Conditions of Work and Employment Programme

Reconciling work and family:
Issues and policies in Trinidad and Tobago

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Preface

The ILO's Conditions of Work and Employment Programme seeks to promote decent conditions of employment on the basis of international labour standards and the analysis of policy experience in its member States. One of the key aspects of working conditions that this Programme addresses is the reconciliation of work and family life. On the one hand, how can working conditions be adapted to facilitate workers' ability to fulfil their family responsibilities? And, on the other hand, how can the family responsibilities of men and women be lightened or made less incompatible with employment so that they are not a source of discrimination in the labour market?

Based in part on the recognition that the problems of workers with family responsibilities are part of wider issues regarding family and society, and that family responsibilities can be a source of discrimination in employment, the International Labour Conference adopted the Convention on Workers with Family Responsibilities (No. 156) in 1981. The core of this Convention stipulates that the aim of national policies should be to enable persons with family responsibilities who are engaged or wish to engage in employment to exercise their right *without being subject to discrimination* and, to the extent possible, *without conflict between their employment and their family responsibilities.* The accompanying Recommendation on Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981 (No. 165), provides guidance on how work-family issues can be addressed. Yet, while this standard outlines many important factors and issues for consideration, it is also necessary to examine how workers with family responsibilities actually experience work-family conflicts and how the issues are being addressed in different countries. What are countries doing to reduce conflicts between work and family? How are these measures compatible with increasing productivity in the face of global competition? What are the factors that worsen or reduce this conflict?

Although there is a considerable and growing body of literature on the nature of work-family conflicts and how they are being addressed in many western and industrialized countries, less is available on how these issues are being addressed in other countries around the world. As valuable lessons can be learned by examining these different experiences, this paper presents the example of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago provides an interesting example of the implications of industrialization, economic diversification and large-scale migration for the relationship between workers' paid and unpaid work in a small island economy. The paper uses data, interviews and policy reviews to examine major trends and issues regarding work-family conflict for families in Trinidad and Tobago, illustrating the many problems faced by workers, particularly women, in coping with both the need to earn income and to provide care for their families. The paper offers recommendations for action and measures by the government, employers and trade unions to address these challenges in meaningful ways.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AFETT	Association of Female Executives of Trinidad and Tobago
ALTA	Adult Literacy Tutors' Association
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BIGWU	Banking, Insurance and General Workers Union
Bptt/BPTT	British Petroleum, Trinidad and Tobago
CAREC	Caribbean Epidemiology Centre
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEPEP	Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
COSTATT	College of Arts, Science and Technology of Trinidad and Tobago
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CSSP	Continuous Sample Survey of Population
DPI	Disabled People International
EAP	Employee assistance programme
ECA	Employers' Consultative Association
ECCE	Early childhood care and education
EFA	Education for All
FIA	Families in Action
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHL	Guardian Holdings Ltd.
HDI	human development index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRA	Industrial Relations Act
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NADAP	National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programme
NCECCE	National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education
NCPD	National Council for Persons with Disabilities
NGPPTT	National Gender Policy and Action Plan for Trinidad and Tobago
NFS	National Family Services
NUDE	National Union of Domestic Employees
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PRDI	Planning, Research and Development Institute (Tobago)
PTSC	Public Transport Service Corporation
SEA	Secondary Entrance Assessment
SERVOL	Service Volunteered for All
SEED	Small Enterprise Development Programme, ILO
SWMCOL	Sanitation and Waste Management Company
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
t.i.b.s.	The Informative Breastfeeding Service
TT	Trinidad and Tobago
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
URP	Unemployment Relief Programme
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	The University of the West Indies

Executive summary

This study is one of a number of country studies commissioned by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Conditions of Work and Employment Programme, within the context of international labour standards that address work-family issues, namely, the *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)*, and the *Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)*, with its accompanying Recommendation (No. 191 of 2000). It aims to provide information on workers' experience of negotiating work and family responsibilities and the implications for gender equality and poverty in Trinidad and Tobago. This is a relatively new area of research for Trinidad and Tobago, although it is an issue of which many persons are acutely aware and interested. This study found, overall, that employers and trade unionists in the public and private sectors, as well as many middle-income employees, were familiar with the idea of work-life balance and the challenges which this presented.

The Caribbean has a tradition of women's work outside the home from the start of its modern history. Since the mid-20th century, however, Trinidad and Tobago has tended to have lower female labour force participation rates than other parts of the region. This is largely because, until recently, many Indo-Trinidadian women were involved primarily in home-based production and not defined as workers. These numbers have begun to rise again since the late 20th century along with the increasing access of all women to formal education. Today, although women's levels of educational attainment tend to be higher than men's, more women are unemployed than men and women still earn lower incomes then men. This reality places a special pressure on women in the labour market as employment outside the home continues to be important for their social and economic autonomy.

Over the past few decades, the increasing industrialization and diversification of the economy and the impact of the women's movement has wrought complex changes in society and economy. Families and households have had to respond to the quick pace of technological change, migration, workplace demands, poverty and the resulting social dislocation. While migration has always been an option for Caribbean people, the large-scale migration of women of child-bearing age in the last decades of the 20th century has had a particular impact on these societies.

In addition, the pace of economic life has also changed and with it there has been an expansion in the range of occupations in which women are involved. The still-contested position of women in the labour market means that women have had to prove their commitment to the workplace, by ensuring that their family responsibilities do not intrude inordinately on their work situation. Added to this, families continue to be seen as part of the private "feminine" sphere which is not the concern of employers or the State. So while women continue to enter the workplace in increasing numbers, they are also strategists: wheeling and dealing in efforts to negotiate their work and family conflicts. Childcare and elderly care remains primarily the responsibility of women.

While smaller family units have become predominant, many families still depend on a modified extended family, by reaching out to grandparents, other relatives and friends in times of crisis or incorporating babysitters. Although there are fewer three-generation households, grandmothers are still important and become principal caregivers when parents migrate or abandon their children. The pressures to reconcile the competing demands of work and family have been especially demanding for single parents in a context where the age-group bearing the highest numbers of children is also the age-group with the highest proportion of women who have never married or have a common-law partner. For low-income single parents, the challenges are even greater. One study (Bronte

Tinkew, 1998) found that, although fewer, male single parents are more likely than their female counterparts to be embedded within extended families and to have their support.

While recognizing that the changes in family traditions have removed some of the supports formerly available to family members, the study also recognizes that not all change in family traditions has been negative. Families in the Caribbean tended to be very authoritarian, sexist and hierarchical, and corporal punishment of children and violence against women have only recently been publicly and legally challenged. The recognition of the need for "quality time" and the existence of legislation against domestic violence are positive aspects of the changing family traditions in this country and region.

Since 2000, largely in response to school violence and poor educational performance, the government has introduced measures aimed at providing increased access to educational services and facilities at all levels. This focus on educational support has inadvertently begun to address some issues of work-family conflict. The provision of school meals, the textbook rental programme, school transport (though limited) and renewed attention to early childhood care and education (ECCE) are all important contributory factors in this process. This ECCE programme to some extent engages community groups and so draws on the tradition of the extended family and the perception that "it takes a village to raise a child". Additionally, many non-governmental organizations have developed relevant initiatives, e.g. The Informative Breast-Feeding Service (t.i.b.s.).

The business sector, with few exceptions, and with the exception of the introduction of employee assistance programmes (EAPs) and family fun days, has not made the reduction of the work-family conflict a priority. It recognizes minimally the importance of work-life balance, and has not yet taken an aggressive approach in instituting practical mechanisms such as breastfeeding breaks, childcare facilities or homework centres. In order to reduce the discriminatory impact of these responsibilities on women workers, men at all levels of the employment spectrum must be sensitized and encouraged to accept full responsibility for parenting, and this must be reflected in workplace expectations and their own behaviour.

In order to respond to the conflicts of work and family, a great deal more needs to be done by the State, employers and trade unions in the area of workers' rights, employer responsibility and collective bargaining. While the establishment of employee assistance programmes (EAPs) with their emphasis on mental and emotional well-being has been important, practical remedies still need to introduced or enhanced. Employers — state and non state, large and small — need to recognize the importance of quality family relations to overall societal stability, labour productivity and social peace, including the reduction in violent crime. The production and development of future workers and the care of former workers can no longer be seen purely as the responsibility of individual woman, parents or other family members. Some of the proposed measures include flexitime arrangements, paternity leave legislation, crèches and day-care centres at workplaces, breastfeeding breaks, rationalization of work hours with school hours and improvements to school transportation.

The main findings of the study are that:

- family traditions, and therefore family structures, have undergone significant changes over the last three decades;

- employers in both the private and public sector have not significantly accepted their responsibility to address issues of work-family conflict and the challenges which workers face in this regard;

■ the State, trade unions and the private sector have not adequately recognized the relationship between work-family reconciliation and the problems of social dislocation currently being experienced in Trinidad and Tobago;

■ women, increasingly a part of the labour force, have used innovative coping strategies to reduce the conflict that work-family responsibilities produce. Men to a lesser extent are visible in this respect but usually in specific areas;

■ while Government and, to a more limited extent, the private sector and NGOs have provided support facilities and services based on family needs, policies are not yet targeted to workers with family responsibilities;

■ the unpredictability of this country's infrastructure, especially transportation and utilities, play a large role in heightening work-family conflict;

■ the heightening of the citizens' fear of criminal violence has placed more stress on working parents who seek to ensure their children's safety;

■ while middle- and upper-income women/parents are able to use their financial resources to ameliorate their situation (e.g. babysitters, special transport arrangements etc.), low-income women are unable to access similar support structures.

