the tragic impact on their lives. Cecily Asson reported in the *Sunday Newsday* June 17 2012 about a family hit by double tragedy.

*A woman who went to view the body of her nephew, who was earlier shot dead and left lying on the side of the road in Moruga on Friday night, collapsed and died within minutes of arriving on the murder scene. Relatives believe the shock of the killing of Anton Sambury, 26, was too much for his aunt, Hazel George, 48, who lived a short distance away from the murder scene. She along with relatives had hurried to the crime scene when they received the news. According to a police report, at about 11 pm on*

Friday, Sambury, a hunter of Bonyon Trace, St Mary's Village, Moruga, was shot dead by an unknown gunman while on his way home from liming with friends in the village. A relative told police he and Sambury had just parted ways when he heard several gunshots. Upon checking, Sambury was found lying at the side of the road bleeding from gunshot wounds to the head and body. He died on the spot. As news spread of the incident, George, a general worker employed at Bermudez Biscuit Company Limited, left her St Mary's Village, Moruga home in the company of her husband, Santos George, and scores of other relatives and friends and rushed to the scene. According to relatives, on seeing the body, George suddenly began coughing and complaining of chest pains, saying she was unable to breathe. She also began to froth at the mouth. Relatives placed her in a vehicle and rushed her to the Princes Town District Health Facility, where she was pronounced dead on arrival. It is believed George suffered a massive heart attack. "Two dead in one family is really hard," said Sambury's mother, Monica, who was inconsolable when Sunday Newsday visited her home yesterday.

The double tragedy has left the St Mary's Village, Moruga community in a state of disbelief. Both Sambury's mother Monica, 46, and his wife of three years, Meranda, said they were puzzled over his killing. Monica said on Friday he left her home at about 7.30 pm and went to his home at Bonyon Trace. "Although he is married, he was always home by me and dressed from here. He asked for \$50 but I gave him \$40. He talked to his father (Leo Sambury) about a hunt he went on the other night. He was a good child. He was not in anything and always involved in something positive," she said, adding when he was not hunting he worked in construction with his father-in-law Elleary Pitman. Meranda said she was at home when she got news of her husband's death and rushed out the road. She found him lying face down and bleeding from the head. He had earlier left her home with their eight-year-old daughter, Quonisha, watching wrestling on television. She said: "He didn't really want to go. He went to the door several times and turned back saying he didn't feel like going down the road. I told him not to go because he already

had a beer in his hand. ...We don't know where to look for answers in this one," she said. No arrests have been made. Officers of the Southern Homicide Unit and Moruga Police Station are investigating.

In an unrelated incident, police are seeking to identify the body of an East Indian man who was found dead at the side of the road in Claxton Bay yesterday. The body was found along Peake Road around 6.30 pm, police said.

The *Trinidad Express*, June 16 2012, seemed to have more information on why Anton Sambury may have been killed. Carolyn Kissoon wrote that Sambury had witnessed the murder of his cousin four months ago. Sambury's cousin, poultry farmer Randy De Coteau was gunned down by men dressed in camouflage clothing in February. De Coteau, 34, was sitting in his brother's front porch with relatives when a darkly-tinted Nissan Almera car pulled into the driveway. The gunmen ran in and opened fire on the men. Police believe Sambury was a target. Meranda Sambury's father Ellery Pitman said Sambury was not involved in any illegal activities. The *Sunday Guardian* reporter Sascha Wilson wrote on June 17 2012 that for the second time in one week a state witness had been shot dead. While Sambury had witnessed the murder of his cousin in Mandingo Road, Princes Town, the previous Sunday Collin Baptiste, a witness in a double murder, was gunned down in Duncan Village.

#### **Mandate of the Youth at Risk Committee**

Attempts to locate full explanation as to why young men predominate as criminals that are contained in the nature of masculinity and the rites of manhood is as good a starting point. In order to pursue this set of explanations to its logical conclusions, one also needs to ask, however, why are young women not similarly disempowered or de-stabilized and ranking high among youthful miscreants? While this review does not pursue that question, it remains central to a study of youth and crime.

As a result of the ascendancy of the marginality explanation in the popular imagination and in

scholarly or institutional research, the Youth at Risk Committee was charged under its *Terms of Reference* to review and assess the literature on the causes of male marginality in Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere in the Caribbean. To align this further with the Committee's undertaking with respect to crime and criminality, the analytical focus of this review is concentrated around the literature pertaining to masculinity, to the reasons proposed for male marginality and to the specific reasons why men in general, and young men in particular engage in crime and are drawn to criminal activity. The review scrutinizes the explanations proposed in order to see how these may help us to target the appropriate solutions for intervention into the problem of young men and crime. The review was conducted first by establishing a broad based list of references locally, regionally and internationally that has dominated and influenced the policies and practices of Governments, Organizations and Institutions in the Caribbean and elsewhere, with specific reference to male marginality, young male criminality and youth at risk populations.

A critical examination of the above involves not simply the academic review of the dominant studies, but an assessment of the impact they have had in shaping public perceptions and how people - professionals, media, the *vox populi* - discuss the problem of men and the problem of crime. Much of the popular debate centres around the lack of male role models in the home, the inadequate system of education that caters to the different gender needs of boys, the growing under performance of boys in the education system, the unrealistic cultural definitions and expectations of masculinity, the lack of opportunities available to young men for legal employment and the inability of the criminal justice system to cope with the magnitude of this problem. Sadly lacking in the literature that deals with youth and violence and a lacunae that looms larger as the review continues, is that while we deal with the supply of young males who are being prepared as it were for a life of risk taking, violence and crime, the demand that is created by a marketplace that requires a

steady supply of expendable humanity is rarely openly addressed and discussed.

### **Explanations on Male Marginality**

The idea that men are marginalized in society gained popularity through publications such as Errol Miller's *The Marginalization of the Black Male* (1986) and *Men at Risk* (1992). *Men at Risk* makes an attempt at a grand theory that embraces the position of all men in contemporary society although Miller centres his concern around the implications for and position of Caribbean masculinity, especially the black Caribbean male. He established a "marginalization hypothesis" that was easily convincing as an explanation for the current changes in gender and sexual relations. Women's increasing opportunities for education, employment, their higher earning capacity and improved symbolic status by the second half of the twentieth century allowed femininity to challenge the hold over men's patriarchal control of the past, thus changing the nature of patriarchy at present. Instead of a secure patriarchy, confident of its control over household, family and women, late twentieth century men began to fear that manhood itself was being challenged. What is interesting about this thesis in Miller's argument is that women have been granted these opportunities only because "patriarchs, men of the dominant group, in defending their groups' interests from challenges from the men of other groups in society, relaxed their patriarchal closure" (Jones 1992). In other words, women were merely allowed in by the dominant (read white male) patriarchs to ensure that other men, the black male upstarts who were working their way upwards from the working and middle classes into white collar occupations, becoming the teachers, managers and politicians would not be in a position to challenge those who had originally held power at the top.

This finding was consistent with the popular notions of the amazing strength and resilience of Caribbean femininity that had been the subtext of Caribbean history and colonial policies regarding women in society. The marginalization of black men in the family due

to the nature of plantation life during slavery and the role of men as labourers and stud rather than as parents or live-in partner in a distinctive family household setting had led to the label of the powerful woman who took the place of both mother and father. This feature of Afro-Caribbean family life is echoed in the title of the influential study by Edith Clarke *"My Mother who Fathered me"* (1957). Edith Clarke, an anthropologist looking at Jamaican family life, had found a predominance of households that were headed by women – thus the idea of male marginalization actually begins on two related beats in the Caribbean rhythmic narrative of gender. Black men are made marginal from power in the wider society as they are competing with the landowning elites and governing class of men, and they are also marginal to the family, not resident under the familial roof and thus without authority on offspring or women themselves. By the late fifties however, some of this is more hearsay and convenient repetition than based on real hard empirical fact. While Clarke had found that over fifty percent of the households in Jamaica were headed by women, by 1993, in a study on *Women as Heads of Households in the Caribbean: Family Structure Status* Jocelyn Massiah would show that female headed households were predominant only in societies that had a demographic prevalence of African descended populations. The percentage of female headed households in these societies varied between 25 and 40 percent per territory.

Societies like Trinidad and Guyana due to the influence of Indian populations and different family patters did not exhibit a large percentage of female headed households. At the same time in Trinidad and Tobago, the stereotype was applied to all African women and families, and legacies lingered for Afro-Caribbean families of all classes, although slowly patterns of family life were changing for all group. In a study carried out in several Caribbean territories in 1995 entitled *Caribbean Women at the Crossroads*, Mohammed and Perkins had found that male attitudes to their fathering role had in fact undergone change since the earlier centuries and decades. At the same time the central idea that childrearing and caring are female jobs

and women's responsibility had not shifted considerably. This was despite the fact that by the end of the twentieth century many women throughout the Caribbean were now working in jobs outside of the homes that were incompatible with housework and childcare around the clock. The facile statement that women are to blame for relinquishing their "god given roles" and for creating this generation of delinquent young men, needs to be dismissed. The majority of Caribbean women and men did not have the luxury to be stay at home wives, mothers, fathers or partners. The contemporary economic scenario has exacerbated this as the cost of living and the economic burdens of bringing up families, requires monetary contributions of both parents, whether or not both reside in the same household.

While Caribbean historiography and sociology have unfolded around a meta-narrative of male marginalization and female dominance, this discourse has differed for different ethnic groups and thus we have three competing explanations in the marginalization thesis. Various scholars have argued that not all men are marginalized from production, authority, power or influence. One of the critical contributions that has emerged in the theorizing in masculinity is that there is no single definition of masculinity or a homogenous masculinity that fits all men of all ages, ethnic groups or classes. In a pathbreaking work in 1993 following on the influential work of Robert Connell in *Gender and Power and Society* (1987), Rafael Ramirez argued in *What it means to be a man: Reflections on Puerto Rican Masculinity*, (in a similar argument to Miller's *Men at Risk*) that definitions and prescriptions for Puerto Rican masculinity that have centered around an aggressive machismo have been imposed by the United States colonial discourse through programmes of population control, rather than arising out of the Latino experience. Ramirez made the important observation that "while men as a class are powerful in Puerto Rican (and many other societies) we should recognize that not all men are powerful nor are all women equally subordinated" (Foreword). He underscores the fissures of social class, gender identities and

sexual orientation that create inequalities in access to power and resources. This point is fully supported for the wider Caribbean by Keith Nurse in “Masculinities in Transition: Gender and the Global Problematique” (2004). Nurse suggests that there are several masculinities that function within and for the purposes of the global capitalist system. In particular Nurse argues that white masculinity differs from black masculinity through varying socialization processes, resulting in the hegemony of one and the subordination of the other. In *Gender Negotiations among Indians in Trinidad 1917 to 1947*, Mohammed (2001) demonstrated that by the 1930s one could discern three clearly competing masculinities in Trinidad - a white dominance, an emerging coloured and black middle class and at the lowest end of the spectrum East Indian men who were the last major migrant group brought through an organized labour system in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus the idea of marginalization must first consider which group thinks that it is more marginalized than the other, or perhaps what the particular form of marginalization experienced means for the particular ethnic group or class of men.

The idea of differentiated and competing masculinities, even before it was theorized in academic studies on masculinity or gender studies, was already to be found in the fictional literature. Linden Lewis (1998) interrogates the novel *The Dragon Can't Dance*, written by Trinidadian novelist Earl Lovelace, and suggests that Lovelace uses the metaphor of the dragon, the costume donned by the main protagonist Aldrick in the yearly Carnival masquerade, as a mask which disguises his need to confront his own masculinity under poor, urban conditions in Trinidad. Lewis notes that in struggles between urban working-class men and women in the community of Calvary in Trinidad, the novelist teases out the different constructions of masculinity in the various characters he portrays, exploring how this construction is embedded in the contestations of identity, ethnicity, reputation and honor. While Aldrick and Fisheye, the latter a black working class hoodlum, both disenfranchised by urban poverty, are the central characters in Lovelace's

novel, Pariag, a rural Indian man who moves to the city to get away from his familial heritage is marginalized one step further. The Trinidadian stereotypes of masculinity are thus entrenched. Pariag moves away from the rural setting to get away from a controlling Indian family and he still occupies the lowest rung of the masculinity ladder in Trinidad and Tobago. Samuel Selvon's *A Brighter Sun*, though more sympathetic to his main protagonist the young Indian male Tiger's dilemma of being married at age 16 and having to become a man and father in the semi-urban space of Barataria in the 1950s, the novel retains the ideas firmly held in Trinidad that the black urban male was more streetwise and savvy and that a process of creolization, assimilation and transformation from Indian cultural norms were the desired goals of the Indian male to fit into this society.

The thesis on marginalization has undergone refutations and deconstructions by several scholars. Keisha Lindsay (2002) undermines Miller's work and the marginalization thesis through a methodological and theoretical deconstruction. On the other hand, Eudine Barriteau (2007), agrees that gender systems are unjust for both sexes and that this varies for the different sexes. She suggests however that in assessing the Male Marginalization thesis we need also to concretise what exactly this means by carefully examining the following:

- What are the policies, legislation, prejudices, practices that penalize or reward men?
- What are the deeply entrenched, policies of the state and its institutions that marginalize men?
- What are the contents and effects of the gender identities men subscribe to?
- What part do these play in expressions of masculinity that are viewed as problematic?

The ideas that have proliferated on male marginality have, nonetheless, served to usefully highlight the conditions that have prevailed among men as a sex. Furthermore it has usefully allowed the emergence of a stronger male voice in the gender debates that

were previously viewed as a “woman thing”. The marginalization of men persists as a thesis perhaps for several reasons. First recognising the existence of multiple masculinities does not mean that a hegemonic notion of masculinity does not prevail, or that one form or type of masculinity is not culturally exalted over another. Secondly, the capacity for a thesis to sustain its explanatory value usually means that it appeals to a real or imagined condition that people experience – this implies that many men do in fact feel marginalized in one way or another. The debates on male marginality have made way therefore for a spate of studies in the Caribbean on how men learn their masculinity, the contemporary conditions that men and boys experience in the households and a closer examination of the systems that were once available to men for power and upward mobility in a previous era, particularly in the education system. By the last decades of the twentieth century the declining proportion of males in education at all levels began to signal that some major changes had taken place to the conventional balance of the sexes under the patriarchal watch.

### **How Young Men Learn Their Masculinity and Gender Identity**

In 1987, examining sexual attitudes and practices among Barbadian men, Graham Dann chastises the main institutions of socialization in Barbados - the church, the schools and the family - for their failure to provide sufficient guidance to young males. He argued that this was one of the reasons why there were lower numbers of males than females pursuing tertiary education, and why men were led to become involved in sex tourism and promiscuity. Young people in general felt that the church was backward in its views on female subordination and male homophobia. Dann blames the system of elitist versus common schools which in his view had segregated youth rather than sexually educated them. He also suggested that the prevalence of single parent matriarchal families simply gave rise to the cycle of single-parent families, and therefore there was a lack of fathers and male role models in Barbadian society. Young men

were socialized mainly on the streets and bars, places where men gather, rather than in the homes, where girls were groomed for femininity. Thus younger men were ill prepared to learn their gender identity and role expectations as well as their sexuality.

Barry Chevannes findings over a decade later in *Learning to be a Man: Culture, Socialization and Gender Identity in Five Caribbean Communities* (2001) were similar to Dann’s study above on the problems caused by single-parent families, male promiscuity, homophobia and macho-ism particularly in the inner-city parts of Jamaica. Boys it was argued, have more distractions and temptations to contend with than girls, they are more easily sidetracked by sex, gangs, drug culture and street life and the desire to have a “bad-boy image”. In *Learning to be a Man*, a committed group of researchers study the micro-dynamic processes in the home and community through which boys understand their masculinity and the roles they are expected to perform as men. The study examined boy’s socialization in relation to girls in Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominica. What is valuable for us in this study is that it was one of the first to compare the socialization of Afro and Indo-Caribbean males which account for variations in their behaviour. This comparison showed that subordination of women and domestic violence as control is common to both groups, but that Indo-Caribbean women were more submissive than Afro-Caribbean women who fought back both verbally and physically. As expected therefore patriarchal rule and control was viewed as more effective in Indo-Caribbean households over both women and younger men. In the latter it was found the institution of marriage itself and two partnered households were central to family life, compared to the incidence of single parent matriarchal households among Afro-Caribbean households. Reviewing Chevannes’s study, Reuben Albo claimed that “In Afro-Caribbean culture the power exchange seemed to go in both directions. Women wanted a financially secure man who could primarily give them material things and men wanted sex. Some women did not care if their boyfriend had

other women as long as he provided money and women sometimes had more than one “money-provider” themselves. Thus he paints Afro-Caribbean women as having a more mercenary attitude to relationships. The study concludes that the process of becoming a man is far more challenging to boys than that of becoming a woman is to girls. Like Miller, Chevannes was among the most influential scholars in relation to the philosophies of why young men were traumatised in contemporary society and much of his activist interventions in Jamaica centered around the re-socializing of boys and men through Male organizations such as Fathers’ Incorporated which he spearheaded.

David Plummer and Stephen Geofroy’s article entitled “When Bad is Cool: Violence and Crime as Rites of Passage to Manhood” (2010) focuses primarily on masculinity in Trinidad and Tobago and looks at the range of ethnic groups and classes that comprise the population. They fully support the impact that peer groups have on the codes of masculinity that many boys aspire to and found that it is this group that plays a central role in policing which masculinities are considered acceptable. They draw attention to those masculinities that are not supported by the hegemonic machismo that is viewed as the norm. For instance one of their survey respondents noted: “I first realized my sexuality when I was seven years old but I never really paid any mind to it. But as you get older you realize people have less tolerance for people who were “confused” with their sexuality...that is when I started experiencing it as a bad thing, when other people had a problem with it...I went to a breaking point where I just did not know who I was”. (*NKO, aged 26; self-employed*). As Ramirez had noted, multiple masculinities existed. But there is a tendency for society to assume that they can all be pummelled into a generic form that satisfies an imagined ideal.

Miller’s thesis on the sidelining of different groups of men who do not quite fit, influenced a range of opinions particularly media opinion about the root of the problem. Writing in *The Gleaner* in 2003, Earl Bartley questions the parity between black male marginalization

and under-achievement and concludes that he even preferred to use the term male under-achievement as the issue of marginalized men for him was closely linked to the better performance of women in the educational system and the feminisation of teaching. In his view challenges faced by males were exacerbated by the absence of male role models and father figures from the school, the home, the strong homophobia within Jamaican culture and macho images of masculinity that continued to proliferate.

Another aspect of the media, in this case film and literature were also viewed as instrumental in shaping notions of desired masculinity. Gia Lyn Harewood examines three films “The Harder They Come”, “Third World Cop” and “Shottas” as well as the novels “The Harder They Come” and “For Nothing At All”. She argues that Jamaican masculinity is linked to gun violence and that the most popular Jamaican films perpetuated this image. Thus we have another media that is responsible for influencing the shape of a contemporary masculinity. Now the desired role models become the violent men in these films who are viewed as the successful ones as they can control and dominate others. With the increase in this media, and the spread of television in Jamaica clearly young men could not escape yet another dominant influence, this one more insidious. By and large, young men are presented as uncritical in their reception of media images.

### **Educational attainment and the “underachievement of males**

As Earl Bartley picked up above, the problem of increasing male drop outs from the education system, spiralling male delinquency in schools and a growing disregard for academic qualification among young men compared to young women, the latter manifested as male underachievement or under-performance, became the focus of attention on masculine gender identity by the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This point is fully supported by Rhoda Reddock, a scholar in gender who has focussed a great deal of attention in the area of masculinity, spearheading the first conference on the construction of masculinity in Trinidad in



1996 at the University of the West Indies through the (then) Centre for Gender and Development Studies. The phenomenon was a global one and could not be reduced to the specific conditions thought typical of the Caribbean such as emasculated blackness or dominant matrifocality. The Caribbean, however, presented some interesting statistics given the already paradoxical situation of women which placed them as central to the family but marginal to power in the wider society, especially at its higher echelons. Education and the access to and absorption of opportunities in education became the sounding board for examining gender differences, as perhaps foretold by Miller's study. Odette Parry had already demonstrated in a study of fourth forms in Jamaica, Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines that the subject of English was viewed as too effeminate and girlish for boys and that any inclination to academic learning was viewed by the male peer group as "nerdish" behaviour. (Parry, 2004). 'Schooling is Fooling': Why do Jamaican boys underachieve in school?" is one of Parry's titles in another publication on gender and education.

Mark Figueroa (2004) had perceived how this would challenge male progress in society. He argued that the work environment was increasingly being determined by educational competence, so that young men who did not achieve these competences would fall into the disadvantaged group. Thus the question of what menu of offerings the education system was now rendering up to change the new demands of masculinity needed to be examined carefully. In other words as the demands of the workplace changed to require education both of basic competencies as well as a range of skills, the specific needs or propensities of boys versus girls were in the view of some educationalists, not being taken into account. Girls were able to focus better at an earlier age according to the studies, they matured earlier and the nature of femininity required that they were more guarded as a sex. None of this applied to young men, especially young working class men. In the Caribbean, this group is viewed as synonymous with black men.

The statistics showed that by the 21<sup>st</sup> century, "Overall the number of women enrolled in tertiary institutions grew almost twice as fast as that of men – "While the number of male students quadrupled from 17.7 to 75.1 million, the number of female students rose six-fold from 10.8 million to 77.4 million" (Reddock, 2009). In 2005 women comprised 55.6% of students in the tertiary education system, a figure that has expanded to near 75% at present. While the global expansion of secondary and tertiary education by the end of the twentieth century incorporated both sexes, up to three decades before this, the primary target were men, especially in many developing countries. Reddock concludes that "where tertiary education opportunities are limited, women are less likely to access them. However in countries where access has expanded women are more likely to seize the opportunities than men. ...where higher education begins to move from a more elitist education and its class characteristics begin to change, it is women who are more likely to fuel this expansion" (Reddock, 2009).

A proliferation of studies, some spearheaded by non-government institutions, examined the causes for increased male underperformance in schools, understanding that the lack of a disciplining structure at this formative age, coupled with the lack of qualifications were sure fire recipes for a problem among young males. Not only would they get into trouble at an early age, but having done so, they would not have the qualifications for future re-tooling. Leith Dunn and Alicia Mondesire (2009) on the behest of CARICOM, found that increasing gender gaps in the attainment of secondary and tertiary education in favour of females resulted in male insecurity and contributed immensely to a growing discourse on masculinity and male vulnerabilities. Preliminary research thus led to the call for expansions in research and masculinity programmes targeting male insecurity and furthermore, in other global research on the differences between girl's and boy's brain. Years of research on brain differences have revealed that the most profound difference between girls and boys is not in any brain structure per se, but

rather in the sequence of development of the various brain regions. “The different regions of the brain develop in a different sequence, and different tempo, in girls compared with boys -- this is the key insight from the past five years of neuroscience research in brain development, but the research on sex differences in male and female brains is not conclusive (Sax: accessed 2012). The conclusions thus far are that “Differences in brain size between males and females should not be interpreted as implying any sort of functional advantage or disadvantage” (Lenroot et al, 2007). It must be noted that the flurry of research activity around brain differences by sex emerged in the late 1980s with the movement for single-sex public education “when sex segregation first garnered national attention as a promising antidote to a widely reported epidemic of violence, psychological disturbance, and academic underachievement reported to be afflicting a generation of boys and young men. Emphasizing the acute challenges facing at-risk youth—particularly economically disadvantaged African-American boys living in the nation’s faltering urban centers—sex segregation was introduced in public schools in the late 1980s in the context of more comprehensive reform measures, including most notably the creation of Afrocentric “academies” which identified racial and economic inequalities as primary causes of the failure of boys to thrive” (Williams, 2010).

Contemporary black men are viewed by and large, as the product of an undermined masculinity during slavery, one that continued during the post colonial reclaiming of nationhood and self governance. Black working class men in particular are viewed as the most vulnerable in society compared to other men, and in comparison with all women. As Tonya Haynes (2012) noted above, black masculinity is viewed as “an incipient fragile thing, vulnerable to emasculation”. The possibilities for transformation and the fact that many black men are not among the marginal and vulnerable are rarely developed as an alternative discourse that may serve itself as a message to masculinity. Instead, the ideas of underperformance and underachievement have proliferated so much

that it has become synonymous with masculinity, particularly black masculinity. The term “underperformance” is popularly interpreted as males not performing to the degree that is expected, or possibly to their full capacity – in comparison to girls who are thought to be outperforming males and exceeding themselves. Reddock (2009) points out that this interpretation “hides the fact that indeed at least in most of our region the majority of our young males and females have not been performing adequately. A focus on underperformance of males therefore directs our attention away from low performing girls” and from other performance issues that also deserve attention.

Why are males not attracted to education in the current period? The apparent concerns with the “nerdishness” of doing certain subjects, with remaining in the school system and appearing to be disciplined and interested in reading and writing like girls, masks one of the more important reasons why educational attainment is not important to young men. Reddock’s findings suggest that “women get a larger return on their investment in formal education than do men” or as the current economist’s mantra has it, “Women Learn – Men Earn.” Despite women’s higher access to formal and higher education men overall still earn more than women (Reddock, 2009). The promises inherent in the wage gap acts as a further disincentive for males to remain in school as without putting in the years of hard mental labour, they can earn far more at an earlier age. So why endure the drills of the classroom and the censure of one’s peers, particularly when there are few checks and balances on the home front?

Thus the link between low male educational achievement and causes of youth violence were also made more connected. In a Commonwealth Paper presentation on the relationship between “Youth and Crime” (2006), Keith Bell showed from survey that youth between 15 and 25 were identified as the largest offending group. The data demonstrated that the number of young Caribbean males carrying firearms was extremely high and that one fifth of the students carried a weapon to school thirty days prior

to the survey. He also revealed that 20% of male students belonged to a gang at one point, compared to 12% of female students. Bell puts the blame for this gun-toting and gang-belonging behaviour to the following factors: poverty, living in high-crime communities, problems due to the single parent family, domestic abuse, the absence of male authority figures in the home and negative role models such as 'rap, reggae and rock' stars and 'movie heroes'. In other words, all the usual suspects. The fate of the potential of young lives being lost inspired the UNICEF study by Cristina Uzal in "The State of the World's Children: What About Boys?" (2012). This UNICEF publication presents the problems faced by boys in the Caribbean which lead to their vulnerability, marginalization and participation in crime and violence. Uzal pointed out yet again, that the problems they faced were poverty and low enrolment in schools. Gender disparities between boys and girls were also highlighted and comparisons were made to other countries. The publication as many other studies also did, suggests the need for gender sensitive policies in education as an important solution to the problem of male underachievement in the Caribbean.

### **The Causes of Youth Violence**

As a result of the increased scrutiny of masculinity, especially on young males and related violence, there was a spate of non-governmental organization response and a proliferation of studies, findings and recommendations for alleviation of the problem from United Nations and The World Bank, comparing Latin American and Caribbean states. An early study in 1997 by United Nations ECLAC on "Caribbean Social Structures and the Changing World of Men" analysed a number of issues faced by Caribbean men which they claimed resulted in their marginalization and men as the main perpetrators of crime and participants in crime and violence. The issues they cited were not unknown but were re-confirmed – among these poor performance at school, gender stereotypes linking masculinity to violence, increasing school drop-out rates, high unemployment rates and the ease of

availability of guns and drugs. Interestingly, while the publication critiques Errol Miller's view in "The Caribbean Male in Perspective" that male participation in crime and violence were due to conflicts between various groups that make up Caribbean societies, this study highlighted the importance of analysing the problems faced by men through classifications of males into dominant and subordinate groups and according to race, class, region and generation. There is a general agreement here that not all males are violent, some are victims of violence, and generational, class or ethnic conflicts are part of the new patriarchal order, a point also confirmed in the findings for previous generations of Caribbean men.

In a World Bank study on the literature of youth gangs and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean carried out in 1999, Dennis Rodgers provided an overview of youth gangs across both regions, confirming that these do exist and that many of the studies linked the proliferation of gangs to economic poverty. Caroline Moser and Jeremy Holland in *Urban Poverty and Violence in Jamaica* (1997) identified gang violence as the most serious type of violence in Jamaica. They observed that the gangs were comprised of youths between the ages of 12-15 and that guns had become easily accessible. While they pointed to the typical reasons cited in other studies, i.e lack of education, breakdown in institutions for socialization such as the family, school, youth clubs and the church, they highlighted two other important ones. First the lack of employment opportunities for young men and police harassment of youth was also suggested as a factor which influences young persons to engage in criminal activities. By 2008, a UN ECLAC study "Exploring Policy Linkages Between Poverty, Crime and Violence: A Look at Three Caribbean States" confirmed this consistent trend being found of a dominance of Caribbean males in the perpetration of crime and violence and its link to poverty throughout the region. Having thus made the causative link, the solutions presented began to call for stronger poverty reduction policies as a means toward reducing crime throughout the region.

Similar conclusions were again reinforced by academic researchers.

Placing high priority on the issue of youth violence "A Joint Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank" additionally sought to analyse its impact on development across the region. They examined case studies on Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and the Netherlands Antilles along with a cross-country analysis of the Region. Youth violence was presented as an issue of legitimate concern in the Caribbean, with the highest risks for persons aged 15-29. A comparison of youth violence statistics between the Caribbean and external countries based on World Health Organisation (WHO) 2003 data identified the Latin American and Caribbean region as having the world's highest homicide rate of men 15-29 years old. Further, 2005 homicide statistics for Jamaica identified young men 16-30 as committing over 70% of the country's homicides while there were significantly more young men residing in juvenile correction centres in the Dominican Republic. In addition to identifying factors causing youth crime that by now were being repetitively invoked, i.e poor school attendance, family connectedness, poverty, inequality, youth unemployment, drug trafficking, school violence and domestic abuse this study pointed to another interesting finding. They suggested that male youth fascination with guns, with the possession of a gun was important to consider. The study argued that possession of a gun provided empowerment and protection to disadvantaged and dispossessed male youth, and was endorsed by the stereotype of masculinity that embraced violence as an inherent part of a hegemonic masculinity.

Barbara Bailey and Suzanne Charles (2008) dubbed this cohort who figured heavily as both perpetrators of crimes as well as victims "the missing generation" echoing popular sentiments about the losses incurred to society as a result. Nancy Guerra et al (2009) supported this idea of a missing generation by demonstrating that if Jamaica had the highest homicide rate in the

Caribbean, it is also true that Jamaica's youth are overrepresented among perpetrators of serious crimes. Petre Williams-Raynor reinforced the metaphor absence in an article in the *Jamaica Observer* entitled "Missing Daddies, Criminal Kids." (May 2011). This article focuses on the negative impact of the lack of role models and father figures on the male youth in Jamaica. Inner city male youths were identified as having the greatest risk of becoming criminals, particularly in the absence of fathers from the home.

While Jamaica is the focus of these studies similar trends were being observed in Trinidad in particular and in the rest of the Caribbean which was becoming increasingly known for its violent culture rather than for a place of relaxation for tourists of the north. A Draft CARICOM Commission Report on Youth Development: "Eye on the Future Investing in Youth Now for Tomorrow's Community." (2010)" identified crime and violence as the most important concern within the Caribbean Community and called for investments in crime prevention programmes. In a very extensive literature review on violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, focussing on youth violence, Peter Imbusch et al (2011) confirmed that youth gangs (predominantly male) was a major issue of concern accompanied as these were with unemployment, poverty, high drop-out rates at school and poor educational attainment. The literature review addressed not only the causes but the costs and consequences of violence. The authors reinforce some factors like social inequality, unequal life chances, poverty and social exclusion, but point additionally to deficits in the rule of law, police corruption, machismo culture and a culture of violence that was becoming the norm all contributed to the high incidence of violence in Latin America. Thus far in the literature and debates, there had been no detailed and analytical understanding of the causes of violence in the region nor was there a distinctive, theory of violence that would explain its rapid acceleration. A concept of social exclusion of young men entered the vocabulary of causality by the first decade of the twenty first century, linking the tendency to violence as a result of social exclusion. Heather Berkman

(2007) argued that the socially excluded are left in a hostile social environment, resorting to violence as a means to secure economic gain, security, justice and authority. Youths and street children are identified as particularly vulnerable, often seeking gang membership and she recommends policies to reduce alienation.

In one of the few studies located devoted primarily to “Gang-Involved Youth in Trinidad and Tobago”, Andrew M Fox and Charles Katz make the connection between the antisocial behaviour of gang involvement to the availability of guns and drug use and concluded that gang membership among school aged youth in Trinidad and Tobago was similar to that in the United States, Canada and Europe. Results from the surveys conducted portrayed a variation in gender with more males than females reporting current gang membership and gang association and twice as many males reporting to be former gang members. Respondents who identified themselves as ‘other’ in terms of ethnicity most likely reported current gang membership (7.6%), Africans followed with (6.4%) and East Indians (5.8%).

Finally in a very recently published study that focussed some of its attention specifically on ethnic differences, Anita Kalunta-Crumpton in *Race, Ethnicity, Crime and Criminal Justice in the Americas*, 2012, presents an analysis of race and ethnicity in the perpetration of crime and violence in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The picture emerging for Trinidad is not a happy sight for ethnic marking of categories. A case study on crimes committed by Afro- and Indo- Trinidadian youth provides an understanding of and explanations for acts of crime and violence dominated by a particular ethnic group. Shaped by a colonial past, Trinidad and Tobago developed concentrations of crime and violence within urban centres, primarily characterized by Afro-Trinidadians. The book highlights the rise in gang violence in Trinidad and Tobago as being concentrated in predominantly African communities. Supporting data suggested that 83% of the gangs in Trinidad were African while 13% were East Indian. Increases in violent crimes were also

linked to drug trafficking. A 2006 report of the Ministry of National Security indicated that 65% of the serious crimes in Trinidad were linked to the drug trade. Additionally, data on the race of those arrested for narcotics trafficking identified Afro-Trinidadians as being disproportionately involved in this crime. Between 2008 and 2009 half of the persons arrested for narcotics trafficking were of African descent. Studies on gang crime also revealed that African youth and those belonging to the race labelled ‘other’ were most likely current gang members, followed by East Indians. Afro-Trinidadians were also found to be more likely to report carrying a gun than East Indians. The findings of another study also suggested that more Afro-Trinidadian youth were living in juvenile homes than East Indian youth. The research then cited a 2002 study which revealed that of all convicted inmates at all 6 prisons in Trinidad, 61% were African while 26% were East Indian. 2007 data further revealed that 36% of Afro-Trinidadian inmates were incarcerated for narcotics related offences, compared to 33% of East Indians. Conversely, Afro-Trinidadians were identified as victims of shootings at a disproportionate rate based on police data.

### **Approaches**

Many of the studies examined also make recommendations or policy suggestions on how the problems of youth male violence can be addressed. This section of the review outlines some of the key recommendations or proposals. Decrying the negative impact of the media and its role in legitimizing violence, Caroline Moser and Bernice van Bronkhorst (1999) have made calls in the Caribbean for greater mentoring and evaluation programs geared towards reducing and preventing youth violence and for the development of policies and programmes to address the concerns raised in the causative variables of family life, poverty, inequality, poor school attendance, poor policing practice, the generation of employment opportunities and enhancing low self esteem among youth. Herbert Gayle (2002) sought to provide a foundation for interventions for the enhancement of the life chances of male youth. He stresses for Jamaican

adolescents, the role of the family as a key agent for re-socializing youth and highlights the importance of delaying the entry of youths into the work force as a means for ensuring that they are qualified for social and professional roles. Further, curricular re-design is recommended to meet labour market needs of male youth, as well as reform addressing high risk issues faced by adolescent boys including violence and drug abuse. He points out that the ease of drug availability in society does nothing to help the situation and that this is a key area of social concern.

Patrick Prendergast and Hylton Grace suggest that male organizations in the Caribbean should take the lead and place this issue firmly on their gender agendas. They call on men to support the Male Action Network (MAN) Initiative towards the establishment of a regional men's movement that would promote gender equality and empowerment, addressing the issues faced by Caribbean men. They place the onus for change directly on the backs of other men. This proposal is similar to that suggested by Nancy Guerra et al (2009) who identify specific male organizations such as the YMCA and propose that they should enhance their development programmes to educate, socialize, feed and maximize employment opportunities. Their findings suggested that community based programmes such as the YMCA can contribute to positive youth development.

Reddock (2009) has pointed out that focus on some aspects of the problem ignores others. Close attention needs to be paid to the way in which the drugs and arms trade are organized around youth labour and participation, there is insufficient analysis on the weaknesses of the criminal justice system or on finding criminal justice solutions. Finally, this article raises for close attention, the social and economic costs facing the region, because of the high rate of youth involvement in criminal activity. Similarly emphasizing this point Maria Beatriz Orlando and Jonna Lundwall (2010) highlight the problems that place Caribbean boys at risk as a gender issue which presents a challenge to the region's development. They propose

policies geared toward keeping children in school, the provision of opportunities to develop skills for employment, effective parenting and mentorship for at-risk youth were identified as essential for lowering male participation in crime and violence.

More recently, the UNDP "Caribbean Human Development Report 2012: Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security" (2012) makes a strong plea for a reduction in the risk factors associated with youth violence and enhancing the resilience of Caribbean youth. The report offers a sound gender analysis of the gender dimension of youth violence, demonstrating greater male involvement in crime than females. They emphasize the costs associated with youth crime suggesting that CARICOM countries lose between 2.8% and 4% of GDP annually through direct expenditure, fighting crime, youth incarceration and losses in tourism revenue as a result of youth crime and violence. Political costs were also associated with labelling and marginalization of Caribbean youth and specifically through exclusion of such youths from participating in governance, the economy and society. The report concludes that Caribbean societies themselves are at risk unless with national and regional policies and programs are put in place to address youth violence.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Plummer and Geofroy (2010) conclude their study on rites of manhood with the following: "...our interview findings along with cumulative evidence from other researchers build a compelling case that the incitement to violence and crime is deeply encoded in existing hegemonic masculine constructs that hold substantial sway in Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere in the Caribbean and beyond". There is conclusive evidence from the wide if not exhaustive sweep of literature examined that it is important to place the situation of young males under serious scrutiny and that we must seek solutions that will make some indentation into the severity of the problem. If anything, the review has revealed that those who are

underprivileged in society are the ones who are put under the microscope of researchers and investigators. That there is a continuous and unfolding narrative of decline in mores, expectations and futures for this young group of men and for that matter for many men is evident. The picture that emerges is not a pleasant one. It is clear that all young men undergo similar rites of passage in shaping their masculinities. So do young women. What we are faced with however is the overwhelming evidence that a life of involvement in crime has emerged as an option for young men, particularly young black men. There is no contestation that the issue deserves attention and direct interventions. What must give us pause however is the common denominator in all of these discussions - history seems to be so insistent on continuing its legacies for black men, while women appear to be freeing themselves of these burdens. Parallel studies need to be carried out on why women have adjusted to the demands of contemporary existence. Although women are numbered among criminal elements they have not emerged as a category that needs this kind of focussed attention, except in areas such as teenage pregnancies and as drug mules.

As all the research has agreed, the role of the family, school and institutions in society are crucial in shaping young masculinity. What has not surfaced however is the other side of the question that this review could not raise for lack of data and research. If young men are being caught into the trap of criminality, then there is clearly much opportunities available to them and many hands willing to welcome and socialize them into a short and brutish existence. This review brings me to a few major conclusions and recommendations.

*First*, that the areas for intervention identified by the research be targeted for policy and pragmatic programmes that will make a difference to the problem.

*Second*, that while we focus on the problem of young men as the immediate target for address, we also ensure that the problems of youth as it affects other groups in Trinidad and Tobago

society are not overlooked. For one thing, if there are strategies that are working for these groups, then some of these need to be harnessed. For another, there are different levels at which youth all experience problems and social interventions need to think of preventative mechanisms as well.

*Third*, there has been insufficient research and understanding in the literature of the failures or strengths of the criminal justice system in Trinidad as it relates to the problem of youth and crime. This needs to be addressed in a systematic way by persons trained to analyse these areas, such as lawyers, criminologists and persons who work within these systems.

*Fourth*, despite the academic furrowing that will no doubt continue, it is the media that largely shapes and influences the popular discourse on crime and masculinity, on attitudes to service, on celebration of different kinds of risk people take with their lives, not just criminal ones. In this area the media has a crucial role to play as an institution that has a great deal of influence on the young and should be invited to provide suggestions for interventions that may be of great value when systematically addressed over time, including the questions of identity building, affirmation of selfhood and young manhood and so on.

Finally, this is tentative but a strong hunch that emerged on being suffused with the data on masculinity. Perhaps we have to delink the issue of young men and crime from the gender discourses on masculinity that serve to obfuscate another picture that also needs to emerge with clarity. Where is the research on crime itself and the organization of crime that attracts youth and men in general? What are the benefits, short term they may be, that boys enjoy and what are the dangers? The case studies on murders and shootings listed above tell a story of an underworld that has its own rules and mores. This is dangerous work for researchers but perhaps it is the kind of undertaking that a government and state seriously interested in the future and welfare of its peoples must consider as seriously.

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# CARLYLE AND THE “LAZY NIGGER” QUESTION

*Selwyn Ryan*

The question as to what needs to be done with “little black boys” in the Caribbean in general and Trinidad and Tobago has become one of the most eagerly debated issues in the last few years as their involvement in drug running and other forms of criminal behaviour appear to have become disproportionate to their numerical significance in the population. The problem, is, however, not one of recent vintage. Indeed, there is a genealogy to it. It was one of the questions most heatedly discussed in the years following Emancipation. In the pre-emancipation era, the question was answered mainly with the crack of the planters whip and other inventive weapons of physical punishment. Those who malingered, ran away or did not work as hard or as assiduously as their masters believed they should, were whipped, put in the stockade and punished in other abusive ways not excluding death. Use of the rawhide whip was justified as the only way to season and civilize the former slave who was in the view of many, a mere “beast of burden” or a “beast without a soul.” Christian Slavery was said by some to be “God’s solution to the problem of the relationship between capital and labour.”

In the post-emancipation era, when use of the whip was frowned upon and discouraged by abolitionists, other forms of punishment had to be utilized. In many contexts, the use of the whip was replaced by economic alternatives. Young black men, in general, and black men in particular, who abandoned the plantation or who tried to strike out on their own, were deterred from doing so. The aim of such policies was to make them pay an economic price for exercising the rights to which they had recently become entitled. Fear of starvation was seen

as a viable substitute for “fear of the whip”. The question most earnestly asked was how does one get the emancipated enslaved person to work on the plantation? How does one persuade him to continue to identify himself as a plantation worker, a servant or a farmer who sold his labour when he felt like doing so?

In Trinidad, where abandonment of the land was frequent because land was abundant and the soil rich, the preferred official punishment was to make land acquisition difficult, if not impossible. Land was to be sold in larger plots only, and at prices which were beyond the ability of the ex-slaves to acquire. Squatting was also discouraged. These mechanisms were reinforced by ideological assertions which sought to stigmatise certain kinds of behaviours as “loitering” and “vagrancy” and to instead valorize agriculture, particularly on the plantation which was seen as the most effective means to civilise the African man. The law was also used to criminalise occupations that did not involve cultivation of the land.

These policies and strategies were given support by public intellectuals among whom was the well known English intellectual, Thomas Carlyle who in his *“Occasional Discourse on the “Nigger Question”* argued that the West Indian plantations were “built” by heroic “white Saxons” who in the process of doing so encountered all kinds of physical and other challenges as they sought to tame the environment and build a brave new world in what were tropical jungles. In the process of making the land suitable for growing sugar cane, spices, and “pumpkins” etc, they had to deal with poisonous snakes other reptiles,

malaria, and the savagery of man-eating Caribs. The Saxons were also said to have invested their financial capital without which manual labour was unequal to the tasks that were required. Capital was valued more than land and labour. Carlyle was angry that the emancipated blacks were claiming that they were entitled to the land because they and their ancestors were the ones who physical transformed the landscape. They were also claiming that their labour was now their own and that they had a right to determine whether to work and on what conditions. In Carlyle's view, they had no such options. Work they must! As he wrote:

No black man who will not work according to what ability the Gods have given him for working, has the smallest right to eat pumpkin or any fraction of land that will grow pumpkin, however plentiful such land might be. Men [should be compelled by the real proprietors of the land to do competent work for his living. This is the everlasting duty of all men, black or white, who are born into this world.... Woe is to everyman who, by friend or foe, is prevented from fulfilling this, the end of his being. Every man shall be emancipated from his indolence and to do the work he is fit for. It is not Black Quashie, or those whom he represents that made those West Indian islands what they are, or can be by any hypothesis, be considered to have the right of growing pumpkins there. Quashie, if he will not help in bringing out the spices, will get himself a slave again, ... and with beneficent whip, since if other methods avail not, will be compelled to work.... Not a pumpkin, Quashie, not a square yard of soil, till you agree to do the state so many days of service... The state wants sugar from these lands and mean to have it, wants virtuous industry in these lands, and must have it".

Carlyle told his audience which included several evangelical types, that "heaven's laws are not repeatable on earth. He that will not work shall perish from the earth and the patience of the gods has limits." The answer to the problem is not a "black Ireland" achieved by immigration, but a regulated West Indies with a [happy] black working population." Carlyle did not wish to have slavery reintroduced. He wanted instead cheap servile wage labour. Quashie was told that he would decidedly have to work for and

identify with those who "are born wiser than they were." Carlyle did much to shape public attitudes as to who were and who were not lazy.

Carlyle was sharply attacked by John Stuart Mill, another distinguished public intellectual, who accused him of producing a "true work of the devil". An enraged Mill challenged Carlyle's remarks about "the right of the wise" to subordinate those who were not of their class, as well as his assumptions about what constitutes "work". What was work and what was not? In Mill's view, the emancipated former slave worker was not to be deemed "lazy" simply because he decided to choose how he would use his time. Mill also argued that the Greeks had borrowed and had learnt from the Egyptians who were a Negro race. He told Carlyle that Greek sculptures of Egyptians tell us that the Egyptians were a Negro civilization. (See Mills' Reply' in *Fraser's Magazine*, Li Hell, Boston, 1850 Vol. XX14.]

Carlyle's words and his social construction of the essential nature of the newly emancipated were welcomed by the planters who used his address to answer those who wanted to educate the ex-slaves. The planters were not only unwilling to give much financial support the public schools that were being built by the British Government, the churches or other charities. They also discouraged school attendance. The argument was that it did not make sense to "manufacture clerks", to train scores of "little black boys" for jobs and careers that were not available to them. The young men were instead encouraged to remain in agriculture or to learn a trade. A few little black boys and the mixed mulattoes in particular, encouraged and assisted by their hard working parents, saved and managed to escape the structural traps that were strewn in their path. Some members of the brown middle class were able to get into the better secondary schools of the day such as QRC. Those who were Catholic could get into St Mary's if they had the fees, but many were discriminated against in other ways. The majority, the black girls in particular, remained on the periphery of the secondary system until the nineteen fifties (1950s) when

Dr. Eric Williams threw wide open the door to “free” secondary school education for the thousands who could not afford to pay to enter such schools even assuming they would find a place. This was the beginning of the problem of the young black male in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr Eric Williams took note of what was taking place in the schools of the Caribbean. As he wrote in his *Negro in the Caribbean* (1942):

It is the deliberate policy of planters and governments to keep the people ignorant and unlettered. In the words of one planter: “give them some education in the way of reading and writing, but no more. Even then I would say educate only the bright ones; not the whole mass. If you do educate the whole mass of the agricultural population, you will be deliberately ruining the country.... Give the bright ones a chance to win as many scholarships as they can; give the others three hours’ education a day ..., but if you keep them longer, you will never get them to work in the fields. If you want agricultural labourers and not dissatisfaction, you must not keep them longer.”

Another planter was asked whether he did not think it would be more satisfactory that children under twelve should be sent to school rather than begin work as soon as they were able, to which he replied that “education would be of no use to them. Were they then to be without education at

all? “As long as this is an agricultural country, of what use will education be to them if they had it? “In these candid words we have planter mentality over the area. Education means discontent, and planters must have their labour supply. Much of the lighter work on plantations is done by children under twelve, and planters want to make sure of their child labour. (*Negro in the Caribbean* 1942: 72-73). This then was the modern beginning to the problem of young black males in the Caribbean.

Williams is generally regarded as the person who did most to open the flood gates of educational opportunity at the secondary level to young blacks, making it possible for them to leave the caves to which they were confined by the white ruling class. He is however also blamed by many who consider him to be the person most responsible for creating the template for the existing system which is the principal breeding ground for the dysfunctions which currently obtain. Driven by his fundamental belief that the school and universal secondary education would be the mechanism through which the children of slavery and indenture would be fully emancipated, Williams fast forwarded free secondary education. As we shall see however, there were certain unintended and negative costs associated with this strategy.

# ERIC WILLIAMS, LITTLE BLACK BOYS, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE DEPENDENCY SYNDROME

Selwyn Ryan

The claim is persistently made that Dr. Eric Williams and the People's National Movement have been responsible for creating and sustaining the dependency syndrome in Trinidad and Tobago. Many argue that Williams was responsible for the entrenchment of the "gimme gimme" disposition which prevailed in the system and which continues to inform contemporary political and social behavior. The view is widely held that as a scholar Williams' ascribed the pathologies of Caribbean society to slavery. Williams was said to be responsible for popularizing the view that "Massa Day Done," and that the once enslaved population were entitled to receive their grand parents' "back pay". Following Williams, the view came to prevail that the black peoples of the Caribbean were victims of slavery and colonialism and that their former slave masters must make good their debt by paying reparations to their descendants in the form of aid grants and preferences for agricultural staples such as sugar, cocoa and citrus

This widely held view that Britain was responsible for slavery and the mercantilism which followed held that the descendants of the slaves were historically "entitled" to compensation for the social pathologies from which they suffered then and even now. In practical terms, this means that citizens of Caribbean states are entitled to free or subsidized education and social services, a view that was also held by the Moyne Commission which was commissioned by the British Government to advise the Colonial Office.

Following Independence, Williams not only made secondary education free, but over the years in which he was Prime Minister expanded the boundaries of the welfare state beyond what was necessary or affordable, and also made available goods and services for which citizens have now come to believe they have a "right." In sum, the "rights" ideology has served to reinforce the view that Caribbean people are not only victims of slavery, but also capitalism. Very little was said about the responsibility of citizens to expand levels of production. The stress was on rights and not responsibilities.

Critics of Williams have used these and related arguments to make a case for black "underclass" youth in the post Independence era. The latter are said to be the unwitting victims of the entitlement syndrome in the sense that they were never encouraged to develop a spirit of self-assertiveness and competitiveness in the area of production such as was urged in Singapore. They were left to sit and await for "manna" to drop from the secular heavens above, i.e. the state, rather than go out and hustle for opportunity. Eliminating poverty was the responsibility of the state; not theirs. They have now, it is said, lost the will to make use of the many facilities available for getting higher education and training. They have overtime become "lazy" and chronically parasitic. They do not now even show a keenness to register for and pursue the many opportunities for training that are being made available by the state, even when a meal and subsidies are provided as bribes and inducements to do so. In terms of the latter, they are said to demand a fish than learn how to fish.



Dr. Williams and his PNM successors are generally blamed for what occurred over the past 50 years. Specially targeted are the various "make work" for votes programmes that were put in place – the Special Works Programme, DEWD and URP programmes, free education, free school lunches, free bus passes, free books etc. All these allegations and more have been levelled against Williams by his critics. Many argue too that the Williams agenda was driven not by any concern for social justice and need, but by narrow political calculations. Some of the criticisms are of course valid; but there was another side to it that critics deliberately ignore.

Williams was of course preoccupied with gaining independence and with winning political power. He however had social goals and ends which he had absorbed from the radical left in Britain and from the leaders of radical thought whom he encountered in London and Oxford, among them were Arthur Lewis, Theo Mosquito, Norman Manley, Jomo Kenyatta etc. He was definitely not a socialist, but he wanted to build a new world as Nehru and others were doing in various parts of Africa and Asia. He was also a firm believer in planning, Indian and not Soviet style. As a product of the labour ideology, he also believed that the masses needed a social cushion beneath them to alleviate the genuine hardships which they had to endure in their quest for equality. The playing field had to be levelled to allow competition to be fair.

Williams' and his successors in the PNM expanded the welfare state on the argument that there was need not only to eliminate poverty and provide basic social citizenship, but also because they held the view that there was a need to transform Trinidad and Tobago into a "developed state" in which the number of persons who were poor were reduced to a basic minimum. The justification was class not race. Williams was of course not unaware of the links between poverty programmes and the size of his political base, but there is little question that he had broader objectives.

He were also persuaded that the viability and security of the state depended to a considerable

degree on the well being of the violence prone urban proletariat who, unless they were looked after, would destroy the society and the state as they almost did in 1970-3. In sum, given jobless growth, it was in the interest of the middle class to provide welfare to those less fortunate socially but who were strategically poised to inflict a great deal of damage to the fabric of the social system. Democratic stability and human development sustainability (at least in the liberal sense) required state intervention. To quote the Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012, "citizen security involved democratizing the state so that it better serves and protects the political citizenship."

The Government's response to the explosive urban crisis was to announce the creation of a programme which it labelled called "Colour Me Orange." This programme promised to expend TT\$300m to create 20,000 jobs mainly for Little Black Boys and girls in the crime ridden "hot spots" mainly along the East West Corridor which had borne the brunt of the stress which had been caused by the State of Emergency which had been declared in August 2010.

The government took the view that the programme was necessary to remove the "civil war" potential from the society. It was however justified on another basis. It was seen as a major part of the government's entrepreneurial thrust. As Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar declared, "the days of quick fixes were now gone. I want to give you a hand up instead, into a future of self-determination. The scheme is part of an arsenal of thoughtful social programmes intended to regenerate and restore neighbourhoods and would teach young people valuable new skills. CEPEP was also to be extended." But there was yet another agenda associated with the project. It was a naked attempt to bribe the electorate in much the same way as the PNM had done when its back was against the wall in the years after 1970. The Programme was a spectacular failure in the sense that it could not be fiscally sustained. The programme was terminated after three months. There is little evidence that any of the workers were entrepreneurial successes.

Not surprisingly, the Opposition expressed feigned surprise that the Government was expanding programmes which its members had criticized for almost their entire political life. Ironically, the PNM also conceded that it was their efforts to create make work programmes like URP and CEPEP that had given rise to the increase of violent crime that one was witnessing in certain key urban and rural areas. It was almost as if they were advising the Government not to use money to buy social peace

The Prime Minister and other officials of the Housing Development Corporation and the Ministry of Housing in which the project was located, nevertheless boasted about how much training, entrepreneurship and beautification the scheme would yield, going forward. The Minister of Labour however openly admitted that the programme was a three month exercise paying TT\$180 a day and was not extendable for the six months which was being asked for. The programme was a short-term employment scheme and was not sustainable. He nevertheless boasted that the Government would “lick the unemployment comprehensively. “Reliance was put on the entrepreneurial thrust.

Many young blacks on the bloc avidly scrambled for the promised jobs. Many welcomed the assurance that the programme would not be run by contracted gang leaders as was the case in respect of URP and CEPEP. They also welcomed the fact much of this money was to be used to repair and rehabilitation homes, and that the focus was to be placed on teaching and training youngsters skills which they could use in the future. The aim was to empower micro-entrepreneurs.

Not surprisingly, there was conflict over the issue of who and what communities would be recruited since there was more demand for the jobs that are available. The Prime Minister however affected this as vindication. As she remarked: “We cannot continue to ignore those signs of frustration and dysfunctional relationships. It is easy to simply condemn what occurred without looking at the root cause of the

issue. Rather than seeing these young minds as a problem, we will pursue solutions ameliorative. The “grassroots” programme was targeted to breathe new life into the heart of our most troubled community using community members to regenerate and restore neighbourhoods. The official launch by the Prime Minister of the *Colour Me Orange Programme* at the Hilton drew over 1,000 persons all of whom hoped to get jobs. State of Emergency detainees were attracted as were rival gang members and rival communities e.g. Nelson Street and Duncan Street. No contractors were allowed to procure labour, a task which was handled by the HDC.

The opposition PNM warned that there would be conflict as communities and gang leaders fought turf battles. There was indeed stone throwing and quarrelling, but the crisis was not sustained. The HDC opined that the programme would reduce crime by reducing unemployment. The claim was that people stole because they were hungry. It was hoped that the “much maligned” programme might not only serve to reduce crime, but also serve to bring some of the gangs together. They were expected to work together and not as rival gangs. To quote the Minister of Housing, “persons associated with different gangs may have to work together. The fact is that there are gangs out here. We don’t create gangs. We met those gangs. If we are going to do clean-up activities in an estate, and there are different people from different gangs, and they are all recruited, they will have to work together, so there will be tensions that we will have to deal with”. (*Newsday*, November 20, 2011)

The programme was a temporary success in that many secured short term jobs, but it did not have any sustained impact on the incidence of crime and the homicide rate rose once the programme came to an end. As the *Trinidad Guardian* concluded editorially, “the reasonable inference is that Colour Me Orange was a political disaster never intended to create real change in deprived communities.” (Feb, 24<sup>th</sup> 2012)

What is evident is that their rhetoric notwithstanding, both parties saw the need for “make work” projects for both economic and political reasons. Youth had become addicted and hooked on the programmes and could not disengage. They wanted jobs if not work. The politicians of all parties, but particularly of the PNM and the UNC had also become convinced that their tenure in power and the social stability of the country depended on the continuation of these make work programmes. The dependency had become mutual. The politicians had to bribe the urban electorate, and the gangs they control, to deter them from destroying the political system. Young Black Men were “victors” as

well as “victims”. But it was a misalliance that threatened to produce a zero sum game in which both sides lost a great deal. The problem was that the largesse that was required to keep the underclass satiated, whatever the colour, was beyond the capacity of the economy to generate. The prospects for being able to do so in the future, given what is taking place in the LNG market in The United States, makes it even more likely that we are at risk. The government saw it fit to put a substantial crate of eggs in the SME basket. But there is no reason to believe that what occurred in the 1970s will not happen again.

# YOUNG BLACK MALES AND THE INDEPENDENCE EXPERIENCE

*Selwyn Ryan*

The little black males who aspired to educate themselves after emancipation found themselves constrained by a social system which was defined by skin colour and hair texture. Class was invariably determined by these characteristics. As George Lamming put it in his *Pleasures of Exile*, to be black in the West Indies meant that one was poor. Being poor meant that without a scholarship, one could not normally have access to education. Without education one could not access the jobs that provided the ladder with which one could lift oneself out of poverty.

One of Dr Williams' main preoccupations on becoming Prime Minister in 1962 was the dismantling of the colonial educational structure (Williams, 1969). On the eve of Independence, Williams had a public conversation with the school children of the new nation. The children were told that they must practice what they were affirming in the National Anthem, viz. that every creed and race has an equal place. He also told them that on their young shoulders would rest the future of the nation. "Each and every one of you carries the future of your country in your school bags."

On Independence Day, Williams spoke to the parents of the children whom he had addressed the day before, and asked them what would they transmit to their children five years hence. His advice to them was that their first responsibility was to protect the democracy which they were proclaiming. "Democracy", he told them, "meant more, much more than the right to vote, and one vote for every man and every woman of the prescribed age". As an

educator, Williams clearly understood the role that youth would have to play in shaping the country's future and the supportive role that parents would have to play in helping them to fulfil that historic responsibility.

Williams returned to the question of the role of youth and their parents frequently during the independence decade and after. He did so, for example in his many speeches on education, and on the role that iron and steel would play in the transformation of the economy. In terms of the latter, he quarrelled with those who felt that Trinidad and Tobago should remain wedded to the "brown sugar economy." As he put it, "many of our population are still of this mentality of the brown sugar economy. We, (i.e the PNM), stand today as the only cohesive force in the society against this mentality and its vigorous prosecution of our own nationalist economic identity" (*Guardian*, December, 14 1977).

Williams was of the view that the new economy would provide the opportunity and the platform which would allow the children of slavery and indenture to escape the curse of the plantation and come into their patrimony. As he told a group of young students graduating from the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) in 1981 on the eve of his death, there would no longer be need to "swim in oil and to suck sugar cane" As he told them:

The eighties must surely belong to you. I urge you to accept that role, that challenge with the same determination, the same sense of discipline, with the same attitude towards productive hard work that your parents and indeed your grandparents had in the 50s, 60s and the decade before that.

Where our ancestors toiled in the field producing sugar under conditions of slavery or under conditions of indentured labour, you will have an opportunity to produce steel of the highest quality. You will have the opportunity in an environment far removed from the conditions experienced by your parents, your grandparents, and their parents. (Press Release, Office of the Prime Minister, February 4 1980)

Williams told the apprentices that his choice of words in his speech was “deliberate.” He was speaking to them as the “youth of the nation”. It should be noted that Williams spoke to the youth of all ethnic groups and not merely to the children of enslaved blacks as some would have preferred. As one East Indian student wrote in an autobiographical exercise that he was asked to undertake by Vera Rubin et al of Columbia University, who were mapping the attitudes of youngsters in a survey exercise in 1956, “we wish to be looked upon. I hope the examination (Senior Cambridge) would be a further step in my achievement of being someone to be looked upon” (Rubin 1969-67). Afro-Trini students expressed similar ambitions as Rubin summed up what she found:

The period of drawing political emancipation saw the rise of aspirations in the emergent lower class of Negroes and East Indians, as well as in the in the rising coloured middle class. Achievement might no longer be limited to the few fortunate island scholars, or to the white and coloured segments of the population; colour and class might no longer be a brake on ambition, but the path would still be arduous. Perhaps it is the distance which must be traversed between present reality and the actual attainment of aspirations which create[d] a greater sense of urgency among all lower class students. Rather than discouraging the students, it appears that status distance strengthens their status achievement motivation and enhances their dreams of accomplishment (Rubin 1969 74).

The question of ethnicity arose when policy choices had to be made in choosing the model to be used in meeting the challenges of secondary education and the aspirations of the young. Williams rejected the option of creating two different types of secondary school: the vocational and the traditional grammar school

and established instead comprehensive schools in which various types of educational offerings would be accommodated. Williams argued that creating a separate vocational stream would serve to maintain the class and ethnic divisions which the PNM was determined to destroy. The little black boys and girls would inevitably end up there. As he put it:

The vocational school will become a place of refuge for the rejects and dropouts from both the Junior and Senior Secondary programme. Secondly, it will foster and further develop fragmentation within the society, the removal of which the Education Plan has as a major objective.... Regarded as schools at the bottom of the ladder of the educational system, there will be tremendous difficulty attracting teaching staff of the calibre that is needed for any vocational education programme.

The problem was to find enough places, teachers and other resources needed to cater to all of those who were expecting to be accommodated in the new “free” secondary schools. The answer was a temporary double shift system coupled with a two tiered Junior and Senior Comprehensive School. The Concordat, which had been negotiated with the Catholic Church in 1960, had given parents the freedom to choose the school of their choice. This served to ensure that the students who performed better on the Common Entrance Examinations and who gained access to the so called “prestige schools,” were those who lived in middle class neighbourhoods which provided the supportive environments which facilitated success on those examinations.

There were some young blacks who managed to succeed well enough to gain a preferred place in spite of the social handicaps, but in the main, there was a correlation between race, colour, class, residence and performance at the CXC examinations which did so much to determine career and life outcomes. Those who went to the prestige denominational schools were in the main successful in getting the pivotal 5 passes and more and were able to get into university or white collar jobs, while the others who failed or dropped out and had to choose other types

of occupations. They were on their way to becoming “at risk”.

Blame has consistently been ascribed to Eric Williams for capitulating to the forces which opposed zoning which would have integrated the schools socially and academically. Williams was also criticized for allowing political considerations to determine the rate at which secondary school education was made “free”; he was abused for destroying the old state owned schools like Tranquility and Queen’s Royal College, and worst of all for throwing open the gateways to secondary school when the system could not accommodate the demand, thus making it necessary to introduce a temporary two shift system which he knew would not be temporary. The results, combined with the Concordat which served to keep the society divided by class and ethnicity, were disastrous and established the template which continues to burden the society up to this day.

While the criticisms levelled at Williams were accurate, they were somewhat unfair in the sense that what is necessary is not always possible given the intersections of race, class and political conjuncture. The power of the Catholic Church was much too entrenched for the PNM. The urban middle class was also too strategically embedded, and given the way the electoral lines were drawn, might have overpowered and overturned the new government. One thus had to defer or abandon whatever plans one might have had to take larger bites of the social cherry. One had to make do (*satisfice*) with the Concordat which left 80 per cent of the annual examination intake in the hands of the state to be allocated on a competitive basis, leaving 20 per cent to the denominational churches, provided that those pupils had passed the CXC. It was not yet a meritocracy, but steps had been taken to ensure that places were open to talent, whereas before, those places were not open to little black and Indian boys unless their parents could afford to pay or had the correct pigment, connections, or both.

The results of the Concordat were however contradictory. Doors were open to many little

black boys, but remained closed to many others who did not have the family and environmental supports which would have enabled them to compete meaningfully for the limited number of spaces which were available at the so called prestige schools. The result was that many young black boys and girls ended up being placed in state owned junior and senior secondary schools which were really academic warehouses which one attended in morning or afternoon shifts. Among the many schools that suffered was Tranquility Intermediate, the school which Williams himself attended in the 1920s. Now a secondary school, Tranquility became a shadow of its former self. The “intellectual discipline” of which Williams boasted is no longer evident. Teachers do as they like, and the students cross trump and follow suit. Drugs and sex are for sale or in use in what is called the “boom boom” room which is located on the compound, and it would not be unusual to find a gun or two in the schoolbags that Williams assumed would only carry books and other educational material. Academic failure or indifferent performance was more usual than unusual.

The “Tranquility Experience” could be replicated across the educational landscape. The dreams of those who aspired to being seen in Rubin’s study had not been achieved by them nor their offspring. For reasons which are indicated in the essays in this study, this was more true of black males than Indians generally. (See “Ganja in School,” *Newsday*, October 20, 2012 and “Educational System failing girls as well.” *Daily Express*, October 12, 2012).

Many who had not succeeded at the secondary school level would later seek admission to the state owned community College of Science, Technology, and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT). Many of them lacked the financial and intellectual resources which were needed to enter the remedial programmes, or to benefit meaningfully from them. The need for “affirmative action” remedial programmes for young men at risk was recognized by many, including a World Bank taskforce which recommended the establishment of an experimental pilot programme. The Bank

argued that “there was need to make special arrangements to assist people who were financially challenged.”

The attempt to put such a programme in place generated a heated debate in Parliament and in the society at large. The trigger for the debate was a statement made in 2002 by Dr Keith Rowley, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, about the state of black youth and the need for remedial programmes. Dr. Rowley was supported by fellow Member of Parliament, Mr Colm Imbert, who agreed that there was need to establish programmes at COSTAATT which targeted male black Trinidadians aged 17-24. Mr. Imbert told Parliament that it was time for the government of Trinidad and Tobago to start “bending backwards to look after PNM areas.” He argued that in the past, the government was too inclined to lean backward to prove it was not “unfair” to minorities.” In his view, the PNM was too “neutral” and too even handed. The Opposition was accused of having a “deliberate strategy” to cry “discrimination,” which was designed to constrain Afro-based social action. Imbert told Parliament that the time had come to address the critical problems that were facing young black youth. To quote him:

Today, we have social problems in Trinidad and Tobago. There is a large pool of young unemployed angry youths. We must not hide from these things. This is a fact. There is a large group of frustrated youths outside there. One of the reasons they are frustrated is that they do not have employable skills. There is no need to belabour these issues. There is need to target “at risk” youths between the ages of 17-24 in the East Port of Spain area.

The two MP’s told parliament that the country had to target under-performing youth by providing remedial training in conjunction with COSTAATT (*Hansard* 2002, 82-87).

Prime Minister Manning however publicly disowned the policy, and said that it was an “error” to have put it in the Social and Economic Policy Framework Manual. Manning blamed its insertion on “public servants who were still stuck in an [American] orientation.” He let it be known that if he had his way, the recommendation

would not have been in the document which the party was submitting to Parliament. Manning went so far as to issue a new page to replace the one that was there in “error.” Mr Conrad Enill, Minister in the Prime Minister’s office, claimed that it was a footnoting error. Messrs Rowley and Imbert however denied it was an “innocent error,” and defended the policy in Parliament

The Indo-based parliamentary Opposition claimed that the policy was racist, unconstitutional, and unfair to Indians, and that Indians were also “at risk” The Government was urged to ensure that their social policies were equitable and accessible to all citizens. It was observed that state owned companies did not always follow officially announced policies. Discrimination might not be real, but whether it was or not, one still had to deal with it. One had to prove by deeds and actions. The media also expressed alarm. The policy was said to be provocative and likely to lead to social tensions which were already a cause for concern Members of the Parliamentary opposition complained bitterly. As one declared:

After years of independence, we still need to talk about equality and discrimination. Imagine this small rich country does not have institutions to address issues of discrimination.... We do not ask for any one group as opposed to another. We just ask for an institution to protect citizens from politicians. After more than four decades, we do not have that.”

The Opposition also argued that “their people” and their communities were not benefitting from the increased social spending, and that the principal beneficiaries were the trainers and the bureaucrats and not the people affected (*Hansard*, October 15 2003).

Prime Minister, Manning, denied that the PNM was deliberately partisan and in fact boasted that his party was the “most impartial, the most neutral, the fairest, and the most even-handed administration that has ever held power in Trinidad and Tobago.” He however subsequently amended his position and apologized for the imbalances in the delivery of common goods which were apparent. His

apologia was attributed to “the speed at which the new policy was rolled out and the need to respond to a developing social crisis.” As he promised:

We are going to spend our time next year trying to make existing programmes more and more efficient, and to ensure they are given a completely national reach. We admit that some of our programmes have not yet attained that level, but we have moved so fast, trying to intervene so rapidly, particularly in the areas which are “hot spots”, and on occasion, when such an allegation is levelled at us, it is not entirely without foundation (Hansard, Wednesday, 9, June 2004)

Mr Imbert also pledged to be fair in his implementation of the policies that were being put in place. The programme would be means based. To quote Imbert:

What we are going to do is favour students from underprivileged backgrounds, students who are financially challenged, and students who for one reason or another have dropped out of the education system and need to be encouraged and given incentives to re-enter the education system. (ibid 82)

Imbert noted that there were less than 20,000 students registered in tertiary programmes and that the goal was to increase that number to 40,000 or 50,000. Scholarships and Bursaries would be allocated to those in need. The question was how would the means test be implemented

Dr Rowley, for his part, denied that the PNM was pursuing a Malaysian Bumiputra strategy in which the state advanced the fortunes of the Malays in relation to the Chinese. Rowley denied that 20-20 was inspired by the Malaysia style racial balancing “We are doing no such thing in Trinidad and Tobago. This is for all the people of Trinidad and Tobago” (Hansard, Oct 15, 2005).

Dr Rowley went on to criticize the then Minister of Education, Mrs Kamla-Persad-Bisessar, for throwing wide open the doors of the secondary school by providing, out of the blue, that all students finishing primary school

in 2000 would be given a place in a secondary school. This policy was endorsed by Prime Minister, Panday, who described it as one of the policies about which he was most proud. It opened secondary education to everyone who was eligible by age. No one would be left behind. This raised questions as to where were the places to be found, and as to whether many of those who were given places had the ability to handle the secondary school curriculum. Normally, no one who scored less than 30 per cent of the mark was allowed to proceed to the secondary level. Dr Rowley accused the minister of playing politics with the nation’s school children. As he told parliament:

When the CXC results come in, we will see results because those children are in high school and have no chance of passing. They have to thank the UNC for that.... What is the remedial programme for them? None. It was pure politics to be able to say, “we put all our children in high school.” What are their chances of benefitting from the opportunity in the high school? This was the most criminal act! (Hansard, October 15, 2003 554).

Ironically, during the debate on the State of Emergency which took place in September 2011, Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bisessar, returned to the matter and chided Dr. Rowley for giving way to the critics and not pursuing the COSTAATT initiative. She claimed that if he had done so, there might have had no need for a State of Emergency.

Dr Rowley explained that he had backed away from the Programme because he was accused by the Opposition of being racist. As he said, “I was accused by my colleagues on the other side of being racist. This project was not even a PNM project. It was a carry-over from the UNC days. It was in the PSIP document.” Rowley noted that the same young black men are now deemed to be too “far gone.” “Now that you are architects of a state of emergency, do you still accuse me of being racist? The moral of that story is that the PNM government of the time should have had the courage and conviction to standby that programme” (Express, September 5 2011).



Indo-Trinidadian MP's complained that the policies such as the Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres (YDAP) targetted Afro-Trinis and reached only a few Indians. Similar complaints were made about the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP) which was designed to upgrade the manpower base in the plant construction industry, and YTTEPP which catered to some 7,000 persons, most of whom were Afro-Trinis. There was also the RCC which was administered by the Ministry of National Security which offered young adults educational and vocational training, but these were along the East West Corridor.

The Government claimed they saw the problems in term of crime suppression while the opposition saw them in terms of race. The then Prime Minister advised that his concern was about what he termed "equitability." Manning argued that his social policies rejected the "trickle down" theory of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan which enriched the few at the expense of the poor. The finger of Almighty God had however pointed him to other social objectives. "The role of the state had to be different." He said he took responsibility for the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the shift was made. To quote him:

What you are seeing today is economic activity that is indeed creating wealth in the society; but the state is an effective instrument of the distribution of that wealth as the society moves forward, nobody [must be left behind]. That is the PNM policy of today. I am very proud of it...We have increased our expenditure at the social level. *The problem is that the hot spots in this country are by and large in the East West Corridor. Therefore if you were to allocate resources to hot spots as an investment in social stability, you run the risk of being accused of racism....A country like this is not easy to govern (Hansard, October 15, 2003: Italics mine).*

According to Manning, it is well known that the equal treatment of unequals does not always lead to equity. For all kinds of social, economic and other reasons having to do with the various challenges which people face, equality of access often produces outcomes that are not equitable. As Karl Marx once reminded us, in pursuit

of equality, history often requires societies to adopt policies that are knowingly unequal in terms of achieved outcomes. Such were the considerations that informed affirmative action and reverse discrimination polities in the United States. Those policies have recently been declared unconstitutional by the American Supreme Court which ruled that admission to educational institutions must be "colour blind" or "race-neutral". Other ways had to be used to achieve equity.

Some of what is being proposed in the US is relevant to what is taking place in Trinidad and Tobago where the demand for equal opportunity legislation came mainly from the Indo-Trinidadian community. When the report prepared by the Centre for Ethnic Studies on Employment in the Public and Private Sectors was published some fourteen years ago, it was observed that while there were indeed imbalances in the numbers of Indo-Trinidadians in the public sector, the demographic dynamics that were at work in the society were manifesting themselves at the middle levels of the public service and had already begun to force their way to the top. When this occurred, the demand for equity and parity would come increasingly from the Afro-Trinidadian element.

That prophecy is now being realized. The demands are openly articulated by Professor Courtenay Bartholomew. In a letter to the Dean of Medicine (*Sunday Express*, July 1 2007), Professor Bartholomew indicated that he had received numerous complaints about "a certain cliqueishness" in the recruitment policies in all the hospitals. He indicated that he had previously received complaints about "discriminatory and preferential admission practices in the selection of certain students for entry into the medical school here", complaints which he could not verify until recently. He now suspected that they were true, and called for the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to examine the subjects on which entry requirements are based, scoring assessments, and the composition of the Dean's selection panel at UWI. Bartholomew is using euphemistic language to address issues that were being whispered aloud in many corridors

of the campus community. All was not fair in the groves of the academy, these voices say.

This was not the first time that Bartholomew had rung the bell and asked plaintively “for whom they toll.” The Professor had earlier observed (*Express*, November 20, 2005), that Indo-Trinidadians were making better use of the available educational opportunities than Afro-Trinidadians who seemed to have succumbed to the culture of the extended Carnival. Bartholomew felt that this preponderance of Indians in the professions was an unwelcome trend, particularly in the “essential” profession of medicine, and called for “national proportional representation” in that profession. Needless to say, Indo-Trinidadians spokesmen were radically opposed, arguing that nobody paid any heed when the shoe was on the other foot.

The question however remains: was Dr Williams betrayed by the youth of Trinidad and Tobago in terms of what they were now carrying in their school bags, viz guns and marijuana? Were black youth particularly guilty? Who was primarily to blame for these outcomes, young blacks or Dr Williams? Is affirmative action now required, not only for the reasons given by Imbert and Rowley in 2002-3 in respect of COSTAATT, but also because it appears that there are changes taking place in the society at large which puts Afro-Trinis generally “at risk,” and which now threatens the society as a whole. The case against such a departure is the same which was given when Drs. Rowley and Imbert argued against it, viz, that it constituted discrimination.

The case for it is that if the society does not make “special kind of arrangements” such as was articulated by the World Bank in 2000 and the two MP’s, the country could well be made ungovernable by the gangs, and the whole game might well be lost. The third option may well be an affirmative option strategy that targets all male youth, whatever their ethnicity.

Professor Selwyn Cudjoe argues that if the critics had read the COSTAATT document carefully, they would have noticed that there was nothing racist about it. The paper, he argued,

addressed the issue of male underachievement and argued that strategies should be put in place which would deal with the problem. The programme targeted recruitment programmes for males aged 17-24, especially Afro-Trinidadian males. The COSTAATT paper sought to “establish special mentoring programmes for male students to improve retention and achievement rates.”

UNC politicians argued that one could not provide for the whole and then single out a subset of one group? It was not clear why this was so. Cudjoe counter argued that COSTAATT’s intent was to be inclusive and responsive to all vulnerable citizens, including the unemployed, unskilled youth, and the disabled. The groups had to have one thing in common, viz. they were to be poor and seeking opportunities for education and skill training. If young black males were more in need, then so be it. To quote Cudjoe:

It was in this context that our government sought to treat such a vulnerable group. One does not have to be an inhabitant of Mars to know that Afro-Trinidadian males between the ages of 17 and 24 are a vulnerable group no matter how we chose to look at them.... This group of young men is vulnerable to crime ... and the chances of their being killed violently are much higher than any group in society (“Black Empowerment Day” *Sunday Guardian*, March 23 1998. <http://www.tricenter.com/Cudjoe/1311.htm> 10/2011)

What is to be done to avert this imminent tragedy, Cudjoe asked? Shall we help send them to jail to join the high proportion of convicted Afro inmates – 61 percent – in our prisons? When we hear that more prisons are to be built or to be upgraded, whom do we think they are building them for? What do we do about the remainder, the bulk of whom are being condemned to die before they reach the penitentiary? Which option is more racist and Darwinist? If we have a festering boil, should we not lance it as soon as we can? If black youngsters for all kinds of reasons now number among the illiterate and the innumerate, should we eschew teaching methods which help to bring them back up to scratch, or shall we wait until they congregate

in angry clusters to seize what they believe they cannot get through legitimate processes?

Cudjoe believed the answers are obvious. As he wrote:

- African people cannot really hope to become successful economically unless and until they begin to master areas of science and mathematics.
- Africans must understand that whatever monopoly they felt they once had in the system, disappeared a long time ago.
- African parents are not satisfied with how teachers teach their children, and may soon have to use different alternatives and ways to teach their children with the assistance of the state.
- African parents may soon have to find different ways to teach their children. They may have to resort to charter schools which have less bureaucracy, more innovation, where more learning will take place.
- Parents must involve themselves more centrally in the education of their children. Too many time parents refuse to become involved in the education of their children because they are afraid of being seen or thought to be illiterate.

Cudjoe's views were anathema to the Indo-Trini community in general and the Hindus in particular. His views were also not welcomed by a significant number of middle class blacks who believed that some of his positions on the race question were too extreme. Cudjoe however, believed that change along the lines which he advocated were urgently required and chided Manning, Rowley and Imbert for not being persistent enough and for not being sufficiently aware of what was taking place in the larger community. The problem facing the country in his view, is that it is "multicultural," and different segments of the society were developing at various rates. The bottom line is that Indians are doing well and Afros are doing poorly in the economy and in the temples of education, and are in danger of being structurally marginalized in several other areas of endeavor.

The consequences of what was occurring were serious and should be addressed by the society as a whole.

Cudjoe argued that the education system had failed black youth. On leaving school, many of them were illiterate and deficient in numerate skills, mathematics and science. "Thousands of children in high school are now waiting to fail, and that if such trends continue, it is almost certain that Africans will become the permanent serfs of our world, thrust back into a form of mental slavery that our children climbed out of in 1838."

Cudjoe ruffled many feathers when he accused some Indian teachers of "under teaching" blacks and of bunching them at the back of the class, which makes it difficult for them to hear or pay attention to what is going on. Similar charges were once made about certain teachers at UWI. As Cudjoe continued:

We must organize our teachers and our communities around our students' needs. This is the major challenge that faces African people today. If we do not claim our young men and women, the prisons will. African students cannot be saved unless we master writing and reading; scientific, mathematical and computer literacy. No educated person in the twenty-first century can exist without those skills (ibid).

The GATE programme seeks to spread secondary and tertiary education far and wide and its goal is to educate 65 percent of those who are entitled. The problem with GATE is that many people of all ethnicities do not have the skills or the prerequisites to make use of the available opportunity. Amongst them are to be found many men who can neither read nor write. They thus drop out as they perceive the first challenge. The way out is to structure remedial classes for all poor starters and target the underperformers not on the basis of race but on the basis of need. .

We note that despite the growing objection to racial quota systems, quotas are still in vogue especially in respect of women. We however, note, that Brazil has recently provided that from 2016 on, 50 per cent of the places in their federal

universities would be reserved for blacks, browns and Amerindians. Quota systems have also been introduced at Cambridge university which reserves 25 percent of its intake from state schools. Cudjoe was not recommending quotas and neither are we.

### **Recommendation**

Our recommendation is that special classes should be established (or maintained where they exist) for all students at COSTAATT, UTT, Cipriani Labour College) regardless of race or ethnicity who need remedial programmes to enable them to function at a certain level in identified basic courses. One recalls that such remedial programmes were established in the

seventies at UWI in the areas of mathematics and the sciences.

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# THE “TRAGEDY” OF THE YOUNG BLACK MALE

*Selwyn Ryan*

*African youths are overachieving in the jails and underachieving in the classrooms. Blacks have an obligation to stop making excuses. PNM ruled the country for 40 years and it is time they took responsibility for the mess made in our backyard. Paternity tests shows that the Laventille of Today is a PNM creation.- Keith Rowley, Trinidad Guardian, October 25 2011.*

Even though we use the term “tragedy” to define the condition of the young black male, that term is not without its ambiguities in the context of Trinidad and Tobago. Our survey data (which we treat with below), indicates that the vast majority of black youth are not at risk and do not join gangs. Indeed, Afro-American males are much more at risk than their Trinidadian counterparts, many of whom migrate to the US to pursue higher education.

The issue of underachieving male youth is however one that is preoccupying Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean, and many countries the world over, including the United States of America. There is global concern as to what is to be done about them. The problem is in part a by-product of the changed nature of the world economy which is now driven mainly by services and information technology and not by heavy industry as was previously the case. The global diagnosis is that the modern economy no longer needs the hands and the bodies of workers to produce the goods that are needed. The result is joblessness, or put another way, what we have is “jobless growth” if there is growth at all. Jobs are either unavailable or have changed their nature, particularly at the bottom of the pyramid.

Millions of workers the world over now grow up never having had anything that resembles a steady or “decent” job. What was confidently available at the end of secondary school or university is no longer available, and many believe that they have been deceived or misled. They survive economically on the basis of hand outs from state agencies or from their parents if they have one or two. This in turn gives rise to

alienation, boredom, loss of self-esteem and a sense of purpose. Paradoxically, alienation may now be the by-product of the loss of excessively high self-esteem among individuals and groups, especially when it is unstable. Violent reactions may ensue when a superior sense of life is threatened. We have seen this in Greece, France and other parts of Europe.

Many societies have experienced these changes before, and we are not unaware that many societies have experienced prolonged famine, economic depression, technological change and forced emigration in search of opportunity and a new life in a new world. The Atlantic world was a by-product of this movement of people. The contemporary economic crisis however seems more pervasive and the social problems more deeply embedded and interlocked. The crisis has given rise to debate as to what are the seminal and underlying causes of the problem and what if anything can be done to deal with it sustainably. Will poverty and all that is associated with it overwhelm the democratic state and cause it to be overcome by the narco-state as some worry?

While the basic problems seem to be the same everywhere, even in normally well ordered societies such as Germany, Scandinavia, and Canada, the manner and sequence in which it arises, and the form which it takes vary substantially. Western slavery has given a particular shape and tone to outcomes in the United States and in Latin American societies while indenture has contoured the problem differently in societies where indentureship was the defining relationship such as in Mauritius,

Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad Tobago, and Malaysia. The one thing which they all seem to be experiencing in common is the rise of gangs. Gangs seem to have replaced political parties and factions as the engines of mis-development just as parties were once seen as the organizations of the future.

Empirical data indicates that joblessness in some countries is more of a problem for males than it is for females. In decades gone by, the latter were inclined to remain at home to tend to family and other domestic matters. The reverse is however now the case. Given the changing nature of the economy and the competences which they have, women are finding it easier than men to get jobs or to retain them than men. This in turn, contributes to perceptions of marginality and castration among males. As Professor Errol Miller observes in his study "Men at Risk" (1991):

Whereas, as we have noted above, many young blacks have "graduated" from the rungs of the ladder which they occupied in the decades after slavery and many have performed brilliantly in the Caribbean and in the world at large, the evidence now points unequivocally to a decline in the numbers and the quality of what is being produced. It is true that our best students now excel on the SAT and go on to universities in the UK, Canada and the USA instead of attending the UWI. It is true that in various professional fields, Trinidadians and Caribbean citizens generally routinely distinguish themselves professionally; the data show unequivocally that fewer young black boys are winning the valued scholarships to study at home or abroad. We use scholarships as an index of achievement, but if we used other comparators, the result would be the same except in the field of sports and culture where black youth continues to excel.

Similar positions have been taken by other back professionals. One such complaint was made by Professor Courtenay Bartholomew. As Bartholomew complains:

Unfortunately, too many Afro-Trinidadian parents today have no personal ambition to pass on to our offspring who are distracted by frivolous interests and pursuits, and "mimic men" as they are, they ape certain role models

abroad and here, who are given unworthy prominence and praise. It is what I call the "failed family factor." And so, it is mainly about a lack of educated parents, poor parents, absentee parents [Particularly male parents,] dysfunctional homes, and indiscipline. As a result, the strong black middle class of yesteryear which began with the free coloureds and free blacks is gradually disappearing from the social scene" (*Express*, 22 January 2009).

Bartholomew also lamented the extent to which there is disinterest in commerce and business enterprise, and the extent to which carnival dominates the school calendar and time table. Others have noted the effect of the substantial migration to the Eastern United States in the nineteen thirties, a movement which emptied the region of its human and particularly its intellectual capital. The hemorrhaging continues (James 2001)

Professor Selwyn Cudjoe, President of the National Association for the Empowerment of African People (NAEAP) spoke for many Afro-Trinis when he openly supported the need for special emphasis to be given to young black males 17-24 whom he claimed were "vulnerable." Cudjoe argued that "one would have to be from Mars not to know that Afro-Trinidadian males 17-24 have special liabilities and are multi-vulnerable. One thus needs to put in place targeted recruitment policies to address the problem. Cudjoe took note of the claim that young Indian males were also at risk and averred that if it could be shown that young men from Caroni were equally vulnerable, he would support government programmes that would help them. He however agreed that the answer was not to be found in quotas, but in special teaching arrangements which employ teaching methods more appropriate to the special needs of Afro-Trinis, and delivered in charter type schools controlled by Africans (*Sunday Express*, November 2 2003.)

While many focus attention on black males generally, Cudjoe argued that more attention should be directed to underclass black women who were also at risk, though not to the same degree. The focus here is on young boys,

however, many of whom are illiterate. Many are ashamed to be in classes with women. Up-skilling is thus an uphill task for them. The general trend is thus towards female supremacy in terms of those who register and remain in the remedial programmes generally.

The key question being asked globally is whether the Trinidad economy will resume growth fast enough or at all to absorb all those who are now being trained. What happens if they are not? What happens if the black underclass presently locked into urban bivouacs start a rebellion even if accidentally, such as happened in 1969 and 1970 if the newly educated come to feel that he or she was misled into believing that there was use for the skills which they are presently acquiring. The government is no doubt aware of this ticking time bomb, or should be aware of this possibility, and this awareness might explain why extensive resources are being lavished on the urban periphery even as other elements critical to the maintenance of their political base which is located outside Port of Spain are urging them to do otherwise. One has to be aware that there is an ethnic dimension to the problem which has to be monitored and managed.