This study recommends that the State take the lead within its own institutions and actively encourage through legislation and other means other employers to do the same. A starting point would be the ratification of the ILO Convention on Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981 (No. 156), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No 183), and their accompanying Recommendations.[1] The State should also ensure that necessary support structures are put in place and systems for monitoring and evaluation established. Measures aimed at resolving work-family conflict have not been a major component of collective bargaining. Trade unions need to be sensitized about the importance of this issue and to institute changes beginning with their own worker organizations, setting examples for the collective bargaining process. The draft National Gender Policy for Trinidad and Tobago and the draft Policy on Aging both strongly support many of these measures, which would have positive repercussions for the society in general and which go far beyond the workplace.

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[1] Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191), and Workers with Family Responsibilities Recommendation, 1981 (No. 165).

Introduction and context

Work-family issues have long been an important subject for those interested in women's work outside the home. Yet, in many countries, this is not reflected in labour policy and practice. This study on reconciling work and family in Trinidad and Tobago is one of a number of country studies commissioned by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Conditions of Work and Employment Programme, within the context of international labour standards that address work-family issues, namely the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), with its accompanying Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191).

In selecting countries, preference was given to countries where there is political interest in formulating policies and practices to reconcile a balance in work-family issues, and to countries which may eventually ratify the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156 of 1981), if this has not already been done. The timing of this study, therefore, is appropriate as the various sectors in Trinidad and Tobago are conscious of the magnitude of the issue, although the Government has not yet ratified either of these Conventions or their accompanying Recommendations.

This study aimed to document the following:

- changes in family structure and role, and implications for work-family conflict;

- implications of the changing nature of work for work-family conflict;

- policies and practices to reduce work-family conflict and its effects;

- the gender impact of work-family conflict; and

- the impact of family responsibilities on earnings and poverty.

Methodology

The main research objectives of the study were as follows:

- to identify major trends and highlight key work-family issues, policies and practices at a national level;

- to identify changes in family structures and roles;

- to document these ongoing changes;

- to examine some of the root causes for changes in family interactions;

- to identify changes in work patterns;

- to examine the role of employers in meeting the challenge of workers with families responsibilities;

- to examine policies and practices that affect work-family issues; and

- to make recommendations for future development.

Research methods

A. Primary data collection

The researchers conducted 30 interviews, and one focus group meeting with ten members of the social work staff of the National Family Services Division of the Ministry of Social Development. Among the persons formally interviewed were working parents, including single parents in the formal economy; human resource and industrial relations officers and managers, administrators of relevant non-governmental organizations; private or independent human resource consultants; and two full-time trade union leaders. Where some persons proved difficult to access in person, telephone or e-mail interviews were carried out. This was the case for two interviews.

Informal interviews were also carried out with family members, consumers in shopping malls and with workers in the informal economy, for example, lottery vendors, maintenance workers, construction workers and taxi drivers.

Observation

In addition to the above, information was acquired from observations at early childhood education centres and primary schools, including the processes of taking children to and from school.

B. Secondary data collection

Relevant data (published and interview data) were derived through visits to a range of institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. Institutions such as the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Development, the Industrial Court Library, the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies, the Family Court Library and the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean were visited, their documents examined and, where possible, interviews carried out with relevant personnel. Because of the autonomous and separate governance structure of Tobago, the researchers visited Tobago for meetings with authorities in the Division of Health, Social Services and Environment, the Division of Labour, and the Policy, Research and Development Institute (PDRI), all of the Tobago House of Assembly. All these sites provided official documents, published and unpublished research studies, books, periodicals, scholarly journals and newspapers to help meet the objectives of this study.

In addition to the above, research was carried out through the use of online resources of national, regional and international studies, as well as institutional websites. This was particularly useful where we were unable to arrange formal interviews with some agencies.

Organization of the study

This study is organized into six parts. Part I provides the historical and socio-economic context of the issue of the work-family conflict. Part II examines trends in family and household development, focusing on the specificities of the Trinidad and Tobago situation. Part III looks in more detail at working conditions, including labour legislation and the implications for work-family conflict. Part IV addresses the issue of support facilities in the state and non-state sectors for workers with family responsibilities. Part V provides an evaluation of the overall situation. Part VI provides conclusions, and presents targeted recommendations directed at various sectors.

Part 1. The historical, socio-economic and employment context of Trinidad and Tobago

1.1 Historical context of Trinidad and Tobago

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a two-island state, the most southerly state in the Caribbean archipelago, located between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. Tobago lies a few miles to the north-east of Trinidad and is more similar in topography to the other islands north of it than it is to Trinidad. In 1898, Tobago was administratively linked to Trinidad creating the two-island state of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad, the larger of the two islands, covers an area of 4,828 square kilometres (1,864 square miles) and lies 11 kilometres (7 miles) to the north-east of Venezuela. The two main urban centres on the island of Trinidad are Port of Spain, the capital city situated in the north-west section of Trinidad, and San Fernando, situated in the south. Scarborough is the capital and main commercial centre on the island of Tobago. Tobago was settled by the British much earlier than Trinidad, and had a well-developed plantation economy. Colonial rule over the islands changed frequently. In 1962, Trinidad and Tobago became independent from Britain and acquired republican status in 1974.

The differences in historical development are most obvious in the contrast between the demographic compositions of the two islands: Trinidad's ethnic diversity and Tobago's predominantly African population. Trinidad, and increasingly Tobago, is multi-religious. However, on both islands, traditional export agriculture has been declining**.** Economically, Trinidad's dependence on its energy sector contrasts with Tobago's dependence on tourism. All of these factors are significant in understanding the complexities and specificities of family, social and gender relations in this country.

The population of Trinidad and Tobago according to the 2000 census was 1,262,366, with 633,051 or 50.1 per cent male and 629,315 or 49.9 per cent female (UNDP, 2000, p. 161). With respect to ethno-demographics, people who for census purposes define themselves as Afro-Trinidadians (37.52 per cent) and Indo-Trinidadians (40.03 per cent) comprise the majority of the population. The "mixed" group appears to have increased significantly since the 1990 census to 20.46 per cent. The other minorities (white/Caucasian, Chinese, Syrians, Lebanese), though small in number, are highly represented in the social and economic elite. Small numbers of mixed descendants of indigenous people also exist, mainly in the north-eastern town of Arima. The population of Tobago is 92 per cent of African descent with small but increasing proportions of Indo-Trinidadians (2.5 per cent). The "mixed" population is 6.6 per cent (Tobago House of Assembly, 2005).

The largest religious groupings are Roman Catholics and Hindus. The remainder include Muslims, other Christian denominations (including Anglicans, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals and Evangelicals) and Afro-Christians, such as the Spiritual Baptists, as well as those with no religious affiliation.

Table 1. Total population by sex in Trinidad and Tobago (2000)

Trinidad				Tobago				Total population
Male	Female	Both sexes	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Both sexes	Sex ratio	
606,283	601,999	1,208,282	100.71	26,768	27,316	54,084	97.99	1,262,366

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Population Census, 2000, at www.cso.gov.tt/statistics.

This diversity of religion, ethnicity and class is reflected in many aspects of life: family forms, household composition, marriage and union status, relevant to this study. This diversity also impacts on patterns of labour force participation which have been under constant change with exposure to post-colonial and neo-colonial influences, everyday interactions among social and ethnic groups, improved levels of formal education, and increasing exposure to globalized media from the United States.

In relation to other demographic characteristics, the sex ratio is relatively even, but fertility levels have undergone a transition. Prior to the 1960s, the crude birth rates were generally in excess of 30 live births per 1,000-estimated mid-year population. This rate declined until the 1980s when there was an increase, but from 1985, it has declined once more from 28.6 in 1985 to 18.60 in 1992 and 14.6 in 1999. Using another measure, total fertility rates were estimated to be 5.4 in 1960, 3.6 in 1970, 3.3 in 1980 and 2.4 in 1990. In the 1990s, these rates declined even further, from 1.9 in 1994 to 1.7 in 1997. Interestingly between 1997 and 1999, the crude death rate increased slightly from 7.3 in 1997 to 8.0 in 1999 (CSO, 2004, p. xi).

1.2 Socio-economic context in Trinidad and Tobago

Compared with countries of the economic south and indeed the Caribbean, the overall economic situation of Trinidad and Tobago is more positive. While many of these countries are facing serious economic challenges, in part due to the developments in "free market'' world trading protocols, the energy base of the Trinidad and Tobago economy has provided a cushion to these shocks. In spite of this, however, the prevalence of wide income disparities and the resulting violent crime and social vulnerabilities remind us that governance issues are as important as financial concerns, and are major contributors to social and economic development.

In 2004, according to the *Annual Economic Survey 2004*, the energy sector (petroleum, natural gas and derivatives) contributed 34.1 per cent of GDP, while the non-energy sector (agriculture, manufacturing, construction, financial services and others) contributed the remaining 65.9 per cent (Central Bank, 2004, p. 4). Over the period 2000 to 2004, there has been a steady decrease in official unemployment figures from 12.4 per cent in 2000 to 8.4 per cent in 2004. This is a significant change from the figure of 21.0 per cent in 1996. A great deal of this can be accounted for by the increasing oil and gas revenues, which have created buoyancy in the economy and stimulated investment. In addition, these revenues have allowed the government to finance a number of "special work programmes", such as the state-funded Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) and more recently the Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) as well as a range of skills-training programmes. Indeed, in very poor communities like the Beetham Gardens Estate, a community close to the Port of Spain Garbage Disposal (Landfill) Site, working in these "make work" programmes is considered permanent work (Janssen, 2005).

The energy sector, although the largest contributor to the gross domestic product, is not a significant employer of labour. Indeed in keeping with international trends, "other services" is the largest employment sector, in particular community, social and personal services, which account for 31.2 per cent of total employment (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Sectoral distribution of employment, 2001-2004 (percentages)

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Agriculture	7.8	6.9	5.9	4.6
Petroleum and gas (including mining and quarrying)	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.6
Manufacturing	10.3	10.6	10.3	10.5
Construction (including electricity and water)	15.3	14.4	15.0	16.2
Transport, storage and communications	7.6	8.0	7.8	7.4
Other services	55.5	56.4	57.5	57.4
Wholesale and retail	17.5	18.0	18.5	18.0
Community, social and personal services	30.0	30.1	30.6	31.2
Finance, insurance and real estate	8.0	8.3	8.4	8.3
Not classified	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Adapted from Central Bank: *Annual Economic Survey 2004*, p. 16.

With an HDI rank of 57 in the 2005 UNDP *Human Development Report*, Trinidad and Tobago just makes it into the group with "high human development". Demographic indicators, however, do not compare favourably with other countries in this category, including close Caribbean neighbour Barbados. However, the high per capita GDP (US$ 10,766 in 2003) no doubt contributes to its position within this category. In the Human Poverty Index, Trinidad and Tobago ranks fifteenth with the probability of not surviving to age 40 being 11.6 per cent, one of the highest indices in both the high and medium development categories (UNDP, 2005, p. 227).

In Tobago, tourism is the main economic sector, replacing agriculture the earlier leader. As a result, the services sector accounted for approximately 98 per cent of Tobago's GDP in 1998. This included government services (24 per cent); distribution services, consisting of restaurants (21 per cent); construction and quarrying (20 per cent); and hotels and guest houses (15 per cent).

1.3 Family and labour force participation

More generally in relation to labour market trends, the Continuous Sample Survey of Population (CSSP) Labour Force Survey for the first quarter of 2005 found that the trend of declining "unemployment" had continued with rates for both sexes of 9.0 per cent, males 6.6 per cent and females 12.6 per cent (CSSP, 2005, p. 4). In spite of overall reduction for both sexes, the unemployment rate for females continues to be higher than that for males. During the period under review, 235,900 women as opposed to 117,700 men were recorded as unemployed.

Table 3. Summary of indicators of women's and men's labour force participation, 1996-2000 (15 years and older)

Indicator	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Number of women in the labour force	204,700	205,200	214,400	215,400	219,800
Percentage of the labour force	38.6	37.9	38.3	38.2	38.4
Number of men in the labour force	325,700	335,800	344,600	348,000	353,100
Percentage of the labour force	61.4	62.1	61.7	61.8	61.6
Female labour force participation rate	46.8	45.9	47.0	46.6	47.0
Male labour force participation rate	74.2	74.8	75.3	75.0	75.3
Number of females employed	161,700	165,300	173,800	179,300	186,400
Number of males employed	282,500	294,500	305,500	310,100	317,000
Female unemployment rate	21.0	19.4	18.9	16.8	15.2
Male unemployment rate	13.2	12.3	11.3	10.9	10.2
Number of female wage-earners	126,900	128,300	139,300	142,300	149,200
Percentage of all wage-earners	38.0	36.9	37.8	38.1	38.7
Number of female unpaid workers	7,000	7,100	7,100	6,200	5,400
Percentage of all unpaid workers	68.0	68.3	77.2	70.5	75.0
Number of female own-account workers	23,600	24,200	24,200	25,200	25,800
Percentage of all own-account workers	29.3	30.3	30.1	30.9	31.5
Number of female employers	3,800	4,600	4,000	4,200	4,800
Percentage of all employers	21.1	23.3	19.7	20.9	20.3

Source: Central Statistical Office, Labour Force Reports, 1996-2000, www.cso.gov.tt.

Unlike other parts of the world, the Anglophone Caribbean has a tradition of women's participation in economic activity. Although this declined in the middle of the 20th century, it is increasing once again (Reddock, 1994). Trinidad and Tobago, however, has tended to have lower labour force participation rates than other Caribbean countries because of the lower rates for Indo-Trinidadian women, many of whom tend to be home-based producers and thus recorded as housewives. Between 1996 and 2000, as shown in Table 3, women's labour force participation rates (15+) slightly increased numerically but were consistent percentage wise. This trend continued somewhat and between 2001 to 2005 labour force participation rates generally increased, while the unemployment rate decreased (see Table 4).

Table 4. Male and female labour force participation (15+), 2001-2005

	2001*		2002*		2004*		2005**	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total labour force	354,900	224,500	356,100	236,100	366,200	254,100	362,400	256,500
Persons with jobs	327,500	193,300	328,300	200,900	350,100	222,400	340,700	228,900
Total unemployed	27,400	31,200	27,800	35,200	16,100	31,700	21,700	27,600
Labour force as a percentage of 15+ population	74.2	47.2	74.3	48.8	75.4	52.0	74.7	51.9
Unemployed as a percentage of 15+ population	7.7	13.9	7.8	14.9	4.4	12.5	6.0	10.8
Not in the labour force	123,100	251,600	122,900	247,900	119,700	234,500	122,800	237,400

* third quarter   ** second quarter

Source: Central Statistical Office, CSSP and Labour Force Survey reports, 2001 to 2005, www.cso.gov.tt/statistics.

This trend of increased labour force participation and declining unemployment rates for women and men since 2000 has been the result primarily of the increased buoyancy of the economy due to the increased revenues from the energy sector and the government's short-term employment and training programmes mentioned earlier.

In Table 5, we examine the union status [2] of employed women and note that the largest proportion of employed women was recorded as "never married/had a partner". It is important to note, however, that in the Caribbean, the fact that women have never married or had a partner may not necessarily mean that they are without children. Indeed, the largest numbers of employed women in this category were in the age groups 20-24 and 25-29, in other words during the prime childbearing years. According to the CSO *Population and Vital Statistics Report, 1999*, the age groups with the highest proportion of live births were also 20-24 and 25-29 (CSO, 2004, p. 5). ***Therefore, the highest childbearing age group coincides with the age groups with the highest numbers of women recorded as never having married or having had a partner.*** This must be significant in relation to creating a situation of work-family balance.

Table 5. Females with jobs and union status, 1999-2001

	1999	%	2000	%	2001	%
Never married/had a partner	66,000	36.8	69,200	37.1	68,400	36.3
Married but now living alone	20,000	11.2	22,100	11.9	23,400	12.4
Had a partner but now living alone	9,600	5.4	10,300	5.5	9,800	5.2
Married living with husband	64,000	35.7	63,600	34.1	65,00	34.8
Common-law union	19,400	10.8	20,600	11.1	20,900	11.1
Not stated	200	0.1	600	0.3	200	0.1
Total	179,300		186,400		188,100	

Source: Central Statistical Office, CSSP and Labour Force Survey 2001, pp. 72-73.

The second largest category of women comprised those who were married and living with their husbands. If this group is added to those in common-law unions, then this accounts for over 45 per cent of all female workers. This suggests that women, whether living with a partner or not, have significant family responsibilities, without even considering dependants (for example, disabled relatives, parents, etc.).

Data on the marital/union status of employed males are not easily available, as males are assumed to be breadwinners/providers and the ones who have a right to be employed. This is also the case for data on the labour force participation rates of women by union status. It would have been interesting to see if this was an important factor in determining women's participation in the labour force. This situation is further complicated by ethnicity, as union status varies with ethnic group as more Indo-Trinidadian women (48.7 per cent) tend to be married and living with a partner than Afro-Trinidadian (28.1 per cent) and mixed (30.7 per cent) women (2000 Census, special tabulation). St. Bernard (2003) suggests, however, that in the Anglophone Caribbean, increased access to secondary and tertiary education may be associated with women's increased labour force participation, especially with the decline in agriculture, which was the major employer of women in the early 20th century (Reddock, 1994).

Although labour force participation rates for women in the Caribbean are among the highest in the world, women's unemployment still tends to be close to twice that of men's in spite of the higher levels of educational attainment among women (Seguino, 2003). Economist Stephanie Seguino suggests that this could serve as a greater pressure on women to keep the jobs which they have. She argues that:

> Because Caribbean women (as elsewhere) have primary responsibility for children, the elderly and the ill … they may face more difficulty than men in searching for a job. Job searches incur

[2] The term "union status" was introduced by Caribbean demographers and social scientists to better reflect the diversity of family and household arrangements in the region. In regional censuses, union status data are usually collected from women of childbearing age (15 to 44 years).

costs since caretakers must replace their unpaid labour while seeking employment … The same responsibility may also cause women to geographically limit their job search, if they are required at home on short notice to care for children and family members. (Seguino, 2003, p. 85)

Nevertheless, as we have seen, the female labour force has been increasing consistently, continuing the trend over the past three decades.