### **Young Black Females**

In years gone by, females were deemed biologically inferior to males, and codes and identity maps took this as a point of departure. Certain careers and organizational affiliations were either closed to women, or the levels to which they could aspire or achieve were circumscribed. This was certainly so in the field of work outside the home, the family and particularly in the field of education where certain schools, scholarships, examinations and careers were reserved for men. In the field of secondary education, girls had their own educational examination tracks, the presumption being that they could not compete equally with boys. There were also certain professions like engineering, security etc. which were reserved for males. This is no longer the case. Those days have since gone. Male underachievement and failure is the obverse of female liberation and success. Black women are doing less well than

women of Indian and other ethnic minorities, but generally are doing better than black boys.

Women were once said to hold up half the world. Given this, it was argued that they were entitled to half its problems and its possibilities. Access to institutions and careers previously restricted to males are now fully available to most females. What our studies show is that they not only perform as well as males, but do better in almost every field and at all levels. In the area of schooling, they do better than males. The latter do less well in examinations in secondary and tertiary levels. Between 1988 and 1992, girls' CXC scores were significantly higher than that of males, and a four (4) percent gap was maintained between the sexes (Ryan and La Guerre, 1992). Reddock has however observed that notwithstanding their successes at examinations, girls are not doing very well, that is only in relation to black boys. As she observed, "the education system is failing girls as well as boys, contrary to popular belief girls might may be faring a bit better. It is true that generally speaking, girls are doing better than boys, but if one looks at all the girls, and using examinations as an indicator, then a majority of girls are failing and we need to recognize that." (*Daily Express* October 9<sup>th</sup> 2012) One assumes Reddock is referring to black girls.

In 2012, 65 percent of students enrolled at UWI, St Augustine were females. The percentage of females registered at Mona, Jamaica was even higher – 80 percent. An examination of Critical Training Programmes indicates that females outnumbered the males in 12 programmes while males outnumbered females in only 6. (Social Sector Investment Programme 2012) (Our own survey data indicates the same pattern. See below). The pattern is more or less the same regionally, and is in fact a worldwide phenomenon. Studies in mature societies like Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and Singapore all point in the same direction and pose problems for mating patterns in these countries.

This dramatic shift in the proportions of young females to males has had serious

consequences for both young females and for males who have been virtually displaced from certain professions and jobs in which they were once dominant. As is the case in the USA, few young black males are going into math and science which are seen as being "too difficult." This imbalance has serious consequences for family and professional life. It must certainly cause chagrin in the minds of males when they see their female siblings and other females occupying disproportionate shares of the available senior jobs and offices. They must also conclude that hegemony has shifted and that they are at risk of being crowded out of the market for white collar and other jobs requiring IT skills. They also feel frustrated and embarrassed when they recognize that they are regarded as underachievers, and that in some Caribbean countries, (Jamaica, for example), affirmative action policies have had to be put in place to augment the supply of men in the university. Many also find it difficult to deal with the fact that they are more likely to lose the scarce job opportunities which they have and that they are no longer the main breadwinners they once were. Interestingly, many women insist that notwithstanding the increase in the numbers who have been certified, there has not been any increase in the jobs available at the board or managerial level. This is still true, but the evidence shows that the glass ceiling is cracking. Most of the Permanent Secretaries in the public service are now women and no change is envisaged any time soon. The same is true in the private sector. The little boys of the future are going to wake up from their slumber to find that there are no jobs left at the inn.

Economic insecurities have given rise to certain kinds of hyper-masculine behaviours. Many black males imitate the warrior "badmen" of Jamaica who wear outlandish outfits, wears lavish "bling-bling," use violent and coarse language and has many women either serially or simultaneously. Having many women is a key symbol of power, As Donna Hope of Jamaica writes, "the donman loses respect if he is a one burner." The "one-burner" is a nail in the coffin of any shotta or don. Monogamy is seen as a sign of weakness, reflecting an inability to

control their women...Accordingly, badmen usually claim multiple partners, and evidence this in the many children they have with several baby -mothers"(Hope, 2010 62).

Many black youngsters complain that they have unwittingly lost their freedom, and that their mobility is circumscribed by their membership in a gang. Their ability to move up and about, to court women, attend funerals, attempt new relationships etc. have been traded for rank and respect on the bloc. Many belatedly find that it was a poor choice which in many cases was likely to end in death. The common phrase used to describe the fatality that inevitably ensues is "blood in, blood out."

The prevailing patriarchal dominance will be eroded, but not easily. Hierarchies in the home, the work place and the community are being permanently altered. A great deal of the spousal and sexual abuse of women and the raping of young girls about which one hears a great deal, is a result of male marginalization and insecurity. Urged on by the lyrics of certain Jamaican and Afro-American dance hall and hip hop songs which validate their behaviour, many young males seek to recover the hegemony that is being lost by beating up women physically and violently. Males also seek ascendancy over girls by changing the rules and the road maps to achieving dominance, or to conceal underachievement. We note that single sex schools were first seen as a way to encourage boys to read and study which were seen as feminine activity, not suited for what they now see as macho activity. The absence of males from the classroom as teachers and role models is also seen as a disincentive to males achieving their potential.

Our survey data have, however, confirmed our assessment that young black males are not all underachievers. Many, indeed the majority, do well as they have always done. Many migrate, and like migrants of many ethnicities, go on to become distinguished and productive residents and citizens of the USA, Canada, the UK and elsewhere. The list of achievers in the academies of the world is long and distinguished. The



achievements in culture and academic pursuits are also legendary. These achievements are not limited to the Caribbean and its diasporas.

Notwithstanding the past achievements of young black males, the view still exists that they are all lazy non-performers. Some things have however happened which have to be set right. There are those who believe that the hour is late and that there is a Greek tragedy in the making from which early recovery is not likely. Those who hold the optimistic view argue that the problem is not beyond repair. They believe that the outcome could be turned around. Black males are part of a generation which is in crisis all over the world—in the USA, Japan, China,

Korea, France, the UK – evidence abounds that women are outperforming men in every field that does not rely on brawn mainly. The problem has nothing to do with race. Blackmen are not the only males in need of social redemption. Boys have to compete in an environment that no longer automatically privileges patriarchy. There is however a need to do things which first change the game from race to race and class. Poor blacks have to be enabled to catch up and compete. The road ahead will be long and winding, but it is one that the entire society has to take preemptively. Not to do so is to court unsustainable social conflict which may occur sooner rather than later.

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# INDIAN MALES AT RISK

Selwyn Ryan

There is an argument abroad amongst some Indian intellectuals and politicians that Trinidad and Tobago has a *young male* problem and not a young black male problem as is commonly believed. The claim is that young Indo-Trinidadian males are equally at risk or perhaps even more so than are their young black counterparts. The question inevitably asked is, "at risk for what," since, on the face of it, young Indians are not visibly and obviously so, except in so far as young males the world over are "at risk," in respect of problems relating to their masculinity and their ability to get what they deem good decent jobs.

The empirical data which are required to determine questions of poverty within the Indo-Trinidadian community is sketchy and not up to date. Dr. Ralph Henry of Kairi Consultants Ltd, has analysed the Household Budget expenditure data (1997-1998) and has found that "there were some important economic differences in the data between the ethnic distribution by households. Whites were more likely to be in the highest quintile than in any other group relative to their representation in the population. Africans were less likely to be in the highest quintile than other groups, and while Indians were well represented in the lowest quintile, they were also slightly better represented in the highest quintile than Africans. In 1997-98, the differences between these urban poor two groups might not have been significant. Indians were heavily represented among the rural poor and Africans among the urban poor". According to Henry, "there were some important economic differences among the ethnic distribution by households. Whites were more likely to be in the highest

quintile than in any other group relative to their representation in the population. Africans were less likely to be in the highest quintile than other groups and while Indians were well represented in the lowest quintile, they were also slightly better represented in the highest quintile than Africans. In 1997-98 Survey, the differences between these two groups might not have been significant. *Indians were heavily represented among the rural poor and Africans among the urban poor*" (Henry 2004,49.)

The 2005 Survey of Living Conditions indicates that Afro heads of households earn about \$4,476 more per year than Indos. The SLC also indicates that Afro average monthly expenditure totals TT\$6,872, while Indos spend TT\$7,204. In terms of average monthly income, Afros earn \$9,255 whereas Indos earn \$8,882.3. More Afros (27.2%) live in poor areas than Indos (23.5%), but more Afros live in high income areas as compared to Indos-18.7- per cent. There are 10 per cent more Indos living in middle income areas. In the 19,000-24, 999 bloc, there is a higher percentage of Indian households earning more than African ones. In all other middle and upper level income ranges, there is a greater proportion of Afro-Trinis.

The figures also reveal that Afro heads of households earn twice as much as Indo-heads-50.0-23.8. Note that 40.1 percent of the Indians in the sample say they earn no income, compared to 35.7 per cent of the Afros. The directors of the Survey urge caution in the use of the figures. They indicate that the highest earners are the worst respondents (*Express* July 7, 2011.)

Dr Sandra Sookram's analysis (2011), based on the 2005 Survey of Living Conditions, also suggests that Indians are doing better economically than Africans. She notes further that poverty is a complex historical and multidimensional problem. With respect to educational attainment, policies should aim to promote the achievement of further and higher education for African households. This would have a significant effect in reducing the poverty rate among Afro-Trinidadians."

Kairi Consultants advise, correctly, that the "assessment of poverty has to be undertaken in terms that are far more dynamic than can be suggested by estimates from household surveys and surveys of living conditions. There is need for the use of a wide swath of data, some statistical, some of a more qualitative nature, in deriving an appreciation of the reality faced by the poor and of the perspectives they draw out of that reality in developing their own coping strategies." (Henry 2004)

The data are indeed varied, and the most that one can say is that while there are indeed many clusters of economically poor and dispossessed Indian youth in parts of the country, especially in the deep rural areas of central and south Trinidad, there are few, if any, that resemble what obtains in Laventille and Sea Lots where poverty is generic, widespread, and concentrated. One can of course point to recently developed squatter settlements like "Bangladesh," and to areas which have had to bear the burdens associated with the closure of the sugar cane industry at Caroni Limited which led to considerable job loss, both in the factory and in industries or enterprises which catered to the industry. It is said that some 9,000 to 10,000 jobs were lost. One parliamentarian complained that "by destroying the sugar industry, the entire region of the country has been destroyed. You have also put them on the breadline.... What is taking place here is the destruction of our history....they have destroyed the lives of thousands. Let me warn them, these poor people's tears will be like acid (*Hansard*, October 15, 2003).

Indian parliamentarians claim that with the closure of Caroni, the Indian family lost a vital social resource, since Indian society in the rural areas revolved around the phases of the industry. There is however another view of the sugar industry and its impact on Indian youth. As novelist Harold Sonny Ladoo (*No Pain like this Body*) remarks, "the sugar cane estates were monsters; they were in the habit of yawning and swallowing the young men; those who were lucky enough to get away from the estates were trapped into a career of rum drinking and fighting." In this perspective, closing down the industry was a way of releasing the Indian community from bondage to the plantation. It is now said that after a period of serious immiseration, the sugar cane workers have largely recovered, and have gone into commercial agriculture on lands given them by the state from the Company's holdings or to do work as artisans.

Indians have consistently complained that they were victims of material and cultural marginalization. It was also claimed that because they were located mainly in the centre and south of the island, Indo Trinidadian youth was not able to access the newly established welfare and other remedial programmes that were being put in place in the eighties as readily as would those who lived in the urban areas of the north. The fact, however, is that similar complaints were made in respect of Laventille, Morvant, Beetham and Sea Lots which also had to bear the economic and social costs associated with downsizing the Port Authority, the Telephone Co, and the migration of industries which once provided jobs for the people of those areas.

Some of those who insist that there is an "at risk" young Indian male, claim that alcoholism and marijuana have become serious social problems. The abuse of alcohol consumption is seen as being a particularly worrying issue. It is said that blame for the growth of the habit rests with their parents who introduced them to the "take a drink" habit early. Many of their parents' generation "binged" on rum in the village shops and various watering holes on the assumption

that rum was a way to deal with “worries” or to overcome their boredom, tiredness and the frustrations of living on the plantation. (Stewart, 1989). The popularity of the “rum and chutney” songs, “Rum ‘til ah die” and “I am ah drinka”, is said to reflect the excessive consumption of alcohol by both young and old (of both sexes) that obtains. Dr Suruj Rambajan, Minister of Local Government, also complained that he was “worried about the chutney culture and the rum culture which has seeped into the psyche of our people, to a point where I feel it will be irreversible in the future.” (*Guardian*, November 6 2012). Marijuana and cocaine consumption are also said to have become a serious problem.

One is also reminded that Indian gangs were once deeply involved in the stealing of motor vehicles which were sold as car parts. The drug and kidnapping world was also once dominated by Indians. The names of Dole Chadee, Zimmern Beharry, Teddy Mice come to mind Indian gangs still exist, though they are much less powerful than they once were. Ironically, contrary to what is now being said, the Hindus and not the Africans were the “bad guys.” The Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha (SDMS) which claims to speak for a majority of the Hindus, publicly complained that “creole society believed that Indians were given to criminal activity, especially that involving international drug activity, homicides related thereto, and car theft. The complaint was that “the media sought to give the impression that Hindus, crime and murder are synonymus.” This was not supported by prison data, complained the SDMS:

In 1996, the number of persons committed to prison was 3875. The table of criminals according to religion reads: Roman Catholics-1255; Anglicans-422; Muslims-632; Baptists-386; Non-Conformists-33, other-483 Hindus-348. These figures must surely explode the myth of Hinduism and criminality (*Trinidad Express*, March 29 1999)

One Hindu notable, a minister of government, complained bitterly about “Hindu bashing” and even demanded that it be made illegal. “The

time for Hindu action is now” (*Trinidad Express*, April 26, 1999).

The Indian extended family which in the past was a pillar of social strength, is now said to be under a great deal of stress and the single parent family is becoming more ubiquitous. Dr Glen Ramadharsingh, Minister of the People and Social Development recently voiced concern about the large numbers of unemployed women with several children who live in [Indian] settlements. He complained of the “cycle of poverty which is established when women who have several children are abandoned by their husbands and fathers. When these children grow up without proper guidance, the cycle repeats itself.” The Minister pledged to provide jobs for these single mothers. He also urged Indians to take advantage of the many training opportunities being offered by the government so that they can gain employment or start small businesses (*Trinidad Guardian*, April 15<sup>th</sup> 2012).

Other Indian spokesmen have made the point that there is a view, which is mythical, that all Indians are rich. As one senior attorney declared, “not all of us are well dressed, well fed and well educated: there are thousands who are living in abject poverty and depravity in this country” (*Express* October 29 2011). Interestingly, when the country was experiencing boom conditions in the petro-boom years, many Hindus complained that their culture was “at risk.” Youth were rejecting work. As Steven Vertovec (1992) recorded, “many young men chose not to work. Well educated and used to well paid work, they simply refuse to engage in tedious, poorly paid labour, especially in agriculture (where wages are depressed) “Making a ‘lime” and waiting for appropriate work to arrive through social channels is preferred. This partly structural, partly voluntary unemployment among young men, some say, has led to an increase in ganja smoking and further fragmentation in family life.”

More recent prison data help to confirm earlier perspectives on the issue of ethnicity and crime. We note that while there are many more

Afro-Trinis in the prison population, there is a growing Indian presence there as well. Twenty-eight (28) percent of the prison population in 2011 were Indian. At the Golden Grove remand yard, there were 493 persons waiting to have their matters determined. Two hundred and sixty-six (266) were African, 145 were mixed, and 82 were Indian. The percentages of Indians in relation to African might well have been significantly different were it not for the fact that Indians find it easier to access bail since they command more movable wealth than do Afro-Trinis. Of the convicted "lads" at YTC, 19 were African, 11 were mixed, and 6 were Indians. About 10 percent of the inmates at St Michaels Boys Home at the time of our visit (March 27, 2012) were Indian. Most were committed for drug offenses. Some were from homes that were well off.

The claim is made that in the past, Hindu family networks helped to attenuate the problems faced by the pathologies identified above, but that that family resource is now under more economic and social stress than was traditionally the case. There is also said to be an unacceptably high incidence of spousal abuse. Indian feminists have been very critical in their observations about their men folk on this issue. As Rosanne Kanhai complains:

Violence within the Indian family is still a strong male reaction to crises which are centred around definitions of male and female. A large proportion of homicides by Indian men are perpetuated against their wives, lovers and children. In many case, women have been killed when they rejected a man or wanted to separate. This rejection is such a blow to the man's public self, which is critical to his definition of manhood...(Kanhai 1999).

Kanhai and others note that physical abuse is more likely to take place in reaction to infidelity, or when males are intoxicated or feel marginalized. Growing competition from upwardly mobile and more westernised mates, and challenges to patriarchal authority also generate feelings of inadequacy or dishonour. Men are often advised to show the woman "who wears the pants" (Ibid).

Allegedly, gangs have also begun to appear in "warm spots" in Central Trinidad. It is however claimed that these are either migrants from outside or persons who come from Afro dominant communities like Enterprise Village. It is further argued that unlike what obtains in many Christian and Muslim communities, there are few institutions- temples and mosques- which have rehabilitation as their core mission and which encourage miscreants to modify their behaviour. A successful Hindu businessman may sponsor a puja, it is said, but beyond that, it is "everyman for himself." The "crabs in the barrel" syndrome is also said to be much in evidence. A statement authored by Khemraj Rai of Guyana may be regarded as providing corroborating evidence of what obtains in Trinidad. According to Rai Instead of cooperating to achieve certain goals, Indians, so it is said, pull each other down and have difficulty working together, since success is taken to indicate that those remaining behind are underachievers. The successful are pulled back into the barrel.

These claims and counter claims were discussed with several persons within the Indian community who have a sense of what obtains. The problem is that Indians are more cautious about revealing their social problems to persons who do not belong to the tribe. There are thus not many published analyses available. We however consulted such limited studies as exist, and the conclusion that emerges is that while there are a considerable number of poor and "at risk" Indians in Trinidad and Tobago whose needs must be given due attention, the claim that there exists a significant "at risk" young Indian male underclass which is comparable to (or even worse than) to the young poor Afro- male phenomenon is exaggerated. The qualifier invariably given was that the two parent patriarchal Indian family, challenged and stressed as it is, is still the dominant archetype, and is able to provide anchorage and support for their sons who are economically and socially in danger.

Many conservative or conventional Indian parents, pundits, and Hindu-centric elements however complain that Hindus in particular are

losing their identity and their denominational self esteem. Many find traditional forms of worship boring, and are joining evangelical churches, the numbers of which have grown significantly between 1972 and the present. (Ryan, 1999). Young Indian males are also patterning their behaviour on Afro-youth and are themselves mimicking the music and other cultural behaviours imported from Jamaica, Black America and urban Trinidad. Their musical tastes are much the same as that of creole youth. Sixty two per cent of them prefer hiphop, 62 percent prefer Jamaican dance hall and 50.5 percent prefer rhythm and blues. The percentages for Afro Trinis were 68.5 percent, 71 percent, and 51.9 percent, respectively.

Young Hindu and Christian women were also taking to the bars where social drinking with their male counterparts is becoming ubiquitous. In sum, westernization is overtaking the young Indian male, and what we are seeing in the activities of organizations such as the Hindu Prachar Kendra is an attempt to revive Hindu cultural consciousness and offer young Hindus an alternative to Westernisation and fundamentalist Christianity. The group most at risk is not the young Indian but the so called "real" or fundamentalist Indian whose Hindu soul is being wrested from him by proselytizing evangelists and by creole cultural assertiveness, (Munasinghe 2001)

The Indian family however remains more resilient and risk resistant than its Afro-Trinidadian counterpart and has so far been better able to address the issues that afflict the creole family. The "evidence", such as it is, points to the conclusion that the Indian family, extended and nuclear, is still viable and support their young members, while the single parent is still prevalent in "Hotspot" type communities. Land and the habit of planting are also still available for use as collateral.

The data and judgements revealed above were reinforced by data generated by the Trinidad Youth Survey conducted by Katz and Fox in 2006 which indicated that while they

were at risk for several social pathologies, Indo-Trinidadian youths were not as seriously at risk as a group. What the figures show is that Indo-Trinidadians were less likely to live in "hot spot" neighbourhoods where hand guns and drugs were easily available than were Afro-Trinidadians, and would thus be less likely to be affected negatively by these factors. Indians were more likely to be living in communities with low levels of community disorganization – 51 percent for Afros compared to 28.9 for Indo-Trinis. These factors served to reduce the risks to which they were exposed. The figures also show is that Indo-Trinis were the most likely ethnic group to report high family opportunity for pro-social involvement (60 percent), followed by Afro-Indians (52 percent) and Afros (49.5 percent). This family resource served to reduce the likelihood of actually becoming involved in risky behaviour. In sum, the Indian youth could still rely on family supports

Turning next to gang involvement, the researchers found that Afro-Trinis students were more likely to belong to one (28 percent), followed by 27 percent for Indians, and 30 percent for Afro-Indians. These differences were however not as significant as we had assumed. Afro-Trinis also said that they were more likely to have hand guns available to them than were other groups. Forty-seven percent of them said that guns were available to them, compared to 29 percent of Indo-Trinis, 41 percent of "others," and 47 percent from douglas. In terms of drugs, 50 percent of the Afros and douglas said that drugs were available to them if they wished compared to 32 percent of the Indo-Trinidadians. Availability is in part determined by where one lived and whether ones' neighbourhood or community was such as to make it easy or difficult to purchase drugs. Afro-Trinidadians were more likely to be living in such neighbourhoods – 47.8 percent compared to 47 percent for douglas, 44 percent for others and 32.4 percent for Indo-Trinis. What this data suggest is while there are some young Indian males who could be deemed "at risk," there were available family supports which prevented them from becoming unequivocal victims.

If there is an “at risk” element, the paradoxical causes thereof have to do with increasing family wealth and the relaxation of effort that is associated with this recently acquired wealth. The young are not as motivated as were their parents, and more likely to be seduced by risky “creole” life styles, conspicuous and instant consumption, substance misuse (ganja, powdered cocaine, alcohol, and heavy partying.)

Many Indian males also have an identity problem, and seek to replace traditional aspects of their Indianness with creole alternatives. Creolisation, which has its attractions to many youngsters, is also seen as a danger by many pundits and parents seeking mates for their daughters who are showing a growing disposition to marry outside tribal circles than was previously the case.

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# THE INDIAN DILEMMA

*Indira Rampersad*

The perception that young Black males alone constitute at risks youths is an erroneous one. The tendency to focus primarily on young Black males has ignored the dynamics in other ethnic communities such as the Syrian community and particularly the East Indian community in Central Trinidad. This paper recognizes that there is also a crisis amongst Indian youths, an issue which requires much more indepth research. The problems are multi-fold and range from actual criminal activities in Central Trinidad to the lack of human values amongst rich, middle class Indo-Trinidadian youths to alcohol consumption and domestic violence in Indian communities.

A community leader from Central Trinidad outlined the abject fear in which residents in the area live. He explained the recent break-ins in the homes of a neighbourhood which has a long stretch of cane-fields where villagers are afraid to pass at night even though the area got street-lights two years ago (interview, 9<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2012). The villagers are terrified of newcomers into the community as these are supposedly the persons committing crimes in the area. This fear was intensified when the news spread that one alleged criminal, popularly known as "Robocop" was camping in the region known as Enterprise which was deemed a hotspot during the State of Emergency in 2011. The area was once known as Datsonville as the shells of containers were used as homes creating a slum-like environment where criminals thrive. It was predominantly inhabited by Afro-Trinidadians but the community leader noted that recently Indians have also been occupying some spaces there. Areas in Central Trinidad which

were designated hotspots in the 2011 State of Emergency include Charlieville Edinburgh/Longdonville, Enterprise North, Enterprise South Cunupia, Montrose, Felicity/Endeavour and Munroe Road/Caroni Savannah.

The community leader also affirmed that the slum area created a kind of "people in exile" and now has a frontier dimension extending further into the outskirts of Central where two major wasteland areas exist. One was formerly owned by Bhadase Sagan Maharaj which was in litigation and which was eventually all lost by the Maharaj family and claimed by squatters. The other is the site of the Palms Springs Recreation Club in what is called Cocorite Jungle at the North of the edges of Londonville. The squatters almost always come from Laventille and included many small islanders. According to the community leader, "their criminal activities which are linked to that of the large, fearful figure of Robocop and the spate of kidnappings in the last ten to fifteen years are real issues in terms of crime and fear of crime in Chaguanas".

The community leader also mentioned the housing settlement known as Edingburgh 500 which was created more than 15 years ago. Again, he emphasized that it was occupied by people who came from outside the area, who also started claiming liming space in the streets and committed petit crimes such as stealing, robbery, snatching and displayed aggressive behaviour in the community. He described one known very skilful thief called lizard, who got into people's homes to steal their belongings. The community leader affirmed that "Lizard



was a Dougla and his surname was Bridgelal. He was a very clever thief who could enter people's homes through very small spaces, hence the name lizard".

This contention about people from "outside" coming into Central to settle and commit crimes was supported by the police official and Head of the Central Police Division. The Superintendent further added that Edinburgh has one gang while the housing scheme in Pt Lisas Gardens has five rival gangs. In all cases, the ethnicity of the gang members are primarily Afro-Trinidadians while ninety percent of the victims are of non-African descent (Interview, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2012). He also explained that those coming from outside are also involved in the use and sale of drugs - mainly marijuana and cocaine - and are the same persons involved in the home break-ins. In addition, he noted that one bar, ironically nestled between the Chaguanas Police Station and the Court was patronized mainly by Afro-Trinidadians from Enterprise, who over time, have been charged with over thirty offences including firearms, murder, violence and robberies.

The myth that the depressed area known as Felicity has a rampant drug problem was dispelled by the police official who himself resides in Felicity contends that "Felicity is no different from any other area in Trinidad. There are a few people who sell drugs, namely cocaine and marijuana, more so in Kakandee Road and there are about twenty pipers in the area but it is by no means a serious problem".

Like alcohol, marijuana is not really viewed as a drug amongst many Indians in Trinidad. It is not seen as a "hard drug" like cocaine and is perceived to have both medicinal, religious and spiritual values. Indians always seemed to have a meditated outlook of life, so in the post-colonial era, it was difficult to tell if they were in a state of *samadhi* (sleep), or a state of intoxication when they used marijuana. Today, it is also both an alternative source of income when trafficked in the local community and an escape from the trials and tribulations of daily life amongst the poor, unemployed and underprivileged in society, when consumed.

The police official continued that the problem in Central including Felicity is not one of drugs but rather one of alcohol abuse particularly amongst the East Indian community. He noted that several Hindu East Indians have gravitated towards other religions like Pentecostal, Church of the Nazarene and Jehovah Witness so that Felicity is now an area comprised of Hindu Temples, Mosques and churches of various Christian denominations. He emphasized, however, that alcohol consumption is most prevalent amongst the Hindu community in Felicity as it is in the rest of Central. "Everyone is consuming alcohol", he affirmed. "One may even argue that women are consuming more than men". He observed that the bars and pubs are frequented by more women than men as "every man has a few women around him in these drinking places". The lower classes tend to frequent the less luxurious "rum shops" but the more affluent can be found in the more posh pubs which have sprouted up throughout Central in recent times.

Alcohol has always been present in both the home and community environment via cultural festivities such as weddings and in the village rum shop. It evolved during indentureship as an integral aspect of Indian culture. Grandma, whether "Nanee" or "Argee" was both alcoholic and matriarch as she sometimes sat squatting at the roadside with a nip of puncheon at her side. The arduous task of the sugar estate also lent itself to alcohol consumption as sugar workers frequently turned to the "bottle" to relieve stress after a hard day's work. Their eldest son who also worked the fields, frequently joined his father in this exercise which was the means by which the male youths were generally indoctrinated into alcohol consumption. Besides, there were few opportunities for recreation outside the village rum shop and even today, this still obtains as sporting facilities such as basket ball courts, swimming pools, cricket and football pavilions are few and far between, if not notably absent in East Indian communities, throughout the country, not just Central Trinidad. Thus, the rum shop serves as a convergence point and frequent "liming spot" for neighbours, friends, families and relatives alike to meet, greet, drink

and discuss the issues, particularly the politics of the day. It was also arguably a genesis point for chutney music as male villagers converged in the village run shop singing:

*Ah beating meh dum*

*And ah singing meh song*

*De only ting ah missing*

*Is ah bottle ah rum*

Moreover, the home was a natural environment for drinking. Indian children are exposed to alcohol from quite early as their elders often send them sometimes from age five for a “pint or nip of puncheon” in the village shops. So consumption is hardly linked to immorality but has become a natural part of their daily lives. In the past, and even today at Christmas time, when families go from house to house, to eat, drink and be merry, children were often asked to “take a small one” as normal rules and inhibitions were shed in the spirit of communal festivity. Moreover, under normal circumstances when family visit each other, it is a gesture of goodwill and welcome to provide alcoholic drinks at the table to preserve their own image of camaraderie and status. Women were also known to drink in the house, away from the watchful eye of the public and the menfolk.

None of this however, dispels the dangers associated with alcohol abuse. Alcohol consumption has been frequently linked to the issue of domestic violence in East Indian communities and families and has sparked a debate on whether one naturally leads to the other. The central police official believes that it does, given the number of complaints received at the Chaguanas Police Station which averages about four to five reported cases per day. He explains how the numerous calls to the Police Station on weekends for alleged domestic abuse, usually alcohol propelled, divert valuable security resources away from criminal activities such as robbery which are most prevalent during the weekends. Moreover, he strongly advocates a significant reduction in the price of alcohol which he insists would not increase consumption but rather reduce the quantity of household income being diverted to alcohol

consumption and increase the amount available for necessities like food, education and family health care. He is convinced that whatever the price of alcohol, consumers would consume the same quantity and therefore a reduction in price would have no effect on consumption patterns.

Alcohol consumption amongst East Indian males also engages the notion of masculinity particularly as it speaks to maleness and manhood of traumatized Indian males. The community leader, affirms that young Indian men in central Trinidad, seems to have been facing a self-emasculating identity crisis of “finding themselves” in a diverse society traditionally dominated by the more assertive and aggressive Afro-Trinidadian who typifies what has traditionally been promoted as maleness. The phenomenon may also be linked to the decades of Indo-dominated Opposition politics which characterized the political history of Trinidad and Tobago. Before the United National Congress (UNC) assumed the reins of government in 1995, the East Indian community had little hopes of ever holding national power. One may argue that once in power, a certain discomfort has arisen due to unpreparedness to control this unexpected powerful space traditionally dominated by Afro-Trinidadians. Moreover, even the wider, diverse community still experiences difficulties in accepting East Indians in the sphere of governance which has traditionally been viewed as the prime domain of the Afro-dominated PNM party.

In a similar vein, the phenomenal achievements of East Indian males in the political, social, cultural and educational arenas has been neglected within the dominant discourse whether in the mainstream and social media or in music, particularly calypso, soca and chutney which tend to focus on their weaknesses rather than their successes. Today, East Indian males prevail in some of the most esteemed professions in the country including doctors, lawyers, engineers, managers, entrepreneurs and academics. This is quite evident in Central Trinidad where the closure of Caroni 1975 Ltd has led to deep trauma amongst Indians due to the loss of income which sustained their daily

lives. But their capacity to endure is reflected in their adoption of alternative employment in the construction sector and skills such as welding, tiling and even the production of food-crops. This retooling strategy has proven quite successful for some who are now economically better off than before.

In recent times, the discourse continues that self-emasculatation has been compounded by the now highly educated population of independent, Indo-Trinidadian women who threaten the stability of the traditional Indian home where the women were predominantly housewives. The contention is that this results in higher rates of both domestic violence and divorce as Indo-Trinidadian men resort to “rum” in order to evade their deep-seated insecurities and the threats inadvertently posed by their more professional, modern, sophisticated wives. The woman and at times even the children naturally become helpless victims of domestic abuse which sometimes ends in suicide and homicide.

The crisis amongst East Indians then, is generally one of alcohol abuse and domestic violence. This is compounded by a burgeoning middle-class spawned by the education achieved by the generation of parents of today’s youths. The parents of the current generation of Indo-Trinidadians youths sacrificed tremendously to ensure that their children do not suffer the hardships they did when they were growing up. Now qualified professionals such as lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs and teachers, most tend to have just two or three children in contrast to their parents who generally had half a dozen or more. They endow their children lavishly with every material comfort and luxury including cars, computers, cell phones, Ipads and even apartments. Though some of these youths do well in school and even attend university, they lack the sense of values that accompanies hard work and sacrifice. Those employed, have all their salaries to themselves which they use as spending money. As such, they frequently operate in party mode, heavily involved in alcohol and drug consumption. This negates the view that involvement in drug activity is a feature of poverty or lack of employment opportunities.

Indeed, it is only the more affluent youths who can regularly afford to consume cocaine powder. However, no detailed study of this phenomenon has yet been conducted and the information here is derived from the author’s observations.

### **Alcohol, Chutney Music and Domestic Violence**

The theme of alcohol or the more popular “rum” which has been quite pervasive in the chutney genre in the last decade or so has been blamed for the perpetuation of crime in the society, more so, domestic violence in the East Indian home and community. From, “rum till ah die” to “gyul yuh know ah was a drinker” “rum is meh lover, “Guinness and Puncheon” to “White Oak and Water”, alcohol has been eulogized in chutney songs. This is quite evident in the popular rendition entitled “Bring it” by the singer known as Hunter:

Yuh could bring it in a bottle,  
yuh could bring it in a flask.  
You could send it in a cup,  
you could bring it in a glass.  
Ah want mih rum in de morning.  
Ah want mih rum in de evening

Commentators have lashed out at what they perceive as base, demoralizing and uncouth lyrics. One observer angrily asserts that “the East Indian community in Trinidad has a sickness call rum drinking that it needs to have addressed. The recent crop of Chutney songs tends to support this sickness by glorifying the drinking of rum... Rum drinking in the East Indian community is a very big problem and with these Chutney Stars glorifying this purveyor of more hard core drugs it has become a time to tell these singers that they need to stop” (*Santiwah*, 2008).

Aisha Mohammed notes that

The issue of domestic violence has an uneasy place in chutney-soca, since it is a fête and dance genre. The dissonance between the genre and the topic leads to trivialization, which occurs in two ways. If the song has a subtext of violence, it is masked by humour, usually of the slapstick kind, as in the case with Rikki Jai’s “Dulahin”, Videsh Sookhoo’s “Dhal Belly” or Edward Ramdass’ “Bailna”. If violence is the main theme, then the

juxtaposition of abuse with cheery melodies and lilting rhythms serves to undermine the gravity of the issue. (Mohammed, 2007).

Lystra Maharaj established the link between these chutney lyrics and violence

Not so for chutney singers: they glorify wife beating, horning, sibling against sibling violence and substance abuse. They seem imprisoned and damned to the image of a man (Amitabh Bachan or Dharmendra) coming home late at night, in love with a bottle of rum, expecting his wife to be faithful and have food on the table and children in bed so she can please his pathetic, short lived multiple sexual needs. Indeed this is the plight of many a young woman these days. However, with education and liberation, the young professional East Indian woman does not settle for this: its either her man shapes up or she ships him out for a man of another race, but not after a good few beatings. (Maharaj, 2008).

This however, is not true of all chutney songs. In 2002, Drupatee Ramgoonai, recognizing this tendency to promote domestic violence in chutney-soca, rendered the tune "Doh Beat Yuh Wife" because she felt "she had to do it with the amount of violence in the country" (Trinidad Express, 29 January 2002). The rendition was accompanied by a skit depicting the brutality of domestic violence between a man and a woman culminating in the release of a dove to symbolize peace. She later explained in an interview that "It's not that I think all men are batterers, but I'm a woman and if I'm going to sing I will sing for women" (Trinidad Express, 29 January 2002).

Male chutney singers have also addressed the issue of domestic violence, indeed, more so than female singers where they either depict it humorously or condemn abusive men. Rikki Jai, for example, was heavily chastised for beating his wife flat in 1998 by Prakash Jaglalsingh with the lyrics

We bailnaa we dulahin, well but that is not de norm  
[Yuh stupid, yuh really stupid. Hear dis]  
We bailnaa we dulahin, well but that is not de norm  
If yuh have a fat dulahin she can keep yuh nice and warm.

Aisha Mohammed notes that "in the verse, he pathologizes violence against women, condemns perpetrators as 'stupid' and decries weight as an accurate measure of attractiveness". As the song progresses, he admits that men can't survive without women:

We say dem girls too bothersome but we can't do without them  
The way we does hang on is like mango on a stem".

Mohammed continues that "the men come off as being somewhat pathetic in their dependence. The melody suddenly changes to a nursery rhyme. He sings joyfully:

We must respect our dulahin anywhere we go  
We must respect our dulahin anywhere we go  
Respect our dulahin anywhere we go"

In a song entitled "Baboolal" the author, Kenny J, affirms that the song was rooted in reality and reflects the experiences of a friend of his and many families in Barrakpore, South Trinidad. He explains that when "Baboolal comes home from work in a drunken state, he does believe he getting horn and he behave bad. Reports were made to the Community Police against 'Baboolal' about domestic violence and we are desperately trying to assist him" (Trinidad Express, February 2001).

Kumar Mahabir, a member of the Indo-Caribbean Council, in an effort to digress from the issue of domestic violence and focus instead on the fallacies of the then UNC government, contends that

the chutney items portrayed Indian men in these kinds of disputes as rum drinkers, wife beaters and Gramoxone ingesters. The portrayal begs the question: is domestic violence and murder-suicides prevalent in the Indian community? If this is so, then it is certainly not reflected in the location of counselling/referral/support services in these communities, and the ethnicity of the officers hired in the Domestic Violence Unit under former UNC Minister Daphne Phillips (Trinidad Guardian, 14 February 2001).

Domestic violence is quite prevalent in the Indian community and is linked to alcohol abuse. This is borne out by the statements made by the Head

of the Central Police Division. Whether music perpetuates this practice, or more specifically, whether chutney lyrics promoting alcohol is responsible for this form of violence is still to be determined. The survey undertaken by this Youth at Risk Committee revealed that in both hotspot and non-spot areas, a vast majority of

respondents rejected the idea that there was any link between musical preferences and personal aggression; the figure was almost the same, (70.1%) in hotspots and (70.5%) in non-hotspots. Only a minority in both areas agreed with this idea (27.1% in hotspots vs. 26.8% in non-hotspots).

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# THE RACE QUESTION AND YOUTH AT RISK IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

*Patricia Mohammed*

The Terms of Reference of the Committee comments that the Caribbean has been loosely described in some reports as the “murder capital of the world”. It is an established fact that over the past few years, the incidence of violent gang related crime has increased quite dramatically throughout the Region. Statistical analyses indicate that young black males have largely been responsible for the increase, that they are at risk as a generation and have also served to render the country at risk. Within the Terms of Reference provided to the Committee appointed to examine youth and crime, we are directly charged to:

*Identify the at-risk groups in the society in terms of age, gender, social class, ethnicity, occupation and geography. Due attention should be given to young black and Indian males in both urban and rural communities.*

Understandably, a major focus of the Committee is on the ethnic and gender group who appear to be at greater risk and who are presenting greater challenges to the criminal justice system. The statistics and ethnographic data have reinforced these findings. One of the institutions visited by the members of the Youth at Risk Committee in May 2012 was the Youth Training Centre (YTC). They noted that there were 463 young men at present in the Centre, of whom 89 or 19% were of East Indian descent, the rest primarily of African descent.

An undated but recent study carried out on the Youth Training Centres of Trinidad and Tobago under the auspices of the National Drug Council and the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service on the *Detection and Prevalence of*

*Substance Abuse and Related Issues among Juvenile Offenders at three juvenile centres* – the Youth Training Centre (YTC), St Michael’s Home for Boys and St Jude’s Home for Girls provided the following statistics by gender and ethnicity on its inmates. The total number of inmates at the YTC was 201, at St Michael’s Home for Boys, 50 and 49 at St Jude’s Home for Girls. Of the total population in the facilities, 251 or 83.7% were males and 49 or 16.3 % were females. While the age grouping spanned 14 to 19 years, 63% of the population were between 14 and 17 years of age. A larger proportion of East Indians (81%) tended to be over 15 yrs old compared to Africans (68%) and those of “other origins” (71%). However, proportion-wise there were notably more Africans (7%) under 14 yrs old compared to the both East Indians and those of “other origins”.

The report noted that: “Of this group, sixty-one percent (about six in every ten) of respondents in the study were of African descent and 12% were of East Indian descent. A further 22% were classified as “other origins”. The vast majority of the population at each institution was of African descent - more than half (58%) the population at the YTC, eight of ten (88.9%) at St Michael’s Home for Boys and six often (63%) at St Jude’s Home for Girls. East Indians made up 15% and 16% of the population at the YTC and St Jude’s respectively and a very small proportion at St Michael’s Home for Boys (2%)”. Results of the study confirmed perceptions about ethnicity. It was found that boys and girls of African descent were significantly more likely to be sent to these institutions compared to boys and girls of East Indian or “other origins”.

The Summary of the *Drug Abuse Monitoring Project Among Inmates from all Prisons in Trinidad and Tobago* supports these findings: "A typical male inmate was a single person of African origin, about 34 yrs old working in the service industry or as a labourer, completed high school or a lower level of education, that all age groups were more or less equally distributed among the ethnic groups, that about twice as many East Indians compared to those of African and mixed origin had no formal schooling, that half of all respondents of African origin, 56% of East Indian and 49% of those of mixed race were in full-time employment before incarceration, that a little more than half of those offenders of African origin were on remand and that convicted offenders were more likely to be East Indians (51.3%)".

There is obvious justification for the focus on young black males as a group particularly at risk, but the mandate with which the committee is charged i.e To *Identify the at-risk groups in the society in terms of age, gender, social class, ethnicity, occupation and geography* also requires it to extend its reach to ensure that other at risk groups, young men of other ethnic groups, young women in general and the widest geographical spread, are considered for the factors that may parallel the conditions of young black males face at present, even if to a lesser extent. The Committee needs consider preventative mechanisms for the entire young population while it targets the group immediately at risk. The following data confirms the need to scrutinize the condition of other populations in this age group, including non-nationals who are excluded in the definition of citizen but who live and work in the territory.

One of the major areas of concern that emerges in the data of the National Drug Council *Youth Training Centres of Trinidad and Tobago and the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service on the Detection and Prevalence of Substance Abuse and Related Issues among Juvenile Offenders* is that substance use and abuse affects all youth. The study probed the prevalence of substance abuse and found no current marijuana use reported for girls, but one-third of males at the YTC and one quarter at St Michael's reported

marijuana use in the month prior to the survey. Current cigarette use was slightly higher among East Indians (60%) compared to Africans (58%) and those of "other origins" (55%). However, current alcohol use was slightly higher among Africans (11%) compared to the others. In terms of current marijuana use, it was slightly higher among those of "other origins" (27%) compared to Africans (24%) and Indians (22%).

The relationship between drug use and abuse and presence in correctional facilities and its impact on what constitutes a miscreant youth must consider the following perception of youth in their initiation to drugs in the marketplace of leisure or potential commerce. A Rapid Assessment Survey by Paul Holder (*Rapid Situation Analysis, Trinidad p.24*) was conducted in La Horquetta in 2000, to determine whether the drug use among the youth of the community influenced, or was related to, the reported crimes committed by the young males of the district. Among his findings was the strong conviction by respondents that alcohol and marijuana were not drugs, and, unlike cocaine users, marijuana users do not commit crimes. Alcohol, the respondents contended, contributes to more crimes than cocaine in terms of the propensity to domestic violence and disorderly behaviour. Holder concludes that the lack of awareness of the pharmacology of the substances and uncontrollable behaviour influenced by the use of alcohol are examples of the vulnerability of drug use and one might add the easy availability which leads to a further misunderstanding of its dangers. These are available to all ethnic groups and classes in the society. What deterrents are built into family and economic conditions and psychological propensities that influence this or that grouping? In the National Consultation on Education and Harm Reduction related to Drug Use, HIV and AIDS in Trinidad and Tobago for youth between the ages 15 and 18, respondents were distributed among African, Indian and Mixed ethnicity, were mainly Christians and resided in North, South, East and Central in the country. An interesting finding is that the majority of respondents began their drug taking activity between the ages 10 and 14. *The Rapid Situational*

*Analysis of Drug Use and Harm Reduction among Young Persons in Tobago* carried out in 2008 noted that 75% of respondents indicated that there was a problem with youth drug use, yet only 3% were perceived to have sought help.

The Prison report (cited above) again noted of all its inmates that “An overwhelming majority of inmates confirmed positive for marijuana were of African origin – six of every ten (61.1%). One fifth were East Indian (20.6%) and 17.6% were of mixed race. In terms of age grouping, there was a higher proportion in the 20-29 years age grouping (38%), but the proportions decreased as age increased. In respect of Treatment and Rehabilitation “A small proportion (7.6%) indicated that they had previously treatment for substance use and twice as many (proportionally) indicated previous counselling/rehabilitation (15.5%), East Indians (compared to those of African and mixed origin) were more likely to indicate that they had been previously treated as well as counselled/rehabilitated for substance use including alcohol and tobacco” (p.3).

As a group, young women of all ethnicities are equally at risk for other reasons. Another study carried out by the National Drug Council in collaboration with the Prison Service of Trinidad And Tobago entitled *Women in Prison: Relationship Between Drug And Criminal Offending*, found that there were slightly more Africans overall (32%) compared to Indians (28%). Those who were classified as “mixed” (28%) were also predominantly nationals. All those classified as Caucasians and “others” were non-nationals. Linking the nature of offences and ethnicity, the study found that women of African origin tended to be incarcerated mostly for drug offences (51.6%) followed by violent offences (25.8%), while those of East Indian origin tended to be the reverse – more for violent offences (50%) followed by drug offences (26.9%). The Caucasians, “mixed” and “others” tended to be incarcerated mostly for drug offences (100%, 44% and 80% respectively). With respect to substance abuse, women of African and “Mixed” origin reported higher levels of marijuana and crack cocaine use (lifetime, annual and current).

East Indians reported higher levels of lifetime alcohol use than Africans but lower levels of annual use. Those of “mixed” origin reported higher level of alcohol use overall. Women who were un-employed prior to being incarcerated were significantly more likely to report higher prevalence of marijuana use (63.2%) compared to employed women (39%). They were also more likely to report higher prevalence of crack cocaine use but only higher levels of annual and current use of alcohol.

Forty-six percent of the women were incarcerated for drug related offences of which trafficking was the most notable charge (56% all drug offences) compared to possession (44% of all drug offences). The next most prevalent charge reported was related to violent offences of which murder/manslaughter made up 82% of these offences. About 14% were incarcerated for property offences of which larceny/theft, fraud and burglary made up most of these offences. The predominant offence among non-nationals tended to be drug offence (77%) followed by public order offences (17%) and this related mostly to immigration violations. Most nationals however were incarcerated for violent offences (41%) followed by drug offences (34%) and property offences (22%) in rank order.

Women of African origin tended to be incarcerated mostly for drug offences (52%) followed by violent offences (26%), while those of Indian origin tended to be the reverse – more for violent offences (50%) followed by drug offences (27%). The Caucasians, “mixed” and “others” tended to be incarcerated mostly for drug offences (100%, 44% and 80% respectively). The majority of women (90%) reported no prior prison sentencing to incarceration, probation or fines. The very small proportion of prior sentencing related to almost equal amounts of violent, property and drug offences (p.6). While these statistics are not broken down by age, the study notes that when the ages were grouped, 12.4% of women were under 20 yrs old; 31% were in the 20-29 yrs age grouping; 32% in the 30-39 yrs; 19% in the 40-49 yrs; and six women or 6.2% were 50 yrs or older. The 20-39 years age bracket made up some 63% of those incarcerated.



### Who therefore is at risk?

In two Draft papers submitted to the Committee (2012) which deal directly with the race question in Trinidad and Tobago, Selwyn Ryan has raised very pertinent issues. First in "Indian males at risk" he has noted that "There is an argument abroad that Trinidad and Tobago has a young *male* problem and not a young *black male* problem as is commonly believed. The claim is that young Indo-Trinidadian males are equally at risk or perhaps even more so than are young black males. The question inevitably asked is, "at risk for what," since, on the face of it, young Indians are not visibly so, except in so far as young males the world over are seemingly "at risk" particularly when compared with females". He concludes that the sociologically repetitive mantra of Indian culture and continuity, family networks and economic stability will rise to the rescue of those young Indian males who are venturing over the edge of legality: "We also consulted such limited studies which exist, and the conclusion that emerges is that while there are a considerable number of poor Indian people in Trinidad and Tobago whose needs must be given due attention, the claim that there exists a significant "at risk" young male Indian underclass which is comparable to the young poor Afro- male phenomenon is somewhat exaggerated. The qualifier invariably given by our informants was that the two parent Indian family, challenged and stressed as it is, is still the dominant archetype, and is able to provide anchorage and support for their sons who are economically and socially in social danger".

In another draft paper "Carlyle and the "Lazy Nigger" question", Ryan has raised the binary opposition that is invariably a part of any public discourse in Trinidad, if less so in Tobago. He has posed the issue of who is more at risk in society at present in a well thumbed genealogy of historical experiences of black slavery and colonialism. Ryan writes "The question as to what needs to be done with "little black boys" in the Caribbean in general and Trinidad and Tobago has become one of the most eagerly debated issues in the last few years as their involvement in drug running and other forms of criminal behaviour appears to have become

disproportionate to their numerical significance in the population. The problem is however not one of recent vintage. Indeed, there is a genealogy to it". The genealogy establishes first the white slave master's whip and colonialism as the basis of undermining black male masculinity to be replaced by the undeliverable promises of the first black Prime Minister Eric Williams who had brought the society to independence by 1962 and remained in power until 1981.

Both analyses are accurate in proposing the popular theories and sentiments that have framed the perception and policies that have been applied to African and Indo-Caribbean population, one deprived of its roots and culture, the other despite hardships, still emerging culturally saturated with continuities and family resources to buttress economic and social gaps. Ryan has also argued that the concept of being at risk is used too loosely. "Of late, the term is being used to define young persons, whether male or female who live in circumstances that put their well being "at risk", another point that may be considered relevant to a discussion on the question of race, youth and crime in Trinidad and Tobago". It is useful to consider another definition of at risk as we clarify the issues further. According to World Bank Report (2000), an "at-risk youth" is one who "faces exceptional challenges in the traditional venues of socialization, principally, the family, community, school and workplace" (Rapid Situational Analysis of Drug Use and Harm Reduction among Young Persons in Tobago, 2008.p.11). What constitutes "exceptional challenges" therefore remains the debatable point.

Whiggish history has been severely critiqued for its deterministic long term view of history. Derek Walcott has also commented in a public lecture in St Lucia in 2003 that what emerges in Caribbean historiography and popular discourse is an ongoing debate about which group has borne the greater pain and thus the question becomes what entitlements follow from this equation. The circumstances that affected individuals in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century have undergone massive changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>

century. Political regimes have changed hands, world revolutions have changed denigrating and negative attitudes to differences due to class, race and ethnicity and even gender. Four years ago a black President was elected to arguably the most powerful nation in today's world. India and China have emerged as world powers contesting the western dominance in every sphere including aesthetics, education and market resilience. Africa, though still troubled and riddled as are other nations such as those in the Middle East, has emerged as the iconic motherland and through its prophets like Nelson Mandela, a rightful place as leaders of men and a mirror of global consciousness on race and the racial question. In a recent paper and lecture entitled "The Temples of the Other" I have asked the following question: "Is it possible to change the vocabulary and theoretical entry points in which we address the problem of the other and consider more consciously the politics of the gaze itself. Asians are not about to shed their cultural clothing even if there is a natural process of change and adaptation. The term "Asian" refers to both South Asian migrants from India and Chinese from various provinces in China who were brought in smaller numbers to the Caribbean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the Caribbean, during this period of migration and well into the twentieth and twenty first century these groups represent the "Oriental" other as against those brought through the African slave trade and those who were severally grouped as European. Where do we place this population in the continuously expanding Caribbean culture – as another group which must continuously be isolated and studied for its cultural persistence, its exotic rituals, the submissiveness of its women...." and in this case for its consistent resilience. I have framed the question equally to Indians and Asians of how they (we) also employ this gaze..." what do they want in the evolving Caribbean world? To continue to relish the outsider position is another elision. Indo- and Afro- Trinidadians have far more in common with each other than they have with any native of India or Africa, Europe or China, and the constantly emerging space of "creoleness" in the region...How do we imaginatively enter each other's predicament of

identity and belonging and collectively rebuild the desecration of the past? This challenge is equally to the Asian to engage in this task by departing from the safety of "Otherness" and the false premises on which this hierarchy was once deliberately and divisively constructed by a colonial paradigm that we must now move beyond"(Mohammed, 2012).

In my view the Committee's mandate must extend beyond the current assumptions which have for too long misguided the multicultural society of Trinidad and Tobago, for two reasons. First there are serious consequences in continuing to stereotype an ethnic, age and gender group as the primary criminal element in a society. While there are obvious reasons for investigating why different groups by race, class, gender and age resort to criminal activity, and make provisions for such categories in policy or recommendations, the stereotyping of a particular group reduces all persons in that category to potential criminals, failures, victims or at best "at risk". A quick search of the internet with key words black males and crime reveals titles that are frankly disturbing: *The Crisis of the Young African American Male and the Criminal*, (Report title), *Black men 'to blame for most violent city crime'...* - Daily Mail, *Black Demons: The Media's Depiction of the African American Male* (book) and many others. The titles that view young black males in relation to crime see them as a disempowered group, victims of the police, the state and the society at large, always in crisis. In doing so it fixes the concept of the African family and African women and by extension all things black in crisis and at risk. This perception of an ethnic group, an ethnic gendered group, and an age group, primarily as victims of the social order, of poor parenting, lack of male role models, poverty and lack of opportunity as is the current and popular thinking also creates a self fulfilling prophecy – that all young black men will continue to view themselves as potential criminals. This point was manifestly argued by an educated male participant at the National Consultation held in Trinidad. He noted that as a young black male from Morvant, he had to work against the grain of peer group and police attitudes to gain an education that freed

him from becoming another prison statistic. Secondly, it assumes that other groups in the society, for example Indian and White young men and women are not engaged in criminal activity, or likely to become more involved in the future, have fewer problems of adjustment or are potential conduits for crime and other forms of abuse. The statistics demonstrated in this paper indicate that all groups and genders face challenges, even if some are more represented than others.

Solutions to a problem derive from the assumptions we make. Race is employed to manipulate power and resources. While this approach has served the temporary agendas

of many political regimes in the past, they have not liberated the real victims – those who are encouraged to commit crimes, those who suffer persistently as a result of crime such as the families, the public who live in fear of crime and this society which has increasingly gained a reputation of being an unsafe and insecure one. This paper is presented not as a prescriptive one for the Committee but intended to again inform the collective vision that we present as a group interested in fostering sustainable change for the future. One of the ways we may be able to do so is to begin reshaping ideas and discourses, especially popular ones - these are the hardest to dislodge in the human condition.

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# YOUTH, CRIMINALITY AND HUMAN SECURITY: GENDER ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE UNDP CARIBBEAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2012: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE SHIFT TO BETTER CITIZEN SECURITY

*Patricia Mohammed*

The UNDP *Caribbean Human Development Report 2012* (Harriott et al) (henceforth referred to as the CHDR) prefaces its concerns with Citizen Security with an insightful question that the Youth at Risk Committee has also framed in another way. The CHDR observes:

...we are confronted by a paradox: Why is it that, despite the democratization process experienced in the region in the last 20 years, citizen security levels, as well as the justice and security institutions in the region, are in crisis?

The question that the Youth at Risk Committee has asked is why have we produced a generation of disaffected youth who are drawn to crime and criminality in the face of the economic affluence that Trinidad and Tobago has experienced relative to other societies over the past four decades? What does this say about the post independence opportunities for self-actualization, proud nation building and the goals reinforced by the 20/20 Vision for national development of this society? What does increased youth criminality say about the failure of two earlier generations to provide ample role models and institutional supports that now guide the current generation?

The CHDR starts off by expanding the concept of development to include citizen security as a key component of a truly democratized and developed society. The CHDR's primary concern is with the issue of public confidence in state capacity to protect citizens and ensure justice. The Report proposes that Caribbean

countries need to focus on a model of security based on the human development approach, which promotes social inclusion and advocates the prevention of crime and violence alongside effective law enforcement and swift criminal justice. The complementarities of this approach ensure that citizen security and the welfare of people take pre-eminence over the traditional security model which is concerned primarily with the protection of the state. The Report of the CHDR was based on Caribbean region wide research on crime and crime statistics as well as on a survey of people's fear of crime, their uneasiness about security on the streets or in their homes and the impact on the everyday quality of their lives.

A reasonable proportion of the CHDR is devoted to youth and gender. This analysis extracts and scrutinizes the findings and recommendations of the CHDR as it refers to youth, gender and crime so that the Youth at Risk Committee may benefit from the lessons of the wider Caribbean and Latin American region and draw on the conceptual approach which has informed this study. More critically, I propose that selected findings of the CHDR have implications for the Youth at Risk investigations for the following reasons, thus are included in submissions to this Committee. *First*, it provides findings against which the survey component of the Youth at Risk Committee pertaining to citizen security may be compared as there are aspects of the survey that deal with fear of crime; *second* it places crime and the criminal

as part of the problem of underdevelopment, including in underdevelopment the lack of legal economic, institutional, community and family support systems. Such an approach puts the onus of change onto the society rather than viewing incarceration or punishment as the primary focus of policy intervention; *third*, it draws its statements from a concrete set of data that looks specifically at a gender analysis of youth and crime in the Caribbean region and thus contextualizes the state of youth criminality in Trinidad and Tobago regionally; *fourth*, it provides pertinent recommendations that may lend support those emerging from the Youth and Risk Committee investigations, including especially, that pertaining to the need for effective law enforcement, swift criminal justice and separate facilities and institutions that deal with youth and crime. The latter was also emphasised in meetings with the Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago (June 2012); *fifth*, a critical re-examination of the CHDR analysis provides an opportunity to raise further questions or ideas that may enhance the work of the Committee on Youth at Risk. *Finally*, based on the findings of the CHDR with reference to youth and gender concerns, it is important that *the philosophy adopted by this study, that is a human development approach promoting prevention of crime and violence through social inclusion alongside parallel systems of effective law enforcement and criminal justice inform the Recommendations of the Youth at Risk Committee*. I served as the UNDP Gender Peer Reviewer for this study and had the opportunity to study the document carefully before the final version and comment on the shape of the gender analysis. This paper culls the findings of the study without rephrasing in parts to preserve the authenticity of the CHDR analysis. I have orally requested permission and been granted this from Dr Marcia De Castro to use the report for the purposes of the Youth at Risk Committee work. This is consistent with the goals of the UNDP who are anxious that the findings and recommendations of this report are widely used by governments of the Region.

*The CHDR argues that high rates of violent crime and gender violence may be regarded*

*as the outcome of a wrong approach to development that marginalizes large sections of the population. Victimization or undue focus on one group by others may result in deepening race, class and gender divisions.* The authors propose that the creation of avenues for citizen participation, and that the development of programmes geared towards decreasing poverty and gender and race or ethnic inequality will improve social integration and reduce disharmony and group or individual disaffection (pp 5-8). I reemphasize this point at the end of this review.

The CHDR suggests that the root causes especially of youth crimes and delinquency, include less tangible factors such as alienation and a sense of exclusion, and concrete factors such as high levels of income inequality, inequality of opportunity, gender peer pressure, high rates of unemployment, high rates of rural and urban poverty, and survival mechanisms adopted in communities with histories of social exclusion. They promote paying attention to these root causes by treating youth with respect, positively protecting their rights, and “promoting common integrative identities that bridge race, colour, ethnicity, class, gender and other social divides, thereby promoting a common sense of belonging and a common national purpose” (p. 9). It must be noted that in treating the issue of crime, the CHDR do not differentiate ethnic groupings as the Caribbean is demographically an Afro-dominated population and ethnicity was not one of its primary variables. This analysis therefore refers generically to age and social class divisions rather than ethnic distinctions.

### **Crime and the gender question**

The CHDR emphasizes that a consideration of masculinity is incomplete without placing it in the definition of gender that incorporates both male and female. It is often assumed that gender refers specifically to women. However, gender, as defined in United Nations documents refers to the socially constructed differences and attributes and opportunities in being female or male and to the social interactions and relationships between women and men. Looking at gender in the Caribbean is more than

understanding masculinity and femininity: it is about recognizing the importance of human relationships; it is about examining how Caribbean history has shaped and defined both women and men; and it is about how men, as well as women, have assisted in defining male and female behaviour. Gender is the strongest predictor of criminal behaviour and criminal victimization. In the Caribbean, as well as elsewhere, women commit fewer crimes than men but are disproportionately the victims of some types of crimes. They are more at risk and more vulnerable to some types of crime, particularly to gender-based violence.

*The CHDR affirms that youth violence has a gender dimension.* It notes that across the region, the majority of aggressors as well as victims are young men who use violence for protection against real or perceived threats or have been socialized to resolve conflicts and differences through violence. What is useful about the treatment of gender in the CHDR is that it simultaneously treats with the questions of femininity and the relationship of young girls and women to crime, not only as victims but directly or indirectly as perpetrators themselves.

With respect to masculinity, the CHDR acknowledges a correlation between declining educational achievement and increasing levels of violence in society. Low educational attainment levels account for the increasing rates of school drop-outs and declining levels of educational attainment, particularly among boys. Caribbean Examinations Council data show that overall pass rates in the basic subjects of mathematics and English at the secondary school level have declined more significantly among boys. The early departure of boys from school contributes to the male-on-male character of violence in the Caribbean.

Domestic violence is experienced by both males and females, but females experience all forms of violence at higher rates than males. In general young women are victims of verbal and physical violence, particularly in the interpersonal and domestic spheres, *although, not developed in the CHDR, the data pertaining*

*to how males are abused verbally, physically and psychologically is less forthcoming and may still be an area that we need to examine in relation to how and why young men rebel against their homes or caregivers where these exist. This is borne out the by CHDR finding that* relative to men, almost twice the proportion of women reported being threatened by spouses, partners, or ex-partners. The CHDR thus concludes that young men are predominantly the violent aggressors among Caribbean youth and that the majority of youth reporting fear of sexual assault are young women (p.47-48).

Nonetheless, while crime is typically male-on-male and youth-on-youth, young girls face the added burden of forced or early sexual initiation. This has consequences for early pregnancy, health status such as HIV/AIDS infection, exposure to intimate partner violence, intergenerational transmission of violence and poverty in later life and the cycle of violence in gender relations which complicates the problem of young male perception of their “traditional” roles as provider or authority figures in households. For example, the CHDR found that “for the entire population of three juvenile institutions in Trinidad and Tobago, 58.5 percent of youth in an institution for young boys and 92.8 percent of youth in an institution for young girls were institutionalized for non-illegal acts”. *This suggests that early juvenile behaviour punished by incarceration in juvenile institutions may be unrelated to acts of criminality. This may be one of the ways in which young boys and girls with problems associated with learning disabilities, poor household and family support, poverty and perhaps other psychological issues may be weeded out from another group who have in fact committed illegal acts.*

### **Street Versus Organized Violence**

The CHDR focussed considerable attention on street crime and violence. According to the Report, the majority of youth living on the streets are boys or young men. For example, Cooke (2002, 6) notes that, among street children in Jamaica, “boys outnumber girls by a proportion of 70:30.” The average age of boys involved in various forms of child labour and co-opted for

other forms of exploitation is 13 years of age. An interesting finding is that young men who leave their homes for various reasons, including child abuse, are allowed to live on the streets, while young women who leave their homes for similar reasons are more likely to be institutionalized. This distinction is in itself a sign of inequality; however, they argue that neither approach is appropriate. Both reflect neglect: a neglect of the responsibility to provide care and protection to youth. The CHDR comments that neither young males living on the street, nor young females in institutions, receive the kind of support, counselling, or encouragement required to address the issues that lead them to abandon their homes and families. *This again supports the point made above that what may be viewed as early signs of criminality in young boys and girls may be nipped in the bud by addressing the core reasons for stealing to survive or for homelessness.*

Youth crime and violence in the Caribbean have been characterized as a phenomenon pitting youth against youth and male against male and have been closely linked to the emergence of criminal gangs. The CHDR found that 17–24 percent of males and 11–16 percent of females (varying by age) report they have been involved in gangs. Preliminary evidence on Jamaica and on Trinidad and Tobago indicate that, among school-aged youth, the majority of street gang members are male; however, female gang membership is also prevalent. For example, Katz, Choate, and Fox (2010) found that, among a national sample of Trinidadian youth in urban schools, 40.1 percent of self-reported gang members were females. Similarly, Meeks (2009) notes a strong presence of females in Jamaican street gangs. Police data suggest, however, that gang membership is predominately male. A survey of experts with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service found that there were no female-dominated gangs in this country. Similar findings were reported in a study comprised of police experts in Antigua and Barbuda. Together, these findings might suggest that, while females are involved in street gangs in the Caribbean, their involvement might not be sufficient to

come frequently to the attention of police. The research suggests that, compared with more developed nations, the Caribbean might have a relatively significant gang problem.

The CHDR stress that organized crime and gangs are the source of major lethal violence in the region and that “youth are inherently vulnerable in the Caribbean development process: to organized crime and gang warfare”. For the wider community, youth violence in the form of street gangs contributes to the popular perceptions of increasing insecurity that people feel. However they note that this proliferation of street gangs is related to high levels of youth unemployment, poor or inadequate educational opportunities, social exclusion, exposure to and experience of violence at home, in school, in communities and the wider society, and insufficient attention to youth development and empowerment. Despite the variations in scope between territories the CHDR findings suggest that there is some consistency in the characteristics of street gangs and organized crime groups across the Caribbean. For example, these gangs and groups are largely comprised of poor young men (or young men from poor backgrounds). The preliminary findings together imply that the street gang problem is largely confined to young marginalized males. While young women are also involved in these groups, their involvement in violence and other crimes is substantially less than that of the young men. Street gangs often lack formal leadership and structure and are frequently bound together by symbols and turf. This is different to the organized crime groups which are more sophisticated with respect to structure and leadership. *As a policy intervention issue here, it may be useful to examine the extent to which media and filmic notions of street gangs in the United States or UK have fostered a mimicking of street gang behaviour in Trinidad without some of the more brutal elements that have come to be associated with gangs, as for instance the initiation rite of performing a criminal act to belong to the gang or the symbols on body or clothing that define one as a specific gang member.*

At the same time the CHDR places a cautionary note. "...Violence is not prevalent throughout the youth population of the region. Studies show that 6 percent of youth may have been gang members. In fact, most youth that come into contact with the police reflect behaviour related to the need for care and protection after abuse, neglect, abandonment or having run away from home. The majority of aggressors and victims are young men who use violence for protection against threats, or who have acted under a male-dominated tradition of violent conflict resolution, particularly by being involved in various forms of neighbourhood or community violence". While the problem of youth violence warrants urgent attention, "exaggeration of the problem, particularly through anecdotes reported in the media, may serve to stereotype youth, particularly young males. Where young women are caught in the gender trap is that they are primary victims of verbal and physical violence, particularly in interpersonal or domestic spheres" where the street culture and home intersect.

The CHDR point out that organized crime constitutes a different and serious problem, that in some countries they are powerful and entrenched into the system of goods, services and patronage, and work through exercising violence in connection with an enterprise activity, be it drug, gun, or human trafficking, and extortion. They note, however, that the extent of their prevalence is difficult to measure as Caribbean nations lack the institutional capacity to effectively respond to the problems of street gangs and organized crime. Crime associated with these activities rarely leads to arrest, and even more rarely to conviction. *The implications for youth at risk are obvious here. If organized crime goes unpunished then this is an open invitation for any young man to become associated with criminal elements since this itself provides protection from the law. Effective police enforcement and detection of crime along with a swifter criminal justice system may offer deterrents.*

### **Vulnerable groups**

The data sources analysed in the CHDR confirms popular knowledge that youth-related vulnerabilities and insecurities have increasingly emerged because of an upward trend in drug-trafficking, the spread of HIV/ AIDS, adolescent pregnancies, gang involvement, and greater access to and use of firearms. It notes that while crime is typically male-on-male and youth-on-youth, young girls face the added burden of forced or early sexual initiation. This has consequences for early pregnancy, health status such as HIV/AIDS infection, exposure to intimate partner violence, intergenerational transmission of violence and poverty in later life, all of which continue the life cycle of crime and criminal activity for particular social classes (p. 34).

While the focus on masculinity and crime generally assumes a heterosexual masculinity, the CHDR findings reminds the Youth at Risk Committee of the need to consider sexual minorities who are targeted for brutal violence and even death as part of the population who are differently at risk. The CHDR notes that gay men are an increasingly vulnerable group in the region. "Homosexuals are stigmatized and stereotyped and generally seen as the negation of masculinity. Their vulnerability arises from the social construction of masculinity and the hatred for persons who challenge heterosexual notions of manliness. Thus, people who are or who are perceived to be members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer communities live in an environment of stigma, stereotype, and constant vulnerability to violence", (Norman, et. al. 2006; White & Carr 2005). The findings confirm again the current attitudes towards these populations - violence towards sexual minorities is tolerated and at times may be openly advocated in the media, religious practice and in the music of the Caribbean. *It must be emphasized here that in the Youth at Risk Committee's analysis and investigations thus far, the issues of alternative sexualities its implications for young men at risk has*



*not been fully examined.* This is particularly important to note since constitutions around the region bar discrimination on the basis of race and gender, but no such protection exists for sexual orientation or sexual minorities. Yet vulnerable groups face threats arising from discrimination, exploitation, or displacement and as a result are stigmatized relative to others mainly on account of their status, characteristics and powerlessness. "The stigma, in turn, limits their access to needed benefits and services. Factors such as poverty, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, as well as demographic characteristics such as race, gender, language, and a myriad of other characteristics such as physical, mental, or health status (including HIV/AIDS) may create vulnerabilities to victimization" (p. 33).

### **Trafficking**

While drug-trafficking has tended to dominate public dialogue, trafficking in persons has been identified as a new problem in the region. Criminal networks in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and Jamaica are increasingly becoming involved in human trafficking. The CHDR notes that investigative work in Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados recently discovered that the majority of prostitutes in the country were immigrant women forced into the sex trade. The investigation uncovered at least 80 women who were told they would be earning decent salaries as bartenders, masseuses, hotel workers, or dancers. Instead, the women, drawn mainly from Guyana, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia were forced to serve as sex workers in nightclubs. It was found that organized crime groups obtained the cooperation of immigration officers and senior officials, who were frequently bribed to allow the women into the country. Trafficking in persons is a practice of growing concern that creates insecurity among Caribbean women and children, though it does not exclusively affect these groups. Men are also victims, but the patterns of victimization vary according to the gender of the victims. Most victims trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation continue to be women and girls who are eventually involved in prostitution, exotic dancing, massages, pornography and other related activities. Evidence suggests that, while boys

and young men are more at risk of becoming victims of trafficking for labour exploitation, especially in the agricultural, construction and mining sectors, some are also trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Across the region, the number of children that are sexually exploited may be increasing, and the average age may be decreasing. *It is interesting that Trinidad and Tobago has not been signalled for attention with respect to this problem but it is useful to point out however that trafficking in sex has involved young men from within the same society who are coerced or co-opted by older men.* Factors including poverty, parenting oversight, lack of economic opportunities, marginalization, violence, illiteracy, gender discrimination, homelessness are some distinctive vulnerability factors that contribute to the vulnerabilities of those drawn, with or without their collusion, into this trade.

### **Recommendations**

1. The CHDR proposes that in order to enable a long term developmental approach to alleviating crime and ensuring more confident citizen security, there is need for a shift in policy to a greater emphasis on social crime prevention, institutional transformation, respect for human rights and the rule of law, youth empowerment and gender equality.
2. *Short-term measures* should include the development of programmes for promoting pro-social behaviour among the youth. It is important to target groups or both in-school youth and out-of-school, out-of-work youth, particularly new school leavers. These should include gender differentiated after-school programmes; the establishment of youth friendly spaces; the promotion of voluntary community service; introduction of programmes that support family stability and prevent the shifting of children between multiple guardians, which is a significant contributor to the development of aggressive and anti-social behaviour. One example is useful to cite fully here. The Peace Ambassadors Programme was

established in 2006 to confront the rise of violence and conflict in secondary schools in Barbados and to influence positive choices and decision-making among boys and girls. The programme targets young people interested in living in peace by promoting respect for themselves and others. It brings girls and boys together to speak out and take action against violence by encouraging them to become involved with others to solve problems in their schools and communities. The programme currently involves over 150 Peace Ambassadors at seven secondary schools in Barbados. It encourages the establishment of zones of peace at each school, supported by events and activities that promote an atmosphere of harmony within the school environment.

3. The CHDR recommends that the institutionalization of youth in conflict should be a last resort. Rather *restorative justice should encourage and promote alternative means for provision of care and protection*. Legislative changes should take place concerning the treatment of 'wandering' and 'running away' offenses. Children and youth who are in jail should have access to health services including evaluation of their mental health status.
4. *To reduce risk and build youth resilience* the CHDR proposes that the crime prevention strategy must deal with the problem of youth unemployment since youth typically exhibit low labour force participation rates with young women (some of whom then claim a dependency on young and older men), showing lower labour force participation rates than young men
5. *There is need to establish a rigorous research agenda* on the causes of street gangs and organized crime in the Caribbean. They advise the need to establish a regional crime observatory that would provide crime mapping and other evidential, monitoring and evaluation support for promising practices and policies. The observatory would seek to fill existing data gaps in areas

such as gender based violence. It would design and implement frameworks for analysis that would be comparable across territories. It would monitor vulnerable populations and provide data that can be used to directly inform policy.

6. Such a research agenda is essential for the development of efficient and effective public policy in the region. Investment in basic research examining the impact of social structural factors, the community, the family, the school, peers and individuals are necessary, along with basic research that examines the unique role of gender, age and citizenship in criminal organizations. The research agenda would include assessments and documentation on good practices and strategies and policies in various aspects of gang control, reduction and prevention. The CHDR urges the development of programmes that would assist gang members to successfully exit gangs and that those interested in leaving the organizations should be supported and protected by relevant programmes.
7. *In respect of the control of street gangs and organized crime* the CHDR propose in the short-term the establishment of a surveillance system of street gangs and organized crime at the regional level since there are connections between these gangs and they do not operate in isolation. They advise that rigorous research should be carried out on the causes, scope and nature of the phenomenon and assessment of the trends in the region. In the long-term, however, they point out that there needs to be a balanced response to street gangs and organized crime, using primary prevention programmes for those who are at risk, and intervention and suppression programmes, for those involved in violence.
8. Finally the CHDR offers valuable guidance in terms of an innovative shift in the philosophy behind both policy and practice in the area of crime and violence. The recommendations emphasize the importance of shifting

policy so that there is a greater emphasis on social crime prevention, institutional transformation, human rights, the rule of law, youth empowerment and gender equality. There was also significant advocacy aimed at prioritizing gender-differentiated or gender-sensitive responses where the particular needs of young vulnerable males and females are examined.

The report notes that Caribbean citizens are keenly aware of the region's crime problems and of the dangers that lurk but despite the high rates of violent crime, in particular, homicide, the survey concluded that general victimization rates remain fairly low by international standards, and majorities in all countries in which the Citizen Security Survey 2010 was conducted felt secure. This is true of both men and women. *But they underscore this statement with the following corollary – this sense of security is greatest where the level of confidence in the institutions of law enforcement and justice is highest.*

It is clear that citizen security, human rights and human development are interdependent. The creation of a more secure environment necessitates the social, economic and political empowerment of young men, women and other vulnerable groups to counter the decades of deprivation among these groups caused by poverty and social, cultural, political and institutional practices. What is still lacking in the Region, and *we need to be reminded of this in Trinidad and Tobago, is the need to undertake initiatives to promote awareness of and respect for human rights especially within law enforcement and respect and attention to those who have been victims of crime.* Social cohesion is promoted by socially integrative policies that give people, particularly young people, a sense of being valued and belonging to the community and the country regardless of ethnicity, gender, class, or other differences.

As I write this I am also looking at the messages being transmitted by the organizers of the London Olympics which is currently ongoing. This is a society dealing with the

problems of extreme multiculturalism and what this has meant for social cohesion, ethnic identity formation and disaffection of various groups or classes – London is perhaps, next to New York, once of the most multicultural cities in the world and Britain is increasingly becoming a mixed society. There has been major displays of youth and community disaffection – in the eighties we saw West Indian youth dissatisfaction in riots in Brixton, now the Asian youth have exhibited signs of an alienation that have been even more destructive to the perception of ethnicity and masculinity of young Asian males in British society. The London Olympics is being used to target this disaffection in ways that Trinidad and Tobago society and our political regime can learn from tremendously. The voluntary and country wide efforts in preparing for the Olympics have involved the widest reach of peoples, not only the urban but the rural, certainly not only the majority population of whites but a large amount of the coloured population and most effective for our purposes, an extremely large proportion of young persons. In addition, the mantra of the organizers, the politicians, the television announcers and even the athletes who are being interviewed has been about the impact that they want this Olympics to have on a generation of youth who must feel involved, who must be engaged in healthy activities, who must be competitive but at the same time understand the nature of sportsmanship and finally who must enjoy the benefits of their youth and the health and freedoms that this affords them.

It is useful in the light of the above approach to reinforce this finding of the CHDR - that high rates of violent crime and gender violence may be regarded as the outcome of a wrong approach to development that marginalizes large sections of the population. Victimization or undue focus on one group by others may result in deepening race, class and gender divisions. Developed countries who are experiencing some of the problems of crime and criminality of their young populations have had to move to more innovative and humane ways of dealing with this generation, which is not to afford them greater indulgencies, nor to target groups, but to collectively engage them and to

provide opportunities to build confidence, to remove ethnic or gender labels and to work in community and civic activities of which they are

justly proud so that they will continue to build on this legacy in their future work with the nation and society that has won their confidence.

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Citizens Security Programme Civil Society Work Group

Golden Grove Prison

National Drug Council

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Saint Michael's Home for Boys

Youth Training Centre (YTC)

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **THE DYNAMICS OF GANG BEHAVIOUR AND THE DRUG CRISIS**



# THE DRUG CRISIS: TRANSNATIONAL AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS

*Indira Rampersad*

The literature suggests that the major cause of crime in Trinidad and Tobago is drug-related (UNODC/World Bank Report, March 2007). The island is now being referred to as the “world’s newest narcostate” (Foreign Policy Magazine, 2010). Crime in the Caribbean is deemed to be fuelled by the transnational drug trade which in turn facilitates the gun-trade and triggers fire-arm related crimes. According to the UNODC/World Bank Report (March 2007), “drug trafficking has spawned a vibrant industry, namely, guns for hire, a service particularly useful to addicts who need to commit crimes to support their habit and hence perpetrate more violent crimes. This has spawned another criminal industry, contract murders. As a result, narcotics, firearms and related crimes have seen a similar upward trend in recent years. Between January and August 2011, 4004 murders have been identified as drug-related in Trinidad and Tobago (Spencer, 2011). Like the drug trade, the drug problem in Trinidad and Tobago is propelled by international, regional and national dynamics. This paper seeks to examine these three-fold dimensions of the drug crisis and explores the connections to crime and at risk youths in Trinidad and Tobago.

## **The Transnational Dimension**

The transnational drug crisis involves the production, supply, trans-shipment, demand and consumption of illicit drugs. Illicit drug trafficking is an international problem from which no country can insulate itself. According to the World Drug Report 2012, it was estimated that there were between 16 and 37 million chronic drug abusers between the ages of 15 and 64 worldwide. The Report indicates that the

most prevalent drug is Cannabis which in 2010 was consumed by some 119 and 224 million persons globally. Cannabis is followed by ATS (amphetamine-type stimulants which includes methamphetamine, amphetamine and ecstasy), opioids including opium, heroin and prescriptive opioids and cocaine. While heroin and cocaine use reflect stable or downward trends, statistics reveal increasing use of synthetic and particularly non-medical prescriptive drugs in both developed and developing countries.

The Report estimated that there were between 1,110,000 and 1,730,000 chronic marijuana abusers, between 170 and 250 thousand cocaine users and between 120 to 250 thousand users of methamphetamines. Recent statistics indicate that approximately 210 million people use illicit drugs each year in the global arena and between 99,000 and 253,000 of them die from drugs (World Drug Report, 2012).

The transnational nature of drug trafficking has been fueled by globalization which has allowed organized criminal syndicates to benefit from advancements in productive technology, transportation and communication. In summing up Interpol, a 1999 UNESCO report asserts that “Trafficking organizations are being run like multinationals. According to the international law enforcement agency, these vast enterprises are run by organized crime groups based in different parts of the world, such as the cocaine cartels based in Colombia and Mexico; triads in Hong Kong, Taiwan and China; the Yakuza in Japan; the Sicilian Cosa Nostra; La Cosa Nostra based in New York and mafia groups in Russia and some other east European countries.”

Similarly, the United Nations World Drug Report, 2011, contends that “Drug trafficking, the critical link between supply and demand, is fuelling a global criminal enterprise valued in the hundreds of billions of dollars that poses a growing challenge to stability and security. Drug traffickers and organized criminals are forming transnational networks, sourcing drugs on one continent, trafficking them across another, and marketing them in a third” (World Drug report, 2011).

Drug production is no longer the specialization of a few countries. Drugs which were previously found in some countries are now being produced in all regions of the world. The number of regular and casual users has also increased to over 200 million. The 1999 UNESCO report contends that “the countries of the former Soviet Union, for example, now produce 25 times more hashish than the rest of the world. Coca plantations, which were always found in Bolivia, Peru and Colombia, today stretch into Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, Panama, Guyana, and have been reported in other regions of the world. Chlorohydrate (the final product made from cocaine paste) is manufactured in laboratories that are also springing up in new countries, such as Argentina or Chili” (UNESCO 1999).

Previously opium poppy plantations were concentrated in South East Asia’s Golden Triangle which includes Laos, Myanmar and Thailand as well as the Golden Crescent encompassing Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. These remain the main producers but poppy is also now being cultivated in Turkey, Egypt, Eastern Europe, Mexico, Central America and Central Asia. The highest demand countries remain the United States and Western Europe. However, Eastern Europe, South East Asia and Africa are rapidly increasing their consumption of ecstasy, cocaine, crack and heroin. Cannabis is now consumed worldwide. This changing pattern of drug consumption has also been noted in the 2011 World Drug Report:

Heroin consumption has stabilized in Europe and cocaine consumption has declined in North America – the most lucrative markets for these

drugs. But these gains have been offset by several counter-trends: a large increase in cocaine use in Europe and South America over the last decade; the recent expansion of heroin use to Africa; and increased abuse of synthetic ‘designer drugs’ and prescription medications in some regions. Heroin consumption has stabilized in Europe and cocaine consumption has declined in North America – the most lucrative markets for these drugs. But these gains have been offset by several counter-trends: a large increase in cocaine use in Europe and South America over the last decade; the recent expansion of heroin use to Africa; and increased abuse of synthetic ‘designer drugs’ and prescription medications in some regions (World Drug Report, 2011)

Facilitated by globalization, drug trafficking has spawned a vibrant international money-laundering industry. It has intertwined illegal and formal economies spreading its tentacles throughout the global economy and penetrating all sectors of societies, impacting both marginalized groups and business elites. In 2010, proceeds from drugs in the USA alone amounted to 64 billion US dollars. Statistics for the UK for 2003/2004 is estimated at 5.3 billion pounds. In the Netherlands, drugs accounted for 15.4 % of total unlawful earnings for 2007/2008 while Germany’s income from drug trafficking amounted to .6 billion Euros in 2009. The bulk of income from organized crime in Italy (44%) was derived from drug trafficking, amounting to 60 billion Euros in 2009 (UNODC, 2011).

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) founded by the G-7 in 1989 to treat with threats posed by money-laundering for the international banking system found that in the 1980’s drugs was responsible for about a quarter of global money-laundering which in turn accounted for 2% of global GDP. Data presented by UNODC in 2005 showed a similar trend taking into account inflation and drug markets other than the US and Europe. It estimated the global drug market at US \$322 billion which is equivalent to 0.9% of the global GDP. The largest drug markets were North America and Europe reflecting 44% and 33 % of the global drug market respectively. Cannabis followed by cocaine and opiates accounted for the largest drug sales. An estimate of the 2003 FATF and



UNODC drug proceeds reflects 2.4 % or US \$1.4 trillion of GDP attributed to money- laundering (UNODC, 2011).

As far as trafficking goes, most cannabis are locally produced and consumed or intra-regional. Cannabis resin produced in Morocco is destined for North Africa, Central and Western Europe while that produced in Afghanistan is sent to neighbouring regions. Cocaine from Colombia, Peru and Bolivia are usually destined for North America, Western and Central Europe. Heroin produced in Afghanistan is consumed in the region and sent to Europe, South East Asia, South Asia and Africa, Iran and the Russian Federation. Heroin produced in Colombia and Mexico is usually destined for the United States. Trafficking of heroin takes place via the Andean region, Central America, Mexico or the Caribbean to the United States

### **Regional Dynamics**

It is difficult to treat with the Caribbean region in isolation without discussing South America's involvement in the drug crisis. Production and trafficking of cocaine is prevalent in South America and consumption is on the increase. Almost 100% of global coca leaf production comes from Colombia, Peru and Bolivia although there has been a clear downward trend between 2007 and 2010 due to declining production in Colombia. In 2009, 70% of global cannabis plant seizures occurred in the South American region, a reflection of the significant levels of cannabis production in that area. Cannabis is the most prevalent drug consumed in the region. About 5% of global cannabis users are found in South America, Central America and the Caribbean. In 2009, among those aged 16 to 64, between 2.9% -3% of the South American population, between 2.2 and 2.5% of the Central American population and between 1.6% and 7.6% of the Caribbean population, consumed cannabis (World Drug Report, 2011). The most recent data from the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reflect increases in cocaine use in Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, and Haiti. That these countries are notably located along major

cocaine transit routes suggest that their location is linked to this increase in consumption.

The Central American crisis is brought into stark relief by the recent study entitled "Guns Drugs and Cash: Analysis and Proposals on how to manage the Crisis in Central America." (Bryan, 2012). The report underscores the role of Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) which sponsor and enable Localized Criminal Organizations (LCOs). According to the report, many of the TCO's which are Colombian and Mexican drug cartels "have the finances, organizational structures, geostrategic influence, and illegally obtained firepower to destabilize many Central American countries". The report continues that the TCOs provide alternative governance for areas in certain countries which are not under direct government control. It contends that "these Alternative Governance Spaces (AGS) have become logistic hubs for road, maritime and aerial deposit and storage of large amounts of illicit cargo destined for the U.S. and other markets and primarily for TCOs active in Mexico that operate a complex variety of tunnels and land crossings into the lucrative U.S. market" (Bryan, 2012).

The study also notes that it is Central America and no longer South America and Mexico that is the new "superhighway" providing the many transit routes for cocaine entering the United States. Between 400 and 500 tons of cocaine pass through the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) per year with approximately 300 to 400 tons passing through Guatemala alone, annually. This is valued at approximately \$12 billion in the US wholesale and amounts to about \$65 billion of street sale profits in the U.S (Bryan, 2012).

The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) reports the following:

The primary pathway today for illegal drugs entering the United States from abroad is through the Central America-Mexico corridor. Currently, roughly 95% of all cocaine entering the United States flows through Mexico or its territorial waters, with 60% of that cocaine having first transited through Central America. Traffickers appear to be using overland smuggling, littoral

maritime trafficking, and short-distance aerial trafficking to transport cocaine from South America to Mexico. A large but unknown proportion of opiates, as well as foreign-produced marijuana and methamphetamine, also flow through the same pathways. The overwhelming use of the Central America-Mexico corridor as a transit zone represents a major shift in trafficking routes. In the 1980s and early 1990s, for example, drugs primarily transited through the Caribbean into South Florida.

The Caribbean-South Florida route continues to be active, and although it is currently less utilized than the Central America-Mexico route, some

observers have warned that activity along this route may surge once more in the near future. As U.S. counternarcotics cooperation with Venezuela has diminished since 2005, Venezuela has become a major transit point for drug flights through the Caribbean—particularly Haiti and the Dominican Republic—into the United States as well as to Europe. Elsewhere in the Caribbean, the Bahamas continues to serve as a major transit country for both Jamaican marijuana and South American cocaine (CRS Report for Congress, 2011).

This is depicted in diagram 1 below.



Diagram 1

**Source:** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Report, 2010; National Drug Intelligence Center, 2010 National Drug Threat Assessment, February 2010; Barack Obama, Presidential Determination No. 2009-30, “Memorandum to the Secretary of State: Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2011,” September 16, 2010, adapted by CRS graphics (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>).