In Tobago the difference between the sexes was less stark, with much more equal labour force participation rates than in Trinidad. In 2002, the rates were 71.5 for males and 61.3 for females, while in 2003 this was 72.7 for males and 60.1 for females (Tobago House of Assembly, 2004, p. 8). This can probably be explained by the predominantly African-descended population in Tobago, whose labour force participation rates have usually been higher than in other ethnic groups. Tobago's pattern therefore is closer to the other Caribbean territories than it is to that of Trinidad.

In relation to occupations, women have extended their reach into non-traditional areas to a larger extent than men. The majority of women are employed in the lower professional categories as teachers; nurses; workers in administrative, secretarial and the financial services; and manufacturing, as well as other areas of personal services. These include shop and store clerks, workers in catering establishments or in private homes. Men, on the other hand, are employed as craft and related workers, machine operators, assemblers and technical workers. In the generally declining agricultural sector, once the largest area of female employment, women's participation is now limited and largely invisible. The closing in 1975 of the sugar producing company Caroni Ltd marks both the end of an era and the beginning of another. Former agricultural workers have been allocated small two-acre plots of land for agricultural production. It is left to be seen if this will breathe new life into this sector. [3]

Nevertheless, men still tend to have a wider range of occupations open to them than women. This is particularly so in the non-white-collar area, where men have greater access to positions as tradesmen and technicians, and in manual occupations, as seen in the table below. These occupations tend to have higher remuneration rates than low-wage women's jobs that are mainly in the area of services. In the first quarter of 2005, the distribution of occupations was as follows:

[3] Possibly because of the sexual division of labour in the industry prior to its demise, the majority of those receiving these agricultural plots were men.

Table 6. Labour force by sex and employment status in Trinidad and Tobago, March 2005

Employment status	Male	%	Female	%	Both sexes	%
All occupations	343,700	100.0	223,300	100.0	567,000	100.0
Legislators, senior officials and managers	25,100	7.3	20,800	9.3	45,900	8.1
Professionals	9,900	2.9	7,100	3.2	17,000	3.0
Technicians and associate professionals	32,700	9.5	35,900	16.1	68,600	12.1
Clerks	17,100	5.0	47,500	21.3	64,600	11.4
Service workers (including defense force) and shop/sales workers	36,400	10.6	45,500	20.4	81,900	14.4
Agricultural, forestry and fisheries workers	13,000	3.8	700	0.3	13,700	2.4
Craft and related workers	81,000	23.6	10,100	4.5	91,000	16.0
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	49,200	4.3	4,000	1.8	53,200	9.4
Elementary occupations	78,100	22.7	50,600	22.7	128,700	22.7
Not stated	1,300	0.4	1,000	0.4	2,300	0.4

Source: Central Statistical Office, CSSP and Labour Force Survey report, 2005, www.cso.gov.tt.

From the above, it is clear that although the patterns of male and female employment vary significantly, in some categories the differences are less marked. For example, equal proportions of women and men, close to one-quarter of all in occupations, are involved in elementary occupations, while at the other end of the spectrum, women are well-represented among legislators, senior officials and managers. Females also slightly exceed males in the category technicians and associate professionals, but largely because of the high numbers employed as teachers and nurses. Whereas the majority of women are employed in the area of services, the majority of males are employed as craft and related workers.

In relation to Tobago, the picture is slightly different. There is significant migration from Tobago to Trinidad and this tends to be sex-specific, with implications for families. The table below suggests that, although males predominate slightly in the employed population, in 2001 females predominated in the white-collar occupations such as clerks, technicians and associate professionals, even exceeding the number *and* proportion of males as legislators, senior managers and officials. Men predominate as craft workers, plant and machinery workers, and in elementary occupations.

Table 7. Labour force by sex and employment status in Tobago, 2001

Employment status	Male	%	Female	%	Both sexes
All occupations	12,100	55.8	9,600	44.2	21,700
Legislators, senior officials and managers	800	6.6	1,000	10.4	1,800
Professionals	200	1.7	200	2.1	400
Technicians and associate professionals	1,000	8.3	1,600	13.2	2,600
Clerks	400	3.3	2,100	21.9	2,500
Service workers (including defense force) and shop/sales workers	1,400	11.6	2,100	21.9	3,500
Agricultural, forestry and fisheries workers	500	4.1	---	---	500
Craft and related workers	3,000	24.8	300	3.1	3,300
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	900	7.4	100	1.0	1,000
Elementary occupations	3,800	31.4	2,100	21.9	5,900
Not stated	100	1.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Numbers may not add up because of rounding.

Source: Central Statistical Office, CSSP and Labour Force Survey report, 2001, pp. 51-53.

Therefore, in both Trinidad and Tobago, male employment far exceeds that of female employment in other technical and craft sectors and elementary occupations. These sectors are usually filled by persons from the lower socio-economic groups and/or persons with some or no technical/vocational training. As many of these occupations are still perceived as profoundly masculine, women are still a minority in the technical/vocational training

programmes, whether formal or informal/apprentice training, and so not easily employed in these occupations.

The data suggest therefore that middle class young women in particular are taking advantage of the opportunities for educational achievement and taking up positions at senior levels of the economy. But for the vast majority of working class women, employment opportunities without formal academic and technical qualifications are extremely limited.

1.3.1 Self-employment [4]

There are more than twice as many self-employed men as there are women. Self-employed women also earn substantially less than self-employed men, again supporting a trend noted by the United Nations:

> All over the world, self-employment provides some women and men, especially those who have failed to secure paid jobs, with a means of contributing income to the family ... Sometimes self-employment makes it easier for women to combine family responsibilities and unpaid subsistence work with income-earning activities. *On the other hand, it can imply a high level of job insecurity and does carry with it a lack of such protections as maternity leave and parental leave (*UN, 2000, p. 116, emphasis added)

The report continued to note that this trend toward increasing self-employment (or micro-enterprise development) was closely associated with the introduction of neo-liberal economic practices initially through structural adjustment programmes and the decline in paid work. In such instances, poor women and men are forced to create their own income-earning opportunities (UN, 2000, p. 116).

In this regard, an ILO working paper on *Boosting employment through small enterprise development* found that in Trinidad and Tobago, the majority of females in small enterprises had no exposure to technical/vocational training, or the specific skills for their trade. They drew on the skills and experiences learnt in the domestic context and predominated in activities which were compatible with their family responsibilities. It noted:

> Women tend to predominate in certain business activities based on the compatibility of such activities with women's reproductive roles. It would appear that they are attracted to activities that keep them close to home and allow them some flexibility with respect to working hours. Women also tend to be more cautious and avoid risky ventures that will expose them to loss of savings and where they are unable to care for their families, hence the business of choice generally is in the low growth sector with little profit potential. (Ferdinand, 2001, p. 2)

The Trinidad and Tobago country study further found that a majority of female small business entrepreneurs lived in households with children, as shown in Table 8 below.

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[4] Referred to as own-account workers in the survey.

Table 8. Family characteristics of women entrepreneurs in Trinidad and Tobago, 1997

Family characteristics	Percentage
Married or living in common-law union, no children	7.38
Married/common law with children	47.81
Single-parent household, no children	8.45
Single-parent household with children	9.85
Member of relatives' households, no children	21.21
Member of relatives' households with children	5.30
TOTAL	100.00

Source: Yearwood, 1997, p. 88.

1.3.2 The informal economy

The informal economy is a very broad concept which is often difficult to define. It is derived from the original notion of the informal sector, which was defined by the ILO in 1991 as:

> very small-scale units producing and distributing goods and services, and consisting largely of independent, self-employed producers, some of whom also employ family labour and/or a few hired workers or apprentices; which utilize a low level of technology and skills; which therefore operate at a low level of productivity; and which generally provide very low and irregular incomes and highly unstable employment to those who work in it (ILO, 1990).

The notion of the informal economy, however, has often gone beyond this to include aspects described by others as "the underground economy" or the "black economy" or "the unregulated economy", and would include very low-wage employment, illegal activities, such as drug dealing, and unregulated activities, such as unregistered migrant work.

In relation to its original focus on small-scale self-employment, much of what was discussed above under self-employment therefore would be relevant to an understanding of "the informal economy" in Trinidad and Tobago. As noted by Ralph Henry (2005, p. 7):

> There are limited data on the size and structure of the informal sector in the Commonwealth Caribbean and Trinidad and Tobago is no exception. By and large, the sector acts as a sponge absorbing in own-account employment many who cannot find formal sector jobs and elect to employ themselves. It has been very difficult to identify this sector in the official employment data generated. … There is enough visual evidence of the sector, in the form of itinerant peddlers in main thoroughfares and major traffic intersections, and self-appointed car park attendants at major public events.

Official data on self-employment therefore are limited to those of "own-account workers" in the CSSP. In 2005,[5] a total of 86,800 own-account workers were recorded: 59,000 male and 27,800 female. Own-account workers therefore represented 16.7 per cent of the employed males and 11.8 per cent of the employed females, which is a substantial proportion (CSSP, 2005).

1.3.3 Income distribution

There is a great deal of income disparity in Trinidad and Tobago. As a result, some groups enjoy an economically comfortable lifestyle, while relative poverty exists among significant sectors, leading to feelings of alienation and deprivation. The ethnic tensions which exist among the country's two major ethnic groups — Afro- and Indo-Trinidadians

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[5] Second quarter CSSP Labour Force Survey.

— and generally in this post-colonial context are often interpreted in economic terms and mobilized by political movements, with potentially dangerous repercussions for the society in general and women in particular.