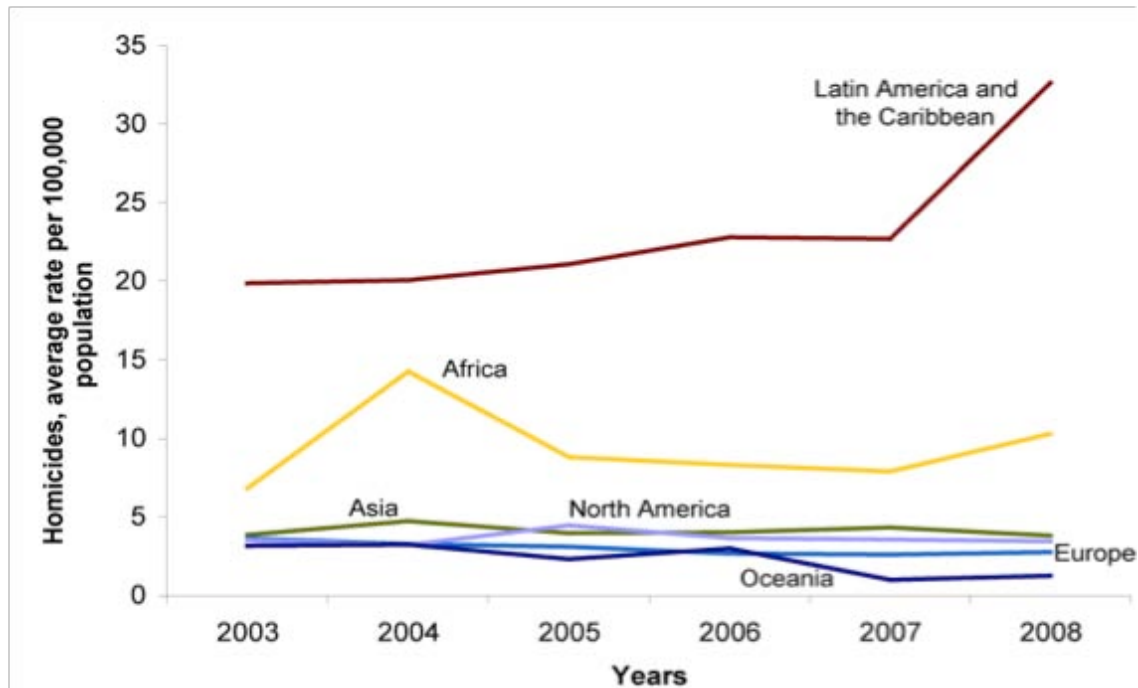
A number of arguments have been espoused to explain Latin America's critical role in the drug-trafficking market. Firstly, the Andean region's unique geographical location accounts for it being the only source of coca and cocaine in the world. Secondly, its proximity to the United States, the demand centre for drugs in the hemisphere, facilitates the trafficking process. Thirdly, a lack of viable opportunities for farmers and youths resulting in poverty, inequality and unemployment are also contributory factors. Weak institutions such as the police, prisons and judicial systems and lack of funds for the security services also exacerbate the problem. Moreover, insurgent groups involved in drug production and trafficking, geographical impediments to interdiction and uneven political support for counter drug efforts fosters the process even further. The high level of sophistication of some groups possessing extensive paramilitary and counterinsurgency techniques enhance their capacity to rival state security and operate through deep networks of corrupt state officials (CRS Report for Congress: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41215.pdf>).

It is estimated that 30 percent of illegal drugs arriving in the United States mainland is shipped via the Caribbean, while some 70 percent of cocaine passing through Puerto Rico also lands in mainland United States. In response, the US Congressional subcommittee held a hearing in June 2012 on national security threats on America's Caribbean border. The hearing is entitled "US-Caribbean Border: Open Road for Drug Trafficking", the hearing of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Management and was chaired by Republican Congressman

Michael McCaul. Moreover, the United States has responded to the transnational drug crisis with the creation of the Caribbean-U.S. Security Cooperation Dialogue. Established in 2010, the event has been taking place annually to deal specifically with drug-related issues. The new subcommittee was charged with the responsibility for creating the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) "to control and reduce drug-trafficking and related violence in the region" The financial allocation is as follows as reported in the Congressional Research Service Report:

The Administration's FY2011 request for the CBSI is for \$79 million, with about 43% of the requested assistance specifically for counternarcotics efforts and another 23% in military assistance to improve air and maritime security. For FY2012, the Administration is requesting \$73 million for the CBSI, with about 24% for counternarcotics and 33% in military assistance focused on improving maritime security. The Administration requested that CBSI funding for FY2011 be part of a separate State Department operating unit for the CBSI, but in the FY2012 request, funding has been reincorporated into the State Department Western Hemisphere Regional program (CRS Report for Congress, 2011).

There seems to be a definite link between drug-trafficking and crime with Latin America and the Caribbean reflecting the highest rate of crime in the world in recent times. While global homicide rates have been declining, those of the Caribbean and Latin America have been sharply increasing. According to the UNODC 2010 Report, "homicides in Latin America and the Caribbean had, on average, increased from 19.9 per 100,000 people in 2003 to 32.6 per 100,000 people in 2008".



**Diagram 2: Average Homicide Rates by Global Region: 2003-2008**

**Source:** U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Homicide Statistics, February 2010.

Drug trafficking resulting in criminality accounts for the primary source of citizen insecurity in the Americas, replacing political and regional conflicts. Drug transit and production zones through Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, Venezuela, and Brazil are most prone to drug-related violence which results partly from the protection of drug trafficking routes and syndicate power struggles. It is also due to the corruption and undermining of police and criminal justice systems resulting in an increase related crimes such as kidnapping, money laundering and trafficking in arms.

### The Caribbean

Described as the “Third Border” of the United States after Canada and Mexico, the Caribbean is an archipelago of islands that links North and South America. Its geo-strategic location encompasses vital air and sea routes which connects the four hemispheres – East, West, North and South. The Panama Canal is the only link between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. While this strategic geographic position

has proved critical as communication links to the rest of the world, it has also fostered transnational criminal activities which have escalated to unmanageable proportions in recent times. Currently, approximately 30% of the drugs entering the United States are shipped from the Caribbean. The problem emerged in the seventies and has escalating since with the Central and South American drug cartels using the strategically located Caribbean as a transshipment point to supply drugs to the United States’ and European markets. The primary means of transporting drugs include “fishing boats, speedboats, freighter shipments, yachts, and other modes of small commercial, as well as private sea transportation conveyances, along with light aircraft” (COHA, 2011).

The 2012 UNDP Human Development Report describes security as an issue of common interest to Latin America and the Caribbean. It continues that “Organized transnational crime, mainly that which involves drug trafficking, looms large in the security crisis currently

affecting an increasing number of countries in both sub-regions and stresses that that “the Caribbean is a critical transit route between drug producers and large-scale consumers”. Although the word “drug/s” appear only nine times in the eighteen page document, the report contends that “An improved worldwide policy addressing the problem of addictive drugs could contribute considerably to reducing levels of violence and social disruption in the Caribbean”.

Murder rates in the Caribbean now stand at 30 per 100,000 population annually. These are higher than for any other region of the world and have risen in recent years for many countries of the region. Though crimes levels and their causes are country specific, drug trafficking has been identified as the best explanation for the escalating rates of crime and violence in the region. According to the 2007 UN/World Bank Report:

The drug trade drives crime in a number of ways: through violence tied to trafficking, by normalizing illegal behaviour, by diverting criminal justice resources from other activities, by provoking property crime related to addiction, by contributing to the widespread availability of firearms, and by undermining and corrupting

societal institutions. At the same time, it should be recognized that there is a trade-off between resources spent on combating drug trafficking and those spent on other forms of crime and violence prevention.

The rise in crime has triggered an increase in more powerful weapons. The 2007 World Bank/UNODC Report notes that the trafficking of narcotics which facilitates the availability of firearms is a major cause for the surge of gun related crime in the region. The firearms are usually smuggled in with the drugs as it is required for the protection of the contraband during transportation. The illegal drugs in turn are often traded for foreign exchange and firearms from the United States. The firearms serve the purposes of the protection of the turf, intimidating competitors, empowering recruits into the distribution networks (or gangs), maintaining discipline within them and executing informers. It spawns vibrant ‘guns for hire’ and contract murder industries thereby perpetrating violent crimes (UNODC/World Bank Report, 2007).

Diagram 3 below, adopted from a study by Commodore Anthony S. Franklin, pinpoints the air and sea routes to and from the Caribbean and the rest of the world.



Diagram 3

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) made several observations in June 2012 regarding drug-trafficking between the Caribbean and the United States. Firstly, it contends that there is an increase in drug trafficking throughout the region just as it is strongly affected by organized Latin American criminal groups. Secondly, it notes that the wider Caribbean has experienced a growing spillover of drugs as U.S./Mexico border controls were tightened. Thirdly, the topography of the Caribbean including its natural landscapes,

diffused geographical location, long coastlines often unguarded and mountainous interiors are all ideal for the propagation and transportation of narcotics. Vulnerable islands like Haiti are targeted by drug traffickers who aim to corrupt high officials. As a result, the United States has beefed up its interest and support through the establishment of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. Table 1 below reflects the highest annual seizures of cocaine between 1998 and 2004 in the Caribbean.

Country/Territory	Year	Highest Annual Seizures (Kilograms of Cocaine) 1998-2004
Puerto Rico	1998	10344
Netherland Antilles	2003	9025
Bahamas	2003	4361
Jamaica	2002	3725
Guadeloupe	1998	3222
Cuba	1999	2444
Dominican Republic	1998	2342
British Virgin Islands	2001	2159
Turks and Caicos	1998	2075
Cayman Islands	1999	1926
Haiti	1998	1272
Martinique	2003	1138
Anguilla	2001	926
Trinidad & Tobago	2001	821
Aruba	1998	794
Antigua & Barbuda	2001	767
Bermuda	2001	667

**Table 1: Highest Total Annual Cocaine Seizure, 1998-2004**

**Source:** UNODC Data Base

(<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTHAITI/Resources/CaribbeanC&VChapter2.pdf>)

This contention is refuted by the 2007 UNODC/ World Bank Report which asserts that there may be a decrease in the flow of drugs through the region. It also contends that “the transshipment

of cocaine to the United States, the most significant flow in economic terms, appears to be in decline. Cannabis production for export from Jamaica, the largest cannabis producer in

the region, appears to be in a slump". Yet the Report concedes that "in 2005, it is estimated that about 10 tons of cocaine transited through Jamaica, and 20 tons through Haiti and the Dominican Republic" (UNODC/World Bank Report, 2007).

Another reason espoused for this alleged decline is that Mexican drug cartels have now replaced Columbian groups. Traditionally, the Caribbean has been the preferred transshipment route for Columbian drug cartels which had close ties with traffickers in the Dominican Republic who acted as wholesalers and retailers. But with stricter and more effective trafficking law enforcement in the Caribbean, the break-up of Columbian drug cartels and increasing stability in Columbia, the Mexican cartels prefer the Central American coastline as their transshipment route and then to the U.S./ Mexican border (UNODC/World Bank Report 2007).

While cocaine consumption has declined in the United States, it has increased in Europe. According to a Europol report, forty percent of the cocaine entering Europe is transited through the Caribbean. Large quantities of cocaine also enter Canada through the Caribbean and seizures have been made of cocaine from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, the Netherlands Antilles, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Haiti, St. Lucia, Grenada, Barbados, Suriname, and Dominica. Several countries are heavily involved in the transshipment of drugs. The United States has identified the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica as major transshipment points. Both the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas have come in for high praise by the United States for their interdiction successes unlike Haiti which has been designated a non-cooperating country.

The Dominican Republic is viewed as a "command, control, and communications" center for drug operations in the Caribbean. It is also used to store drugs before they are shipped to Puerto Rico or the United States. Moreover, there has been an increasing flow of heroin in the island with an estimated seven kilos seized in

1998 to 122 kilos in 2005. Moreover, Dominican expatriates have been heavily involved in drug distribution in the United States (UNODC/World Bank Report 2007).

The Bahamas is particularly attractive for Jamaican marijuana and cocaine from South America which are processed for sale in the United States. The Bahamas is an archipelago comprising some 700 islands which encompass some 15,000 square miles. This makes it difficult to detect and monitor drug activities in these waters. Indeed, since the 1980s, Anthony Maingot described the security dilemma of the Bahamas at the time:

This time the commodity was different, but the essential ingredients were the same: geographical proximity to both producers and markets, with corruptible officials and financial benefits on both sides (South Florida and the Bahamas). By the 1980s, the "business" had grown deeper and wider and appeared to touch all levels of Bahamian society: government officials, lawyers, businessmen and - critically - bankers. While it had developed an enormous international dimension, it retained a tight Bahamas-Miami (FL) link (Bahamas, 1984). It comprised the newest, most dangerous threat to Bahamian society as well as to US interests. It was the drug trade (Maingot, 1988).

The Haitian drug crisis was exacerbated by the earthquake of January 2010. Moreover, a number of factors have contributed to Haiti's security dilemma. These include the tightening of the US/Mexican border combined with abject poverty, corruption, economic and political instability, unsafe environment and unemployment. Members of the Haitian National Police were also found conspiring with drug-traffickers in 2009 and 2010. In what was described as a clean-up campaign, seven members of the Haitian National Police were arrested for aiding drug-trafficking and kidnappers (Beale, 2011). The devastated Haitian infrastructure made it more difficult for the Haitian National Police to deal with drug-trafficking. However, it should be noted that Haiti is not a key producer or supplier of

drugs. Marijuana is the only drug produced in certain parts of the island. Rather, the island is ideal as a transit zone where drugs from Latin America are dropped off. Haiti's long coastline, mountainous interior and inadequate coastguard further exacerbate the difficulties in curbing drug-trafficking. Haiti's neighbour, the Dominican Republic, estimates that about 67%

of the cocaine entering their country came via Haiti, a significant drop from 2003, when the figure was 90%. (UNODC/World Bank Report 2007).

Diagram 4 below depicts the major transit routes for drugs from Latin America to the Caribbean.



Diagram 4:

Source – U.S. DEA <http://www.coha.org/the-caricom-blueprint-for-illicit-drug-trafficking/>

Jamaica is the largest English-speaking country of the Caribbean as well as the largest producer and consumer of marijuana in the region. This is partly due to its Rastafarian culture which uses marijuana in its rituals and endorses it as a medical remedy. It is also due to its mountainous topography particularly in the region of the Blue Mountains. This topography is ideal for the production and concealment of marijuana. One of the areas where the Caribbean continues to dominate is hash oil, a product which has long been imported by Central and Atlantic Canada from Jamaica. Jamaican traffickers in Ontario tend to smuggle hash oil directly from the Caribbean and also manufacture it within Canada. The high level of violence is frightening and is exacerbated by the street sale of marijuana. Several drug traffickers including the infamous Christopher Dudas Coke, have not

only become highly feared but highly respected in their communities as they assist the local population by providing food, employment, education and medical supplies (Beale, 2011). A strong correlation exists between drug use and homelessness in Jamaica. The National Council on Drug Abuse in Jamaica found 75% prevalence of substance abuse amongst the homeless in St. Andrew and Kingston (National Council on Drug Abuse, 2012).

From all indications, the Caribbean will continue to be a major transshipment point for drugs. It is quite a lucrative enterprise for drug traffickers given that the illegal drug market generates an income of more than three billion U.S. dollars annually. Columbia remains a major source of heroin and cocaine for the United States and as such may remain an attractive



transit route. Strong ties bind the Caribbean to some of these metropolitan consumer demand centers. The linguistic, historical, commercial, tourism and legal links between the Caribbean, the United States, Canada and Europe are strengthened by daily direct air and cargo flights between these countries. The Caribbean diaspora, particularly those from Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, are principal agents of drug distribution in North America and Europe. Deportees find themselves engaging in the same activity when sent back to the Caribbean, already with well-established networks at home. Moreover, an effective cover for money laundering and the large financial services are opportunities presented by the enormous remittances which are sent by the diaspora to

the region. A number of countries are listed as “jurisdictions of primary concern” by the United States is involved in money laundering. According to the U.S. State Department, these include Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Cayman Islands, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and St. Kitts and Nevis.

One must remember, however, that the Caribbean is an extremely diverse region. While some countries like Barbados are quite developed, others such as Haiti ranks as the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. Such diversity makes regional analysis on crime and drugs quite challenging. Perhaps the pursuit of country specific inquiries may prove more plausible.

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# THE CORRELATION BETWEEN DRUGS AND CRIME: IMPACT ON YOUTH AND GANG ACTIVITY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

*Indira Rampersad*

## **Geo-Strategic Location**

Trinidad and Tobago is the most southerly island of the Caribbean with a population of 1.3 million and a land mass of 5,128 square kilometers. Its proximity to the South American mainland, just about seven miles from Venezuela at its closest point, presents it as ideal for cross-border criminal activities. Moreover, its porous air and sea borders and direct transportation routes to Europe, West Africa, the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, make it an ideal location for drug transshipment. The island's oil and gas-based economy deems it one of the most industrialized and richest countries of the region which to some extent camouflages the money laundering associated with the drug trade.

Caught in the direct line of drug-trafficking as an ideal transshipment point between South America and North America and Europe, Trinidad and Tobago suffers the negative impacts of its strategic location which accommodates the South's supply and the North's demand. The main drugs trafficked from South American to the Caribbean are cocaine and marijuana and smaller quantities of heroin. The island's

domestic drug production and illegal drug use concentrates on marijuana. Contraband prescription drugs are also becoming increasingly available in Trinidad and Tobago.

The most common mode of transporting cocaine to Trinidad from South America for transshipment to Europe, Africa, Canada and the United States are small fishing vessels known as pirogues. Other means are through pleasure boats and commercial aircraft. Marijuana destined to Trinidad and Tobago come from other Caribbean islands, including Jamaica, via pirogues, loose cargo vessels and parasitic devices attached to the hulls of vessels. An increase in the frequency of marijuana shipments arriving at both of Trinidad and Tobago's international airports and its seaports was noted in 2010. An increase in the quantities of marijuana moved was also observed (INCSR 2011).

Figure 1 below shows the typical drug trafficking route from Columbia and highlights Trinidad and Tobago geo-strategic location in the direct path of this route:



Figure 1: Trinidad and Tobago in the Direct Path of the Typical Drug Route in the Region

Source: Commodore Anthony, S. Franklin,

[http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative\\_process/documents/9\\_franklin\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/documents/9_franklin_presentation.pdf)

The techniques used in drug smuggling to and from Trinidad and Tobago are multifold. Couriers either ingest or attach the drugs to their bodies or transport it in their luggage secret compartments or loose in their luggage. Narcotics are also transshipped via international commercial parcel delivery services. Containerized and loose cargo shipping services are also used. In addition, pleasure yachts moored in Trinidad during hurricane season are also used for the shipment of narcotics both in and out of the country. The INCSR Report, 2011 affirms that “In September 2010, Spanish authorities, in cooperation with law enforcement

officials from other countries, interdicted 1.5 metric tons of cocaine in a yacht that originated from Trinidad’s marinas at Chaguaramas.” It continues that “According to SVG officials, the Police have also seen an increase in movement of cocaine in airports via false bottom suitcases carried by both locals and foreigners. A go-fast boat was intercepted travelling from Trinidad and Tobago with cocaine and arms in exchange for cannabis. There has been an increase in regional trade with Trinidad and Tobago sending drugs and guns by vessel to St. Vincent and the Grenadines in exchange for cannabis. In addition, a marked increase in cash flowing

through money remittance systems has been witnessed (INCSR 2011). The majority of drug seizures in Trinidad and Tobago are made at

the airports and sea ports as depicted in Table 1 below:

Drug	Method of Import		Method of Export		
	Air (%)	Sea (%)	Air (%)	Sea (%)	Mail (%)
Cannabis	0%	77%	2%	56%	1%
Cocaine	0%	18.3%	50%	2%	29.7%
Heroin	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1: Methods Used to Transport Illicit Narcotics – January - October 2007

Source: Organized Crime, Narcotics and Firearms Bureau

Notable seizures of both cocaine and marijuana have occurred in recent years. These include 26.3 metric tons of marijuana found inside a single cargo container in Port of Spain. Others involve the \$30 million marijuana drug bust concealed in a refrigerator container among frozen chicken parts at the Pt. Lisas Port (See Figure 2 below). The container had departed from the United States but had stopped off in Jamaica and Customs officers believe that that marijuana

was placed in the container in Jamaica. The container belonged to a businessman from Central Trinidad but it is uncertain whether he had any knowledge of the drugs. In August 2011, “cocaine valued at \$22 million was seized at Piarco International Airport following which there was a spate of murders” (*Trinidad Express*, 16<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2011). Yet, many cargo shipments arriving in Trinidad remain largely under-screened.



Figure 2: Cocaine discovered in container at Pt. Lisas Port, September 2011

Source: *Trinidad Express*, 8th October, 2011.

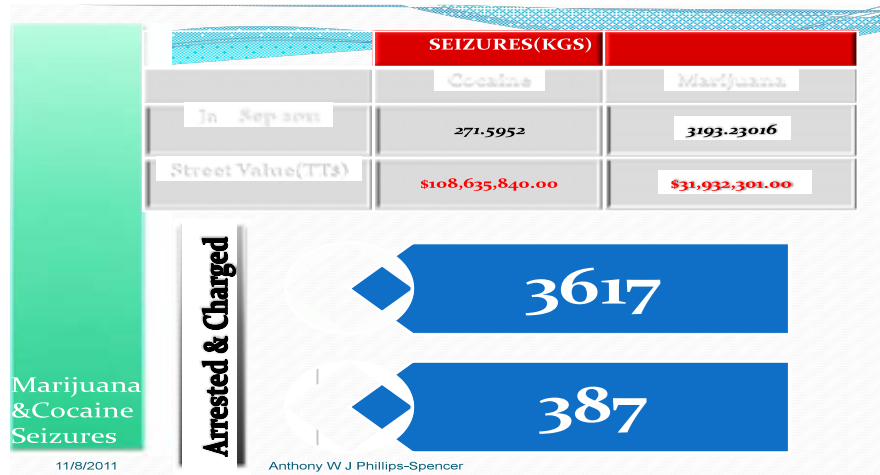


Figure 3: Seizures of Cocaine and Marijuana- Jan-Sept, 2011

Source: Colonel Anthony Spencer

Figure 3 above reveals that between January and September 2011, 271,595.20 kilograms of cocaine were seized with a street value of \$108,635, 840. With respect to marijuana, 3,193, 230.16 kilograms were seized during the same period with a street value of \$31,932, 301. Of those arrested and charged, 3,617 were men and 387 were women (Spencer, 2011).

### The Drug/Crime Nexus

Of particular significance to this study is the correlation between drugs and crime and the impact on youth and gang activity in Trinidad and Tobago. This link was clearly enunciated by Former Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago, Ramesh Maharaj, who noted the following at a regional forum in 2000:

There is a direct nexus between illegal drugs and crimes of violence, sex crimes, domestic violence, maltreatment of children by parents and other evils." Our citizens suffer from drug addiction, drug-related violence, and drug-related corruption of law enforcement and public officials. Aside from the very visible decimation of our societies caused by drug addiction and drug-related violence, there is another insidious evil: money laundering. It changes democratic institutions, erodes the rule of law, and destroys civic order with impunity (Maharaj, 2000).

This nexus between drugs and crime in Trinidad and Tobago accounts in large part for the crisis amongst youths in the island. Amongst the notable crimes are homicides, rapes, robbery arms trafficking, kidnappings and corruption, all of which are possibly linked to the drug trade, making the drug phenomenon a multi-faceted one. For Ivelaw Griffith, "the narcotics phenomenon is multidimensional, with four main problem areas - drug production, consumption-abuse, trafficking, and money laundering (Griffith, 2011).

As the levels of crimes and violence increase in the island, so too does the level of arms. A report commissioned by CARICOM in 2002, on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Caribbean, designated Trinidad and Tobago as a country with emerging high levels of armed and organized criminality. At that time, only Jamaica fell in the category of countries with established high levels and patterns of armed crime. Today, ten years later, Trinidad and Tobago would also be listed in that category as statistics reveal that the murder rate doubled between 2002 and 2005. In 2004, the island witnessed 160 firearm murders, more than 450 firearm woundings, and 1,500 firearm incidents that did not result in injury (UNODC/World Bank Report 2007).

More recent comparative statistics provided by the current Prime Minister, Kamla Persad Bissessar, during the 2011 State of Emergency, reveal that between 1995 and 2001 there were 789 murders, or 112 per year; between 2002 and 2009 there were 2,853 murders, or 357 per year; between 2002 and 2009 murders increased by 218% on average per year compared to between 1995 and 2001 and between 2003 and 2009 when there were 126,978 serious crimes, of which

3,082 were murders (Persad Bissessar, 2011). The 2007 UNDOC/World Bank Report notes that “before 2000, firearms were responsible for less than one-third of all homicides. By May 2006, this percentage had risen to 74 percent. The percentage of homicides attributed to firearms in Trinidad and Tobago lies well within the range of rates of 60 percent to 93 percent seen in Latin America (UNODC/World Bank Report, 2007).

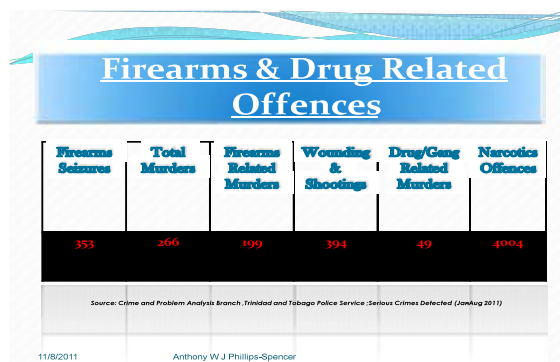
Year	Number of Murders Committed with Firearms	Total Number of Murders	Percent Murders Committed with Firearms
2001	82	151	54 percent
2002	102	172	59 percent
2003	158	229	69 percent
2004	182	259	70 percent
2005	273	386	71 percent
Jan-May 2006	123	166	74 percent

**Table 2: Murders Committed in Trinidad and Tobago using firearms**

**Source:** Modus Operandi. Trinidad and Tobago (Take from UNODC/World Bank Report, 2007).

Drug trafficking fosters crime in a number of ways and these may serve as valid explanations for the connection between these two in Trinidad and Tobago. Couriers are often paid in kind, that is, drug products rather than cash which they are forced to sell in the local market. This perpetuates youth gangs, prostitution, and market-related violent and property crime. Drug transactions involve firearms which are not only often traded for drugs but also smuggled together with drugs because the firearms are required to protect the traded contraband. Drug barons and dealers use these firearms to protect their turf, to threaten and intimidate their

competitors. It has also spawned a lucrative guns for hire industry which exacerbates the crime problem. They also attract new recruits into the distribution process by empowering them with weapons and maintaining discipline. Firearms are also used for assassinating enemies and informers. Enemies could be ordinary citizens, competitors, defectors or state officials including members of the police force. Figure 4 below, courtesy Colonel Anthony J. Spencer, depicts the incidents of firearm and drug related offences in Trinidad and Tobago between January and August 2011.



**Figure 4: Firearms and Drug Related Offences**

**Source:** Colonel Anthony J. Spencer

Figure 5 below highlights the rate of Narcotics Possession, Murders and Certified Firearm

Homicides in Trinidad and Tobago between 1992 and 2005.

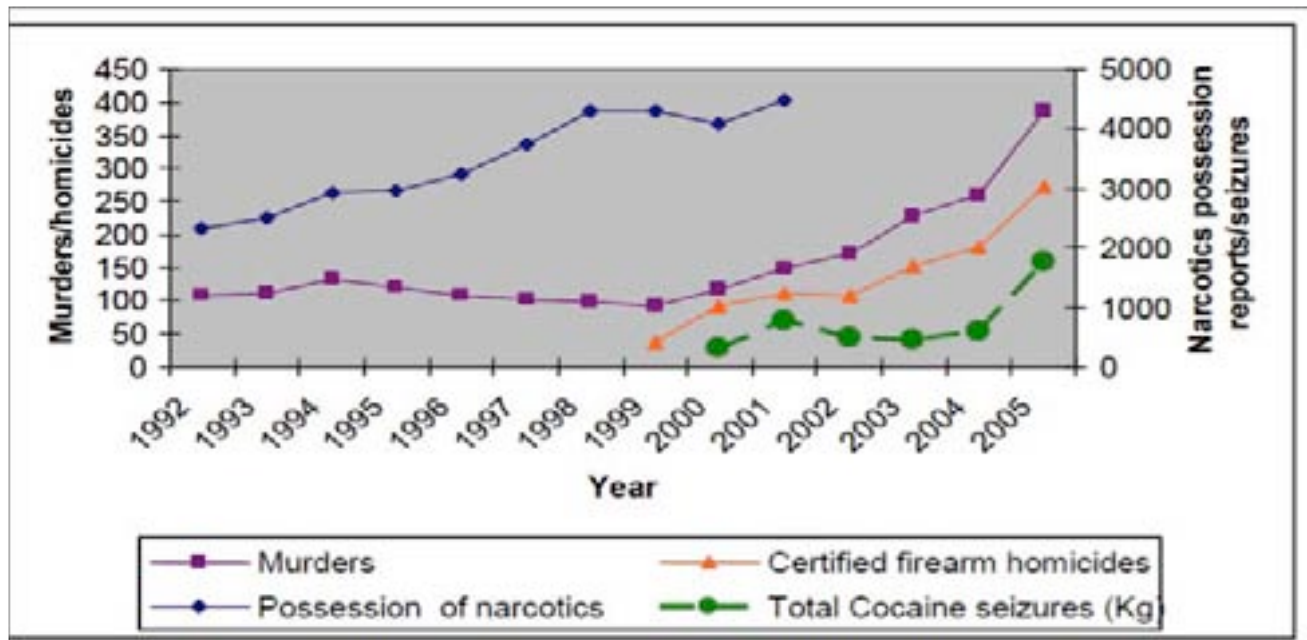


Figure 5: Police Reports of Narcotics Possession, Murders and Certified Firearm Homicides in Trinidad and Tobago: 1992-2005.

Source: Central Statistical Office, Drug Interdiction Unit, Trinidad and Tobago Police Force. Taken from (UNODC/World Bank Report, 2007: [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Cr\\_and\\_Vio\\_Car\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Cr_and_Vio_Car_E.pdf))

The most dangerous impact of the drug-arms nexus however, is its impact on the establishment and operations of gangs which are mainly comprised of youths. A UN Instraw publication notes that:

In addition to being the main perpetrators of gun violence, young men are also by far the group most likely to be direct victims of gun violence. Young, poor, socially marginalized men with a low level of education and poor prospects for income generation are the primary group of people that are killed and injured from gun violence. Youth homicide rates are highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (Blessing et al, 2010).

In Trinidad and Tobago, not only are youths often killed in gun violence but they are the ones committing the crimes. The consumption of drugs amongst youths is less significant than

the impact of trafficking on armed violence. The imperative are frequently economic since young men who just got out of prison and with few prospects of employment are the most vulnerable group. These become the prime targets of drug suppliers who already wield considerable control of the community and who become emboldened with their illegal weapons and wealth accumulated from the illicit drug trade (UNODC/World Bank Report, 2007). They approach the vulnerable youths with a quota of cocaine while at the same time, offering the necessary weapons to protect their turf. The youths are hardly left with a choice for if they refuse the offer they would be forced to face continued hardship, even death. The option of lucrative profits from the sale and distribution of narcotics becomes quite tempting and attractive even if they are aware of the great danger they face with regard to death, injury and even detection.



Across the hemisphere, there is an uncanny similarity in the “hot-spot” communities from which such at risks persons originate and mainly operate their gun related activities. In North America, they are called “ghettos”, while in Latin America, depending on the country, they are known as *villas miseria*, *barrios callampa*, *pueblos jovenes* or *favelas*. In the Caribbean, they are best known as “garrison communities. They are notably urban, densely populated, underserved and underprivileged, reflecting lower than national levels of most social indicators and standards of living. The typical example is Laventille in Trinidad and Tobago which is now internationally renown for crime and violence (WINAD/Ploughshares, 2008).

However, non-economic factors are also driving these at risk youths to their chosen lifestyles. Like in other Latin American and Caribbean countries, culture now seems partly responsible for the drug crisis in the island. Issues of identity, including manhood, the need to belong and the lack of value for human life are also explanatory variables. A constructed stereotype of masculinity influences their behaviour. This stereotype embraces violence which fosters the sense of empowerment by the possession of a gun. The weapons embolden them to threaten and instil fear, to command respect and demand sexual favours. In this sense, the drug/crime dichotomy is intimately linked to the gender factor as young men harbor the belief that owning a gun makes them “real men”.

Blessing et al., 2010 notes that “male gun ownership is accepted and encouraged as a sign of maturity, status and unquestionable masculinity.” They continue that “For marginalised males, the gun can become “the great equaliser” in obtaining what they feel has been denied them in a postcolonial, and continually exclusionary, society. This image of guns is reinforced by the reification and celebration of guns in popular culture, where gun-ownership is often also linked with hyper-masculine imagery. Private gun ownership is also perceived as both a right and a privilege. On the one hand, it is viewed as necessary for

protection, on the other hand, it is an agent of violence. The targeted group that are likely to be killed and injured in gun-related violence are young, poor, socially marginalized men with a low level of education and poor prospects for generating income (Blessing, et al., 2010). Moreover, these young men feel a sense of self-esteem and protection by each other engendering a sense of identity and belonging to like young men in the “posse” further driving the demand for firearms.

The youths attach little value to human life which for them is merely a commodity which they can buy or sell in exchange for coveted material objects like Nike shoes, sophisticated cell phones and other electronics, gold chains and drugs. Indoctrinated in a culture of entitlement by their forebears, many believe that they are entitled to a comfortable lifestyle without having to work hard for it. Moreover, a sense of laziness intensified by an oil and gas rich little island where money sometimes flows like water, has over time, been promoted by a state-propelled “gimme gimme” syndrome which is difficult to overcome.

This is compounded by a burgeoning middle-class spawned by the education achieved by the generation of parents of today’s youths. Amongst some ethnic groups, notably, Indo-Trinidadians, parents sacrificed tremendously to ensure that their children do not suffer the hardships they did when they were growing up. Now qualified professionals such as lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs and teachers, most tend to have just two or three children in contrast to their parents who generally had half a dozen or more. They endow their children lavishly with every material comfort and luxury including cars, computers, cell phones, Ipads and even apartments. Though some of these youths do well in school and even attend university, they lack the sense of values that accompanies hard work and sacrifice. Those employed, have all their salaries to themselves which they use as spending money. As such, they frequently operate in party mode, some getting involved in gang activity, others in drug consumption. This negates the view that involvement in

drug activity is a feature of poverty or lack of employment opportunities. Indeed, it is only the more affluent youths who can regularly afford to consume cocaine powder. However, no detailed study of this phenomenon has yet been conducted and the information here is derived from the author's observations.

It is noteworthy, however, that women are also drawn into the drug trade, particularly as couriers/carriers. Their plight is different as many who carry or consume drugs are victims of domestic abuse, prostitutes or HIV positive. They have histories of sexual and emotional abuse, mental illness (over 60 per cent of substance abusers have a concurrent mental-health issue), and children for whom they are responsible. The trauma women experience is much more than men. They frequently get into trafficking and drug abuse and are less likely to pursue treatment because they have to hold families together (Martin, 2009). A YouTube video produced by the UN tells the story of a female drug courier by the pseudonym Nicole who was caught carrying drugs to the United Kingdom. Nicole admitted that she was paid \$US500 to take one kilo of cocaine to the UK but because the traffickers had packed her suitcase, she unknowingly took four kilos instead. She had accepted the deal because she needed to support her family. Her husband was not contributing and she was hoping to start a new life in the UK. Though she knew that \$US500 was not a lot of money, in her situation, every penny counted. She was eventually sentenced to seven years in prison (UNODC YouTube Video, 2010).

In attempting to understand how at-risks youths become involved in gangs, one can speculate on whether existing gangs lead to drug activism or whether drug-activism spawns gang formation. What is certain is that they are intricately intertwined and interrelated. In a survey undertaken by Charles Katz and Andrew Fox in 2010, the findings reveal that "about 7.7% of youth reported being a gang associate; 6.8%, a former gang member; and 6.2%, a current gang member. Gang involvement was associated with perceived availability of handguns, residential

mobility, having parents who favour antisocial behavior, early initiation of antisocial behavior, intention to use drugs, having antisocial peers, and having peers who use drugs" (Katz & Fox, 2010). The 2007 UNODC/World Bank Report affirms that "established in structured networks with suppliers, distributors, couriers, retailers, and enforcers, there are 66 known gangs with more than 500 members, according to the Ministry of National Security in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these gangs now engage in kidnapping, with ransom demands that include heroin and cocaine" (UNODC/World Bank Report, 2007).

The link between drug trafficking and crime was noted since 2006 by then Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, Fitzgerald Hinds. He contended that "sixty-five per cent of all serious crimes committed in Trinidad and Tobago are related to the illicit drug trade." Declaring drug traffickers the enemies of society, he continued that "there is a clear link between crime and drug use and drug trafficking, and therefore we recognise clearly, if we deal with the drug problem whether from a criminal justice standpoint or a social or health standpoint, we are dealing with crime at the same time" (Street, 2006).

In forging a nexus between crime, gangs and drugs during the State of Emergency in Trinidad and Tobago in 2011, President George Maxwell Richards declared that the nation had been witnessing "the tragedy of multiple murders and an upsurge in gang-related violence." He noted that between August 19th and 21st, a seventy two hour period, there were eleven murders. He also underscored the escalating violent crime and information provided by national security intelligence about the link between such crime and then recent counter narcotics activities where a seizure valued more than \$20 million was made. The President continued that "the majority of these murders are occurring in specified geographical areas across Trinidad and Tobago, often committed by members of criminal gangs or persons involved in the drug and arms trade" (Alexander, 2011).

When Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar announced the state of emergency on 21 August 2011 she stated that “I am advised that one of the causations for the spike in murders is ironically linked to the success by the police in the discovery of large drug hauls, with values in excess of twenty million dollars in just one raid.” The raid in question was the aforementioned cocaine haul, with an estimated street value of \$22 million, made at Piarco International Airport on August 16. She continued that “these large sums of money simply do not disappear from the drug trade without consequences, and in some of the cases now occurring, this is the result.” (*Trinidad Express*, 21 August, 2011).

Although the United Nations Office of Drug and Crime found a reduction in the amount of illegal drugs transshipped through Trinidad and Tobago in 2010, this decline resulted an increase in violent crime, not only in this country but the entire region. One UN report states that between 1997 and 2009, drug seizures in the region dropped by 71%. In 2009, only 10% of cocaine bound for the US was transshipped through the Caribbean (UNODC, 2010). Yet violent crimes increased and according to former National Security Minister, John Sandy, “the increasingly violent rivalry between criminal gangs competing for fewer narcotics has become a challenge for law enforcement officers” (*C News*, Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2011).

Another dimension of the drug crisis in Trinidad and Tobago is that of white collar crimes which includes the involvement of law enforcement officials who frequently become corrupt as they become embroiled in the movement of drugs. Reports continue and are not denied that the drug arrests made are of small fries, the street corner hustlers, and that the really big sharks, well known to the police, are not and cannot be touched. One particular ethnic group is consistently mentioned. It should be noted, however, that information on “those guys at the top” are difficult to come by and hence is not comprehensively discussed in this paper.

According to UN estimates, in 2004 smugglers paid nearly £80 million a year in bribes to Trinidadian officials (*Unreported World*, 2011). During the state of Emergency in 2011, Adviser to the National Security Minister, Gary Griffith was questioned by reporter, Seyi Rhodes, as follows: “It’s probably no surprise to you to hear that every person I speak to in Trinidad, when I ask them where the drugs and the guns come from, they tell me that the ports, the customs authorities, the coast guard and the police are a 100 per cent involved in the trafficking of drugs and guns. Why are you not focusing on that?” Griffith replied that “Every country in the world will have corrupt police officers, will have corrupt persons in the Judiciary, will have corrupt politicians. That is not an avenue to call a State of Emergency. We needed a State of Emergency to stop law abiding citizens of this country from being killed” (*Trinidad Express*, Nov 27<sup>th</sup> 2011).

More recently, newly appointed Minister of National Security, Jack Warner, said that he hopes to deal with the illegal drug trade by seeking out the “guys at the top” and the “source”. “If you want to stop the drug trade, do it in two ways — go for the guys at the top and go for the source. “We going for them, we going for them. Those guys at the top, they keep themselves out of sight and they are very powerful because nobody’s willing to touch them or say what they know”. According to Warner “white collar” criminals and organised crime for the presence of illegal drugs and guns in TT and said crimes were often committed in the name of guarding one’s “turf” or “business” (*Trinidad and Tobago Newsday*, August 6, 2012).

### **Drug Use and Abuse**

The issue of drug abuse in Trinidad and Tobago has been one of concern in recent times. One of the most well researched phenomena in the scholarship of drugs is the relationship between drugs, delinquency and crime. Three categories are highlighted by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission. These include “psychopharmacological” which is violence

due to the direct acute effects of a psychoactive drug on the user; “economic-compulsive” which is violence committed instrumentally to generate money to purchase expensive drugs and “systemic violence” which is associated with the marketing of illicit drugs, such as turf wars, contract disputes etc. (CICAD, 2010). The CICAD 2010 report is the findings of a sample of 3,309 students of which 44.84% were male and 55.16 were female. A survey was conducted amongst forms two, four and sixth form students in the country. Analyses were undertaken on age categories of 14 years old or less (47.33%) 1–16 years old (33.04%) and 17 years and older (19.63%). The following paragraphs detail the findings of the survey.

With regard to alcohol, Trinidad and Tobago was classified as a high prevalence country in terms of lifetime prevalence, reflecting 82.08% as compared to 66.60% past year experience (2010) and 42.23% past month experience. Interestingly, both lifetime and past month prevalence were also higher for females than for males in the island. A notable exception to the other islands sampled (except Jamaica) was the high prevalence amongst sixteen to seventeen year olds. The age of first use was 10.69 amongst males and 11.20 amongst females with an overall average of 11.07. The results also suggest that there is a consistent positive relationship between past year prevalence and behavioral problems so as the number of behavioral problems increase so too does prevalence of alcohol use. In Trinidad and Tobago, 77% of students claimed to misbehave “a few times” in the past year as compared to 83.65% who claimed to misbehave “frequently”. However, the island reflected a low level of below 36% with respect to binge drinking (heavy drinking).

The World Drug Report 2011 reveals that most of the countries in the Caribbean has higher than world average prevalence of cannabis (marijuana) use with mixed trends and that in most Caribbean countries, marijuana is the most widely used illicit substance. Trinidad and Tobago reflects a low past year prevalence of just over five percent. The statistics reveal 12.09% lifetime prevalence, 6.44% past year prevalence

and 2.70% past month prevalence which is much lower than that of other Caribbean countries. Neither is Trinidad and Tobago considered a major producer of Marijuana. Of the Caribbean countries sampled in the 2011 comparative study of the Inter-American Commission, only two of the countries, namely Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, actually produce quantities of marijuana specifically for export to other countries.

The past year prevalence amongst males almost doubles that of females although current use amongst females is quite low reflecting a 3.64% for males and 1.90% for females. The 15–16 years age group reflect both the highest past year and past month prevalence while the island stands out for its very low level prevalence amongst the fourteen or less age group. The age of first use of marijuana amongst males is 12.27 and 13.14 for females. Like with alcohol, behavioural problems increase with marijuana use from 3.01% for those students who never used it to 11.07 who used it a few times and 23.32% who used it frequently for lifetime prevalence. The same pattern is revealed for past year and past month prevalence rates. With regard to access to Marijuana in Trinidad and Tobago, 37.8 said it was easy to obtain, 12.08% said it was difficult to obtain, 17.12% said it was impossible to obtain and 33.00% did not know.

The prevalence of cocaine, crack cocaine and ecstasy seems much lower than that of marijuana reflecting lower lifetime and past month prevalence for each drug. This amounts to 0.91% and 0.49% for cocaine, 0.77% and 0.29% for crack cocaine lifetime and past year prevalence respectively and 0.90% lifetime prevalence for ecstasy. A much lower percentage of students claim to have been offered cocaine, crack or ecstasy than marijuana. Past year and past month prevalence for marijuana are 7.1% and 13.1% respectively. For cocaine it is 0.9% and 2.1% respectively for crack cocaine 1.1% 1.9% respectively and for ecstasy its is 1.0% and 2.0% respectively. The same percentage of students (18.5%) indicated that cocaine was easily available as those who claimed it was difficult. 22.0% of students said it was difficult to access

cocaine and 41% did not know. Crack cocaine reflected lower levels of accessibility with 15.9% claiming it was easy, 14.1% that it was difficult, 22.0% that it was impossible and 47.9% did not know. When surveyed for ecstasy 10.9% thought it was easy to access, 13.1% found it difficult, 22.5% said it was impossible and 53.5% did not know.

Trinidad and Tobago also reflected a high prevalence for inhalants, that is, breathable chemical vapors that users intentionally inhale because of the chemicals' mind-altering effects. The substances inhaled are often common household products that contain volatile solvents, aerosols, or gases. Repeatedly inhaling these substances can lead to death. Prevalence rates for Trinidad and Tobago were amongst the highest in the Caribbean. The lifetime prevalence rate amounted to 24.81% while past year and past month prevalence rates were 11.92% and 6.67% respectively almost doubling that of the United States as revealed in a 2007 survey. Females reflected a higher prevalence rates than males in all categories. In the case of lifetime prevalence rates, male usage was 21.11% as compared to female 27.96%. Past year prevalence rate showed males at 9.52% and females 13.97% and past month prevalence rate amounted to 4.99% for males and 8.10 females. Interestingly, age 14 years or less reflected the highest past year (12.89%) and past month (7.25%) prevalence rates with the age of first use being 10.8 for both males and females. Those who use high proportions of inhalants also display frequent behavioural problems and reflect a high rate of repeated school years. On the other hand, Trinidad and Tobago reflects a very low prevalence rate for prescription drugs specifically tranquilizers and stimulants with 2.61% 1.46% 0.80% and 3.27% 2.00% 1.49% lifetime, past year and past month prevalence rates for tranquilizers and stimulants respectively.

The Final Report Rapid Situational Analysis of the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago prepared by Alexander Riley (2008) reveals some interesting findings about drug

users in Trinidad and Tobago. The following paragraphs reveal the findings of the research.

Respondents from the Youth Training Center (YTC) initiated drug use between ages 5 and 9. 17% of respondents claimed that they were driven to drug use by abuse; 16.22% blamed it on peer pressure; 14.86% attributed it to family stress and 10.81% to financial stress. Homosexuals affirmed that drug consumption facilitated their capacity to cope with discrimination, isolation and exclusion which they have to endure. Female drug users had also increased. Many respondents claim that they avoid cocaine use because of messages received at home, in the community and the media. If the prospects for employment are high, drug consumption decreases for fear of failing the drug-test required to secure the job. Respondents were also unaware of available treatment and rehabilitation facilities. Continuing drug use resulted from lack of education (6.76%), financial stress (10.81%) unemployment (2.70%) and family stress (14.86%). (Riley, 2008)

One interesting case study is that of Paul Holder who conducted a Rapid Assessment Survey in La-Horquetta, East Trinidad, in 2002. The study sought to determine whether there was a co-relation between drug youth among the community's youth and reported crimes committed by young males in the area. The findings reveal that the respondents strongly believed that alcohol and marijuana were not drugs and marijuana users did not commit crimes in contrast to cocaine users. They also believed that alcohol was more responsible for crimes than cocaine because its propensity for domestic violence and disorderly behaviour (Riley, 2008).

Similarly, a focus group was conducted in the La Brea community and though it was poorly attended, important information was gathered from two experienced users (one male, the other female), who resided in the community and participated in the focus group discussions. The ages of the majority of those surveyed ranged between 15 and 18.12 and embraced

African, Indian and Mixed ethnic groups. They were predominantly Christians and resided in North, South, East and Central Trinidad. 27% were male and the majority had started their consumption of drugs between the ages of 10 and 14 which is much higher than those of the YTC survey where they had started between the ages of 5 and 9. Interestingly, the majority of the girls surveyed lived with their parents (71%), 26% percent resided with other relatives and one with grandparents. 78% percent claimed that both parents are surviving. %17.57 and attribute their drug consumption practice to abuse, 16.22% to peer pressure, 14.86% by family stress and 10.81% by financial stress (Riley, 2008)

From this it can be gleaned that a level of vulnerability exists in the circumstances that made it necessary for the girls to be resident at St Jude's, and that their parents or home environment had insufficient protective influence. This is borne out by the statistics that 69% of the girls at St Jude's affirmed that they were never engaged in criminal activity nor had been in trouble with the law. Two admitted that they had been arrested and twenty-three (23) to having used drugs at some time. Of the users, 47% claimed that their family members were aware of their drug consumption practice while 21% said that their relatives did not know, 4% was not sure and the other 26% did not respond to the question. However, two respondents revealed that family members sometimes participated in their drug taking activities (Riley, 2008).

The reaction to marijuana consumption is rather interesting and is, and has been the favoured drug of choice for the young people. This is due to its availability, its relative affordability and the widespread perception that it is less harmful than cocaine. Youths believe that they have control over drug use because marijuana is not addictive and one can quit whenever one chooses. The users did not perceive drug and alcohol abuse as a disease but a social habit and though they did not define moderation, they claim that they drink in moderation because it is socially acceptable. There are no long term effects of using drugs and they can even have

a positive impact such as enhanced status and rank. Besides it is an easy and lucrative source of income as one can get rich quickly through the sale of drugs. One can even gain respect, power and control within the community, ultimately becoming a 'Community Leader'. Some even perceive positive health effects such as "good for the brain and the memory" and can be used for meditation and calming down and have both medicinal and spiritual properties. The peer-pressure factor also surfaced with respondents claiming that they can also do it if their parents and peers can – it is the "in thing". Most respondents agreed that marijuana was easily available and could be acquired almost anywhere the youths frequent. Cocaine use is perceived as a more dangerous activity and therefore more clandestine. Besides, "cocaine use takes you to a lower level. It is more degrading to use cocaine as it is associated with 'pipers' and vagrants; - Persons from the lowest strata of society are more vulnerable to the use of cocaine. Therefore they do not see themselves as vulnerable to the use of cocaine and, as a result, immune to the consequences" (Riley, 2008).

Recent information is also not available on the race factor. A somewhat dated article on substance abuse by Dumas (1994) notes that opinion varies among the NGOs.

One said that more Indian-origin persons were smoking marijuana now, while continuing to drink alcohol; another NGO qualified this by stating that younger Indian-origin persons in central Trinidad were mostly using cocaine, and some marijuana, while the older ones, in their mid-forties and above, were still concentrating on alcohol. It will also be recalled that Singh et al. found more use of alcohol by secondary school students of Indian origin and, conversely, more use of marijuana by students of African origin (Dumas, 1994).

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The collapse of communism in the Eastern bloc and the capitalist unification of the world economic system around the neo-liberal paradigm have created new, increased and diversified horizons for drug production and

drug-trafficking in the global arena bringing together criminal networks in a massive transnational operation, unmatched in history. The new liberal drive to free trade has opened up both the Soviet Union and China to the world market while at the same time reopening ancient silk passages which are also used as drug avenues. The deeper, denser, faster, thicker and wider interactions propelled by globalization have facilitated the transnational drug trade and its concomitant evils such as transnational criminal activities including money laundering and corruption. As an ideally located transshipment point for drugs from South America to North America and Europe, Trinidad and Tobago has not remained unscathed by the scourge of this sophisticated network of illegal criminal activity.

The security threat which Trinidad and Tobago faces has moved away from the traditional realist military threat to more liberal human security threat of the new global disorder in the form of criminality, illegal drugs and violence. The drug crisis presents several challenges to both development and governance in the island. Illegal drugs and the drug trade have an enormous negative impact on individuals, families, communities, nations and regions as the issue has proven to be transnational in scope and dimension. Moreover, it has a ripple effect on other socioeconomic problems in society given that transnational drug trafficking spawns an associated trade in illegal firearms required to protect drug cargoes. As seen, this makes Trinidad and Tobago particularly vulnerable to drug and gun related crime and violence. The nexus between drug use, crime, violence, money laundering, corruption, poverty, unemployment, social marginalization and economic inequality and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, are struggles which families have to grapple with on a daily basis. Moreover, drugs, crime and violence threaten the very fabric of the nation's security as it impacts on individual safety and the social, political and economic life of the nation and its citizens, particularly the youths. The problem must be viewed as one which can

engender a national crisis if measures are not put in place to deal with it.

Because the drug crisis affects national development, it has serious implications for governance. Drugs and crime have pushed the island to the edge of the governance precipice in recent times. The State of Emergency in 2011 is testimony to the extreme measures which governments are forced to undertake to protect its citizens. It also reflects the unpopularity which governments unable to treat with the problem can face in the light of public perception that the extreme measure of a SoE suggests that normal internal governance has been undermined. Because it mobilizes capital and employs illegal means, the illicit drug trade poses a challenge to democracy and the rule of law in the island. As the anti-democratic culture of breaking rules and breaching the law becomes established, crime and illegal activity take hold and ultimately becomes the norm. Drug money also results in distortions in economic structures as well as exacerbates social inequity. Resource allocation is skewed as the government is forced to spend more on national security than on other sectors such as food production. Private security firms have also mushroomed in the island posing an additional cost to business enterprises.

Fortunately for Trinidad and Tobago, the island has not assumed the status of a narco-state. Ivalaw Griffith views a narco-state as "one where (a) the top rulers of a country either collude with drug lords or so fear them that they turn a blind eye to their pursuits, or (b) drug dealers exercise effective control over parts of the nation, thereby undermining the nation's governability by the rulers who reputedly govern it. Afghanistan under Taliban rule is an illustration of the first situation. Examples of the second situation are Colombia for much of the 1960s-1990s and contemporary Mexico especially in relation to Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Guerrero, Ciudad Juarez, Nuevo Leon, Monterrey, and a few other areas" (Griffith, 2010). Neither has local authorities detected laboratories that manufacture cocaine, heroin or synthetic drugs, so one can surmise that all other

illegal drugs consumed locally are imported. There may also be some solace in the knowledge that 99% of the cocaine entering the island is re-exported as cocaine hydrochloride while the other 1% remains for local consumption.

The other good news is that governments have been attempting to deal with the drug crisis in the island through the establishment of several institutions and legislations. These include the National Drug Council (NDC), the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADPP), the Strategic Services

Agency (SSA), the Organized Crime, Narcotics and Firearm Bureau of the Police Service and the Counter Drug Task Force. Legislations include the Dangerous Drug Act, the Firearms Act and the proposed Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Act. The most recent Drug Treatment Court launched in September 2012 will provide non-violent drug dependent offenders with an alternative to traditional incarceration.

Figure 6 below depicts the various institutions charged with alleviating the drug problem in Trinidad and Tobago.

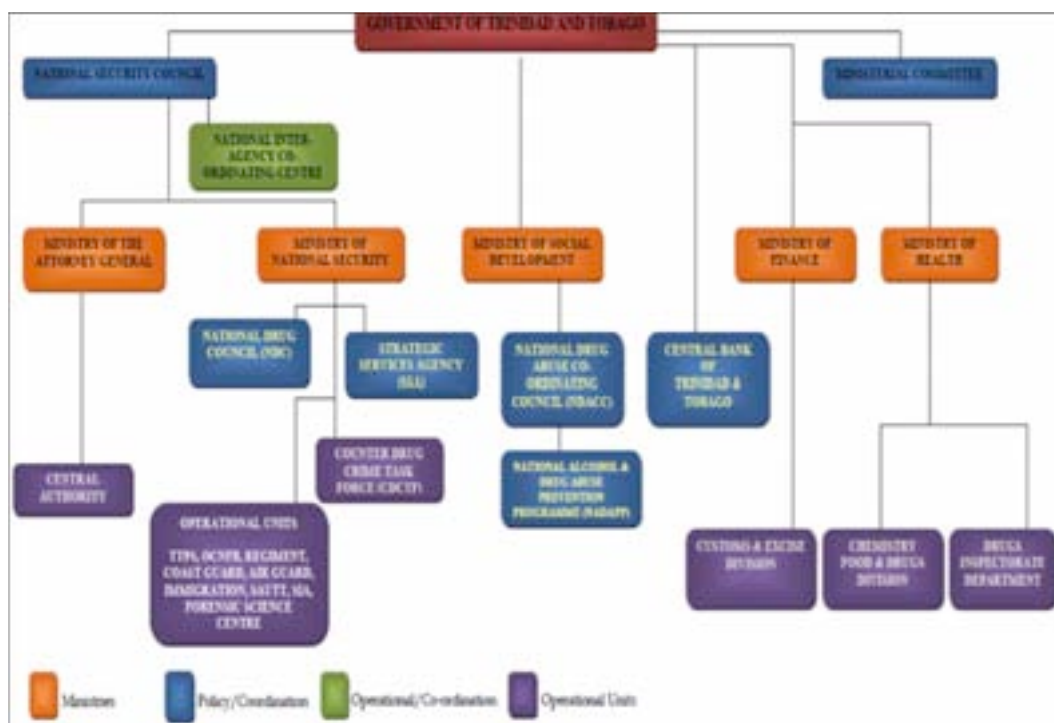


Figure 6: Anti-Drug Initiative in Trinidad and Tobago

Source: National Anti-Drug Plan, 2008-2012

Apart from the above initiative, several recommendations can be proposed to treat with the drug crisis in Trinidad and Tobago. Though it may seem as if the list of proposals has already been exhausted in previous reports a few prescriptions may be necessary to meet the changing dynamics of the transnational drug trade. These are listed in separate paragraphs below.

Policies should trump politics so that projects should seek long-term solutions rather than quick-fix measures adopted for political expediency. This entails diligently pursuing white collar criminals including law enforcement officials and bringing them to justice. It also involves instituting laws for campaign financing to make contributions transparent and to hold political parties accountable to a higher standard of due-



diligence in accepting funds. More resources should be deployed for fighting corruption, money laundering and embezzlement and checks and balances instituted to keep high-ranking officials, including politicians, in line. Moreover, national and regional policies which facilitate in-depth financial investigations and asset-seizures to seize profits from corruption rings, drug traffickers and organized crime groups should be created.

Political will should be harnessed to inculcate and defend fundamental human and democratic values, rallying sectors of the national population, particularly grass-roots movements to support this effort. It also involves education in human values from the primary through the secondary school system which targets all groups in the society including the middle class youths who have yet to learn the virtues of hard work and sacrifice.

Incentives should be provided for more comprehensive and indepth research to identify the at-risk communities and their causes and consequences. Such initiative should be promoted by the state, the private sector, NGO's and regional and international organizations. The research itself should be relevant to the idiosyncrasies of a plural society and the regional differences which characterize the different ethnic enclaves in the island.

Existing educational/vocational programs should be evaluated, reviewed and revised to determine if they are to be maintained as they are, revamped, revised or eliminated. This, in light of the multitude of such programs which continue to exist such as Multi-Skills Training Programme (MuST), Youth Training and Entrepreneurship Partnership Programme (YTEPP), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Military-Led Youth Programme of Apprenticeship & Re-orientation Training (MYPART).

A system of systems involving more integration, cooperation and collaboration at several levels including national institutions, non-state actors and regional and international stakeholders should be established. This would

include more intense interaction between government agencies such as those under the Ministry of National Security like the National Drug Council and the Security Services Agency (SSA) with civil society including NGO's, such as religious and faith-based organizations and the private sector. Regional bodies such as the Organization of American States and CARICOM need to collaborate within nations, across the region and across the globe with international bodies like the United Nations and the World Bank, to establish dense but manageable networks for implementing projects which are relevant to the particular needs of the society. A transnational approach of collective responsibility from the supply, transshipment and the demand side is needed to treat with this complex transnational problem.

Context relevant projects appropriate to the at risk communities are necessary as experiences vary in different areas of the island. Middle class communities in the West may be more prone to the consumption of the expensive cocaine powder while poor and underprivileged communities in East Port of Spain, Central and South Trinidad, may be involved in the trafficking and consumption of marijuana and gang activities.

Effective use of technology should be employed to intercept air and sea drug traffickers. This may necessitate the engagement of scientific researchers to invent and test appropriate devices such as detectors which would facilitate detection of illegal drugs. Advancements in computer and communication technology could also be utilized for the dissemination of information across national, regional and international networks and to encourage victims to seek assistance. Employment of E-Governance can facilitate monitoring and control of borders.

A regional security system specifically for monitoring and control of drug trafficking with heavy penalties for those law enforcement officials who may be tempted to become engaged in corrupt activities involving drugs which they are assigned to monitor should be established. Each country of the region can supply a

portion of their under-utilized military who will be deployed for this purpose. The selected personnel should be rigorously trained in naval, air, police and military tactics for combating and confronting drugs and understanding the interdiction process.

It is important to borrow from the evidence-based toolkit of programs from other regions, such as early childhood development and mentoring programs, interventions to increase retention of high-risk youth in secondary school and address issues of youth and gang violence in the short term.

The criminal justice system, police and prison services and the education system should be reformed to meet changing national, regional and international dynamic.

In conclusion, one notes that no one solution can alleviate the menace of the multi-faceted and complex drug crisis in Trinidad and Tobago.

If drugs precipitate crime then an alleviation of the drug problem should reflect a dramatic reduction in crime. The implications of the threat should not be underestimated as noted by the West Indian Commission which sounded the alarm bells almost two decades ago:

Nothing poses greater threats to civil society in CARICOM countries than the drug problem and nothing exemplifies the powerlessness of regional governments more. That is the magnitude of the damage that drug abuse and trafficking hold for our Community. It is a many-layered danger. At base is the human destruction in drug addiction; but, implicit also, is corruption of individuals and systems by the sheer enormity of the inducements of the illegal drug trade in relatively poor societies. On top of all this lie the implications for governance itself—at the hands of both external agencies engaged in international interdiction, and drug barons themselves—the “dons” of the modern Caribbean— who threaten governance from within (West Indian Commission, 1992).

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# SOME DYNAMICS OF GANG BEHAVIOUR

*Selwyn Ryan*

*"I do not worry about the penitentiary anymore. I worry about the cemetery."*

Warrior groups and feuds that go back to the mists of time have almost always been a feature of traditional society. They are aspects of the rites of passage. Whether they raided, killed or did both depended on time, place, social structure, material base, proximity to commodity markets, the nature of those markets, and much else. Modern gangs are inspired by some of the same considerations, but there are differences. When asked why they kill seemingly without remorse or compunction, modern gang members have offered explanations that range from the seemingly casual—for fun, to avoid boredom and hopelessness – to the most fundamental – to do “work” on behalf of their buddies or age cohorts. Much of the literature on gangs and adolescent violence generally has been produced in the United States and the United Kingdom where the gang phenomenon has become ubiquitous. The urban inner city gang is rapidly becoming a global problem and studies of them are beginning to appear in other jurisdictions, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. This chapter briefly reviews some of this literature.

Broadly speaking, however gangs kill in order to secure food, livestock, valuable substances, women, for self-defense and mutual protection, revenge, spite, reputation, esteem, and respect for themselves and their families, or to indicate who is the “baddist,” or the most macho or monstrous. Some kill persons who merely cross their border, wear the wrong colour or type of clothing, or because they just feel “crazy.” Others do because of greed, rage, profit, to demonstrate loyalty to a leader or a group, or to prevent persons from snitching

or incriminating them in a court. Other motivators are feelings of empowerment, the quest for notoriety, sexual frustration, relative deprivation, or extreme poverty.

Most analysts have focused on the dysfunctional aspects of gangs. Some criminologists and sociologists however recognize that gangs are not simply criminal enterprises, but that they in fact perform vital functions that are no longer being undertaken by parents, the extended family, neighbourhood mentors, the church, and other groups in civil society. Gangs and the “dons” who lead them are often functional equivalents to the social capital producing agencies that once existed in traditional and rural village societies. The groups meet the needs of members who fall victims of the law or the mainstream economy.

The American sociologist, Robert Putnam, (2000) observed that high crime rates are a by-product of high social capital deficits. “Higher levels of social capital, all else being equal, translate into lower levels of crime. States with more social capital have proportionally few murders”. Putnam, drawing on the work of criminologists, argues that the quantum of social capital stocks are better indicator of the incidence of criminal activity and homicides than levels of education, single parent households, income, income inequality.

Given the absence of the formal and informal relationships that are associated with social capital- positive adult role models, community organizations, vibrant churches, adult friendship and kin networks, youths react

by creating their own social capital in the form of street and neighbourhood gangs which demand and extract loyalty. These sodalities serve as functional substitutes for the missing networks. As Putnam generalizes, "young people rob and steal not only because they are poor, but also because adult networks and institutions have broken down. Those institutions once served as vaccines that reduced the number of contagious kids capable of infecting others".

Putnam notes that many inner city gangs not only serve as poles of loyalty and sources of wealth for their members and their relatives, but also provide welfare for the poor and indigent. In doing so, they seek to recreate the sense of community and trust which had been destroyed by what has Francis Fukuyama called *The Great Transformation* (1995). The same phenomenon has been observed in the heavily armed so called "garrison" communities of Jamaica where "dons" operate as "community leaders" who dispense "justice," jobs and welfare to those in need as did the mythical Robin Hoods of yore. They are "shadow states" capturing spaces not filled by the official institutions.

Of interest is the claim made by Putnam that the decrease in crime seen in several American cities in the nineties was a by-product of experiments seeking to augment or utilize existing stocks of social capital. The community police movement was in fact a kind of "applied social capitalism" which sought to fight crime by building working partnerships between law enforcement officials and community residents. Of interest as well is his observation that while social capital is important for all types of communities, it is more important for those which are poor, because the poor have little of the other kinds of capital – financial and human. Social capital is however easier to destroy than to build or rebuild once destroyed, and reconstruction is often harder to achieve in communities which need it more.

While many see gangs as warts or scars on the social landscape, they are also functional equivalents to institutions that were once the bedrock of traditional societies. Many

youngsters grow up not knowing anything else and derive their identity from memberships in the gang. The gang replaces the school and the teacher, the church, and the family.

It has often been said that for all their bravado and machismo, killing is a cover for the deep fears and insecurities from which many gang men suffer. Death, an abusive policeman, or a prison cell is never far off. There is also great deal of fatalism and meaninglessness about life and death in the ghetto. As one put it, "there is a crazy world out there, and we are living and dying in it. If you die, you die. Most gang bangers don't have nothing [anything] to live for no[any] more, anyway. That's why some of them be gangbanging. I am talking for a lot of bangers. People don't have nothing to live for. You see enough dying, then you ready to die yourself, just so you don't have to see no more death. (Bing, 44) Many feel that they can kill and die anytime. You "do or die." One becomes fearless. As Elijah Anderson observes:

The code of the streets is actually a cultural adaptation to a profound lack of faith in the police and the judicial system....this fearlessness has implications for law enforcement. Many street-oriented boys are much more concerned about the threat of "justice" at the hands of a peer than at the hands of the police. Moreover, many feel that they have little to lose by going to prison, but they have something to gain. The toughening up one experiences in prison can actually enhance one's reputation on the streets. Hence the system loses influence over the hard core who are without jobs, with little perceptible stake in the system. If mainstream society has done little for them, they counter by making sure it can do nothing to them (1994)

Killing also makes some gangmen feel taller, and more empowered."If you have heart to kill somebody, then like you got the heart to destroy. Make you tall, kind a pumps you up". (49) Some are however scared to die, especially when they are alone. They however fake bravado. They claim that dying violently is better than a humiliating death. Death is an antidote to humiliation.

Concern about being publicly "dissed" and humiliated is also a strong motivator for killing or

suicide. Some gangmen say they prefer to “ride the hearse” and get a “nice funeral” rather than be humiliated. As one put it, “I don’t worry so much about the penitentiary [any] more. I worry about the cemetery”. Any “enemy nigga” who humiliated an individual or the community as a whole must pay a price in excess of the damage they caused. “They deserve what they get. It is not enough to demand an “eye for an eye.” “One up” is what it is in gang life. A shoot for a stab. Escalation is the name of the game. One to nothing In the process, the ghetto becomes a veritable killing field. The death of one person may spiral, multiply and cause the “death” of over a hundred. It becomes an epidemic, a feud.

Studies of gangs have shown that there exists a code which says that one must be prepared to die for one’s “homies”, if necessary. There in fact exists an “obligation to die, if necessary. “Work” is equivalent to performing this “duty”. One’s standing in the community goes up if one shows oneself not to be a “buster” (coward) and acts out his masculinity. As one put it, “you got to be ready to do anything if somebody dis’ your hood. If you don’t, you a “buster.” If you scared, forget it. (Bing, 24).

The gang also provides a substitute for those institutions which suppress the aggressive sexual tendencies that young boys have without any legitimate way of getting rid of them. “The gang offers everything those legitimate organizations do.” Some even say that their organisation is not merely a gang, but a community organization that meets the security and other needs of its members from whom it demands loyalty and mutuality in return. Life in the ghetto is “poor, nasty, brutish and short,” to use Thomas Hobbes’ classic phrase with which he described life in violence prone 17<sup>th</sup> England. One therefore needs to have one’s back watched. That is why “snitching” (leaking information to the police) is considered such a grave offence for which the penalty is high. The gang not only kills its enemies, but those of its own who are seen as a potential “snitcher.”

As we have noted above, the gang also serves the individual’s basic emotional needs. “You feel

wanted. You feel welcome. You feel love, you feel important. And there is discipline and there are rules”. Everybody is all together as one. (Bing 49) many insist that their organization is not a mere “gang.” “It is a community organization looking after the needs of its members.” Leaving it is however not easy. One could fall between two stools. As one explained, “if you leave the gang too suddenly, the “niggars” will come after you and kill you. If you stay in the gang, the police would come after you and throw you in jail for thirty days. But such is life in the gang” (Venkatesh, 2008)

Persons who consciously choose to join a gang are usually persons who have had a challenging upbringing. As Bing observes:

The very fact that a kid is in a gang means that something is missing. So many of them are functioning illiterates. So many of them come from abusing backgrounds. The hardest cases were probably sexually molested or they were routinely beaten – probably both. Depends on what kind of father influence was around the house, if any. If you find a gang member who comes from a complete nuclear family, a kid who has never been exposed to any kind of abuse, I’d like to meet him.” (Bing)

There is a clear and unequivocal relationship between the collapse of the Afro-American-family and the increase in gang membership and prison occupancy. The numbers speak for themselves. Available data indicate that the nuclear family is disappearing from the “ghetto” and that a high percentage of black underclass households are headed by females. One observer has noted that many Afro-American youngsters grow up never having attended a wedding. Fathers are often absent from the home A majority are either dead, in prison or in some psychiatric institution or the justice system Some 30 to 75 per cent of black males in the USA are either in prison or in some stage of the justice system. Many young blacks are more likely to end up in prison instead of graduating from high school (Miller) Jim Crow and the plantation still live.

Many youngsters grow up in homes in which there are no positive constructive male

models. Many grow up being hostile to their “phantom” or “rented fathers” for having abandoned, humiliated and pauperised them, their mamas, and their siblings. As one complained, “these days, your father is your mother’s latest boyfriend. And usually, your mother is switching boyfriends every other month. Some youngsters even want to kill or maim their father for abandoning or for leaving them to provide for themselves, their siblings and their mamas, They often have to witness their mothers or sisters having serial sexual relationships in order to earn the wherewithal to live and to survive. It is well known that mothers “farm out” their daughters to men who provide money in return. Sex is a valuable commodity or currency.

The school is also a weak link in the socialization train. Many young blacks claim that school is a waste of time and does not help them to survive economically or earn the where withal for their family to live. School is not “cool.” One has to learn to hustle early. One is either a predator or a survivor. As one explains, “what would I look like going to school every day, knowing that my daddy is smoked out, or knowing that my little brother is at home?” “What[would] I look like going to school and they not really even teaching me nothin?” “The irony is that the things they do to survive almost inevitably leads to their imprisonment or death and the circle continues. Life is a trap with no escape routes.”( Bing)

One key problem is that most teachers are not able to teach anything since they are either unable to discipline the child or may themselves be on one substance or another. Many teachers do not care much about their charges. Many little black boys have thus been merely warehoused, dumped, imprisoned, or suspended from school for one reason or another. “When they come out of prison, they are at the same educational level as when they entered prison. They may however come out with a death certificate.” (Cosby, 193)

Social psychologists and psychiatrists have much to say about the relationship between adolescent delinquent behavior and

psychiatric disorder. Basically, that literature suggests that many prisoners are in fact psychologically disordered. (UWI Today, June 24<sup>th</sup> 2012). Hutchinson also called attention to the relationship between incarcerated young males and their fathers who were also incarcerated, child and wife abuse, criminality, and the rate of underachievement in our schools.

David Bratt, citing research recently done in the UK, also tells us about the relationship between dyslexia and delinquent adolescent behaviour:

There is a relationship between criminality and learning disabilities in primary school which leads to school problems which lead to school failure followed in a number of cases by delinquent adolescent behaviour which predisposes to criminal behaviour, ending up either in prison. The UK Prison Reform Trust has just last month published its first research findings on the frequency of various types of learning disabilities and mental disorders among men and women imprisoned in the UK. The results make fascinating reading:

Seven percent of prisoners have an IQ of less than 70 and a further 25 percent have an IQ between 70 and 79”. That means seven out of every 100 prisoners are officially classified as mentally retarded and 25 of every 100 have a moderate intellectual deficiency and would have needed special educational services in school.

Twenty to thirty percent of offenders have learning disabilities that interfere with their ability to cope with the criminal justice system. The term learning disabilities or difficulties includes people who experience difficulties in communicating and expressing themselves and understanding ordinary social clues; have unseen or hidden disabilities such as dyslexia or are on the autistic spectrum”. If you add those with intellectual problems to those with learning disabilities, half of the men in prison have problems learning. Prisoners with learning disabilities are unable to access prison information routinely; over two-thirds have problems reading prison information.

Prisoners with learning disabilities are discriminated against personally, systematically and routinely as they enter and travel through the criminal justice system; are five times as



likely as prisoners without such impairments to have been subjected to control and restraint techniques *and more than three times as likely to have spent time in segregation.*

The situation with young offenders (ages 15 to 18) is just as bad: 40 percent of them are rated as underachieving at school and 25 percent have special educational needs. The majority of people entering prison have never been evaluated for learning disabilities. Once in prison there is no routine or systematic procedures for identifying them. Consequently their particular needs are rarely recognized or met. No wonder prisoners with learning disabilities are “more than three times as likely as prisoners without such impairments to have clinically significant depression and anxiety. Nearly half, 47 percent, suffer from a major depressive disorder”.

But that’s not all. At any one time, “ten percent of the prison population has serious mental health problems. Seven percent of male and 14 percent of female prisoners have a psychotic disorder (schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. This is 14 and 23 times the level in the general population. Neurotic and personality disorders are particularly prevalent.

*“Forty percent of male and 63 percent of female prisoners have a neurotic disorder, over three times the level in the general population. Sixty-two percent of male and 57 percent of females have a personality disorder”. (Trinidad Guardian, July 12, 2012).*

Bratt argues that prison has become “the default setting for those with a wide range of mental and personality disorders.” He also recommends that we take a good hard look at what we are doing to our socially disadvantaged children in the public schools. “The very real possibility exist that we are not dealing appropriately with a range of biologically induced illnesses and in the process creating monsters”.

Other research findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between family dynamics and rates of incarceration. The absence of the father from the home invariably affects the

behavior of the child in ways that are invariably (though not always) negative. Research shows that while innate factors play a role in inter-general transmission of behaviours, poor parental strategies, including separation from the home may also have serious negative psychiatric consequences for adolescents. Murray’s research indicates that “separation due to parental imprisonment was the best predictor of later delinquent behaviour among young males even to adulthood.” (Murray, J. et al 2005) In sum, family dynamics plays a crucial role in the generation of various anxiety and conduct disorders.

Murray’s work was replicated in an experiment at the Golden Grove prison in Trinidad and Tobago. The finding confirms that familial environmental factors eg. community of origin, socio-economic status, parental educational attainment and previous parental incarceration conduces to criminal activity among young males and helps to explain why some of them behave as they do and why so many of them are in our prisons. (Wolsey 2009: 44)

The late Jamaican Professor, Carl Stone, in an essay entitled the “anatomy of aggression,” also identified some of the tap roots of violent behaviour in Jamaica. What we have in Jamaica, according to Stone, is a “crisis of authority” caused by a clash between upwardly mobile blacks and the traditional white and light skinned elite. The former is seeking to gain full legitimacy or acceptance of their authority by the more disadvantaged black majority. That particular dynamic may not be relevant in Trinidad and Tobago where different demographics obtain, but a crisis of authority nevertheless obtains. What we have is a clash between two cultures, a clash between that of genteel middle class society and that of ghetto youth which is seeking instant wealth, rank, and status derived from the barrel of a gun. And it appears that they are prepared to risk death to secure that to which aspire. In this respect, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago are not remarkably different. As Stone observes:

But why are we so aggressive and violent? In this society, most people have become hypersensitive about status and recognition in a culture in which most black people are treated as if they have no self-worth. Aggression has become a standard tool or weapon to assert one's manhood and put down slights, insults and ego threatening behaviour, real or imagined. We live in a highly status-sensitive society and it does not take much to trigger aggressive behaviour as we are easily wounded into believing that some trivial act or comment is attacking our

self-worth and assaulting our ego. Some of the incidents that trigger violence in the ghetto are frighteningly trivial: casual remarks about women or clothes: an accidental stepping on someone's foot: approaching the Don's lady for a dance, accidentally spilling beer on someone: not showing enough respect and deference to bad men. All of these trivial circumstances are the stuff out of which dances are shot up, families are massacred with M-16 assault rifles, youth are shot and put in garbage bags and houses are invaded and burnt down.

# GANGS IN CONTEMPORARY TRINIDAD

*Selwyn Ryan*

As we have indicated, gangs or gang like groupings have always been part of the post emancipation landscape. Many operated under the watchful gaze of the police. They became more ubiquitous and threatening in the last two decades of the twentieth century and calls for action against them became shriller. This continues to be so, especially since the current weapon of choice is not the stick ("bois,"), the baton, the "bootoo, the bottle," the knife or the razor, but the gun. In 2001, 54 of the murders which took place in Laventille were said to be gang related. By 2009, there were as many as 509 murders, 161 of which were said to be gang related. In a survey done by ISER in 1995, (Ryan) only 14 percent of those interviewed were aware of gangs. By the year 2000, their number had increased by 74 percent. By 2011, the number of gangs had exploded even more. In November, 2011 there were said to be between 90 to 100 gangs, each having 6 to 50 members. The average size for each gang was 12 persons. The majority were in Port of Spain and the East West Corridor. The conflict between these small gangs and the larger and more dynamic Muslim based "gang", the Jamaat al Muslimeen, (see below) gave a peculiar characteristic to gang life in the 1990's.

What was responsible for this explosive growth of gang membership? Were young men doing so for money, fellowship or just because they had nothing better to do? Figures provided by Katz and Fox in the Trinidad Youth Survey (undertaken in secondary schools in 2006-2007) indicate that some 80 percent of those who joined a gang did so without perceived coercion. They were either just "born" into the gang or joined as

a matter of course. Other reasons for becoming a member were "beaten up" (6.7 percent) to commit a crime (5.9 percent), "get sexed" (5.5 percent) to kill a rival or someone (5.5 percent) or some other (17.7 percent).

Katz et al also found that not all gangs have formal structures. Only 64 percent had a name, 62 percent a turf, 42.6 percent had colours or insignia, 49 percent had a leader, 48.9 percent had a leader), 48 percent had rules, and prescribed punishments for breaking rules 34.1 percent. Gangs seem to have been formed less for criminal activity than for friendship. Forty four (44.) per cent joined for friendship, 22.2 percent for protection, and 7.1 percent because their parents or siblings were in it. Only 12.7 percent said they joined to make money. In terms of activities undertaken for financial gain, it would seem that many were not involved in money earning activities. Of those who did, 37 percent gave money to the gang, 31 percent earned money from drug sales, 10 percent from kidnapping and 30 percent from other crimes.

Gang membership however clearly leads to delinquent behaviour and criminality. Gang membership or association is positively correlated with marijuana use (32.6 percent) and heavy alcohol use (89 percent). About 38 percent reported suspension from school in the past 12 months, while about 17 percent said drugs, 11 percent stole a vehicle, and 27 percent a gun. Fifty-nine (59 percent) reported attacking someone with intent to harm them, while twenty-three (23 percent) reported that they had taken a gun to school. There were clearly significant differences between students who

were members of gangs and those who were not or had left the gang. Twenty-nine (29 percent) of gang members had been arrested compared to 3.6 percent who had been. One must recall here that the respondents in the survey were secondary school students. The survey would thus have been cause for concern.

The events of 1990 which represented the attempt on the part of the Jamaat al Muslimeen to capture the state of Trinidad and Tobago, and what followed thereafter in terms of the expansion of activity of that group have been blamed by many for the rapid growth of gang activity. The state of the economy, and the dramatic loss of jobs, and the attendant increase of poverty have also been blamed. We will explore this possibility later. The Attorney General speculated that some young boys were joining gangs in response to the bullying that was taking place in the schools and open spaces, and the need by the weak, or the cowardly for protection from their more dominant and aggressive classmates. We will look more closely at the role played by the schools in this expansion of gang membership. The data indicates that the growth in gang membership is closely linked to the growth of the drug trade, and the policy employed by the gang leaders of recruiting black youths as their sales force in the drug industry. Gang leaders also considered it expedient to recruit youths between 16 and 18 years or less as couriers since doing so enabled them to use those who were not legally classified as adults as allies to commit certain kinds of high risk crimes which would otherwise lead to severe punishment by the law. "So that what is a heinous crime committed by a criminal gang with a serious conspiracy as a criminal enterprise, is watered down in terms of sentencing, so that they in fact escape the effect of justice" (ibid.) They were invariably sentenced to serve non custodial time at the St Michael Boys Industrial School and the Youth Training Centre (YTC) which are discussed in another section.

Young boys joined gangs for many reasons. The above data however indicates that most

youngsters joined for benign reasons, viz, there was no pressure or threat involved in their affiliation. These were however young boys who joined a gang because of pressure to be in sync with what their peers were doing such as acquiring a tattoo or a stripe or a reputation. As one old timer from Laventille observed, "this gang thing is more like a style the youths joining. People copy it from America, and everybody wants to be in fashion. It's an ego thing". (*Trinidad Guardian*, August 30, 2011). Others joined because they believed that doing so would enhance their chances of getting on the fraudulent employment lists which were controlled by the gang leaders. The "ghost gangs," were employees who existed in name only or who borrowed the name of celebrities such as "Serena Williams," to cite one particular case. Some calculated that the only way in which they could earn quick money and get rich, such as the dons were doing, was to join a gang. Some claimed that they could earn more money by hustling than by working in the "legit" sector of the economy. Money earned in this sector, which was not a great deal, was sometime used to purchase guns with which they could earn more than they could do on the state funded projects.

Some who joined did so because they valued the reputations, respect, and who believe that they had acquired the power and esteem which they longed and hoped for in order to gain access to women's bodies, whether in the school or in the community. The prizes were flashy clothes, souped up cars, "hot" women, a reputation for meanness, and most important, ownership of one of the many brand name guns that are popular in the ghetto. Some were, however, persuaded to join out of fear of the consequences of not doing so. Some were in fact known to have been killed because they refused to join the gang or indicated that they wished to give up membership. There was always the fear that those who gave up membership might become "snitchers" to the police. Many also joined claim that gangs provided them with the homes and sodalities which they did not get at home or in the mainstream community

It has been claimed that persons who were deported from the US, Canada, and the UK after serving their sentences there were responsible for the significant increase in numbers which occurred in the nineties. The evidence does not however support this view though there many reports of deportees who did have an impact on certain gangs in that they brought with them some of what they had learnt from gangs in the United States or in some other jurisdiction.

Gangs in Trinidad are however not as structurally differentiated as the Maras and some of the other well known groups in Latin America are not homogenous. Most are small, and are located on urban street corners or in low rise housing complexes in which boys “lime” make mischief, or do “foolishness” to overcome boredom. Some are based on generational family links or Caribbean island of origin. The latter is quite important. Some specialize in certain types of hustle, eg grab and run, drug retailing, or salvaging on the garbage dump, an activity which can be economically rewarding. Some recruit older or better educated men and have more serious criminal intent. Some allow women to join.

It is worth noting that although some of the groups make war on each other, they have at times worked with each other under the spiritual intervention of one of the hundreds of NGO.s which exist in the community. One such group was led by Pastor Kelly who claims to have brokered peace treaties between gangs on Nelson and Duncan Streets. These efforts were said to have been rendered futile by the state of emergency which was declared just as the negotiations were being finalized. One expects these and other efforts to be continued. One also assumes that the gangs would remain in existence since they are now fixtures which fulfill a social need. They are organizations based on fear as well for purposes of self defense. If the Peace Making Initiative fail, the guns would be easily recoverable or rentable from the police at short notice.

Small size is not the only characteristic that distinguishes Trinidad gangs from those in Latin

and Central America. (There are no known gangs in Tobago). The latter distinguish themselves by the colours of the clothes and accessories which they wear, the various initiation rites and rituals that are required before one becomes a member, the hand signs, body marks and tattoos which they display, their signals and codes, and the leadership structures which they use, and above all, the type of spaces where they meet. Like all other gangs, they have their hierarchies, patterns of discipline, rules and the terms which they use to denote who stands where in the pecking order. Most of them have a nickname which they use within the group and often not when strangers are present. Last of all, but not least, gang soldiers wear their tank tops and pants and under pants differently and also walk and talk differently. We turn next to an examination of the phenomenon of the Jamaat Al Muslimeen whose attempt to impose order and hegemony on other groups served to change the nature of politics in Trinidad and Tobago.

### **The Jamaat al Muslimeen: A Hybrid Gang**

The biggest, “baddest”, most powerful, most controversial and most multifaced gang in Trinidad and Tobago has been the Jamaat al Muslimeen (JAM). The gang is led by Imam Yassin Abu Bakr. Bakr however insists that the Jamaat is not a typical gang but an organization which is a part of a one billion member global religious grouping which owes allegiance to Almighty Allah. The Jamaat however has all the characteristics of a gang and a lot more. Few gangs have attempted to capture the state directly as did the JAM in 1990. Bakr and others in the leadership group claim that this effort was preemptive. They believed that the state was determined to destroy their mosque and other buildings at its base camp at Mucurapo in West Port of Spain (Ryan, 1991). We single it out for analysis because its activities were not only unique in Trinidad and Tobago’s gangland, but also because we cannot make sense of what took place in 1990 and thereafter without understanding the JAM, its leadership style, its relationship with the politicians of the day, and the appeal which it had to hundreds of young

men looking both for a new religious experience, as well as a way to make quick money by selling drugs and protection services.

There are two characterisations of the Jamaat al Muslimeen. The first is that of an organization which catered to the underclass in general and to young blacks in particular, some of whom had previously been involved in the Black Power uprising of 1970. (Ryan and Stewart, 1995) The other view is that it is a violent terrorist gang operating within a religious integument, and led by a charming, clever, and smooth talking con-man. The first narrative projects the Imam as a charismatic benevolent leader who claimed that his mission was to rescue little black boys from the drug heaps and drug dens of South East Port of Spain.

In its attempts to fulfill this self appointed task, there were many confrontations between the JAM and drug traffickers during which a great deal of crack and pure cocaine was seized by the Muslimeen and allegedly dumped and destroyed. In testimony to the Commission of Inquiry which was appointed in 2011 to investigate the attempted coup which took place in July 1990, one of the JAM leaders claimed that the drug dealers were assisted by the Police in these confrontations. He told the Commission that "the Jamaat was singled out for harassment because the organization stood up in defense of the poor, the oppressed, and those on the street. The Jamaat also interfered with the trade of the drug pushers and sought to stop kickbacks to police officers and politicians. "That was when the trouble started. The Jamaat would try to persuade drug dealers to get out of the trade, and if they didn't listen, the JAM would t flog them into submission with baseball bats. Every time the Jamaat tried to touch a big (drug) dealer, the Mucurapo compound would be raided by the police". (*Trinidad Express*, Wednesday 2 November, 2011).

Bakr's many enemies did not regard him as a benevolent leader but as a chameleon – today a bandit, tomorrow a charismatic leader. It was said of him by his detractors, some of whom were once members of the JAM, that he enabled

men to rob and steal, and that he took at least one-third of the booty that was acquired. With this income, he bought houses and cars for his four wives. It was also alleged that much of the drugs that were seized in the drug eradication campaign was in fact recycled, an allegation that Bakr always denied strenuously.