Despite the relative increases in women's participation at all levels in the labour force, and their high levels of educational attainment and increased participation in various professional fields, women continue to fall at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder and face discrimination when compared to men, in the level of wages which accrue to them.

Table 9. Women's average income as a percentage of men's in occupational groups, 1998-2000

Occupational group	1998	1999	2000
Legislators, senior officers, managers	52.9	52.3	52.8
Professionals	75.6	80.6	73.5
Technicians and associate professionals	76.7	79.7	84.1
Clerks	86.6	85.9	87.8
Service workers, including defense force and shop/sales workers	50.2	53.5	57.7
Agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	52.9	67.3	68.7
Craft and related workers	50.0	47.3	55.2
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	54.9	64.8	64.9
Elementary occupations	61.9	64.1	64.4

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Labour Force Reports 1998-2001*, available at www.cso.gov.tt/statistics.

Differences in women's and men's income were greatest at the senior legislative and management level and craft and related workers, and lowest among professionals and technicians and associate professionals. Between 1998 and 2000, there were limited improvements in all sectors, except for professionals, where there was some deterioration.

1.3.3 Labour organization

A 1999 survey carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Cooperatives found that women accounted for 26,770 or 44 per cent of the 61,345 members of 28 trade unions. However, men still dominate in the leadership of these organizations. The 1999 survey found that women held 7.5 per cent of executive positions in eight trade unions. This situation has not changed, leading the Banking and Insurance Workers Union website to say in 2004:

There are 35 labour unions in Trinidad and Tobago; of this, only eight unions have women on the Executive. Of the eight unions, only one has a woman holding one of the power-positions in the Union. (See www.bigwu.org/library/women/default.asp.)

Yet large sections of the working population are unorganized, including workers in sections of finance and banking, security, sales and services, and the government special employment programmes. The Employers' Consultative Association (ECA) acts on behalf of employers offering advice, advocacy and training on relevant industrial relations and human resource management issues. Part III discusses this in more detail.

1.4 Poverty

As noted earlier, income disparities are a major problem in Trinidad and Tobago, resulting in significant levels of poverty. One of the most recent estimates of poverty carried out by Kairi Consultants found that, in 1997-1998, 24 per cent of the population was poor (cited in Henry, 2005, p. 2). This estimate was based on the use of a food poverty line and the average expenditure on non-food items of the poorest 40 per cent of the population, and derived from the 1997/98 Household Budgetary survey. The study also

found that 8.3 per cent of the population could be described as indigent; female heads of households were more likely to be poor than male household heads, and as much as 28.9 per cent of youth were poor. These data are presented in the table below.

Table 10. Poverty estimates for selected groups, 1997-1998

Category	Percentage
Poor households	18.4
Poor population	24.0
Indigent households	6.0
Indigent population	8.3
Youth population	28.9
Elderly population	15.0
Female population	24.4
Male population	23.7
Male heads of households	17.1
Female heads of households	21.4

Source: Henry, 2005, p. 3.

In general, it was also found that rural areas tend to be poorer than urban areas, although there were pockets of the poor in all areas of the country. County St. George, the largest county, had the highest levels of poverty; and County Caroni, the lowest proportion of poor. The poor also tended to live in larger families, to have more children and to lack certain key amenities, such as potable water or flush toilets. Not surprisingly, they also tend to be less educated and concentrated in elementary occupations (Kairi, 2004, p. 81, cited in MSD, 2004, p. 43).

1.5 Education

Trinidad and Tobago is perceived as a country with a relatively high level of education. By 2000, 99.9 per cent of the population was recorded as enrolled at primary level (UNDP, 2000) and 71.5 per cent at secondary level education in 1997 (Ministry of Education, 2004). By 2000, secondary education was available to all secondary age children (UNDP, 1998, p. 131). [6]

These figures for school enrolment contrast with recent studies of functional literacy, which suggest that, in spite of higher rates of school enrolment and to a lesser extent school attendance, illiteracy still persists in some circumstances. Whereas official data using the criteria "years of schooling" give Trinidad and Tobago high levels of literacy, smaller surveys based on literacy tests have had different results. It was found that overall an estimated 12.6 per cent of the population 15 years and over was illiterate, while a further 8.7 per cent were seen to be "peripherally illiterate". Interestingly, 16.2 per cent of persons currently working were found to be illiterate (ALTA, 1994; St. Bernard and Salim, 1995, p. xi).

Among persons aged 15-24 years and 25-39 years, there were higher levels of illiteracy among men than among women. With respect to older persons aged 40-54 years and 55 years and older, the situation is reversed, with women having higher levels of illiteracy than men. Therefore, although it was found that variations in the literacy rate between the sexes were minimal, the majority of those who *had not* gone to any schools were female, yet those who were more likely to have ten or more years of schooling were also female. (ALTA, 1994, p. 12).

[6] In the 2006 Budget Presentation, the Prime Minister announced that, from January 2006, state-funded tertiary education would also be free of charge.

The subsequent work of the Adult Literacy Tutors' Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ALTA), Moms for Literacy and other non-governmental organizations in combating literacy at community levels may have resulted in some reduction in this rate. What is clear is that the education system caters to the top 10 to 20 per cent of the population who perform exceedingly well in an extremely competitive climate. However, a significant majority, although exposed to free primary and secondary education, may leave school without attaining the minimum levels of accomplishment, and many "drop out", if not physically, then psychologically.

Table 11: Enrolment in government and assisted primary schools by sec, 1999-2000

Sex	Trinidad and Tobago		Tobago	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Male	83,051	50.9	3,642	51.3
Female	80,155	49.1	3,458	48.7
Both sexes	163,206	100.0	7,100	100.0

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office: *Annual Statistical Digest* (2000).

Table 12: Enrolment in public secondary schools by sex in Trinidad and Tobago, 2000

Trinidad				
Male	Male	Female	Female	Both sexes
51,471	48.8%	54,071	51.2%	105,542

Tobago				
Male	Male	Female	Female	Both sexes
1,553	47.2%	1,737	52.8%	3,290

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Population Census 2000, at www.cso.gov.tt/statistics.

The school system also tends to be very unequal, especially at secondary level. These schools are organized in four tiers of prestige, with students being assigned after a universal Secondary School Assessment examination (SEA). Although all students are guaranteed a place in a secondary school, this examination still places extreme stress on young children (and their parents), many of whom attend hours of extra lessons after school and on weekends, including Sundays, in order to pass for a suitably prestigious school. Students of the middle and upper classes are better placed to succeed at these examinations and, failing this, to gain admission to preferred schools by another route.

This very competitive climate continues into secondary school and some children ― for a number of reasons, including poor pre-secondary preparation or lack of parental support ― are unable to cope with the work involved. Thus, some young people perform at extremely high levels in secondary examinations, but over 50 per cent of the children are unsuccessful. Some parents, especially from low-income groups, withdraw children from school, especially boys who appear to be "underperforming", and poor parents are in a less favourable position to either help their children with homework or pay for extra classes. Generally there is great concern in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region over the lower educational performance of boys overall in comparison with girls, although some boys still perform exceptionally at the highest levels.

1.5.1 Early childhood education and care

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) has been receiving renewed attention by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. This concept refers to a wide range of programmes, all aimed at the physical, cognitive and social development of children before they enter primary school ― theoretically from birth to about age 7 or 8. It is argued that the benefits of ECCE programmes, which extend into adulthood, contribute to good child development outcomes that set the foundation for lifelong learning. These programmes

also help in the monitoring of health and nutrition status during this critical period of development. According to the UNESCO *Education for All (EFA: Monitoring Report)* (2005), the following were the net attendance rates in early childhood education and care institutions in Trinidad and Tobago:

Table 13: Net ECCE attendance rates for 3- to 4-year olds by sex and by number of hours attended (past week), 2000

	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*GPI F/M*	*Mean number of hours attended**
Trinidad and Tobago	71.5	67.9	75.4	1.11	24.7

* In week preceding the interview

Source: UNESCO: *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (Paris, 2005), at http://portal/UNESCO.org/Education.

These rates far exceeded the rates for the other countries listed, and the average net attendance rate for all countries was 17.1 per cent. Trinidad and Tobago has a history of ECCE going back to the early 20th century. Early women's organizations, like the Coterie of Social Workers, established day nurseries, and many "private schools" were run by women in communities for pre-school-age children. According to the recent 2006 budget presentation, the government plans to construct 43 early childhood care and education centres and 600 pre-schools. [7] In preparation for this, the Ministry of Education is implementing a high-intensity training programme to train 1,500 ECCE educators and to establish monitoring systems. With the general focus of the society on educational achievement and attainment, the rationale for this initiative appears to be more related to education than to resolving work-family conflict, as we shall see further on in this study.

1.5.2 Tertiary education

At the University of the West Indies (UWI), the number of female students overall exceeds the number of males. As a result, the number of female students is equal to or exceeds that of males in previously male-dominated fields, such as the physical and natural sciences. One exception in this regard is engineering, although female enrolment has also increased in this area. What is interesting is that, as females extend their options, males appear to be reducing theirs. Proportions of males have been declining in the Humanities, Education, Social Sciences, Agriculture and other disciplines. Data for students who pursue higher education overseas are not easily available.

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[7] Interview with the Minister of Education, Hazel Manning, after the budget speech, 28 September 2005.

Table 14: Trinidad and Tobago graduates from the University of the West Indies, 1991-1992 to 1999-2000

Degree	1991-1992 Male	1991-1992 Female	1995-1996 Male	1995-1996 Female	1999-2000 Male	1999-2000 Female	Percentage
B.Sc. Agriculture	28	28	23	37	19	60	76%
B.A. Humanities	34	100	53	140	50	171	77%
B.Sc. Engineering	67	10	126	39	157	41	21%
B.Sc. Natural Science	71	96	80	99	98	149	60%
B.Sc. Social Science	66	111	141	290	164	337	67%
MBBS Medical Sciences	28	6	49	36	43	42	49%
Education	---	---	43	132	89	221	71%

Source. Central Statistical Office: *Annual statistical digest 2000* (2000), p. 65.

There is generally much concern about the lower numbers of males among UWI graduates and at other levels of the education system. Research is ongoing to better understand this trend.[8] It must be stressed, however, that the university-educated population is an extremely small proportion of the national population, therefore educational attainment levels of most women, *as with most men,* leave much room for improvement.

This is especially so as males still dominate other forms of tertiary education, for example, the broad range of technical/vocational education, which is a distinct advantage, bearing in mind the energy and industrial base of the economy. Young girls in secondary schools are sometimes discouraged or not allowed to do technical and applied science subjects, such as woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing, information technology, etc. Similarly, course enrolment at trade schools, technical institutes, the community college – College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTATT) and the new University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) – are largely gender differentiated, and girls and boys are directed into sex-stereotyped occupations.

Nevertheless, with regard to young people who do not complete formal education, the employment options for young men are still greater than those for young women. Women are still excluded from most of the skilled trades except dressmaking, business studies and catering while, due to ideological and discriminatory factors, options such as auto mechanics, electrical technology, refrigeration, plumbing, carpentry, masonry and so on exist primarily for young males. The sexual division of labour in the technical and skilled trades still operates very strongly and so affects the majority of the population; therefore, there is less incentive for boys to complete formal secondary education. Overall, therefore taking *all* forms of tertiary education into consideration in 2000, the ratio of female to male tertiary students was 72:100, while female tertiary science students comprised 38.2 per cent of all female tertiary students (UNDP, 2000, p. 255).

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[8] The CDB/CIDA-funded research project ― Gender differentials in educational performance at the secondary and tertiary levels of Caribbean education systems ― is ongoing, coordinated by the Regional Coordinating Unit, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, located on the Mona campus.

Table 15: Enrolment in technical and vocational (craft) schools by course and sex, 1999-2000

Subject area	Male		Female		Total number
	Number	%	Number	%	
Graphic design and applied arts	33	34	64	66	97
Mechanical/building engineering	358	95.7	16	4.3	374
Mechanical/production engineering	461	94.3	28	5.7	489
Civil engineering/surveying and construction	173	94	11	6	184
Home economics	22 (tailoring)	15.6	118	64	141
Distributive education and management	23	11.8	172	88.2	195
Total	1,101	74.4	379	25.6	1,480

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Annual statistical digest 2000* (2000), pp. 64-65.

Women's high representation in institutions of tertiary and other levels of formal and informal education reflects their continued quest to improve their bargaining status on the labour market. As a result, many more women than men are full-time workers and parents and still attend educational programmes of some sort after (or sometimes during) working hours. [9] Women's increasing attendance to career pursuits has a high impact on their family responsibilities.

1.6 Child labour

The Rapid Assessment Surveys commissioned by the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean identified child labour as an issue for further exploration in Trinidad and Tobago (Dunn, 2002; Hunte and Lewis, 2002). The visibility of young children in the street during school hours is one indicator and these two distinct studies carried out in Trinidad, as well as in Tobago, conclude that some of the worst forms of child labour exist in this country. In the case of Trinidad, Hunte and Lewis found that children were involved in agriculture and domestic work among other types of labour, but children were also involved in scavenging, prostitution and pornography. In Tobago, Dunn found that children were involved in vending, work in trades, services, agriculture and fishing, and other forms of casual labour. As in Trinidad, they were involved in "incest, prostitution and pornography", as well as other illicit and hazardous activities. Among these activities, this report highlighted one incestuous relationship where the family was economically dependent on the perpetrator (Dunn, 2002, p. 7). [10]

Several factors contribute to cases of child labour, including poverty, the death or loss of one parent, low levels of educational attainment, limited social and psychological diagnostic outreach, and absence of parental support or poor parenting. Dunn also emphasized a lack of awareness of children's rights, "poor moral values" and materialism as contributing factors (Dunn, 2002, p. 10).

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[9] By personal observation, this trend increased at the UWI after tuition fees were introduced. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, in his budget presentation on 28 September 2005, announced that university education would now be free of charge. It is left to be seen if this trend will continue.

[10] These studies were rapid assessments. More in-depth studies are required.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has ratified ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and established a National Steering Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago in August 2004 (Ministry of Labour, 24 August 2004, unpublished).

1.7 Conclusion

The Caribbean has had a tradition of women's work outside the home from the start of its modern history. While Trinidad and Tobago since the mid-20th century has tended to have lower labour force participation rates than other parts of the region, these numbers have begun to rise again since the late 20th century. Although women generally have higher educational levels than men, they are still less likely to be employed and to have lower relative incomes. This places added pressure on employed women to perform as employment outside the home is important for them.

As the pace of economic life changes and as the range of occupations in which women are involved expands, so too do the pressures to reconcile the competing demands of work and family. This is especially demanding for single parents in a context where the highest child-bearing age-group is also the age-group with the highest proportion of women who have never married or have a common-law partner. It is also a major challenge for the poor, who have fewer economic means to address the competing demands of work and family.

Part II: Trends in family and family responsibilities

Introduction

This section provides background information on the systems of family and family traditions in Trinidad and Tobago. This is provided as a backdrop from which to evaluate the challenges of reconciling work with family in this context. It begins with a historical overview of factors affecting family development and the diverse patterns and trends which have emerged. This section also reviews the demographic indicators related to family and household, and provides summary information on the legislation relevant to this subject area.

2.1 Trends in family development and implications for work-family reconciliation

Family traditions in the Caribbean have been shaped by the historical displacement, uprooting and migratory shifts caused by the forced labour systems implemented by European colonizers with varying levels of brutality. In Trinidad and Tobago, in addition to the aboriginal communities met by the colonizers, people primarily from Africa, Europe and Asia contributed to establish diverse yet, in some ways similar, family traditions which allowed them to survive these systems.

First, the aboriginal communities before their almost total destruction were socially organized in villages, which consisted of an extended family structure. While some were hunter-gatherers, others had settled agriculture at the time of conquest. While men were responsible for hunting and warfare, women had responsibility for virtually everything else. For foreign observers like Père Labat writing on Dominica, this appeared to be oppressive, but it was also evidence of the significant contribution these early Caribbean women made to their families and community:

> The men only hunt, fish and cut down trees when a new clearing has to be made, which does not happen often, and they do other small jobs. The women have to do everything else. When the men return from hunting they just throw their game down in the doorway of the carbet, and the women pick it up and cook it, or when they come back from their fishing, they leave the fish in the canoe and not even mention it. The women have to run to the canoe to get the fish and cook it at once, for they are expected to know that the fishermen are hungry. In a word, the women are born servants and remain servants all their lives (Labat, cited in Johnson).

The early colonial and colonizing interventions, including forced labour systems like the encomienda system, [11] disrupted the social structure and family patterns, even before the major physical and cultural demise of the populations. Archaeological research and anthropological study of contemporary communities are now beginning to piece together this lost knowledge.

The economic imperatives of European capitalism necessitated the continuous search for cheap and productive labour. Therefore, although in the 18th century marriage was their

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[11] *Encomienda system*: an *encomendero* was granted a parcel of land with the right to exact tribute in the form of labour, crops or both from the indigenous people living on the land. In return, he was expected to Christianize and protect them (Brereton, 1981, p. 5).

prerogative in setting up families for wealthy colonizers, for the enslaved, legal marriage was not allowed. For planters, slaves were units of production which could be bought and sold, when necessary without concern about kinship ties. For most of the 18th century, therefore, when labour was easily available through the slave trade, few children were produced, and those who were born were removed from their mothers upon birth and would begin work by age 4 (Reddock, 1984). Despite this, however, historians suggest that slaves did establish informal family relationships, but such ties as existed did so at the whims and fancies of planters.

In the 19th century, in the aftermath of the abolition of the slave trade, the colonizers encouraged Christian marriage as a means of stabilizing African unions and increasing fertility, but with little success (Reddock 1979; 1994, pp. 22-23). This and other pro-natalist policies were resisted by the enslaved, who saw through them and sometimes used them as a means of resistance. In the post-emancipation period therefore, family systems were reconstructed from memory and circumstance but amid a great deal of contradiction and ambivalence.

The now free Africans showed that they did not care much about western ideals of family, and colonizers had stigmatized their forms of family relationships. Additionally, practices in slavery, such as the random sale of adults and children out of one plantation to another and the removal of very young children from mothers at early ages, disrupted family life. Additionally, planters and their overseers claimed rights to African women's bodies and the resulting offspring created new categories in an emerging colour-stratified social structure.