Lennox Smith of the Morvant Laventille Improvement Association (MLIO) attributes the increase of criminal activity in the nineties in Trinidad to the Muslimeen whom he said targeted those who had a tendency to act involved in criminal activity. They sought out the Jamaat to satisfy their material and other needs, and the Jamaat welcomed them. (*Newsday*, December 15, 2011) Bakr was accused of condoning and encouraging thuggery (*Trinidad Mirror*, May 30, 2003). It was also alleged that Bakr franchised several kidnappings and got a share of the ransom in return for his intermediation. He was likewise accused of "snitching" to the Police whenever it suited his purpose.

Bakr denied these allegations and even claimed, improbably, that he himself has never carried a weapon. He however legitimized its use He in fact urged his men that they had a right to bear arms: "Anyman who does not have a gun is a slave." He was however openly critical of youths "who took "Shahadah" (obedience to Islam), and then put on a Taj (Muslim head cap), and then went into the streets committing criminal acts, (eg forcing people to pay protection money or "coward taxes" which he said he did not condone. Bakr publicly promised to clean up the "haven for badboys" image which the mosque at Mucurapo had acquired and noted that "every now and then, he had to do a little house cleaning. Otherwise things would go haywire" (*Mirror*, June 8, 2003)

Bakr boasted that in 1989, the year before the attempted coup, membership climbed to 12,000. Many were attracted by the anti-drug campaign. "They liked the idea of going down on the cocaine bloc with a posse and showing some muscle. The war against drugs was so fierce. The youths were licking up everybody. Either you in or you out. So some people said,

"OK, OK." I am in." But what some "pretend muslims" really wanted was to get their hands on the cocaine or squeeze out the competition." (*Trinidad Express*, January 18, 1995). In his view, the anti-drug campaign was only 60-70 percent successful. "They put "heavy manners" on the gangs in South Caledonia in 1994 and persuaded them to sign a peace treaty (*Trinidad Express*, January 18, 1995). The Jamaat eventually gave up the campaign because some key members argued that it was imposing serious strain on their organizational resources. It was said to be costing them too much.

Bakr claimed that he was very concerned with the economic plight of dispossessed black Muslim youth and planned to do something very radical about it. While addressing his flock in a sermon delivered on November 4th, 2009, he declared that he was going to force all well to do Muslims to pay *Zakat*, the "tax" on personal wealth which the Quran enjoins all Muslims to pay to support those who are in need and unable to sustain themselves. Bakr told his 300 worshipers that the payment of *Zakat* was one of the pillars of Islam and warned that from next year, "everybody paying". He recognized that this initiative will lead to a "big war, a real war, and that "Lives may be lost. "He was however determined to take this stem.

Bakr however conceded that poverty eradication among Muslims was not the state's responsibility. That responsibility belongs to the Muslim community. "Zakat is for the eradication of poverty [and] there were too many unemployed Muslims. It is a burning problem in the Muslim community. Muslims are oppressed. Everyone must [thus] pay. Those who cannot afford to pay would have to indicate why they should be exempted." Bakr went further and talked about the need for an aggressive programme to have those who were weak and oppressed "take back" wealth from the rich. "If someone takes your sustenance, you go and take it back". Muslims were however not expected to be continuously dependant on hand outs or to steal. They should instead get into business and trade.

One is not clear as to why Bakr decided to make *Zakat* compulsory. Was he genuinely looking for a source of funds to help fellow Muslims, or was it a case of extortion? The Muslim community was enraged and so was the state which charged Bakr with sedition and of planning to commit a terrorist act. At time of writing, the matter is still before the courts.]

But it would not be true to say that Bakr was only concerned with Muslims. He saw himself as a man with a mission to rescue the dregs of the old world and recruit them for Islam. The JAM was also a social movement, one which differed in many respects from the other conventional movements which have emerged in other parts of the Caribbean and the Guyanas. Bakr's movement attracted the poor, the young and the old, and those in need as did other conventional parties. It also attracted social outcasts and misfits, criminals, drug pushers, addicts and adolescent youth who felt unloved by their families. It was likewise a magnet for many deracinated and lumpen elements from the urban centres who felt discarded, marginalized and rejected by the society at large and who "throbbed with the ferment of frustration". At #1 Mucurapo Road, they found a movement which was characterized by a sense of discipline and purposefulness which they did not find in the traditional religious communities or in other conventional organizations. The movement's stress on self-help, involvement in commercial activity, abstention and postponement of gratification, also proved attractive to persons previously hooked on drugs or the sneaker and acid jeans culture. (Ryan, 1991)

Bakr's recruits were however not all social dregs. In his movement were also to be found drop outs from Christianity which they claimed was too "white", creative people, unemployed university graduates who were bored with bourgeois life and who felt that the society did not recognize their talents or share their Africentric visions of the good society. Unable to find gratification within the system, they set about seeking to destroy it. What Eric Hoffer had to say about the potential for mobilization

of these various types of individuals is true of those who found Bakr's movement attractive. Speaking of those who were creative but alienated, Hoffer had the following to say:

The most incurably frustrated and therefore the most vehement...., are those with are unfulfilled craving for creative work. By dedicating all their powers to the service of an eternal cause, they are at last lifted off the endless treadmill which can never lead them to fulfillment. [But] even the wholehearted dedication to a holy cause does not always cure them. Their unappeased hunger persists, and they are likely to become the most violent extremists in the service of their holy cause (*True Believer*, 1951: 114).

Hoffer's remarks about the relationship between criminals and mass movements are relevant to Bakr's community of Muslims. He observes that leaders of religious social movements have a "tender spot" for the criminal whom they avidly seek to recruit from the "cesspools of skid row", offering them "the priceless chance of salvation". "They use the slime of frustrated souls as mortar in the building of a new world. The criminal too is attracted to such movements. Mass movements are custom made to fit the needs of the criminal - not only for the catharsis of soul, but also for the exercise of his inclinations and talents... An effective mass movement cultivates the idea of sin.... To confess and repent is to slough off one's individual distinctiveness and separateness, and salvation is found by losing oneself in holy oneness of the congregation."

We note Eric Hoffer's interesting point that crime could in certain ways function as a substitute for a mass movement, whether patriotic, religious, or revolutionary. In Bakr's mind, he was all three. To many of the orthodox, whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or atheist, he was a terrorist, pure and simple. To many young blacks, he was a "true believer" of the Muslim brand.

Bakr claimed that the peace that he helped to broker among the dons was undone by the Peoples National Movement(PNM). As he

complained, "the PNM won the elections in 2002, and as soon as the election was finished, they discarded us. Since then, they've called in people to help who have admitted that they had no experience in solving crime. If you are going to tackle an important thing like this outrage[that] is taking place in the society, you have to have a basic knowledge of the society to produce the desired results" (*Sunday Express*, December 14, 2003).

### **The Jamaat and the Political Parties**

Laventille was once a sleepy quiet community controlled by the PNM. Political rivalries destroyed that peace in the 1980's. The problem began to fester when the three main political parties, the National Alliance for Reconstruction, the United National Congress and the Peoples National Movement. In each case, the JAM provided muscle and voting fodder in return for access to state resources. In the case of the NAR, the JAM protected the NAR's foot soldiers and made it possible for the party to enter certain inner city constituencies during the election campaign of 1986. In return, the JAM expected to get the parcel of land which in was claiming from the Port of Spain City Council and which was in dispute since the seventies. It also hoped to gain access to the Unemployment Relief Programme. In this it was not successful. The same applied to its relationships with the United National Congress. The JAM campaigned on behalf of the UNC in 1995 those constituencies which were considered winnable either by the PNM or the UNC. The JAM has claimed that whichever party it supports wins the national election and that it had delivered the 1995 and the 2002 election to the UNC. Following the 1995 election, the UNC and the JAM met at a highly publicized meeting with the Prime Minister and other ministers (Ryan, 2003).

The JAM/UNC entente did not last very long. The UNC could not give it the disputed land at Mucurapo or state assistance for its secondary school without alienating powerful interests in the society. Indeed, in 2001, Panday declared war on the JAM which he accused of being involved in "crime and terror". He went



so far as to indicate that he believed that the URP was run by a "Mafia" and that he would try to persuade the army to run it. (*Sunday Guardian*, April 6th 1997) The UNC's Minister of National Security also told the country that the Government would have to "deal with the JAM for where they are, and what we know they have always been, and what on all evidence, they will continue to be, i.e, anarchists and terrorists. (*Sunday Express*, November 2, 2003).

Following the return to power of the PNM in 2002, the JAM leadership again became politically close to that party which it claimed it had helped to return to power. The relationship between Prime Minister Manning and Bakr and his entourage became one of mutual dependence. The JAM helped with the pacification of the gangs in East Port of Spain, and the delivery of votes and political muscle in marginal constituencies in return for which Bakr and his lieutenants secured control of the URP. Indeed, the drug war in Port of Spain was one by-product of the political war between the PNM and the UNC. It was the UNC's thrust for power which ignited the war.

Prime Minister Manning referred to the Jamaat and other dons as "community leaders", and as a "reward," all but ceded control of the Unemployment Relief Programme which was said to be worth more than more than TT\$400m annually to the JAM. Manning's aim and hope was to impose a "Pax Laventille on gangland using the Jamaat as the enforcer." As he declared on the eve of the 2002 election, "the time had come to put an end to an issue which was a source of unnecessary anxiety to sections of the national community. The land grant was intended to end a long source of confrontation and unease between the Muslimeen and the state. Already, the controversy over the land has led to a breach in the democracy, and we want to bring some calm to the situation". The PNM's claim was that the JAM had been "exonerated" by the courts and that this should be recognized by the general community. (*Express*, Sept. 21, 2002). 100 persons were said to have died while engaged in URP fights.

During his winding up of the 2004 Budget, Prime Minister Manning explained further what were his calculations in respect of the Jamaat. In his view, there was nothing wrong in having a Prime Minister talk to a "community leader" who comes from another social background. Panday did the same thing when he spoke openly to Bakr in his Prime Ministerial Office or when he chose Bill Francis to be a candidate to contest local government elections. What he was doing was employing a particular innovative approach. He believed that the only persons who could broker a truce and get it to hold were the dons themselves who had a vested interest in peace. As Manning opined:

What is the PNM approach? The PNM is saying that there are persons in this society who are not always living on the right side of the law, and there are many options available to governments in treating with situations of this nature. We felt that the time had come to take an approach that converts these persons, and move them away from a life of criminal activity, showing them an alternative to which they could subscribe and which could guaranty for them not just the economic life to which they aspire for themselves and children, but one that can lead to the social acceptability to which they all aspire. That was the approach ...The Opposition see everything in terms of race."

It was a strategy that was typically Manning who was given to divinely inspired public policy making (*Hansard*, October 15 2003). The "cease fire" strategy, which used Bob Marley as the iconic instrument, had been attempted in Jamaica, but did not work.

One aspect of the Jamaat matter that caused controversy was Bakr's claim that he had brokered a peace in the ghetto designed to bring to an end to the spate of kidnappings that was causing grave concern to the country generally, and to Indians, Europeans, and Syrians and other minority elements, in particular. The latter groups felt that they were the chosen targets for kidnappings because they were rich business persons whom it was assumed would

be able to meet ransom demands. Bakr boasted that he had brought together rival gangs and community leaders who had agreed, *inter alia*, to stop the spate of kidnappings and other types of criminal activity. He admitted that he had mediated certain deals and had coerced certain elements, some of whom were either caned or expelled from his mosque. When asked how he got people to cooperate, he replied that it was well known that he offered "a certain level of protection." When asked whether guns were what were used to get people to cooperate, he wondered aloud whether guns were the only "persuaders."

The PNM Minister of National Security however denied that the abrupt cessation of the kidnappings was the by-product of a "land for peace" deal with Bakr, and ascribed the halt to the work of the Anti Kidnapping Squad and not to any deal that Bakr had negotiated. The police also dismissed Bakr's claim that he had engineered a gangland truce. Their view was that the pre-election lull in activities was due to increased police patrols and hard police work. Their prediction that "there never will be any truce between these gangs" would prove to be very accurate.

The Prime Minister endorsed the claim made by Bakr that he had negotiated a "land for peace" arrangement that would reduce crime in certain communities, though he insisted that the agreement was a "private" one, and not one between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Muslimeen. The Prime Minister however acknowledged that he had seen the agreement and welcomed it." (*Express*, September 21, 2002). The Jamaat would later swear to an affidavit that such a deal was in fact made, and that the deal also involved an agreement that the state would not seek to enforce payment of the debt arising out of its claim against the JAM for the damage which was done to state owned property during the attempted coup in 1990. The DPP, however,

advised that the matter should not be pursued in the Courts since there was insufficient evidence to proceed with a criminal charge against Mr Manning who was charged with an offence which violated the Prevention of Corruption Act (See *Newsday* March 27 2011).

Manning's plan to use the URP as a seducer and a pacifier did not work. Indeed, gang warfare broke out shortly after the pact was negotiated. One of the major gang leaders, Sean Francis, the so-called "don" of Vegas, Morvant, blamed pro-PNM elements and the Jamaat al Muslimeen for the killing spree that erupted. Francis alleged that a "certain well known religious group" wanted to control the entire East-West Corridor so that when elections were called in October, they could "ring the bell and swing the vote". Francis, himself a former UNC local election candidate, alleged that he was being targeted by the Jamaat because he "took millions of dollars from them" when he was running the URP programme on behalf of the UNC and gave it to the "people". He claims that he cut out 7,000 ghost names from Laventille in 1997. Francis claims that the Jamaat was now in charge of the programme, and that thousands of "ghosts" had returned to the list.

Some "community leaders," a term which Manning borrowed from Jamaica to describe the "dons", were said to be taking home as much as TT\$200,000.00 a month. "Is them who killing one another for greed. Is a turf war going on in town...Who feeding the "hood" control the crime, and these people will make the [PNM] government fall. Crime have a propeller on it now". (*Express*, December 17, 2002) The JAM was pleased with the number of contracts it secured from the PNM, but turf wars and shootouts continued to break out among the franchise holders as gangs struggled for hegemony. The "community leaders" sought to eliminate each other." Murders in fact increased as URP allocations increased, as the following table indicates.

### URP Allocations and Homicides

Year	URP Allocation (m)	Murders
2002	\$100	151
2003	\$125	171
2004	\$313	229
2005	\$322	261
2006	\$290	386
2007	\$300	371
2008	\$381	391
2009	\$442	544
2010	\$441	472

Source: Ministry of Finance

Controversy obtains about who was responsible for the political crisis in Laventille. Both parties blame each other, but Laventille was not a problem when it was controlled by the PNM. The problems began when the UNC and the JAM and its associate NEW Vision Party sought to build a base of their own in the community. (Ryan 1991) Of interest is the view of Anand Ramlogan, the current Attorney General and one time associate of Panday, as Ramlogan remarked in July 2008 after he broke with Panday, “the UNC in its 6 short years in power, destroyed Laventille overnight. This well educated gainfully employed crime free community was transformed into a hell hole. It quickly became a breeding ground for restless young criminals” (Freedom Chambers).

### Community Leaders

Overtime, Trinidad’s “community leaders” came close to resembling those in Jamaica’s “garrison” political constituencies. According to Bill Francis, “a community leader is a person who takes responsibility for the people to heart without thinking about personal gain-broadscope responsibility – that means you find jobs for people, give food to single parent households and send their children to school”. Francis, who was subsequently brutally assassinated, (he was shot 15 times) claimed

that he had such a vision of the ghetto. Mc Donald Padmore, another community leader, agreed. He claims to have employed between 40 and 100 workers each 10-day cycle. He defined himself as a “man of god” and boasted that he had never “shown a youth a gun”. His only real sin was to have been involved with a little ganja a long time ago.

Bakr, the “Muslim Don”, also had a view as to who or what defined a “community leader.” He argued that “community leaders sprang up readily in the ghetto because the people needed each either to survive more so than people in the middle and upper classes. They are forced into groupings. The only people organized in this society are those in the ghetto. There is a leader on every block. Organization occurs at the root of the tree.” Bakr’s point that gangs are to some extent creatures of necessity is well taken.

Bakr saw himself as a Super Don, and was proud of the fact that he had built a school and a medical clinic for his flock, and that he did not have to either beg local businessmen or the government for hand outs to buy books and clothes. Some retorted that he had other ways of earning income, including that which he obtained from Libya and the Middle East. Interestingly, Bakr never denied his ambition to build an empire. As he bragged, “I am a king and I have a palace. Muslims build empires, and I am in the process of building an empire” (*Trinidad Guardian*. March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1998).

The Imam, whom we recall had attempted to seize political power in 1990, did not think that rival dons were genuine community leaders. In his view, they had not done anything to better the lives of the people. He regarded Mark Guerra whom he dubbed the “Laventille Don” as the only “true community leader and the leader of the community leaders”. Manning seemed to have accepted him as such and publicly walked the streets of Laventille with him in one of his pre-election walkabouts. Guerra was a senior member of the JAM and was given top bureaucratic office in the URP. He was deemed an “untouchable.” (*Newsday*, December 15, 2011). Like Francis, he was however brutally

assassinated. In fact, all of most the dons who were party to the truce were assassinated. They had eliminated each other.

The vengeful assassination of Guerra sent shockwaves through the gangland. Some felt that he was aware that his time was near, and that he was full of remorse, and wanted to see a better ghetto. There was however no exit. "Blood in Blood out" as the saying goes. Reports are that he was anticipating death and spent his last day praying to Allah. Francis, who was Bakr's bitter rival, saw the Imam crying over Guerra's casket and remarked that "those tears have meaning," Laventille elder, Mohammed Shabazz, who claimed responsibility for organizing the meetings between the dons and Prime Minister, Manning, argued that "it was time for Bakr to take some of his youths in a different direction. They think that because they're with him, people must fear them – he has to look at that: *"Since the uprising, every government has given credibility [to the Jamaat]. Someone must look at that and see how it has impacted young people"* (Sunday Express, April 20, 2003). Shabazz, was of the view that the politicians had to become more visible in the ghettos since they were the "true community leaders". Bakr shared this view; "if you are the head of the household, the problem child is the child you have to pay the most attention. No more attention needs to be paid to the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Clubs".

Bakr however insists that while his grouping was principally Afro-black, it was not racist. "I am a Muslim and I have an Indian wife. I live by what I preach.... Caroni does not belong to the Indians. "It is the Africans who cut down all the forest, and did all the irrigation and planted all the cane. The Indians came 150 years later when the Africans were striking for better wages.... Laventille did not belong to the Africans alone either.... When they refused to allow Panday into Laventille during the 1995 elections, I told them that Panday is a citizen of this country, and I would personally take him up there" (Mirror, March, 22, 1995). The Jamaat leader was however not beyond using racial rhetoric for his own political purposes. He often referred

to "rich" Indians and Syrians who had all the wealth while the people had none.

This account of the JAM raises a few critical questions that need to be settled. Were the events of 1990 and their aftermath responsible for the proliferation of gangs in Laventille or was the drug economy that was responsible. Did the freeing of the insurgents by the Courts help to persuade the criminal element that they could commit heinous political crimes with impunity? The JAM does not of course believe that it should take the blame for what took place. As Akii Bua, a JAM elder argues, "it is happening all over the world. It is a lazy assessment to say this gun thing is happening because of 1990. It does not stem from 1990". (Newsday, November 1, 2011).

The fact that it is a worldwide phenomenon does not however establish that it did not play a critical in Trinidad and Tobago. The Jamaat, in my view, was clearly responsible for much of what happened in the "Hot Spots" of Port of Spain and elsewhere in the country. As we have seen, however, gangs and gang warfare have always been a part of our urban landscape. What the Jamaat did was to have given rise to new factors, new methods of waging social war and a type of religious militancy which was not hitherto present. The JAM and its leaders seem to have constructed itself as the vanguard of a new shanty state which would function parallel to the mainstream state.

We note that the JAM went so far as to import guns into the country in its attempt to take over the state. This changed the nature of political conflict. Guns had become a legitimate weapon of political and economic destruction. In fairness to the JAM, the group was encouraged by the UNC and the PNM leadership, both of which seem to have surrendered its responsibility for managing the URP and other make work programmes. Both capitulated, seemingly because they believed they needed the electoral resources that the JAM claimed to control in the marginal constituencies of Port of Spain, the East West Corridor and San Fernando, and also to pacify the dons.

The pact over turf, if anything, made the problem worse in that it led to war among those selected to manage conflict in the gang zone. At one point, it was even thought that it was necessary to bring in the army to manage the warring tribes. That was vetoed, presumably by the army and the dons. The inflow of drugs and guns only served to widen and deepen the conflict. The stakes became much higher. The rewards earnable as a result of the drug war was considerably larger than that which

was available in the URP, enough to tempt the dons to kill their rivals to control it or be risk death in order to protect their share. (*Sunday Mirror*, March 29 1998) Interestingly, Both Bakr and Manning believed in divine providence, though they worshipped different gods. As Bakr explained, "God does not allow any anything to happen that he does not want. What we wanted was also what God wanted. God allowed it to happen..." (*Newsday*, March 26, 1998).

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# WAR, DEATH, AND HOPE IN EAST PORT OF SPAIN

*Selwyn Ryan*

A great deal of attention has been given to the factors which nourish and facilitate gang activity in Laventille and Morvant. The job and gang crisis in the Beetham Gardens and Sea Lots however also demand attention since the areas are home” for many young black males and contribute significantly to the crime statistics which concern us. At the time of this study residents of Beetham were insisting amidst smoke from burning tyres that they wanted jobs and community facilities and not hand outs or jail.

Beetham Gardens was previously known as Shanty Town and was reconstructed in various stages by the PNM in the 1960s. The community, or more accurately the various communities, have become a battle zone for rival gangs with exotic street and village names such as Katanga. The communities are varied in terms of geographical space, social class, the islands of the Caribbean from which they come and which inform their behaviour. When “war” breaks out, many families and individuals end up losing their properties and lives as a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Murders provoke revenge and retaliation which leads to sequential grief and pauperisation. Some of the conflicts have feud-like characteristics.

The community has become overrun by drug dealers and prostitutes and persons engaged in criminal activity. As one school principal put it, “that little area is breeding too much violence, too many bandits, too much lawlessness. That is what they do there, that is their life style....Its about the guns, its about the sex, and the drugs” (*Newsday*, March 11,2012.) Another puts it this

way. “Drug pushers walk in any time they want. Pipers steal our stuff... School girls also walk in here to go with these old men for money and the security guards are doing nothing about it” (*Newsday*, 31 11 2012).

The community often becomes and remains under an informal “lock down” during which time the activities and movements of the community are restricted. Citizens are warned not to cross streets or zones. The police limit the protection which they provide to the community. The police in fact at times deem it unsafe for them to operate in the community and “go to sleep” rather than go on patrol. Many services, e.g. payment of state pensions, are withheld or not provided due to the absence of a police presence. Residents complain that the police seem more afraid of the bandits than the bandits are of them. Members of the community are often forced to choose between rival gang lords. Once one gets locked into one section of the community, it is difficult to exit. (*Newsday*, 31 March, 2012, *Express*, 22 March, 2012).

There is only one primary school located in the community. The school was founded by Mr Wayne Patrick Jordan in 1985, a resident who had himself served time at the St Michael Home For Boys. Jordan recalled his own experiences as a deprived youth and decided to do something to help the children, many of whom were without parents. The school started with 4 children in a makeshift facility with an earthen floor (*Newsday* March 11 2012).

Suppliers of services do not want to work in the community. Public transportation for

workers who are employed in the city is limited since taxis are unwilling to work late hours. Businesses refuse to invest in at risk communities since they are often expected to pay for "protection". Vehicles which supply commodities are frequently vandalized and robbed. Citizens are often warned to avoid late night travel on the highway that borders the Gardens.

There are few community institutions, other than the nearby garbage dumps, which provides "employment". Many youngsters live off the dump and by stealing from passing delivery trucks which may be stalled or moving slowly in traffic on the highway. Unemployment remains higher than the national average since persons are reluctant to hire persons who give "Beetham Gardens" as their address on their job applications.

One survey worker had the following to say about life in the Beetham:

Life in the Beetham continues to be without some of the critical human, social and financial capital normally required to cope with or escape from poverty. The supporting environment is just not there, and each deficit reinforces the others. The deficits seem to affect youth more keenly than older folk since unemployment and joblessness are higher among them. Many youth cope with their boredom, frustration, alienation, or dispossession by "hustling, selling or smoking ganja, burglary, persistent "liming," or other joining a gang to raise esteem". As one 18 year old male told a field worker, my life is a mess right now because I don't have a job. I don't like to stay home; I like to be out there, working. It's hard to find a job these days; every year it becomes more difficult, and I don't know why. Sometimes when you go for a job and you have all the qualifications, then you tell them that you from Beetham or Laventille and it's a "no-no." And I have my passes, you know. I have three passes. Because you're from Laventille and they hear things happening in Laventille and they give you a "no." I applied for jobs already and I had to put my address on it. I'm not ashamed of my address, I put it on the thing...and then: no no...

This place is like hard to get work and thing. It have the Ten Days and the programmes and thing. That's how people get a little earn, how people make a living. Sometimes they can get a little work on the side. It have some people go over in the La Basse and hustle. That's how some of them go make their money and thing. It have those who selling weed. It have plenty people here who smoke because they so frustrated... because they can handle their problems better if they smoke. I find they should legalise it, because it ain't stopping them and it ain't harmful. People here, we have to work for real small money, even people have child to feed and all kind of thing. And the kind of work you getting, you know like construction work... they ain't giving a fella no other kind of work. And that's a kind of hard work to kill out yourself and all kind of thing. And it have real easy work out there... fellas realising to kidnap somebody, they getting real money for that. It have some of them robbing maxi's and thing. You could call it crime... but them fellas feel they have to, we are trying to survive. People hungry when the day come. It have a man who have a newborn baby, and he have nothing to give it, he have no other choice than to rob because he has no job and he need fast money. It go be hard you know. Myself, I did my bad things, but nothing really serious, but I have some of my friends... but they have to survive... I know that too. I ain't really get to go to school, well I went primary school but, you know well... when you growing up now, you know your mind go be frustrated too like... your mother gone, your father gone in prison, and you know, I ain't grow up with mother and father together... I grow up with my aunt, and she has five of her own, so you know, I would always be the last one to... get thing. And my father, he had real plenty children, he end up dying now... My father had real plenty children, it have some of them I don't even self know.

From: Trix Janssen, "Youth Livelihoods and Poverty in the Beetham Neighbourhood." Poverty in Trinidad and Tobago."(Caribbean Dialogue. OCT-DEC 2044)

The assassination of Cassius "Cass" Williams, the 27 year old don and godfather of Beetham Gardens on March 4 2012 illustrates some of the problems which arise when a "hotspot"

community like Beetham Gardens goes to “war.” Williams was shot 15 times by an assailant who used a sub-machine gun to carry out his assignment. There has been no arrest even though there were 50 odd persons who were sharing drinks at a birthday party in the public place where the shooting took place, refused to testify. Williams and the assailant were known to each other and seemed to have quarrelled over what was said to be an “internal” matter. Williams had been forewarned that he was marked for assassination, but apparently did not treat the warning with the seriousness it deserved. He reportedly brushed off the warning saying he had no “beef with anyone in Sea Lots.” (*Guardian*, March 4, 2012).

The assassination of Williams revealed in graphic detail the contradictions that are a by-product of life and death in a gang community. Some residents saw Williams as a good man, a beloved god-father. Others saw him as a “trouble maker”. As one young admirer of Williams eulogised:

In every good man there is something bad; and in every bad man there is something good. And no matter what he did, there was something good in Cass. He looked for the good in me. He always used to tell me study hard, make your mother proud, and that if you put your mind to it, one day you would become the prime minister of this country. Out of all the men in the community, no one has ever been that positive towards me, never a soul has told me that but Cass... Please don't allow Cass' death to be in vain. Stop the killing and bring back the peace and love we once had. And while I have high hopes of becoming the next prime minister, I know that there are among us future lawyers, doctors, engineers, and teachers. Please, it takes a community to raise a child, so please let us all band together and rise as a community.

## Sea Lots

Sea Lots is officially part of East Port of Spain and has many faces. Parts of it are among the most “disgustful” of the many slum spots in Trinidad and Tobago. The area referred to is the one which is seen by commuters as they drive into the capital city east to west along the seashore. Most people do not see the community because it is closed in by galvanized iron sheets. Few have an opportunity to satisfy their curiosity to discern what lay beyond that “ghetto” which is home to hundreds of young black males.

Sea Lots was carved out and reclaimed from the sea. It is characterised by informal settlement, tenure insecurity, extreme decay and dereliction and the absence of formal infrastructure networks.”(EPDCOL) Some residents recall that it was once wet lands which were filled in by native born citizens and immigrants from the Eastern Caribbean. While many residents are virtual new comers and are squatters, many have long standing connections to what is potentially one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the perimeter of the capital city. And therein lies a problem.

Sea Lots is not a nice place for anyone to live in. It is virtually a dump. Indeed, no one in this energy rich Trinidadian should have to live in such unacceptable surroundings. Garbage is everywhere as are drains filled with black oily effluent, which is the industrial waste discharged from the work sites that surround the settlement. When the rains come and the water level rises, the place is virtually unlivable.

Notwithstanding squalor and poverty, many do their utmost to improve their homes by putting in a drain and a footpath here, and a sheet of galvanise or plywood there. Sewerage is ubiquitous. Many desire to remain on lands which they fought the sea to create; others can't wait to escape what they regard as the “mother of all ghettos” in Trinidad and Tobago. One reason why the place is as garbage strewn as it is has to



do with its status as a “commons”. “Tragedy” usually consumes it because there is little community management. No one is responsible for maintenance of the public spaces. Everyone litters with impunity assuming that no one will clean up after they use the common spaces.

### **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty**

Various Trinidad and Tobago governments have adopted two broad strategies for dealing with the problem of criminality, particularly criminality among youth. The strategies have alternatively emphasized punishment and repression and suppression. The dichotomy becomes more evident in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the problems became more sharply etched on the public’s consciousness. Several analyses of the problem of galloping criminality were undertaken by foreign and indigenous consultants.

In response to this sharpened consciousness, a suite of programmes were put in place by the three main competing political parties, since the parties recognized that since electoral victory was largely determined by how well each responded to the problems which had become visible to all. The parties competed with each other to determine which could bid higher using public or borrowed fiscal resources. Some of the programmes focused on reforming the schools which had become “armed” camps, while others involved the setting up “alternative” training schemes to encourage young drop-outs to complete their schooling by taking remedial action to complete their training which would enable them join a new better trained workforce

Among the many recent programmes which have been put in place to address the problem of disconnection of distressed communities is “Life Sport”. This programme, which is the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of National Security seeks to use sport as an activity which would help to wean young males 16-25 away from the gangs by providing an legitimate non-violent alternative to crime, community rivalry. Community Inter Sports is not only seen as a

positive activity in its own right, but also as a channel through which life skills and vocational skills can be taught. These skill training programmes are to be run in conjunction with other agencies such as YTEPP and COSTAATT.

Another high profile activity which was launched at Beetham Gardens in June 2012 was “Hoops for Life”, a sports oriented programme which uses football, cricket and basketball as the vehicles through which certain goals are to be achieved. The basketball programme involves the creation of a national competition between 33 communities for prize money ranging in amounts from one million dollars for the winning team to TT \$500 and TT\$250 for teams coming second and third. The programme will be an annual event over a 3-year period.

There has been sharp criticism of the programme which was borrowed from the USA. The claim is that the criminal element would insert themselves into the programme and eventually capture it, and that instead of bringing the communities closer together, the competition might give rise to gang ridden turf wars and rivalries between “hot spots” that would eventually become destructive. The claim is further made that gang leaders would capture the teams which take part in the competition. The programmes would thus be self-defeating. The argument is that the prize money would be better used to empower existing groups or new ones. It is also argued that miscreants will have no problem laying down their guns before a game, but that when the game or the competition is over, they would pick them up and play “badman” for the people of the community” (*Mirror*, July 6, 2011).

In short, the fear is that instead of changing the communities, the programme and others similar would be subverted by the culture of the communities. The claim of some criminologists is that “the programmes have the potential to increase juvenile crime and delinquency by concentrating young people, who are potentially at risk, reinforcing antisocial tendencies and facilitating deviant peer group subcultures.” They further claim that in the US, “similar

programmes have erupted into violence if there is a lack of visible police presence and security. There have also been situations of placing bets on teams and players, threatening players with violence not to perform to ensure an opposing team wins, match-fixing and a host of other illegal activities which could turn good intentions into deadly dealings." One well known cleric was of the view that the monies should be given to programmes that help in the building of human beings.

The official response to the critics is that various initiatives have to be tried to compete with the gang lords for the interest and attention of the young. Some things might work though some might not. It is important to generate hope, hope for the best. The important thing is to try to break the cycle of criminality. The critics however insist that the official options are short term, elections and PR driven, and are guaranteed to fail as did the "Colour Me Orange" experiment. What is needed is a long term commitment and sustainability. Failure is not assured.

How does one fix the Beetham, Sea Lots and the other "border" spaces of Laventille? Does one try to improve them incrementally or does one raze them to the ground? There are good arguments for both options. Part of the problem is that the residents are not of one mind as to what was the future of Laventille to be? Some residents want to remain where they are while some wish to be bought out if the price is right. There is widespread concern that the old residents would be poorly compensated for their prime land after it is gentrified. The Company has been starved of funds. Part of the problem is money. Criminality is also a major disincentive. As the Company said in its Report to the Joint Committee of Parliament in 2011, there were several barriers to implementation of the Development Plan. Among them were:

High rates of crime and violence against persons and property which largely reflected the growth in the operation of criminal gangs and struggles for turf, power and control, and threatens the safety and stability of the

area, and negativity impact construction projects.

One cannot achieve much unless the larger security problem and state capacity are dealt with. Weak states cannot implement much. We however feel that in the longer run, the gentrification of East Port of Spain is the only way to address the perennial problem of "hot spot" joblessness and poverty. This would however have to be done incrementally, and over an extended period. There are no silver or golden bullets, only those made of the common metals which do so much damage to a peoples hopes and their lives. Residents however welcome the initiatives that are currently taking place under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, the Inter American Development Bank (IDB), various state agencies and the private sector to regenerate Laventille. The IDB has identified Port of Spain as one of five medium sized cities in the Americas to which it would commit material and other resources. The plans are elaborate and involve the rehabilitation of heritage sites and buildings, and there are also plans to link the "Hill" with other sites in the city. The programme was formally launched on October 22, 2012. There is however still a great deal of suspicion, bitterness, and distrust on the part of residents who have heard and seen it all before. But on balance, the mood is positive and hopes are high that the IDB link would help to give continuity to the construction programme, and provide needed jobs now and in the future. Much however depends on whether peace can be secured and maintained while construction is being undertaken.

### **The Revitalisation of East Port of Spain**

One of the persistent complaints heard by residents and sympathetic observers of poverty enclaves of East Port of Spain is that governments have done little or nothing to enhance the living conditions of these communities on a sustained basis. The claim is that these areas are regarded as "vote banks" to be used opportunistically at election time when vague promises are made and when political money flows. It is conceded by some that a few amenities and utilities have

been put in place – water, paved roads, electricity, a basketball court, a community centre, but that very little has been done which is sustainable. Nothing is done to sustain economic life in a more tolerable way. Safety nets have been put in place, but no step ladders are in evidence.

Much of what is said is true, and it may well be that the neglect is not deliberate, but that “fixing” these areas requires material resources or human capabilities that are not readily or available on a “quick fix” basis. What had also happened is that there has been a “secession of the successful”. Many who have “made it,” notwithstanding the drag generated by the environment, have migrated either to the US, the UK or Canada, or they have moved to more gentrified spaces within Trinidad and Tobago. The migrants have left behind those less enterprising or assertive, those too old or infirm to move, or those who have resigned and reconciled themselves to their circumstances. There are also many who are still dreaming about moving. For these persons, poverty and crime have become normal, the lot of the poor. Many who are young remain idle, steal or sell drugs in order to live. Our survey data reproduced above nevertheless indicates that many are employed though mainly in pedestrian jobs.

The big question now is what is to be done with the generation who are now coming on stage, those who we describe euphemistically as being “at risk” or “in crisis”. What do we do to silence their anger, their rage, and their guns? What tactics do we use to wage the “urban warfare” that has been declared by the “dons” and the drug lords?

The Minister of National Security has declared that the government of which he is a member cannot and will not retreat. Using Churchillian language, he has declared his intention to “fight the gang leaders and their followers on the streets and its corners, and has promised that the state will” never surrender. The inner city and the neighbourhoods will be reclaimed, bullet by bullet. Some have warned of a coming anarchy if steps are not taken to reconnect them to the mainstream.

The answer to the problem is to cut the economic ground from beneath the gang leaders. Several pillars need to be put in place to shore up the official forces. Some are easier to do than others. Among the first things that perhaps needs to be done is to decriminalize marijuana. There is of course a cost to doing so. We however believe that the gains exceed the costs. In particular, it will remove one of the pillars of the drug economy and correspondingly, it will weaken those who thrive on the trafficking of the drug. It would also reduce the number of those who are wards of the state in the labyrinths of the criminal justice system.

The second thing that needs to be done is to render less central the “dump economy” which now sustains the Beetham Gardens. One is of course not advocating the immediate closing of the Beetham dump site. That would be impractical and counterproductive. Recycling garbage is a life line for many. The challenge is to compete with the “dump” economy by offering alternative economic activities.

The third focus should be on is the stock of housing. In respect of housing, our proposal is that instead of ad hoc efforts to construct high rise buildings which attract gang activity, funds should be allocated to the construction of a new stock of housing and commercial buildings in these “hot spots” as was envisaged when the East Port of Spain Development Company was established. The argument against such a proposal is that security and public safety would be a severe disincentive for workers when the buildings and homes were being constructed, as well as for employers when the industries open for business. It may well be that the Defence Force would have to be mobilized to provide public safety with all that involves.

Planners have recognize that there were strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats in respect of the district. One of the strengths was that it was part of the cultural heritage of Trinidad and Tobago. It was also strategically located in relation to the capital city with its employment opportunities and its dramatic views of the city of Port of Spain, the Gulf of Paria and beyond.

Among its weakness were its poor roads and infrastructure, its environmental degradation, its high dependencies on a government hand-outs and party patronage its negative public image, its poverty, its low levels of employment, the ubiquity of garbage and solid waste, its propensity to either flooding or landslips and above all to criminality, gang activity and battle for turf.

The threats were its high dependence on political patronage, its disenchantment, mistrust of politicians and its unattractiveness to private sector investment. The opportunities were that there was need for quality housing close to the city, ease of transportation to the down town centre, tourism potential using the area's rich historical past and culture. One could convert a now squalid community into a business and residential opportunity as was done in parts of Brazil. There were opportunities for diversification and transformation, and also for innovation, entrepreneurialism collaboration among the stakeholders, private and public, and trust. Above all, there was need for the elimination of patronage that perpetuates traditional unemployment relief programmes, cultural dependency and a poor work ethic that is wedded to a belief in entitlements.

It is to be noted that the Ministry of Planning and Development has recently negotiated and signed an agreement with the Inter American Bank (IDB) which has as its objective the economic regeneration of East Port of Spain.

The bank has identified Port of Spain as one of five sustainable cities that it will help develop in Latin America and plans to spend some US\$1.5B in Trinidad between 2011 and 2015. The Trinidad Government will partner the bank in this initiative. To quote the Minister, "the development of East Port of Spain is a major part of the Government's Development Plan.... The plan is to expand the economic activity around the rich, diverse culture, while simultaneously providing social and environmental conditions towards the creation of a sustainable heritage city." The projects would be undertaken in San Juan, Gonzalez, Belmont, and Laventille generally. The Government has however taken the view that the citizens have to effect peace and order without which no positive development is possible.

The citizens of East Port of Spain have welcomed the new initiative, and are hopeful that the involvement of the (IDB) Bank will lead to the achievement of some of the economic and social projects that they have been promised over the decades. They also welcome the fact the Bank and the Ministry have given the assurance that consultation with the community would be an essential ingredient of the "new deal." We welcome the partnership and await further details of the specifics of the plan. We too are enthusiastic and optimistic that this time round, East Point of Spain would be "reconnected" to the rest of Port of Spain as was planned in 2005." *Sunday Express* December 2, 2012.

# SOME CAUSES OF POVERTY IN LAVENTILLE

*Selwyn Ryan*

Poverty is entrenched in Laventille. This has been so for much of its existence as a community. The causes of poverty in Laventille are many and arise out of the circumstances of its settlement. Laventille, was the destination for persons taking refuge or sanctuary from the plantation. Among the refugees were slaves who abandoned the plantation after emancipation. There were however other blacks who were themselves small planters, black slave owners, artisans and others who provided services for persons who lived in Port of Spain and its environs. Laventille also provided bedroom and living space for the flotsam and the jetsam li coming from Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in search of work. Laventille also attracted migrants and investors, both black and white, who came with their slaves from the French speaking Caribbean under the terms of the 18th century Cedula of population which opened up the island to settlement by white and black planters. In sum, the people of Laventille or Belmont which also attracted migrants from divers places, were not all poor or black with a slave past. Some were poor and some were entrepreneurial success stories.

Over time, many of the successful persons and businesses fled Laventille to make room for others. In time, the character of Laventille changed to one that was almost uniformly part of the wider national underclass. While there are areas in Laventille that are more depressed than others, our study indicates that the Laventille area and its "diaspora" in Beetham Gardens and elsewhere along the East-West Corridor are peopled mainly by dysfunctional one parent (mostly female headed) families, houses that are poorly appointed and which

are poorly provisioned with basic utilities and toilet facilities. In terms of human capital, the community lacks community pride and cohesion, is possessed of a considerable number of delinquent and illiterate youth with learning disabilities, incomplete schooling, home environments that are characterized by violence, spousal abuse widespread use of psychotropic drugs, high proportion of ex-prison inmates, high mortality rates. The community is also deficient in terms of social capital and financial capital.

The state and NGO's have over the past 50 years transferred substantial material, resources to Laventille to alleviate the prevailing poverty and to pacify the community whose social "war mongering" on more than one occasion threatened the social peace of the heartland of the capital city. Political patronage was also prominent among many reasons for the transfers.

Questions have been asked as to whether it is possible to eradicate or even alleviate poverty in Laventille, and, if so, how can it be done? The discourse is part of a larger international debate as to how one would go about such a task, assuming that it is indeed possible to eradicate poverty using democratic processes. Is Laventille a victim of the so called "culture of poverty? The "culture of poverty" concept can have either radical or conservative policy implications. Some argue that poverty generates a distinctive way of life, a folkway, and that it requires radical programmes which target the psychological deficits of the people who are born into such ways of life. Many of the "great society" policies

of the Lyndon Johnson era in the United States were driven by these policy assumptions. There was however another view, viz., that poverty is “ineradicable” and permanent because the cultural deficits of the poor are not easily compensated for, and that the deficits persist because the poor are part of a sub-culture that is not easily reached by the mechanisms and resources available to the contemporary welfare state. “Wars of poverty”, like “wars on drugs” are thus doomed to fail. Blame is thus placed on the poor. To quote Seligman, “those traits that accompany the sub-culture of poverty ... will pass from generation to generation to create unseen chains that constitute a social syndrome” (Seligman 1965:217).

Some who take this view do so not to change the lot of the poor, but to co-opt, regulate or pacify them. Rodman also observed that concentrating on notions of culture deprivation may provide excuses for doing nothing for the poor. As he writes, “values or culture may not be at the heart of the problem and thus the argument that jobs and money are not enough may therefore be a convenient rationalisation (1968:759).

Some analysts say that people are poor because they have defective character traits while others say that they are poor because they have no income earning opportunities. Clearly these are generalizations. Many people who are poor manage to emerge from poverty and do extremely well in all walks of life. The Caribbean is a living testament to this fact. Success is thus not determined by the culture circumstances of lower class life. As Rodman (1971:196-197) notes:

...individual ability or creativity, or parents or friends or kinsmen who are especially able or creative, can set a lower class person on a tract that leads him to surmount rather than adapt to lower class circumstances. Similarly a cultural tradition that is antagonistic to the characteristics of lower class life, or that sets a heavy store by family solidarity and educational advancement, can propel many of its adherents out of their lower class circumstances. Perhaps that is why Jewish, Greek, Armenian, Maltese, Chinese and Japanese immigrants to the Americas have

been so mobile and have moved so quickly out of the lower class. Perhaps that is one reason why [blacks] in the Americas – whose cultural traditions were largely destroyed during the days of slavery – so often manifest the lower class characteristics in archetypal form.

Oscar Lewis comes close to the truth when he observes that the problem with most of the commentary about the culture of poverty or lower class culture is that they are abstractions and generalizations which do not accurately define reality. As he writes:

One danger lies in the tendency to subsume under the term “lower class culture” a medley of traits without making distinctions among the kinds of traits and among levels of abstraction. A related danger comes from the failure to separate essence from accident, the crucial from the trivial, and the persistent from the transitory in the packages of traits. (Lewis 1971).

Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1993) have also challenged the notion that the “culture of poverty” concept can in itself explain what has happened in the urban ghettos of North America and elsewhere where the underclass proliferates and is most underfoot. They are particularly concerned to explain why American blacks seem less able to escape the poverty trap than do other immigrant groups. In their important book, Massey and Denton note that four theoretical explanations have been given for the existence of poverty and its intergenerational transmission in American cities – culture, racism, economics and welfare. Lewis, they note, argued that once culture was established, it became an independent cause of persistent poverty. In time, commentators forgot that the original structural fact was poverty and argued that people were poor because they had a “lower class culture”. The tendency was to “blame the victim”. Other critics advanced racism, institutional and otherwise, as the key to the problem. People were poor because they were victims of embedded racism which confined them to the economic and political periphery of the system.

A third explanation was offered by conservatives like Charles Murray (1984) who argued that the attempt to be helpful via welfare had had the unintended effect of locking the poor into a dependency syndrome. Generous anti-poverty programmes were a disincentive to the poor to seek work. Work became unprofitable. One could thus bear children – in 1994, more than three out of five black American households with children were headed by a lone mother who was typically young and never married – live in subsidized housing, get food stamps etc. without having to exert any corresponding civic or economic effort. Sponging became rational behaviour. Perpetual poverty was the inevitable by-product. The culture of poverty was thus a construct of the welfare society. By providing more for the poor, the country produced more of the poor, insisted Murray. Murray's policy prescription was to abolish welfare.

Another explanation was offered by William Julius Wilson (1987) who argued that the key to the spatial concentration of poverty was to be found in the migratory patterns of the residents of those who lived in poor communities. In Wilson's view, structural changes in the economies of America in the thirties and later led to the migration of industries and certain kinds of jobs which once sustained those citizens. Instead of sustaining a parallel economy, businesses failed as demand fell. As industries came suburbanized, those who had skilled jobs and good incomes moved out. Those who were left behind were low skilled, unmarriageable and unable to support stable households. They were also unable to serve as role models as their parents once did. Unwed childbearing and female headed households increased as did welfare dependency. The physical fabric of the cities declined as economic disinvestment took place.

### **Safety Nets Without Safety Ladders**

Governments of Trinidad and Tobago have tried in varying ways to address the problem of poverty and dispossession and all that flows there from. The various programmes have not helped meaningfully to alleviate poverty which remains

stubbornly entrenched. Our hypothesis is that while individually some of the programmes had or still have some merit, delivery has been poor and ineffective. There is in fact little or no coordination among the various state agencies and NGOs. This challenge to the programmes resulted because poverty issues were not addressed by an integrated and multi-sector strategy within the overall macro-economic framework. The Government, its agencies and NGOs must accept that ad hoc social safety nets need to be completed by safety ladders that assist the poor to climb out of their hopeless position to sustainable livelihoods. That concept itself implies a greater mix of community-based strategies to complement the over-reliance on the traditional approach of attempting to continuously exploit the economy in order to create individual employment opportunities.

Increased well being has not trickled down, even when the economy improved, since the issues underlying poverty in Laventille are structural in nature and are interconnected. None of these issues, crime, unemployment, poor education, illiteracy, abuse, substandard housing, poor mental and physical health, illegal guns and narcotics cannot be solved in isolation, and require participatory planning and coordination among the stakeholders. These interventions provided some assistance but in most cases, they were not effective since they were not integrated into a model of care which was sustainable. The downward spiral of poverty continued to root itself in the Greater Laventille community eroding and uprooting the stability of homes, relationships, values, systems and "dependency" on community leaders increased.

The general approach of all parties has been to "throw money" at the problems. The aim has been to try to satisfy the basic physiological needs of the members of the community leaving their ego needs unfilled. But as Douglas McGregor (*The Human Side of Enterprise Theorized*) "man lives by bread alone when there is no bread. Unless the circumstances are unusual, his needs, for love, for status, for recognition are

inoperative when his stomach has been empty for a while. But when he eats regularly and adequately, hunger ceases to be an important need. The sated man has hunger unless in the sense that a full bottle has emptiness. The same is true of the other physiological needs of man—for rest, exercise, shelter protection from the elements” (McGregor in Kramer: 01).

Laventille however needs to have both its physiological and ego needs fulfilled. The latter were safety ladders. It is often argued that the practice of providing welfare to the poor leads to the creation of an attitude of dependency, and that the beneficiaries of such programmes are not motivated to help themselves. They came to assume that as citizens, state welfare is not only a human right, but one that is a historical legacy and that the state is responsible for meeting their basic physiological and material needs. They are therefore not motivated to be aggressively entrepreneurial.

It may indeed be that their passivity and proverbial laziness has nothing to do with their “human nature” but with the fact that their higher level needs for status and self-esteem are not being met. It may well be that

they attempt to meet these higher level needs by conspicuous consumerism – high priced sneakers, bling, etc. To quote McGregor again, “people will make insistent demands for more money.... It becomes more important than ever to buy the material goods and services which can provide limited satisfaction of the thwarted needs. Although money has only limited value in satisfying many higher-level needs, it can become the focus of interest if it is the only means available”. (McGregor 104)

The key question to be answered by policy is whether Laventille is fixable, what it would take to fix it, and how long the exercise would take, taking note of the circumstances of the human, social and fiscal capital that is available locally, and the state of the regional and world economy. Trinidad and Laventille are in a race to determine who gets in the blocks first. Would the gangs capture it first and become entrenched, putting the whole society at risk, or would the state take the battle to the gangs and triumph over them in the urban warfare that they have declared? The answer to this question lies both inside as well as outside the limits of the Trinidadian state. We shall return to this question.



# YOUNG BLACKS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*Selwyn Ryan*

The People's partnership has made entrepreneurship one of the pillars of their programme to empower youth and wean them of their tendency to depend excessively on handouts from the state. Much of what was attempted in 2010-12 in respect of starting small businesses in Trinidad and Tobago were of course not new. Following Independence, efforts were made to encourage the private sector. These efforts were increased following the "Black Power" demonstrations of 1970 which witnessed dramatic protests on the part of black youth that the promised by-products of Independence were not forthcoming. The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and The Small Business Development Company (SBDC) were established to cater to the need for capital and management advice of small and medium sized enterprises. The Workers Bank, The National Commercial Bank, The Cooperative Bank and the Agricultural Development Bank were also urged to assist small and medium businesses. Many of these and other programmes have had painful experiences which alerts us to the fact that the current policy shift to SMEs will not be easy to make. SERVOL, a faith-based NGO, was one of the organizations which sought to achieve a paradigm shift in the years following the "Black Power" eruptions. Fund Aid, SERVOL's business development arm, explained its mission and the outcome of its early efforts:

Young unemployed people with no prior job experience, single mothers who headed households, entrepreneurs in the informal sector who had been denied access to credit – these were Fund Aid's beneficiaries. They sought to start or expand their businesses –

usually single-person activities ranging from manufacturing clothes and local foods to selling drinks and hot-dogs. Although they had the technical expertise and the support of their communities to successfully run a business, they were faced by many obstacles preventing them from achieving success: they lacked the capital and the resources to approach financial institutions for credit; they lacked fundamental business skills in management and accounting; and they often lacked the encouragement and guidance from professionals. Fund Aid's role is to offer these enterprising poor unprecedented opportunities and to show them a way out of poverty while encouraging self-sufficiency and economic development". (Pantin, 1997:84)

SERVOL claims that between 1973 and 1993, loans amounting to TT\$m19,368,846 were guaranteed to 7,287 clients. US\$500,000 came from loans provided by the Inter American Development Bank (IADB). A Fund Aid Report issued in 1995 indicated that 1,900 jobs were created as a result of these investments. Fifty-six per cent of the loans were made to women and were used for activities such as hair dressing, clothes making, food selling, food distribution, food processing and in agriculture processing. Initial reports claimed that the default rate was low, but subsequent analyses indicated that at least a quarter of the loans had to be paid by guarantors. Many had to be written off. An assessment of the attempt to establish a bakery had the following to say about the experiences of the young would be entrepreneurs:

The young men, where unemployed, obtained money through 'hustling' or from

the irregular income of a special works project. Each of them had numerous financial problems and were up to their ears in debt. Further, they were regarded as leaders in their area and had developed numerous, complicated relationships with many of the people, young and old, who lived in their neighbourhood. When [the] group suddenly found themselves the directors of the fifty thousand dollar business, the very marked change which occurred in their relationship with the area had far-reaching effects. The environment in which the new investors had to function was not conducive to good business practices. Their erstwhile liming buddies constituted a constraint on the new business. The same friends looked on the bakery as a convenient 'liming' corner and an ideal place to 'push' marijuana; thus the bakery was often surrounded by a number of boisterous youths who peddled their merchandise, played ball in front of the building and passed remarks on customers. The result of this was that many prospective customers began to shun the bakery and sales dropped. The group then firmly told the limers to go elsewhere – which they did. But obviously this resulted in a definite coolness between the group and others in the area...(ibid).

Reflecting on the lessons learnt from these and other efforts, Father Pantin, director of SERVOL, had the following to say:

Any attempt to introduce inexperienced, disadvantaged young people into the world of business, must take into account the sociological and interpersonal relationships of the people concerned. Although the above observations were made from the Harlem Bakery, to a large extent they hold true for practically any business attempt in the area. The point which has been firmly established by the experience of three years is that, whereas the average middle class businessman can separate his business relationships from his personal relationships, the two are so inextricably linked in the case of disadvantaged people, that this fact must be taken into account in long-range planning (Pantin 1979:50).

Interestingly, the entrepreneurial "successes" in the 1990s were in the main the byproducts

of drug related and other criminal activities. As Father Pantin further explained as early as 1995:

A lot of entrepreneurship is, however, taking place but they are of the wrong type. It is entrepreneurship where guns are being used. But we have to do something to stem that, or sooner or later, something is going to explode. (*Trinidad Guardian*, September 11, 1995)

St. Cyr makes much the same point:

Laventille has become a popular place for illegal drugs and, consequently, this area has attracted drug pushers and drug addicts in numerous quantities. Unfortunately, related to the drug trade is a profession designed for the collection of money owed by both pushers and consumers. This trade is called "franchising" in local jargon. It is a contractual agreement to maim or kill any individual who refuses to pay his or her debt. Payment increases with an increase in the number of body parts which are to be damaged. Murder is the most expensive job. (Monique St. Cyr 1994:15)

Most of the "legit" business were on the periphery of Laventille on the Eastern Main Road and not in Laventille proper. The same is true in respect of Sea Lots. There were only a few successes and these preceded the onset of gang warfare. Crime had scared away investment. Most of these firms have left their ghetto bases and few, if any, have shown any interest in investing in the "hot spots" given their fear that they would be preyed upon by their co-residents or outliers. There was also concern that the markets for their products would be limited to the zones and borders within which they were confined, and that they would not be able expand.

The Development and Environment Works Devison (DEWD), The Unemployment Relief Programme, (URP), Community- Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) and similar type "make/fake" work or training projects were among the principal sources of income for people in Laventille. Money was also earned by persons who worked in the construction industry, in the skilled or semi-skilled trades, and in household

domestic service. Most of this was spent on food and consumer goods outside the community. In the absence of these sources of income, all that remained were remittances and money from crime and drugs. In sum, there was little to encourage individuals to invest in Laventille and its diaspora in order to capture a community market. The economic forces at work in fact encouraged disinvestment. More often than not, as families got into trouble, buildings were abandoned, physical assets were sold to feed a drug habit, to meet emergencies, or to reconstruct shelter or start anew if circumstances suggest that it is worth taking the risk elsewhere.

Security considerations were also a key factor which discouraged the location of business in Laventille. There have been numerous reports of businesses being vandalized or of delivery trucks which are intercepted and relieved of their goods while on their way to business outlets. This is particularly the case with commodities such as alcohol, soft drinks and cigarettes. (Ibid, 191)

Efforts have also been made by NGO's to encourage young black residents to go back to the land. One such project was the Morvant/ Laventille Youth Agricultural Network (M/ LYAN) on the North Coast at Las Cuevas and in Cedros. These were all unsuccessful for one reason or another. Factors leading to failure included distance from the sites to their homes, lack of experience with agriculture, attitudes to farm production, leadership problems and an unwillingness to delay gratification. The group which had an initial membership of 86 persons ended its effort with less than a dozen members (Ryan 97:191).

In the years following the petro dollar generated boom (1973-1983), governments embraced neo-liberal trade and investment policies which made it difficult, if not impossible, for small entrepreneurs generally to be given shelter behind tariff walls. The cumulative experience of those years also engendered a skepticism about the advisability of relying on such policy instruments all of which constituted a significant drain on public resources. As we

have seen, the government remained committed to promoting entrepreneurship, and offered a variety of training and lending programmes to nurture and sustain aspiring entrepreneurs. NEDCO was one of the programmes from which great things were expected. The Company, which was established in 2002, had a database of some 6500 borrowers. It began by lending as little as \$30,000 once they had an "idea" as to what they would like to do. Loans were easy to obtain and there was a great deal of "opportunistic" or "welfare lending." Politics also informed much of what was loaned and to whom. The opposition regarded NEDCO as a 'scam," a strategy to source campaign funds. Moneys were loaned without proper vetting of borrowers, and it did seem that politics and other questionable criteria were indeed used to disburse funds on a few questions asked basis. Between August 2002 and October 31, 2002, \$17.4m was loaned. The cost of lending was extremely high (\$33m to lend \$83) The Ministry of Legal Affairs data indicates that company registration increased by some 20 percent since the financial crisis developed in 2008.

There was a high default rate in respect of borrowers. At one time the default rate was 15 percent. (*Sunday Guardian*, June 5, 2001) Borrowers still believe that moneys sourced from the state are not expected to be repaid. The money is treated as a welfare grant or a political gift that does not have to be repaid. What is evident in the area of entrepreneurship cannot be isolated from what is taking place in the black community, particularly in respect of the young male members thereof. Large numbers of them have to all intents and purposes dropped out of school at the secondary and tertiary levels, joined gangs in the hope of getting rich quickly, commit violent drug related crimes, or defend themselves and their base communities from other inner city gangs. NEDCO has on occasion targeted Laventille and other "Hot Spots" with results that were predictable. There was some evidence of entrepreneurship, but it was directed towards hustling or activities in the drug trade. Many black communities are not now hospitable environments to investment of any kind.

Numeracy and literacy were also continuing problems as was an unwillingness to postpone gratification. Many youngsters became parasites and assumed that they are entitled to be looked after by the state rather than accept some of the low end convenience jobs that were available in the private sector. Why work when money was available from the state or in the non-“legit” sector. Criminal activity also allocated jobs. In many cases, gang leaders controlled weapons, supplies of drugs and turf on which to locate businesses. They determine who and what businesses flourish and under what conditions. Most projects, whether undertaken by the state or by private individuals or firms, big or small, have to pay rents and “taxes” which are extorted by those whose entrepreneurship consists in providing gang protection.

The then political opposition was sharply critical of the NEDCO initiative. It agreed that the programme had some validity, but claimed that it had corrupted it. It was also claimed that lending was racially partisan and that Indo-Trinidadians were unfairly treated. It was also alleged that the programme was one of several strategies used to transfer money from the Treasury to the Jamaat al Muslimeen which had campaigned on behalf of the PNM in the 2002 election. Interestingly, NEDCO claims that most of their clients were single African women and not young black men, and that a majority of them went into vending.

### **Post 2010 Initiatives**

Notwithstanding all that had occurred in the past in respect of SME’s in Laventille and elsewhere, the PP government decided to renew the effort to establish them as part of its strategy for reducing poverty, crime, and lawlessness and to reclaim youth. The new government also indicated that it intended relying more on the private sector to provide thrust for its development initiatives. The plans were enunciated by the Minister of Finance in the 2012 Budget and in several subsequent statements made by other government officials. Of particular importance were the statements and commitments made in the *Social Sector Investment Programme*

*2012: From Steady Foundation To Economic Transformation*. The Finance Minister noted that youth unemployment was distressingly high, some 55 percent in June 2010. There was thus need to upgrade the Youth Development and Apprenticeship centres to increase the intake of students as well as further engender the shift from welfare practices to one of self reliance and empowerment. Also stressed was the need for a social safety net. It was observed that seventeen (17) percent of the population, rising to 30 per cent in some geographic areas, required income support to meet basic needs. The plan was to provide financial support and food security to targeted groups and communities while promoting development activities through the provision of training, assistance in financing and budgeting, family planning, career guidance, and utilities assistance. The aim was to reduce poverty by 2 percent annually through rehabilitative and skill enhancement initiatives.

It was officially noted that the structure of the world economy had changed significantly, and that unemployment had become a feature of that economy. There was however no quick solution to that problem. A possible way out involved increasing focus on small and medium sized enterprises (SME’s), something that was happening worldwide. The Minister of Finance noted that there were about 18,000 SME’s in Trinidad and Tobago employing about 200,000 persons, or close to 35 percent of the gross domestic product. SME’s he said were, and will continue to be an important pillar of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago

The plans for effecting this policy shift involved, *inter alia*, encouraging more at risk citizens, young and adult alike, to be innovative and to strive to create jobs and careers for themselves and not rely on salaried and wage occupations, since the traditional productive machine had ceased to deliver the great many jobs which it once did. The shift involved a pivotal role for NEDCO which secured a renewed mandate to assist would be entrepreneurs by making start up funds available on easy terms. It was also mandated to provide budgetary advice, training and career guidance. NEDCO

was also given responsibility for developing and stimulating the spirit of entrepreneurship using mentors and “incubators.” Its goal was to stimulate the development of 10,000 enterprises over a two year period. Reportedly, 900 loans had been given since the programme had been re-established.

The mandate of the SBDC was somewhat different to that of NEDCO. The SBDC was mandated to focus on transforming established small enterprises into successful medium and large enterprises. The mandate also involved enhancing managerial capacity, promoting technical innovation, product development, quality control, and access to export markets for the enterprises. In sum, SBDC was to create a new breed of entrepreneur.

A vast suite of other training programmes, some of which were already in existence, were also revitalized and made part of this sector. Among them were the Works Assessment Certification Centre (WAC), the Youth Training and Entrepreneurship Partnership Programme (YTEPP) which focused on secretarial and culinary skills and which targeted a wide range of participants, particularly women. Other programmes were the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which involved persons in environmental and re-forestation projects, and which were delivered by military personnel. The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), Small Business Certificate (SBCS), National Energy Skills (NES), Helping Youth Prepare For employment (HYPE), Community Environment Protection Enhancement Programme (CEPEP), Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA), to name but a few of the many programmes which were offered either by public sector institutions or those with a private national or regional partner. Important too was The Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) and MuST which was founded in 2004 whose role was to train and provide life and other skills for those who were unable to find employment or who had deficiencies in their ability to read, manipulate figures or use

the computer. The government even provided stipends to make it possible for trainees to get bus transport to get to and from work as well as a daily meal. Also worth noting was the On the Job Training Partner (OJTP) which recruited young people and placed them alongside persons in existing jobs to gain experience. The plan was to recruit 5000 young persons for this programme. Interestingly, plans were also announced to recruit 60 university graduates to take part in farms and agro-processing industries and other businesses.

The indigenous banks were also expected to play a critical role in this transformation. The established banks were encouraged to shift their focus from lending to citizens to finance consumer goods and government debt. The government’s programme also involved putting some state enterprises put on the stock market. The strategy would likewise seek to develop a “junior market.” Also urgently needed was fiscal discipline at the enterprise level as a condition for the growth and development of public/private sector lending. Finally, the Minister wisely emphasized the need to make it easier to do business in Trinidad and Tobago as part of a strategy to increase competitiveness, productivity, and profitability. Others, like the Governor of the Central Bank and the Chamber of Commerce, also drew attention to the fact that weaknesses in public sector infrastructure—for example the time taken for business registration as well as the poor protection of intellectual property rights frustrates the growth of entrepreneurship.

The question to be determined was whether the proposed revolution in business behaviour would go beyond words, and whether the private sector and small businessmen would respond positively. Given the above analysis, the question might well be raised as to what was the future of the young entrepreneur, whatever the gender or ethnicity. Can small business fill the void in this highly competitive globalised world, or does survival require one to maintain some version of the existing welfare system or the neo-liberal model which depends on capital intensive mega-projects as was once the case?

The Minister of Finance has recently expressed guarded optimism. As he said in his Budget Address:

The well structured development of the [SME] sector is a continuing challenge. We have focussed on financing, and have made considerable investments in the Business Development Company, the venture Capital Fund and NEDCO. This notwithstanding, there are many other constraints. We are addressing the other components necessary for successful business development; capacity, capability, and culture. For this reason, a comprehensive programme will be developed over the next year in consultation with stakeholders in the industry to address these deficits as we seek to develop successful small and micro-enterprises," ( Budget Speech, October 2nd 2012).\*

\*PS. We however note that the loan repayment performance had recently improved quite dramatically. According to the Minister of Labour, the delinquency rate had moved from 84 per cent when his government came to power in 2010 to 3 per cent, Loan production had also gone up by over 1000 per cent *Trinidad Guardian*, Dec 19, 2012.

### **The Unemployment Relief Programme (URP)**

The Unemployment Relief Programme (URP), was the source of many of the country's problems as they relate to employment, crime, the work ethic, gangs, real and ghost, party patronage and much else. The URP in its many manifestations (DEWD, SWP) was assumed to be the "haven" of the gang and turf war problem. When the administration changed politically in May 2010, it was widely assumed that the programme would be abolished and replaced by something less socially and politically disruptive. The new regime however felt that that would not be prudent or perhaps even politically possible to abolish the programme overnight, and that they would instead restructure and reposition it to make it more entrepreneurial and less tied to certain urban constituencies which had been favoured in the past. Changes were made both in terms of who was employed, where, and who managed it.

The current URP has some 14,458 persons on its payroll and an annual budget of \$365m. The programme was removed from the Ministry of Labour, and is now managed by three ministries, the Ministry of the People and Social Development, the Ministry of Local Government, and the Ministry of Food Production. Eleven thousand are employed in the core programme and 3,858 are employed in the women's programme. Some forty (40) social programmes are also managed by the Prime Minister's Office. These are labelled "URP Social." URP labour was also to be used to produce farm products to feed orphanages and churches. Seventy six percent of the "new" programme is to target smaller projects e.g. maintenance of public buildings, and that these would be undertaken by small scale entrepreneurs who wanted to become petty contractors. There is little evidence that this has yet been achieved. The aim too was to ensure that the wages, which were small (\$69.00 per day) reached those for whom it was intended. The aim was to eliminate ghost gangs. It does not however appear that much has been changed other than which parts of the country gets the projects and who gets them. The role and influence of the gangs has also been reduced, though not completely so. The political opposition's charge is that the programme has not really changed in any fundamental way and that it has simply become more politicized. This is to be expected. The programme is however no longer controlled by the ganglords and people with questionable records, though their involvement is still evident, if not to the same degree.

There is much duplication, adhocism, ethnic partisanship, poor management and supervision and learned helplessness. Much of what is being attempted is however new and experimental, and it is not yet possible to make firm assessments of its achievements.

## CEPEP

The Community Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) was established in 2002, and was in part conceived as an answer to the problems and challenges that beset the URP. CEPEP employs persons from 18-60, and most of its employees are women. The numbers employed range from 6,000 to 10,000 for a maximum of 3 years, mainly in areas that were not previously served. The aim was to achieve more geographical equity and diversity. One key aim was to bypass the gang leaders who once controlled the URP and appoint contractors who would be privately incorporated and who would in turn employ and pay workers from the budget provided by the state. The hope was that in time, the workers, most of whom came from the lower rungs of the society, would be bitten by the entrepreneurial bug and that some of them would become entrepreneurs.

In the meantime, however, the value of the programme to the workers, who are in the main single mothers, was that it provided regular wage income. Unskilled workers received \$86.00 per day, and \$320.00 if they were skilled or operated heavy equipment. There were some 9,700 workers in 2012 and 186 contracting companies spread over 80 major communities. Marine centres in the western and southern part of the coastline and beaches were also part of the coverage. The main features of the programme were said to be the following:

- (a) In 2010, there were some 200 contractors and some 10,000 employees. The workforce was divided into groups ranging from 40 to 60 members.
- (b) The groups were community based and spread over the country though mainly in the areas which were not previously served. Note, however, the special case of East Port of Spain which had some 15 to 16 contractors. This "special deal" was negotiated by Makandal Daaga, who is a member of the ruling coalition.
- (c) Employment was regular. Groups were supposed to be employed for a maximum of three years. In the past, some workers were employed for nine years.

- (d) There was a fair degree of discipline among the workers who normally put in 6 to 8 hours each day.
- (e) All contractors were incorporated as private companies and were responsible for recruiting employees. They must all have clean criminal records.
- (f) There was provision for incubators which would serve as platforms for those who wanted to go into business.
- (g) Employees were recruited from areas not previously serviced. Translated, this meant that Afro dominant groups had to make way of Indo based groups.
- (h) There were no gangs, ghost or otherwise. There were instead "teams."
- (i) CEPEP workers wore uniforms. This helped to generate group recognition and discipline.
- (j) The focus of the programmes were on community beautification.
- (k) Emphasis was being put on training. Programmes were either delivered directly or in partnership with YTEPP, COSTATT, EMA, OSHA and the Self-help Commission. Some 4,700 persons were trained by Osha in Occupational Safety. Modules were also available in literacy and numeracy.
- (l) Politicians have some say in the choice of contractors and as to where groups were inserted.
- (m) CEPEP was broadly responsible for choosing the contractors and for managing and supervising the projects. Not surprisingly, party affiliation informed choices of contractors.

Despite what was said officially about entrepreneurship, the programme is still a glorified income/job distribution programme that in practice is not very different from the URP. Contractors and workers were still threatened and made to pay percentages of their earnings to the gangs even if their wages were made directly into their accounts at FCB. There are also indications that gang members roam the hot spots and demand food etc which serves to make the small businesses unviable. As one

would-be entrepreneur put it, “we had a little business selling barbecue wings, but we ended up closing it down after 18 months because the Gonzalez gang was coming down and shooting. People saying we don’t want to go out there and look for jobs, but how can we when warfare going on?” (*Newsday*, April 19, 2012).

The PP has given much thought to restructuring the URP and CEPEP programmes in part because of complaints that they are in competition with the private sector for labour. The new plan is to provide for partnerships between the private sector and the two companies. As the Minister of Finance declared in his Budget:

We are initiating the restructuring of CEPEP and the URP with a focus on skills development as employees are transferred from those programmes to private sector activities. I propose to provide companies with a training allowance to assist in skill development. I shall now encourage companies to engage employees of the CEPEP and the URP programmes.

It remains to be seen how this arrangement will work. What is evident is that the Government seems ambivalent about transforming the URP and CEPEP into more productive organisations. The Minister of National Security recently announced that the URP and CEPEP programmes were being abandoned, and would be replaced by an alternative which offers jobs to the inhabitants of the “Hotspot” areas or the country. As he told a meeting, “Let me tell you very early. This gang and this CEPEP gang thing in this area, that is it. Out! Finish! Finish! And the new programme will be replicated in other parts of the country so, like Maloney, Caroni, Central and South Trinidad thereafter.

Warner said he wanted to “transform “hotspots” into cold spots in a new dawn, a new renaissance where people will finally understand that the future of this country and their families could never be in the barrel of a gun.”

The programme would be handled by the Police, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Engineering Division of the TT Defence Force. The unit will be called “People and Projects For Progress” and the security is there to provide safety and protection. “We will not be employing any gangs of people. We will not be calling them gangs anymore. We shall be calling them “field members”. The Minister went on to indicate that people would not necessarily have to work in their home areas. They can be assigned anywhere, a decision that is being rethought because of the problem of inter community suspicions.

The question to be determined is whether the army should be used for this type of civilian activity and whether soldiers would accept the new role. The army has always resisted being used in managing URP type programmes. It was feared that the army would corrupt those with whom it came into contact. The other question too is money. Where would the money and the jobs come from? Some are skeptical about the sustainability of the program. The parliamentary opposition has expressed concern that the new crime plan would politicise the army, and that public funds are being used surreptitiously to buy off gang leaders who have come in from the cold disguised as “team members.” (*Newsday* October 17 2012.”) In substance, it was seen as being another version of the PNM’s URP formula or that of the PP’s “Colour Me Orange” house and yard repair and cleaning programmer, which was used at Christmas 2011. One waits to see whether the new “jobs for guns” programme is sustainable, and whether the programme would see the end of the “donarchy” as we have seen it in recent years

We need to remind ourselves that entrepreneurship, like leadership, cannot be manufactured as a commodity, though it can be encouraged and nurtured if the disposition exists or is latent. There is also “replicative” entrepreneurship and “innovative” entrepreneurship. There is also a



tendency to regard all small business as being entrepreneurial. We need to distinguish between types and see how our young men perform over time with all the assistance that is being made available to them. (*Entrepreneurship in Trinidad and Tobago: The Black Experience*, In Press, 2012, See also Global Heroes, *The Economist*, March 2009)

Even though there is a great deal of experimentation and ad hocism within URP, there is no indication that the programmes will be abandoned or replaced. The reverse is the case. Four hundred new projects were recently announced. What is being sought is more

productivity and better value for money. The Minister of Local Government has indicated that he wants workers to work "seriously for at least 4 good hours a day. We are not about the enslavement of people. We are about the empowerment of people. URP workers can be productive (*Daily Express*, October 10,2012). Many attempts have been to reform URP. It remains to be seen if this effort will yield more success. One suspects that notwithstanding what is done to regentrify East Port of Spain, some version of the URP will be with us for some time to come, and that it would be an occupational haven of young blacks for much of that time.

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**CHAPTER 3**  
**PRISON REFORM, THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**  
**AND POLICING**



# CRITICAL ISSUES IN POLICE TRAINING

*Lennox Bernard*

Police training dates back to 1890 when the St. James Barracks was first officially used for the training of police officers. We are told that it marked a turning point in the history of the service whereby not only recruits received training but also for the first time, older members of the force were trained in the use of firearms. Over time through seven decades of colonialism, followed by independence and republicanism, the institution became the Police Training College, continuing to train new recruits as well as to mount refresher courses for serving members. It was not until April 2010 it was upgraded to the status of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Academy (TTPA)

The curriculum of any Police Academy must be informed by the changing philosophical approaches to policing. According to Wallace (2011) policing in Trinidad and Tobago has undergone four broad changes, with of course with as many crime reports and plans in the last decade. The traditional approach to policing with its emphasis on police force with low level of community involvement was the dominant style of policing introduced in the middle of the 1990s. Harriot (1998) noted that this view of policing carried the baggage of being originally fashioned as an instrument of domination which basically left the policed communities 'voiceless' in the decisions on how they are policed.

This was followed by the short lived community policing in 1996. Deosaran (2001) informs us that selected police officers from various divisions and branches within the organization were trained in community policing. These officers were trained in

investigative techniques in dealing with victims in a non-invasive, caring and understanding manner. Community policing personnel were also trained in areas such as conflict resolution, mediation, reactive problem solving, psychology and counselling which prepared them for effective intervention.

As the crime rates escalated civic society and the politicians became impatient. They saw this approach as a soft option and demanded immediate results for the continuing upsurge in vicious crimes. Community policing as Haberfield (2002) notes that apart from the emphasis on problem solving and conflict resolution skills, training should be placed on our fears and weaknesses: understanding the dynamics between police officers and the parents of delinquent children, medical conditions of mentally ill people, problems of adolescence, jealousy, hate and ethnocentrism, and an insatiable demand for drugs, gambling, prostitution and a propensity for other 'victimless' crimes.

The mindset needed was generative and time consuming and required the support of supervisors who themselves needed training in this humanistic approach. In the end it was debunked in 2002 for the reactive strategies available with the traditional approach. The traditional approach held sway until 2007, when Trinidad and Tobago embarked on a developmental programme for the transformation of society by 2020 as formulated in its National Strategic Plan. The Policing for People initiative that replaced it espoused community involvement. It was not successful

as indicated by the continuous increase in serious crimes, 44% from 2000 to 2010 and with a sharp increase in homicides rising by more than 400% from 7 per 100,000 to 30 per 100,000 in 2007. (Wallace, *ibid*). Crime fighting remained in the domain of police officers and Wallace believes that community involvement amounted to tokenism and patronage and with the focus clearly on infrastructure and staffing.

The newest move introduced in 2010 by Commissioner of Police Dwayne Gibbs was 21<sup>st</sup> century policing that provides for greater visibility of police officers by the introduction of continuous foot and mobile patrols throughout the communities of Trinidad and Tobago. The project was designed to build partnerships with communities and provide a high level of customer service. It was meant to effectively blend intelligence-led proactive initiatives with community policing. A model police division was established in the Western Division.

At time of writing Commissioner Gibbs and one his deputies resigned, throwing into disarray this approach and recent statements from the Acting Commissioner of Police Mr. Stephen Williams seem to suggest a return to 'Policing for People'

What is the impact of all of this on police training? The Honourable Prime Minister Mrs. Kamla Persad Bissessar made these comments on the debate in Parliament on the Appropriation Bill 2011:

*The present training programme for our law enforcement officers is totally unacceptable, hence the reason for our law enforcement officers at times falling short in the performance of their duties, as they do not have the proper training environment.*

Months earlier the displaced Minister of National Security Mr. Martin Joseph was indirectly making a 'cri de coeur' for some type of curriculum immersion that would take into account morality and ethics. At the passing out

parade of the TTPS 2009/2010, A to G squads he said:

*Two critical areas I want to pay some special attention to, first is the issue of ethics and integrity. We want to reverse an impression and perception that there is widespread corruption among law enforcement officers. This perception has a double effect. It causes citizens to doubt the integrity of the Police Service and dampens their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement officials to fight crime."*

The issue of 'rogue' cops had bedevilled the perception of committee members in many of its interactions with stakeholders. Some had made bold to say that it was as high as 40% while others felt that it varied from 10% to just a few individuals. This and more faced Mr. Stephen Watt, the first Provost of the Police Academy. Mr. Watt a career police officer was also a Director of the British Columbia Police Academy for nine years. He had also initiated, developed and managed police training programmes in China, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Some of his immediate changes include:

- A new and enhanced Induction Programme (April 12, 2010)
- Creation of a Field Training programme to assist with the transition of recent graduates from the training environment to front line duties
- Delivery of a Police Leadership Programmes
- Regeneration of the Advance programme Unit to address the need for continuous in-service training as well as an annual and periodic re-certification in specific skills set.

The Induction Programme is based on a foundation of three fundamental pillars:

- Ethics and Integrity;
- Policing for People ;
- Practical Based Learning

This suggests that notwithstanding the former Commissioner's initiative for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing, the curriculum is largely informed by Policing for People started in 2007, allowing for

the increase of police/community involvement, but some may argue a tame version of Community Policing.

The Provost and his team must be commended for establishing the Academy and for providing academic rigour to the institution. The committee is satisfied that the learning modules in the Induction programme represent in a large respect a meaningful learning set; it is coherent, concise, sociologically and psychologically relevant with a valid amount of contact hours and learning time. However there is need to engage in curriculum review/engineering to reflect some of the felt needs of society as it seeks further social reform.

The learning environment has been enhanced with the application of innovative teaching techniques that include student-centred learning, interactive group work (cooperative learning), role-play and simulations. Teaching aids include multimedia (LCD) projector, computer and digital media, TV and video, internet and police related tools and equipment.

Training faculty includes full time members of the Police Academy who are assigned to the Induction Program for the delivery of the learning modules, as well as other members of the Police Service and external resource personnel who are engaged to provide expertise in areas of study that are lacking at the Academy. There are anomalies regarding the non-payment of an instructor's allowance and this should be addressed urgently if the academic integrity of the delivery of the programme is to be maintained.

An extremely important development in 2011 was the introduction of police related in-service programmes and support services. The in-service programmes are opened to Special Reserve Police (SRP), Traffic Wardens, Port Authority workers and Airport Authority workers. These programmes include Advanced Programmes, Police Leadership Development Programme and Field Training Programme.

The Police Leadership Development Programme seeks to fill the gaps in general advance training in human resources, administrative and strategic management. It focuses on progressive, positive, and collaborative leadership. It encompasses all levels of leadership:

- Level 1: Exploring Leadership (Corporals and Sergeants)
- Level 2: Accepting Leadership (Inspectors and ASPs)
- Level 3: Embracing Leadership (Superintendents and Senior Superintendents)
- Level 4: Strategic Leadership (ACP, DCP, and CoP).

Probably the most impressive part of the training is the operational field training programme, which exemplifies the complexity of police work and the constant need for additional in-service training.

What Jones stated in 2008 ahead of this development, is very instructive. She felt that in the region, we were not training people to become Commissioners of Police, she said it was almost as if there was a conspiracy for us not to get those posts, because the training seemed to be very, very lukewarm in those upper echelons. She noted that leaders in the Police Service lack sufficient strategic visioning and thinking. They possessed inappropriate leadership skills and styles and are not adequately prepared to meet the challenges of a new global environment.

She raised an issue then that this committee would like to reinforce. Jones stated that despite the prevalence of training, there is an insufficient transference of training into practice. Training was not manifested on the ground in terms of the police officers interaction with citizens. There is an urgent need to change the style of supervisors to reflect the values and techniques of Policing for People. Willard (2000) tells us that the most careful recruiting and selection accompanied by an enlightened and motivating training programme can be nullified by poor

supervision. If the new officers find that the values they were taught in the Police Academy are not respected by their supervisors, under actual working conditions, or that their own participation is reduced to mindlessly obeying orders and regulations then the idealism and initiative fostered during the training period will be neutralised if not rejected.

Modern law enforcement agencies are challenged by the changing face of crime. It means therefore that institutions will be expected to engage in constant curriculum review in order to ensure relevance and reflect new legislation. Some of these issues include, cybercrime, child pornography, human trafficking, terrorism, crime mapping and the associated geospatial and temporal analyses, managing crime scenes and selection of forensic data based on DNA , piracy and modern day gangs.

Crucial to all of this is the cost of training to the taxpayers of the country and whether there is value for money. The then Minister of National Security, Brigadier John Sandy in a report , tabled in Parliament in 2012, noted that the overall cost for training for police officers in 2010 was \$13,701,758.46 for 1,852 officers at an average of \$7,398.75 per officer. The training of army officers cost \$43,197,817.76 for 1,638 officers at an average of \$23,372.29 per officer. The disparity is glaring even as we seek answers for value for money (our detection rate in 2010 was 16.7). More money is needed for the proper functioning of a highly professional Police Academy.

### Recommendations

1. In the light of current felt needs of the society more contact hours should be allotted to the learning module (BESC 101) to take into account Moral Reasoning and Values and the Valuing Process. The immersion of Ethics and Integrity across the curriculum should not be left to chance but should be discreetly highlighted as affective objectives in the Units of Work of all learning modules.

2. In that regard appropriate training in values and the valuing process should be mounted for all instructors.
3. The multicultural nature of our society suggests that we should produce police officers easily amenable to change by being exposed to a more extensive diversity training. The learning module, Gender Roles Socialization- Diversity (BESC 109) gives no credence to the violation of human dignity by an authority, police and society's outcast, police and ethnic differences, the people's perception of their police dealing with racism and human dignity, integrity and professional responsibility and practical applications. A more comprehensive learning module on Diversity Training with the necessary number of contact hours should be considered urgently.
4. Child pornography, Human Trafficking and Gangsterism should be given greater prominence in an existing learning module.
5. Police officers should be trained to secure properly, electronic evidence for forensic analysis as well as the management of crime scenes including the management of DNA samples. The current time allotted for (POLD 117) Securing the Crime Scene and (POLD 118) Building and Area Searches and (POLD 119) Exhibits (handling and process) is nine hours and is inadequate and should be increased.
6. The Crime and Problem Analysis unit requires timely data and is using modern equipment and software namely GPS units and Arc GIS software to accurately map crime location. Knowledge of the use of the technology is important and should have prominence in the course (POLD 100) Police Duties (Investigation and Patrol).
7. Without elevating the status of training officers, there will be no effective police training. In that regard police officers on



- the staff of the Police Academy should be paid an Instructor's/Faculty allowance commensurate with the level of training offered and satisfactory enough to allow for the purchase of research materials.
8. If the concept of Policing FOR People is to be the guiding strategy of Service it must be reflected not only in its recruiting but in all the training programmes of the Police Academy. This should include recruits as well as the veterans of the department who should be retrained in the philosophy and practices.
  9. Despite the range of topics designed for in-service training, it appears that a follow-up mechanism that would enforce systematic updated training does not exist. This curriculum activity should be equally important for the Police Academy.
  10. Although law enforcement is a core function of policing, the committee believes that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service should evolve and embrace a community policing culture.
  11. Quality control of instructors should be implemented and institutionalised.
  12. Follow-up evaluation of trainees should be a standard activity for The Police Academy and its curriculum research and development officer.
  13. The committee supports the Provost in his suggestion to the committee that the height requirement of 167 cm for male and 163 cm for female should be removed entirely. In fact the requirement is discriminatory against the male who is required to be 4 cm taller than a female.
  14. The practice of part residential training (12 weeks) should be reviewed since decentralised training is more convenient and less costly.
  15. Courses that are accredited by ACTT should be credit rated as they may allow for matriculation or credit transfer to other tertiary institutions.
  16. It should be possible to start a police career directly at a higher rank. The individual with added qualification will have to fulfill the same requirements as a trainee of the lower ranks as well complete the Police Leadership Development Programme (PLDP), Advance Programmes and Field Training Programme.
  17. The Police Academy should in the medium term seek to certify individuals working in private security firms thereby making the Academy income-generating.
  18. The nation's annual budget 2013 should include added expenditure for the Academy for purposes of teaching spaces (classrooms), a library and information centre, a mock court and re-fencing of the compound.

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# A CASE FOR IMPROVED CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

*Lennox Bernard*

A comparative study of three states in the USA (2006) showed that correctional education reduced recidivism; and employment data revealed (post release), that the earnings of the correctional education participants were higher than non-participants. Of course the magnitude of correctional education's effect on recidivism was high dependent on the programs and techniques used.

It is generally felt that the mission of correctional institutions should be to protect the citizens from crime by safely and securely

handling criminal offenders while providing offenders some opportunities for self improvement thereby increasing the chances that they will become productive and law abiding citizens. The goals are punishment, incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation. Although punishment is a valuable tool and legitimate goal of correction, all four goals must be balanced to maintain the professional integrity of the institution and to meet those goals. The Training programmes of YTC conducted by the Training and Programme Department consisted of the following (2010):

THEMES	CURRICULUM DELIVERY
Literacy & educational challenges	ALTA YTC- primary/secondary education Computer literacy (volunteers)
Tertiary Education	National Academy of Business, Arts and Computing John Donaldson Technical Institute, Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies UWI Open Campus
Skill development e.g. plumbing, electrical masonry, food preparation, agriculture, landscaping.	YTEPP, Ministry of Science & Technology, YTC staff
Relational and Life Skills (problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, conflict resolution, goal setting etc.) Self Esteem and character development, defining masculine excellence and personal development.	SERVOL'S Adolescent Programme
Reintegration The Alpha Programme Understanding the effects of crime on society, Preparing for Purpose, Freedom Within Financial Literacy	Caribbean Umbrella Body for Restorative Behaviour
Self Presentation and Self Management (manners, grooming, etiquette, anger management, stress management, making responsible choices)	Child Line Programmes
Spirituality	Religious instruction, Group Guidance and counseling, Church Services.

## St. Michael's School for Boys

When a child is committed to St. Michael's School for Boys (2006), he falls into one of two categories: Seniors (15-18), or Juniors (10-14). Juniors are exposed to an academic programme at the primary school on the compound while Seniors receive tutoring in Auto Mechanics, Welding, Upholstery, Tailoring, Plumbing, Masonry, Leather craft, Baking, Laundry Operations. There are also evening classes in PVC furniture making, and air conditioning and refrigeration and a compulsory remedial programme in English and Mathematics. Additionally residents are exposed to counselling, religious instructions and sporting and cultural activities. Other youth correctional institutions varied minimally.