Thus, historically, the African-based family defied the traditional colonial norms and patterns, although in the post-emancipation and early 20th century period, colonial religious, administrative and education systems sought to establish and institute western ideals of marriage and family organization (Reddock 1994). Afro-Caribbean family forms emerged which drew on memory from Africa. They were also influenced by the needs for survival in the New World. From that time until now, however, policy-makers and scholars have perceived them as deviant from the Western conjugal norm and seldom sought to understand them on their own terms; for example, African family patterns tended to privilege consanguine relationships (blood), such as parent-child relationships over the conjugal. Family researchers also agree that gender relations tended to be more egalitarian, with women having greater authority and autonomy than in European or Indo-Caribbean families, and a key economic responsibility for households.

In an effort to re-establish planters' control over the labour force in the post-emancipation period, various systems of bonded labour were introduced in the 19th century. The most successful was the indentureship system using Indian immigrant labour. Unlike slavery, Indian indentureship was for a limited period – three to five years – and in the wake of the atrocities of the former system, there were more controls and monitoring mechanisms. Therefore, while on the one hand, colonials despised Indian cultural and religious practices, on the other hand, they could not overtly suppress them. As a result, there was less loss of identity and culture, although this was substantially transformed.

The Indian immigration system imported men in highly disproportionate numbers to women, resulting in serious instability in gender relations and family development among indentured Indians. Plantation wage labour, although discriminatory, provided women with a degree of economic independence. They, in turn, sought to establish some degree of autonomy in their social and family relationships. These efforts resulted in significant resistance from men and violence against women, which came to characterize the period.

While the indentureship experience challenged ancient patterns of family, these had been practised unevenly among the agrarian castes that comprised the majority of migrants even prior to migration (Reddock, 1994). Indian immigrant women, the majority of whom

migrated as single women, seized the opportunities which were presented in the new situation (Reddock, 1994). In the post-indentureship period, however, stabilizing the family unit was important in the establishment of the Indo-Trinidadian community in a still relatively hostile society. Traditions from India, such as arranged marriages and transference of property to male family members, were re-established (Mohammed, 2001). These activities brought some degree of stability, but reinforced patriarchal authority in co-residential households derived from the North Indian joint family. According to Leela Rampersad, however, by the middle of the 20th century, with increased levels of education and higher occupational status, co-residential units were increasingly replaced by distinct nuclear family households, although people sustained links with the "patrifocal joint-family". [12]

Although persons of African and Indian descent comprise the majority of the Trinidad and Tobago population, minorities have been significant in the history and contemporary life of Trinidad and Tobago. [13] For example, in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, Chinese form an important minority, whose migration to Trinidad and Tobago began in 1810, but who came in larger numbers during the indentureship period (1845-1917). In the light of the disproportionate number of men to women, Chinese men during the late 19th century married or established common-law unions with African women. These unions "ensured that subsequent generations were creolized" (Ho, 1989, p. 9).

At the end of indentureship by the early 20th century, Chinese voluntary immigration increased the numbers of women and men. The newcomer Chinese acted with some moral authority over the norms of marriage and cohabiting of Chinese-Trinidadians. The immigrant Chinese were sufficient in numbers to establish ethnic family patterns. Therefore, the "pure Chinese group" emerged, who engaged in business, imported wives and established extended families. However, by the mid 20th century, attempts to maintain the tradition of arranged marriages became rare, and the patriarchal family was hardly in existence as women worked outside the home and were equally influential in the management of business (Ho, 1989, p. 12).

This limited tracing of a historical formation of family life in Trinidad and Tobago indicates (a) that family structure was flexible and not an exact copy of western ideals; (b) that the western ideal continued to be hegemonic and to influence social and public policy; (c) that women differentiated themselves as working women who had some measure of economic independence; and (d) that the extended family (patrilocal or matrilocal) was a strategy for social and economic survival. All of these will be important as we examine contemporary efforts to reconcile work with family.

2.2 Demographic trends in family development

Caribbean sociologists and demographers have usually stressed the concept of the household in conjunction with or often instead of the concept of "family". This is because Caribbean family forms often defied traditional western norms of family and were often considered deviant. In this region, the idea of family goes far beyond the household and is seldom perceived as coterminous with family. It is interesting to see the ways in which family forms of western industrialized countries are becoming more varied, often adopting Caribbean-like patterns, while in the Caribbean, western nucleated forms become increasingly prevalent, especially in urban areas.

[12] See http://www.saxakali.com/indocarib/sojourner4.htm.

[13] Other minorities include the Lebanese (Syrians), European (whites) and new immigrant groupings, e.g. Filipinos, continental Africans and new waves of Venezuelans.

Similarly, the term "union status" was developed to address the range of unions which may exist among Caribbean people. Unfortunately, "union status" census data are often only collected from women of child-bearing age because of demographers' initial concern with its significance for fertility. Among union status categories, the term "common-law union" refers to stable co-residential unions without legal marriage, while "visiting union" refers to stable unions with partners having separate residences, regular sexual relations and usually with one child. If we examine data on marital status at the time of the Census, close to 50 per cent of both sexes were not married, just over 38 per cent were married, 5.20 per cent widowed and 2.51 per cent divorced (see table below).

Table 16. Union status, 2000

Status	Percentage
Married	37.80
Common-law union	10.25
Visiting union	0.40
Visiting union, no children	1.09
Married, no longer with husband	7.25
No longer with common-law partner	8.51
Never had partner	29.63
Not stated	10.50
Total	100.0

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Population and housing census 2000*, at http://cso.gov.tt/census2000.

2.2.1 Population and fertility

Prior to the 1960s, the crude birth rates were generally in excess of 30 live births per 1,000 estimated mid-year population. This rate declined until the 1980s, when there was an increase. From 1985, however, it declined once more from 28.6 in 1985 to 18.6 in 1992 and 14.6 in 1997 (CSO, 2004, p. :xi). Using another measure, total fertility rates were estimated to be 5.4 in 1960, 3.6 in 1970, 3.3 in 1980 and 2.4 in 1990. In the 1990s, these rates declined even further from 1.9 in 1994 to 1.7 in 1997 (CSO, 1996, p. 31).

In Trinidad and Tobago, fertility levels have undergone a further transition. For example, while fertility rates for the age group 15-19 fell from 61 per cent in 1990 to 45.9 per cent in 1994, births to teenage mothers increased from 13.5 per cent of all live and stillbirths in 1994 to approximately 14 per cent in 2000. As a result of this reduction in fertility in the older age groups, births to young women under 20 comprise a significant proportion of all births.

Births to teenage mothers therefore account for about 15 per cent of all births, and is usually correlated with lower educational status. The median age of the first sexual experience for girls was 15 years (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 2000, pp. 111-112)**.** In 1999, the modal age-group for live births to mothers was 20-24, followed by 25-29; while for fathers, it was 25-29, followed by 30-34. Fathers therefore still tend to be older than mothers.

2.2.2 Household organization and composition

As indicated earlier, the concept of "household" as developed in this region nuances our understanding of Caribbean family. The CARICOM Secretariat defines a private household as "consisting of one or more persons living together and sharing at least one of the daily main meals". It further claims that a household may consist of one person who lives alone in a separate dwelling or part of a dwelling shared with another household. Common to the region are "single [person], nuclear and extended type" households (Caribbean Community, 2002, p. 25).

According to the 2000 Census, there were 343,180 households in Trinidad and Tobago, with 328,000 in Trinidad and 15,180 in Tobago (2000 Census, p. 6). There were slightly more dwelling units than households. The average household size was 3.65 in Trinidad and 3.51 in Tobago. This average, however, does not reflect the variation in household size among the population. Household sizes ranged from one–person to one 40-person household. There were eight households comprising 30 persons.

There were twice as many male household heads as there were female household heads, even in older age groups where women predominate demographically (2000 Census). This is largely because of the accepted notion of headship. The modal household size for female-headed households was the two person household followed closely by the three-person household. For male-headed households, the modal household size was four persons (see Table 17).

Table 17: Household heads by household size and sex, 2000

Head of household	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1 person	30,442	14	15,817	17	46,259	15
2 persons	33,670	16	18,808	21	52,478	17
3 persons	37,163	17	17,571	19	54,734	18
4 persons	45,452	21	14,043	15	59,495	20
5 persons	31,097	15	10,071	11	41,168	14
6 persons	17,550	8	6,568	7	24,118	8
7 persons	8,255	4	3,564	4	11,819	4
8 persons	4,178	2	2,077	2	6,255	2
9 persons	2,098	1	1,217	1	3,315	1
10 + persons	2,497	1	1,732	1	4,229	1

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Population and housing census*, at http://cso.gov.tt/census2000.

Using data from the 1992 Household Budgetary Survey, Jacinta Bronte Tinkew found that poorer households tend to have higher numbers of children and were therefore supporting more people. Households in the lowest quintile had approximately 6.1 persons, while those in non-poor households had approximately 3.9 persons (Bronte Tinkew, 1998, p. 5). She also found that few of these poor households were nuclear and a large proportion was single parent: female-headed or non-biologically related households.

Female headship is seldom acknowledged unless an adult male is not present, if he is mentally or physically incapacitated, or if the woman is widowed or divorced. n the past in Indo-Caribbean extended families, the oldest son would assume the position of household head in the absence of the father. Even in Afro- or Indo-Trinidadian homes, where women, especially older women, exercised authority and leadership, in answer to a question they would usually defer to the adult male. Not surprisingly, the majority of male household heads tend to be married, while the largest proportion of female heads tends to have never been married, followed by widowed. It is interesting to note that just over one-quarter of women whose union status was married were recorded as being heads of their households. In 1990-1991, Trinidad and Tobago was one of three countries in the Caribbean with "the highest proportion of women married" (Caribbean Community, 2002) and, not surprisingly, men headed the majority of households.