### Recommendations

- 1 The entire system of correctional education should be reviewed in light of the recommendations made regarding National Service.
2. In that regard data on young offender population characteristics should be collected and used in strategic planning and program development.
3. There is a variety of extremely valuable programmes offered to young offenders at these institutions but they should be streamlined to provide a meaningful set that is coherent, is built on the philosophical principles of the institution, differentiated to satisfy varying ability levels and is owned by the programme unit of the institution.
4. Such ownership should provide scope for the training of instructors in pedagogical and andradogical principles, methods of delivery, orientation exercises and timetabling, formative and summative evaluation and research.
5. Research should be a key element in the operations of these institutions. It is necessary to ensure program integrity,

accountability, and assurance of future support for correctional education

6. An integrated approach to curriculum development that includes key developers as YTEPP, SERVOL and ALTA should assist in reducing recidivism and increase employment opportunities for young offenders.
7. Training plans should be a collaborative effort between the custodial units and welfare, training, counselling and psychology departments of the correctional institution.
8. Training plans should set a series of targets for young offenders to achieve, aimed at preventing re-offending and assisting in re-integration into society.
9. Young offenders who achieve particularly well on these targets may be eligible for early release. A mentor should be assigned to such an individual considered for early release.
10. Training programmes should allow for a wide range of field based activities that should provide greater self sufficiency in food, stipend for young offenders on release, miscellaneous expenses at the institutions.
11. There is an urgent need for staff training at all of our correctional institutions and at all levels of personnel, in the following areas:
  - Critical thinking skills
  - Behavioural theories to inform interventions
  - Knowledge and application of traditions of therapeutic communities
  - Cognitive behavioural techniques employed with individual and groups of young people within an agreed framework of psycho dynamic thinking about child development
  - The functioning of groups and the nature and meaning of relationships within a therapeutic community
  - A clear grasp of how children grow up in 'normal' circumstances

- Managing defensive behaviours
  - Dealing with burn-out
  - The importance of modelling of pro-social behaviour
12. Members of staff at all of our correctional institutions should be reclassified and should be provided adequate remuneration in keeping with the greater demands of legislation related to the rights of the child e.g. Children's Bill dealing with young offenders who are more violent and more likely to be associated with gangs.
  13. In that regard the YTC should not be staffed by Prison Officers but individuals specially trained in youth development and sensitive to the objectives of YTC.
  14. Library and information services should be upgraded and a accompanying course in Information Literacy should be provided to young offenders.
  15. Unconvicted young offenders on remand at YTC should be exposed to training programs of the institution in the same manner as convicted offenders. Early exit from the institution should allow for the transfer of training at other institutions.
  16. Sports and Physical Education should be a flagship course at all of our young correctional institutions, because of its potential to develop self-discipline, self-confidence and self-esteem in the individual.
  17. The Arts, visual and performing, should be a flagship program at all of our young correctional institutions because of its potential to develop creativity, discipline, self-esteem and love for humanity in the individual.
  18. The St Michael's for Boys should be refurbished in the shortest possible time and should take into account, the erection of a Manager's House, dormitories, a classroom bloc and library a multipurpose indoor court, a space for worship. Secure fencing and well kept playing fields should be included. It should be conceived as a model secure environment for young offenders and staffed accordingly.
  19. A similar institution should be established for young female offenders who are currently housed at the Women's Prison at Golden Grove. The secure environment should be located at a site away from Golden Grove.
  20. Government should increase their subventions to young offenders' institutions for girls such as St. Jude's School and St. Dominic's School and assist in their upgrade.
  21. An Inspectorate of Young Offenders' Institutions should be established to regulate standards, codes of conduct and curriculum delivery and to conduct performance appraisals of staff of these institutions including those run by NGOs and CBOs. The Inspectorate should be under the control of the Ministry of Justice.
  22. A mentor should be assigned to monitor the rehabilitation/ development of the individual, on release, for no less than one year, with responsibility and accountability to a Youth Offenders Board
  23. Some of these recommendations will require amendments to the Youth Offenders Detention Act.
  24. In an attempt to encourage family and community based rehabilitation, efforts should be made by the authorities concerned, to meticulously screen prospective inmates at the institution and exclude some individuals who may be assigned for uncontrollable behaviour.

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# BEYOND THE “PAIL”: TOWARDS PRISON REFORM

*Selwyn Ryan*

Young black males outnumber all other groups in the prison population. They are the principal occupants of our prisons and thus warrant our concern. According to prison data, Afro-Trinidadians constituted 55.1 percent of the convicted prison population of 2,920 in 2010, the mixed grouping accounted for 28 percent, while Indo-Trinidadians and “others” accounted for the remaining 10 percent. Convicted females were 89 in number. Convicted male inmates by offence were as follows: narcotics accounted for 31 percent, maintenance and affiliation 12.8 percent, property without violence, 24.7 other laws, 23.6 percent, Trafficking 20.2, possession of narcotics, 13.5. Seventy-two percent of the murder victims – 1,668 out of 2,307 were Afro-Trinidadians. The statistics also reveal that a large percentage of those who are in prison- 20.1 percent are there because of what are loosely called “drug related” offences. Most are petty offences related to trafficking narcotics. They also indicate that first time offenders account for 50 percent of the inmates.

Conditions in our overcrowded prisons are inhumane, degrading and unacceptable. This is particularly so in the remand yard which houses persons whose matters have not yet been decided. In sum, they are full citizens until a court determines otherwise. Prisons which were meant to “house” hundreds now warehouse thousands. Shocking is perhaps the only appropriate term to describe the conditions found there, and it is surprising that there are not more prisoner breakouts or suicides on a routine basis. The remand facilities are primitive. Conditions for getting rid of bodily waste and for performing basic hygiene

routines are unbecoming. Pails which are used to urinate and defecate share crowded and unlit cells with cots and hammocks that can barely fit what passes for rooms. The pails conceal much more than is imaginable. In a speech given at the opening of the 2004-2005 Law Term, the Chief Justice who heads a committee concerned with the prisons reported that the conditions in our prisons are “sub-human” (*Newsday*, January 22, 2012). The Chief Justice’s assessment was reinforced by that of Justice Carol Gobin, who noted that the Port of Spain Goal was built in 1812, long before the emancipation of the slaves in 1838 (ibid.) The result is that the prisons are in need of physical rehabilitation. Repair and retrofitting of the older units in Port of Spain and Carrera are however difficult to effect, if not impossible. It is reported that they are to be dismantled and rebuilt in Central Trinidad. One notes that most remandees are currently housed in facilities that were initially used to accommodate the controversial voting machines used in the elections of 1961.

## **The Women’s Prison**

Conditions at the women’s prison which accommodate some 90 inmates, are said to be somewhat better, but not much more so. Many of the inmates are “drug mules.” One recent inmate, a citizen of Malaysia who spent four years in the women’s prison, on being released reported that she had to share her cell with two other prisoners, and that she also had to share a pail with cellmates to defecate and urinate, and also had to eat “bread infested with maggots and rotten food.” (That comment about the food might well have been an exaggeration. The food

is said to be OK, notwithstanding the lack of salt and spice about which some complain) Inmates are said to give thought to committing suicide with their blankets (*Borneo Post Online* March 7, 2012).

In recent years, demands have arisen in Trinidad and Tobago for prison reform. Two broad views have emerged in the debate. Those who favour hard line (*mano dura*) retribution approaches agree that conditions in the prisons are substandard, but they are the price that society exacts from those who commit crimes. According to this point of view, the "beasts" who commit these crimes (career criminals they are sometime called) which one hears or reads about must repay the community and the victims for the crimes which they commit by being made to occupy crowded cells, sleep on concrete or on soiled bedding, drink fluids that are contaminated, tolerate roaches crawling in their orifices and over other parts of their body and much else. Their punishment is a loss of some of their rights as citizens and as human beings. The state, it is argued, should not use scarce public funds that are needed to improve living conditions for those who have had their rights, their freedoms, their well being and in some cases, their very lives affected. Retribution is also seen as a deterrent in that it sends or reinforces a message that "jail is not nice."

The other point of view is that the hard-nosed approach is neither humane nor cost effective. It is estimated that it costs taxpayers a great deal to maintain prisoners each day, money which could be better spent to deliver justice. Some members of the reform school want to see the closure of all prisons. They argue that prisons have no justification whatsoever. Following Michel Foucault, they argue that they are creations of the capitalist state. Most people, it is argued, are socially obedient and law abiding and do not need to be physically restrained. Crime it is said prevents crime prevention. Abolitionists admit that there are individuals who are sociopaths and who need to be restrained, but counter argue that these are outliers. These people, it is said, are the responsibility of the community. Transformative justice recognizes that both

the offender and the society were responsible for creating the problem, and both must share the responsibility for providing restitution. Preventive detention, properly structured and monitored, may be necessary for the treatment of the few who need it.

Prison officers, the management and the reformers are divided. Few to favour abolition. Some have however bought into the new paradigm. The current Minister of Justice is committed to aspects of the reform agenda. As the minister argued, "fighting crime is no "soft-man" thing. You have to be hard in your fight against criminals. They are organized people. They have *bowwow*. They have guns. Without the tools that this legislation [provides] law-enforcement agencies, persons who commit crimes will walk the streets with impunity". (*Newsday*, Thursday, Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 2112) The Minister was quoted as being in favour of hangings in the public square. He however favours electronic tagging which allows the security services to locate prisoners who might be let out of prison on specified terms and conditions, and in whom the state has an interest. It is however to be noted that a large majority of the citizenry is in favour of capital punishment.

There is growing public support for some aspects of restorative justice. This view holds that prison conditions must be made more humane and more in tune with what obtains in more "advanced" societies. Prisoners are human beings who also have rights, it is argued. It is also maintained that deep down, most prisoners are not "bad" people, but people who do bad things. They are victims of the prevailing structural and ideological environment. Some get trapped or caught unwittingly because of circumstances, and may need a second chance. Some may need counselling, training in anger management, opportunities to become literate or skilled, and if possible, secure gainful employment on release from prison or even while in prison. Depending on their record, behaviour and apparent disposition, some should also be rewarded with regular visits from their families and may even be allowed a small grant to empower them if they seem serious about becoming entrepreneurial.



In sum, prisoners need to have their stock of human capital increased. Plans to introduce a court to administer a parole system related to minor drug offenses should also be encouraged.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has also bought into the prison reform exercise, and has in principle approved new rules that will apply in respect of good management of penal facilities. It has been noted that the current rules have been in existence since 1943. The new rules, when given legislative approval, will focus more on the prisoners and less on the prison officers who are said to be provided for in other legislation. The rules will make prison officers more aware of the health challenges and status of prisoners, their gang affiliations, if any, their blood types, and the level of risk which each constitutes, all this in order to better allow the authorities to stratify them on entry into prison. Prisoners will also be required to wear uniforms which will reduce the risk of contraband and unauthorized communications being hidden in civilian clothing worn by yet unconvicted prisoners. It will also prevent the wearing of clothing that is unhygienic and improper. As of now, prisoners on remand i.e. charged, but not yet sentenced, wear street clothing. (*Daily Express*, January 25, 2012). It is to be noted that on arrival at prison, prisoners are not stratified. Those in prison for minor offences are mixed with those who are seasoned criminals. It is often said by prison officers and criminologists that the remand yard is the prime school and incubator for crimes that exist, and that it cannot be allowed to function as it currently does. Resources to facilitate stratification on entry are urgently needed and should be given top priority.

Plans have also been announced for other reforms, including the introduction of cable TV, parole, and conjugal visits within the confines of prison. These proposed reforms elicited a great deal of critical comment from citizens about what they might give rise to. There was concern that porn films would be shown on cable TV and that this would excite sexual passions, spread HIV infections from inmates to spouses, conflicts between inmates and their

spouses, family quarrels etc. It was however explained that cable TV would only be used for showing educational type films, the viewing of which would be allowed on a controlled basis. It was also explained that conjugal visits did not necessarily mean visits for purposes of sexual intercourse, and that these would be confined to inmates who were being prepared for release and who needed to be gradually introduced to normal family life and routines. It was also indicated that TV was already in use in several jurisdictions in North America, and in other prisons in Trinidad and Tobago, and had worked well enough.

Reformists pay particular attention to the problem of recidivism. Their argument is that just as capital punishment does not serve as a deterrent to homicide, just so, imprisonment does not serve as a deterrent to many who are engaged in crime. In not a few cases, repeat prisoners prefer to remain being a ward of the state, or are unable to prevent themselves from committing the given offence. What many recidivists need is patient help to overcome or attenuate their illness, which is what it is in many cases. The work being done by faith based groups in the area of rehabilitation for drug addiction illustrates what could and should be done. The existing prison management fully supports this and other initiatives as did its predecessor, former Commissioner of Prisons, John Rougier who argues that the "youthman" is often the victim of the society and not the other way around. As he testified, "part of the problem is that youths have certain basic needs – love, freedom, self-determination, recognition, that are not being met by adults in society. "I believe there is a deep rooted problem which rests with us adults. We have failed drastically in satisfying and meeting the needs of our youths. As such, they respond to this failure through violence and what have you" (Violence, 73). Adults, especially fathers or guardians, also do not give youths quality time. It is to be noted that some fathers are not much older than their sons.

Some ganglords encourage juveniles to become involved in crimes because as juveniles,

they escape the full punishment of the law. They invariably end up at St. Michaels Boys Industrial School or the Youth Training Centre (YTC) (see below) By this time, some already know about the Glock and the Bouhaca guns. "The adult will put that in a young person's hand and he'll end up doing anything he wants. Rougier was also critical of those who opposed reform. "They believe that a criminal is a criminal and should remain so. But the youth would eventually come out and will no doubt be angry and bitter. "You will see him, but you would not see him alone. You will see him behind the barrel of a gun, pointing at you.

Interviews with prison officials and former prisoners yielded a great deal of pertinent information, some of which we summarise as follows:

There are gangs and gang members in the prisons, and they have their own "law" and court, codes of behavior, and status systems. Those who are committed for serious offenses and who are in "big prison" have more rank than those in "little prison." Inmates fight against each other as well as among themselves. They also have links outside prison and are in constant contact with networks of gang leaders. Decisions as to who lives or dies is often determined within the Remand Yard. Some prison guards facilitate the operation of the networks

There is an underground economy in the prisons which is run by ganglords and gang members. That economy relates mainly to the buying and selling of cocaine and marijuana and certain valued commodities such as cigarettes. These informal markets were jokingly referred to as "parlours." There are said to be convicts and remandees who are millionaires.

Following the 1990 attempted coup, there were many members and supporters of the Muslimeen in prison, and they virtually controlled it. Many inmates became or were coerced into becoming converts to Islam to ensure their protection, survival, or their "well being." It is said that the character of the prison was fundamentally changed in these years, and

for the worse. The then Commissioner of Prisons, Mr John Rougier, confirmed that prison officers had lost control of the prison and that a take-over by dissident Muslim elements was only averted by the intervention of outside forces drawn from the armed services. Permission had to be sought to allow this to be done.

Some fifty seven prisoners who were beaten up by prison officers and others drawn from the Defense, Police and other protective forces, made claims in the courts. The presiding judge opined that the inmates suffered "unjustified and unreasonable attacks at the hands of prison and police officers during a prison riot." "Force, she said, "must be used as a last resort only." The state was ordered to make restitution.

Counsel for the state claimed that there was a history of subversive and disorderly behaviour of inmates incarcerated in the north wing of the prison which began in May 2006 and continued with intermittent flares of insurrection up until November 11, 2006." Some of the prisoners obeyed the orders, but the majority did not. The majority used obscene language and hurled missiles at the masked officers, behaviour which caused the latter to take anti-riot action using batons, gas cannisters and rubber bullets (*Express*, July 10, 2012).

In her judgement Justice Jones was critical of what seemed to obtain at the prisons. As she asked, "how was the situation allowed to this critical state? What seemed to be required was preventive action, not aggressive reaction. The evidence in these proceedings brings home the fact that our prison authorities do not have the wherewithal to deal with these incidents." Jones noted that the use of excessive force merely served to aggravate a bad situation and set that time bomb ticking. She also insisted that the "rule of law" must prevail.

As a society, we require the prison authorities and the prison officers employed in our prisons to protect us from persons convicted of, or suspected to have committed crimes. In this regard we demand that they exercise on our behalf the responsibility for the

care and conduct of these persons. As a society committed to the maintenance of the rule of law, and the protection of human rights, there is a responsibility on us to ensure that these persons incarcerated at our behest, and for our protection are afforded at the very least basic human rights and adequate living conditions. In order to do so the prison authorities must be given the necessary resources, physical and human.

The Judge also called for revision of the archaic prison rules which were last revised in 1961. These are abused, she observed. "I am not for one moment advocating the removal of those safeguards which ensure that the power placed in the hands of the jailer is not abused. I am advocating however that the rules be revised to ensure that they reflect the changes wrought by time and to guarantee that their use becomes one of the main tools in ensuring effective governance within our prison system. The judge also warned about prisoner abuse:

In order to move forward, we need to recognize that as a society we have an obligation to ensure that persons employed in the protective services are psychologically suited and equipped to properly discharge the responsibility that we have placed on their shoulders. This obligation, to my mind, not only requires constant psychological assessment and support and adequate training but requires us to ensure that these officers operate under conditions which allow them to discharge their functions in a manner consistent with the values we hold as a society committed to the rule of law.

Despite current efforts to alter the URP and CEPEP programmes, resourceful gang lords succeed in hiring "ghost" gangs while being in prison or in getting part of the employees' wages. Some employees are afraid of the gang leaders or are loyal to them and hand over part of their wages.

Gang leaders recruit members from among the prison population. Management also recruits trusted inmates who function as prison officials or orderlies.

Prisoners punish inmates who commit "nasty" crimes, particularly against women

and children. They have their own codes to determine what is an acceptable crime and what is heinous and deserving of punishment. This often presents safety problems for officers.

It is difficult to keep cell phones out of the possession of inmates in prison. They are brought in by prison officers who are on the take. Officials also supply drugs. Prisoners and officials conceal phones in what is euphemistically called their "vault", i.e. their rear orifices and in food. Eliminating them completely is nigh impossible. They also cannot easily be jammed.

Many prisoners can neither read nor write and are often embarrassed when they have to make this known. They enter prison as illiterates and most leave illiterate

Many young prisoners resent their incarceration and are angry and belligerent. Many in the Remand Yard believe that they are unjustly imprisoned, that their matters are taking too long to be determined, and that they do not deserve their detention and punishment. There is a great deal of bitterness against the police who are accused of "rubbing" them down when they do not cooperate with them. Many of them also know that many police officers are "bandits," and are responsible for their incarceration.

Some have become very angry and have had to be beaten into submission in order to get them to face "reality". Many young men complain that prison takes away their dignity and their self-esteem. Whereas they were "lions" with ranks before, they were now at the mercy of prison officers. Many of the latter are aware of the dangers which they face on a daily basis. We were told by officials that the remand yard is a danger zone, and that they never know whether they would return home alive. Many resort to alcohol to deal with their anxieties and insecurities.

As is the case, in all prisons and penal institutions, *prisonization* obtains in Trinidad and Tobago prisons. In order to survive in

prison, inmates must comply with the codes of prison society. "The pressure to live by this code is far more powerful than any other force behind prison walls, including efforts at reform. Sexual assaults, race wars, extortion, rival-gang conflicts, guard abuse, racial violence, and the demand for absolute loyalty to an inmate's fellow prisoner, are all factors in the *prisonization* effect. Prison is a place where survival quickly becomes the only thing that matters. *It is nearly impossible for an inmate to make rehabilitation a priority under such stressful conditions.* Older prisoners become "prisonized" and come to terms with their situation. Prison is home. They become adjusted and are co-opted. Some are even given privileges and function as de facto officers."

Many prisoners prefer to remain in prison than to be freed because they fear that they might be executed sooner rather than later. Some also value the regular meals which they get in prison.

It is well known in the underworld that by age 25-30, many young black males begin to prepare for their death and their families are told the type of coffins which they want and the church and cemetery in which they wish to be buried.. It is also said that many prisoners put aside money for their bailers, attorneys, and their undertakers, in that order. Many gang members are afraid to attend funerals since to do so may cause them to have to cross a forbidden border.

Prisoners experience many indignities that do a great deal of damage to their self esteem. One former prisoner, Mr Wayne Chance, who has become an advocate of prison reform, reports that what he calls "human trafficking" still takes place in our prisons, though there is less of it than was the case when prisons were not as well lit or covered by CTV. As he explains, "if you were a young boy just entering the system, they deliberately place you in a particular cell for other prisoners to have a "feast". This in the prisons is called "human trafficking" where prisoners are sold to other inmates. Mr Chance is the founder of Vision on Mission (*Guardian*,

Sept 11<sup>th</sup> 2011.) Chance makes the interesting point that prisoners are very clever persons, and that it is very difficult to determine whether they have been genuinely reformed. They are very good at faking reform or may believe their own fables. Time is needed to determine whether the protestations of ex-cons that they are reformed can be taken as given. Chance has been a tireless advocate of prisoner rehabilitation and has been working with indigenous and international NGO's, agencies and employers. The general public has however been hostile and has made it clear that he and others are not welcome in their backyard.

There have been complaints that not enough is being spent on rehabilitation either of prisoners, ex-cons or prison guards. Government is not seen as being sufficiently serious about prison reform which some see as a critical contributor to the crime problem which the country faces. They assume that all is well at the prisons which is not the case, and do not recognize that prisons are one of the major classrooms for the inculcation of criminality. There is in their view an urgent need for after care attention for released prisoners as well as counselling for prison officers who are pivotal parts of the security system. Self interest requires that these things be done to reduce the risk that the community becomes the victim.

Successive governments have, however, been introducing a number of measures to respond to the claims of the restorative justice movement. A parole bill and an electronic monitoring bill have been introduced into parliament in April 2012. Both of these bills, if made law, would allow convicted persons to be released from prison earlier than would normally have been the case. According to the Minister of Justice, the electronic tagging bill would be a "revolutionary crime fighting measure meant to assist in penal reform [and] to cut down real time punishment." We agree.

There is also need to assess the roles which the Judiciary and the Police Authorities play in this matter. Both contribute mightily to some of the most unacceptable conditions in the prison

system, particularly in the Remand Yard. We met individuals who were awaiting trial or completion thereof for upwards of ten years. They suffer as do their families, especially those who believe they are not guilty. What often happens is that persons are arrested and charged before supporting evidence is forthcoming. The prisoner has to wait for months while the police gather the needed evidence which they may never succeed in doing in a timely manner or not at all. Delays in the judicial system compound the problem. The system is given to unacceptable delay and frustration. We are convinced that the system needs to be radically reconstructed. This will serve to reduce the substantial number of angry young males who believe that the system is rigged to the advantage of the police and those who are well off or well connected. It is to be noted that some inmates who have been charged plead guilty and “take jail” whether they are or are not guilty if the maximum penalty in terms of time in prison is less than the time that the matter would take to be disposed of in the courts.

The judiciary is also aware that it too has a critical role to play in prison reform, both directly and indirectly. There is however a resource and capacity problem which it has to overcome. Less than two per cent of the national budget is allocated to the judiciary. But even if more money were available, there would still be skill shortages. There are insufficient lawyers practicing at the criminal bar. The same holds for staff trained to meet the skills that restorative justice requires—training in IT, counselling, arbitration, transcription, etc. Both the courts and the DPP’s office are under-resourced. Coordinating the activities and policies of all those who are part of the system also calls for goodwill and an eagerness to deliver which has not been a characteristic of the justice system which tends to follow precedent rather than what is required.

Not surprisingly, matters coming before the Court have to be postponed, either because all the pieces are not in place to allow scheduled matters to proceed, or because lawyers have a pecuniary interest in causing the matter to be

postponed. We note the statement of the Chief Justice that the backlog in the High Court would remain unmanageable even if parallel courts are put in place and the old system of preliminary trials are abolished. Doing so would merely transfer the problem from juries to the judiciary. As he observed, “if every matter went to trial in the High Court, each judge would have to do over 400 trials a year, a clear impossibility.” The problem is of course worse in the magistrate’s courts to which most of the matters go. (*Express*, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

It is however clear that the delays which are built into the system are generating anger and frustration and that in the not too distant future, the matter could blow back into the remand yard and into the faces of society at large. An interim answer might well be a public defender system. A Pratt and Morgan type of rule might also be put in place in respect of matters that involve inmates on remand. It should be provided that it is cruel and unusual punishment to keep a citizen in prison if his/matter is not disposed of in say, 3 to 5 years. It is said some authorities that a year spent in our remand yard should be counted as two. This issue is currently the subject of a great deal of judicial and political attention. The suggestion is that the default period should be 10 years.

Plans are afoot to augment the space available for housing inmates. The Eastern Correctional Rehabilitation Centre which was acquired to house detainees following the State of Emergency and which now houses 117 low risk inmates is to be retrofitted to house 457 inmates, and not the 1000 that it could accommodate if the human and logistical capabilities were available. The increase would however go some way to relieving the overcrowding problem to which we have alluded. Much of the overcrowding would disappear if the consumption as opposed to trafficking of marijuana is decriminalized. Close to 40 percent of the prison inmate population is said to be in the system for a marijuana related charge and should not be in the prison at all. Plans are afoot to address this problem by the introduction of a drug court, come September 2012.

## The Forgotten Lads of Trinidad and Tobago

The case for the rehabilitation of little black boys was poignantly made by the experiences of the St. Michael's School for Boys. This home was built by the Anglican authorities in 1889 to accommodate homeless boys and young men who had behavioural problems of one kind or another and whom no one was willing or able to care for. The Home, which operates under the Children's Act, has two categories of inmates – remands, youngsters whose cases are yet to be decided by the juvenile court and “committals” whose cases have been completed by the Court. Inmates must be between the ages of 10 and 18, fall into two broad categories. The first are matters which are “private” and those that are brought to the courts by parents, family members, or caregivers. The second category are “police matters” in which the “lads” as the young inmates are called, has broken a specific law and is brought before the court on a police charge.

Inmates came from all ethnic groups and classes. The data however indicates that 90 percent of the inmates at St Michaels are Afro-Trinidadian. The remainder is Indian. Of the 493 remanded lads, 266 are African, 145 are mixed, while 82 are Indian.

The “lads” continue or begin their primary school education at the School and either go on to learn a trade or to take secondary education if they can handle it. More or less the same arrangement is in place at the YTC in Golden Grove which is also not a prison but a training institution. It would seem that very few boys go beyond primary school and get into secondary school either because they do not attend classes regularly and are not easy to control or motivate.

St. Michael is a noncustodial institution, and there are no security gates. The offenses most frequently committed were breaking and entering, rape, and use of obscene language. A profile of the students given by the Deputy Manager of the School in 1993 complained that the inmates of the 90's are fearless, quick tempered, lacking in discipline, have a low

attention span, exhibit poor hygiene, and lack self-esteem. The manager advised that reforms need to be done “to prevent our youth from coming to St. Michaels or to ensure that the lads did not graduate to the adult prisons”. The behaviour of the lads has apparently become worse.

The successes in terms of CXC pass rates which one tutor was able to achieve however, suggest that the school is failing the lads and not the other way around. (We note here that instruction for the CXC is delivered on a pro bono basis only.) This view is shared by prison officials. The lads are not “unteachable”, but must have competent teachers who can speak their language and deliver their product in a way which dramatizes the material and stimulates their interest and imagination. The students (like others) also need to be given access to material which is relevant to their interests; they have to be motivated to read and write. They must also see the purpose and relevance of what they are doing, and connect what they are learning to their own lives. They also need to be taught to control their anger and their boredom and impatience. (Debbie Jacobs, “The Lessons Learned at YTC”, *Guardian*, March 12, 2012; October 31, 2011).

We were advised that many boys at St Michael challenge, defy or disrespect the authorities. Some have also grown marijuana on the fringes of the 50 acre estate on which the school sits. There have also been reports that youngsters made fake guns in the school workshops which can intimidate; that they abuse, parents and teachers alike, and that there is also a latent homosexual problem. Unfortunately some teachers are suspected of being pedophiles and have abused youngsters who in turn abuse those younger than they are. Gangs and their leaders have also successfully recruited youngsters by tempting them with money, clothes, “bling’ and young women. The lads, however, discover later that they are locked into gangs for life. We were told that inmates who come from South or Central Trinidad have better success rates than those from along the Corridor where gangs are

more “persuasive”, and the environment more permissive.

Prison officials complain of being devalued and stressed the urgent need for more and better trained and structured staff, and for a new set of rules more relevant to the spirit of the times. They complain that they are treated as a dumping ground and not regarded as a central part of the prison system.

A general complaint frequently heard is of the absentee or “phantom” father. Very few visit the school when activities are scheduled. (As is the case at YTC, 9 out of every 10 who attend are women). Many hate their fathers for the lack of respect and concern shown to their younger siblings and mothers. Many admit to wanting to hurt them, such is their anger. Youngsters often identify and call certain prison officers “Mummy” or “Father.” Youngsters have been known to complain about having to share beds

or rooms while their mothers are otherwise occupied, perhaps as a sexual worker. It is also known that some youngsters believe they have to commit crimes in order to feed their mothers and their siblings. We note too that many boys give up the struggle and drop out of school because they are unable to compete with their sisters or with female classmates. Boys need better teachers and committed workers, but they also need better parents and home and school environments. Often, both the home and the school are prisons unto themselves. One senior prison officer was heard to say that it is the parents who should be in jail and not the lads.

We note that programmes are being continuously being revised in conjunction with YTEPP and much progress is being made. Prison work is however demanding, stressful, and burnout among prison officers and other workers is frequent.

# POLICE IS BANDIT TOO!

*Selwyn Ryan*

*Any Peace Between Police and High Risk Communities Will Not Work If Police Officers do not change the way they Interact with Members of the Community. They have told me that until we are sure that the Police is on our side, until we are sure that the policemen who are involved in drugs are disciplined, we are not giving up our guns. Communities have to begin to trust you! - Father Clyde Harvey*

During our meetings and conversations with stakeholders and young blacks, much was said about the role of policemen in the criminal justice system. The police are generally not trusted and snitching is an offence punishable by death. Police are frequently accused of being responsible for much of the corruption that exists in the drug economy. Some of our informants believe that between 30 and 40 percent of the members of the Police Service are corrupt and that policemen themselves were either invisible members or associates of gangs or controllers of their activity.

Several inmates at the remand facility of Golden Grove prison accused policemen of being responsible for them being in prison. Quite naturally, they are embittered. The police were accused of “rubbing: them down,” of planting drugs on them, and lying on them. It was also said that the police were often responsible for their prolonged stay in the remand yard because they were either inept or selective in generating or collecting the evidence required for matters to be heard by the courts. The system is ascriptive and partisan in both class and ethnic terms.

Police were also accused of being corrupt and of rarely being where they were needed by victims of crime when they were most needed. It was likewise alleged that they were often guilty of colluding with drug lords, big and small, either by providing tip offs or giving safe passage to them when drug shipments or other trafficking activities are taking place. This, it is

said, happens at the very top levels of the service as well as at the pedestrian levels of the system. It is alleged that some political personalities are silent partners of the big fishes who control the drug trade. These allegations are difficult to prove or establish, but many believe them to be true. The Minister of National Security in fact concedes that crime detection is very low and that only 20 percent of the crimes which are committed are detected. The figure is even lower where homicides are involved.

In the responses to what was alleged about the police, it is widely agreed that while there are many honest and competent officers, much is “wrong” about the service, and that lawlessness is not only limited to gangsters (*Express*, July 7 2012). It is generally agreed that the police are poorly trained and lack the forensic skills needed to fight white collar or blue collar crimes, whether major or minor. Visibility and mobility are also low One official put it bluntly, but correctly when he said that the Police Service went to sleep in 1962 at independence, woke up in 1990 in the wake of the attempted coup, and went back to sleep again.

When asked why they were still asleep, it was said they were frustrated and poorly motivated. Salaries are low, and promotions at all levels were not forthcoming. Much of the membership was said to be “acting”. The number of vacancies was also said to be high and were being filled selectively (*Express*, July 7, 2012)



It is said that few young men join the service, and that most of those who do so are not choosing it because they see it as a worthwhile career, but as a "job". Many of the recruits are poorly educated and unable to read, write and communicate in English. Their language is that of the cell phone. Recruits came from the same constituency as the gangs. Training methods, particularly in intelligence gathering are now being put in place, but it will take years before these become routine. Steps are being taken to increase the number of recruits.

More and more questions have been asked about the role of the Police Complaints Commission (PCA). The complaint is that it is ineffective and that in most cases, the police prevail once they complain that the offenders shot first and that the police were acting in self-defence. Since its establishment several years ago, only one of over 60 officers has been disciplined. The (PCA) also has other limitations. As the Chairman complained, "the rogue cops in the service have brought a loss of respect. There is also concern that the Ministry of National Security has unofficially sanctioned a judicial execution policy which is intended to take back the streets from the urban guerillas.

The former Minister of Justice, Mr Herbert Volney, also opined that the police are "too quick to draw," and warned policemen that "any killing of a citizen by a police officer must be done with lawful justification. The gun is the last resort and is to be used in self defence". Volney accused policemen of homicidal killing. The Police have a habit of going to poor communities and causing havoc for small pieces of weed to harass the peaceful residents with. You do not kill a man in this country for being in possession of weed."

The Minister of National Security in his "new crime plan" however, seemed inclined to give the police more freedom to confront the gangmen. He warned the bandits that they should expect no sympathy from the state if they shoot at its officers. He also warned that he planned to beef up the forces of law and order

by putting more men in uniform who will be going after the "recalcitrants". When the plan is implemented, it shall be surgical, it shall be clinical, and this country shall begin a new era of safety."(*Express*, August 17<sup>th</sup>). This sounds like a campaign of judicial or state centric extermination such we have witnessed in St Kitts and Guyana where at one time a "Phantom Squad" and a "Black Clothes Police" were used by the Guyana government to deal with bandits and insurgents (*Express*, Sept 27<sup>th</sup> 2011).

In more recent months, however, (November 2012) the Police have concluded that hard policing alone would not work and are trying to change their mode of operation. As the Commissioner of Police (acting) observed, (*Express* November 16, 2012) "hard policing may have created a strained relationship with some citizens and the Police. We are trying to change that across the board...There is no quick fix." Time will tell whether the peace can be maintained.

For their part, the gang lords have warned that they would not surrender their guns unless they are satisfied that they can trust the police. Such trust may be hard to come by. Father Clyde Harvey, a socially activist priest, in fact warned the Police that many young men had reason to be distrustful. He also reminded those who listened to his sermon to the University of the West Indies graduating class in 2002 that Laventille was not merely East Port of Spain or only about criminals: quite a few had in fact recently completed degrees. The young men however had serious problems which the police should not ignore (*Express*, October 29, 2012):

When I look into the eyes of young men, I see the anger, the loneliness and the need for recognition in the other. How do you deal with that? You do not deal with that by becoming angry yourself. You have to remain calm because your anger will feed on his anger and an explosion is bound to occur. People are suffering not because they are bad, but because of the way they were brought up,

The police were advised to avoid labelling and stereotyping communities as “hotspot” etc. They should go into communities and help the people to understand their vision, but should not expect that people will understand immediately.

The top leaders of the Police Service have recognized and acknowledged that levels of distrust between themselves and certain communities are high, and that they have to move toward reducing such hostility as they go forward. “Hard” policing alone would not achieve the goals which they and the policy

makers are seeking to achieve as part of the “new crime plan” which is currently being rolled out. But as Fr Harvey has warned, arms amnesties are hard to come by, much less hold unless trust is reengineered.

As of writing, the Police do not seem to know whether the “soft” or the “hard” approach is the default mode. The public’s attitude seems to be hardening. The Public also seems to be opting for a law and order approach. The frequency with which elements in the “hot spots” riot and burn tyres in the street has served to legitimise the “hard” Line approach,

**CHAPTER 4**  
**THE INFLUENCE OF**  
**POPULAR MUSIC CULTURE ON CRIME**



## MUSIC AND THE BLACK MALE GANGS AND SAGA BOYS: THE BIRTH OF THE STEEL BAND

*Selwyn Ryan*

Trinidad and Tobago has always been a riotous society which disrespected authority. The problem now is that guns have replaced sticks, knives and razors as the weapon of choice. The problem as to what needs to be done about rebellious black youth was avidly discussed in the decades of the post-emancipation era. Acute concern about gangs and hooligans also manifested itself in the years after WW I following the return of those who served in the war and before WWII when the “bare footed man,” once peacefully led by Captain Andrew Cipriani, broke loose from his tether and terrorized the urban gentry. Labour leader, Uriah Butler and his supporters continued the struggle for better wages and working conditions, but there was also much talk about “hooligans.” This riot led to the death of a black policeman, Charlie King, who was incinerated by the rioters and the eventual imprisonment of Butler. The events of the thirties have become an important part of the narrative about the development of trade unionism and of political parties, but too many of the day, what they were witnessing was “hooliganism.”

Much was also heard about rebellious black young men during the years (1941-1943) during which the “Yankees” were in Trinidad as part of the US-UK Bases for Destroyers deal. That event shook the moorings and manners of the society to its foundations. The established press was inundated with hostile comment as to what was taking place. Political activist, Albert Gomes, wondered in one of his columns about “what were we doing with the young men and women whose contact with the bases has altered their values beyond any hope of adjustment”. The

answer, he moaned was, “not much.” Everyone, or so it seemed, was trying to get as many Yankee dollars as possible for mother, daughter and gangster.

Harvey Neptune (2010), noted the public mood of the era. As he wrote: “the phenomenon of hooliganism was to a large extent driven by the establishment press. Law, order, and discipline, drummed the two main dailies, had broken down in the colony. Editorials and articles railed every day about terrible “gangs” of young men garbed in colored shirts and armed with sticks and stones. The *Trinidad Guardian*, in particular, chronicled what it christened a “wave of lawlessness,” and routinely treated readers to outraged reports about local toughs – the period’s infamous “robust men”. These types, alleged the newspaper, stole food, stoned bystanders, and assaulted anyone impeding their progress. The organ also published numerous pieces of public correspondence on the subject; one, for example, mockingly advised that, to become a member of the hooligan gangs, all one had to do was “to beat up on someone, supposedly with a lead pipe”.

The mainstream tendency was to explain “hooliganism” as a product of the terrible twinning of American money and lower-class Trinidad immorality. From this perspective, the root of the new social evil lay in Yankee dollars placed in the hands of young local rogues. When, for example, the Commissioner of Police unveiled the administration’s anticrime program in November 1942 (which included banning the public consumption of alcohol, increasing the difficulty in procuring licenses for recreation

clubs, and deploying more police on the streets), he explicitly identified laboring people's abnormal purchasing power of hooliganism. The island's "top cop" further underlined the connection between hooliganism and a sense of inappropriate working-class empowerment by characterizing the colony as caught in a "chronic state of carnival."

Not all commentary on hooliganism, however, degenerated into a harangue against Trinidad's working people. Patriots, in particular, questioned the quick recourse to condemnation of the colony's impoverished youth as "criminals running amok." Though conceding that Yankees had produced a pattern of worrisome conduct among the populace, dissidents like Port of Spain Mayor, Tito Achong and Albert Gomes subscribed to a diagnosis more sociological than moralistic. In late 1942, both these municipal politicians opposed a convening of the City Council meant to discuss hooliganism for fear that the "city fathers" would endorse increased punishment and other "drastic remedies". These, it is worth recalling, were the days when calypsonian Lord Invader's call to "bring back the cat" echoed the establishment's clamor for the government to reinstate flogging."

The gang phenomenon during the war years also brought into focus the "Saga boys" about whom Sparrow sang in *Jean and Dinah* who were said to be the tropical variants of Britain's "teddy boys". According to musicologist J. D. Elder, the Saga Boys were not only delinquent, but traded in vice". Elder also claims that the boys also gave rise to the steel band. As he observes: "It is from the ranks of the "Saga Boys, with their gaudy dress and their long, sharp stilettos and razors that a new type of music arose. In the early days, mainly in 1938, young men had begun to sit on the dry embankment of the city of Port of Spain, idling. Those were the days of depression and low wages. This group could be seen experimenting with discarded motor-car parts, beating out what was more rhythmic noise under the tutelage of retired Kalinda-men."

The steel bands were one of the earlier manifestations of the gang phenomenon in lower Port of Spain. The clashes invariably took place in the streets. To quote Elder once more, "steel bandmen were usually armed to the teeth. Their hatred and suspicion of the upper class was so great that reprisals were usually waged against a whole upper class street in order to avenge the interference of one member of that district." Elder also observed that there was a dynamic relationship between the music of the tamboo bamboo, the dress standards of the saga boys and the gangs, which is what the steel bands really were. "This strange phenomenon – this triple headed social problem in which the colored people struggled for spiritual security in a community shot through with conflicting forces in melodrama acted out against the maddening frenzied music of the steel band as back-ground just as the old *cannes brule*. *Kalinda* fighters struggled for acceptance and approval in the land where just a hundred years ago, they had been slaves and chattels.

A root and branch analysis of the phenomenon of the young black male would be incomplete if it did not recall the battles that took place among the gangs of yesterday, the epic steelband clashes, the white handle razors which the badmen flashed. The steel bands were descendents of the gangs of the 19th century. Prior to their appearance, the gangs used whatever weapons were deemed legitimate and whichever percussion instrument met their fancy. Stones, sticks and knives were the weapons of choice in combat. Stalks preceded the dust bin covers, and the oil and biscuit tins and the steel drums. The saga boys in their turn were descendants of the proverbial "lazy man" who loved to dress flashily and sharply and who lived off women. "His "bling" was fancy tailored clothing and custom made two tone shoes. He invariably also wore a hat. One contemporary described the typical "saga boy" in the following way:

He looked for the most expensive shirt, the most expensive pants and shoe. And every time you see him, he clean. Well-shaved. Every two days

he going to the barber to get a fresh mark. And he does nothing more than pose. Just go, let's say, by Green Corner that was the headquarters for posing. You'd go by Green Corner and you'd see him posing there. You'd see him call one girl and he'd talk to her. And she'd hand over some money and she gone. And maybe about a half an hour after, you'd see him call the next one. She'd hand over money to him. And he goes over to his friends and says: "Well, boy, I did well. Collect from two of them. So he had no reason to work (Stuempfle 1996).

Steel band rivalry often took place over women and expressed itself in gang warfare. Steelbands generated strong feelings of partisanship and loyalty and not surprisingly, they became linked to the political activities of politicians and parties. Rivalries between parties often expressed itself in terms of rivalries between steel bands. Steel bank classes became the norm. As Stuempfle writes:

The strong territorial attitude of bands meant that it was sometimes difficult for pan men from one neighborhood to pass through a hostile neighborhood without being attacked. Furthermore, some bands had long-standing feuds with each other that could flare up at any time. In the late 1940s Invaders (of Woodbrook) and Casablanca (of East Dry River) were continually at war with each other. Vernon Mannelle explains that this was due to the perception of Woodbrook as a more prosperous neighborhood and to the fact that Invaders would dress up and attract women from downtown. In the late 1949 and early 1950 a considerable amount of publicity was given to stabbings and arrests involving these two bands (Ibid 42).

The clashes invariably took place in the streets. To quote Elder once more, "steel bandmen were usually armed to the teeth. Their hatred and suspicion of the upper class was so great that reprisals were usually waged against a whole upper class street in order to avenge the interference of one member of that district." Elder also observed that there was a dynamic relationship between the music of the tamboo bamboo, the dress standards of the saga

boys and the gangs, which is what the steel bands really were. "This strange phenomenon – this triple headed social problem in which the colored people struggled for spiritual security in a community shot through with conflicting forces in melodrama acted out against the maddening frenzied music of the steel band as back-ground just as the old *cannes brule* Kalinda fighters struggled for acceptance and approval in the land where just a hundred years ago, they had been slaves and chattels.

By the sixties, the steel bands no longer consumed most of their their energies making war on each other. Their conflicts were now about jobs with the Crash Programme, the Prime Minister's Special Works Programme, the LID, the DEWD Programme and the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP). Many of those who worked on the various projects were ex-prisoners, the badjohns of the time who defied the authorities by killing without fear of the law. Even then, guns were trumps!

### Calypso and the Young Black Male

One of the most memorable discussions in which the status of the young male in society was dissected was that related to the calypso sang in 1997 by Winston Peters, known in the calypso world as Gypsy. The calypso in question, "Little Black Boy" was a "giant of a song" which aroused a great deal of passion because of the stark way in which the profound issues were framed. It would be helpful to quote some of the lines of the song.

*He never learn how to read,  
he never learn about math  
He never learn how to write,  
he never learn about that  
All he study was he sneakers,  
he sneakers and clothes  
So he learn how to dress and he learn how to pose  
Now he can't get no work,  
he can't get no job  
So he decide to steal and he decide to rob  
But little Black boy couldn't last long at all  
The police put a bullet through his duncey head skull.  
Look in the front,  
see who's he doctor?  
Look at the back,*

*see who's the lawyer?*  
*Look in the bank*  
*see who's the banker?*  
*Look in the business,*  
*see who's the owner?*  
*Look at the staff,*  
*see who's the worker?*  
*Look at the drugs,*  
*see who's the dan man?*  
*Look who eating out of them garbage can?*  
*Look in the jail see who you see too?*  
*Ah bet a little Black boy just like you.*

Many blacks were critical of Gypsy for highlighting the problem of "failing" blacks. Some argued that he should have focused more on the achievements of those who were making it up the ladder. Was he not abetting those who were won't to denigrate blacks and gloat over the success of their co-ethnics? Was he not sending a message of despair to African youth? Was he not ignoring the fact that the problems of black youth could not be meaningfully analysed and understood outside the context of what was taking place in black families, black neighbourhoods and in the labour market where joblessness among black youth was pervasive?

Questions were also raised by those who felt that Gypsy should have directed his messages at all little Trinidadian boys rather than just to those of African ancestry. Why was he being ethnically selective? Interestingly, Professor Kenneth Ramchand felt that Gypsy was not in fact being selective. To quote Ramchand:

...these days, plenty people are black in the socio-economic sense.... Gypsy does not exclude the parents of little black boys of Indian, Chinese, white or off-white origin.... just as "House for Mr. Biswas" was not just about Indians in Trinidad. (*Trinidad Guardian*, February 12, 1997).

And indeed, the Indo and Euro-Trinidadian commentariat have observed that there is a great deal of poverty among their co-ethnics though it is perhaps less visible than that which exist among the urban based Afro-Trinidadian community. Responses to Gypsy's song came from, many other quarters. Reginald Dumas had the following to say by way of comment on the

difference between the attitude of the blacks of his generation and that of contemporary blacks.

All little black boys these days are not pipers, posers and maxi touts; of course, several will become doctors and lawyers and bankers. But hasn't there been a considerable decline over the last 20 years in the numbers of the upwardly mobile blacks as a percentage of the population? When the A-level results are published every year, how many black faces do you see among the scholarship winners? Why is that so? What you can say is that little boys and girls of whatever colour cannot be expected to make it on their own; they need a support system. The family, first and foremost, but also the school and the community, among other structures. For black children, that system is crumbling at a disproportionate rate.

Former *Express* Editor, Lennox Grant, took the view that Gypsy was wrong to focus on the school; education was not the key to upward mobility in the context of Trinidad and Tobago except for those who attended the prestige schools. As Grant saw it:

Gypsy's big song fails to recognize that today's 'little black boy' could only have arrived at his present condition because of decades of free schooling. The calypsonian regards school as an unqualified good without questioning what has actually been going on in the schools. (*Express*, February 23, 1997)

Much of what Grant wrote is of course true, and there are several studies of what is taking place in the state schools which confirm his view's (cf. Jules 1994; Ryan et. al 1997). But Gypsy was singing a calypso, and could not be expected to deal with all the facets of a very complex situation. Gypsy's response to the criticisms levelled at him was to say that there is a serious problem at hand, and that someone had to ring "the bell of concern", notwithstanding the fact that others such as the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC), calypsonians CroCro and Sparrow had done so before. In his view; there was a "potentially explosive problem" which had to be faced.

We have to get rid of the ostrich mentality and face reality. As an "African", I recognize that



my own are going astray more than any other group of people. Many are on drugs leading to vagrancy; there are those in correctional facilities. The effect of these ills are highest among many of our African youths, and while we may not be able to pin point the exact cause, we can start today [and] try and remedy the situation (*Trinidad Guardian*, February 8, 1997).

The late Keith Smith also defended Gypsy's composition. He denied that it was "racist" as some alleged, which it clearly was not. Smith, however, quoted verses from two songs which he felt had also treated with the problem in ways that deserved to be noticed. The first selection came from Flex who said he wanted to do better, but from birth had a hard row to hoe:

*What about all de confusion  
Dat corrupt we generation  
Williams say he had a plan  
To separate all black man  
And apart from de recession  
We deal with in de nation  
We faced with segregation  
So don't pressure de youthman*

"Stand Firm (Little Black Boy)" opens with the chorus in which we find the "little black boy" reaffirming pride in his blackness, suggesting that we need to look at the root of the problem.

Another of Flex's songs which Smith quoted is as follows: The song again raises the question as to who or what is responsible for the predicament of blacks whatever the age. The voices here are mixed:

*Yesterday meh father get lay off  
From a job he had down on de wharf  
When I hear dat, I get nervous  
From now ting go be real rough  
But if ah start selling de ganja  
Dey go say I is a gangster  
But de truth of de whole matter  
Dey should never lay of meh Father*

### **Dance Hall Music and the Young Black Male**

Music plays a critical role in the generation of social capital the world over. Music has always been central to the lives of black folk whether it took the form of work songs on the plantations, drums, hymns, sankeys, gospel songs, or

jazz and bebop. Blacks in the Caribbean also used music to protest slavery, segregation and injustice, to console themselves in times of grief, or for purposes of entertainment. In Trinidad and Tobago, the steel band and the calypso were always seen as the basic ingredient of the creole culture, and to this must be added the various versions of calypso, soca, and in recent years, within the Indian community, the chutney. All of these music forms have served the community as agencies to cope with the vagaries of life.

In recent years, Jamaican music has become one of the staples of the music world in Trinidad and Tobago, and this has helped to change the social landscape. What we attempt here is a brief account of the impact which American hip-hop and Caribbean dancehall music have had and continue to have on young black youth and more recently, young Indo-Caribbean youth as well. Establishment figures all over the region have complained that Jamaican dance hall music has been impacting negatively on their societies, and some in fact blame the growing popularity of this music for the violence, vulgarity and coarseness that characterizes so many aspect of their lives.

As did Reggae before, Jamaican dancehall music and hip pop dominate the airwaves of Jamaica and of the Caribbean. That music is incendiary and characterized by the use of raw language and expletives, female battering, valorization of alcohol consumption, homophobia, patriarchy, verbal violence, donmanship, and badmanism, conspicuous consumption of certain brands of high end and goods, fear of impotence, misogyny, sexual promiscuity, emphasis on sexual prowess, a glorification of mama and complaints of fatherly abandonment. Police brutality and informer phobia, hyper and hegemonic masculinity, references to gangster codes and behavior, the glorification of guns and "shottas" all feature prominently. A noted dance hall "badman," Elephant Man, made the point when he sang as follows:

*Ova di wall, ova di wall  
Put Your AK ova the wall,  
Blood a go run .ike Dunns River Fall*

If them mek we pop out we gun pon them  
All five magazine we would a dun pon dem  
Kidnap dem daughter or son from dem  
Give them k bullet if magnum want dem  
To all badmen dis a the gun anthem  
So we big up all de de shottas and we gun man  
friend...

In a comment on Elephant Man's rant, Dennis Howard (2010) asserts that "there are those in the criminal underground who use the glorification of violence in dance hall lyrics as inspiration and justification for their criminal behaviour. These songs also influence youngsters to enter the underworld due to its endorsement by their musical heroes; such youngsters, in their search for identity, see the example of the rudeboy as the only way to gain recognition." Guns have thus become "cool".

Some Jamaican scholars (Brian Meeks) have lamented the extent to which the music and language of the Jamaican and American ghetto is displaced the life styles of the Jamaican political and social mainstream. Meeks argument is that there has been a "hegemonic dissolution" of the old structures and moorings in Jamaica and that the culture of the dance hall has displaced or replaced it. Dancehall challenges existing structures. The mainstream has become "dancehallized". (Hope, Cooper, Meeks, Stone, Jackman). The dancehalls have also become affected by the politics and make reform well nigh impossible. As Ian Boyne of the *Sunday Gleaner* (December 22, 2002) opines:

There is no way this country can successfully change the culture of violence in the inner city without changing the culture of the dancehalls. We underestimate to our peril the threat of Jamaican dance hall to the culture of peace. It is hard to empirically establish a causal link between murders committed in the inner cities and negative dance lyrics...but it is not hard to show that these lyrics do not help those who need to manage their conflicts and bring about reconciliation.

For much of the past five decades, black American soul, rhythm and blues, and Latin American music have been the sounds of choices for young Caribbean males. Competition

came from calypso and steelband. These were however seasonal. What has been happening in the last two decades is a massive shift to Jamaican genres which have eroded the popularity of indigenous Caribbean music. It is now considered "disrespectful" for DJs to play music other than soca, chutney and calypso during the carnival season when one is urged to "wine," simulate sexual activity and drink "buckets" of alcohol. Outside of the season, however, dancehall and other Black American music is played loudly, but its sexually and violence charged messages are nevertheless "heard" and "read" by those who patronize it. Black activist, Pearl Eintou Springer, recently complained that she worked among young African women and men in the so called "hot spots", and the major problem is the lack of a sense of self esteem. "I listen to the nastiness in the dance hall music by Vybz Kartel that they listen to. And when I ask them to write the lyrics to the songs they listen to, the lyrics are so filthy they cannot repeat it. They are so embarrassed." Springer was reacting to criticisms that she inappropriately suggested that a certain Jamaican consciousness song, *She is Royal*, should not have been sung on a political platform by calypsonian Sugar Aloes. Springer shot back. "I know that once you perform a work of art, it is accessible, and everybody can use it, but I am asking, is nothing sacred? And what is there that will give self worth and a sense of self to young black people?" (*Trinidad Express*, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

One would be surprised if these messages did not percolate down to the minds of the young Black males and inform and influence their behaviour and the way in which they see the world and their place in it. Attempts have been made to make chutney and soca more competitive, especially in the US and British markets, but this has not been very successful so far.

Professor, Carolyn Cooper, claims that Jamaican and American dancehall is "lyrical" and not literal. She complains that the lyrics of Jamaica's dancehall DJs, are taken all too literally, and have increasingly come under attack at home [in Jamaica] and abroad". But

they are not all meant to be read literally, she insists. But one wonders whether the lyrical does not in time come to be taken literally and acted upon just as has happened in Trinidad and Tobago where *double entendre* songs which were once characterized by subtlety have now become stripped of their nuances which are now deemed to be unnecessary.

Other Jamaican scholars, as we have seen, disagree with Cooper. As Dennis Howard observed, "the analysis of the lyrics indicates that the artistes are not using metaphor. While this graphic storytelling can have the effect of highlighting the realities of inner city life, and shocking the society to engage in fundamental changes in the body politic, it can also have a reinforcing effect" (Howard 2009).

This finding was corroborated by our own survey data. Asked to indicate what type of music they prefer, our young respondents chose dancehall and hip hop over Soca and Calypso by large margins. In the "hotspot areas, dance hall was the most popular-41 per cent -followed by hip hop, 37 per cent. Soca was next with 34 percent, followed by rhythm and blues, 28 percent, Chutney pc, and Bollywood, three

percent. The numbers were roughly similar for Indians as well as females. (totals exceed 100 because more than choice was allowed) Most of our responders disagreed with the notion that their preference for hip hop and dance hall in any way disposed them to misbehave in terms of sexual behaviour or inclined them to be violent or aggressive. In our survey, 68 percent of our respondents disagreed with the allegation that they were encouraged to be aggressive because of dancehall lyrics, one third however agreed that they were so encouraged, a figure that is not insignificant. In this case, one has to be concerned about the significant minority rather than with the majority. It is perhaps for this reason the former Prime Minister Patrick Manning felt that he had to encourage a return to the type of big band dance hall music that was popular in his youth, and his further decision to use state funds to establish an orchestra which he named "the Divine Echoes." Sponsorship was also provided to A National Steel Orchestra and a National Philharmonic Orchestra which were expected to trigger youth interest in music that was less socially threatening. It may well be that sponsorship for those genres should be continued in modified form.

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# THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Lennox Bernard*

*"Precisely because they wear the warmth and colour of the senses, the arts are the strongest and deepest of educative influences." - (Kidd, 1958.p.56)*

The multicultural nature of Trinidad and Tobago suggests that considerable significance should be attached to those activities that are concerned with life and feeling and the development of creative powers. From a historical stand point, no proper understanding of the contemporary world and of our society is possible without having some knowledge and understanding of traditions we inherit. A well informed pursuit of all kinds of creativity will enable us not only to cope with the economic necessities of the world, but will increase the potential for discovery and progress on the many fronts of human interest and activity that they offer us. The important contributions of the arts to the individual include:

- Developing the full variety of human intelligence
- Developing the capacity for creative thought and action
- Developing physical and perceptual skills
- The exploration of values
- Understanding the changing social culture
- The education of feeling and sensitivity

Critical theorists see the arts as an inherently emancipatory activity and according to Gibson (1986, cited in Jones 1988) it seeks to locate artistic work in its social context, to consider artist and audience in the light of history, and to identify its social purposes and interests served. The arts are important not only for the emancipatory images they provide for society but also for their great potential for individual liberation.

Throughout this report we have described the value frames of our youth at risk. They include anger and rage, dispossession, learned helplessness, victim-hood, entitlement, ambivalent self regard and low self esteem. The various art forms provide scope for liberation. Drama and theatre have been one of the powerful areas of success; they have been utilized throughout the world as a medium for the transmission of information designed to change attitudes and practices to a participant-controlled conscientization and organizational process leading to collective action aimed at social change. Bates (1996) cites examples from ancient African societies where drama, dance and storytelling were key media in social education. He points to similar developments in aboriginal pre-Christian America.

Didactic theatre groups emerged in the USA in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to educate the public about problems in housing, unemployment and discrimination. More recently it has been used as psycho drama to deal with the problems of drug abuse.

Theatre for development according to Bates (ibid, p. 277) used traditional and indigenous forms of communication to bring across development messages in a variety of fields. He cites; drama used in Malawi to find solutions to health problems, puppetry used in Latin America to assist with literacy education and problems related to alcoholism, mime in Costa Rica to address problems of personal hygiene and dance and drama in Swaziland used to facilitate dialogue about problems of

corrupt community leadership. Then there is theatre for conscientization and popular theatre inspired by Freire (1970,1985) by which people receive a deepening awareness both of the same sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality.

Here in Trinidad and Tobago we have experienced a fair share of theatre ,drama and story telling in our learning culture, in fact our Carnival has been referred to as 'street theatre' or theatre for and of the people',when incidentally, serious crime is at its lowest. But the educators will argue that much of the learning taking place has been incidental, and not an organizational process leading to collective action aimed at social change. The closest we came in attempting theatre in development was the establishment of Trinidad and Tobago Television Workshop in 1974 and the 'Banyan' series. The series dealt with education, youth and women. It was discontinued in 1977. In the last decade family issues have been addressed by Hal Greaves using comedy. Credit must be given to the Secondary School Drama Festival and the Secondary School Film Competition sponsored by the Trinidad Film Company for some inspiring work. Recently, we were told by Raviji a well known community activist, about some progressive developments in community work using dance. Titled 'Ramleela' the programme in its ninth year has transformed the lives of many Indo Trinidadian children. The Malick Folk Performers that evolved from the Prime Minister's Best Village programme are for many decades a formidable group in the society. In the context of drug abuse, the regional film titled "Eva goes to Foreign" has had a huge impact on drug trafficking among women and the committee was told that its reduction can be credited in part to the public education the film provided.

Years ago when one of our intellectual giants Lloyd Best wrote about 'School in Pan' we were loathe to give him a hearing, years later when we read the commentary of Martin Daly (The Bird Song model, *Sunday Express*, July 8, 2012. p.12), we cannot but see the wisdom in his suggestion. Panyards can become extensions of

schools; community-based centres of learning where the experts of the pan teach about the pan in its original setting. Pan can also be at the heart of a conceptual web from which we can teach values, skills, the arts, science, and above all living together with each other.

The Ministry of Education, "Pan in the Classroom Project" is a variation of the concept and logistically so, as it would be difficult to establish pan yards in all school communities. It is a concept however that we can explore according to Daly, during the long vacation and on weekends. The committee's other recommendation for after school programmes can be considered with the necessary credits recorded for application in the NCSE. The curriculum developed in the setting of the pan yard is so much more holistic, according to Daly, "the expertise of the tutors is not merely technical. The tutors and leaders often become confidantes or even parental substitutes for the youth in their care....The dedicated leaders in those communities are also models of the self sufficiency generated by knowing how to raise a little funds and how to use those funds frugally. That is expertise to be embraced." (ibid.p.12). In hinting at an integrated curriculum, he records his observation of the model, " the integrated nature of the model, which includes sport as well as music, and its contribution to the evolution of the pan as a musical instrument to be played in harmony with other instruments."

Daly shares the position of the committee on the important role of the arts and sport in social development by concluding, "it is obvious that the musical and sport empowerment exercise is a soul-saving mission, which requires all hands on a coordinated deck. It ought not to be contaminated by the tuneless clamour of political gallery."

Sunity Maharaj (*Sunday Express*, April 15, 2012.p.14) in her inimitable style gives ascendancy to the pan in the use of other instruments for the new and expanded Multicultural Music Programme Unit, "Pan needs no embellishments, nor does it have to prove itself. All it requires is for us to look

at it and see it for what it truly is; a symbol of our creative possibilities and a catalyst for liberating us from the prison of self-contempt into the freedom of self-confidence.....Until we understand the meaning of the steelpan and recognize what it says about us and how it truly represents our sleeping potential, we will continue to make the mistake of seeing it as a sectoral, ethnic invention, limited by time, place and circumstance. We will humour it but we won't believe in it."

In making her case for its highest recognition she states, "If we understand the steelpan as the truest symbol of the best that we are, we will understand why it is an outrage for pan to be jostling up for space within something called a Multicultural Music Programme and why, in our schools a special dispensation, is required for the teaching of pan, not only as instrument but as science, art, culture and self."

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## Recommendations

1. Cultural Literacy should be a major component of the Social Studies syllabus at the primary and secondary level
2. Drama, Ramleela, dance and storytelling should be key media in social education
3. The Pan in School Coordinating Council should be encouraged to pursue the use of panyards as extension of schools and community-based centres of learning of the music of the pan, especially in disadvantaged communities
4. A programme of enrichment activities in the Arts should be encouraged by providing transportation and admission for youth in disadvantaged communities to gain exposure to excellence in the arts.

# CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CULTURE AND YOUTH VIOLENCE IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO – CONNECTIONS AND CO-OPTATIONS

*Patricia Mohammed*

The lyrics of the most popular music artistes in the first decade of the twenty first century in Trinidad and Tobago reveal that young men and women have certain freedoms that were not permitted to previous generations. Certainly one of the most important among these has been a sexual explicitness - an aggression and forthrightness among women with a not unexpected response from men that is similarly blunt. If in 2007 Destra Garcia could boast in *I Dare You* that she could handle any man:

*Tonight I'm In The Mood,  
I Want To Wine And Behave Rude  
So Anything You Want To Do  
I Dare You, I Dare You  
If You Want To Hold Me Round Ma Waist (I Dare  
You)  
Come And Take A Taste (I Dare You)  
Trouble In Di Place (I Dare You I Dare You)  
If You Want To Hold Me From Behind (I Dare You)  
Come And Test Ma Wine (I Dare You)  
Tickle Down Ma Spine (I Dare You I Dare You)*

Then by 2012, Shurwayne Winchester can also make his demands of women in *Wine*

*Gyal get in position  
Do whe yuh want  
You don't need no permission  
Wine and drop  
Any where any mission  
For you mi petition  
You ah you ah top girl, you ah you ah top girl  
In they face yes show you're the bubbler  
In yuh box leh me put in mi speaker speaker*

The emergence of a raw and some would say licentious music culture is viewed by many as

an integrated component of the violence that pervades youth culture, not just in Trinidad and Tobago but in many other societies globally. Every society, however, creates local culture in its own image, despite regional and global influences. We need to examine the relationship between the current musical culture of youth and its link to violence and criminality in order to assess its potential for co-optation by the seedier elements of society. Young impressionable minds can be easily influenced by the current musical culture. But this also represents an opportunity for policy makers to recognise such talent and to appropriate it to create more wholesome products that work to theirs and to society's well-being. In this essay I focus attention on the influence of music and the transmission of contemporary culture reinforced and supported by the ubiquitous availability of various digital technologies including television, Facebook, Twitter and mobile devices. The digital age has created another transmitter of culture that may now overshadow the impact of family, religion and other institutions. The social media have become a critical component of everyday schooling for youth, a dynamic forum for education and interaction among young people.

The earlier debates on what shapes youth aspirations, youth identity, youth psychology and youth culture have focussed on four main areas in Trinidad and Tobago and in the Caribbean. These have been (a) the impact of the home and family, (b) the impact of nation and identity formation processes, (c) the role of education on the political socialization and (d)

the construction of identity primarily national identity, but these extended by the eighties to a growing concern with the definition of gender identity and the impact of gender peer pressure. Pedro Noguera, a Caribbeanist and renowned scholar in the field suggests that the focus on education has tended to be on curriculum content, student assessment and placement and the recruitment of training of teachers. Education studies have also concentrated on an examination of educational institutions as instruments of the state that reinforce the hegemony of domestic and foreign elites. These debates have shaped the primary ways in which we have understood how the social reproduction of culture and the dissemination of the dominant ideology are conveyed to the young. The relationship to popular culture and to music in particular has received considerably less attention until the last three decades when its impact could no longer be ignored (Noguera, 2001). Despite the evidence showing that it is adults who are primarily responsible for the rise in drug trafficking and the prolific arms flow in Caribbean societies and in Trinidad in particular, young people, especially young men, are perceived as the primary targets for police action. And the popular music and club culture that has always been part of youth culture is now viewed as a site where illicitness and licentiousness are all pervasive and embedded in the violence associated with guns, drugs and sex.

The influences of musical culture in Trinidad and Tobago can be traced back to the earliest origins of calypso with its social commentary and *double entendre*. However, other twentieth century modes have had the greater influence in twenty first century youth popular culture. In a persuasive argument on why the messages in music have been so influential Ben Thielen (undated, *The Dread Library*) suggests that Dancehall, as a reflection of society and its beliefs, is the form which has arguably influenced the underbelly of young popular culture in the Caribbean and frequently stands directly against the music from the 'golden age' of reggae in the 1970s, and, certainly the slower and more reflective rhythms and tempos of a previous era.

In the current ragamuffin sound according to Thielen which dominates the ideologies of Afro-Caribbean youth, there are fewer references to the mythic signifier of black identity that was once the basis of Afro-Caribbean music. Instead dancehall DJ's describe this music as "strictly reality" – reflecting sounds of the local gun battles, the neighbourhood rivalries, the poverty of life and culture in dirty inner-city streets, a largely urban music.

Current musical traditions can also not be separated from multiple global influences. Many writers have pointed for instance to the impact of Hollywood outlaws and the way in which their fictitiously violent exploits have influenced music, literature and the early emerging film industry in the Caribbean. *The Harder They Come* (1972) by Perry Henzell in Jamaica, the character of Bogart in V.S Naipaul's *Miguel Street* (First published 1959) after Humphrey Bogart, the naming of early steelbands and gang warfare based on different neighbourhoods in Port of Spain in the sixties like *Casablanca* and *Desperadoes* have all taken their cues from Hollywood and have shaped the machismo of working class masculinity. The gun toting Rhygin in *The Harder They Come* challenges the authority of state power with the song *Johnny Too Bad* - one of the popular songs which contain the following lyrics:

*Walking down the road with a pistol in your waist  
Johnny you're too bad  
Walking down the road with a ratchet in your waist  
Johnny you're too bad  
You're just robbing and stabbing and looting and  
shooting.*

As Carolyn Cooper, one of the more prolific commentators in Jamaica on music and popular culture observes: "Caribbean societies have a long history of ghetto youth internalizing images of Hollywood heroism and gun violence that they regularly absorb in the movies, the cheapest form of entertainment of the urban poor." (Cooper cited in Thielen). What is most troubling perhaps for the outsider and onlooker on the inner-city expressions of disaffection is that the music becomes associated with and marred by an "affection for guns and the



gangster lifestyle”(Thielen). After all this is the “strict reality” which the youth are expressing about Jamaica as Thielen writes:

Imported guns were the means by which political power, in the form of garrison constituencies, was acquired and maintained, a method that worked very well until the balance of power shifted from the political ‘dons’ to the drug dons that the politicians had themselves created. These drug lords became internationally self-employed. These drug cartels came to dominate the cocaine trade in New York, Toronto, Miami, and London, with the former political rivalries replicating themselves in the form of competing drug cartels in such neighborhoods as Brooklyn and the Bronx. Reflecting these developments, there has been, a musical switch from marijuana-influenced acoustic reggae to the cocaine-charged computer beat of dancehall, where acts with names like Bounty Killer and Destruction have replaced those of more cultural nomenclature, such as the Abyssinians, Burning Spear, and Culture.

In addition to lyrics of homicidal violence, messages of sexual dominance and the objectification of women have also accompanied gun lyrics and are commonly known in the music industry as slackness. Here the Trinidadian influence is not distant. Carolyn Cooper supports the point that “The genealogy of this overtly sexual dimension of reggae can be traced directly to a long established, indigenous musical tradition: mento. Mento music, which shares elements of the Trinidadian calypso, particularly the penchant for sexual double entendre, is an undisputed progenitor of contemporary ragga/dancehall music.” Male singers and performers are by the way not the primary culprits in sending out messages of sexual violence as we have seen above. The current climate of female sexual liberation has also invited and allowed a fair degree of freedom of expression from women.

Whether associated with gun violence or sexual violence, Cooper argues that “Contemporary dancehall culture is really a youth culture and there is an element always in youth culture of danger.” In her view, both verbal and physical violence is part of the rush

of entertainment for many youth who embrace the sense of danger that is inherent in the more contained threats that mirrors the reality they experience on the streets. The courting of vicarious danger has become an everyday part of youth reality and musical culture simply reflects this in the clubs. I have listened to stories from young men in Trinidad as a way of learning about a generation and the new world that they inhabit that I have now left behind for a few decades. Even in up-market clubs in Trinidad the lines are drawn – between groups who differ by ethnicity, social class or even within the same class by geography. Cooper observes in her work on dancehall that youth culture is a reflection of the wider society and not an invention of a younger generation. If the music culture has women under bondage and are exploitative of the female body then so does society. If the songs are openly heterosexual and the clubs are a place where sexuality is heavily policed, so that they are repressive of alternative sexual lifestyles of not just females but especially males then this is also a reflection of what young men and women have observed of the wider society in which they live. The question that society must therefore ask of itself, the question that political, commercial and civic leaders must ask of themselves, is, what are the messages of nihilism that are being transmitted to the young today so that the courting of danger and the presence of danger offer no deterrent to engagements in criminal activities.

### **The relationship of music to violence in Trinidad and Tobago**

In a study on the political economy of school violence in Trinidad carried out in secondary schools in an effort to locate a Caribbean theory on Youth Crime, Daphne Phillips noted that explanations of the apparent upsurge in youth crime and violent behaviour in Trinidad attribute blame to changes in the morals and values in the society, associated with a decline in moral education through religion, or with the relaxation of adequate punishment systems for children from an early age, for engaging in socially unacceptable behaviours. This assumed decline in morals and values were

occurring alongside the increasing inflationary costs of basic foods and services between 2006 and 2008 in Trinidad and Tobago. There was a simultaneous expansion through international trade of available attractive foreign goods and behaviours exposed in the media, especially through the digital media services of the TV and internet. By 2010 the global measure of media reach noted that 87.52% of the households in Trinidad and Tobago had television sets.

Many assume that music and violence reinforce and support each other. In a blog article entitled *Soca lyrics & moral decadence revisited*, Dr. Kwame Nantambu proposed that there is a direct correlation between soca lyrics and moral decadence, public pornography and sexual promiscuity in Trinidad and Tobago. Similar to the chain of thought developed by Thielen on the rise of Jamaican dancehall out of the origins of an Afro-identity based conscious music, Natambu harks back to the good old days when Lord Shortie introduced Soca music via his 1974 LP titled "Endless Vibrations", suggesting that Shortie's lyrics were conceptualized around themes of love and togetherness. Sadly, he observes "some of today's Soca lyrics have completely transformed the original "Love Circle" into today's Soca public pornographic Sex Circle as patrons "get ready to juk, juk, juk". "In this era in Trinidad and Tobago" he writes "where 14,000 plus of our citizens between ages 15-29 years are infected with AIDS and women comprise 51% of all adults with HIV, now is the time for Soca and Reggae artistes to become sexual role models to our "little people." Instead they are watching, emulating, imitating and acting out explicit simulated sexual intercourse behavior per cell phone porn with their school uniform on" (Natambu, 2009).

While it is impossible to draw a definitive correlation between the violence or explicitness of lyrics and the level of criminality of youth, the lyrics of popular Soca hits in 2012 do tend to support the idea of a contemporary youth culture that is very consistent with the rebellious behaviour of previous generations of youth – for example the era of the sixties was well known in the west for the anti-war protestations and a

musical revolution replete with drugs, sex and rock and roll. Here again we might argue, as Natambu does that the underlying feature of the music of the sixties, an era through which I was one of the "youth" was that of love and peaceful co-existence. The "make love not war" slogan of the music of the sixties and the era of post colonial independence was fitting to a generation of Trinbagonians still inspired by nationalist ideals and imbued with values that meritocracy would be rewarded. What differentiates the inspiration and outcomes of the music of the current generation then? What seems to typify the music of Trinidad is that it is fast paced and driven by a frenetic energy that at the same time is mindless but also controlling of the emotions and energy of the crowd. The themes in the music of Trinidad tend to be rather repetitive, associated with sexual prowess and pushing sexual boundaries on stage or with the consumption of alcohol, particularly rum. These are rather mundane themes compared to the ideas of poverty and the raw violence that is characteristic of Jamaican dancehall described above. Is this the music of a generation drawn to criminality? Is this a music expressing the received violence of the Jamaican or New York street reality or one simply driven by the commercial instincts of a commercially driven nation tapping equally mindlessly into the nothingness required for temporary oblivion? What then does it say to us about the realities of the youth of Trinidad and Tobago at present?

For instance in 2011, Machel Montano's *Bend Over* is resonant of both Destra Garcia's and Shurwayne Winchester's songs cited earlier.

*This gyal she wokin up a storm  
Wining ah circle, watch how she perform  
She so good when wine she winning freeze  
People stop and staring got man on their kneeds  
And bawling oyee...*

Kes The Band's *Real Love* in 2012 adds nothing to the expand the imagination or creativity of the sensual soul.

*Well come to meh bedroom session  
So gyal you could wine on top  
When yuh start dont stop*

*Until yuh body start trembling  
You could flip dont stop  
Just like an acrobat  
Flex til yuh feel something stretching*

And Ravi B, Chutney Soca Monarch Winner 2010, confirms that the consumption of alcohol is understood as a dominant part of youth culture in *Ah Drinka*

*Gyul yuh too blind to see  
That i will never come home sober  
Gyul yuh know ah was ah drinka  
Yuh always know ah was a drinka  
Yuh cyar change meh no way  
Gyul yuh know ah was ah drinka Yuh always know  
ah was a drinka*

There have been few studies that have attempted to make the explicit connections between music and youth violence. A recent publication by Marcia Forbes entitled *Music, Media and Adolescent Sexuality in Jamaica* deals specifically with how the new phenomenon of increasingly sexually explicit music videos, including a generous helping of dancehall music videos – are affecting a young impressionable population. Adolescents comprise one fifth of the population of Jamaica at present, most if not all have access to the range of technology and devices which make music videos accessibly around the clock - television, mobile phones and the internet.

Forbes finds that adolescent descriptions of sexuality are equally expressive as those that adults have employed – young men refer to playing with a young girls breasts as “juggling and dribbling”, and the sexual act itself take on graphic visual shape in “hot wuk’, “bruckneck” lizard lap, “back shot” and “wheel barrow”. The young borrow liberally from the dancehall lyrics and video images creating frankly shocking outputs. One young man of 16 used his cell phone to record his 13 year old girlfriend giving him oral sex and beamed it to his friends via blue tooth technology. In a matter of weeks this was common property in many of the islands schools with dancehall lyrics being added to the images with lyrics questioning, “Why do you look so jolly with the lolly in your mouth?” The

spin-off is that there was less than two weeks after a similar incident in Trinidad patterned off in rapidly shared youth culture across the region.

Forbes however concludes that one cannot be prescriptive about the relationship between musical culture and an increase in criminal behaviour or violence among the young. Music and entertainment are integral to the cultural industries, it has provided a new space to claim sexual and cultural expression of nations and peoples, prompting both new occupations and a creative outlet for many young men and women and engaging them in the collective work ethic required of work places – for example the capacity to stage an entire musical performance or concert requires teamwork and discipline - even if this may also be a breeding ground for engaging in other illicit behaviour such as drug taking. One can argue as Cooper does above that it is not that the music or the proliferation of music videos that is at fault - what it asks us to consider very carefully is how new technologies are deployed for creativity and cultural expansion and social inclusion rather than as a destructive element for the young.

Resisting the effort to pin her findings on a precise causal relationship between the growth of music videos and changing adolescent sexual behaviour, Forbes approached her research from the theoretical standpoint of how people learn gender and sexuality – such as gender schema and learning theories – and how audiences interact with the media. For in making the assumption that there is a one to one relationship between the two, we also make the assumption that audiences, even young audiences are uncritical of received media messages. This is not what Marsha Pearce, another young scholar has noted in her study on Caribbean music television video station TEMPO (2012). In her survey of audiences in Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, she has found that they are by and large critical of what they see reflected back to them as typical either of the “Caribbean” or of their understanding of local idiom, style and content of music and culture. Nonetheless, if not definitive, there is a certain relationship

between the media, including musical media, their influences in shaping the popular culture of a period, and the effect this has on the way a generation views their prospects for life, love and happiness. After all if we can take for granted that media affects us all in this or that way, in terms of our political views, our attitudes to class or ethnic groups, our reading of different nationality traits and so on, then why should we assume that adolescents remain unmoved by the plethora of images and sexual messages that are beamed to them incessantly.

### **Recommendations**

From the point of view of policy makers it is impractical to attempt to censor creative expression – there are serious consequences for a society if the pressure points that are released through song, music, dance and cultural arts are curtailed. Rather we may turn to how aspects of creativity may be channelled differently, offering a marriage between institutions that may seem antithetical at present. Pedro Noguera presents some interesting solutions to consider in respect of a relationship between the education system and popular culture in “Education and Popular Culture in the Caribbean: Youth Resistance in a Period of Economic Uncertainty”. He argues that the potential that is inherently there in the resistance of youth culture has not been recognised by politicians and civil leaders who are too preoccupied with the criminal elements associated with these trends to examine the strategies that may be developed for cooptation.

Noguera argues that “...the social control function of schooling has been diminished... the shrinkage of the public sector has drastically reduced the number of jobs available to school leavers and graduates. ... as a consequence, the possibility of achieving upward mobility through education has become increasingly remote” for a new generation. This generation tells us in a musical popular culture that hard work provides no guarantees for further education, nor do they believe in the drudgery of education and unfulfilling and low paid jobs. According to Noguera, and as the statistics in Trinidad and Tobago also confirms, since the mid-80’s crime

in the form of drug trafficking particularly in urban areas is another option and has become a major informal sector for employment. It also comes replete with the violence and criminality associated with this occupation. What the music industry and contemporary popular culture does is glamorizes the lifestyle of those who succeed in drug dealing and has defined this lifestyle as a marker of a new, rebellious and defiant culture.

There are alternatives however and Noguera locates an example from the St James Youth Centre in Trinidad, a magazine entitled Youth Voice with music, poetry and journalism devoted to sports, entertainment, music and cultural events launched by the young people of Port of Spain and Diego Martin. He notes that the magazine conveys dissatisfaction with the direction taken by political leaders to address social and economic problems in the country and puts forward new priorities that will reach this age group. The magazine was published with the support of cross generational alliances pointing to policy directions that aim for bridges across generational divides and organs that allow the voices of youth to be heard. Noguera presents a challenge to the education system in particular, emphasizing that *teachers could potentially have the most to gain in an alliance with youth, by proving themselves and the education system ready to meet the challenges of a difficult youth culture, rather than seeking political support for declining salaries and conditions through labour unions*. In other words, youth and youth culture should become the greatest allies of teachers and other civic bodies rather than being the gatekeepers and guardians of a social system that has become increasingly distant from the reality youth of all classes, ethnic groups and geographical reaches inhabit today in Trinidad and Tobago.

Other approaches have been proposed by nations engaged in parallel projects of curbing youth violence and channelling youth energies into more wholesome and profitable tasks. A task force recommendation to the Premier of Ontario on a Review of Youth Violence

recommended a Cabinet committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism with a clear mandate to develop a corporate agenda that involved both state ministries and agencies as well as civil and commercial sectors. Apart from the development of a comprehensive youth policy “to provide overall direction for the myriad of programs affecting youth” *the Task Force proposed that disadvantaged neighbourhoods should be identified and targeted for the creation of “Community hubs to provide space for community activities, including meetings, recreation, arts and service providers”* (Ontario, 2012). The latter is not a new policy indication to us. What is new in this document is the measures that are undertaken for monitoring of success rather than primarily the provision of facilities and the placebos of handouts that themselves generate another set of illegal activities that are not defined as criminal.

In conclusion, this examination of contemporary popular culture among youth concurs that the cleavage along generational lines is pronounced and that conventional traditions such as respect for authority have suffered as a result. It argues, however, that the current deterioration, manifested through music and the world of youth popular culture is a reflection of the declines in social and economic conditions that some, not all, young men and women experience as there are also class and gender differences. It proposes as a recommendation that the terrain of youth culture be examined for its co-optation in the education system itself as well as through other social and economic organisations in the society who are seriously invested in youth transformation and development as a way to ensure that a generation of young men are not at risk to themselves and to others in the society.

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**CHAPTER 5**  
**THE ROLE OF EDUCATION**





# YOUTH AT RISK AND THE TVET SYSTEM: THE SERVOL, YTEPP AND HYPE/MuST PROGRAMMES

*Marjorie Thorpe*

*"It's not realistic to dream. There are no opportunities to fulfil them."  
"My dream is illusory, it makes me suffer... I dream to save my skin."  
"In five years I will be dead, struggling or incarcerated."  
("Voices of Youth", CARICOM Commission on Youth and Development)*

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is used as a comprehensive term to describe those aspects of the general education process that include the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of social life. TVET is also seen as a method of facilitating poverty alleviation and preparing trainees for responsible citizenship ("Draft National Apprenticeship Policy").

One of the themes that recurs in the global discourse on youth at risk is the importance of nurturing the self-esteem of dispossessed young persons. In a 2009 article titled "Identifying the Sources of Self-esteem", the authors Kwan, Kuang and Hui note that self-esteem has been promoted as "a vaccine against social problems, including anxiety, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, crime and violence". They go on to argue that this trait commonly derives from three major sources:

- (i) **benevolence**, described as an attitude in which persons perceive themselves and others positively and accept that suffering, inadequacy and failure are part of the human condition;
- (ii) **merit**, including scholastic competence, athletic competence, social acceptance, physical appearance and behavioural conduct; and

(iii) **bias**, defined as an overly positive view of oneself which inhibits the impartial judgment of the self. The study goes on to divide bias into two parts:

- a) the conscious / aware effort to see oneself in a positive light
- b) the unconscious / unaware tendency to favour oneself.

In Trinidad and Tobago, **merit** (perceived or real) is a primary source of self-esteem; and scholastic competence has been and, to a large extent, still remains the principal avenue by which disadvantaged members of the population seek to achieve social mobility and an improved standard of living. By way of example, we need only consider the psychological pressure to which students writing the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) Examination are subjected, and the tributes accorded those who distinguish themselves at even this early stage. A gloss on this phenomenon appears in the 2009 article "New Findings on the relationship between education structures and outcomes from National and International Assessments," in which the authors observe:

The education system inherited from British colonial rule was noticeably elitist and examination-oriented, disposed to filter, segregate and retain students based on perceived meritocracy, as defined solely by performance in public examinations. Despite Government's commitment to a seamless system, the legitimacy

of the differentiated system remains high among the populace, with a persistent concern for the fate of "the top 20% of the ability group. (DeLisle, Seecharan and Ayodike, p. 2).

At the same time, the growing influence of Western capitalism has meant that wealth and the things that it can buy are increasingly perceived as conferring merit on the individual. In such a situation, there is less reluctance to engage in illegal practices. True, the country has traditionally affected a somewhat cavalier response to white collar crimes. But some have argued that the privileging of wealth has meant that more and more, academic success and scholastic competence have come to be valued primarily as a means of acquiring material assets. The level of remuneration, not the quality of the product, is the over-riding concern. Moreover, when wealth is not necessarily allied to competence, there is less motivation to strive for excellence. And this in turn has severely undermined the authority and influence of those who, earlier, might have served as exemplars and cultural transmitters of the intellectual, moral and spiritual values formally endorsed by the larger society.

An editorial published in the 26 June 2010 edition of *Newsday* drew attention to the fact that, generally, private primary schools and denominational primary schools tend to outperform the government primary schools in the SEA Examination. The article considered the argument that, because private schools charge a not inconsiderable fee to educate youngsters, they naturally draw their pupils from a better-off, and generally more stable, home environment. Parents of these children, having already invested financially in their education, are more likely to be supportive of their youngsters in terms of homework and other assignments. The article, however, goes on to suggest that an analysis of the problem should explore issues like teacher absenteeism, discipline, the effectiveness of the PTA, individual parent involvement, and the community environment from which the pupils are drawn. And it concludes by acknowledging that shortages of specialized teachers to help with underperforming pupils,

and deficiencies in terms of support staff and effective management tools, only serve to further compound the challenge.

Inefficient and under-resourced schools, unstable family structures, financial constraints and poor living conditions continue to make it very difficult for young persons living in depressed areas to succeed academically. And this failing at school is in turn linked to conflict with staff; rebelliousness; running away; trouble with authority figures/police; anti-social behaviour; depressed, listless, uninterested responses; and an "I don't care attitude" - all behaviours associated with the Youth at Risk concept.

Trinidad and Tobago has a long history of apprenticeships and technical and vocational training. Starting with the curriculum of the Senior Comprehensive School proposed in the 15-Year Plan for Educational Development (1968-1983), successive Administrations have promoted technical and vocational training (TVET) as a viable alternative to academic instruction, and equally deserving of the respect afforded scholastic competence. In this way, they have sought to remove the stigma attached to technical and vocational education, and to give to persons who pursue technical courses "a more meaningful and central place in the education system."

Today, TVET programmes proliferate. Some are Ministry-led. Some are Ministry – supported, delivered by other public institutions and by private organizations. Most TVET programmes target dispossessed youth between the ages of 15 and 25 years. These include SERVOL (1970); the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), 1988; the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP), introduced in 1994; the National Energy Skills Centre (1997); Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE), 2002; and the Multi-Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST), 2004. Those programmes that are entirely Government-supported offer financial as well as non-fiscal support to trainees in the form of stipends, basic tools and equipment. TVET programmes are

located at centres throughout the country, so that one or more may be accessed by youth resident anywhere in Trinidad and Tobago. Qualifications are certified. Most of these programmes boast a Life Skills component; and Life Skills training is available through the Ministry's affiliated TVET programmes, many of which offer stand-alone Life Skills courses.

SERVOL's intervention in the Laventille community began with the establishment of two centres serving 400 unemployed 15 to 19 year-olds who lacked the academic or vocational qualifications that would facilitate their entry into the formal world of work. Between 1971 and 1976, SERVOL established six vocational skill training units comprising a welding shop (1971), a plumbing facility (1972), a woodwork shop (1973), an electrical training centre (1974), food preparation and garment construction (1975), and an auto mechanics garage (1976).

From its inception, the SERVOL leadership adopted the now-established position that people are at once the agents and beneficiaries of the development process. As the Mission states:

SERVOL is an organization of weak, frail, ordinary, imperfect yet hope-filled and committed people seeking to help weak, frail, ordinary, imperfect, hope-drained people to become agents of attitudinal and social change in a journey which leads to total human development. It does so through respectful intervention in the lives of others and seeks to empower individuals and communities to develop as role models for a nation.

Understanding that "[the people's] voice is the most important element in their own development," these early SERVOL initiatives sought to address expressed interests. Nevertheless, there was a 35% drop-out rate; and quite a number of those who completed the courses either did not seek or could not find employment.

A sense of alienation is a recognized characteristic of the youth at risk population; and, even today, residents of the area claim

that a home address in Laventille can hinder efforts to secure employment, especially in the private sector. Indeed, the East Port of Spain Development Company lists "stigma and discrimination against the people and communities of East Port of Spain" as one of the "threats" to the area's development.

The possibilities of solving the inequities in Caribbean society need to be addressed in the context of communities, in their physical setting, at a particular point in time: that is, as unique combinations of history, geography, and cultural factors. Only this approach permits understanding of the whole, before attempting ad hoc responses to specific but limited aspects of the problem, so that all the fragments may be brought together in finding sustainable solutions. (Building Community, Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication (1996).

SERVOL's subsequent success in engaging the "at risk" population may be attributed to the fact that the organization's approach to curriculum development and its pattern of programme delivery reflect just such an attempt to bring "all the fragments together in the search for sustainable solutions".

First, in terms of the curriculum: the decision to introduce the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) into the technical and vocational courses being offered is generally considered the primary reason for SERVOL being recognized as an important purveyor of the TVET model. As it has evolved over the past four decades, the current version of the ADP includes a fourteen-week human development segment which must be completed before skills training begins. Deemed one of the most innovative and successful ideas ever dreamed up by SERVOL

...it is a period when trainees are given talks on self-understanding, self-awareness and spirituality to help them understand the role of the subconscious in their lives, to overcome complexes, prejudices and hang-ups they may have acquired along the way, and to discover how they are all-too-often trapped in a cycle of violence which is born out of an enormous amount of repressed anger.

The SERVOL focus on self-awareness and self-understanding is in accord with the UNICEF definition of Life Skills as psychosocial abilities that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. This focus on intrapersonal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and interpersonal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others, also finds support in the MSTTE Green Paper titled "Policy on the Development and Implementation of a National Life Skills Curriculum for Personal Development and Employment Enhancement".

The Policy document states that Life Skills education in Trinidad and Tobago will focus on three broad areas: 1) Psychosocial Skills (intra and interpersonal); 2) Societal Skills; and 3) Occupational and Livelihood Skills. This approach is informed by an understanding that "Life Skills encourage the development of a core set of skills across cultures and settings. Life Skills also promote the development of the ideal Caribbean person who displays respect for human life and moral values, an appreciation of family and community values, and has an informed respect for our cultural heritage." (p13).

Life skills must teach us how to live with one another. Because we can have all the academic competencies, all the technical and vocational skills, but if we do not know how to disseminate that, if we do not know how to live well with our brothers and sisters, what we are going to have, rather than competition for skills, we will have confusion (Minister Fazal Karim, Tobago, May 7, 2012).

Minister Karim's suggestion that Life Skills education has the potential to exercise a civilizing influence takes the concept beyond the mastering of occupational and livelihood skills, beyond education and training considered "critical to cultivating a workforce compatible with the competitive needs of the 21st Century job market." Rather, Life Skills education may be seen to speak to the urgent need for a vision of Development that treats not only with the individual's "standard of living", but also with

what might be described as his/her "standard of being".

SERVOL's twelve-month Skills Training Programme seeks, in the TVET tradition, to equip participants with marketable skills. Courses are offered in welding, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, catering, child-care, tailoring and electrical wiring. Graduates of the Skills Training Programme may access advanced courses in Computer Literacy, Electronics and Digital electronics offered at the Hi Tech Centres. At the Junior Life Centres, which cater annually for approximately 10-12% of the primary school children who have not been successful in the SEA Examination, the goal is to build/ nurture self-esteem by helping students to become literate, and by equipping them with the Life Skills that will help them to meet new challenges without resorting to a life of crime.

As expressed in the SPICES curriculum, the SERVOL approach addresses the Social, Physical, Intellectual, Creative, Emotional and Spiritual needs of trainees. While the organization prides itself on being "a deeply religious organization which politely avoids all church institutions", the acronym does indicate that Spirituality is a key component in its attempts to meet the affective needs of the dispossessed youth who are most at risk. As described by the authors of the SERVOL spirituality course, the objective has been "to propose a spirituality which was drawn from [the] fundamental, basic experiences of the adolescents in question, rather than to impose an ideology which would always be something alien to the human experiences of the young people" (*Footsteps*, p. 4).

Additionally, while the first version of the course was prepared for the predominantly Christian community of trainees in the two existing SERVOL Life Centres, the expansion of the SERVOL project into ten Life Centres and several Secondary schools has led to the substance being modified to reflect the multi-religious make up of Trinidad and Tobago society. Today, though the content of the course

is predominantly Christian, material from the spirituality of Hinduism and Islam, the two other principal religions, has been included, thereby allowing trainees to see the extent to which the *New Testament*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Quran* share a common vision of life.

The SERVOL Spirituality course may be described as a form of "Religion Education". South Africa's Draft "National Policy on Religion and Education" links the teaching of Religion Education, Life Skills and Social responsibility in the Life Orientation learning area, stating:

Religion Education may be justified by the educational character of the programme, which includes the common values that all religions promote, such as the human search for meaning and the ethic of service to others, and by the desirable social ends, such as expanding understanding, increasing tolerance, and reducing prejudice. Religion Education is justified by its contribution to the promotion of social justice, and respect for the environment, that can be served by this field of study within the school curriculum.

The Policy goes on to note that Religion Education does not promote a particular religious position; nor does it seek to impose a unified, syncretistic or state religion. Rather, Religion Education creates a context in which pupils can increase their understanding of themselves and others, deepen their capacity for empathy, and, eventually, develop powers of critical reflection in thinking through problems of religious or moral concern.

A further perceived advantage of the SERVOL approach is that it is "Supply Driven". Projects are community initiated, community-based, and community supported. While the philosophy of "Respectful Intervention" forestalls any charge of cultural arrogance, it also forces the communities involved and the trainees to assume a measure of responsibility (administrative and/or financial) for the success of the undertaking. This feature, in turn, is thought to constitute a valuable means of empowering the dispossessed. Today, the drop-out rate of the SERVOL ADP Project is around

5%.; and, ten to fifteen years after completing the programme, graduates are said to retain and put into practice what they have learned.

SERVOL's records reveal that since its inception, the organization touched the lives of thousands of young persons through programmes that reach them at the period of their development when they are most vulnerable: Early Childhood (0-5 years); and Adolescence (13-19 years). Urging the need for a public drive that spans every nook and cranny of the country, Dianne Douglas, a clinical psychologist, observes: "A lot of parents have little knowledge of child development and age-appropriate discipline. We are dealing with ingrained cultural values where once you are a parent, it is assumed you know what to do and [you may] discipline a child however you see fit." Dianne Mahabir-Wyatt, a member of the SERVOL Board of Directors, makes a similar assertion: "The things that parents do to their children, if they did it to adults, they would be in jail for a long, long time." (Discipline or Abuse, *Trinidad Express*, July 2012).

SERVOL's Early Childhood programmes introduce children to ways of communicating and interacting that may be very different from what obtains in their home environment when core social bonds have been severely weakened, if not destroyed. As the team appointed to research the roots of youth violence in Ontario, Canada writes:

As those bonds break, violence is normalized, sensibilities are brutalized and communities are isolated. The sowing of the seeds for community retreat, the ceding of public space to violence and the silence that arises from the fear to speak out all increase the opportunities for violence. (*Ontario at a Crossroads*, October 2011).

SERVOL's Early Childhood Programme may be considered the first part of the "vaccine against social problems" alluded to earlier, and which is designed to protect underprivileged youth from the physical and psychological problems commonly associated with their social and economic status, such as depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug abuse, crime and violence.

The Adolescent Development Programme constitutes the “booster” shot, administered at a time when they are most “at risk” of succumbing to these pressures.

In her examination of Community-Based Education Models, Daphne Heywood recalls strategic responses to the problems of school failure identified by John Swope in a 1995 study conducted in the Latin American region. Swope’s list includes preventative programmes; compensatory programmes; programmes involving communities in the instruction process; economic incentive programmes to keep children at school; pre-school programmes; and programmes linking education with work. Heywood goes on to note that these strategies are all reflected in the SERVOL course of studies. “SERVOL is not a welfare organization, nor does it see its explicit task as being the mass transformation of society in the alleviating of the many problems of the poor.” (SERVOL, Pantin, p.3). Yet the Organization’s success in addressing the challenges of youth at risk led to it being awarded the Alternative Nobel Prize for Social Work in 1994. Today, SERVOL is responsible for sixty-six (66) Early Childhood Centres and its ten (10) Junior Life Centres absorb between ten and twelve percent (10%-12%) of the approximately 5000 young persons who are not successful in the SEA Examination.

In 2007, The United Way agreed to finance the introduction of a shortened version of the ADP in three (3) secondary schools for the years 2010 and 2011. In 2010, four (4) additional secondary schools were included in the project. Since that time, several other Principals have asked to have the programme extended to their schools. In October 2011, SERVOL submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Education for the funding of the programme in the existing seven schools, and its extension into additional schools on the Ministry’s list of approximately thirty-nine (39) “at risk” schools over a three year period. At the time of writing, no firm arrangement has been reached with the Ministry.

An article published in the August 2004 edition of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber

of Commerce magazine sums up SERVOL’s contribution to TVET in this way:

Poverty does not in and of itself lead to crime. In fact, it is at least arguable that substantial percentage of people involved in corruption, extortion and the drug trade are not found in the ranks of the poor and never have been. White collar crime is simply less easily detectable and less dramatically reported in the media... SERVOL trainees are not saints by any means. They come to SERVOL like so many other young people, angry, disillusioned, resentful, often involved in violence and with substance abuse of one sort or another, but instead of going the route of graduating into violent lives of crime, they graduate into respected members of their community.

The SERVOL experience suggests that, when treating with youth at risk, projects which focus primarily on the acquisition of employable skills are of limited value since they do not get at the heart of what are essentially psychosocial problems. Certification is a valuable, even necessary asset; but no certificate is proof against the mindset of a brutalized sensibility.

#### **YTEPP**

When The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) was established in 1988, crime had been on the increase for at least eight years, and the country was experiencing the economic fall-out concomitant with the Structural Adjustment Policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund. Conceived by the Extra Mural Studies Unit of the U.W.I. as a vocational /job oriented project, the YTEPP target group was unemployable “at-risk” youth between the ages of 18 and 25. The proposal sought to give these youth a skill and, at the same time, create a skills bank from which employers could recruit. The programme would run for six weeks and be delivered at nine centres. The first intake would comprise 2650 trainees. The curriculum included: “Attitudinal development; Basic education; Vocational Skills Training; Work Experience; and Post Training Support.”

In a July 2006 interview, the CEO of YTEPP, Nigel Forgenie, stated: "The reality is we want youth to take greater responsibility for where they end up. We want them to change their mindset". A review of YTEPP's history of programme delivery supports this statement. In 1990, for example, the YTEPP programme was introduced to the lads at the Youth Training Centre (YTC). Between 1992 and 1998 (when the YTEPP courses were validated and accredited by the National Examination Council), the Organization instituted a Basic Programme to address low levels of literacy and numeracy; initiated a Counselling and Referral system to assist trainees in their personal, social and career development; established six full time Training Centres; and, building on Trinidad and Tobago's 1995 CARIFESTA VI experience, briefly expanded its curriculum to include courses in the Performing Arts. In 1998, two Mobile Computer Training Buses also came on stream. These PTSC buses were outfitted with state of the art PC technology, including internet access, and focused on providing persons who live in rural areas with the opportunity to become computer literate. A decade later, some 500 persons had been trained. Finally, in 1998, the Civilian Conservation Corps was brought under the YTEPP umbrella.

The YTEPP Vocational Skills Training Programme comprises courses in a wide range of subject areas including major training in the field of Welding and Fabricating. In 2001, YTEPP became a "Sustaining Company Member with the American Welding Society (AWS)". The current partnership with BHP Billiton Trinidad and Tobago and Hydro Tech Limited strengthens a skill bank of Qualified/Certified Welders and Fabricators trained to perform at standards set by the American Welding Society (AWS), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and/or the American Petroleum Institute (API).

In 2008, the Future Leaders Programme was added to the YTEPP curriculum. Conceived by the YTEPP CEO Nigel Forgenie as a social intervention to curb the increasing incidence of at risk youth, its mission is "to equip

tomorrow's leaders with the social, intellectual and moral tools necessary for 21st Century leadership". The programme is offered to young persons between the ages of 15-35 years, and involves exposing the Council Presidents from each YTEPP Centre to high quality leadership training aimed at improving their self-image and equipping them to positively influence their families, the Centres, their communities and their places of work. The programme therefore promotes the understanding that a lower level of certification does not preclude one from assuming a position of leadership. By 2011, one hundred and twelve (112) of the one hundred and twenty-five persons (125) enrolled in the programme had completed the course of training, representing a retention rate of 84%. In this way, the programme may be seen to contribute to the MSTTE's Life Skills Training Strategy which is geared towards "the holistic development of persons within our seamless education and training system" ("Policy on the Development and Implementation of a National Life Skills Curriculum for Personal Development and Employment Enhancement" p.7.)

By 2004, YTEPP had graduated 80,000 persons out of an enrolment of 152,042. (*Newsday*, June 14, 2004). At the 2009 ceremony at which some 4,286 trainees graduated, former Prime Minister Patrick Manning, dubbed the Skills Training programme a "shining example" of his Administration's commitment to youth empowerment, adding that it has a major role in contributing to the growth of an effective workforce (*Newsday*, 12 July 2009).

A primary implementing agency for the MSTTE, YTEPP now has 25 Training Centres throughout Trinidad and Tobago and, by all accounts, continues to change and renew itself in an effort to keep its programmes current and relevant. The Organization offers 80 vocational courses in 12 occupational areas. In April 2011, the former Minister of Trade and Industry, Stephen Cadiz, strongly endorsed the YTEPP proposal to introduce "Animation Training" into its curriculum, stating: "This industry, which fosters innovation and creativity and builds upon the cultural attributes, indigenous skills

and talents of our citizens, can provide a viable platform for diversification of the economic base and export earnings of the country" (*InVESTT*, 12 April 2011).

More recently, as the Peoples Partnership Government seeks to make good on its commitment "to cultivate a diversified, knowledge-intensive economy", YTEPP has been charged with developing an integrated campus at the former Agricultural Services Department of Caroni (1975) Ltd in Waterloo. The campus will provide entrepreneurial support services, and education and skills training programmes. Farm management, vegetable production, boat building and net repair, small engine repair, data operations and digital arts, including graphics and animation, will be offered. A Workforce Assessment Centre situated on the compound will allow citizens without certification, but with relevant skills, to be assessed and appropriately certified. An Integrated Training Facility is also to be established in Chaguanas under YTEPP leadership. The goal is to double the number of community-based training programmes offered, making training more easily accessible to residents of Biche, Tabaquite, Cunupia, Mayaro, Woodland, Freeport and Las Lomas. Finally, YTEPP is seeking to increase the number of mobile buses available for training in computer skills, and to increase the number of classes per bus.

Consultations with YTEPP senior managers revealed that the Organization does face certain challenges in the delivery of its programmes. For instance, while it is recognized that trainees need support in the area of literacy, some are reluctant to access this training because of the stigma attached to being illiterate. The Organization also does not have the capacity, in-house, to offer the training required because emphasis is placed on helping trainees transit seamlessly from the Trinidad and Tobago Vocational Qualification (TTVQ) to the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ).

The CVQ is an award that represents achievement of a set of competencies which define the core work practices of an occupational

area within the regional qualification framework. To earn an award, candidates must demonstrate competence in reaching CARICOM approved occupational standards developed by practitioners and employers in the particular field of work. This in turn facilitates international recognition of the level of skill attained. The award provides an alternative route to further/higher education, complements the academic track, and ensures a better match of pay to ability and responsibility. Additionally, past work experience and skills count towards the CVQ. Trainees can achieve unit awards based on the modules in which they are competent. The National Training Agency (NTA) awards the CVQ. Trainees are assessed by certified assessors and are deemed either "Competent" or "Not Yet Competent". A trainee judged not yet competent can be assessed as many times as possible to prove his/her competence in the occupational area.

Given the demands that preparing trainees for the CVQ places on its limited resources, YTEPP would like the Adult Literacy Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ALTA) to administer the literacy programme. ALTA's programme, however, requires a minimum of 160 hours to get trainees to the Standard 3 and 4 levels, and this is not possible given the 260 contact hours devoted to the courses that YTEPP administers.

A second challenge arises in respect of the Rehabilitating Inmates through Training and Retraining programme (RITTR). The RITTR programme can be accessed by convicted lads who are scheduled to be released within 6 to 18 months. It includes Vocational Skills training and courses in Information Technology. The courses are approved by the NTC and lead to the Caribbean Vocational Qualification. The vocational courses are eighty percent practical and twenty percent theory. Facilities are not available within the confines of the prison to accommodate the practical aspect of some of the courses offered. Again, YTEPP and YTC are currently exploring the possibility of extending the RITTR programme from 8 months to 2-4 years, but it is thought that such extended exposure to the restrictive prison environment



would pose particular psychological challenges for the tutors involved.

Life Skills training is part of the YTEPP general curriculum and it is offered to candidates in the RITTR programme. The *Life Skills Policy Document* declares the following skill-sets to be fundamental to the local life skills education and training: i) Self esteem and self responsibility; ii) Self development and emotional intelligence; iii) Critical thinking and decision-making skills; iv) reduction of high risk behaviours; v) Stress management; vi) Health habits and personal well-being; vii) harmonious interpersonal relationships in society; viii) positive social skills; ix) self sufficiency and self-reliance; x) responsible citizenship; xi) volunteerism and community involvement; and xii) preservation and protection of the environment (pp.7-8)

Interestingly, the 2005/2006 "Life Skills Landscape" appended to the Life Skills Policy Document shows YTEPP delivering Life Skills training (under "Career Enhancement") to 7791 persons in that year – a figure that is second only to the 8224 trainees reached by the MuST programme over the same time period. At the same time, while the MuST intervention was limited to 48 hours of instruction, both YTEPP and the Military Led Youth Programme of Apprenticeship and Reorientation (MYPART) devoted 120 hours to Life Skills training. The MYPART programme was delivered to 100 trainees – a relatively small number in relation to the YTEPP and MUST student communities.

In terms of the number of hours allotted to Life Skills training, then, both YTEPP and MYPART are ahead of the programmes offered by other Government Ministries. But they all compare less favorably with the 1488 hours that SERVOL spent in the attitudinal development of its 2936 candidates in the same period. In the words of the "Policy Document", Life Skills education and training offers a possible solution to many current socio-economic dilemmas that are part of the youth at risk experience, including poverty; functional illiteracy; unemployment and underemployment; HIV and AIDS; diseases related to diet and nutrition; drug, alcohol and

the tobacco habit; and crime (*Policy Document*, pp14-16). SERVOL's low attrition rate and the fact that a significant number of its graduates have moved out of the "at risk" category suggests that the benefits to be derived from mastering these so-called "soft skills" far outweigh the extended hours of instruction required.

### **HYPE and MuST**

In 2002, Government sponsored the Helping You(th) Prepare for Employment (HYPE) Programme to assist citizens between the ages of 16-25 to obtain sustainable employment in the Building Construction Industry. HYPE is one of the training programmes administered by the Metal Industries Company (MIC) Limited. In 2004, the Multi-Sectoral Training programme (MuST) was introduced in Trinidad and, one year later, in Tobago. MuST was designed to meet the needs of both young and more mature trainees (ages 18-50 years). The MuST programme offers Level 2 certification in the Construction and Tourism and Hospitality industries. HYPE and MuST trainees are required to work four (4) days each week on site, and one (1) day at a Training Centre following literacy and other non-occupational courses, including Life Skills training. The National Training Agency assesses the programmes.

Both HYPE and MuST use electronic and print media to recruit new trainees. Community groups and Regional corporations promote the programmes. Career guidance is offered. Before being allowed into the programmes, applicants must pass a drug test.

While illiteracy poses a major challenge, remedying this setback has been difficult given the very limited time allotted to the non-occupational components of the curriculum. There has, however, been significant support from the private sector with respect to the employment of trainees; but, despite a high level of enrolment, the attrition rate has been increasing partly because, in some instances, the stipend does not allow students to meet their financial responsibilities. Additionally, some young male trainees have difficulty adjusting to

the role of students, especially where they have been functioning as heads of their respective households from an early age.

The MSTTE Framework for Sustainable Development states that the Ministry's policies are directed towards the rationalization of the post-secondary school sector to avoid duplication, wastage and needless overlap, [and] to support accountability and synergies in the sector. Under the EDF Programme, the Government has access to grant funding from the European Commission in the amount of 27.3 million Euros for the development and rationalization of the non-University tertiary education sector (Framework, p.39).

Additionally, the Government has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to those citizens who have been historically disadvantaged in respect of access to tertiary education and TVET due to systemic barriers. Two such disadvantaged groups are the financially challenged and the academically under-prepared. (Country Strategy Action Plan 2012-2015, p.41).

The decision to reposition the Multi-Sectoral Skills Training (MuST) programme from the MSTTE to the MIC may be seen as an example of the proposed rationalization, signalling in the words of Minister Karim, a symbiotic relationship between the MuST and HYPE programmes in the construction and skills training area. Under this altered arrangement, the HYPE programme will provide nine months training in a workshop and classroom setting, developing the social and technical skills of its trainees at Level I. The MuST programme will then receive the candidates and expose them to actual work-site training geared toward Level 2 CVQ certification. Given the fact that the construction industry seems poised to recapture its earlier role as a major employer of TVET graduates, the MuST/HYPE seamless transition appears to be particularly timely. But whether the occupational skills acquired could be put to use effectively is open to question.

In an address to the "First International Conference on Self Esteem" held in Asker/Oslo on 9 August 1990, the Canadian psychotherapist, Nathaniel Branden, observed:

We have reached a moment in history when self-esteem, which has always been an important psychological need, has also become an important economic need – the attribute imperative for adaptiveness in an increasingly complex, challenging and competitive world. A modern business can no longer be run by a few people who think and a great many people who do what they are told (the traditional military, command-and-control model). Today, organizations need not only an unprecedentedly high levels of knowledge and skill among all those who participate, but also higher levels of personal autonomy, self-reliance, self-trust, and the capacity to exercise initiative. Historically, this is a new phenomenon.

In such a situation, an approach which downplays the importance of Life Skills training would appear to be strategically flawed.

A second concern arises in respect of the ILO concept of "Decent Work" – an issue that is particularly important when treating with the efforts of the TVET system to engage the youth at risk community. In the words of the Director of the ILO, Juan Somavia, "Employment is the source of social inclusion in all sorts of ways, providing not just income, but security, self-realization and self-esteem for workers who are organized and represented". But, he goes on to add, employment only plays this cathartic role under the right conditions, conditions that he characterizes as "Decent Work". Decent work meets people's basic aspirations, not only for income, but for security for themselves and their families, without discrimination or harassment, and providing equal opportunity for women and men. In this way, the "Decent Work" concept supports the Millenium Development Goals to which this country subscribes. It is therefore useful to ask the question: to what degree does "the legitimate opportunity structure" satisfy the needs of TVET graduates for decent work? How effective is it in combating the lure of "the

illegitimate opportunity structure" preferred by some of their peers?

It is unacceptable that being poor should also mean having sub-standard services in a wide array of areas, ranging from housing to recreational and arts facilities and transportation. This is not just a matter of human dignity; it is a matter of addressing in a cost-effective way the high potential that otherwise exists to generate the roots of violence involving youth. (*"Ontario at a Crossroads"*)

The *"Situational Assessment"* published by the East Port of Spain Development Company lists, among the challenges facing the area, urban decay, poor housing and living conditions, and inadequate physical and social infrastructure. With approximately 46% of the population below the age of thirty (30) years, and 23% under the age of 15 years (*Situational Assessment*, p.9), the "youth at risk" community is not insignificant. Yet the high rates of crime, and the pervasive gang culture with the attendant emphasis on territoriality, make the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the area problematic. Moreover, these and other symptoms of social dysfunction are apparent in other depressed areas throughout the country.

### Conclusion

A survey of local, regional and international TVET programmes reveal certain commonalities in terms of mission and purposed outcomes. All offer educational programmes in some or all of the following areas: literacy courses; occupational training; crafts; IT and computer science. They all urge the importance of personal transformation and aim to have trainees change "negative" attitudes through the development of conflict resolution, negotiation and anger-management skills. Further, they seek to have participants develop/strengthen their sense of personal responsibility, self-awareness and self-esteem. Parenting skills are a part of many programmes. In most instances, partnerships exist with NGOs, other Government agencies and Ministries, local authorities, international charities, and regional and international funding

agencies. Job placement is a primary goal. The TVET system in Trinidad and Tobago is thus clearly in line with global best practices.

### Recommendations

1. The length of time devoted to Life Skills training should be expanded significantly. The SERVOL approach is a proven success and could be adopted by TVET institutions.
2. Life Skills programmes should stress the value of mediation as an alternative form of resolving disputes. Peer mediation and restorative justice programmes should be an integral part of the curriculum offered at secondary schools, Technical and Vocational Training Institutions, and at correctional institutions committed to the rehabilitation of young offenders.
3. Students at the primary school level should be introduced to the principles of mediation and restorative justice in an age-appropriate manner.
4. The People's Partnership Government has continued and, in some instances, expanded mechanisms put in place by former administrations in support of the TVET system. This includes extending the GATE programme to TVET. Other forms of financial and non-fiscal support should be explored.
5. The proposal to establish a Labour Market Information System should be implemented.
6. The MSTTE's goal of "seamless education" which facilitates youth employment and the transition from school to work should be pursued urgently. The core element of the action is "the integration of the basic education system, technical education, vocational training, apprenticeships in enterprises and labour insertion for young people."
7. Mechanisms for assessing and certifying skills acquired through non-traditional modes, including experiential learning, work-based and open and distance learning should be quickly established/expanded.

8. Resources should be provided to facilitate the establishment of the twenty mediation centres approved by Cabinet in 2004. To date, only 9 are in existence.
9. Legislation should be enacted to make mediation a mandatory first recourse for offences (other than capital offences and other serious crimes) committed by first time juvenile offenders.
10. Consideration should be given to making the Mediation Programme a statutory agency as a means of enhancing its public image and insulating the Programme from disruptions brought about by reassignments of Cabinet portfolios.

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# NATIONAL SERVICE: A GROWING IMPERATIVE

*Lennox Bernard*

There is a growing need to consider a model of national service that would ensure that all young citizens regardless of gender and economic status, give to society some of their time, skills and expertise. The concept generally conjures up in the minds of some sectors of the population, images of boot camps or of young people herded into military driven camps. We contend that a para-military approach to national service by itself will not work in Trinidad and Tobago, neither would a totally compulsory mode.

The approach suggested is three fold; the immersion of a community based project in the national secondary school curriculum as part of what is considered as service learning whereby structured opportunities to serve are combined with an academic curriculum, secondly, a voluntary form of national service linked to the various youth programmes devised by the various Ministries but now with a national focus and with a compulsory community based project as part of its vocational curriculum. And finally a compulsory form similar in scope and content to the second fold but with added features of a physical module mounted at our correctional centres and at youth camps established for individuals who have 'dropped out' of the system.

National service is important more than ever as we face the onslaught of juvenile crime and delinquency, with some attendant features of greed, selfishness, laziness, and a lust for instant gratification. The value frames that young people have expressed and exhibited during the life of the project are anger and rage, a culture of

entitlement, victimhood, learned helplessness, dispossession, low self esteem and ambivalent self regard. There is also an overall erosion of trust in the society.

Fukuyama (1995) argues that with this erosion, social capital withers away and dies. Put simply, social capital is the glue that binds the human capital together; it provides the cultural networking that reminds us of our duty to society; and allows us to affirm our love and loyalty- and at the highest level- sacrifice to this physical and social space called Trinidad and Tobago. Not too long ago social capital was reflected more intensely in our activities and social behaviours such as story-telling, neighbourhood gatherings, trust and respect for the aged, the infirm, teachers and the police and in spaces such as the barrack yards, village streets and community centres. Common concepts such as 'lend hand' 'sou-sou' 'gayap' 'panchayat' reflected that sense of cooperation, community and togetherness that sustained us during tougher times in our society's development. These social behaviours, spaces and concepts are diminishing and there is an urgent need to replace them with something that can sustain us as a society. A model of national service is proposed relevant to the socio-cultural structure of the society.

The model is not entirely new and represents an adaptation to and amalgam of some models used across the globe. Five national/provincial service schemes were examined thoroughly and brief exposure to some of their attributes is provided:

### **Ghana National Service Scheme**

The scheme was established in 1973 by a military decree. It was later given statutory legitimacy by the Parliament of Ghana in 1980 and brought into force in 1982. In 1997 the duration of service was reduced from two years to one year. Service is compulsory for all Ghanaian tertiary graduates who complete approved tertiary courses. There is a national voluntary programme but recruitment of voluntary personnel takes place immediately after the deployment of the mandatory national service personnel. No exemption is generally allowed for tertiary graduates below the age of 40 and evasion is dealt with severely. Since its inception, income generation is central to the scheme. The objectives are to make use of the endowed human resource by ensuring that it is not under-utilized and to make the scheme self-sustaining. The scheme is engaged in a number of projects including catering services, bore hole water drilling, animal and crop farming, manufacturing and sports development. For 2012-2013, 2,013 qualified mid-wives and nurses are expected to undertake their national service in 166 health facilities. The scheme has grown from 2,000 service providers at its inception, to 60,000 and it is expected to deploy 70,000 in September 2012.

### **Singapore National Service**

This scheme was launched in 1967 and is compulsory for all male Singaporean citizens and second generation permanent residents who have reached the age of 18 and are enrolled in the military. The youth serves for a period of approximately two years full time service in the armed forces, police force or civil defence force. Evasion of national service is viewed very seriously and individuals may be imprisoned for three years and fined up to 5000 Singaporean dollars. The views are mixed among the youth with some looking forward to national service and some expressing apprehension.

### **India National Service**

National service in India was started in 1969 and has as its motto "Not me, not you, but we".

Its aim is personality development through social service or community service. It is a voluntary scheme. There are two types of activities lasting for a period of 2 years. There are compulsory special camping programmes, when participants spend 10 days in an adopted village or slum area, with regular activities that include, cleaning, afforestation construction and repair of roads, water conservation projects, conducting literacy classes, plastic eradication and stage shows or processions creating awareness of social problems. The scheme is marketed in all colleges and universities and each year there are more than three million volunteers from over 289 colleges and universities. The aims and objectives of the scheme allow for the development of self in relation to the community. The service providers learn to identify the needs and problems of the community and to develop problem solving skills. They also develop a sense of social and civic responsibility, and competence required for group living and sharing of responsibilities. They are expected to acquire leadership qualities and a capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters and to produce as best as they can national integration and harmony. There is a general feeling that national service refines one's personality through exposure to various segments of the society and through community service. There are no adverse effects to one's studies but rather enhances it through refined thinking and reasoning power. Some external benefits include, weighting for admissions to higher studies or recognition for extraordinary work and the granting of a national award.

### **The Jamaica National Service**

National service was established in 1973, but after a long dormant period it was relaunched in 1995. The scheme is voluntary. Not unlike Trinidad and Tobago its major concerns were an escalating trend towards anti-social behaviour, academic underachievement and youth unemployment. The emphases of the scheme are behaviour modification, volunteerism/patriotism, career development, discipline, respect for authority, punctuality and their willingness and ability to follow instructions. There are core programmes

in early childhood education, and for aspirants as teacher aides, health promotion facilitators, clerical administrators, micro entrepreneurs, sales and administrative officials. National service includes a residential training camp and six months on the job placement. The scheme attracts 2,000 volunteers per year. It targets youths between 17 and 24 and applicants are generally individuals who have successfully completed secondary schooling but are unable to gain employment. The program aims at providing a bridge between school and career. Recruits are given one month training in a core curriculum that stresses personal development and socialization followed by 8 months of work. Some of the projects over time include, construction and renovation, environmental projects, mentoring programmes, sports development and training, foster care and indigent care, health promotion, medical, dental and optical outreach and engagement at homework centres. External benefits are financial assistance for further education, scholarships and a national service certification.

#### **Ontario/ Canada Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Programs and Diploma Requirements**

Every student who begins secondary school during or after 1999-2000 school year must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as part of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The purpose of the community involvement requirement is to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities. Community involvement activities are part of the school's program and may take place in various settings including businesses, not-for-profit organizations, public sector institutions (including hospitals) and informal settings. It should be noted that students will not be paid for performing any community involvement activity.

## **A Proposed Trinidad and Tobago National Service Scheme**

### **The Community Service School Component**

The process should begin with the secondary school-age population and linked to an upgraded National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) whereby students would be certified for the successful completion of programmes pursued at the secondary level including a community service component. It means that every secondary school student would have a record of performance whatever the nature and scope of the success in the school curriculum. Students will be required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of mandatory community involvement, having discussed appropriate types of community involvement activities with secondary school staff who may offer suggestions, but the selection and management of the involvement will be directed by the student. Of course the issue of an overloaded curriculum can be dealt with by immersing the community service project into existing CXC school based assessment. Presently there is scope for this activity in the existing school curriculum and the process can begin at Form 4 and for some be concluded at the sixth form level. There is also scope through private sector partnership programmes and social engagement through the Girl Guide, Cadets, Boy Scouts, Police Youth Clubs, Seeds of Hope etc.

All students either through the standard secondary school syllabus or a nation building module should be exposed to the history, sovereignty and achievements of Trinidad and Tobago, before engaging in a community service project. We can add that no student should graduate from secondary school without completing 40 contact hours of community service that would be rated and recorded on the NCSE. By extension no student would be considered for national scholarships and awards without completing a community service project.

Ontario Canada's High School Community Service program when described by their Ministry of Education stated that the purpose of mandatory service is "to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and the role that they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities" (2011).

It is proposed that a special agency, the Trinidad and Tobago National Service Scheme should be attached to the Ministry of Community Development. The Ministry of Education through its educational districts will liaise with all schools after they have processed the performance of its students. Teachers would have approved all suggestions submitted by students, provide guidance and evaluate projects (individual and joint) eventually. The activities that should allow for group performance must take place outside of regular school hours and must be grounded in the felt needs of the society. The essence of each project is reflected in the examples given in the India National Service Scheme. Schools must be provided with community service coaches who would provide the adult leadership that is crucial in communicating civic principles of tolerance and social justice to youth and would work alongside teachers in coordinating each school's service learning.

### **Regular National Service**

There are three other categories of youth that will not fit neatly into the community service school component these are individuals who have chosen the technical vocational stream, mounted by state or private agencies or are engaged in on-the-job programmes and apprenticeship schemes at state agencies, individuals 12-18 who have dropped out of the secondary school system but are not young offenders, and young offenders who have been removed from the school system and are detained by the state at correctional institutions.

The first category should be able to access voluntarily, community service projects through the various state programmes

including Youth Apprenticeship Programme (YAPA), Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), Multi Skills Training (MUST), Helping Youths Prepare for Employment (HYPE), Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme (GAPP), Youth Camps, Military Led Academic Training (MILAT), Military Youth Programme Apprenticeship and Reorientation Training (MYPAT), Citizens Conservation Corps etc., and Youth Volunteerism and through private agencies. These individuals can provide national service through technological and vocational skills useful to the society and obtain the necessary ratings on their NCSE. However there must be a strong element of volunteerism- service for its own sake- that thrives within an ethos of charity, but which brings a lot of personal and social benefits.

The National Service Scheme will need to engage in curriculum review of all syllabi of the various state programmes and private learning providers to ensure that there are common features at orientation sessions, that focus on nationalism and patriotism and willingness to sacrifice for the general good. There should also be a standard module similar in content to SERVOL'S Adolescent Development Programme. Curriculum expansion will be needed to take into account other areas of society's needs e.g. environmental projects. The National Service Scheme should be well established in Government, for example, the Ministry of Planning and the Economy and the Ministry of Community Development, to suggest to the various state and private agencies and the school system projects that would benefit the country. For example the 51 community -based projects that have been implemented throughout Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year 2011-2012 and the 38 projects planned for 2013 announced by the Minister of Tertiary Education, Mr. Fazal Karim, can fall neatly into the NSS. For example a project under the auspices of YTEPP at the Woodland Community Centre, Woodland, focuses on graphic design, grow box agriculture, the making of household furnishings and bread,



cakes and pastries. Other private agencies like 'Seeds of Hope' that promotes agricultural and environmental practices and leadership can have a place in the NSS.

A special approach to national service must apply to young offenders; individuals whose punishment apart from incarceration should include some form of restorative justice. In this category national service would be compulsory and would be pivotal to the curriculum at correctional centres. The curriculum with its emphasis on community involvement should include a physical module that should include marching, hand to hand combat, obstacles courses, camping, navigation, survival and first aid training a character building module that is experiential based with emphasis on values, the valuing process, emotional and social intelligence, leadership and self-evaluation.

Youth camps should allow for the accommodation of individuals that have 'dropped out' of the system but are not part of voluntary programmes mounted by state and private agencies. These individuals would be expected to complete a one year programme of skill development with 20 hours of orientation, and at least 100 hours of community service. Community service coaches would also be needed to provide adult leadership similar to their role in the school system.

The general perspective of this model is the need for national service but not at the level of compulsory quasi-military service for all youngsters over the age of 18 years. No individual, except some specially challenged learners, should be allowed to be exempted from national service. National service would be recorded on the NCSE whether there is partial or complete fulfilment of it. In defence of this model, national compulsory service as practised in places like Singapore with its emphasis on compulsory quasi-military service will never be culturally sound in Trinidad and Tobago. We do not have a history of militarism or 'war mongering', mobilization for war or regular civil unrest. Our heterogeneity with its

vast array of interest groups will also delay any attempt at national service that seeks to provide one set of common features and make one set of common demands.

The establishment of this model of national service already exists in principle in some subject areas in the secondary school curriculum and at some secondary schools and the UTT. Already tertiary institutions are providing some weighting in approving entry to some faculties. The same is true for programmes at the technical/vocational level at some state agencies. The adaptation needed in the other institutions is not major but emphasis on a specially designed community project is crucial. The individuals must understand the communities in which they live and work and develop through observation, self-reflection, self-discovery, planning and executing, a project that will reflect a sense of social and civic responsibility.

Research shows that involving young people in these activities has a positive impact on their personal development, sense of civic and social responsibility, citizenship skills, academic and technical/vocational skills and knowledge and career aspirations. Furthermore service learning has a positive impact in schools and contributes to community renewal.

There is scope in the short term for many of these state agencies to mount similar technical vocational courses, for example the Youth Training Centre, MILAT, MYPAT, and a second cluster could be YTEPP, HYPE and MuST. There are many common features to their curriculum including community based projects. Personnel support from existing ministries and state agencies should persist with scope for cross-appointments.

In the medium term all these state agencies should be amalgamated and expanded. They would provide full impetus for the National Service Scheme. In conclusion this model will build character and create career and educational experience; it will act as a catalyst by providing strategic critical support to volunteer

organizations; but above all it will cultivate the growth of a culture of citizenship and service in which contributing to our community becomes common place. There is an immediate need as well to build a critical mass of pro-social youth to help eliminate the culture of violence threatening to overtake Trinidad and Tobago.

### **Recommendations**

1. A National Service Scheme should be established in the shortest possible time in Trinidad and Tobago
2. The NSS should consist of a compulsory community based project/service learning for secondary school students (a minimum of 40 contact hours), a compulsory community based project/service learning for volunteers at the various state agencies' vocational courses (a minimum of 40 contact hours), a compulsory community based project/service learning for young offenders at youth correctional institutions (a minimum of 120 contact hours), a compulsory community based project/service learning for individuals who have dropped out of the school system (a minimum of 120 contact hours) at a youth camp.
3. No individual between the age of 16-25 should be allowed to evade national service, except those referred to in page 309 and individuals who have resided in the country for less than one year.
4. A record of service should be included on an individual's National Certificate of Secondary Education.
5. No individual should be considered for scholarships, fellowships, other awards, job placements or any other national recognition unless there is a valid record in the NCSE of national service rendered to Trinidad and Tobago.
6. The National Service Scheme should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Community Development, with support from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Gender and Youth Affairs and other key Ministries that may be included to make the Scheme effective.
7. Every effort should be made in the short term to engineer a core curriculum among the various state agencies engaged in technical/vocational education and other formal outreach activities, eg, YV, CCC, MILAT, MYPAT, YAPA, MuST, HYPE, YTEPP, NESC and SERVOL.
8. Specially trained community service coaches should be employed to manage the projects with the involvement of teachers at the level of the school system, with the involvement of instructors at technical/vocational institutions and with personnel at youth correctional institutions and camps.
9. Special national awards should be given to individuals in each sector for their creativity, innovativeness, civic pride and responsibility.
10. Honour students; who have gone beyond the cause serving more than 120 contact hours should be rewarded with the opportunity to work at the Ministry of Community Development or any other related state agency during the July-August vacation. The individuals should be paid a stipend.

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# EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND STRENGTHENING THE CARE ENVIRONMENT

*Lennox Bernard*

The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990, articulated the significance of the early years as the foundation for the life of any individual. The first five years of life are particularly critical. This is when children develop basic learning patterns and abilities that they will use for the rest of their lives. Research shows that children who face the following hardships in those early years are more prone to developmental delays that can cause long term deficits in school achievement:

- Lack of stable, consistent, and nurturing relationships with parents and caregivers
- Poor access to health care and proper nutrition
- Little or no exposure to age-appropriate learning activities

Evidence that good early childhood experiences can make a positive difference in the mental health of individuals born into poverty, underscores the importance of investing in high quality early childhood experiences for poor children (Reuter, 2007). Quality ECCE will allow for early and easy identification of children with special needs, because of disabilities, and for vulnerable 'at risk' individuals. Early identification of children with special needs that in Trinidad and Tobago unofficially stands at 15% of children at school age will ensure that they maximize their potential and contribute to society according to their knowledge, skills and values.

The curriculum in early childhood programs should emphasize the holistic development

of the child within a comprehensive program of providing support to families in the rearing of their children. The curriculum in quality early childhood programs should contain the following proponents that should also be considered at the primary and secondary levels in Trinidad and Tobago:

- The focus is a competent child who has lots of things to learn
- Active hands-on learning
- Conceptual learning that leads to understanding along with the acquisition of basic skills
- Meaningful relevant learning experiences
- A broad range of relevant content, integrated across traditional subject matter divisions
- During play children should develop pleasure-filled, creative feelings and situations
- Observing and documenting individual characteristics of children in order that the teacher will reflect and improve pedagogic practices.
- Interactive teaching and cooperative learning
- Teacher must give children confidence, appreciation, confirmation and stimulation
- Values and social graces of our culture
- Child development knowledge for families and educators

- Families/parents desires and goals for their children are to be considered
- Knowledge that children need to function competently in our society
- The environment should be safe and offer encouragement for activity and playing and gives inspiration to the children

Strengthening the care environment will require the government to focus on conditions that promote young children's physical, cognitive and social and emotional development (Van Leer, 2007) This would require that all agencies dealing with health care development, and education of young children from birth to five years, to work collaboratively to ensure that children are well prepared to enter the primary school system. The present course of action points to the establishment by the Ministry of Education of 5 Diagnostic centres that would allow for screening for vision, hearing and other development issues including cognitive development. The Ministry of Gender and Youth Affairs intends to on its own accord to establish diagnostic centres geared to examine the social aspects of development. There is a general feeling by the Student Services Division of The Ministry of Education and the members of the Youth at Risk Committee that a tripartite arrangement made up of the Ministries of Health, Education and Gender and Youth Affairs be instituted for the establishment of the Diagnostic centres and with main control from the Ministry Of Health.

Senator Helen Drayton reminded the Committee about an initiative in 2007 by Families in Action and endorsed by United Way Trinidad and Tobago titled Collaborative Child Development Programme. CCDP was designed to provide a comprehensive framework of health service provision by which all infants and children at risk for developmental delays would be identified and provided with access to early identification services in accordance with goals and targets established at the World Health Summit on Children and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Essentially, through this programme, there would have been

early detection of learning and other disabilities, allowing the children to receive appropriate medical attention and other support, while the attendant parent education and capacity building of communities and families. The total cost of the project was approximately 9 million dollars over a three year period and would have allowed for a wing at a hospital designated to treat children with developmental problems. United Way pledged 2 million dollars with a further 2 million dollars expected from the government of Trinidad and Tobago (2007).

Despite the support from the then Minister of Education, the initiative failed to come to fruition. We are told that there was indecision related to ownership of the programme by the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development. This was indeed tragic. Even as the Government seeks to set up Diagnostic Centres on its own volition, it is the position of the Committee that the original CCDP initiative be revisited and with its goals to establish an assessment programme for children, create an appropriate and integrated response to the identified needs and to build a network of collaborative, health service providers throughout Trinidad and Tobago. There should be an added goal that provides a health registry and allows for research activities, some of a longitudinal nature.

An Early Childhood Intervention Program used in the USA to prevent or decrease the level of juvenile delinquency was examined in the context of best practices:

#### **Perry Pre-school Project**

This program was designed for preschoolers deemed 'at risk' for delayed intellectual functioning and eventual 'school failure'. The children who attended this program received high quality cognitively oriented, early childhood education. For one or two years, teachers conducted frequent home visits to apprise parents of their child's activities and to encourage participation in the education process. Monthly meetings provided opportunities for parents to exchange views and

to support one another's changing perceptions of child rearing. Some parents became active in these meetings and eventually became part of a planning committee. Berrueta-Clement et al (1987) & Barnett (1993) longitudinal studies on this project found that there was a 'snowball effect' which resulted in greater readiness, which in turn resulted in a more positive reaction by Infant 1 teachers, which led to a stronger commitment to school followed by better academic performance in later grades. According to Berrueta-Clement et al, this snowball effect led to more successful schooling, which they linked to lower delinquency rates.

Seitz (1990) offered an alternative explanation to Berrueta-Clement et al. by emphasizing the significant role extensive home visitation played in this project. Seitz hypothesized that parents (due to their involvement in the project) became better socializers of their children across during and after the program ended. These parents gained experience in building proactive relationships with teachers; a pattern that developed throughout the child's schooling. Thus the involvement of parents in the 'Perry Pre-School Project' may have helped them to establish a supportive home environment and effective home-school linkages, which may have been responsible for more successful schooling by their children and a reduction in delinquent behaviour.

The early childhood intervention program described above highlighted the effects of successful experiences early in childhood that 'snowballed' to generate further success in school and other social contexts; the programs enhanced physical, health and aspects of personality, such as motivation and sociability, helping the child to adapt better to later social expectations and family support, education and involvement in intervention improved parents' child rearing skills and thus altered the environment where children were raised. The 'snowball hypothesis' presumes that children who attend quality intervention programs are better prepared socially and academically when they begin primary school. This enables them to interact positively with their teachers,

who in turn relate positively to them and this tone of adult-child relationships continues in progressive years of schooling (ibid.).

### **Local Intervention - The SERVOL Parent Outreach Programme**

In Trinidad and Tobago the SERVOL 'Parent Outreach Program' focuses on working with children and their families from birth to three years offering parenting support in their homes and communities. This is a program that should be expanded in each community in Trinidad and Tobago, as its focus is similar to the early intervention programs described above.

### **Key to Learning**

A unique educational programme based on Vygotsky's social-cultural theory of cognition and learning as well as input from the latest worldwide research into children's learning has been successfully implemented in parts of Britain. Vygotsky proposed that mental tools are to the mind as mechanical tools are to the body. Children need to acquire these tools of the mind early, because it is these tools that will enable them to succeed in formal education. These tools include cultural tools, maps, language, symbolic devices, symbols, diagrams, models and graphs. (Dolya, 2011) (see Appendix 1).

Logie (2008) fittingly reminds us of the dangers inherent in seeking to replicate models from elsewhere as there are unique socio-economic conditions in the Caribbean that may hold different meanings across cultural communities. For example she suggests that the transition from ECCE to primary schooling may be difficult to address in Trinidad and Tobago because of our conception of curriculum that puts emphasis on academic training very early in children's lives and other challenges due to sparse resources and family structural organizations.

### **Recommendations**

1. An institutional strategy for the ECCE Division as contained in the Moore Report (2011) and the Franklyn report

(2010) that provides a framework to support the transition of children from ECCE to Primary Education should be given full consideration by the Ministry of Education in keeping with its quest for a seamless education system

2. The ECCE Division of the Ministry of Education should be fully staffed by competent professionals to reflect the importance given to ECCE.
3. Such professionals must be committed to the policies and strategies of ECCE as espoused by the Ministry of Education.
4. Implementation of the ECCE curriculum is crucial in dealing with children at risk. Some consideration should be given to the adaptation of the 'Key to Learning' syllabus.
5. In keeping with the philosophy of a seamless curriculum, officers of the ECCE Division should seek to achieve the goal of a seamless transition from ECCE to Primary schooling.
6. Curriculum mapping dictates that there should be regular joint collaborative meetings between ECCE and Primary School educators and parents.
7. Strategies and work plans to deal with the transition should be monitored closely by the groups of curriculum stake holders with scope for review and assessment of key performance indicators.
8. The Ministry of Education should ensure that adequate resources, identified and prioritized by officials of the ECCE, be provided to implement the above recommendations.
9. The national ECCE curriculum with its activity-based approach should include instructional guides in the major developmental areas of body image/ gross motor, perceptual motor and language and arithmetic. Body image and gross motor activities are intended to increase body awareness thus increasing a child's self-concept.
10. Teachers should provide opportunities within the range of activities to develop school readiness skills such as paying attention, as well as self-help and socialization skills.
11. All day care centres (for children from birth to 3 Years) should be under the control of the ECCE Division and the respective educational districts and the THA.
12. Child care officials should be aware of the importance of quality child care from birth. Quality child care requires sufficient well-trained staff to ensure that every child receives appropriate individualised attention.
13. Every child deserves a good start in an environment that is safe, healthy, emotionally supportive and cognitively stimulating. In that regard, a child with a learning disability or with social and emotional needs should be screened by age 5 for remedial intervention. The original CCDP initiative should be revisited; with its goals to establish an assessment programme for children, create an appropriate and integrated response to the identified needs and to build a network of collaborative, health service providers throughout Trinidad and Tobago. There should be an added goal that provides a health registry and allows for research activities, some of a longitudinal nature.
14. The development of an Electronic Child Health Network (ECHN) to link hospitals, health care professionals and other organizations providing maternal, newborn, child and adolescent services should be considered.
15. Child to caregiver ratio at day care centres should be no more than (5 to 1) and at the early childhood level no more than (10 to 1).

16. Parent involvement in ECCE should include participating in parent room activities, volunteering in the classroom, attending school events, reading public education documents on parenting, and enrolling in educational courses for personal development.
17. Adults that have practical and social support are in a better position to become more effective parents than those who feel stressed and alienated. In that regard a comprehensive focus on human development must include comprehensive health care services, social services, housing services, public education in parenting and home visits.
18. In its attempt to differentiate the ECCE curriculum the ECCE Division should work with community groups and private centres to develop local situations that best meet the early childhood needs of a community.
19. Demonstration projects should be mounted in communities across the country to foster positive approaches to early child development and parenting at the community level. Special funding would be needed for community coordinators.
20. The ECCE Division should develop a programme operations manual to guide the management of ECCE.
21. The ECCE Division should ensure that culturally appropriate learning resources are developed and disseminated to support the curriculum particularly literacy and numeracy.
22. Home visitation by ECCE teachers should be a common necessary feature of curriculum delivery.
23. Teacher education for ECCE should be rationalized to allow for a higher level of professionalism. In that regard teachers of SERVOL should be regularised with the state's teachers thereby removing the financial and other anomalies that exist.
24. The National Council for ECCE should be re-instated.
25. Because of the grave importance of ECCE , child care loans should be granted to needy parents (after applying a means test) to a maximum sum of fifty thousand dollars payable after ten years at an interest rate of 6% per annum.
26. A Workplace Child Care Tax Incentive should be established where by businesses are given a 30 per cent tax deduction to create on site child care facilities or to improve existing community child care facilities for children of working parents This incentive recognizes the important role that employers can play in providing child care.



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# PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING: A PARTNERSHIP IN LEARNING

*Lennox Bernard*

*"The child is a bridge between home and school" - Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot (2004)*

In the last five years there has been a growing intensity worldwide concerning parent involvement in the schooling of their children. This has come about as a result of increasing violence in schools including bullying, poor expectations regarding the performance of teachers and administrators and doubts related to the relevance of a constantly overloaded curriculum. From the standpoint of the parents many of them have reneged on their responsibilities as parents and the school is seen as a glorified day care centre. The corollary to all of this is that there is a greater interest worldwide in home schooling among stable families while among the disadvantaged, students are dropping out of school to become the wards of the state, indulging in gang activities or child labour, sometimes with the knowledge of the parent.

In a recent two-day workshop (2012), conducted among principals and vice principals of public secondary schools, they confirmed the lack of parental involvement using the following indicators. The administrators noted that many of the local Parent Teachers Associations were either non-existent or non-functional. Functioning ones generated low attendance consisting mainly of mothers, and matters discussed were peripheral to teaching/learning. They questioned the legitimacy of the national association as it relates to power and discourse on pedagogical issues. It was argued that the parents' interests in schooling waned after students were allocated to secondary schools

and moved from passivity and indifference to hostility and aggression depending on the child's placement at a secondary school. There were anecdotes about parents' refusals to visit the schools when summoned, unwillingness to validate homework activities and expressions of helplessness in parenting. In some instances parents visit schools to do battle with teachers verbally and sometimes physically in the presence of the school community. With reference to local school boards, they appeared to be non-existent.

What follows are the questions:

- How can parents maximize benefits to their children by involving themselves in partnerships with the school and the community?
- How can schools increase the participation of traditionally under represented parents in activities valued by the school, while at the same time valuing the less overt effects made by parents to foster positive educational outcomes for their children?
- How can the community be sensitized to their role in the partnership and the influences they have in shaping children's learning and development?

In confronting the issue of parent involvement, theorists such as Lightfoot (2010), Jeynes (2010) and Epstein (2010) remind us of the serious if not

sacred 'handing over' of the child by the parent for the purpose of learning. Featherstone (2010) captures the transfer poignantly by suggesting that school is 'theatre', the large stage on which our cultural sagas are enacted and the opportunities and casualties of social change are most visible and valid. Lightfoot takes it further by suggesting that parents must quickly learn to release their children and trust that they will be cared for by a perfect stranger whose role as teacher gives her access to the most intimate territory, the deepest emotional places. She felt that a productive engagement with the teacher is essential for the child's learning and growth, and for the parent's peace of mind.

This act of trust according to Jeynes must carry with it subtle expectations; one of love and mutual respect for the child emanating from the teacher and matched by corresponding subtle expectations of love, and an understanding of the importance of education coming from the home. Incidentally subtle expectations can be practised by all classes in society and may be even more effective in the working class home where there is the added benefit of sacrifice; what Illich calls 'the art of suffering'. Delayed gratification may very well be an impetus to learn and to improve one's status.

A recent newspaper report (2012), substantiates Jeynes' position. Hakim Mohandas Amani Williams the holder of two Masters degrees and a Bill Gates Millennium Scholarship winner earned a doctorate in International Educational Development from Columbia University. Williams 32, was born in Laventille and moved to the USA after graduating from Queen's Royal College. Boodram in his article noted that Williams in commenting on his native community Laventille said:

I grew up with drugs, alcohol, gunshots, et cetera all around the community... But I also grew up with many in the community who used to call me Dr. Williams as a child and cheer me on and I grew up in a home with a mom and grandma who did not have much formal education but who ardently believed in its value. Laventille brims with many hard working, decent, self respecting and talented youth and adults.

In his revelation, Williams refers to subtle expectations of achievement from his parent, love and support from the community and the importance of education. These features were well known to disadvantaged families throughout Trinidad and Tobago and there is an urgent need for their revival in young families especially in depressed communities.

Jeynes (ibid) has provided us with the salience of subtle aspects of parental involvement and encourages that involvement. Using the well known social learning theory of Bandura and Walters (1964), Jeynes showed that parental expectations scored higher than household study rules and attendance at school functions. Research indicates that although family disciplines such as checking home work and maintaining household rules can have a positive effect, other more subtle types of parental involvement enjoy an even greater influence. Parental expectations are not the idea of pushing expectations on the child but the subtle ones that are understood by the child. It may include parental sacrifice, low-stress communication and general agreement between the child and parent on the value of education.

Lightfoot (2004) and Epstein (2010) make a case for various forms of involvement by parents in school. At the heart of it all is open communication. Open communication between parents and children is not easy to develop, typically it takes years to develop. It is not only about questioning but effective listening. Communication according to Davalos et al (2005; cited in Jeynes 2010) can cause parents and children to grow closer and often facilitates free expression and experience of love. Inhibited communication inhibits the free flow of love. Open communication is generally a prerequisite for a home to have a loving atmosphere (Cassanova, Garcia-Linares, de la Torre et Carpio 2005; cited in Jeynes 2010). Parental style is also an important subtle component of involvement. High levels of love and support and a beneficial degree of discipline and structure are important (Baumrind, 1971; Boehnke, Scott & Scott 1996; cited in Jeynes 2010).

Involvement could include supervising after school programs, conducting school surveys, assisting in beautification projects, and consultation on policy matters. Inter-generational learning can be enhanced by using the expertise of parents in areas such as sports, health and wellness and cultural studies. Parents can also be empowered to be parent representative for specific classes, encouraged to observe lessons as taught to their children and serve as relief teachers and classroom aides. Insecure, weak or disadvantaged parents can be acknowledged by mounting developmental programs for them in literacies including financial and computer and parenting skills. There has also been some success in progressive countries in child/parent tutoring with the child as tutor.

At the level of the school, a similar form of subtle expectations for students is also highly effective. A teaching style high in love and support and that provides clear behavioural boundaries and enforces these boundaries maximizes learning. (Wentzel 2002) and Jeynes (2005, 2006) are convinced that creating an academically oriented love atmosphere is more important than instilling in parents certain educational tasks they need to perform. Ultimately this means that teachers must become even more concerned with whether parents possess loving attitudes toward their children than whether they engage in specific quantifiable actions.

Lightfoot (ibid) notes that teachers claim that their education does not offer a conceptual framework for envisioning the crucial roles of family in the successful schooling of children. What Cremin (1990) calls "the ecology of education". No central value was put on the crucial importance and complexity of building productive parent teacher-relationship. Their training never gave them tools and techniques, the practical guidance that is helpful in communicating and working with parents. She concludes that without training or institutional support in working with parents, teachers develop their own styles and rituals and define

their own goals and content and these are largely guided by the rituals and echoes from their childhood.

In the absence of formal training in communicating and working with parents, teachers are encouraged to develop skills of active listening and anger management and the maintenance of thorough records of activities of their students, in preparation for parent teacher conferences. Teachers should be creative in dealing with parents; empathize with them to gain their trust, exhibit measures of love and affection for their students and display knowledge of their charges beyond their academic status. All the sources stress the importance of the parent teachers conferences that should be held at least once a term to be effective. These meetings should not be ritualistic and cosmetic but realistic and helpful. Lightfoot believes that no one has focused deeply enough on the parent-teacher conference as the metaphor for a broader cultural narrative, as the crucible where family-school dynamics are most vividly and personally played out and as the place where institutional relationships work or fail. Epstein broadens the typology to include the community whereby community organizations share responsibility for children's education by promoting after school programs including homework centres, health and wellness, excursions and other cultural activities.

Lightfoot (ibid) notes that to parents the child is the most important person in their lives- the one who arouses their deepest passions and greatest vulnerabilities, the one who aspires their fiercest advocacy and protection. It is the teachers – society's professional adults- who are the primary people with whom the parents must seek alliance and support in the crucial role of child rearing. All of these expectations and fears get loaded on to encounters between parents and teachers. She posits (ibid) that adults often play out their own childhood histories, their own insecurities, their own primal fears. Almost every study of school achievement has included the importance of positive relationship between families and schools.

An improved local Parent Teachers Association should be involved in decision making, governance and advocacy at the level of the school; with its members recognised as useful and competent individuals in the various committees of the school. Our national association is in dire need of a new image that gives credence to efficacy and advocacy that is based on strong pedagogical principles. The current thrust of parent involvement worldwide has no place for any association that appears to be reactionary and not in sync with current trends in education.

Lightfoot (ibid) posits that the social and cultural values that shape educational are hostile to the healthy development of children, limiting and stressful to teachers and distorting to parent-teacher relationships. She is correct in her assessment that the value frame of parents is not only about money. It is about patterns of interaction and quality of life. Lightfoot believes that parents should do everything in their power to put children- their strength and vulnerabilities, their achievements and their challenges- at the center of the parent-teacher conference. The child is a bridge between home and school.

Parents can instil the importance of education by providing the basic necessities for learning. These include a nutritional diet, setting goals for the child, reading with the child at an early age, exposure to books, newspapers, magazines and controlled use of the internet, celebrating academic successes however small, encouraging their involvement in sports and the arts and reminding them of positive role models in the community, preferably those who struggled to make it. The downside to all of this is that with all the professional support in the world, where parents have abdicated their responsibilities as far as home routine, parental control, initiative and involvement are concerned, familial dysfunction, underachievement, among many others is an inevitable outcome. The government would do well to educate parents in responsible parenthood.

We met individuals many of them at correctional institutions where there was no family, abusive parents or families struggling emotionally and financially. It is well known that with a severely troubled home life youth can have little interest in school, in his ability to learn and to interact with teachers and peers. At a deeper level it can lead to low self esteem, a lack of hope and other immediate risk factors for crime and violence.

In conclusion there are numerous benefits to parent involvement in schooling. The parent is made aware of any learning difficulties of the child and corrective interventions or referrals and is exposed to the learning requirements of the teacher. Apart from pacing the academic progress of the child, it motivates the teacher to perform at his/her optimum. Finally it provides comfort to the child, parent and teacher that there is love and respect for the individual, but above all parent involvement is crucial in building a learning society.

### **Recommendations**

1. Parents should be consulted on all major policies, plans and initiatives developed by the Ministry of Education well in advance of their implementation
2. Parents should be involved in the education of the child through school visits, conferencing and knowledge of all policies, plans and programs undertaken by the school.
3. The school on the other hand should encourage school visits, parent-teacher conferencing, open house and home visits.
4. A new standard report card at the primary and secondary level should be designed to provide parents with a clear understanding of how their children are progressing.
5. An industrial law should be established whereby parents are entitled to one to

two hours per month to visit the child's school and consult with the teacher.

6. The government should engage post haste in public education campaigns and media blitz on responsible parenting; pamphlets, brochures, CD, DVDs, web sites should be available to parents at hospitals, health centres, government offices and at popular locations in banks, shopping areas and malls throughout the country.
7. Information should include health care, nutrition, emotional support for the child, laws related to the rights of the child, developing a code of conduct in the home and encouraging spiritual development, prayer, love of neighbour and love for country.
8. Health care officials at public and private clinics and hospitals should ensure that pregnant women especially first timers are knowledgeable of the information provided by the state.
9. The information should be user friendly, attractive and should take into account low readability skills.
10. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago should establish Child Parent Centres (CPCs) which provide comprehensive educational support and family support to poor children and their parents.
11. Our National Parent Teachers Association should re-examine its involvement in the education of the children in Trinidad and Tobago and give credence to its efficacy and advocacy based on strong pedagogical principles.
12. Local School PTAs should be involved in governance, decision making and advocacy at the level of the school.

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# SCHOOL AS A SAFE PLACE

*Lennox Bernard*

*“Inclusion is about being really safe in a safe environment. I always took inclusion to mean that every child was entitled to a mainstream education by whatever means necessary to meet their individual needs. Inclusion is about differentiating an activity to meet everyone’s needs.” - (Artiles, 2011).*

Humanization of society in education is reflected in the concept of inclusive education. It is based on the values of humanism and suggests that all individuals including historically considered ‘outcasts’ and ‘rejects’ are ensured the necessary conditions for a wholesome life. Inclusive education supports and concentrates on the educational needs of every pupil in the social context of the school by ensuring accessibility of education to everyone, belonging and participation in all aspects connected with social life as well as the development and achievement of every child in the effective and qualitative process of education.

Since the 1990s inclusion has been accepted part of schooling in many progressive countries. Here in Trinidad and Tobago there is vagueness in policy and inclusion remains a generalized concept that is wide open to varying interpretations by officials at the Ministry. In fact the prevailing policy appears to be one directed to only special needs children while the popular discourse affirmed by Ball (1994) is ‘keeping children safe’ and ‘meeting needs’. Even so the ‘special needs approach’ has not moved from policy to practice to any great extent. There is a clear perception that a clear link has not been established between the policy document on inclusive education and documents to regulate it in the school system - documents that would reflect its practical application. For instance there are students with the following learning challenges: dysgraphia, dyslexia, dyscalculia,

dysphonia, auditory dyslexia, attention deficit and hyperactive disorder (ADHD), (mild) mental retardation and highly gifted children.

The main features of special education/remedial teaching should be linked to theory, procedures and practice. Information should be given on testing, referral, grouping, materials and curriculum strategies. All children before the age of five should be tested, referred and placed in a group with a remedial teacher. There is apparent confusion by policymakers and technocrats regarding the concept of equity. Jencks (1972) reminds us that equity is not the same as equal opportunity. Equity focuses on outcomes and results and is rooted in difference and fittedness of each individual. In other words it is not good enough to acclaim that all children have access to schooling (equality of opportunity) while some children because of poverty and social dislocation cannot benefit from it (inequity).

Berliner (2006) points out that poverty especially among urban youth is associated with academic performance. Among the lowest social classes environmental factors particularly family and neighbourhood influences are strongly associated with academic performance, while small reductions in family poverty lead to increases in positive school behaviour. There are thousands of studies that show a correlation between poverty and academic performance. In that regard school reform is highly constrained

by factors that are outside classrooms and schools. Some of the literature suggests that we may be better off devoting more of our attention and resources than we now do towards helping the needy families in the communities that are served by those schools than putting our attention and resources into trying to fix what goes on inside low performing schools when the cause of low performance may reside outside the school. One of those important areas is health that plays a role in the immediate factors for violence among youth. Health issues such as nutritional deficits, physical inactivity, obesity or eating disorders, substance abuse and poor mental health can be viewed as some of the roots of the immediate factors for violence involving youth.

Berliner concludes that a healthy childhood environment supported by adequate family economics is an amalgam of many factors, but probably includes a regular supply of nutritious food, stability in feelings of security, quick medical attention when needed, high quality child care, access to books and exposure to rich language usage in the home. Of grave importance as well, is the presence of well functioning role models in low income neighbourhoods. Such role models count for a lot in the lives of poor children. For instance the Cincinnati neighbourhood in the USA is trying a 'novel' approach as part of its anti-crime programme. Considered a simple but effective approach and titled 'the Moral Voice' the programme involves people of influence in the lives of criminals to speak to them and encourage them to stop shooting and selling drugs and offer real help if they do. If the offenders do not accept help, they will be subject to intense police attention. This is not novel to us as the Council of Elders in Laventille and other care givers have been trying this strategy for years.

A safe school provides a physical and social environment in which students are able to learn and achieve to their fullest capacity. A safe school environment also enables teachers, administrators and other staff members to support students in their pursuits of learning, without violence, the threat of violence and

other safety concerns. To accomplish these goals, schools must assess their risk factors, needs, local resources and existing efforts and strategies.

In the last decade numerous reports have been submitted to authorities about the nature and extent of problems faced by school aged youth in Trinidad and Tobago. A Trinidad and Tobago Youth Survey (2007) unearthed the following:

- 21.5% of students reported attacking someone with the intention of harming them in the past 12 months;
- 13.1% of students reported attacking someone with a weapon in the past 12 months;
- 9.4% of male students reported carrying a handgun in the past 12 months;
- 40.4% of male students reported that it would be easy to get a handgun;
- 4.2% of male students reported taking a handgun to school in the past twelve months;
- 59.2% of those who had carried a gun reported carrying it for self protection;
- Among males 9% reported currently being in a gang, 9.8% reported being former gang members and 9.7% reported being associated with a gang; 35.7% of students reported not feeling safe at school;
- 21.4% of students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the past twelve months;
- 12.1% of students reported not going to school in the past 30 days because it was not safe.

Deosaran has been prolific in providing the society with data regarding violence and indiscipline in schools and crime and delinquency among our youth in general. Incisive studies have been done in 2003, 2006 and two in 2008. Some of the data in 2006 are worth repeating:

- 50% of the students actually saw or heard teachers being threatened one or more times by other students at school



- 32% actually saw or heard teachers being hit or physically attacked by other students
- Almost 75% of the students used obscene language or cursed with 30% of them saying they did this 11 or more times for the term. The comparable figure for home was 40% and 12% with 11 or more times.
- 30% of the students skipped school or missed classes
- 20% willfully damaged or vandalized school property
- 16% of them were actively involved in gang misbehaviours
- 10% stole somebody else's property
- 55% did not do homework and got in trouble for it
- 7% smoked cigarettes in school
- 20% drank alcohol in school
- 3% used illegal drugs in school
- 20% used force to get something from somebody
- 40% physically struck or threatened to strike another student in school
- 22% were in fights with other students in school (with no weapon)
- 6% fought with a weapon ( for example, gun, knife, ice-pick etc.) in school
- Further, in terms of actual use, and when given 13 different forms of discipline to choose from, less than 2% of the teachers selected corporal punishment for student violence and delinquency
- 90% said that parents or guardians show little or no interest in their children's education
- Over 60% said that "parental neglect, poor upbringing and family breakdown" are the major causes of school delinquency
- These teachers said that among the major strategies for reducing school delinquency are more parent-teacher collaboration (38%), more effective punishment and sanctions
- (17%), improved teaching techniques (11%), and improved school management (10%).

Some of the recommendations contained in these reports have not been implemented and they deserve repetition in this report. A progressive development that followed was the introduction of the Violence Prevention Academy (VPA). VPA (2008) is designed to develop comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based violence prevention plans tailored to specific needs of participating schools. Using a combination of face-to-face learning and technical assistance, the training programme enhances the skills of school violence prevention specialists and the capacity of the schools where they work to implement and sustain successful violence prevention programmes.

Deosaran went on in 2008 to obtain the views and suggestions of teachers in an attempt to empower them to reduce student violence and delinquency. The teachers' suggestions are very instructive:

- 62% of the teachers said that sexual deviance such as pornography, sexual intercourse sexual fondling and kissing on the school premises are "big problems"
- 47% said teacher indiscipline is a big problem
- 30 % said as teachers they have been threatened by students many times in the school term 83% agree that corporal punishment should be a policy in the educational system however 87% said that corporal punishment, if used, should be used only by specially designated person (e.g. Principal,Dean)

The VPA uses a problem solving approach to specific issues confronting individual schools and the implementation process includes: problem identification, analysis, strategy formulation and assessment. The VPA has to its credit 30 years of research and development and their approach is well regarded as 'best practice' by many developed nations. It has been successfully used to respond to issues such as violence, bullying, gangs, drugs and absenteeism in well over 300 communities in the United States, Canada, England, Mexico and Russia.

The VPA worked with 25 schools considered 'high risk' In the student survey more than

50% believed that disrespect, fighting, littering, disruptive behaviour and gambling in that order, were major problems in the school system. It would be interesting to hear what the sociolinguists think about the frequent use of the word 'disrespect' in the jargon of youth – nuff respect. 40% perceived issues as stealing, loitering, bullying, vandalism as major and 30% felt that gangs, taxing, threat and intimidation, inappropriate sexual contact, weapon possession and robbery as important.

Across all schools, however, teachers frequently reported having been the victim of obscene remarks or gestures (45%) and have been threatened by a student in the prior month (27%). More than 8.5% of all teachers reported having been attacked with 7.3% requiring medical attention, in the prior month. Interestingly teachers identified empty classrooms and student washrooms as the most unsafe spaces in the school (VPA 2008).

VPA engaged in three interventions and the first session focused on all participating schools and at the end participants learned to create and use a centralized school-based incident database. The second session two months later focused on total incidents by school. This analysis also concluded that crime and indiscipline had decreased. The final analysis focused on specific problem by each school and sought to determine whether there was a change in the frequency of those specific problem types. This analysis found that three of eight schools experienced a decrease in offending rates.

Interestingly, the VPA made a policy recommendation that reads as follows:

The Ministry of Education should embark on a public relations campaign aimed at correcting the misconception that schools in Trinidad and Tobago are generally unsafe.

Serious violence in Trinidad and Tobago schools appears to be relatively rare. The public, parents and other government organizations in Trinidad (sic) should be informed that their schools are safer than the communities and homes from which their students come.

As part of their sample analysis the VPA identified that most school-based assaults were occurring around 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. This discovery led a number of groups to develop responses that addressed the temporal patterns of such problems at their schools. Interestingly using school-level data the VPA was able to demonstrate the value of documenting how repeat offenders and repeat victims affect school discipline. At one school 2% of students (18 students) were responsible for 45% of incidents and in another school 2.7% of students were responsible for 51% of victimization. It is noted that that kind of data represented a strong case for targeted intervention. Taken further no more than 10% -15% of the students in secondary schools with total numbers of 850 students and 650 students were repeat offenders or victims of assault. This may suggest why in our recent survey many students perceive school as a safe place.

This committee's survey showed in Table 16 and 17, only 8.8% vs 9.3% respondents, in hot spot vs non hot spot areas felt that school was not a safe place. This is contra to the general perception by the public and some earlier data. Similarly only 8.1% vs 11.7%, in hot spot vs non hot areas felt that school was an unhappy place. Using the language of youth the majority of students in hot spot areas 88.5% and 83.7% in non hot spot areas felt that school was 'cool'. An analysis of the survey may suggest that there was a level of comfort with traditional schooling approaches.

Some may argue that there is a general inertia among youth about crime or as Hart (2004) postulates in his book 'Thrilled to Death' that, "the desire for excitement has become as an addiction, and as in all addictions, our brain adapts to the present level of stimulation, gets bored with it, and then looks for more...more..... and more!" (p.167). He warns that this generation is "thrilled to death". The result especially for boys is that not much shocks them anymore and that the brain has been desensitized to the horrors of the world.

This committee disagrees with any return to corporal punishment in school and supports the Ministry of Education in its position to outlaw the use of violence as a form of discipline. There should be no violation of the Ministry of Education's National School Code of Conduct which explicitly states that corporal punishment should not be used in the Nation's schools. There are alternative sanctions to corporal punishment available to the school system. The disciplinary model of practice includes verbal reprimand, withdrawal of privileges, making restoration, applying extra academic work, a system of demerits, counselling services, detention, pupil/student courts, isolation, temporary and permanent exclusion to an alternative school setting. The pastoral model, which is more proactive, humanistic and student-centred in its approach, encourages from an early age, verbal reasoning, positive reinforcement, a system of merits, counselling services, peer support programmes, student councils, spiritual awareness, behaviour contracts with parental involvement, valuing pupils work and letters of commendation.

How do we deal with parents who practise corporal punishment? Would that the recent Children Act had outlawed corporal punishment in the home as well. Linda Albert (1996) has expounded on co-operative discipline that seeks to match the discipline and punishment of the school with that of the home. It is not an easy arrangement culturally and may require patience and forbearance and in some cases behavioural contracts, but if diligently applied it allows for matching the rewards and punishment in the school with that of the home thereby providing greater meaning to rewards and punishment.

There is a general policy of 'zero tolerance' for 'bad behaviour' in schools and some youth have been suspended or expelled from school without adequate support to maintain their learning, occupy their time or obtain the necessary counselling. Expulsion and suspension put youth on the street for extended period, leading to more interaction with gangs and police. This can lead to the criminalization of youth. Any safe school policy that fails to

take these aspects into account will impact negatively on the individual, his family and the community.

Bullying as a form of anti-social behaviour has gained prominence in Trinidad and Tobago and is well represented in all reports dating back to 2003. It was surprising to us that it was not featured directly in the National School of Conduct 2009. According to the Scottish Government bullying behaviours may include (2009):

- name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening
- ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours
- hitting, tripping, kicking
- stealing and damaging belongings
- sending abusive text, email or instant messages

These behaviours can take place in day care centres, schools, home and in the community and can come from children, young people and adults. Bullying also occurs in the virtual world also known as cyberspace that children and young people access through the internet, via social networking, computers and mobile phones. The challenge faced by the Government is to move beyond the acceptance that bullying exists and to prevent bullying of children and young people through a range of policies strategies and approaches.

Character education is a useful additive to the primary school curriculum designed to inculcate positive character traits, including citizenship, responsibility, courtesy, respect and patriotism. The committee felt that it would be better served if it is designed using a 'grass root' approach to development and infused across the curriculum at every age level rather than being relegated to the primary school curriculum as a separate subject. In fact it would be a useful induction to service learning at the secondary level. Character education is a form of moral and values education than in itself a valuing process that can be taught but is better off 'caught' through the role modelling effect.

To apply a standard time for measurement is unreliable and as such the subject should not be examinable.

School must be a safe haven so that old, dilapidated buildings hazardous to health and well being are unacceptable. We were told by officials of the Ministry of Education that there are 100 of our 900 schools that are over 100 years old. Schools must have well lit classrooms and wide bright hallways, age appropriate and ergonomic furniture, outdoor play areas, time out/ serenity room, computer labs, libraries, student friendly staff rooms and welcoming administrative rooms. Student ID cards are an easy and effective way to ensure that unauthorised people are not able to enter schools and roam hallways. These cards can also be linked to other school services such as computer labs and library access.

### Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education should conduct an annual/biennial risk and protective survey to determine those issues and problems facing schools, families, communities and youth in Trinidad and Tobago (recommended in 2007).
2. The Ministry of Education should develop an instrument for assessing schools along a continuum of "risk" from very low risk to very high risk (recommended in 2008).
3. The Trinidad and Tobago VPA should be expanded to more schools and should involve local academics that can work alongside VPA facilitators in an attempt to produce more VPA facilitators for the future (recommended in 2010).
4. A strong and enforceable set of physical security guidelines should be developed for all public schools in Trinidad and Tobago. (recommended in 2010).
5. Coordination between security officers and school principals should be improved. Policies regarding security officers' responsibilities and actions should be reviewed and revised. Security officers need to be made more accountable to school principals. (recommended in 2010).
6. Policies, practices, and traditions that affect the level of surveillance or watchful guardianship on school campuses, such as those related to teacher absenteeism, late-coming, and early leaving should be reviewed and revised if necessary. The goal should be to institute policies and practices that maximize student supervision and campus surveillance by minimizing teacher absenteeism, late-coming, and early leaving. (recommended in 2010).
7. Every effort should be made by administrators and staff at early childhood centres, and primary and secondary schools to make school a safe and happy place. In so doing the curriculum should match the ability levels of learners including learners with special needs that have been mainstreamed into the system.
8. Schools should be learning communities of differentiated curricula, remediation programmes, accelerated learning, therapeutic settings, after school programmes, mentorship, empathetic teachers, student councils and service learning.
9. The school should provide counselling to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged youths. Guidance counsellors must be sufficiently trained to deal with the complex factors that affect the youth in depressed communities
10. There are currently only 2 Student Development Centres to cater for students suspended from secondary schools because of 'bad behaviour'. The Ministry of Education should move swiftly to establish Student Development Centres in all educational districts in Trinidad and in Tobago.

11. There should be scope for remedial work at the level of the school curriculum, emotional intelligence, life skills and physical development.
12. The Ministry of Education should institute in all secondary schools a first period of 20 minutes a day when an assigned tutor/teacher will partner with students on psycho/social/learning issues applicable to the group of students. The tutor/teacher should have a mentorship role.
13. Cooperative discipline between the home and the school should be established. The NAPTA and local PTAs should be encouraged to promote cooperative discipline among its members.
14. Character education should be immersed in the primary and secondary school curriculum, but should be non-examinable, and have a 'grass rooted' approach.
15. Home visitation - by teachers at primary schools should be encouraged, especially visits to delinquent parents.
16. All secondary schools should have a student council that would allow for the involvement of students in the development and implementation of some school's policies and give voice to students on the strengths and weaknesses of the school's culture.
17. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) should establish a prevention and intervention programme that will help teachers identify when children, especially in primary years may be at risk of neglect or physical or emotional harm.

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# TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

*Lennox Bernard*

The Jamaica Gleaner (2011) reported in an article titled 'Quality Teachers Key To Success' that a groundbreaking global study conducted by consulting giant McKinsey and Co. in 2009, identified South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Finland as the nations that consistently outperform the rest of the world. Success of these school systems was not based on higher education expenditure or even maintaining small class sizes. The one consistent thread found in these schools was quality teachers- equipped with the requisite skills to teach, motivate and inspire their classes. They were recruited from the top tier of graduating classes and they are well compensated.

Over time educators recognize that the attributes of a high quality teacher are the following:

- enthusiasm and energy
- flexibility and adaptability
- openness and an encouraging approach
- a sense of humour
- creativity, imagination and divergent thinking
- confidence and firmness
- innovation
- resilience
- emotional intelligence
- high expectations for students
- love and mutual respect

Evans (2001) sums it up aptly, "Teachers will have to become experts not in teaching as an activity but in diagnosing how individuals learn and then designing bespoke learning strategies.

The central issue for teaching in the future is the extent to which it facilitates profound learning both as a means of enhancing formal academic success and creating autonomous lifelong learners."

Academic learning time is a precious commodity for teachers and students and they are expected to make the most of every teaching/learning minute. Experienced teachers know that many factors affect student learning, namely, motivation, intellectual ability, limited concentration span and the learning culture in the home, among others. However research has repeatedly identified a powerful promoter of achievement. That factor is time, or more precisely, how quality time is used by teachers and students in the classroom. Numerous studies conclude that teachers' use of classroom time affects student achievement.

Students are 'off task' and lose important academic learning time if they are waiting for the activity to begin or to continue, are socializing uncontrollably or are uninvolved. Poor classroom management by a teacher can account for a regular loss of academic time and subsequent low academic achievement by student. A low academic achiever is at risk of being disruptive at school, dropping out of school, unemployability, being uninterested in any form of meaningful learning, engaging in deviant behaviour.

There is an urgent need to establish standards and systems for certifying accomplished educators, and to provide programmes and advocate policies that support excellence in teaching and learning. The recommendation seeks to renew confidence in the profession. In

both consultations held in Trinidad and Tobago there were many who were concerned about the performance of teachers in the classroom. They complained that some teachers were 'off task' based on the principle mentioned in. In Tobago we were told that it was normal practice for some teachers to engage in private study during class time to the detriment of students who were 'waiting' to be taught.

At the consultation in Trinidad the committee was told that some teachers were insensitive to the challenges of the urban poor students and neglected to teach them. There can be negative consequences for the education and empowerment of such students. Selection and placement of teachers at inner-city schools and so-called high risk areas should be meticulous and should take into account the teacher's knowledge of the cultural context - its strengths and weaknesses, local traditions and the general perspectives of students.

The issue of absenteeism resulting from the abuse of sick and casual leave was a sore point at the consultations. Of course teachers are entitled by law to 14 days sick leave and seven days casual leave. In the case of sick leave, a medical certificate is required after two continuous days. Sick leave could be related to chronic and common ailments, it could also be related to 'teacher burn out', dissatisfaction with working conditions, and withdrawal of professional service. This could not be determined by the committee but the data for absenteeism based on sick leave were informative. Approximately 40% of teachers in government secondary schools utilized their full quota of sick leave, except in

the educational districts of POS & Environs and St. George East that were at approximately 30% of teachers.

The denominational schools recorded approximately 20% of teachers except for the educational districts of South Eastern and St. Patrick that were approximately 40%. What was noteworthy was the fact that St. Patrick recorded 62% absenteeism resulting from sick leave within their quota and a further 30% that took sick leave ranging from 14.5 days to over 75 days. They were followed by South Eastern that recorded 23% sick leave ranging from 14.5 days to 75 days. Victoria educational district had the least number of teachers (13%) that took sick leave beyond the statutory requirement with less than 1% of teachers from denominational schools. It is interesting that North Eastern (22%), South Eastern (37.6%) and St. Patrick (38.7%) educational districts and Tobago (27.3%) had pass rates for students passing five or more subjects at the CSEC level that were below the mean of 43. Legitimate as it may be the Ministry of Education should research thoroughly the incidence of absenteeism by teachers at schools whether it is sick leave, casual leave, absence from classrooms to attend day time study at tertiary institutions, absence from the classrooms but on the compound and late-coming.

The committee examined a number of qualifying teaching standards but was particularly impressed with the following in Ontario, Canada and in England (that incidentally came into effect on September 03, 2012).



### **Qualified Teaching Standards - Ontario, Canada.**

- There is a performance appraisal of teachers every three years
- New teachers are on a flexible appraisal cycle that requires 2 satisfactory ratings during the first 12 months.
- New teacher induction programme
- Orientation to the School and Board
- Mentoring for teachers by experienced teachers ( an in-house model)
- Professional development and training suitable for teachers
- Two performance appraisals.

#### **Evaluation process**

- An annual learning plan
- Two performance appraisals
- A pre-observation meeting
- Classroom observation
- A post observation meeting with a written report which both teacher and principal will sign

The principal looks for the following categories in the evaluation process:

- Commitment to pupils and pupils learning
- Professional knowledge
- Teaching practice
- Leadership and community
- Ongoing professional learning
- The teacher can appeal the evaluation.
- There are 120 pages of guidance to go with a total of 102 standards teachers meet across all levels.
- There are four core standards on 'health and well being' and just two on making sure that they have a good subject and curriculum knowledge.

### Teachers' Standards in England (from September 2012)

- Teachers will face checks every five years to ensure that they are fit to teach under reforms outlined by the Government.
- The renewable licence will be seen as a means of weeding out poor teachers.
- To retain the licence teachers must demonstrate that they have up-to-date skills and learning to be effective in the classroom.
- Licence will put teachers on par with high status professions including doctors and solicitors
- New licence to teach will be overseen by the General Teaching Council for England with Heads deciding if a licence should be renewed
- The process begins with accreditation by Head Teachers with the general Teaching Council taking an overview and doing checks on a sample basis.

Teachers' standards will be evaluated on the following

#### Part 1 Teaching

- Set high expectations, which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils.
- Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
- Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
- Plan and teach well structured lessons
- Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
- Make accurate and productive use of assessment
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
- Fulfill wider professional responsibilities.

#### Part 2- Personal and Professional Conduct

The low academic achievement of our students at the primary and secondary level that may be as high as 60% depending on the school, educational attainment, subject area, health, standard of living and family issues will be discussed in the paper on 'Reforming our Education System'. Poor teacher performance cannot be discounted although there is no comprehensive research in this area, however any attempt at educational reform that seeks to deal in part with crime, must take into account the professional upgrade of teachers.

#### Recommendations

1. New attention to raising the quality of the teaching profession should become a national priority.
2. A new approach should set out rigorous standards that teachers must meet.
3. Research has shown that it is important to recruit teachers of above average general intelligence and academic ability.
4. In the medium term all teachers at the primary level should have a first degree and at the secondary level no less than an honours degree at the Bachelors level in their discipline or area of study.
5. Special incentives by way of increments should be given for secondary school teachers to pursue Masters degrees.
6. Teachers should be expected to complete successfully a course of study in a teacher induction programme with 2 opportunities to be successful or face rejection.
7. All teachers should be certified and licensed by a National Council for

Professional Standards in Teaching (NCPST).

8. The National Council for Professional Standards in Teaching should be a self regulatory body comprised of renown teachers and educational specialists.
9. The NCPST licence should be awarded for two periods of five years each followed by full tenure with an initial application after one year of internship. Candidates should be expected to submit a portfolio of entries of teaching and classroom interaction including direct evidence of teaching (work samples or video recordings) and an evaluation report based on classroom observation by Principal and her appointees (in-house model). The NCPST should be expected to do checks on a sample basis.
10. Assessment should be based on the evidence candidates submit and an evaluation report by Principal and team. There should be scope for appeal.
11. The NCPST, because of its knowledge base of its candidates, should assist in creating a more professionally and educationally sound teacher, thereby ultimately improving student learning.
12. The Teaching Service Commission should be restructured and renamed the Educational Service Commission (ESC) to reflect the new structure. The ESC should now be engaged in recruitment, selection, and review of personnel at higher levels of the educational service—that will include Vice Principals and Principals. This would relieve that agency (ESC now the Teaching Service Commission) from some of the time consuming tasks such as interviewing which can be competently handled at the level of the Ministry of Education. The public interest should continue to be well served as the certification principle would provide greater transparency (taken from the Education White Paper 1993-2003 with minor adaptation).
13. Major recommendations related to performance appraisal, standards based teaching, networked based management and other employment arrangements will require open discourse with all stakeholders including, Tobago House of Assembly, TTUTA, NPTA, Religious Denominational Boards and the general public.
14. Such recommendations will require the establishment of a special committee to investigate all aspects, including the important amendments that will be needed to the Education Act.
15. There should be mandatory accreditation of all teacher training programs by the ACTI.
16. Upgrade of the teaching profession would require us to provide alongside better salaries, good working conditions and opportunities for professional creativity and autonomy.
17. Classroom teachers should have full-time support from teaching assistants and other educational professionals including technicians, and counsellors.
18. There should be provision for protected, identifiable Planning, Preparation and Assessment (IPPA) time; this should be at least ten per cent of a teacher's time-tabled teaching time.
19. Teachers need strong professional communities that would provide them with support and opportunities for collaboration, self reflection and continuous growth.

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# GIVE A SPORTING CHANCE

*Lennox Bernard*

Many coaches have provided compelling stories about youth who have chosen sport over juvenile crime. There are many, including Diana (2000) who are convinced that an investment in sport for 'at risk' youth would significantly reduce crime and incarceration costs, minimize personal harm to youth and adult and maximize social development among young people. Nichols (1997) tells us that although there is limited empirical evidence of a direct causal relationship between youth sport and youth crime reduction but there are several reasons as to why youth sport including organised sport reduces crime. The reasons are as follows:

- Keeps young people busy and out of trouble
- Meets a need that youth have for excitement and thrills
- Meets a need that youth have for risk taking
- Increases a feeling of connectedness
- Develops problem-solving skills
- Fosters teamwork
- Develops athletic abilities
- Increases self-esteem
- Develops cognitive competencies
- Provides positive role-models and mentors
- Develops decision-making skills
- Provides employment opportunities

UNICEF's Sports for Development (S4D) corroborates Nicholls statement by opining that research shows that participation by young people in structured recreation contributes to their psycho-social development and can

teach basic values and life skills - hard work, teamwork, discipline, fairness and respect for others- that shape the individual's behaviour and help them to pursue their goals and respond appropriately to events in their own lives and in those of others.

According to many criminology experts, the most effective approach to reducing youth crime is to steer young people away from negative social activities before they become involved in criminal activities (Hartman and Brooks 2000; cited in Carmichael 2008). Social development programmes that provide youth with positive peer interaction, opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and a supportive adult to help reduce the risk factors associated with crime (Andrews et al 1990; cited in Carmichael 2008)

In the face of such evidence and more, it is disheartening that governments throughout the world seem unwilling to invest heavily in sport and physical education. The World Summit on Physical Education held in Berlin in 1999, called attention to the serious decline in the state and status of physical education and sport all over the world. It was noted that there was a disparity between curriculum requirement and implementation of the curriculum. The reasons proffered were, curriculum and time allocation, subject status, attitudes of teachers and parents, resources, teacher education, curriculum content, the future of physical education and equity issues.

All of these reasons apply to Trinidad and Tobago although it can be argued that there

has been significant advancement in teacher education with the mounting of Bachelors and Masters degrees at UWI and UTT, with over subscription for the Bachelors degree at UTT. Credit must be given to the UWI Open Campus previously the Extra Mural Department/School of Continuing Studies that was a pioneer in this area of study and was the first to mount a Certificate of Physical Education that serviced the needs of secondary school teachers. The Primary School syllabus has been reviewed and at the secondary level physical education CSEC has been examinable by CXC for many years. However, there is an inadequate supply of resources, poor marketing of the curriculum to administrators, teachers and parents, relegation to unimportance on the timetable and equity issues related to students physically or mentally challenged and gifted children who are excluded from programmes.

There are many sporting organizations and clubs that provide effective service at the non-formal level of education and training. They cater to students and out of school youth and young adults. Some members of the committee were impressed with the work of UNICEF Sport for Development (S4D) non-government organization. (ibid) Its mission is to ensure that every child has the right to play in a safe and healthy environment- a right founded in Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also recognizes sports-based initiatives as a programme strategy to achieve specific developmental objectives. UNICEF uses S4D to help achieve goals in its thematic focus areas:

- basic education and gender equality
- HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support
- child protection from violence
- exploitation and abuse
- policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights
- young child and development

Director Mark Mungal (2012), informed us that after 10 years of community based activities S4D

had impacted positively on under-served youth, youth with disabilities and general community intervention. Some local and international projects are provided:

- **Kicking AIDS Out'** was a project mounted in Speyside Tobago in 2009. The programme used sports and games to teach young people and adolescent about HIV and AIDS.
- **Inspirational International 2010-** 40 students were chosen to attend Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada with support from UNICEF and the British Council. They were taught teamwork, communication skills and event management
- **Training Young Leaders-** In the lead up to the 2012 Summer Olympics, students from 5 schools in Trinidad and Tobago received youth sport leadership training. They were taught teamwork, event management and communication skills. With this knowledge they are well prepared to plan and implement sports festivals for other young people in their schools and communities.

UNICEF Sport encompasses all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well being and social interaction, play, recreation, casual, organized or competitive sport and indigenous sport or games. Mungal sees it as the coming together of the authentic self, the emotional self and the lure of relationships. Through this interaction will come change, most times positive.

S4D currently works with 2 communities considered 'hot spots' by Citizens Security Programme apart from their designated programmes. They are willing to have a greater involvement in the struggle against crime. With their zeal and local and international expertise and other resources, there is wisdom in heightening their involvement in more of our depressed communities in Trinidad and Tobago.

Undoubtedly the Ministry of Sports has been using sport as a social intervention with the assistance of its community sports officers both in the Ministry and the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago (SPORTT). There is some measure of affiliation with the Ministries of

Education, Community Development and Arts and Multiculturalism. The Ministry of Sports is also guided by its National Sports Policy that offers a holistic and systematic framework for the development of sport in Trinidad and Tobago. The Policy document seeks, “to enrich our lives through total participation, quality training and excellence in sport.”

The SPORTT four activities are construction and facility maintenance, ‘Sport for All’ that makes programs accessible and affordable to all those who will participate and at the same time encouraging participation in sport at a localised community and national level and finally national oversight and support for elite athletes. Established in 2004 as a limited liability special interest company, SPORTT provides oversight and guidance to 14 National Sport Organizations (NSOs) that are the national governing bodies for the sustainable growth and development. It is recognized by the sport’s international governing body as the bona fide representative or local governing body for the sport. The following sport are included basketball, cricket, cycling, football, golf, gymnastics, hockey, netball, rugby, sailing, swimming, tennis, track and field and volley ball.

The Ministry of Sports is the major stakeholder of the Sport Company and collectively the two institutions are responsible for the implementation of the goals and objectives of the National Sport Policy of Trinidad and Tobago. To its credit The Ministry has mounted a number of innovative programmes including; Cricket for Development, Legacy in Sport – Sport History Art Competition for Primary School Students, Sport Training Enhancement Programme (STEP)- Learn to Play cricket, netball, athletics, football, basketball and enjoy field trips and art and craft for boys and girls 4-14 years in 7 educational districts throughout Trinidad.

The recent multi-million dollar initiative ‘Hoop for Life’ in basket ball launched by the government is designed to support our youth in depressed communities. First prize winners will get one million dollars, 2nd prize winners

five hundred thousand dollars and 3rd prize two hundred and fifty dollars. The initiative was launched by the United States, NBA super star, Shaquille O’Neal. Some commentators see it as hype with dubious value to the sustainable development needed by young people in low income communities. Others have asked some pertinent questions, for example, what are the special outcomes? What management capability is in place? What are the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms? What message is the government sending to our youth when it chooses to make money the biggest source of motivation for a community competition? Would it add to the already dangerous levels of community tensions? (*Newsday*, June 25, 2012).

The committee chose to examine these concerns in the context of available literature on successful interventions in sport around the world. Hawkins (1998) warns that sport programmes dominated by unequal access and the obsession to win-at-all costs often foster social problems among at-risk youths. The organized programmes that are successful at reducing youth crime appear to develop feelings of competence, connectedness and empowerment among youth. Constantly we were reminded that as well intentioned as politicians may be, it is essential to consider how the design, location and funding of sporting and recreational infrastructure contribute to social cohesion. They (the politicians) must avoid taking sport and physical activity out of its social context.

Another important suggestion was that sport programmes established for the purpose of crime prevention should be subject to rigorous evaluation. The two popular sports for ‘at risk’ male generally are football and basketball. The committee felt that any initiative of that nature and expenditure should have included football.

A useful initiative by the Ministry of Sport piloted in 10 communities is ‘Life Sport’ that is intended to train persons in sport and social skills as well as life skills through occupational skills training. It is hoped that incisive research is on going to allow for review and wider application.

Researchers at the Universities of Strathclyde and Newcastle found that some 8 to 10-year-olds were active for only 20 minutes a day. Their study suggests girls are less active than boys. The scientists gave 508 primary school children advanced pedometers to measure their physical activity levels over a week. They found that just 4% of waking time or 20 minutes was spent doing moderate to heavy vigorous activity. They said 60 minutes a day was recommended. The researchers said it was important that parents did more to get their children into sport, but that it was also the responsibility of schools and education authorities. Newman et al (2010) note that there is evidence that participation in organized sport improves young people's numerical skills and their numeracy scores by 8% above those of their peers who did not play sport.

It is sometimes best to combine sport and physical activity with other interventions and with a range of other strategies and sectors to reduce crime in particular groups and communities. Two examples are provided:

- Often recreation and youth development activities can be equally effective. Researchers at Columbia University found the presence of a Boys or Girls Club in a public housing project reduced crime rates by 13% and drug use by more than 20%.
- Norfolk, Virginia, USA forged a partnership between police, human service agencies and local citizens to combat crime in 10 high crime neighbourhoods. The initiative, which included new athletic leagues and a Youth forum for teens to speak on community problems as well as other prevention measures- led to a 29% drop in crime in the targeted neighbourhood and a city wide reduction in violent crime.

### Recommendations

1. A primary means of socialization for boys is organized sport. In that regard a massive intervention should be attempted by all the respective Ministries (Education, Sport and Community Development) to upgrade the status

of Sport at ECCE, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary educational institutions, out of school youth, correctional institutions, and community based organizations.

2. The Ministry of Sports should be commended for giving exposure to a wide array of sport programmes in their STEP vacation school and at 40 venues. In the short term, it should be expanded to include swimming, cycling, tennis and gymnastics.
3. UNICEF (S4D) or The Trinidad and Tobago Alliance for Sports and Physical Education should be included more prominently in this massive intervention programme for crime prevention and in the 'at risk' communities identified by the Citizens Security Programme
4. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should support the recommendation for a National Service Scheme and devise service learning projects in sport that young nationals could offer for certification.
5. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should lend support to the re-engineering of state programmes such as CCC, YAPA, MILAT, MYPAT, YTEPP etc to form an integrated national youth training and service programme.
6. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should seek to strengthen the National Youth Council to allow for improved delivery service especially in the area of sport.
7. Individuals to benefit from cash incentives in activities like 'Hoop for Life' should be awarded instead investment units or a voucher for use for housing, business enterprise, and education and of course trained in financial literacy.
8. The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs should consider initiatives similar in



intent to 'best practices' described in 9.2 especially in high risk communities and public housing projects. The Trinidad and Tobago Alliance for Sports and Physical Education could assist with the design and implementation of these programmes.

9. The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs should give full support for the recommendation that makes a case for after school programmes that may include recreation as an enrichment activity.
10. Establish / refurbish / upgrade sport facilities beginning with the 22 'high needs' pilot communities and many other

communities. Some require upgrade of sports fields, refurbishment of basket ball courts including lighting systems, the establishment of multi-purpose indoor courts and access to major sport equipment for body building, weight-lifting and boxing.

11. Such a massive campaign to promote sport throughout Trinidad and Tobago will require the professional and technical development of local governing bodies for Sport. By extension these registered bodies should be provided with increased financial and technical resources and its members given regional and international exposure in their sports discipline.

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# REFORMING OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

*Lennox Bernard*

*Most of the elites who make the decisions and who are responsible for planning and management believe fervently that inequality is a normal and permanent condition, if not a desirable condition. - (Best, 2000. p. 7)*

It is a useful time to reflect on our education system, fifty years after independence. Curriculum relevance was always an issue since the days of Captain Cutteridge and his publication of 'West Indian Readers' that introduced a certain amount of Afro-Trinbagonian materials. Williams was not impressed and proposed that West Indian History be compulsory in all secondary schools and training colleges. Williams was not about to give up his original vision of nationalism even though he had been forced into a compromise position with the church, whereby control of education would be shared between Church and State, for in 1954 he had stated:

I see in the denominational school a breeding ground of disunity. I see in the state school the opportunity for cultivating a spirit of nationalism among West Indian people and eradicating the racial suspicions and antagonisms growing in our midst (Williams, 1954. p. 7).

Since independence the country has built a complete education system from pre-school to university post-graduate studies, with universal education achieved at the primary and secondary level and early childhood education forecasted for 2015. Some argue that nationalism is still an elusive dream, but it is fair to say that since Independence Trinidad and Tobago has consistently placed emphasis on the education and training of the population as education is generally regarded as a means of socio-economic development. Our efforts were

not helped by our economic downturn during the 1980s, and the imposition of structural adjustments by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. It resulted in severe cuts in social programmes, including education and seriously affected the thrust in education. The decline in quality was evidenced by low test scores, limited access to schooling and deficient curriculum programmes.

The Education Policy Paper 1993-2003 attempted to fix this and much of what was recommended called for sweeping reforms and a radical restructuring of the system. In its place new special advisory committees were chosen to implement various sections of the report but the essence was lost. A 'piecemeal' approach has continued ever since. We are once again reminded of the words of Lloyd Best:

There is not going to be any sweeping reform of the present system of schooling. By itself our democracy will make that impossible, all the more since schools are financed or run mostly by the state. Even when underpinned by active popular participation, the democratic state is condemned to be conservative. It caters to a multitude of sensitivities. Even when governments have the courage, it tends to surrender to the most venerable habits of culture, awaiting community initiative - (Best (1999). p. 13)

Despite the fragmented approach to education in the face of competing interests, major investments in education have been made by

successive governments. Roughly one fifth of the national budget is allocated to education annually and this is the largest single item of the budget. We have been able to equip all of our services including essential services with local professionals and with self determination have been able to map out our own destiny. Notwithstanding these achievements, the return on the heavy investment in educational expansion has been rather less than satisfactory. It takes us back to the developmental features of education over the last five decades.

The expansion of the secondary school system under the 1968-1983 Education Plan was achieved to some extent at the expense of the primary school system, resulting in a fall in the quality of output from primary schools. Dilapidated schools especially in our rural areas are still relics of that neglect, so too the professional development of primary school teachers, the teacher education curriculum and its less than innovative approach to learning and of course the morale and financial well being of primary school teachers. Many of our children at primary school age are at risk even before they graduate to secondary schools.

The expansion of the secondary system including the cessation of the post primary system in 2000 resulted in a widening of the ability range of the student population at that level, but the offerings have not been sufficiently wide and differentiated nor has the method of instruction been diverse enough to accommodate differences in aptitude, academic ability and interests of the student, nor is remediation a standard feature. The general public, teachers and principals at public secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago all attested to this fact at our consultations held in the country. They pointed out that many children were unable to cope with secondary education because they were weak in literacy and numeracy skills, they had little interests in the various disciplines as designed in the curriculum and some noted that there was a genuine disconnect with the secondary school system. A number of our children from as early as Form 1 are at risk even

before they are mechanically tracked to Upper Secondary school. All of this have contributed to a high failure rate at CSEC In 2011 only 44.6% of students were successful in five or more subjects while 43.3% were successful in five or more subjects including Mathematics and English A., Mathematics had the biggest impact on the group of students obtaining full certificates. This should lead to the immediate intervention of Mathematics and Reading specialists in all of our secondary schools.

The results become even grim when placed within the context of the 'high risk' areas referred to in the survey as 'hotspots'. In Table 9, 16.6% in 'hot spots' never passed an examination while the figure was 9.5% in 'non-hotspot areas'. The CSP using data disaggregated for them by the CSO (2000) found that in their 22 depressed communities, the percentage that never passed an exam, ranged from 75% in Beetham Gardens to 53% in Samaroo Village, Mootoo Lands, Arima. The percentage attaining full certificates in 'hotspot' areas according to our survey was 36% as against 48% in 'non-hotspot' areas (CSEC mean was 43.3) while the CSP found that it was as low as 1% in Beetham Gardens to 10% in Embacadare, San Fernando. As it relates to the highest level of education attained (Table 8) 57 % attained secondary level in the 'hot spot' areas and 50.5% in the 'non-hotspot' areas while the CSP recorded a figure of 30% in the Beetham Gardens improving to 60% in Gonzalves. Belmont. In the survey of those who were currently attending skill programmes, only a small and varying number of individuals were involved. In the case of the 'hot spots' the leading programme was YTEPP (36.7%), CCC (14%), SERVOL (12.2%) GAPP (4.1%) and MUST (0.5%). In the case of the 'non hot spots' the leading programme was also YTEPP (30%) , followed by NESCS ( 20%) and MuST (10 %).

Many of the secondary schools that students in disadvantaged communities are generally assigned to were under-performing and had a low level of achievement at the CSEC level. There is a wide variation with the best performing school in each educational district:

<b>Educational Districts/ No. of Schools to which 'at risk' students attend</b>	<b>% passes in five subjects including Mathematics and English A</b>
Port-of Spain & Environs- 9 schools	Ranging from 0% to 26.52% Best performing school in the district 97.73 %
North Eastern-6 schools	Ranging from 5.41% to 17.89% Best performing school in the district 59.23%
Caroni-5 schools	Ranging from 8.70% to 14.29% Best performing school in the district 96.39%
St. George East- 9 schools	Ranging from 0% to 21.89% Best performing school in the district 99.05%
St. Patrick- 6 schools	Ranging from 1.39% to 12.12% Best performing school in the district 89.90%
South Eastern- 4 schools	Ranging from 2.78% to 6.38% Best performing school in the district 91.53%
Victoria – 6 schools	Ranging from 6.96 % to 25.53% Best performing school in the district 100%
Tobago – 2 schools	Ranging from 0% to 38.14 % Best performing school in Tobago 75.21%

The average observer would recognize that the majority of 'at risk' students are assigned to learning environments, that despite the best intentions of government, administrators and teachers, are under-performing schools. Perhaps part of the problem according to Tooley (1996) is that there is a crisis in education staring us in the face but we are unwilling or afraid to engage in the sweeping changes and reform that are necessary. He notes:

There is a philosophical hole at the heart of educational policy. There is no sense of what education is, or what its purposes might be. No one is asking what are the driving ideas behind

educational practices, and to what extent are these ideas embedded not just within schools but within the whole education system.

The Human Development Index produced by the CSO of the Ministry of Planning and the Economy maps a realistic picture. Leading in all the descriptors of human development from a negative stand point are the following regional districts and administrative areas: Mayaro/Rio Claro, Sangre Grande Arima, with cause for renewed efforts in Tunapuna/Piarco, Tobago, Chaguanas, Princes Town, Siparia, Penal/Dibe and San Juan/Laventille. (see Chart)

#### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

DESCRIPTORS		REGIONAL DISTRICTS/ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS			
<b>Primary &amp; Secondary Education Attainment</b>	Mayaro/ Rio Claro 64.5%	Arima 71.1%	Tunapuna/ Piarco 79.1%	Sangre Grande 79.9%	Penal/Debe 89.6%
<b>Inequality – Adjustment National Human Development Index (2008-2009)</b>	Mayaro/ Rio Claro 0.523	Tobago 0.549	Sangre Grande 0.551	Arima 0.573	Tunapuna/ Piarco 0.577
<b>Household Income per capita per year (2008-2009)</b>	Tobago TT\$20,597	Mayaro/ Rio Claro TT\$21,179	Chaguanas TT\$25,238	Siparia TT\$27,216	Arima TT\$27,635

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (CONT'D)

DESCRIPTORS			REGIONAL DISTRICTS/ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS		
<b>Adjusted fertility rate 2010</b>	Sangre Grande 75.4	Arima 59.6	Port of Spain 55.9	San Juan / Laventille 55.3	Chaguanas 51.9
<b>Loss in Human Development in knowledge dimension, due to inequalities in Secondary and Higher Education attainment rate</b>	Sangre Grande 16.1% -19.9%	Princes Town 16.1% - 19.9%	Siparia 16.1% - 19.9%	Penal/Debe 11.1% - 16.0%	Mayaro/ Rio Claro 6.1% - 11.0%

It is clear to us that a disproportionate number of failure schools serve the poorest and most disadvantaged children. We also aware of the fact that schools no matter how good they are or become cannot reduce the achievement gap if the state does not establish safety nets for families and children in need.

We have been unwilling to grapple with the failure of distinct groups of students and the class-based nature of school structures. The current Minister of Education Senator Dr. Tim Gopeesingh was bold enough to voice his fears albeit while making a case for the Continuous Assessment Component of the SEA to begin in September 2012 in standard 4&5.

“Some 5,000 students out of 17,000 students after writing the SEA do not make it to the CSEC level. How long can a Minister of Education allow students to suffer the indignity of failure , year after year, generations after generations and not do something about it in haste?” (2012. p.9). The CAC is a progressive principle although there are concerns by many regarding its timing for standard 4& 5, the rigid assessment of newer subjects and the readiness to transact CAC across all educational districts.

Every year approximately 80% of students preparing to write the SEA, have their parents choose no more than 25-30 secondary schools as their first choice. Using 2011 figures it could

amount to 14,000 seeking to gain an available 4,000 places. These figures show that there has persisted significant difference in academic performance between the so-called ‘prestige’ schools and the rest of the secondary school system, which accommodates the majority of children at secondary school age. This has placed considerable pressure on the majority of children being prepared for the SEA exam. Those who do not succeed in gaining admission to those ‘prestige’ schools generally have to cope with the psychological trauma of a deep sense of failure, which some never overcome- this psychological burden at the tender of age of 11 years. All students now proceed to the secondary school system regardless of their performance but it does not address the issues raised earlier and the more salient features of inequity.

Those who graduate from the secondary school system with 5 full passes at the CSEC level find themselves ill equipped for the world of work. Their largely academic preparation in the education system fits them for little more than clerical positions, military and police service, hospitality industry.

The implications related to this wide ranging low achievement of especially our male youth when linked to poverty provide a risk factor to crime. The committee does not suggest that poverty directly causes violence. It is well

aware of the many who have risen from abject poverty and succeeded in becoming productive and successful citizens. However poverty with hunger and poor living conditions, poverty with hopelessness, poverty with exploitation and poverty with low educational attainment can lead to some of the value frames outlined earlier; low self esteem, learned helplessness, ambivalent self regard, hopelessness coupled with anger, rage, impulsivity and lack of empathy. These are immediate risk factors for violence and crime. In other words poverty can lead to violence and crime.

Even so the attributes of poverty must be fully ventilated. There are the circumstances of poverty, fleeting or permanent in which the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing are denied or unavailable to individuals. Then there is the geographical setting either planned or situational where these negative features are allowed to grow and reinforce each other, for example, squatter communities. Our main concern is the impact of poverty on educational achievement and by extension on violence and crime. There are also some crucial family issues. We met some youth that have no family, individuals who were abused and struggling emotionally and financially. It is generally accepted that without the strong support of a family, alienation, low self esteem, a lack of hope or empathy, impulsivity and other immediate risk factors for involvement in violence can set in and take hold of a young person especially if he is also experiencing other roots of the immediate risk factors such as poverty and mental illness. A severely troubled home life can have a damaging effect on youth's interest in school, ability to learn, and interaction with peers and teachers.

There are many single parents that cope very well in raising their children but there are also many that need additional support. The current status of single parent families has changed with time, the support of an extended group of families and friends is diminishing and it is apparent that single parent families face more significant barriers

Education is generally seen as one of the best ways out of poverty and as a sound investment in the future of individuals, families and communities. Education is at the heart of socio-economic development of any society. To gain any global advantage would require any country to reform its education system and seek to develop a knowledge economy, especially small states like ours strapped for space and human resources.

There is a need for a greater focus on how males learn in an attempt to deal with the level of disconnectedness that exists with school. Our culture systematically trains men from a young age to distance themselves from any vulnerable or emotional aspects of their psyches. In our recent dealings with youth including our young offenders they informed us that they wanted to be understood not cast aside as unemotional, desensitized and clueless. Our impression was that they desire to connect with others.

From an early age boys are introduced to a culture that is still based on a hierarchy of power and strength governed by often stringent rules for becoming men, incidentally attributes found in the gang counter culture. They also learn that some aspects of being human are off-limits because those aspects are labelled feminine. These aspects include such qualities as vulnerability, tenderness and even compromise-non-attributes of the gang counterculture.

Brain research has shown differences in male and female brains that can affect preferred learning styles and communication. Our school curriculum may not be teaching 'to the boys' and that teaching styles are more suitable for girls. School success skills such as compliance and organization seem to be more easily applied to girls or some may argue religious boys school with similar attributes.

The average parent will agree that girls display greater concentration skills and boys seem to lack focus and are more easily distracted. We need to recognize that developmental stages differ between males and females with

females maturing earlier cognitively as well as physically. However the primary classroom is four fifths language-based and girls are on average stronger than boys in language. Many of our primary schools do not offer enough hands-on learning opportunities. Curricula materials particularly Reading may need to be more inclusive with regard to male interests.

The use of physical space and need for movement should be taken into consideration. Many of the technical/vocational programmes seem to be quite promising on the basis of their positive outcomes for participants. Even among individuals in so called 'hot spots' (Table 25) the attrition rate was a modest 22.6%. Popular programmes include YTEPP, NESCC, CCC, SERVOL, GAPP, and MuST. In the academic sector reform is necessary to improve educational attainment for success in schools. Reform is needed to design curricula to 'reconnect' the male youth with school and 'reconnect' those who are out of school and frequently out of work.

There is hope in after school programmes that can partially compensate for the inequities that currently plague our schools and assist in narrowing the gaps between high achieving students and less advantaged students. A very large percentage (93.1%) in 'hot spot' areas (Table 48) agreed with the suggestion that there should be special training programmes for persons who did not complete secondary schooling. However rates of participation in skills training programmes remain low, as discussed earlier, but gave reasons for not attending as studying elsewhere (37%), employed (21%) no time (8%), disabled (6.7%) or not incline (6.3%). It will call for creative marketing to get more disadvantaged youth to engage in after school programmes.

Comprehensive reform of the education system requires that it is community based and equitable giving greater focus to differentiated curricula... and taking into account every student especially those identified as having 'learning difficulties'. Other essential measures

must include the raising of standards of teachers and school leaders, the redistribution of management and decision making or similarly authority and accountability. This would include decentralizing the control of curriculum and instruction and management to the local level. Finally the development of innovative and fundamentally different schools will require initiatives such as career academies, small learning communities, class size reduction, the creation of inter disciplinary teacher teams, block scheduling, and innovative ways of teaching English and Mathematics

### Recommendations

1. The recommendations listed here should be applied in tandem with the recommendations on National Service, ECCE,, Parent and Community Involvement in Schooling, School as a Safe Place, Teacher Professionalism, Give a Sporting Chance, and The Arts in Human Development.
2. All major policies in education should be seen within the framework of other social dimensions including housing, transportation, economy, income distribution, labour market needs and globalization.
3. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) should address poverty levels in Trinidad and Tobago including indicators of growing impoverished communities in places such as Sangre Grande, Arima, Mayaro/Rio Claro.
4. The Concordat of 1960 that relates to the delivery of primary and secondary schooling between religious institutions and the State should be reviewed to provide for greater equity in the education system.
5. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) should recognize the special circumstances faced by working single

- parents and introduce a new benefit for single parents
6. Single parents with disabled children face unique obstacles. Increased funding is needed.
  7. There should be a clarity of mission and purpose for schools. Schools should have clear academic goals for students in each subject and at all levels of the school. Progress should be measured annually against those goals and school administrators should be held accountable for results.
  8. The school should be the focus point for reform and networks should be built among schools sharing common principles and practices, this is especially important for schools in 'high risk' areas.
  9. Education and schooling should be marketed including social networking with parents, made fully aware of their need for involvement and by transferring the power that duly belongs to them.
  10. The Ministry of Education should restructure larger schools into organizational and thematically small schools or academies using programmatic themes built around broad career clusters.
  11. The Ministry of Education should create smaller learning communities within secondary schools that aim to engender a more supportive, personalised learning environment where students may take a range of specialized courses with peers and receive customized instructional support and academic advising.
  12. These smaller learning communities or cluster academies should allow for participation in other general courses at school, job shadowing activities during the year and the long vacation.
  13. Standards based reform is necessary at all levels of the education system. This reform would allow for clarity of mission, clear academic goals for students in each subject at each level of the school, annual measure of progress against those goals and accountability for results placed on administrators.
  14. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago should re-examine its policy as it relates to the numerous subject silos and the inordinate number of high stakes testing at the primary level, including the SEA.
  15. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago should review the GATE system with the likelihood that it may become unsustainable in the future
  16. The Government should establish in the long term a system of learning accounts and offer these learning accounts to all young adults and adult learners including the self employed. Individuals should invest in their education by contributing to their learning accounts.
  17. Information and guidance counselling services should be enhanced for adult learners.
  18. Employers should provide their workers with cash limited learning entitlements<sup>1</sup>
  19. There should be a maximum public contribution.
  20. A means test as to the Government support should include extra benefits to people without qualifications, people in low skill jobs and jobs of last resort, areas of skills shortage, employees in small firms and those seeking to return to work
  21. The National Certificate Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) should become the official record of students' performance throughout the period os



- secondary schooling and should include academic and social learning.
22. Quality work-site learning should be linked to school-based activities.
  23. After school programmes should evolve into community schools, 'free' schools, neighbourhood learning centres that would allow out of school youth and parents to access learning
  24. Schools should be 'hubs' of widespread learning networks that reach deep into communities exploiting educational resources in unprecedented ways.
  25. Skills training programmes mounted by the state should be mounted as in-school and after-school programmes.
  26. The SERVOL Adolescent Development Programme should be a core unit of most of the skills training programme.
  27. There should be mentoring programmes through supportive relationships with adults and or older peers.
  28. There should be case management and individual assessment of each student with referrals to external services if necessary.
  29. Schools of education must be able to offer useful research and intellectual leadership to help in solving the problems confronting our nation's schools
  30. Schools of education and universities they belong to, must also have a clearer sense of how to develop a meaningful partnership with schools and the Ministry of Education.

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**CHAPTER 6**  
**CONTEMPORAY REALITIES AND**  
**FUTURE PROSPECTS**



# THE TYRANNY OF ENTITLEMENT: FROM THE PNM TO THE PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP

*Selwyn Ryan*

*The responsibility of the state is to intervene in the life of those who are in need of the state's benevolence. In other words, some people need it and some do not and different people need it and some do not and different people need it to varying extents, based on their own circumstances. That is the problem. You see, in determining equitability, there is a judgement, and the exercise of such judgement can always lead to questions being raised and aspersions being cast. Patrick Manning, Hansard, October 15, 2003.*

Over the past five decades, there has been furious controversy as to whether Trinidad and Tobago has been too indulgent with its poor and whether this indulgence helped to cultivate a spirit of "learned helplessness." It would be interesting to determine how the population feels on this issue. Our suspicion is that the population would be seriously split on the issue, and that the division would be along class and to some extent along ethnic and occupational lines, with those who are Afro-Trinis being of the view that more rather than less state generosity was needed. These were said to be rewarding laziness and of using their political clout and access to the fisc in the same way in which Indian beggars use their deformity to advantage.

Is it true to say that young black males are "lazy" and "workshy" and that there is a cultural disposition on the part of a majority to take it easy? Is it true that a majority would rather be given a "cooked fish" than be taught how to fish? We doubt that such is the case though it is true that Trinidadians generally, and black Trinidadians in particular have a "relaxed" approach to life which was allegedly spawned via slavery. Culture, religion, occupation, occupation, climate and the behaviour of reference groups also impact on the propensity to work. Many who are jobless say that they would rather work if they were able find a

decent job. The problem, however, is that there is no agreement in Trinidad as to what constitutes acceptable work or work related activity, and what is acceptable remuneration. Some managers complain that Trininis want jobs and not work.

If we are to go by what Trinidadians say, they are an industrious lot. In a values survey undertaken by MORI International in 2006, if we are to go by what Trinidadians say, they have a positive work ethic. They believe that "work makes life sweet" as the Germans put it. Some 79 per cent of the respondents said that one became lazy if one did not work. Eighty seven (87) percent of the sample said that one had an obligation to work and that 73 per cent felt work should come first and at the expense of free time. Many might smile knowingly at such a self assessment. Many would argue that what Trinidadians value is good jobs but not work as such.

Asked whether it was humiliating to accept money without working, forty-six per cent of the Afros agreed that it was humiliating, compared to 56 per cent of the Indos. When asked whether work was a duty that citizens owed the society, 86 per cent of the Afros thought so compared to 91 per cent of the Indos thought so, a gap of 5 per cent. (MORI International, *Values Portrait of Trinidad and Tobago*, 2008).

Our own view is that no one has an unqualified right to food security. As such, the state must desist from subsidizing able bodied young men who choose to loaf rather than work. The state should help the needy and the hungry for a period of time after which they must be struck off the welfare rolls. The wage level should also be so structured that one would not be able to live on the dole which should merely supplement the earnings of those who are poor, indigent or unable to work. In sum, there should be a floor. The society must try harder to live within its fiscal capacities.

The problem is that given what has been done in the past by mainly PNM Governments, the social costs of reducing food subsidies can be high. A hungry person is in many cases a destructive person, and the costs of terminating benefits could prove to be higher than the costs of the subsidy. The other consideration is that hunger could discourage many from engaging in positive functional behaviour. Food security is important to the achievement of other kinds of higher level needs. Reducing hunger may well serve to improve productivity and performance in several other areas which are important. One thus has to be careful as one attempts to force citizens to live within their means. The transition from welfare to workfare must be gradual.

It is wisely said that "a little money can make a big difference". It can also help to reduce crime. Our view is that in so far as resources permit, the state should continue to provide subsidized meals for "at risk" groups of all ethnicities, especially those who are young and whose brains need nurturing while they are growing. We know that many youngsters get one meal a day or sometimes no meals at all if they do not go to school on any day. It may thus be counter productive to starve the brain rather than use the resources in other less productive ways. In sum, as we have seen being in Brazil, food security may be necessary to enhance citizen security and may also be a prerequisite for satisfying other "higher" needs

The question is whether given what is happening in the world economy and in

Trinidad and Tobago, the current welfare regime is affordable and sustainable. The issue is a live one in Greece and elsewhere in Europe where concern is being expressed about high deficits. One view is that debt must be sustainable. The Prime Minister of Great Britain complained recently that there are too many people who earn more by being on welfare than being at work. As he further observed, "we have too many children growing up in households where a life on welfare has become an acceptable alternative. The key is to make sure that we help families into work so they are not so reliant on welfare. Part of that is the welfare cap. The welfare system was irresponsibility. It is mortgaging the future". (*Daily Mail*, January 29, 2010).

Many in Trinidad and Tobago believe that the country is being mortgaged to enable it to feed and nurture little black males who prefer to lime on the blocs or "make work" on ghost gangs than work. Following the State of Emergency, the Prime Minister indicated that she planned to devote TT\$300m to create 20,000 youth jobs in the hot spots and low income communities of Trinidad and Tobago. The Programme was labelled "Reclaiming Our Youth Embracing Our Future." (*Newsday*, November 10, 2011) The income transfer programme was seen as part of the government's promise of "prosperity for all." The young folk were to benefit by engaging in "work" linked to training initiatives which help to confer basic literacy and numeric skills along with instruction in basic trades." CEPEP was also to be restructured to increase its capacity to engage the communities most affected by deviant behaviour among youth.

The programme was justified on strategic grounds. Given the state of racially tinged unrest in the society, and given the anger that exploded in the black community, one could not abandon welfare policies that had been in place for decades without running the risk of increased gang activity once the SOE had run its course. The policies were seen as being social prophylactics. The society generally seemed to be of the view that the policies should be maintained, but that alternative strategies should be put in place to prepare youth for the world of work. Youth

should be offered a “helping hand or hands up rather than handouts.”

### **The PNM and the Welfare State**

Notwithstanding the general view that the welfare policies have to be kept in place for sometime to come for strategic reasons, there are still a substantial number of people who are opposed to the subsidies regime and who blame Dr Eric Williams and the PNM for creating the dependency syndrome that prevails in Trinidad and Tobago. Many argue that Williams was responsible for the entrenchment of the “gimme gimme” disposition which prevailed in the system and which continues to inform contemporary political and social behaviour. The view is widely held that as a scholar Williams’ ascribed the pathologies of Caribbean society to Atlantic slavery. Williams was said to be responsible for popularizing the view that “Massa Day Done,” and that the once enslaved population were entitled to receive their grand parents’ “back pay.” Following Williams, the view came to prevail that the black peoples of the Caribbean were victims of slavery and colonialism and that their former slave masters must make good their debt by paying reparations to their descendants in the form of aid grants and preferences for agricultural staples such as sugar, cocoa and citrus

This widely held view that Britain was responsible for slavery and the mercantilism which followed held that the descendants of the slaves were historically “entitled” to compensation for the social pathologies from which they suffered then and even now. In practical terms, this meant that citizens of Caribbean states were entitled to free or subsidized education and social services. This view was held by Lord Moyne who was sent to the Caribbean in 1937 to advise the Colonial Office. (Moyne 1945)

Following Independence, Williams not only made secondary education free, but over the years in which he was Prime Minister, he expanded the boundaries of the welfare state beyond what was necessary or affordable, and

also made available goods and services which citizens have now come to believe that they have a “right.” In sum, the “rights” ideology has served to reinforce the view that Caribbean people are not only victims of slavery, but also of capitalism. Although Williams did give the people three watchwords, Discipline, tolerance, and production, very little was said about the responsibility of citizens in respect of production. The stress was on rights and not responsibilities.

Governments in Trinidad and Tobago and some NGO’s have tried in varying ways to address the problem of poverty. Over the decades, several programmes have been put in place to cushion its worse effects. The mix of programmes included the Special Works Programme (SWP) which was instituted in the sixties following the many steel band clashes that took place, the Development and Environment Works Division (DEWD) and the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP). Most of the beneficiaries were black urban youth. While the programmes addressed the need to provide them with the basics for survival, they have not helped meaningfully to alleviate poverty which remains stubbornly entrenched. While the programmes provided a floor for the needy and helped to maintain social peace in the urban centres, delivery has been wasteful and ineffective. There was little or no coordination among the various agencies providing the various services. The agencies did not always accept that ad hoc social safety nets needed to be complemented by safety ladders that would assist the poor to climb out of their hopeless position to sustainable livelihoods.

Williams and other like minded intellectuals were accused of misadvising “underclass” youth in the post Independence era who were said to be the unwitting victims of the entitlement syndrome in the sense that they were never encouraged to develop a spirit of self-assertiveness and competitiveness in the area of production such as was urged in Singapore. They were left to sit and wait for “manna” to drop like cargoes from the secular heavens above, i.e. the state, rather than go out and hustle for opportunity. Eliminating

poverty was the responsibility of the state, not theirs. They have overtime become “lazy” and chronically parasitic. Many do not now even show a keenness to register for and pursue the many opportunities for training that are currently being made available by the state, even when a meal and subsidies are provided as bribes and inducements to do so. In terms of the latter, many demand a fish (“ah food,”) rather than learning how to fish.

All these allegations and more have been levelled against Williams, the PNM, by their critics. Many argue that the Williams agenda was driven not by any concern for social justice and need, but by narrow political calculations. The criticisms are of course valid; but there was another side to it that critics deliberately ignore. Williams was of course preoccupied with gaining independence and with winning and political power. He however had social goals and ends which he had absorbed from the radical left in Britain and from the leaders of radical thought whom he encountered in London and Oxford. He was definitely not a socialist, but he wanted to build a new world as Nehru and others were doing in various parts of Africa and Asia. He was also a firm believer in planning, Indian and not Soviet style. As a product of the labour ideology, he also believed that the masses needed a social cushion beneath them to alleviate the genuine hardships which they had to endure in their quest for equality. The playing field had to be levelled to allow competition to be fair.

Williams’ and his successors in the PNM expanded the welfare state on the argument that there was need not only to eliminate poverty and provide basic social citizenship, but also because their vision (Vision 20-20) was to transform Trinidad and Tobago into a “developed state” in which the number of persons who were poor were reduced to a basic minimum. The formal justification given was class not race. Williams was of course not unaware of the links between poverty programmes and the size of his political base, but there is little question that he had broader objectives. The same could be said of Patrick Manning who would later complain that in the early years of his administrations he

focussed on the people irrespective of race, but that he would no longer make that “mistake.”

They were also persuaded that the viability and security of the state depended to a considerable degree on the well being of the violence prone urban proletariat who, unless they were looked after, would destroy the society and the state as they almost did in 1970-3. In sum, given jobless growth, it was in the interest of the middle class to provide welfare to those less fortunate socially but who were strategically poised to inflict a great deal of damage to the fabric of the social system.. Democratic stability and human development sustainability (and least in the liberal sense) required state intervention. To quote the *Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012*, “citizen security involved democratizing the state so that it better serves and protects the political citizenship.”

#### **From the PNM to the PP**

It was assumed that when the Indo-dominant coalition Government came to power in 2010, the welfare state would be substantially downsized if not demolished altogether. The new government instead expanded it, arguing that their mission must be to “serve the people.” The PP’s response to the explosive urban crisis was to announce the creation of several populist programmes, most of which had been initiated by the PNM in 2002. The most dramatic of the programmes announced the launch of a job creation programme which was called “Colour Me Orange” (Orange was the colour of the PP’s party shirt) This programme promised to expend TT\$300m to create 20,000 jobs mainly for the young black boys and girls in the crime ridden “hot spots” mainly along the East West Corridor, areas which had borne the brunt of the stress which had been caused by the State of Emergency which had been declared in August 2010.

Many criticized the initiative, claiming that the PP was feeding the dependency habit again, and was encouraging learned helplessness as the PNM had done. The government however



took the view that the programme was necessary to remove the “civil war” potential from the society. It was also justified on another basis. It was seen as a major part of the government’s entrepreneurial thrust. As the Prime Minister, Kamla-Persad-Bissessar declared, “the days of quick fixes were now gone. I want to give you a hand up instead, into a future of self-determination. The scheme is part of an arsenal of thoughtful social programmes intended to regenerate and restore neighbourhoods and would teach young people valuable new skills. CEPEP and the URP were also to be extended.” But there was another agenda associated with the project. It was seen as a strategic attempt to pacify the electorate in much the same way as the PNM had done when its back was against the wall in the years after 1970.

Not surprisingly, the PNM Opposition expressed feigned surprise that the Government was expanding programmes which it had long criticized. The Prime Minister and other officials of the Housing Development Corporation and the Ministry of Housing in which the project was located, nevertheless boasted about the training, entrepreneurship and beautification that the project would yield. Many young blacks on the bloc avidly scrambled for the promised jobs. Many welcomed the assurance that the programme would not be run by contracted gang leaders as was the case in respect of URP and CEPEP. They also welcomed the fact much of this money was to be used to repair and rehabilitate homes, and that the focus was to be placed on teaching and training youngsters skills which they could use in the future. The aim was to empower micro-entrepreneurs.

Not surprisingly, there was conflict over the issue of who and what communities would be recruited since there was more demand for the jobs that were available. The Prime Minister however affected this as vindication. As she remarked: “We cannot continue to ignore those signs of frustration and dysfunctional relationships. It is easy to simply condemn what occurred without looking at the root cause of the issue. Rather than seeing these young minds as a problem, we will pursue solutions

such “Colour Me Orange”. The “grassroots” programme was targeted to breathe new life into the heart of the most troubled communities using community members to regenerate and restore neighbourhoods.

The official launch by the Prime Minister drew over 1,000 persons all of whom hoped to get jobs. State of Emergency detainees were also attracted as were rival gang members and rival communities e.g. Nelson Street and Duncan Street. No contractors were allowed to procure labour, a task which was handled by the HDC. The opposition PNM warned that there would be conflict as communities and gang leaders fought turf battles. There was indeed some stone throwing and quarrelling, but the crisis was not sustained. The HDC opined that the programme would reduce crime by reducing unemployment. The claim was that people stole because they were hungry.

The programme was a temporary success in that many secured short term jobs, but it did not have any sustained impact on the incidence of crime and the homicide rate rose once the programme came to an end. As the *Trinidad Guardian* concluded editorially, “the reasonable inference is that Colour Me Orange was a political disaster never intended to create real change in deprived communities.” (February 24<sup>th</sup> 2012) The Minister of Labour admitted that it was not, and was not sustainable beyond three to six months. He however insisted that the unemployment problem would eventually be licked using entrepreneurship as the engine of change.

What is evident is that their rhetoric notwithstanding, all parties see the need for “make work” projects for both economic and political reasons. Youth in general and black youth in particular, had become addicted and hooked on the programmes and could not disengage. They wanted jobs to earn the wherewithal to feed themselves and their kin. The politicians of all parties, but particularly the PNM and the UNC, had also become convinced that their tenure in power and the social stability of the country depended on the continuation of

these make work programmes. The dependency had become mutual. The politicians had to bribe the urban electorate and the gangs they control, to deter them from destroying the political system.

Young Black Men were both “victors” as well as “victims”. But it was a misalliance that threatened to produce a zero sum game in which all sides lost a great deal. The problem was that the largesse that was required to keep the underclass satiated, whatever the color, is now beyond the capacity of the economy to generate. The prospects for being able to do so in the future, given what is taking place with respect to the low price of liquid natural gas (LNG ) on the US\$ market, the reduced levels of oil being produced, and the jobs crisis which is both national and international, the entire economy is at risk. The government has seen it fit to put a substantial crate of eggs in the SME basket. But there is no reason to believe that what occurred after 1970 will not happen again.

Ministers and officials of the Housing Development Corporation and other Ministries have boasted about how much training, entrepreneurship and beautification the scheme would yield going forward. The Minister of Labour however openly admitted that the programme was a three month exercise paying TT\$180 a day and was not extendable for the six months which was being asked for. The Minister conceded that the programme involved short-term employment and was not sustainable. He nevertheless boasted that the Government would “lick the unemployment comprehensively. How he did not say. Many young blacks on the bloc avidly welcomed the programme and the promised jobs. Many particularly welcomed the assurance that the programme would not be run by contracted gang leaders as was the case in respect of URP and CEPEP. They also welcomed the fact much of this money was to be used for housing repair and rehabilitation, and that the focus was on teaching and training youngsters skills which they could use in the future. The aim was to empower micro-entrepreneurs. Time will tell whether the entrepreneurial revolution will materialise, and who would be

the beneficiaries. The available data generated by the Centre of Ethnic Studies in 1992 indicates that approximately 40 percent of the small businesses are owned by Indo Trinidadians, 25 percent by Afro Trinidadians, 20 percent were mixed and 15 percent were owned by other minorities. Data generated by Kairi consultant Drs Ralph Henry and UWI economist Dr Lou Anne Barclay indicate that the picture has changed somewhat in favour of indos. Fifty Per cent of the small businesses are owned by Indo-Trinis, thirty percent by Afro-Trinis, and 20 percent are owned by mixed and other elements. The wealth base of the Indian business men is also said to be innumerable. Some of it is said to be drug derived as evidenced by housing patterns which show evidence of substantial new wealth, but most of it is the by-product of legitimate activity.

There was open conflict in some areas over the issue of who and which communities would be favoured since there was more demand for the jobs than was available. There was also much comment about dependency. The Prime Minister’s response was pragmatic. There was a need which had to be met. There was also an opportunity to rebuild the communities and to repair their housing stock. As she remarked: “We cannot continue to ignore those signs of frustration and dysfunctional relationships. It is easy to simply condemn what occurred without looking at the root cause of the issue. Rather than seeing these young minds as a problem, we will pursue solutions such “Colour Me Orange”. The “grassroots” programme was targeted to breathe new life into the heart of our most troubled communities using community members to regenerate and restore neighbourhoods.”

The PM also hoped that the “much maligned” programme projects would serve to bring the gangs together. They were expected to work together and not as rival gangs. To quote the Minister of Housing, “persons associated with different gangs may have to work together. The fact is that there are gangs out here. We don’t create gangs. We met those gangs. If we going to do clean up activities in an estate, and there are different people from different gangs, and they

are all recruited, they will have to work together, so there will be tensions that we will have to deal with". (*Newsday*, November 20, 2011) The programme was however not sustainable, and more funding had to be made available to keep hope alive and hunger away at the door.

The 2013 Budget has signalled an imminent shift away from the welfare system to a more self reliant option. As the new Minister of Finance declared in his Address," we intend to refocus our social welfare programmes. Participants and beneficiaries will be encouraged over the next three years to acquire such skills which would make them more meaningful contributors to the

productive base of the economy. This represents a hands-up and not a hand out approach." The Minister was responding to bitter complaints from the private sector that its demands for labour are being frustrated. As the *Business Express* asked rhetorically, is it politically expedient to spend \$1 billion(or more) to keep 15,000 voters happy, even if some among them resort to fiery protests on occasion? (*Daily Express*, October 2 2012. Cf also "No Work Must Pay Syndrome" *Business Express*, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 Dr Roger Hosein Complained that There were too many "make work jobs. It was a sad thing," he notes."Transfers increased from \$3b\$ to \$19B between 2000 and2011.

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# THE COMING ANARCHY: GANGS AND GOVERNANCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY STATE

*Selwyn Ryan*

There was a time when gangs were bivouacked on the periphery of the state and only crossed the border in time of crisis and state dissolution. That state, in most cases, met the Weberian criterion of having a monopoly of the instruments of legitimate violence which it employed to provide security for the citizenry. Thomas Hobbes' classic justification for the sovereign state was that it was needed to keep peace and good order and keep modern man from destroying his community which given his proclivities and his vanity and love of esteem and he would surely do. The provision of security was also the rationale for the state which citizens were required to obey unless the state could not ensure tranquillity, stability, peace and good government. Citizens were only justified of open activism if the state was guilty of committing "a train of abuses" against the citizenry or if it could not maintain order. In sum, in these circumstances, Hobbes' Leviathan was entitled to come through Locke's backdoor" to re-establish the Peace. The contemporary state and the society from which it emerged seems to have failed and we have now have reverted to the Hobbesian prototype in which life is "poor, nasty, brutish and short".

Gangs are no longer ghetto bound as they once were. Many are no longer prepared to merely extract or coerce resources from mainstream individuals and firms in the form of "taxes", but also to seek a share of political power either openly or clandestinely. Fiscally wealthy as they are and fiscally challenged as are some of their political prey, they buy and suborn critical elites in the security services, the

media, the justice systems, political parties, the bureaucracy, and pressure groups. The so called "garrisons" in Jamaica and some of the parties in the islands in the Eastern Caribbean as well as in neighbouring Guyana, represent Caribbean examples of what happens or can happen. For awhile, the Jamaat al Muslimeen appeared as if it were evolving in accordance with that paradigm.

Criminality is now the most worrying problem facing some modern political systems generally, particularly in the small states of the Caribbean and Central America, Venezuela, Philadelphia, Chicago, Mexico, Italy, the USA and the UK to select but a few sites. The growing anarchy which is evident in many states is fuelled by the tendency to implant a multiplicity of uncoordinated institutions in the hope that the mortar will stabilize the shaky platforms and pillars that once stood firm. The problem is that weak mortar is being put in place to anchor and pin the new order. What one thus has is cosmetic modernization. The institutional structures do not work as intended. This leads to a decline of authority, institutional legitimacy and assumptions of impunity on the part of white collar corporate mobsters and gangsters. The institutional complex is in place, but it does not work because the institutions are carrying heavier loads than they were meant to bear.

Added to all these difficulties are those generated by gangs which impact negatively on the manner in which democratic political systems work. Not only do gangs pre-empt very scarce material resources that are needed

for other social purposes: they also make heavy demands on the limited human resources that most states have at their disposal. Particular burdens are imposed on the bureaucracy and the security services which are in the front line of their onslaught. The burdensome presence of gangs also unnerves the society, evaporates confidence, trust, and a willingness to take economic risks, whether short term or long term, and leads to institutional and structural constraints which make it difficult to deliver justice in a timely manner. "Head-line crimes, like "head line inflation," force governments to commit or misallocate resources needed to fix other problems.

Rational policy making is normally difficult, but becomes more so in environments of uncertainty and instability. The presence of armed gangs serves to deter decision makers from maximizing possibilities. The policy making environment is made less predictable when "codes of silence" inhibit people from giving evidence in courts or making other inputs in the process. Inevitably, the rule of law fails. Many communities are now in an all out "war" as the anti-social elements confront each other. Gangs have challenged the peace and security of many inner city communities, like Caracas, Chicago, Baltimore, and Juarez, Mexico. They have even forced schools to buy insurance and protection from gangs and their own students. No one, including local business firms and state agencies, wants to visit the "hot spots", much less invest in them, since the market is reduced due to turf battles which assume near war like proportions. *The Caribbean Human Development Report 2012* offers us a formula that bears pursuing. As its authors advise:

The focus on social crime prevention means one must design expensive intervention programmes in skills training and job creation. The root causes of violent crime, especially youth crimes and delinquency, include less tangible factors that account for the alienation and sense of exclusion among those population groups. Paying attention to those root causes therefore also means treating people with respect, positively protecting their rights and promoting a common sense of belonging and a common integrative

identities that bridge race, gender and other social divides, thereby promoting a sense of belonging and a common national and regional purpose.....The adoption of programmes of social crime prevention is therefore, not a politically risky policy.

It remains to be seen whether Trinidad's security and related authorities could push back the gangs as they have pledged to. The Minister of National Security has embarked on a double pronged thrust on the problem that involves carrots and sticks, and use of the Police Force, the Defence Force and a programme of job allocation to those who are in need and who sign up for the programme. As the Minister pledged:

Urban warfare must be met frontally, and we can't run. We must take this country back, street by street, corner by corner. We can't throw up our hands up in the air and say that crime is a lost cause. We can't give up. Sometimes you have to crush grapes to get wine. Unlike what obtained in the past the Defence would not only be used to maintain order, but also to become involved in job allocation. According to the Minister, "to stop all the jobs going to one family or contractor, the programme will be run by the Defence Force. The Army will bring order, equity and fairness. Otherwise, we will have chaos." (*Newsday*, November 16, 2012: *Express* June 30 2012 )

The Minister also pledged to bring down the homicide rate which was of the order of 43 homicides per 100,000. At time of writing, (October 14 2012) there had been some 319 murders for the year. The Minister later told Parliament that 1,615 murders had taken place between 2009 and August 2012, of which only 532 were brought before the magistrates' court. Only 35 of these were committed to stand trial at the supreme court, of whom 20 were dismissed for want of sufficient evidence. Most of the murders-390- were committed in Port of Spain, 331 were committed in the Northern division, 205 in the Western Division, 171 in the North Eastern Division, 163 in the Southern Division, 94 in the Eastern Division, and 74 in the South Western Division. What the data showed was

that most of the killing fields were in the North, and that most was done disproportionately by men aged 15-24 (206) Only 15 murders were committed by women in the period. Interestingly, only 9 persons 55 years and over were charged for murder during the three year period. (*Daily Express* November 28 2012)

Following a few weeks of violent confrontations between two factions which added more than 10 persons to the list of those killed, the Ministry of National Security virtually "locked down" critical communities in Laventille. Large numbers of troops and police were sent in, and regular patrols and searches instituted. Some complained that it was as if a state of emergency, complete with curfew, had been reimposed unofficially. This time, however, the citizens welcomed the "lock down" which allowed for the restoration of peace and intra border movement. For 28 days, no gunshot was heard, and the politicians began to boast that the new crime plan, which more than likely involved providing the gangsters with funds secured from several ministries. Jobs were also promised to several dissident groups. The formula was the same as that which had been used in the 1990's, though it was packaged and branded differently.

The peace initiative did not last, much to the embarrassment of the government which had done a great deal of premature boasting about the success of the plan. Angered that the "Crime Plan" seemed to be unravelling, the Minister of National Security charged that the murder which had broken the peace was a "PNM murder" which was effected for political ends, viz, to make him and the government look bad. Nothing was however further from the truth. The Minister however blamed the PNM for all that happened to breach the peace. As he said, "as long as this continues, it means that the PNM will be on one side and that side is crime, mayhem and murder, and the government will be on the side of law and order." He pledged to keep the troops in Laventille, because "unless this was done, we shall have a return of the old days when gang warfare was the order of the day." (*Daily Express* October 10, 2012).

The troops were not only being kept in Laventille, but were also given the responsibility for managing the peace treaty that had been negotiated among the warring gangs who were told to put down their guns if they wanted to be party to the entente. The Defence Force was also mandated to get involved in distributing jobs It was a "jobs for guns" entente. The gang members were now said to be "team members." The URP and the CEPEP were also said to be at an end. To quote the Minister of National Security, "gangs are "finished, finished!" Residents were advised that should they be harassed by any one, they should go to the police or the army posts and complain. Far from being enemies of the people the police and the army were there to provide protection.

The Minister acknowledged that the people were in rebellion in the streets because they had not been treated in the past with the respect and dignity which they deserved. Unlike "Colour Me Orange" jobs which were temporary, the jobs being created were said to be more sustainable, decent, and even permanent One also promised to make entrepreneurs out of the workers. The Minister however warned that neither he nor the police were "soft" "We have said time and time and again; we shall offer carrots where carrots could be given, but at the end of the day, if there are those who refuse to take advice, to take counsel, it would be a fight to the finish, and such a fight, neither the police nor the government would lose."

There has been some reduction of homicides, but the difference is not very significant. In the past, these well meaning ceasefires have never lasted longer than eight months. Given the absence of trust, and the memory of slights, insults, loss of esteem and respect, and in some cases revenge, the peace is hard to maintain. Street demonstrations in East Port of Spain however increased. There have been loud protests and the burning of tyres in the street, triggered by disappointments about how much was being paid to those who were given jobs. The workers were offered a mere TT\$69.00 (US\$100) when other workers were said to be receiving more. They deemed the offer an

insult and less was promised. The government's position, however, was that it had to get value for money, and the workers were only being required to work for 4 hours per day which is all they normally do. The key problem was that the coffers of the state were limited and had to be rationed throughout the entire country. Appeasement could be only be taken so far. The more one promised, the less the satisfaction expressed. Other areas like Sea Lots inevitably shouted "we too" and demanded to be included. One would be surprised if the Peace initiative lasted beyond the yuletide season.

The Minister of National Security insists that he has a fight on his hand and that failure is not an option for him even if his life was threatened. He promised that he would establish a new dispensation to look after the needs of Sea Lots, and remove the conditions that encourage a life of crime. We will put in place a process that will make your lives better.... "The Army will bring order, equity, and fairness. Otherwise there will be chaos." (*Newsday*, November 16 2012)

Whatever the outcome of the gang wars in Laventille, Sea Lots and elsewhere, the problems faced by young blacks are particularly serious and many of them say they are resigned to early death. As is said in Jamaica by some, "*we ready fi dead.*" They are indeed caught in a trap from which escape seems difficult. They are more than "at risk." They are as endangered as the turtles of Grand Riviere, Toco, a village on the North Coast of Trinidad.

The society is divided as to what should or could be done with the citizens of the "Hot Spots". Some, and they include many from the black middle class, are critical of the young and allegedly lazy black males and the feral young women who believe they are entitled to a state provided hand out for mother and child. These voices are those of the Afro - pessimists who say that Laventille is unredeemable and should be left to its own devices.

If we do, however, the society, already porous and at risk, might in time collapse as pressure is applied from the periphery and from

within. As the Minister of National Security well observes," if we do not give our young people a sense of hope, there will [indeed] be chaos... we all gone through" (*Newsday*, November 16, 2012) We must continue to rescue our youth of both genders and all ethnicities on the basis of economic and psychic need. The task ahead is long and hard and full of dead bodies and burdens on the treasury.

The costs of dealing with crime, both direct and indirect are difficult to assess. One such attempt made by the recently appointed Governor of the Central Bank, Jwala Rambarran and Dr Sandra Sookram. The two researchers estimate that the total "response" cost of crime to the Government of T&T in 2009 was TT\$1.5b. The consequential costs were estimated to be TT\$2.6b. It was estimated that the total cost of crime was 3.45% of GDP. The burden would also have been heavy for private sector firms, individuals, and households which anticipate being possible victims of crime and thus take pre-emptive measures to avoid such. There are other costs that are difficult to quantify, As the authors write: while some of these costs can be assessed directly and quantified in monetary terms, there are certain costs to crime, particularly crime that involves homicide, that are not easily measured. Some of these include fear of violence to the person, loss of social capital and trust, foregone investment and trade, corruption and white collar crime." And, as we stated at the outset of this paper, narco-states or narco dominated states may subscribe to their own peculiar governance protocols which determine who gets what or does what, but one would hardly describe such a regime as one of "good governance, however one might regard the services which they might provide."

The Ministry of National Security itself seemed to have come to the view that the threat level of gang related crime had increased to such an extent that more human and material resources had to be devoted to crime suppression. Things seemed out of control. Mr Stirling Belgrove, the Director of the Rose Foundation, had publically charged in July 2012 that certain gangs seem bent on organised action

along ideological lines. According to Belgrove, the battle was between those who live in the stigmatised 'hilly' areas and those who lived on the plains. To quote Belgrove:

If Port of Spain is considered the outside world, then there is going to be a foreign land. They are really aliens in their own country. The mainstream has its own construct of governance and its own codes and rules of engagement. There are alternative regimes. It has its own skill sets. Those sets were constructed for manning [and planning] robberies. Ways must be found to reconnect the periphery to the orthodox mainstreams. One needs to survive; one needs to develop rules of engagement within their own country (sic).

The Minister of National Security reacted strongly to those whom he described as "urban guerrillas," persons who were seemingly bent on taking over the state. He indicated that he knew who was behind the unrest in the streets and what their agenda was. Using Churchillian language, he signalled his intention to "push back" the criminals to whom he sent the following warning: "Let me advise you that you shall feel the effects of the [Crime] plan. When the Plan is implemented, it shall be swift, it shall be surgical, it shall be clinical and this country shall begin a new era of safety" (*Express*, August 17 2012).

The Minister, who projected himself as a triumphant "black man on a shiny black steed" and a "badjohn" himself, was allocated TT \$289m to deal with the crime problem. The money was to provide vehicles and other material resources as well as to employ 5,000 Special Reserve Police Officers, some of whom were to be specially trained as support officers to work in non-confrontational areas." All this was in addition to the money which was already being spent on crime suppression and anti-poverty programmes.

Notwithstanding his use of strong language, which was perhaps part of a strategy to intimidate the criminals, the minister allegedly met clandestinely with gang men to put in place a formula which would make the homicide

problem go away, at least from the public view. The Minister however denied that he had knowingly met with gang men, and alleged that he was "duped" and trapped into meeting and negotiating with them. The general view is that there was an attempt to negotiate a respite from crime sprees and mayhem. The beleaguered minister badly needed to prove that he could succeed in an endeavour in which several other ministers had failed.

The crime lords also wanted a victory: They had to show that they had leverage with state authorities. They wanted jobs to distribute as part of their patronage regime. Controversy arose as to what transpired during the discussions. The Mayor of Port of Spain who was present during the negotiations, indicated that the gangmen asked for about 100 jobs to start with. They also asked for things like better and more sustainable community facilities etc.

The problem was that the policy of the People's Partnership Government was no negotiations with gang leaders. The Minister agreed that that policy had not changed and that would not change. "It will not be a case of if I give you a job, you will put down your gun or if I give you two jobs, people will put down arms. There will be no concessions to criminals. (*Newsday*, August 30, 2012) If you want peace, put down your arms. Go to the police and so on, but we shall not negotiate. We will not do so and that is the end of the matter (*Newsday*, August 30, 2012). It is, however, evident that there some negotiations.

Both the Commissioner of Police and the National Security Minister were of the view that what was taking place was an "unusual challenge to the state." The Commissioner however denied that an "upsurge" of violence was taking place which was unusual. As he explained, "most murders in Trinidad occur in Laventille, and not only in 2012 but historically. There is no one thing that is happening in Laventille. It is a multifaceted issue and will require a multifaceted approach. (*Newsday*, August 21, 2012) The Minister agreed. "This is just one issue. It is a complex situation. The



Police are already there, and are addressing all areas where there is a challenge." (*Newsday*, August 28, 2012).

What then was the outcome of this clash? The Government pledged that it would increase the funds already allocated to existing programmes, but denied the allegation that 100 jobs and other "soft options" were promised to Laventille. It was evident that some deal had been negotiated. The Minister believed that the ends and goals justified the means.

The state's additional response to the crisis was to establish a substantial army and police presence on a continuous and indefinite basis in the hope that the patrols would pacify Dorata and the community at large. The police likewise indicated that they were aware that community involvement was critical to long term crime fighting and that new strategies must be put in place to focus attention on the social issues which face "hotspot" communities, wherever

they are...(*Newsday* September 13, 2012). This included "family days" which would help to bring families together and also to facilitate the movement of people belonging to various communities within the "border" The first which was held on November 18 was not a great success, mainly because there was a great deal of distrust and fear.

One however hopes that the peace would hold and that whatever else was being done in East Port of Spain cumulatively would yield sustainable benefits. There would however no quick fixes. The main concern is to prevent the crisis from widening and deepening. There is also the problem of finding the wherewithal to pay a sustainable wages to all who believe they are entitled to such a wage. There is also a political problem. Many among the government's supporters, are becoming angry about the fact that Laventille and other Afro enclaves are getting more than a fair share of the available social resources.

# THE PASSING OF AFRO-HEGEMONY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

*Selwyn Ryan*

*Like the Stoic God, History Leads the Wiseman, and Drags the Fool.  
Hegel*

Our essays which deal with the Young Black Male make it clear that the problem goes back to the post-emancipation era, if not to transatlantic slavery itself, which locked people of dark pigment into their skins and effectively prevented them from achieving certain levels of education and achievement. Black and brown people were discouraged and in many cases prevented from pursuing secondary and tertiary education which were reserved for those who were biologically or sociologically white. Race and other birthmarks were used to ration achievement and keep Afros quarantined

There has been much debate as to who or what is responsible for some of the economic, social and cultural problems currently being experienced by the black community. There was and continues to be a great deal of controversy as to whether the problems have been accurately diagnosed, whether it is a race or a class problem, or both, whether the decline is irreversible, and if not, what has to be done or could be done by the community as a whole and the black community in particular to enable it to surge once more. Many blame slavery for some of the ongoing problem of embedded poverty. Some argue that Atlantic slavery was abolished 174 years ago, and should be relegated to the archives of history (Sowell 1994). Others argue that other once enslaved or indentured individuals and communities have survived similar experiences and had moved on in spite of them, and that it was time for blacks to stop blaming others and projecting themselves as victims to whom reparation is owed.

While the role of slavery in shaping the attitudes and attributes of blacks was important and continues to be so, we decided that more attention would be given to the periods just before and after independence, and on the role played by class factors, social groups, political parties and their leaders in particular. One of the questions which arise from time to time had to do with the issue of "responsibility." The general view among blacks in the Afrophone Caribbean was that following the displacement of the British, Afro-hegemony was the natural order of things, and that somebody or some group was responsible for its "loss" in Trinidad and Tobago. Some explanations for that loss center on the "failures" of black leadership. Many blame Dr Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago directly. It was said that he knew what the problem required and chose not to do what "history" required. He was said to have become an Afro-Saxon to use words of Lloyd Best. (Ryan, 1972, 2010.) Yet others point to the black middle class in general which it was said did little to provide their less fortunate co-ethnics with the help needed to enable them move up the social and economic ladder.

Blame was also ascribed to Williams' successor. Prime Minister Patrick Manning, on coming to power in 1991, argued that the country was bi-racial, and that neither the PNM nor any of the Indian based parties could win and keep political power without having support in both major ethnic groups. This element believed that the PNM should systematically "look for Indians" to diversify their ranks. Not many

rallied to Mr. Manning's banner, however, and he came to the conclusion that his first political obligation was to take care of his base in the Afro Trinidadian community. Following his electoral defeat in 1995, he was heard to say that he had made a mistake in not looking after the needs of his base, and would not make that mistake again. And the evidence does indicate that Mr Manning did in fact privilege the black community in much of what he did.

Hindus were more outspoken in their complaints about cultural and political marginalisation, but complaints were articulated by Indians of all ethnicities. Indo political elites however insist that they are not pursuing a policy of ethnic redemption. PP political leaders are equivocal about it. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, for example, Dr Bhoe Tewarie, well captures what the Government claims it is seeking to do. Geography and not race was said to be the dominant variable. To quote the Minister:

The government has basically tried to redress some imbalances that existed in the society. Past governments tended to focus on the urban areas and by and large neglected the rural areas...So those kinds of community based activities have to be spread across the country more and more.

Tewarie noted that the Government is not neglecting the urban areas. "The idea is really to spread the development pie' (*Sunday Guardian*, Sept 9 2012; *Trinidad Express*, November 12 2012) Other ministers, the Prime Minister included, have also denied that there is any discrimination in resource allocation. Many PP ministers and other officials are however explicit about what they are about. In a nutshell, they want to right what they consider to be "historical wrongs" which were inflicted by the PNM on people of Indian descent.

The Minister of National Security, who incidentally is Afro-Creole, however made the redemption agenda much more explicit than most Indians do. As he declared, "*in the post-independence era, the state and its officials excluded Indians in general and Hindus in particular from their due share of public goods. That era now has to be*

*brought to a close. There will be a relentless campaign against discrimination against East Indians in this country.*" (*Trinidad Express*, November 2, 2012) The need was parity and proportional representation in the distribution of state offices, a demand that was made by the Hindu National Association in the run up to independence in 1962. Mr Warner wanted the cabinet to include at least 25 percent East Indians; 21 percent of state boards must have Indians: the post of Attorney General must be open to East Indians, and 10 per cent of the scholarships awarded to Indians (*Sunday Mirror*, November 11, 2012). For whom was the Minister speaking, for himself or the political Executive?

The ambivalence of the Government was noted by Mr Trevor Sudama, a former UNC Minister. Sudama concluded that the Government had an unarticulated agenda:

there is a firm agenda of the UNC, if not the whole PP, to redress imbalances against Indo-Trinidadians....We should note, however, that on the issue of redressing imbalances against Indo-Trinidadians, the PP Government has taken conflicting positions and sent out mixed signals. One therefore needs to raise the question as to when and in what circumstances the pursuit of redressing imbalances is appropriate in the perspective of the PP Government.

Sudama recalled the predicament of the former Chairman of the Police Service Commission who openly front burned the issue of the absence of Indo-Trinidadians in the upper ranks of the Police Service, and suggested that corrective action should be taken to deal with this situation given the ethnic composition of the population. He was however sharply condemned by the Prime Minister and several PP government ministers for creating racial anxiety and discontent in the society. It was felt that his open statement on the matter was inappropriate and would have resulted in damage to race relations in the country." It was feared that his actions might open Pandora's box and unwittingly embarrass the government which was trying to project itself as a multiethnic party. One wanted equity, but one also wanted to avoid appearing racist. The Minister chided the Chairman, Mr

Nizam Mohammed whom he said was dividing the country, hurting race relations, and giving ammunition to the opposition. It was pointed out that the fact that there were only 10 persons in the upper ranks of the 59 member police establishment was due to demographic and historical antecedents; few Indo-Trinidadians applied to join the army and the Police Service in the pre or early post-colonial era., (Ryan and La Guerre 1994: Sudama, *Sunday Mirror*, Nov 11 2012)

### **The Passing of Afro-Hegemony**

The PNM's loss of political power to an Indo based coalition of parties in the May 2010 general elections, gave the matter of who was appointed to what Commission or Board, who controls or owns what, and who is "on top" or "below," has assumed greater urgency than was previously the case. Every appointment is closely scrutinized. Prime Minister Manning, who held power between 2002 and 2010 was accused by his coethnics of having given away control of the state by calling elections two and a half years before they were constitutionally due. This loss of the state and what was in its gift was suicide at worse and gross negligence at best in that it gave Indo-Trinidadians political and bureaucratic power and status which they would use to augment the economic power which they had already amassed in the areas of trade and commerce. In time, they would also come to control the "commanding heights" of the state and para state sector. The conventional wisdom is that it was important for the sustainability of Afro hegemony for state power and private sector power not to be lodged in the same hands.. Manning's fatal error, it is said, was to have caused that outcome to occur. The net result was that Afro-Trinis are indeed "in trouble," and are now considered an "endangered species".

The latest public figure to articulate this view was Makandal Daaga, the individual who was the principal face of the "Black Power" movement of the late sixties and early seventies. Daaga chose the occasion of Emancipation Day 2012 to voice this concern. A few other black

intellectuals, like Dr Courtenay Bartholomew, have openly made similar calls on blacks to "face the facts" and recognize that they are on a rapidly moving escalator and are now in the departure lounge of history.

The fact of the matter, however, is that most of what is generally said to be indicative of decline and dissolution and the loss of mandate became evident long before former Prime Minister Patrick Manning came to power in the nineties. The thrusting for a proportionate share of political and cultural power was very much a part of what took place in the seventies. The Black Power Movement aroused counterpart demands for "Hindutva," "Indian power," and *apan jhat by cultural nationalists* (Gosine, 1986; Ryan and Stewart 1992) .

Further evidence of what was occurring, became manifest when one looked at the performance of students in the Common Entrance Examination and the secondary schools which were mainly to be found in certain types of institutions owned by denominational bodies (Ryan, La Guerre, Jules 1991). Little black males and females who were attending comprehensive state owned school invariably did less well than those attending the so called "prestige schools" run by denominational bodies (those owned by the Catholics, the Presbyterians, the Muslims and the Hindus). The polarization was not complete in that there were some young black males who performed well, notwithstanding the school they went to, and some Indians who did poorly in such schools. There was intra group stratification. What was true of the aggregate was not true of all those in the broad demographic group. But the picture was clear.

The patterns were also evident in the upper school system. Results of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE 2012) indicated that 62 percent of the students who won scholarships had Indian surnames while the others all together had Christian surnames. Results of the marathon mental-mathematics tests held in 2012 also show a dominance of young persons with Indian names among the finalists (33-6) and the winners.

Evidence of the secular rise of an Indian meritocracy is also visible when one considers what is taking place in the middle and upper ranges of the public sector generally. Afro-Trinis once dominated this sector at almost all levels. It was their preserve (Ryan and La Guerre 1994). This is no longer the case. The key officers in the state enterprises and in some ministries are now mainly on contract. Afro elements claim and complain that most of those being employed are Indo-Trinidadians. Most of these are however said to have the required credentials and ITC qualifications which reinforce their ethnic and political compatibility.

Black civil servants routinely complain that the politically neutral central public service is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Salaries and benefits are said to be uncompetitive. Thus many civil service posts are left vacant because those who are qualified do not want to work in the ministries where salaries, perks, and facilities for securing mortgages and loans to purchase cars are not easy to come by. There are said to be over 5,000-6,000 thousand contractees and more are being employed each day. In the past, so it is said, the contractees were in the main Afro-Trinis. It is alleged that the majority of the new contractees are Indo-Trinis.

The leader of the Parliamentary Opposition claims that thousands of Afro contractees have had their services discontinued and that victimization is rampant. Afros also claim that the unspoken strategy is to appoint co-ethnics. Some Indo leaders indirectly justify what is being done by claiming that they are being frustrated by Afro elements who tell them what they cannot do given the rules of the civil service with which they are not familiar rather than how to get done the things which they want to do as part of their mandate. The new executives, both in the ministries and the parastatals claim that they want to be free to appoint persons who are politically "compatible" and have similar policy agendas. The choices of personnel are said to be based on politics and performance and not on the basis of race. Winner takes all is the name of the game as it was when the PNM was in power.

The matters are controversial and contentious, since groups see "reality" through different prisms, and there are no empirical studies such as was done in 1994. There is however a perception among Afro-Trinis that the allegations of what is now being labeled as "ethnic restocking" is true and there is a great deal of bitterness on their part. They claim that appointments to high office are not based on competence or qualification. Indos say that what is taking place is realignment based on an attempt to share the pie more equitably.

Many black males no longer regard careers in the central public service as the prestige vocation it once was. They now prefer to be employed in the state enterprise or the private sector which had long been a preserve of the off white and "other" sections of the business community. The "problem" is that the private sector also draws its professional recruits mainly from Indo-Trinidadians who are better credentialed. This is particularly true in the fields of energy, law, medicine, and accounting. A majority seem to be female.

The dissolution of Afro-hegemony is also said to be evident in the policies that have been announced about deconcentrating Port of Spain. Proposals to decentralise the public service and move some of the ministerial offices away from Port of Spain was advocated by the PNM several years ago. These plans were abandoned by the former ruling party which sought to change the skyline of Port of Spain. The "new" plan is part of an alternative vision to shift the axis of the country away from Port of Spain and the north to the rural areas of Central and South Trinidad, particularly the borough of Chaguanas which is in the heartland of the Indo dominant countryside. That policy would of course privilege Chaguanas and surrounding areas in terms of jobs, services office rentals and real estate prices. As such, it is no surprise that there is growing resistance on the part of many Afros to the planned relocation of several ministries and state offices.

The Leader of the Opposition, Dr Keith Rowley, formally protested what he regarded

as discrimination in the allocation of resources to the various regions of the country. To quote him, "we in the PNM are not against anyone, anywhere in the country, but you cannot be breaking down one to build up the other. I want to ask the government where is the analysis that shows that Port of Spain must be emptied out and taken to Chaguanas." Similar complaints came from the MP for Port of Spain South, part of which is in Laventille. (*Newsday*, July 26 2012) She listed some of the many billion dollar (59) projects that were being located in areas which were peopled mainly by citizens of Indian descent and made comparisons with what is not being done to create sustainable jobs in Afro dominated spaces, which included Laventille.

Counter questions have been asked by Indo elements as to why should Laventille be singled out for special and exceptional treatment. In the view of the latter critics, the constituency "Behind the Bridge" does not contribute more than that contributed by other constituencies, and should therefore be treated as an equal and not a special unit. Its contribution to the country's cultural heritage is conceded by some, but the claim is that with the exception of the steel band, the calypso, and some dimensions of Carnival (Henry 2008), the contribution has not been exceptional. Additionally, it is argued, Laventille has helped to shape the very values that the nation does not want to celebrate or promote at this time, and that it inseminates and infects the community with the entitlement syndrome- the "laziness", the irresponsibility, and the ferality. In this view, Laventille constitutes a convenient myth which is employed to hijack and extract a disproportionate share of resources from the wider community. It is however now a wounded community which should be allowed to die a natural death. The same holds for the black community in general and the PNM in particular which no longer enjoys the hegemony it did over the past 50 years.

Government spokesmen deny that there is any plan to shift social and economic power from the capital city because of ideological or ethnic partisanship. The Minister of Local Government indicated that there was no plan in

the making which involved switching capitals. As he assured, Port of Spain will forever remain the capital city; nothing will take away from that. It is going to continue to be the centre of government and many ministries." (*Newsday*, November. 24, 2012) Government spokesmen however argue that Port of Spain is too far from the newer growth poles of the island, with all that means in terms of travel time to and from work, school, and business. It is also noted that Port of Spain is one of the five medium sized Latin American cities chosen by the IDB to be part of its regentrification initiative. According to the (IDB), the projects being constructed or being planned for Laventille would be integrated with the city generally. Far from shifting resources out of Port of Spain, the reverse is occurring. Notwithstanding the truth of this assertion, some of the new power holders have advanced the view that Chaguanas ought to be developed into becoming a new city, if not the capital city.

The issues surrounding the question of the retention of Port of Spain come mainly from persons who believe that Port of Spain's cultural contribution to Trinidad is unique, and that it is being undervalued. There are, however, other compelling reasons to resuscitate East Port of Spain, and it has to do with the strategic location of Laventille. Laventille, one is warned, is like a "dagger" pointed at the "soft underbelly" of the capital city, and it would be negligent for those responsible for strategic planning to ignore the possibility that Laventille could in time be the weak link in the urban chain. One must thus do whatever is necessary to "silence the guns" of Laventille.

The Laventille problem is an aspect of the problem of the decline of Afro hegemony and the rise and mainstreaming of the Indo community. Indeed, Laventille is a metaphor for much that afflicts the black community. There was a time when much that was culturally distinctive emerged out of parts of Laventille and its environs in places like Belmont. Many young blacks who performed positively in the primary school system came from "Behind the Bridge," That continues to happen, but certainly not as frequently as was the case before. The decay that

is evident in Laventille today is symptomatic of the larger and deeper malaise which afflicts the black community,

The East Port of Spain Heritage Association, one of several groups which is seeking to revitalize Laventille believes that the problem is class not race. Race merely serves to reinforce class. As the Association also asserted, "what Laventille and the rest of East Port of Spain needs is a programme which would generate jobs and begin to restore needed social and fiscal capital Long-term joblessness ultimately leads to permanent joblessness and a culture of poverty. The initiation of programmes which generate jobs and provide other community pillars could well serve to change the ecology of the townships. That change of environment may serve to change the dynamics of the space and help reconnect the ghetto to the mainstream."

Laventille is however not beyond redemption, despite the fact that many past efforts have been made to effect its transformation. The "real" Laventille is however different from the stereotyped or mythical version. It should be recalled that Port of Spain has had slum removal exercises before. The problem with slums is that they tend to grow back. Those who succeed, eventually secede, leaving their garbage and broken windows behind. There are few economic or human poles to pull the weak willed along. There are fewer mentors, fewer successes who tell them directly or indirectly, "Yes, You Can". The cumulative problems, the social overload which they have to carry each night as they compete for space in crowded yards or cots on which to sleep, sometimes in shifts, require heavy lifting. Loud noises, children's voices, and music keep many awake or make it difficult to do homework, providing that a literate parent is there to assist. Breakfast is limited, when available at home or at school, and potable water may or may not be accessible, What many "NEETS" (young men Not in Education, Employment or Training) in Laventille confront each morning are their same old associates who have dropped out from school or training institution, who are hustling

to get a little "end" or a "ten days" or something which the gang leader has organized. A good job is hard to find. It is harder if you come from Laventille. Joblessness becomes a way of life.

The problem of Laventille and its diasporas is a matter of both class and race, but more so of the former. A recent study of the population of East Port of Spain shows a sharp decline of population in the order of 32 percent. In Laventille itself, the negative change between 2000 and 2010 was 48.9 percent; in Beetham/Sea Lots, 35 percent, East Port of Spain 31 percent, Success Village, 11 percent and Down Town, 36 percent. (Figures calculated from 2010 Census data by Dr Roy Mc Cree SALISES, UWI, St Augustine).

The problem thus becomes linear. The people who can help to raise standards, inject human and social capital, and present the young with alternatives to that being dangled by the gang leaders, leave whenever they can. The poverty trap is thus hard to avoid. The material resources and the will to succeed are just not there in sufficient quotients to pull those out of the ghetto.

The political, economic and social factors identified in this and other essays in our study, point to an inescapable conclusion, viz, that Afro-hegemony is at an end, fifty years after independence was won. There is no doubt that what passed for the official culture of Trinidad and Tobago during those years was informed by Euro/Afro as opposed to Indo cultural forms. The latter was said to be oriental and quaint while the former was inseminated by the drums and rhythms of Africa, the calypso, the steelband, limbo, bongo, shango and Christian religious practices. The dominance of this creole culture was unequivocal up until 1986 when the PNM was defeated electorally and demands were heard more frequently than before that Indo Trinidadians were entitled to have their cultures validated and made an essential part of the Trinidadian and Caribbean mosaic. The Caribbean was not an African diasporic lake only. The Ganges had since met the Nile. What was lacking was symbolic recognition.

The political defeat of the PNM in 1995 and the capture of the office of Prime Minister by the UNC was seen by many to be the year which marked the shift from creole political and cultural dominance to something that was essentially a multicultural hybrid. The return to power of the PNM in 2002 served to disguise the fact that Indian culture in general and Hinduism in particular had flourished and were making triumphant counter hegemonic noises (Vertovic 1992). The assertiveness of the Hindus and their insistence on parity was fuelled by the aggression of the Pentecostals who were poaching on Hindu religious turf. By the end of the millennium, it was clear that a cultural transformation had quietly taken place and that "King Creole" who had ruled for some 50 years, was dead or on his death bed.."

The passing of the King was openly mourned and proclaimed by many, but most preferred to whisper within the tribal tent rather than chant lamentations. Many were in denial. It was possible to camouflage the changes that had taken place because Afrocentric elements held political power, and high status Afro bureaucrats were still in charge of the state apparatus. That is no longer unequivocally the case now that the ethnic base of the ruling party has changed. What becomes clear when the lights are lit, is that the Emperor has nothing standing beneath his robes. Even if an Afrobased party were to regain power through the ballot box and the machinery of the electoral boundary system, the reality is abiding will not change much. The imbalance of economic capital is there for all to see.

A recent analysis based on the 2000 population census indicates that there are many more businesses owned by Indo-Trinis than by Afro-Trinis. The percentages were 30 percent owned by Afros, 50 percent by Indos, 5 percent by mixed elements, and 5 percent by others. (Henry and Barclay 2010) Data collected by the Centre For Economic Studies 10 years ago (Ryan and La Guerre 1992) revealed that the gap between Indians and others had widened over the years. Indians then constituted 40 percent of the businesses, Afro Trinis 37.5 percent, 20.5 percent were mixed and 2 percent other.

Urban and conurban commercial estate is visibly and firmly in Indian and Syrian hands. Bureaucratic power in the state owned sector is also becoming entrenched in Indo hands. Though ownership of the media remains controlled by the two conglomerates, and the social media has become important, a major chunk of the electronic media is now controlled or managed by Indo Trinis. The gains that have been made in the field of higher education also confer a great deal of prestige and opportunity to acquire wealth as a result of their memberships in the elite professions such as law, engineering and medicine. In sum, Indians are no longer the numerical and sociological minority they were a few decades ago. Indeed, if one were to do a due diligence audit of what gains have been made, and are in the process of being locked or stocked in, what one is confronted with is a yawning "zero sum" chasm in which valued goods and services are now in the possession of competitors.

Analysts use different criteria to stratify societies. Hierarchical ranking depends on the nature of the society, where and how closely guarded the portals to power are, and where the competing groups are located in relation to them. Some use economic class (wealth), others rely on race, ethnicity, status, prestige, strategic location or political power; yet others use culture. Most use all criteria cumulatively. In Trinidad and Tobago, only in the areas of music, culture and sport is there any real power sharing generally, and as we have seen in other chapters, music has its negative dimensions.

Many view the social landscape in terms which we have used so far and ascribe dominance to the Indo-Trinis Those we might classify as the Afro-pessimists, persons who believe that hegemony is lost forever. There are however elements who are either in denial, or who remain optimistic and who see the world in diverse shades of brown. Some of these gross up their share of the pie by adding the mixed group to their quarry. Some argue that social mobility is not always linear and that the "golden age" of "king creole" and his off spring is far from over, and could reemerge in some yet unknown



form sometime in the future. They argue that we do not know what outcomes lie ahead. The pessimists however retort that there is already a widening inequality between the two groups, and that the dialectic process does not reverse itself. Little Black Males, their parents, and those who wish to retain their political support in the future, thus have to eschew denial and recognize openly that their predicament cannot be concealed any longer using the excuse that they are being stereotyped or that slavery did irreparable and irreversible damage. Even cargo cults have now become obsolete. But we can't quit now. In our view, the Afro tribe must step up to the plate, improve its performance, or face complete marginalization. The role of the wider society is to provide the basic resources and the incentives needed to help young males to help themselves. There is still a role for affirmative action, but one that is based on class. Failure to do so means, in the words of the Minister of National Security, "we all gone through."

We should not therefore rely on the society at large to pull our chestnuts out of the fire. If we do so and rely on society to provide the reparations to which some believe they are entitled, we would continue to underperform. What Shelby Steele observed in respect of American blacks is also somewhat true and we must get the diagnosis right:

Much of the problem must be of our own making. To admit this fully would cause us to lose the innocence that we derive from our victimization. And it would jeopardise the entitlement we've always had to challenge society. We are in the odd and self-defeating position in which taking responsibility for bettering ourselves feels like a surrender to white power. So we have a hidden investment in victimization and poverty. These distressing conditions have been the source of our only real power, and there is an unconscious sort of gravitation towards them...About 70 per cent of the black students at my university drop out before graduation- a flight from opportunity that racism cannot explain. (Steele, 1990)

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**CHAPTER 7**  
**SURVEY FINDINGS ON**  
**YOUTH AT RISK**



# RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER AND HOTSPOTS

## Introduction

The terms of reference for this study focused particularly on areas of the country that were deemed “hotspots” as defined by the police which was based primarily on the incidence of certain crimes, notably homicides and drug trafficking, in these areas. However, in order to examine whether the conditions that influenced these criminal activities or behaviours were unique to the areas deemed hot spots, it was decided to examine also a sample of non-hot spot areas or areas which would not have been considered “hot spots” based on the methodology used by the police or security forces. Put differently, a comparison of hot spots and non hot spots enabled one to identify or isolate the possible factors that predispose youths to engage in what has been defined in this study as risky activities with respect to crime and violence. In making this comparison, however, we found marginal statistical variations between hot spots and non hot spots on some of the major socio-economic issues examined (see Appendix 2). The issues where we found major differences between hot spots and non hot spots included notably, family back ground, education, training and economic activity (see Appendix 2). In addition, since these factors are crucial to resolving some of the problems facing at risk youths, we decided to subject them to further examination by looking for possible variations by gender and race/ethnicity. Consequently, consistent with the terms of reference of this exercise, the examination of the data from the survey would focus particularly on the possible role of the variables of race/ethnicity and gender in understanding certain behaviours, values and

problems in the hot spot areas under study. This would form the basis of recommending possible strategies for dealing with the problems that beset the communities in question. For a detailed description of the demographics and other socio-economic characteristics of the sample, see Appendices 1 and 2.

## Family structure

With respect to family structure, a majority of Mixed (52.3%) and Afro Trinidadians (50.2%) belonged to single parent families followed by a minority or one third among Indo Trinidadians (33.1%) and Douglas (31%) (Table 1). Of these single parents however, it was the mother who was dominant across all racial/ethnic groups, compared to fathers. In this regard, mothers who are single parents were more predominant among youths of African descent (42%) followed by the Mixed (36.9%), Douglas (28.6%) and Indians (23%), who had the least association with single mothers although 23% cannot be easily discounted. The nuclear type family with both father and mother represents a minority across all racial/ethnic groups but was still higher among Indo-Trinidadians (38.7%), followed by Douglas (28.6%), Mixed (21.5%) and Afro-Trinidadians (20.9%) with whom it was least associated based on these frequencies. In addition, it is also important to note that the category of ‘other relatives’ which included grandparents, mothers in law and aunts also represented a significant minority with whom many youths live. This type of family form was more predominant among Douglas (35.7%), followed by Afro-Trinidadians (24.3%), Indo-Trinidadians (23%) and Mixed (21.5%).

**Table 1. Person living with by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Person</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Father	8.2	2.4	10.1	15.4
Mother	42.0	28.6	23.0	36.9
Father& Mo.	20.9	28.6	38.7	21.5
Guardian	0.7	2.4	1.8	0.0
Other relative	24.3	35.7	23.0	21.5
No response	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
NA	3.9	2.4	3.2	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>65</b>

In relation to family size, the Mixed had the largest number of family members with around 43 followed by Afro-Trinidadians (38.9), Indians (36.17), and Douglas (33.48%) which had the least (Table 2). It is interesting to note that Afro-Trinidadians had the second largest number of family members but while this quantity suggest that they may have some support network on which to call, we do not know the quality of those relationships. In addition, as noted earlier, whether those family members can act as a positive influence or support on a daily basis or in times of need would depend on their

geographical location, their age, own socio-economic situation, which would include their financial resources, their criminal record, or whether they are incarcerated or not. However, what the figures suggest is that the reality of many youths is not characterized by complete social isolation or atomism which could make them vulnerable or put them at risks. That however is a positive reading. Another more negative reading is that this extended type family has broken down and in dire need of tremendous social repair.

**Table 2. Average family size by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Person</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Brothers	2.60	2.74	2.60	2.70
Sisters	2.67	2.65	2.35	2.63
Aunts	5.89	7.36	5.81	7.13
Uncles	5.36	5.83	6.05	6.92
Cousins	20.89	17.58	19.35	22.81
Other	3.77	2.89	3.06	3.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>33.48</b>	<b>36.17</b>	<b>43.38</b>

### Schooling and Educational Performance

As regards school attendance, while a minority of both males and females were currently attending school, the proportion of females (42.2%) was still greater than that of males

(31.9%) by 10.3 percentage points (Table 3). Conversely, a majority of both males (68.1%) and females (57.8%) were not currently attending school but more males were not attending by some 10.3 percentage points.

**Table 3. Currently attending school by Gender (%)**

Response	Male	Female
Yes	31.9	42.2
No	68.1	57.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>391</b>

**Table 4. Currently attending school, by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

Race	Yes	No	Total
African	34	66.0	441
Douglas	28.6	71.4	42
Indian	41.5	58.5	217
Mixed	41.5	58.5	65

When examined by race/ethnicity, it was found that a varying minority across all racial/ethnic groups were currently attending school (Table 4), but this was greater among Indo-Trinidadians (41.5%) and Mixed (41.5%) followed by Afro-Trinidadians (34%) and Douglas (28.6%). Conversely, a majority across all groups were also not attending school which was greatest among Douglas (71.4%) and Afro-Trinidadians (66%) followed by Indo-Trinidadians (58.5%) and Mixed (58.5%).

In relation to the type of school attending, two findings stood out (Table 5). Firstly, it is interesting to note that slightly more females (6.7%) are attending trade/vocational school than males (4.7%) although by a slim 3 percentage points. Secondly, when both attendance at local and foreign Universities are combined, more women (16.5%) are found at this level than men (9.5%) by 7 percentage points.

**Table 5. Type of school attending by Gender (%)**

School	Male	Female
Primary (Private)	0.0	4.9
Primary (Govt)	29.1	14.1
Secondary (Private)	7.1	6.1
Secondary (Govt)	44.1	46.0
Trade/Vocational	4.7	6.7
Commercial/Secretarial	2.4	1.2
University (local)	7.9	15.3
University (foreign)	1.6	1.2
Other	0.8	2.1
Refused	0.8	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>163</b>

When examined by race/ethnicity, we found that only 35.6% of Indo Trinidadians in hot spots were attending government secondary school, compared to 50% among both Douglas and Mixed followed by Afro-Trinidadians at 49.3%

(Table 6). A more expected finding however was that more Indo Trinidadians (17.8%) were attending University (local and foreign combined) than Afro-Trinidadians (12.4%) by 5.4 percentage points (Table 6).

**Table 6. School attending by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

School	African	Dougla	Indian	Mixed
Primary (Private)	2.7	0.0	4.4	0.0
Primary (Govt)	17.8	25.0	23.3	19.2
Secondary (Private)	5.5	0.0	8.9	11.5
Secondary (Govt)	49.3	50.0	35.6	50.0
Trade/Vocational	6.8	16.7	4.4	3.8
Commercial/Secretarial	0.7	0.0	3.3	0.0
University (local)	11.0	8.3	15.6	11.5
University (foreign)	1.4	0.0	2.2	0.0
Other	2.1	0.0	2.2	3.8
Refused	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>26</b>



The ethnic and gender differential in educational achievement was again evident when we examined the number of subjects passed at the final examinations of secondary school at CXC/ CSEC or Cambridge Ordinary Level. In this regard, we found that while 41.5% of females had attained a full certificate measured in terms of 5 or more passes at final secondary school

examinations, the corresponding figure for males was 34.6%, a difference of 6.9 percentage points (Table 7). Although this difference might be considered statistically marginal, it is still consistent with wider national and global trends with respect to gender and educational performance.

**Table 7. Number of subjects passed by Gender (%)**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
One	7.2	5.3
Two	22.9	12.6
Three	20.9	24.2
Four	14.4	16.4
Five+	34.6	41.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>207</b>

In terms of race/ethnicity, the percentage difference between some groups with respect to the attainment of full certificates was even greater (Table 8). For instance, while a majority or 51.5% of Indo Trinidadians had attained full certificates (bear in mind that they only

represented 27.1% of the population in the hotspots sampled compared to 55.1% for Afro Trinidadians), this was followed by the Mixed with 36.6%, Afro Trinidadians (32.6%), and Douglas (23.8%) .

**Table 8: Number of subjects passed by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Number</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougl</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
One	6.0	4.8	5.9	9.8
Two	19.0	42.9	9.9	12.2
Three	28.8	9.5	13.9	24.4
Four	13.6	19.0	18.8	17.1
Five+	32.6	23.8	51.5	36.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>41</b>

### Views of School and Self Esteem

In an attempt to explain the prevalence of less than desirable social behaviours among the nation's youths, many have historically pointed fingers at the education system questioning the content and relevance of its curricula particularly in relation to the world of work as well as the formal learning process in general. In order to probe the validity of this view, respondents were asked to give their views on six major dimensions of schooling (Tables 9-15). The findings here might be considered startling since they did not support the dominant narrative as majorities in the hot spots as well as the non hotspots responded positively to what was asked. Even more, when compared to the non hot spot areas, the hot spot areas scored marginally better on three of the questions

asked and had the same proportion of responses on one. In these respects, the comparison of hot spot to non hot responses for 'school is a safe place' was 86.1% vs 81.3%; "school is a happy place," 83.5% vs 76.8%; "school prepares you for work," 91.6% vs 89.5%; "teachers make learning interesting," 76.7% vs 76.7% and "school is cool" (88.5% vs 83.7%). However, on the other two indicators which dealt with having "interest in most subjects" taught and whether the principal was "strong and effective" marginally more in the non-hot areas agreed which were 91.8% vs 89.2% and 75.6% vs 70.3%, respectively. The above finding in relation to views of school strongly suggests that there may be a serious need to reconsider a dominant view that the education system has failed or is failing our children.

**Table 9: School is safe place by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Strongly Disagree	0.7	3.5
Disagree	8.1	5.8
Neutral	5.1	9.3
Agree	39.5	45.3
Strongly Agree	46.6	36.0
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 10: School is happy place by Area(%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Strongly Disagree	0.3	1.2
Disagree	7.8	10.5
Neutral	8.4	11.6
Agree	44.3	41.9
Strongly Agree	39.2	34.9
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 11: Interested in most subjects by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	6.1	5.8
Neutral	4.7	2.3
Agree	48.0	46.5
Strongly Agree	41.2	45.3
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 12: Teachers make learning interesting by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Strongly Disagree	1.4	2.3
Disagree	8.4	11.6
Neutral	13.5	9.3
Agree	41.6	45.3
Strongly Agree	35.1	31.4
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 13: Principal strong and effective leader by Area(%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Strongly Disagree	4.4	4.7
Disagree	9.8	7.0
Neutral	15.5	12.8
Agree	29.1	44.2
Strongly Agree	41.2	31.4
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 14: School prepares for work by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Strongly Disagree	0	1.2
Disagree	4.4	4.7
Neutral	4.1	4.7
Agree	42.6	48.8
Strongly Agree	49.0	40.7
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 15: School is Cool by Area(%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Strongly Disagree	0.7	2.3
Disagree	5.4	3.5
Neutral	5.4	10.5
Agree	45.9	53.5
Strongly Agree	42.6	30.2
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>87</b>

In order to explain the problems of violence, indiscipline and low levels of academic performance among young black males and males in general, many have pointed fingers at the relevance of the school curricula and the quality of teaching and leadership in the school system. In this regard, respondents were asked to state their views on six different dimensions of their schooling experience. The examination of the findings here by gender and race/ethnicity were based on the mean responses which ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 representing Strongly Agree, 4 Agree, 3 Neutral, 2 Disagree and 1 Strongly Disagree. The findings revealed no major difference based on either gender (Table 16) or race/ethnicity (Table 17) on four of the six dimensions examined. Put differently, both males and females responded

favourably to the statements that ‘school is a safe place,’ ‘a happy place,’ ‘they are interested in their subjects,’ ‘school prepares them for work,’ and ‘school is cool.’ However, on the question of whether “teachers make learning interesting” and the “principal is strong and effective,” one notes a slightly lower mean for males (3.97) on the former compared to females (4.05) and a slightly lower mean for females (3.85) on the latter compared to males (4.05) although these differences cannot be considered substantial in any way. With respect to race/ethnicity, Afro-Trinidadians had a slightly lower mean score for ‘teachers make learning interesting’ (3.90) and ‘principal is strong and effective’ (3.73). A lower mean translates into less stronger agreement since as we noted above, the responses were based on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 representing

Strongly Agree, 4 Agree, 3 Neutral, 2 Disagree and 1 Strongly Disagree. These slightly lower means however still are not statistically

substantive and in any event, they can still be seen as representing borderline agreement with the statements in question.

**Table 16: Mean views of school by Gender (%)**

Item	Male	Std Dev.	Female	Std Dev.
Safe place	4.25	0.827	4.24	.964
Happy place	4.19	0.855	4.12	.896
Interested in subjects	4.25	0.778	4.25	.809
TMLI*	3.97	1.011	4.05	.919
Principal/strong/ effect.	4.05	1.113	3.85	1.180
Prepare them for work	4.32	0.807	4.41	.698
School is cool	4.22	0.863	4.28	.779

\*TMLI-Teachers make learning interesting

**Table 17. Mean views of school by Race/Ethnicity(%)**

Item	African	Dougla	Indian	Mixed
Safe place	4.31	4.25	4.10	4.48
Happy place	4.21	4.33	4.06	4.19
Interested in subjects	4.18	4.33	4.36	4.22
TMLI*	3.90	4.50	4.12	4.04
Principal/strong/ effect.	3.75	4.42	4.10	4.19
Prepare them for work	4.26	4.33	4.43	4.59
School is cool	4.21	4.42	4.24	4.41

\*TMLI-Teachers make learning interesting

The examination of self esteem was based on ten questions (Tables 18-19). While five of the questions sought to ascertain the level of positive self esteem, the other five sought to ascertain the level of negative self esteem. We begin by first analyzing the former and, in relation to the hot spot areas. The findings reveal that a vast majority of respondents in hot spots ranging from 90% to 97.9% generally have

positive self esteem on all of the five questions answered (Table 23). In this regard, 97.9% felt that they had good qualities, 95.6% felt that they were as good as others; 94.4% had a positive self attitude, 94.3% felt that they were of equal worth as others while 90% expressed satisfaction with themselves. In non-hotspots, a similar high majority ranging between 91% and 99% had a positive self esteem on the items examined:

99% had good qualities, 96% were of equal worth, 94.5% had a positive self attitude, 93% were as good as others and 91% were satisfied with themselves (Table 18). The figures for non hotspots however were not numerically greater than hotspot areas to any significant degree. For instance, on four of the five questions in relation to equal worth (96% vs 94.3%), good qualities (99% vs 97.9%), positive self attitude (94.5% vs 94.4%) and self satisfaction(91% vs 90%), the figures for non-hotspots were just 0.1% to 1.7% greater than corresponding figures for hotspots. But, on one of the questions, "as good as others," the figure for hotspots was marginally greater than the corresponding non-hotspot figure by 2.6 percentage points. In general therefore, not much separates hotspot and non-hotspot areas in terms of positive self esteem.

However, the findings for negative self esteem were somewhat more variable for while

a smaller majority in hotspots ranging from 50.7% to 88.1% rejected the view that they had problems with self esteem as measured, we note that a varying minority ranging from 8.4% to 45.2% admitted the contrary. In this regard, two measures of negative self esteem stood out: those who admitted lacking self respect amounted to 45.2% while a near one third or 29.3% claimed to feel useless. The same pattern obtained with respect to non-hot areas albeit with some variation. At best though, while a varying majority disagreed to having negative self esteem, a small and varying minority did. In this regard, as with hotspots, a minority in non-hotspots varying between 6% and 34.5% indicated that they had self esteem problems (Table 19). The two areas where this stood out most were the lack of self respect (34.5%), which was 10.3% less than the figure for hotspots, and feeling useless (24%), which was 5.3% less than the hotspot figure.

**Table 18: Self esteem by Area (Hotspot) (%)**

Item	Strongly Dis	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
Of equal worth	0.4	3.1	2.3	37.5	56.8
Good qualities	0.1	0.8	1.3	32.9	65
As good as others	0.3	2.1	2	40.5	55.1
Positive self attitude	0.5	1.9	2.9	31.8	62.6
Satisfied with self	6.8	--	3.1	43.1	46.9
Feel a failure	52.5	35.6	3.5	8	0.4
Not too proud	38.4	39.5	4.3	13.3	4.1
Lack self respect	20.4	30.3	4	37.4	7.8
Feel useless	32.5	33.6	4.6	27	2.3
Am no good at all	48	34.3	2.9	13.9	1.1
<b>Total (800)</b>					

**Table 19: Self esteem by Area (Non-hotspot) (%)**

Item	Strongly Dis	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
Of equal worth	---	1.5	2.5	41	55
Good qualities	---	---	1	44.5	54.5
As good as others	---	2	3	49	46
Positive self attitude	0.5	1	2	40	54.5
Satisfied with self	1.5	6	1.5	44	47
Feel a failure	56	34-90	4	5	1
Not too proud	49	38-87	1	9	3
Lack self respect	28.5	30.5-59	6.5	29	5.5
Feel useless	39.5	32.5-72	4	22.5	1.5
Am no good at all	58.5	31.5-90	0.5	8	1.5
<b>Total (200)</b>					

The general finding across both hotspot and non-hotspot areas therefore suggest the existence of a very high level of positive self esteem and very low levels of negative self esteem.

**Continuing Education and Skills Training**

Continuing education also reflected a marginal gender differential (Table 20). In this regard,

while a minority of both males (13.4%) and females (21.3%) pursue continuing education, the figure for females was greater by some 7.9 percentage points. A large varying majority of males (86.6%) and females (78.7%) however, do not pursue continuing education.

**Table 20: Continuing Education, by Gender (%)**

Response	Male	Female
Yes	13.4	21.3
No	86.6	78.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>489</b>

When examined by race/ethnicity, a varying small minority across all groups said that they were pursuing continuing education but this was highest among the Mixed (23.9%) followed by Afro Trinidadians (16.7%%), Indo Trinidadians

(16.3%) and Douglas (8.5%). Conversely, majority of youths ranging between 76.1% among the Mixed to 91.5% among Douglas were not pursuing continuing studies (Table 21).

**Table 21. Continuing Education, by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Yes	16.7	8.5	16.3	23.9
No	83.3	91.5	83.7	76.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>113</b>

Over the last 25 years, various governments have invested in various social programmes aimed particularly at youths as part of a policy strategy to help deal with a range of social challenges that include notably crime and unemployment. These programmes include for instance: Youth Training Employment and Apprenticeship (YTEPP), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) and Multi Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST), In conducting

this study therefore, one of the objectives was to ascertain the extent of youth involvement in these programmes as a measure of their reach, accessibility and possible success. In relation to gender, a small minority of females (18.2%) and males (16.8%) were currently attending such programmes, a marginal difference of 1.4 percentage points, while a vast majority 81.18% and 83.2%, respectively, were not currently attending (Table 22).

**Table 22: Currently Attending Skills Programme,by Gender (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Yes	16.8	18.2
No	83.2	81.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>154</b>

**Table 23: Currently Attending Skills Programme by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Yes	16.8	17.4	21.6	11.9
No	83.2	82.6	78.4	88.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>42</b>

In relation to race/ethnicity, a similar small minority across all groups were participating in these programmes which was greater among Indo-Trinidadians (21.6%), followed by Douglas

(17.4%), Afro-Trinidadians (16.8%) and Mixed (11.9%) who had the least involvement (Table 23). Conversely, a majority across all groups were not currently involved in these programmes



which was led by the Mixed (88.1%), followed by Afro-Trinidadians (83.2%), Douglas (82.6%), and Indians (78.6%). Whether in terms of gender or race/ethnicity therefore, a small minority of youths were currently attending skills programmes, while the vast majority were not. Relatedly, the figures also show that there is no substantive difference between males, females and various ethnic groups in their involvement or non involvement in the existing skills programmes.

Respondents were further asked to give the reason(s) for their non-involvement in the programmes. In respect of gender (Table 24), a minority among males and females were not currently attending skills programmes because they either dropped out (7.7% vs 5.6%) or had completed the programme (23.8% vs 23%). For the majority however which amounted to 69.6% among females and 67.2% among males, they were not currently attending programmes for 'Other' reasons.

**Table 24: Reasons not attending Skills Pogrammes by Gender(%)**

Reasons (s)	Male	Female
Completed programme	23.8	23.0
Dropped out	7.7	5.6
Other	67.2	69.6
Refused	1.3	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>461</b>

**Table 25: Reasons not attending Skills Pogrammes by Race/Ethnicity(%)**

Reasons	African	Dougla	Indian	Mixed
Completed programme	28.2	23.6	17.2	24.1
Dropped out	6.4	16.4	5.2	8.3
Other	64.0	54.5	76.4	66.7
Refused	1.5	5.5	1.1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>108</b>

With respect to race/ethnicity, a varying minority across all groups were not currently attending skills programmes either because they dropped out or they had completed the programmes (Table 25). In these respects, those dropping out were greatest among Douglas (16.4%), followed by Mixed (8.3%), Afro Trinidadians (6.4%) and Indo Trinidadians (5.2%). Those who

have completed the programme were led by Afro Trinidadians (28.2%), followed by Mixed (24.1%), Douglas (23.6%) and Indo Trinidadians (17.2%). For a varying majority across all groups however led by Indo Trinidadians (76.4%), followed by Mixed (66.7%), Afro Trinidadians (64%) and Douglas (54.5%).

Those who were attending skills programmes were asked to indicate the programme in question (Table 26). Among males, a varying minority were attending YTEPP (29%), 'Others' (25.8%), NESC (16.1%), CCC (12.9%), SERVOL (12.9%) and MUST (3.2%) in that order (Table 70). Among females, a large minority or 42.9% were involved in YTEPP followed by much smaller minorities in CCC (10.7%), Other (17.9%), MuST (14.3%), SERVOL (7.1%) AND GAPP (7.1%). The data present two major findings. Firstly, whether among males or females, involvement in these programmes is not as high as might be

expected. Secondly, that more female youths are involved in YTEPP by some 13.9 percentage points indicate that gender differentials are not only limited to the sphere of traditional formal education. This is further evident in the finding that more women (14.3%) are involved in the MuST programme than males (3.2%) by some 11.1 percentage points. However, while females are making inroads into non traditional areas of education and training, we note that females were absent from NESC programmes which focus on such traditional areas as welding associated with males.

**Table 26: Type of Skills Programme, by Gender (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
YTEPP	29.0	42.9
NESC	16.1	0.0
CCC	12.9	10.7
SERVOL	12.9	7.1
GAPP	0.0	7.1
MUST	3.2	14.3
Other	25.8	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>

**Table 27: Type of Skills Programme, by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
YTEPP	43.8	0.0	31.3	40.0
NESC	9.4	0.0	12.5	0.0
CCC	9.4	0.0	18.8	0.0
SERVOL	9.4	50.0	6.3	0.0
GAPP	3.1	0.0	6.3	0.0
MUST	9.4	0.0	6.3	20.0
Other	15.6	50.0	18.8	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>

In analyzing the breakdowns by race/ethnicity, the small sub totals for Douglas (4), Mixed (5) and to a lesser extent Indo Trinidadians (16) do not make for meaningful analysis or comparisons (Table 27). Bearing this in mind, we note that except for Douglas, a varying minority across all groups were involved in some of the programmes. The most subscribed to programme among three of the four groups was YTEPP which was greatest among Afro-Trinidadians (43.8%), followed by the Mixed (40%), and Indo Trinidadians (31.3%). Marginally more Indo Trinidadians were involved in NESC (12.5% vs 9.4%), CCC (18.8% vs 9.4%) and GAPP (6.3% vs 3.1%) compared to Afro Trinidadians. A bare majority of Douglas are involved in SERVOL (50%) followed by Afro Trinidadians (9.4%) and Indo Trinidadians (6.3%) and 'Other' programmes (50%). More Mixed are involved in MuST (20%) followed by Afro Trinidadians

(9.4%) and Indo Trinidadians (6.3%). In relation to 'Other' programmes, a bare majority of Douglas (50%) were involved in same followed by Mixed (40%), Indo Trinidadians (18.8%), and Afro Trinidadians (5.6%). In sum, the data suggest that involvement in the various skills programmes vary from group to group but may not be reaching their target groups as they are generally under subscribed.

### Employment and Economic Activity

The examination of economic activity by gender found that while a majority of males (50%) reported working in the past week leading up to the survey, only a minority or 35% of females were (Table 28). Females (6.5%) were also twice more likely not to look for work than males (13.3%). Another factor that kept around one third of both males (30.8%) and females (38%) out of the work force was school attendance.

**Table 28: Work activity in past week, by Gender (%)**

Activity	Male	Female
School full time	30.8	38.0
Worked	50.7	35.8
Had a job, did not work	1.8	1.0
Seeking first job	1.8	2.0
Actively seeking work	7.7	9.0
Did not look for work	6.5	13.3
Do not like work	0.0	0.6
Other	0.6	0.2
Not stated	0.2	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>489</b>

The breakdown of economic activity by race/ethnicity did not support the stereotype of the "lazy negro" who is not working or does not like work (Table 29). On the contrary, of all the race/ethnic groups, more Afro-Trinidadians (47.8%) reported working in the past week leading up to survey, followed by Indo-Trinidadians (40.3%),

Mixed (38.1%) and Douglas (30.5%). The major reason for not working across all groups had to do with school attendance which was greatest among the Mixed (40.7%), followed by Indo-Trinidadians (40.3%), Mixed (38.1%) and Douglas (30.5%).

**Table 29: Work activity in past week by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

Activity	African	Dougla	Indian	Mixed
School full time	31.7	32.2	35.3	40.7
Worked	47.8	30.5	40.3	38.1
Had a job, did not work	1.2	6.8	1.1	0.9
Seeking first job	2.0	1.7	1.8	0.9
Actively seeking work	9.5	11.9	6.4	8.0
Did not look for work	0.6	16.9	15.2	0.0
Do not like work	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.8
Not stated	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>113</b>

Another popular view of hot spot areas is that there tends to be a dependence on Government jobs and particularly make shift programmes like CEPEP. The survey findings again provided no support for this view. For instance, with respect to place of employment, we found that a majority of females (76.8%) and males (72.6%)

worked in private enterprise or the private sector (Table 30) which is evident in the type of occupations or jobs which are predominant such as labourers, skilled workers and service workers. Only a small minority of males (17%) and females (14.9%) were employed by the Government.

**Table 30: Place of Employment by Gender (%)**

Employment	Male	Female
Central and Local Govt	8.1	8.8
State Enterprise	8.9	6.1
Private Enterprise	72.6	76.8
Own Account Worker	4.4	3.3
Unpaid Family Worker	0	0
Paid Family Worker	1.9	0.6
Learner/Apprentice	0.4	0.0
Other (specify).....	3.7	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>181</b>

The same general pattern was found when the breakdown by race/ethnicity was examined (Table 31). In this regard, around three quarters across all groups were employed in the private

enterprise sector which was led by the Mixed (78.3%) followed by Afro Trinidadians (74.7%), Douglas (72.7%) and Indo-Trinidadians (72.6%), Consequently, only a small and varying minority

worked with the Government which was led by Douglas (18.1%), Indo-Trinidadians(17.1%), Afro-Trinidadians (16.8%) and Mixed (6.5%). In

the so called hot spots therefore, dependence on direct Government employment is not the order of the day.

**Table 31: Place of Employment by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

Activity	African	Dougla	Indian	Mixed
Central and Local Govt	8.8	13.6	9.4	4.3
State Enterprise	8.0	4.5	7.7	2.2
Private Enterprise	74.7	72.7	72.6	78.3
Own Account Worker	4.0	9.1	1.7	8.7
Unpaid Family Worker	0	0	0	0
Paid Family Worker	0.8	0.0	3.4	0.0
Learner/Apprentice	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other (specify).....	3.2	0.0	5.1	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>46</b>

### Government programmes

When certain Government programmes (URP, CEPEP, OJT and CCC) were examined by gender (Table 32) and race/ethnicity (Table 33), the findings also did not support popular views about those who supposedly dominate them. Firstly, with respect to gender, it was found that a varying minority of males varying between 2.2% and 8.7% and females varying

between 7.4% and 25.9% were involved in these Government programmes. Secondly, with respect to URP, slightly more women (7.4%) were involved than males (2.2%) by a slim 5.2 percentage points but as regards CEPEP, females (25.9%) outnumbered males (8.7%) almost 3 to 1. Relatedly, more males (47.8%) were not involved in any of these programmes than females (37%) by some 10.8 percentage points.

**Table 32: Government programme, by Gender (%)**

Programme	Male	Female
URP	2.2	7.4
CEPEP	8.7	25.9
OJT	4.3	7.4
CCC	2.2	0.0
Other	34.8	22.2
None	47.8	37.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>27</b>

As regards race/ethnicity, the small sub populations for Douglas (4) and Mixed (3) make do not make for meaningful analysis or comparison and consequently the focus would be on Afro and Indo Trinidadians (Table 33). In this regard, it was found that more Afro Trinidadians (45.2%) were NOT involved in these programmes than Indo-Trinidadians (30%) by 15.2 percentage points. Of the programmes

in which they were involved, 7.1% of Afro Trinidadians were involved in URP as well as OJT while no Indo Trinidadian was involved in either. However, more Indo Trinidadians (30%) were involved in CEPEP than Afro Trinidadians (9.5%) by 20.5 percentage points. Contrary to the popular dominant perception therefore, CEPEP is dominated by females and Indo Trinidadians.

**Table 33. Government programme by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

Reasons	African	Dougla	Indian	Mixed
URP	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
CEPEP	9.5	25.0	30.0	0.0
OJT	7.1	0.0	5.0	0.0
CCC	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
Other	31.0	0.0	35.0	33.3
None	45.2	75.0	30.0	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>

### Resolving Crime, National Service, Standard of Living and Future Outlook

While a majority of males (74.6%) and females (67.8%), supported the idea of national service, more males marginally supported it by 6.8

percentage points (Table 34). Consequently, while a minority of males (19.6%) and females (25.7%) opposed the idea of national service, more females marginally opposed it by 6.1 percentage points.

**Table 34. National Service by Gender(%)**

Response	Male	Female
Strongly Disagree	8.4	13.9
Disagree	11.2	11.8
Neutral	5.8	6.4
Agree	30.4	29.8
Strongly Agree	44.2	38.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>439</b>

The breakdown by race/ethnicity also revealed that a varying majority across all groups supported national service (Table 35) but this support was greatest among Mixed (74.3%), Afro Trinidadians (65.4%), Indo Trinidadians (64.8%) and Douglas (64.3%). For the three latter groups however, we cannot exactly say that it is an overwhelming majority although it is a majority all the same. Conversely, a varying

minority across all groups opposed the idea of national service, which was greatest among Indo Trinidadians (27.6%), followed by Douglas (21.4%), and Mixed (20.9%). The promotion of national service therefore as a strategy of youth and national development has to keep in mind pockets of opposition although it does have majority support across all the groups examined here.

**Table 35. National Service by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

Programme	African	Dougl	Indian	Mixed
Strongly Disagree	9.1	14.3	13.6	9.5
Disagree	11.0	7.1	14.0	11.4
Neutral	4.5	14.3	7.8	4.8
Agree	28.7	28.6	29.5	38.1
Strongly Agree	46.7	35.7	35.3	36.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>105</b>

Since national service is aimed particularly at youths, we decided to disaggregate this category in order to probe any possible differences on the subject among youths themselves (Table 36). In this regard, it was found that a majority across all the age cohorts supported the idea of national service which was highest among teenage youths 13-14 (81.7%), followed by those 15-19

(75.8%), 20-24 (70.8%) and 11-12 (65.6%), who showed the lowest level of support. Conversely, the idea was opposed by a minority which was greatest among those 11-12(23.9%), followed by those 20-24 (22.3%), and 15-19 (19.2%) where opposition was the lowest. Notwithstanding this opposition, youths of all ages showed a majority support for the idea of national service.

**Table 36: National Service by Age (%)**

Response	11-12	13-14	15-19	20-24
Strongly Disagree	4.5	8.5	9.3	13.3
Disagree	19.4	9.9	9.9	9.0
Neutral	10.4	0.0	4.9	6.8
Agree	34.3	29.6	26.9	29.6
Strongly Agree	31.3	52.1	48.9	41.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>442</b>

A part from being questioned about national service, respondents were also asked to indicate how crime might be reduced in their communities (Table 37). Among both males and females, the three major strategies identified to help reduce crime were the provision of more jobs, more youth programmes and more skills training in that order. However, 'more youth programmes' was the majority preference

among both males (50.8%) and females (58.2%), although more females preferred it by 7.4 percentage points while more males (52.4%) than females (46.4%) suggested 'more jobs' by 6 percentage points. Getting rid of guns was among the least preferred means of reducing crime being selected by 14.8% females and 13.2% males, respectively.

**Table 37: Crime reduction strategies by Gender(%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
More jobs	52.4*	46.4
More skills training	39.7	39.4
Better schools	7.3	8.1
More youth programmes	50.8	58.2
More micro credit	3.5	4.3
Get rid of guns	13.2	14.8
Other	-	-
Nothing	-	-
Dont know	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>371</b>

\*Question admitted multiple responses so numbers won't add up to 100.

The same basic pattern obtained when examined by race/ethnicity as the same major strategies dominated across all the groups identified with some variation (Table 38). Youth programmes were also the majority preference across all groups led by the Mixed (57%), followed by Indo Trinidadians (56.9%), Douglas (55.8%) and Afro Trinidadians (52.1%). 'More jobs' however was a majority preference only among Afro Trinidadians (56.7%) followed by smaller percentages for Indo Trinidadians (44.1%), Mixed (39.2%) and Douglas (27.9%) among whom it was least preferred. On the other hand, with regard to more skills training, this was chosen more by Indo Trinidadians (42.1%), followed closely by the Mixed (39.2%),

Afro Trinidadians (38.2%) and Douglas (37.2%). Therefore, while three crime reduction strategies stood out (youth programmes, more employment and more skills training), there was still some measure of variation within and across the various groups. Interestingly, a varying minority across all groups identified the removal of guns as a strategy which was largest among Douglas (27.9%) followed by Indo Trinidadians (14.4%), Afro Trinidadians (13.6%) and Mixed (6.8%). Based on this finding, calls for a gun amnesty might do very little to resolve the more fundamental social problems facing these communities since their removal is not seen as a major panacea to deal with the problem of crime.



**Table 38: Crime Reduction Strategies by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
More jobs	56.7	27.9	44.1	39.2
More skills training	38.8	37.2	42.1	39.2
Better schools	7.8	7.0	8.7	3.8
More youth programmes	52.1	55.8	56.9	57.0
More micro credit	4.3	4.7	2.6	5.1
Get rid of guns	13.6	27.9	14.4	8.9
Other	---	---	---	---
Nothing	---	---	---	---
Dont know	---	---	---	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>79</b>

In this context of crime, our respondents were asked to indicate who they felt was the most

powerful in their community as well as their own capacity to influence things therein (Tables 39-42).

**Table 39: Most Power in Community by Gender(%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Politician	25.4	21.9
Drug lord	15.9	21.0
Police	26.9	26.0
Priest	2.3	4.7
Business people	19.2	15.0
Other	25.4	25.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>319</b>

For males, a varying minority identified the police (26.9%), closely followed by politicians (25.4%) and Others (25.4%) as exercising the most power in the community (Table 39). Those seen as exercising the least power were business people (19.2%), drug lords (15.9%) and priests (2.3%). Among females, the police (26%), Others(25.4%) and politicians (25.4%) were also

identified by a minority as having the most power but unlike males, slightly more females (21%) assigned a powerful role to drug lords by a marginal 5.1 percentage points. Those see as having the least power in the community among females were business people (15%) and priests (4.7%).

**Table 40: Most Power in Community by Race/Ethnicity(%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Politician	24.2	16.7	24.6	23.7
Drug lord	19.9	23.8	15.7	12.9
Police	23.6	28.6	28.3	28.0
Priest	2.8	7.1	3.1	5.4
Business people	18.5	4.8	19.4	14.0
Other	27.5	26.2	22.5	28.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>93</b>

The breakdown by race/ethnicity revealed the same basic patterns across all groups although with some variation (Table 40). Firstly, except among Douglas (16.75), Others, politicians and the police were identified by a slightly greater minority ranging from 22.5% to 28.6% as having the most power in the community. Secondly, while drug lords, business people and priests were generally seen as having the least influence within the community, we note that for Douglas, 23.8% saw drug lords as wielding more influence compared to 19.9% among Afro Trinidadians, 15.7% among Indo Trinidadians and 12.9% among the Mixed. And with respect to businessmen, slightly more Indo Trinidadians

(19.4%) and Afro Trinidadians (18.5%) saw them as wielding power in the community compared to 14% of the Mixed and 4.8% of Douglas. Variations notwithstanding, politicians and the police together with 'Others' have been identified as the major power brokers in the hot spot communities. Drug lords do not figure as prominently as might have been expected.

As regards their own capacity to influence their community and make it a better place to live, a majority of both males (78%) and females (72.9%) believe that they can while a minority (22% vs 27.1%) was less optimistic (Table 41).

**Table 41: Influence in Community by Gender(%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Alot	37.0	34.9
Some	41.0	38.0
Not very much	13.5	19.8
None	8.5	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>481</b>

The breakdown by race/ethnicity also revealed that a large albeit varying majority were positive that they can help make things better in their community which was greatest among Douglas (82.8%) followed by Afro Trinidadians (74.7%), Indo Trinidadians (77.2%) and Mixed (71.4%). Conversely, a varying minority across all groups

was more pessimistic which was led by the Mixed (28.5%) followed by Afro Trinidadians (25.3%), Indo Trinidadians (22.8%) and Douglas (17.3%) who were the most pessimistic about making a difference in the improvement of their community (Table 42).

**Table 42: Influence in Community by Race/Ethnicity(%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougl</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Alot	34.3	41.4	37.7	33.9
Some	40.4	41.4	39.5	37.5
Not very much	16.8	12.1	14.6	21.4
None	8.5	5.2	8.2	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>112</b>

Given the socio economic challenges with which these communities are associated, questions were also asked about their self rated standard of living, future outlook as well as their views on moving out. With respect to their standard of living, contrary to what might have been

expected given the perceived realities, a varying majority among males (66.9%), females (70.3%) (Table 43) and the various race/ethnic groups (Table 44) expressed satisfaction with their present standard of living.

**Table 43: Satisfaction with standard of living by Gender (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Very dissatisfied	7.1	4.6
Dissatisfied	16.1	15.4
Neither	9.9	10.2
Satisfied	52.8	54.4
Very satisfied	14.1	15.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>482</b>

In terms of race/ethnicity, while a majority among the Mixed (75.2%), Indo Trinidadians (74.3%), Afro Trinidadians (63.4%) and Douglas (59.3%) in that order were satisfied with their present standard of living, we note that more of the Mixed and Indo Trinidadians were satisfied than Afro Trinidadians and Douglas

by some 12 to 15 percentage points (Table 44). Invariably while a minority across all groups were dissatisfied with their standard of living, this dissatisfaction was greatest among Afro Trinidadians (27.3%), Douglas (27.1%) compared to Indo Trinidadians (15%) and Mixed (13.2%) where there was least dissatisfaction. While

it is not clear from this study whether this greater measure of dissatisfaction among these groups could be at the root of certain disruptive behaviours in their communities, we surmise

that it may serve to increase their predisposition to risky behaviour that brings them into conflict with the law.

**Table 44: Satisfaction with standard of living, by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougl</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Very dissatisfied	8.3	10.2	1.8	3.5
Dissatisfied	19.0	16.9	13.2	9.7
Neither	9.3	13.6	10.4	11.5
Satisfied	53.1	40.7	54.3	58.4
Very satisfied	10.3	18.6	20.4	16.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>113</b>

**Table 45: Satisfaction with standard of living, by Age**

<b>Response</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>13-14</b>	<b>15-19</b>	<b>20-24</b>
Very dissatisfied	3.0	11.4	6.7	8.8
Dissatisfied	6.0	6.8	10.9	22.1
Neither	10.4	1.4	10.4	12.7
Satisfied	64.2	73.0	53.9	47.6
Very satisfied	16.4	17.6	18.1	8.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>456</b>

Invariably, a varying minority across all youths expressed dissatisfaction with their standard of living (Table 45). The greatest level of dissatisfaction existed among those 20-24 (30.9%), followed by those 15-19 (17.6%), 13-14 (7.8%) and 11-12 (9%). When broken down by age, it was found that a majority across all age cohorts were satisfied with their standard of living, which was highest among those 11-12 (80.6%) followed by those 13-14(80.6%), 15-19(72%) and 20-24 (56.4%) who were among the least satisfied. Put differently, the figures suggest that satisfaction with their standard of living was inversely related with age, which meant that the older youths were less satisfied while younger youths were more satisfied. Invariably, a varying minority across all youths expressed dissatisfaction with their standard of living. The

greatest level of dissatisfaction existed among those 20-24 (30.9%), followed by those 15-19 (17.6%), 13-14 (7.8%) and 11-12 (9%).

In order to get a sense of their outlook on the future, respondents were asked to indicate whether their standard of living would get better, remain the same or get worse in the next ten years. In this regard, it was found that a large and varying majority among females (77.3%), males (74%), Afro Trinidadians (78.5%), Mixed (77%), Indians (71.4%) and Douglas (69.5%) think that their present standard of living would get better over the next ten years (Tables 46, 47). On the negative score, only a small and varying minority among males (14%), females (4.5%), Douglas (16.9%), Indo Trinidadians (13.1%), Mixed (11.5%) and Afro Trinidadians (10.7%)

who were the least pessimistic in thinking that it would get worse. Since a greater minority of Afro Trinidadians appear dissatisfied with their

present standard of living, it is encouraging that a large majority (78.5%) remains optimistic about their future.

**Table 46: Future Outlook by Gender (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Get better	74.0	77.3
Remain same	7.3	8.6
Get worse	14.0	9.6
Dont know	4.7	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>489</b>

**Table 47: Future Outlook by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Get better	78.5	69.5	71.4	77.0
Remain same	5.8	6.8	11.0	8.0
Get worse	10.7	16.9	13.1	11.5
Dont know	5.0	6.8	4.6	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>113</b>

The age breakdown showed that a varying majority across all the age cohorts were optimistic towards the future as they think that their standard of living will get better (Table 48). However, a greater proportion of those in the 13-14 (81.1%) and 15-19 (80.4%) age cohorts were

so oriented compared to those 20-24 (73.9%) and 11-12 (70.6%) by 8 to 13 percentage points. The youngest and oldest age cohorts among youths therefore, appear to be not as optimistic towards the future.

**Table 48: Future Outlook, by Age (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Get better	70.6	81.1	80.4	73.9
Remain same	13.2	6.8	3.6	7.3
Get worse	5.9	9.5	11.3	14.2
Dont know	10.3	2.7	4.6	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>456</b>

However, although a majority across gender and race/ethnicity expressed satisfaction with their present standard of living and were optimistic towards the future, it was interesting to find that a majority would move out their community if they get the opportunity to do so. In terms of gender, females were more inclined to move out as a majority or 60.7% expressed this preference compared to males (48.4%) by 12.3 percentage points (Table 49). The finding was also statistically significant at the .05 level

of significance. Alternately, more males or 46.1% were inclined to stay in their communities compared to 33.5% of females by a margin of 12.6 percentage points. We can only speculate as to the reasons for this gender difference which might be due to a host of factors. For instance, it could mean that males identify more strongly with their community; that they cannot leave out of fear of being attacked by rivals, or out fear of losing the particular rewards, benefits and protection that their community affords them.

**Table 49: Move out Community by Gender (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Move out	48.4	60.7
Stay	46.1	33.5
Not sure	5.5	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>489</b>

However, no substantive difference was found by race/ethnicity in relation to moving out the community as a majority across all groups expressed this desire (Table 50), which was led

by Afro-Trinidadians (56.7%) followed by Indo Trinidadians (53.7%), Douglas (50.8%) and Mixed (50.4%).

**Table 50: Move out Community by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Move out	56.7	50.8	53.7	50.4
Stay	38.2	42.4	39.6	44.2
Not sure	5.2	6.8	6.7	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>113</b>

The examination by age revealed three major findings (Table 51). Firstly, except among those 11-12 (45.6%), a small to moderate majority among those 13-14 (54.1%), 15-19 (57.7%) and 20-24 (62.1%) expressed a willingness to move out the community. Secondly, the proportion of those willing to move out increased progressively the older the age group. Thirdly, the youngest group (11-12) was less inclined to move out (45.6%) while the oldest group

(20-24%) was more inclined to do so by some 16 percentage points. Fourthly, the corollary of these findings is that a varying minority across all age groups expressed a preference to stay in the community which was led by those 11-12 (48.5%), followed by those 13-14 (40.5%), 15-19 (35.6%) and 20-24(32.8%). The variations on this question should help confirm the view that all youths are not the same and strategies for change need to be mindful of these differences.

**Table 51. Move out of Community, by Age (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>13-14</b>	<b>15-19</b>	<b>20-24</b>
Move out	45.6	54.1	57.7	62.1
Stay	48.5	40.5	35.6	32.8
Not sure	5.9	5.4	6.7	5.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>464</b>

**Music, Aggression and Crime**

In order to explain the incidence of violence and aggression among contemporary youth, there has been a contested view or assertion that the music that they listen to might have a role to play in their behaviours with the three major musical culprits often identified being: dancehall, hip hop and soca music. In order to probe this perspective, respondents were first asked to indicate the various forms of music that they listened to; secondly, indicate the two forms which they preferred the most and thirdly, whether they felt that the music they listened to made them aggressive or not. With respect to one and two, it should be noted that the question was not open ended as the respondents were

provided with a list of seven musical forms from which to choose. In this regard, we found that across both hotspots and non-hotspots, there were four major musical forms (hip hop, rhythm and blues, dancehall and soca) which were listened to by a varying majority between 51.1% and 69% in both areas while the other three (calypso, chutney and Bollywood) were listened to by a varying minority between 14.1% and 36.3% (Table 52). Of the four musical forms listened to the most, this was led by dancehall (69%), followed by soca (66.2%), hip hop (65.7%) and rhythm and blues (51.1%) in hotspots, while in non-hotspots, the corresponding order was: hip hop(66.2%), soca (64.1%), dancehall (62.6%), and rhythm and blues (57.6%).

**Table 52: Musical Preferences by Area (%)**

<b>Music</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Hip Hop	65.7*	66.2
Rhythm and Blues	51.1	57.6
Dancehall	69.0	62.6
Soca	66.2	64.1
Calypso	36.3	30.3
Chutney	26.6	26.3
Bollywood	14.1	15.7
Other	28.4	34.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

\*Question admitted multiple responses so percentages won't add up to 100.

Of the musical forms they preferred the most, it is noted that across both hotspots and non-hotspots, it was a minority, varying between

26.4% and 45.3%, who identified either hip hop, rhythm and blues, or dance hall among their top two musical forms (Table 53). In the case

of hotspots, this was led by dancehall (45.3%) followed by hip hop (36.8%), soca (33.6%) and rhythm and blues (26.4%) while in non-hotspots it was led by hip hop (40.5%), dancehall (36.5%), soca (31.5%) and rhythm and blues (28.5%). While they may be ordered or positioned differently as the top musical preferences, across both hotspots and non-hotspots, both hip hop and dance hall were the two most popular

forms of music preferred by youths in these areas. Moreover, since the same four and the same two musical forms are predominant across both hotspots and non-hotspots in spite of the numerical variations, it does not readily provide support for the view that tries to associate music causally with particular behaviours since it means that we should expect to find more violence in non-hotspots than what presently obtains.

**Table 53: Music Preferred Most by Area (%)**

Music	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Hip Hop	36.8	40.5
Rhythm and Blues	26.4	28.5
Dancehall	45.3	36.5
Soca	33.6	31.5
Calypso	5.4	3.0
Chutney	7.3	10.5
Bollywood	3.4	3.0
Other	23.6	30.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

To probe the perceived, supposed or theorized link between music and aggression, respondents were further asked to give their own view. In this regard, almost the same majority across hot spots (70.1%) and non hot spots (70.5%) disagreed that music made them aggressive “in any way” (Table 54). It is interesting however that a minority, amounting to 27.1% in hotspots and 26.5% in non-hotspots, agreed that it did.

We may be left to wonder therefore whether it is this minority who might be involved in violent behaviours in these areas, particularly the hotspots. The self reported data however provided no overwhelming support for the dominant view that tries to explain away youth aggression in terms of popular music or popular musical preferences.

**Table 54: Music and Aggression (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Strongly Agree	6.5	7.0
Agree	20.6	19.5
Not sure	2.1	2.0
Disagree	43.6	48.0
Strongly Disagree	26.5	22.5
Missing	0.5	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>



### Music, Aggression, Crime and Gender

The breakdown by gender showed the same general patterns as it relates to the top four major musical preferences (Hip Hop, Rhythm and Blues, Dancehall and Soca) and the three minor musical preferences (Calypso, Chutney and Bollywood) among males and females although there was variation across both in relation to both the order and frequency of the particular musical forms (Table 55). Among males for instance, the top four musical forms were led by Hip Hop (75.2%), followed by Dancehall (70%), Soca (68%) and Rhythm and Blues (47.8%) while

among females, the order was almost reversed as it was led by Dancehall (65.2%), followed by Soca (63.4%), Rhythm and Blues (57.2%) and Hip Hop (56.2%). In relation to the percentages, while 75.2% of males listened to Hip Hop, the figure was 56.2% among females, a difference of 19 percentage points. In relation to Dancehall and Soca the difference between males and females was 4.8% and 4.6% in favour of males which was very marginal. Of the other top four major musical forms, more females listened to Rhythm and Blues (56.2%) than men (47.8%) by some 9.4 percentage points.

**Table 55: Musical Preferences by Gender (%)**

Music	Male	Female
Hip Hop	75.2	56.2
Rhythm and Blues	47.8	57.2
Dancehall	70.0	65.2
Soca	68.0	63.4
Calypso	38.4	31.9
Chutney	27.0	25.9
Bollywood	14.2	14.6
Other	29.6	29.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>486</b>

When asked to identify their top two musical forms (Table 56), among males these were Dancehall (46.4%) and Hip-hop (46.2%) which had more or less the same percentage preference, while among females, these were also led by Dancehall (40.3%) followed by Rhythm and

Blues and Soca which both had same percentage preference of 35%. While we note that these top musical forms were identified by a minority among both groups, we also note that Dancehall is as equally liked among both males and females.

**Table 56: Top Musical Forms by Gender (%)**

<b>Music</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Hip Hop	46.2	28.4
Rhythm and Blues	19.1	35.0
Dancehall	46.4	40.3
Soca	31.4	35.0
Calypso	4.5	5.3
Chutney	8.4	7.4
Bollywood	1.4	5.3
Other		
<b>Total</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>489</b>

**Table 57. Music and Aggression, by Gender (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Strongly Agree	6.5	6.8
Agree	22.7	18.2
Not sure	3.2	1.0
Disagree	26.4	25.4
Strongly Disagree	41.2	48.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>484</b>

The notion that music made them aggressive was rejected by a varying majority of both males (67.6%) and females (74%) (Table 57). A minority however agreed that music made them aggressive which amounted to almost one third among males (29.2%) and one quarter among females (25%). If this self reported view is anything to go by therefore, there seems to be very little support for the view that posits a relationship between music and aggressive or violent behaviour.

#### **Music, Aggression, Race/Ethnicity**

The breakdown by race/ethnicity reflected the same general trends found for the findings by area and gender although there were variations.

For instance, while the four different ethnic groups had the same four major musical preferences (hip hop, rhythm and blues, dancehall, and soca), the extent of this preference and their order or ranking varied (Table 58). For instance, while Dancehall led the top four musical forms across three of the groups, it was marginally greater among Afro-Trinidadians (71.6%), followed by Douglas (66.1%), and Mixed (63.7%). Among Indo Trinidadians, Dancehall was the second major musical preference with 62.1% percentage points although very little separated it statistically from Hip hop (61.7%) and Soca (63.2%) which led the top four musical forms within this group

**Table 58: Musical Preferences by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Music</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Hip Hop	68.5	54.2	61.7	69.9
Rhythm and Blues	51.9	57.6	50.5	54.9
Dancehall	71.7	66.1	62.1	63.7
Soca	67.3	61.0	63.2	68.1
Calypso	36.5	35.6	32.9	33.6
Chutney	14.4	23.7	52.7	18.6
Bollywood	6.4	11.9	32.9	7.1
Other	28.5	49.2	28.2	31.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>113</b>

In relation to the top two musical forms, except among Douglas, Dancehall and Hip-hop were the top two musical forms identified among Afro-Trinidadians (49% vs 41.7%), Mixed (38.1% vs 44.2%) and Indo-Trinidadians (34.6% vs 31.4%) although the percentages expressing

this preference varied. However, while it was Dancehall and Rhythm and Blues which were among the top two among musical forms among Douglas, Dancehall still led the top two with 44.1% followed by Rhythm and Blues with 32.2% (Table 59).

**Table 59: Top Musical Forms by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Music</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Hip Hop	41.7	23.7	31.4	44.2
Rhythm and Blues	26.0	32.2	24.4	33.6
Dancehall	49.0	44.1	34.6	38.1
Soca	35.7	30.5	30.7	30.1
Calypso	6.2	5.1	2.8	2.7
Chutney	1.2	3.4	23.3	2.7
Bollywood	0.0	0.0	11.7	0.0
Other	23.6	37.3	23.3	27.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>113</b>

**Table 60: Music and Aggression by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Dougla</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
Strongly Agree	7.6	10.2	5.0	7.1
Agree	22.4	23.7	16.1	20.4
Not sure	2.0	1.7	1.4	2.7
Disagree	22.6	22.0	30.4	31.0
Strongly Disagree	45.4	42.4	47.1	38.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>113</b>

On the question of music making them aggressive, a two thirds majority across all groups rejected this idea (Table 60). This was led by the Mixed (69.1%), followed closely by Afro-Trinidadians (68%), Indo-Trinidadian (67.5) and

Douglas (64.4). Conversely, a varying minority across all groups supported this idea which was led by Douglas (33.9%), followed by Afro-Trinidadians (30%), Mixed (27.5%) and Indo-Trinidadians (21.1%).

# APPENDIX 1- DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The demographics of the sample refer particularly to its age, gender, racial and ethnic characteristics across both hotspots and non-hotspot areas. In relation to age, given the definition and focus on youth in this study, the sample across both hot spots (42%) and non hot

spots (40.5%) was dominated by those 18 to 24 (Table 1). In the hot spots, these were followed by those 25-29(28.8%), 13-17 (20.8%) and 11 years old (8.5%) while in the non-hotspots, these were also followed by the 25-29(29.5%), 13-17(24.5%) and those 11 years old (5.5%).

**Table 1: Composition of Sample by Age (%)**

Age	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
11	8.5	5.5
13-17	20.8	24.5
18-24	42.0	40.5
25-29	28.7	29.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

In relation to gender, males represented a bare majority in both hotspots (50.9%) and non-

hotspots (51.0%) slightly outnumbering women by 2% in both areas (Table 2).

**Table 2: Composition of Sample by Gender (%)**

Gender	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Male	50.9	51.0
Female	48.9	49.0
Missing	0.3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

In relation to race/ethnicity, in the hotspots, persons of African descent represented the majority or 55.1% followed by a varying

minority of Indo-Trinidadians (27.1%), mixed (8.1%), Douglas (5.3%), Chinese (0.4%) and Whites (0.3%) (Table 3). In the non-hotspots

however, Indo-Trinidadians were marginally the majority group (33%), followed by Afro

Trinidadians (31.5%), Mixed (24%) and Douglas (8.5%).

**Table 3: Composition of Sample by Race/Ethnicity (%)**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
African	55.1	31.5
Chinese	0.4	0
Douglas	5.3	8.5
Indian	27.1	33.0
Mixed	8.1	24.0
White	0.3	1.0
Other	3.3	2.0
Missing	0.5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

In terms of religion, Christianity is by far dominant in both hotspots (72.4%) and non-

hotspots (66%) (Table 4) followed by minorities of Hindus (9.8% vs 11%), Muslims (6.3% vs 8.5%).

**Table 4. Composition of Sample, by Religion (%)**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Christian	72.4	66.0
Hindu	9.8	11.0
Muslim	6.3	8.5
Other	4.8	3.5
None	6.0	10.0
Not stated	0.8	1.0
Missing cases	0.3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

In short, while both hotspots and non-hotspots are dominated by Christians and males, as regards race/ethnicity, hotspots are dominated

by persons of African descent while in non-hotspots persons of Indian descent are the majority group although by a slim 1.5% margin.

## APPENDIX 2-SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

In order to examine the possible factors that predispose youths to engage in risky behaviour or practices, a range of questions were asked in relation to the following: family structure, education and training, economic activity, as well as crime and security.

### Family Background

In examining family structure, the survey focused particularly on family size, parental or family structure and the issue of parental migration. In terms of size, the average total family size in hot spots (38.2) was slightly greater than in non hotspot areas (35.3) by 2.9 points (Table 5). The average number of brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins across both areas also showed marginal variation. If anything, families in hot spots had a marginally greater number of brothers (2.6 vs 2.1), sisters (2.6 vs 2.5), and cousins (20.3 vs 18.1) compared to non hotspots, and the same number of aunts (6.1) but marginally less uncles (5.7 vs 6.1). The issue of family size can be considered important since more family members or an extended family can potentially serve as an important

support system or resource for at risk youths although all depends on the quality of those family relationships, the geographical location of those family members, their own socio-economic situation which would include their finances and whether they are incarcerated or not. However, while the data suggests the existence of a possible extended family system built around uncles, aunts and cousins, we note that the primary family consisting of brothers and sisters is relatively small in both areas although fractionally larger in non hotspots. Unfortunately, we were unable to tell from the data the extent to which this extended family system was working or not. The existing socio-economic challenges in these communities suggest that this extended family structure may have broken down or is under siege.

**Table 5: Average family size, by Area (%)**

Person	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Brothers	2.6	2.1
Sisters	2.6	2.5
Aunts	6.1	6.1
Uncles	5.7	6.1
Cousins	20.3	18.1
Other	3.5	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>35.3</b>

In terms of parental structure, respondents were asked to state the person(s) with whom they were currently living. In this regard, it was found that hotspot areas had a greater preponderance of single parent families (44.3%) compared to non-hotspot areas (35%) although the latter might also be considered relatively high (Table 6). On the other hand, non-hotspots had a greater number of nuclear type families

consisting of both father and mother (40%) compared to 26.8% in hotspots. In both areas however, around a quarter in both hotspots (24.1%) and non-hotspots (23%) lived with some other relative which included grandparents, mothers in law and aunts. The dominance of single parent families in hotspots and nuclear type families in non-hotspots was one of the prominent differences between the two areas.

**Table 6. Family structure by Area (%)**

Person	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Father	8.8	6.0
Mother	35.5	29.0
Father and Mother	26.8	40.0
Guardian	1.1	0.5
Step father	0	0
Step mother	0	0
Other relative	24.1	23.0
No response	0.1	0
Not applicable	3.5	1.5
Missing	0.1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

As it relates to parental migration, this was found to be relatively low as only 7.6% in hotspots indicated that they had parents living abroad although this was still 4.1% more than the corresponding figure in non-hotspots where it was 3.5% (Table 7). The reported extent of

parental migration therefore based on this survey and its potential impact on the family does not suggest that it is a major causal or contributory factor to the problems confronted by youths in general in these areas.

**Table 7. Parental Migration by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	7.6(61)	3.5(7)
No	92.1	96.5
Dont know	0.3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>



## Education and Training

The examination of education and training focused on the following areas: highest level of education attained, highest examination passed, number of school subjects passed, school attendance, continuing studies, views of school or the learning process, involvement in skills training programmes and the type of programmes pursued.

In relation to the highest level of education reached or attained, there were marginal differences between hotspots and non-hotspots in relation to primary (30.9% vs 27.5%), secondary (57% vs 50.5%) and vocational schooling (5.1% vs 6%) varying between 0.9% and 6.5% percentage points (Table 8). However, with respect to university education, the figure was 14% in non-hotspots compared to 2.9% in hotspots, a difference of 11.1 percentage points.

**Table 8: Highest Level of Education by Area (%)**

Education	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
None	2.4	1.5
Primary	30.9	27.5
Secondary	57.0	50.5
Vocational	5.1	6.0
University	2.9	14.0
Other	0.6	0.5
Missing	1.1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

This greater level of educational attainment was also evident in the highest examination passed as well as the number of passes obtained at the final examinations taken at secondary school. At the lowest rung of educational attainment, while 16.6% in hotspots never passed any examination, the corresponding figure for non-hotspots was 9.5%, a difference of -7.1% (Table 9). In both areas however, the highest examinations at which most individuals passed were concentrated at the primary level through CEE/SEA and at the secondary level through CXC (now CSEC)/O'levels (Table 9). In both areas, the proportions passing at these

examinations were around one third with relatively marginal differences between hot and non hotspots. In this regard, at the level of CEE/SEA, the hotspot figure was 37.3% compared to the non-hotspot figure of 31.5%, a difference of +5.8% while at the level of CXC Gen./O'level, the figure was 32.5% vs 30.5%, a difference of +2%. As it relates to Certificates, Diplomas, Associate and Undergraduate degrees, while more persons in the non spot areas had passed examinations at these levels compared to hot spot areas, the differences were still marginal varying between 0.7% and 4.2%.

**Table 9: Highest Examination Passed by Area (%)**

Examination	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
None	16.6	9.5
CEE/SEA	37.3	31.5
School Leaving	0.8	0
CXC Basic	2.5	5.0
CXC Gen/O'Level	32.5	30.5
CAPE/A'Level	1.9	2.5
Certificate	3.3	4.0
Diploma	0.9	4.5
Associate Degree	0.4	4.0
Undergraduate	1.3	5.5-
Other	1.6	3.0
Not stated	1.1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

The difference in educational performance however was not as marginal with respect to the attainment of full certificates (passing 5 or more subjects) at the secondary school examinations

(Table 10). In this regard, those attaining full certificates in non-hotspots was 48% compared to 36% in hotspots, a difference of 12 percentage points.

**Table 10: Number of subjects passed by Area (%)**

	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
One	5.9 (17)	6.7 (5)
Two	17.5 (50)	16.0 (12)
Three	24.1 (69)	17.3(13)
Four	16.4 (47)	12.0(9)
Five+	36.0 (103)	48.0(36)
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>75</b>

### School Attendance

Variations were also found between hot spots and non hot spots in relation to school attendance, continuing studies and views about school as well as involvement in skills training programmes. With respect to school attendance,

while 37% in hot spots were currently attending school, this was 6.5% less than the corresponding figure of 43.5% for non-hotspots (Table 11). A majority in both areas were not attending school but this amounted to 63% in hotspots and 56.5% in non-hotspots.

**Table 11 Currently attending school by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	37	43.5
No	63	56.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

A host of reasons were cited for not attending school across both areas but one of the most statistically significant reason cited had to do with working away from home (Table 12). However, this was cited by more persons in non-hotspots (46%) than those in hot spots (33.6%)

by a margin of 13 percentage points. The other major reason cited dealt with those who felt that they had passed the age for going school which was cited by 42.5% in hotspots and 35.7% in non-hotspots.

**Table 12: Reasons not attending school by Area (%)**

Reason(s)	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Illness	1.0	0.8
Work outside home	33.6	46.0
Baby sitting	2.7	4.0
Home Probs	0.9	0
Financial probs	3.4	0
Pregnant	3.4	0.8
Apprenticeship	0.5	0
Transport	0.2	0
Bored/Fed up of School	1.7	1.6
School teaches nothing useful	0.2	0
Past school age	42.5	35.7
Other	9.4	10.3
Refused	0.3	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

Of those who were currently attending school, a large majority did so on a full time basis in both hotspots (85%) and non-hotspots (80.5%) although this was slightly greater in the former

by 5 percentage points (Table 13). Only a small minority were attending school on a part time basis but this was 4.5% greater in non-hotspots (19.5%) compared to hotspots (15%).

**Table 13: Nature of school attendance by Area (%)**

Attendance	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Full time	85.0	80.5
Part time	15.0	19.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 14. Type of school attending by Area (%)**

School Type	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Primary(Private)	2.7	3.6
Primary(Govt)	21.3	9.5
Secondary(Private)	6.5	6.0
Secondary (Govt)	45.0	40.5
Trade/Vocational	5.8	4.8
Commercial/Sec.	1.7	1.2
University(Local)	12.0	23.8
University (Foreign)	1.4	4.8
Other	2.1	3.6
Refused	0.3	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>113</b>

Of those who were currently attending school in the hotspots, the majority was attending secondary school (51.5%) followed by 24% for primary school when private and secondary schools were combined (Table 14). This was greater than the corresponding figures of 46.5% and 13.1% for non-hotspot areas. While the difference is extremely marginal, it is interesting to note that the proportion attending private secondary schools in hotspots was 6.5% compared to 6% in non-hotspots which could help confirm that there is a minority within these areas who have the financial means and motivation to pay for private schooling. While many have touted trade/vocational education as an important career option or choice in an industrialized economy, only a very small

minority in hotspots (5.8%) and non-hotspots (4.8%) seem to be pursuing this option. In relation to higher education however, hotspots were found to be lagging behind for while 13.5% were attending University (locally and abroad combined), the corresponding figures for non hot spots was 28.6%, a difference of 15.1 percentage points. In other words, persons in non-hotspots were two times more likely to be pursuing University education than those in hot spot areas which has significant implications for their occupational mobility, social mobility and general life chances. In addition, while a minority in both areas were pursuing continuing education, the figure was slightly greater in non hot spots (23.5%) than hot spots (15.6%) by some 7.9 percentage points (Table 15).

**Table 15: Continuing Education by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	15.6	23.5
No	84.4	76.0
Missing	0	0.5(1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

### Skills Training

Over the past 25 years, successive governments in Trinidad and Tobago have introduced various skill training programmes (see Table 19) as part of public policy strategies to help deal with some of the socio-economic problems faced by youths, particularly in relation to unemployment and crime. This study sought to ascertain the level of involvement or non involvement in these programmes as a measure of their popularity, reach and relevance. In this regard, there were four major findings. Firstly, when asked whether they ever attended a skills training programme, a minority in both hotspots (37%) and non-hotspots (21%) indicated that they had

done so which was greater in the hot spots by some 16 percentage points (Table 16). Secondly, a varying majority in both hotspots (62.8%) and non-hotspots (78.5%) never attended a skills training programme. Thirdly, when asked whether they were currently attending such a programme (Table 17), a small minority responded affirmatively in both the hotspots (16.6%) and non-hotspots (23.8%). But while the figure for the hotspots (16.6%) was not only 7.2% less than that for the non-hotspots (23.8%), it was almost half the figure that previously took part in such training programmes (37%) by some 20.4 percentage points (see Table 16).

**Table: 16 Ever attended skills programme by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	37.0(296)	21.0 (42)
No	62.8	78.5
Refused to Say/Not stated	0.3	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table: 17 Currently Attending skills programme by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	16.6	23.8
No	83.4	76.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>42</b>

Fourthly, when asked to indicate the reasons for not attending skill training programmes, a majority in both hotspots (77.4%) and non-hotspots (80%) stated that it had to do with the fact that they had completed the programme

(Table 18). A minority however indicated that they had dropped out which amounted to 22.6% in hotspots and 20% in non-hotspots. On these questions therefore, there was little difference between the two areas.

**Table 18: Reasons Not Attending Skills Programme by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Completed programme	77.4	80
Dropped out	22.6	20
Other	0	0
Refused	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>35</b>

Those who were currently attending skill programmes were asked to identify the programme(s) in question (Table 19). In this regard, of the programmes identified only a small and varying minority of persons were involved. In the case of hotspots, the leading programme was YTEPP (36.7%), followed by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC)-14.3%, SERVOL (12.2%) and GAPP (4.1%). In the case of the non-hotspots, the leading programme was also YTEPP (30%) followed by the NESC

(20%) and MuST (10%). However while in both hotspots and non-hotspots participation in skills training programmes remains low, this participation was greater in hotspots in relation to YTEPP, CCC, SERVOL and GAP while in non-hotspots it was greater in NESC (20%) and MuST (10%). The various programmes mounted by Governments over the years thus seem not to be attracting the persons at whom they were targeted the most.

**Table 19: Type of Skills Programme by Area (%)**

Programme	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
YTEPP	36.7	30.0
NESC	6.1	20.0
CCC	14.3	0
SERVOL	12.2	0
HYPE	0	0
LLC	0	0
YAPA	0	0
GAPP	4.1	
MUST	0.5	10.0
OTHER	1.1	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>10</b>

When asked to state why they were not attending these programmes, a wide range of reasons were given (Table 20). In the hotspots, the most statistically prominent reason had to do

with studying (38.2%) and employment (21.1%), while in the non-hotspots, they were also led by studying (38.3%), followed by employment (15.5%) and just not being inclined (12.1%).

**Table 20: Reasons never attended skills programme by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Studying	38.2	38.3
No time	8.0	6.7
Not inclined	6.3	12.1
Employed	21.1	15.5
Planning to	2.2	1.3
DK how to apply	0.6	0.7
Waiting for reply	1.0	1.3
Applied but programme full	0.4	0
Dont like studying	0	0
Extracurricular activities	0.4	0
Children	0.6	0.7
Under aged	2.0	2.0
Disability	6.7	6.7
Financial probs	0.8	1.3
Not interested	1.2	0
Awaiting results	4.1	5.4
Seeking employment	1.8	4.0
Expelled	1.4	0.7
Learned trade informally	0.2	0
Trade school closed	0.2	0
Money too small	0.2	0
Course inadequate	0.2	0
Pregnant	0.8	0
Too old	0.6	0.7
Illiterate	0.2	0
No reason to	0.4	0.7
Took time to relax	---	1.3
Other	---	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>149</b>

## Economic Activity

High levels of unemployment have also been suggested as a major cause of crime in hotspots coupled with poor work attitudes or disinclination to work and dependence on government make shift programmes. To test the validity of these views or assertions, respondents were asked several questions in relation to their involvement in work activities, the type of work, their place of work as well as involvement in certain government programmes.

In relation to employment, there was little variation between hotspots and non-hotspots. For instance, 43.4% of those surveyed in

hotspots indicated that they worked which was basically the same figure in non-hotspots where 43.5% worked (Table 21). In addition, 10.8% in hotspots were also seeking work 1.8% of whom were for the first time compared to 8% in non-hotspots of which 2.5% represented first time job seekers. These figures show thus that not only were hotspot residents working but were also looking for work which are not consistent with any anti-work thesis. Those who did not look for work amounted to 10.1% in hotspots and 8.5% in non-hotspots. In addition, school attendance accounted for 33.4% who did not work in hot spots compared to 38.5% in non-hotspots.

**Table 21: Work related activity in past week by Area (%)**

Activity	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
School full time	33.4	38.5
Worked	43.4	43.5
Had a job, did not work	1.5	1.0
Seeking first job	1.8	2.5
Actively seeking work	9.0	5.5
Did not look for work	10.1(81)	8.5(17)
Do not like work	0.4	0
Other	0.4	0.5
Not stated	0.1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

However, in relation to the small minority of persons who indicated that they did not look for work, we still sought to ascertain the reasons for this (Table 22). Of the various reasons advanced for not looking for work, the more salient in the hotspots included home duties (36.6%), being tired of looking (11%), being a student (8.5%) and not wanting work (8.5%). In the non-hotspots, home duties were cited by 52.9%, some 16.3%

more than hotspots, as the major reason for not looking for work, followed by not wanting to work (17.6%), being disabled (11.8%) and tired of looking (11.8%). Across both areas therefore, the same factors in different degrees seem to be responsible for persons not looking for work, the chief of which is domestic duties, which invariably, would tend to impact women more.



**Table 22. Reasons not looking for work by Area (%)**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Student	8.5	0
Home duties	36.6	52.9
Disabled	2.4	11.8
Did not want work	8.5	17.6
Tired of looking	11.0	11.8
Awaiting results (exams/ interviews)	4.9	0
Illness	4.9	0
Dont know where to look	3.7	5.9
Feel discriminated	1.2	0
Not stated	18.3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>17</b>

When we examine the general findings on this question of work however, the more pertinent issue appears to be not whether youths are working or not but the type of work in which they are engaged (Table 23). In this regard, the survey showed that work in both hotspots (52.7%) and non-hotspots (46.5%) work was

concentrated in what can be considered low status and low paying jobs in craft, equipment handling and elementary occupations. The dominant character of employment should not be surprising given the generally low level of educational attainment that exists in these communities (see Tables 8-10).

**Table 23. Area by Occupation (%)**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Legislators, Senior Officials, Managers	0	0
Professionals	0.9	5.8
Technicians/Associate Professionals	6.8	12.8
Clerks	18.5	20.9
Service workers	20.4	13.9
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishery	0.5	0
Craft and Related workers	20.4	20.9
Plant and Machine Operators/Assemblers	3.6	0
Elementary	28.7	25.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>86</b>

When probed further, no substantial difference in the occupational profile of hotspots and non-hotspot areas was found except for the categories of professional and service workers (Table 23). In the former regard, there were two times more professionals in non-hotspots (18.6%) compared to hotspots (7.7%) while there 6.5% more service workers in hot spots (20.4%) compared to non-hotspots (13.9%). Very little separated hotspots and non-hotspots in relation to the other occupational categories: agriculture/forestry/fishery (0.5% vs 0%); craft and related workers (20.4% vs 20.9%); plant and machine operators/assemblers (3.6% vs 0%) and elementary occupations (28.7% vs 25.6%). If there are any surprises, it is in relation to craft and related workers and elementary workers

where the proportions across both hotspots and non-hotspots were not very far apart.

Given the type of jobs which dominate across both hotspots and non-hotspots, it was not surprising that a large majority in both hotspots (74.9%) and non-hotspots (72.2%) indicated that they worked in 'private enterprise' or the private sector (Table 24). Relatedly, it is plausible to suggest or assume that this private sector is dominated by activities in the informal sector given the predominant character of the jobs involved. In addition, while the second major place of employment involves the State, this amounted to a small minority in both hotspots (15.7%) and non-hotspots (17.8%) which might serve to confound the dominant expectation or belief surrounding the dependence on state employment.

**Table 24: Place of work by Area (%)**

Place of work	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Central and Local Govt	8.0	10.0
State Enterprise	7.7	7.8
Private Enterprise	74.9	72.2
Own Account Worker	3.9	4.4
Unpaid Family Worker	0	0
Paid Family Worker	1.4	1.1
Learner/Apprentice	0.3	0
Other (specify).....	3.9	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 25: Government Programme Employed by Area (%)**

Programme	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
URP	5.3	0
CCC	0	6.3
CEPEP	17.5	6.3
OJT	3.5	12.5
Other	26.3	43.8
None	47.4	31.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>16</b>

Of the small minority who worked directly with the State, we sought to ascertain if they

worked in any of the more established and well known Government work programmes

(Table 25). In this regard, it was found that varying small minorities across both hotspots and non-hotspots were actually employed in any of the programmes in question. In hotspots, these programmes were led by CEPEP (17.5%), followed by URP (5.3%) and OJT(3.5%), while in the non-hotspots, they were led by OJT (12.5%), followed by CCC (6.3%), which had no participants in hotspots, and CEPEP (6.3%)

### Crime and Security

While we recognized the problems with obtaining valid responses in relation to crime and security, the survey still asked several questions in relation to the knowledge of gangs, involvement in gangs, incidence of violence in

and outside of the home, safety at home and in the community as well as the nature of the power structure within it.

The findings revealed some marginal differences between both hotspots and non spots with respect to these issues. In this regard, while they represent a small minority of the sampled population, it was found that the youths of hotspots were likely to know more about gangs (19.8% vs 5.5%), know gang members(16% vs 7.5%) and be charged by the police (10% vs 4.5%). However, at the same time, a majority across both areas ranging from 78.9% to 94.5% expressed no knowledge of gangs, gang members, and were never charged by the police (Tables 26-28).

**Table 26: Knowledge of Gangs by Area (%)**

Programme	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	19.8	5.5
No	78.9	94.5
Refused/Not Stated	1.4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 27: Knowledge of gang members by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	16.0	7.5
No	82.1	90.5
Refused/Not stated	1.8	1.5
Missing	0.1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 28: Ever Charged by Police by Area(%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	10.0	4.5
No	87.6	90.5
Missing	2.4	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

In examining the issue of security further, we did not only ask respondents whether they had witnessed violence but also whether they had experienced it either in the home or the community during the last twelve months. It was found that while the incidence of violence was relatively small in the home and community across both hot spots and non-hotspots, youths in hot spots were slightly more likely to witness violence at home (10.5% vs 6.5%) and the community (38.6% vs 30%) or be

a victim of violence at home (6% vs 1.5%) and in the community (8.1% vs 3%) (Tables 29-33). In addition, the incidence of violence was found to be more frequent in hotspots in both the home and community compared to non hotspots. This was based on the fact that around one third in hotspots (30.9%) reported witnessing violence at home ten or more times in the past year compared to 7.7% in non-hotspots, while in the community it was 29.8% vs 16.7% (Table 34) respectively, who had witnessed violence there over the past year.

**Table 29: Witness violence at home by Area (last 12 mths) (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	10.5	6.5
No	89.5	93.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 30: Frequency of witnessing violence at home (last 12 months)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Once	21.0	23.1
2-5 times	40.7	69.2
6-9 times	7.4	0
10+ times	30.9	7.7
Can't recall	0	0
No response	0.4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 31: Victim of Violence at Home (last 12 mths) (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Yes	6.0	1.5
No	94.0	98.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 32: Witness violence in community (last 12 mths) (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Yes	38.6	30
No	61.1	69.5
Missing	0.3	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 33: Victim of Violence in community (last 12 mths)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Yes	8.1	3.0
No	91.8	97.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 34: Frequency of violence in community (last 12 mths) (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Once	9.7	10.0
2-5 times	42.1	60.0
6-9 times	12.3	6.7
10+ times	29.8	16.7
Can't recall	0.6	0
No response	5.5	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>60</b>

While the data clearly indicate that violence is also a problem in non-hotspots, its incidence and regularity seems marginally much more than in hotspots. With respect to feeling safe, varying majorities across both hotspots and non-hotspots felt safe at home while minorities felt unsafe during both night and day (Tables 35-38). However, slightly more in non-hotspots felt safe at home during the day (91.5% vs 90.3%) and night (80% vs 76.1%) while slightly more in hotspot areas felt unsafe at night (23.8% vs

19.5%). With respect to safety outside, a majority felt safe outside during the day but slightly more felt safe in non-hotspots (81.5%) than hotspots (76.5%) while more in hotspots (23.5%) felt unsafe than those in non-hotspots (18.5%) by 5 percentage points (Table 37). Ironically, more youths in hotspots (52.9%) felt safe at nights than non-hotspots (47%) by 5.9 percentage points while 53% felt unsafe in non-hotspots compared to 46.9% in hotspots, a marginal difference of 5.9 and 6.4 percentage points, respectively (Table 38).

**Table 35: Feel safe at home in Day (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Yes	90.3	91.5
No	9.8	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 36: Feel safe at home at Night (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Yes	76.1	80.0
No	23.8	19.5
Missing	0.1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 37: Feel safe outside in Day (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Yes	76.5	81.5
No	23.5	18.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

**Table 38: Feel safe outside at Night (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Yes	52.9	47.0
No	46.9	53.0
Missing	0.3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

Given the prevalence of criminal elements in these communities, we sought to ascertain the persons who wielded or exercised the most power in them (Table 39). In this regard, we found that a minority in the hotspots identified 'Others' (23.8%) as the major source of power, followed by the police (23.1%), politicians

(19.2%), drug lords(18.1%), business (13%) and priests (2.8%) who exercised the least power. In the non-hotspots, however, politicians (26.6%) were identified as the major source of power followed closely by the police (23.1%) and business (23.1%) then 'Others' (16.2%) and priests (3.5%) who also exercised the least power

as in hot spots. It is interesting to note that while only 18.1% identified 'drug lords' as wielding the most power in hotspots, the corresponding figure in non-hotspots was 7.5% a difference of 10.6 percentage points. Put differently, drug

lords exercise more power in hotspots than non-hotspots which is consistent with public and police knowledge although it might be much more than suggested by the survey.

**Table 39: People with most power in community by Area (%)**

Person	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Politician	19.2	26.6
Drug lord	18.1	7.5
Police	23.1	23.1
Priest	2.8	3.5
Business	13.0	23.1
Other	23.8	16.2
DK	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>173</b>

However, in spite of the power exercised by the police, politicians and drug lords in their community, a large majority of youths in hotspots (72.4%) and non-hotspots (82%), still

felt that they can exercise some influence making their community a better place (Table 40) which serves to confound any perception that they are powerless or think that they are powerless.

**Table 40: Personal influence in community by Area (%)**

Status	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Alot	36.1	32.5
Some	36.3	49.5
Not very much	17.3	13.5
None	8.9	3.5
Missing	1.5	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

### Resolving Crime, Standard of Living and Future Outlook

In order to help deal with some of the challenges they face, particularly crime, respondents were asked to suggest their own possible solutions

as well as comment on the historically thorny issue of national service. In addition, given the depressed conditions associated with these communities, they were also asked about

moving out, their self rated standard of living, as well as their outlook on the future.

Firstly, as regards training programmes, very large majorities in both hotspots (93.1%) and non-hotspots (94.5%) agreed with the

suggestion that there should be special training programmes for persons who did not complete secondary school (Table 41). There was no significant difference therefore between hotspots and non-hotspots on this issue.

**Table 41: Special Training Programmes by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Strongly Disagree	1.6	0.5
Disagree	2.0	1.5
Neutral	2.3	2.5
Agree	24.8	30.0
Strongly Agree	68.3	64.5
Missing	1.1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

Secondly, as it relates to national service, we found some marginal variation between hotspots and non spots (Table 42). For instance, while 69.1% in the former supported this idea, 59.5% in the latter did, a difference of 9.6% percentage points. It may be surprising that national service received this level of support in hotspots since doing such service could serve to interrupt, eliminate or threaten involvement in criminal

activity that prevails in these communities. Another positive reading of this finding is that hotspots may not be as hot as certain criminal data may suggest. However, while doing national service found majority support in hotspots and non-hotspots, we note that it was still opposed by 20.5% and 24%, respectively in these areas which could still pose challenges to its implementation or community buy in.

**Table 42: National Service by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Strongly Disagree	10.6	9.0
Disagree	9.8	15.5
Neutral	5.8	5.5
Agree	28.0	29.5
Strongly Agree	41.1	30.0
Missing	4.8	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>



Thirdly, respondents were also asked about possible strategies to help reduce crime in their communities (Table 43). In this regard, while the same three strategies (jobs, youth programmes and skills training) appeared as the major suggestions in both hotspots and non-hotspots, there was some variation in their ordering and the actual level of support. For instance, firstly, while a majority or 54.1% in hotspots identified the provision of more jobs, this was some two times the corresponding figure of 27.3% in non-hotspots. Secondly, while 38.9% called for more skills training in hot spots, the figure was

42.2% in non-hotspots, a marginal difference of 3.3%. Thirdly, while a majority in both hotspots (53.5%) and non-hotspots (59.4%) suggested more youth programmes, the latter figure was marginally more than the former by 5.9%. Put differently, while the major proposed strategies in hotspots to deal with crime are jobs and youth programmes, in the non-hotspots, they are youth programmes and skills training. However, it is interesting to note that only small minorities in both hotspots (13.4%) and non-hotspots (17.2%) suggested the elimination of guns to resolve the problem of crime.

**Table 43: Crime reduction strategies by Area (%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
More jobs	54.1	27.3
More skills training	38.9	42.2
Better schools	8.0	6.3
More youth programmes	53.4	59.4
More micro credit	2.0	0
Get rid of guns	13.4	17.2
Other	0	0
Nothing	0	0
Dont know	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>128</b>

Given the nature of some of the socio-economic challenges that they face, it was not surprising that near two thirds or 58.9% of youths in hotspots were favourable to the idea of moving out their community if they had the opportunity

to do so compared to 37% in non-hotspots, a sizeable difference of around 22 percentage points (Table 44). The corollary of this was that only a minority or 35.5% preferred not to move out compared to 57% in non-hotspots.

**Table 44: Move out community by Area(%)**

Response	Hotspot	Non-Hotspot
Move out	58.9	37.0
Not move out	35.5	57.0
Not sure	5.6	5.5
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

With respect to their self rated standard of living, in spite of the challenges that they face, a majority of youths in hotspots or 64.7% still expressed satisfaction with their standard of living although in non-hotspots the figure was 78.5%, a difference of 13.8 percentage points

(Table 45). However, while a minority or 23.4% in hot spots were dissatisfied with their standard of living, this still was greater than the corresponding figure in non-hotspots (13%) by some 10.4 percentage points.

**Table 45: Satisfaction with standard of living by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Very dissatisfied	7.0	1.0
Dissatisfied	16.4	12.0
Neither	10.8	6.5
Satisfied	52.3	56.0
Very Satisfied	12.4	23.5
Missing	1.3	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

Notwithstanding the problems that they face, a large majority in hotspots or 75.9% believe that their standard of living will get better over the next decade which was fractionally more than the corresponding figure in non-hotspots (74.5%) by 1.4 percentage points (Table 46). While the optimistic outlook towards the future in the hot spots is quite encouraging, this, together with

the high level of self rated satisfaction with their standard of living, does not square with the finding that a significant majority (60%) would move out of their community if they get the opportunity to do so. What this suggests is the existence of tremendous ambivalence and torn communal loyalties in hot spot communities due to challenging socio-economic circumstances.

**Table 46: Future standard of living in 10 years by Area (%)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Hotspot</b>	<b>Non-Hotspot</b>
Get better	75.9	74.5
Remain same	6.9	12.0
Get worse	12.4	9.5
Dont know	4.9	3.5
Missing	0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>200</b>

## APPENDIX 3: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

### A. Key to Learning Syllabus ECCE

1. Sensory Mathematics
2. Logic
3. Mathematics
4. Story Grammar
5. Developmental Games
6. Artographics
7. Visual – Spatial
8. Creative Modelling
9. Construction
10. Explanation
11. Expressive Movement
12. You-Me-World

### B. Learning Initiatives In Dealing With Males At School

1. Talk with and listen to boys instead of lecturing
2. Provide positive reinforcement to boys on what they do well
3. Set clear limits for boys
4. Design alternative forms of punishment and develop cooperative discipline with the home
5. Create rules for safe play
6. Let boys read (and listen to) books that appeal to their interests
7. Read aloud to young boys and have them read aloud to you
8. Allow boys to write about what interest them

9. Allow discussions of topics boys may want to talk about
10. Allow boys to express humour in appropriate ways and at appropriate times
11. Allow for open spaces for movement
12. Use innovative teaching techniques that take into account emotional intelligence, spirituality, awareness, peer tutoring and drama and role play.

### C. A Sample of Projects Involving Parents and Community in Schooling

1. Involvement in decision making, governance and advocacy serving on PTAs, School Boards or other leadership positions
2. Involvement in focus groups to help shape school's policies
3. Involvement in learning activities at home by providing a learning culture; helping children with homework; providing useful materials as books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, stressing the importance of education
4. Making connections with organizations that have a vested interest in children's education such as health services, book publishers, NGOs, community/ village councils, elders
5. Classroom aides
6. Class representatives
7. Organizer of after school classes
8. Involvement in beautification projects

9. Volunteering at the school to assist the teachers at field trips and other events
10. Attending school events
11. (Come sit and observe)- classroom observation of lessons
12. Involvement in parents' surveys to gauge satisfaction with the operations of the school
13. Parent of the Year Award given to the parent that best reflects parental involvement in the school-age
14. Free uniforms for student whose parents have a perfect record of attendance at parents' meetings
15. An annual award to all parents of a little back pack filled with parent's texts, books, CDs, DVDs, activity sheets for them to engage in continuing learning activities at home, parental guides, time-tables, tip sheets etc.
16. Support for visitation of primary school teachers to the homes of students prior to the start of the academic year

#### **D. A Sample of Community Based Projects / Service Learning**

1. Social engagement at homework centres
2. Engagement with peace facilitators
3. Involvement in organizing campaigns for the popularization of nationalism, democracy, and social harmony
4. Relief work during emergencies such as floods
5. Identifying local leaders and discussing with them local problems and providing some solutions
6. Preparing brief community profiles on depressed areas covering issues related to amenities, services, living conditions etc.

7. Involvement in sanitation drives and literacy programmes
8. Involvement in adventure programmes
9. Support for the sick and elderly
10. Involvement in environmental programmes
11. Programmes of the Cadet, Boys Scouts, Girl Guides and any other bona fide youth organizations
12. Peer tutoring
13. Peer Counselling
14. Investigating the extent of homelessness in my community and providing solutions
15. Investigating the incidence of asthma among young people 15- 25 in my community
16. Conducting an opinion poll on whether school is a 'cool' place
17. Creating awareness of social problems

#### **E. Sample Projects for Correctional Institutions & Youth Camps**

1. Food Crop Farming for self sufficiency
2. Dairying & Poultry for self sufficiency
3. Aquaculture
4. Afforestation & Reforestation
5. Uniform service
6. Maintenance of correctional institutions e.g. power washing, painting, drains and roads repairs
7. Peer Counselling
8. Disaster relief
9. Water conservation
10. Catering services
11. Light Manufacturing
12. Sports development



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