Table 18: Marital status by household head and by sex, 2000

Marital status	Male percentage	Female percentage	Total percentage
Never married	25.04	37.70	28.85
Married	64.40	18.78	50.67
Widowed	3.98	29.20	11.57
Legally separated	1.59	4.02	2.32
Divorced	3.25	8.39	4.80
Not stated	1.74	1.91	1.79

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Population and housing census 2000.*

Table 19: Union status by household head (female), 2000

Union status	Number	Percentage
Married	22,968	25.15
Common law	8,582	9.39
Visiting	338	0.37
Visiting, no children	1,700	1.86
No longer living with husband	23,181	25.36
No longer living with common-law partner	9,199	10.06
Never had husband or common-law partner	14,657	16.03
Not stated	10,763	11.77
Total	91,408	100.0

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Population and housing census 2000.*

According to St. Bernard, "households below the poverty line tend to be larger, headed by females who are often single mothers with dependent children, or contain at least one elderly person living alone or in an extended family setting sometimes having responsibility for the entire household" (St. Bernard, 2003, p. 142). In other words, women are largely responsible for organizing and implementing tasks to support the family. They often become a head of the household by declaring themselves such, or in the absence of a male. [14]

Table 20: Summary of household characteristics by sex and by head of household, 2000

Household characteristics	Percentage of distribution of households	Average size of households	Average number of children
All households	100	3.78	1.39
Male headed	68.99	3.84	1.41
Female headed	31.01	3.57	1.35
Single parent male headed	4.55	3.91	1.46
Single parent female headed	19.23	4.22	1.68
Single parent female headed with children	2.17	4.02	2.20
Single parent male headed with children	9.15	4.41	2.48

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Continuous sample survey of population*, at www.cso.ov.tt/statistics/cssp.

Table 20 above shows that single-parent women household heads, on average, tend to have the largest households, often larger than the average for all households. This has serious implications for their ability to fulfil family responsibilities, bearing in mind their lower incomes.

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[14] According to CARICOM, "women headed fewer households than men" in Trinidad and Tobago, where there is a high proportion of married women, "suggesting that in married couple households, the man tends to be recognized as head" (CARICOM, 2004, p. 25).

2.2.3 Family structure and organization

For more insights into family organization and structure, Godfrey St. Bernard's 1997 study is instructive. Of a sample of 1,973 households studied throughout Trinidad and Tobago, the *National Survey of Family Life 1994* "revealed that there is a preponderance of 63.7 per cent nuclear households in Trinidad and Tobago" (man-woman conjugal households). The study further found that 13.9 per cent comprised persons living alone; 34 per cent comprised a husband, wife and children units; 11.9 per cent, single mothers; and 17.4 per cent, other extended (St. Bernard, 1997, p. 154). Taken together, conjugal units (i.e. the husband, wife and children) and common-law couple with children units account for 41.1 per cent of all households, less than 50 per cent (St. Bernard, 1997, p. 23). What is interesting is the geographical variation of these trends. Predominantly Afro-Trinidadian communities tended to have lower proportions of conjugal family units, while predominantly Indo-Trinidadian communities and Tobago had higher proportions. In Tobago, in addition, the number of families including "other siblings" was almost equal to the number of husband, wife and children units. The proportion of common law units was also larger, as was the proportion of grandmother extended families (St. Bernard, 1997, p. 23).

2.2.4 The elderly

In 2000, the elderly population (58 and over) comprised approximately 8.7 per cent of the total population with slightly more females (58,453) than males (51,777) (2000 Census). This marked a consistent growth in the elderly population over the last three decades. Using other data, St. Bernard showed that the population 65 and over in Trinidad and Tobago had increased from 4 per cent in 1970, 6 per cent in 1980 and to 7 per cent in 2000, and was projected to reach 10 per cent in 2015 (St. Bernard, 2003, p. 133). In relation to the region as a whole, he further notes that:

In the Caribbean, ageing has gained momentum due to declining fertility levels, increased longevity and a growing trend of return migration involving older Caribbean natives who return upon retirement (St. Bernard, 2003, p. 157).

In another study on return migration to Tobago, St. Bernard (2004, p. 1) found that:

Tobago has also been targeted as the primary destination for a number of return migrants principally from European countries … such returnees have exhibited the potential to invest in business undertakings or make civic contributions to social development initiatives on the island.

The increase in the ageing population has many implications for the society – economic, social and infrastructural. In 2000, close to 19 per cent of males over 60 had worked during the past year, compared with 6.4 per cent of females. St Bernard notes the particularly difficult situation of women who predominate in this age group who may have been dependent on a male spouse who is no longer alive, and who may be without pension or social security benefits or not have children able to support them.

In the Caribbean, a tradition of multi-generational households exists. In many households, especially in the past, elder females were central figures around whom the household evolved. Much of the early work on Afro- Caribbean family structure dwelt on this phenomenon which, among others, was referred to as matrifocality. [15] Indo-Trinidadian households also have a multi-generational tradition, but here the central focus is the male patriarch: the elder male or his eldest son. Whereas the former usually comprised a woman, her daughter(s) (and sons), sometimes their partners and their children, the latter usually comprised a man, his sons and wives, and their children (see St. Bernard, 2003, p. 158).

A 1994 National Survey of Family Life in Trinidad and Tobago found that 22 per cent of all households had at least one older person (65 years and older). Of these, 42 per cent were extended family households, while 21 per cent comprised persons living alone. This reflects a trend towards independent households upon marrying or obtaining adulthood, as well as the loss of children to migration (St. Bernard, 2003, p. 158). Table 21 supports this finding. It also shows that close to 10 per cent more females live alone than males.

Table 21: Elderly household heads by household size and by sex, 2000

Household size	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
1 person	6,038	19.5	6,864	29.0
2 persons	8,054	26.0	5,493	23.0
3 persons	5,116	16.5	3,576	15.1
4 persons	3,741	12.1	2,440	10.3
5 persons	2,771	8.9	1,989	8.4
6 persons	2,121	6.8	1,367	5.8
7 persons	1,149	3.7	789	3.3
8 persons or more	1,636	5.3	1,155	4.9
Total	30,990		23,673	

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Population and housing census 2000*, at http://cso.gov.tt/census2000.

Table 21 also suggests that, although fewer than for males, the proportion of elderly female household heads is much higher than at lower age groups. This suggests that these women may have lost their spouses and are now heads of families including their children and possibly their children's children as described earlier.

As we shall see later in this section, the elderly present particular challenges to families. Most families are not prepared for the changes that take place in power relations, role reversals, the need for additional care and attention, hospital or doctors' visits, and the onset of health challenges. The establishment of the Division of Ageing in the Ministry of Social Development is a timely response to this situation.

2.2.5 HIV and AIDS

In 2004, Trinidad and Tobago had an estimated prevalence rate in HIV infection of 3.2 per cent. It was further estimated that there were 29,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS in Trinidad and Tobago. The epidemic was growing most rapidly in the 15 to 49 age group, with 45 per cent of new infections; 70 per cent of new infections among this age group was occurring among females (UN, 2006, p. 3). The median age of infection was 35 in males and 29 in females. Between 2003 and 2005, there was a shift in the ratio of new HIV infections of males and females in the age group 30 to 49, with more males than

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[15] Other terms were matriarchal, grandmother, matricentric or mother-centred families.

females constituting the new HIV cases. The highest ratios of male-to-female new HIV cases were recorded in 2005 (UN, 2006, p. 7).

In 2003, as shown in Table 22 below, there was a decline in the number of recorded HIV and AIDS cases and deaths, largely due to success in public education and advocacy by government and non-governmental organizations as well as improvements in treatment and care programmes, including access to anti-retroviral medications (ARVs) (UN, 2006, pp. 9-10).

Table 22: Reported cases of AIDS, 1985-2003

Year	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total deaths
1985	39	6	0	45	41
1990	114	59	0	173	113
1995	228	112	0	340	170
2000	243	131	1	375	205
2001	261	165	10	436	231
2002	248	167	3	418	240
2003	198	121	3	322	166

Source: CAREC, quarterly AIDS surveillance reports, 2005.

The main concern in recent years has been the increasing proportion of women being infected, especially as the HIV virus without attention is transmitted to babies during childbirth. Another concern has been the age groups most affected; in 2003, the highest prevalence was in the age group 30-34, followed by 25-29 *and* 40-44. These are the age-groups at the height of their working and parenting years. While heterosexual transmission was identified as the main contributing factor in 101 out of 311 cases in 2003, the report also identified a large "unknown exposure category" of 196 out of 311 cases, which suggests that data on transmission are still incomplete (CAREC, 2005).

Information on caregivers of HIV-AIDS positive people is not easily available. However, in countries with a high prevalence (e.g. Zambia), it was reported that women take on responsibilities for care of the ill and infected and for the care of children whose parents have died, and often have to assume major responsibilities for funerals and other caring activities while still being involved in paid work. [16]

2.3 Families and care work

In Trinidad and Tobago, as in other societies, there is a prevailing notion that the society has lost its family traditions and societal values. The tendency to think in terms of lost traditions may be a reaction to the increasing levels of crime and violent atrocities, especially among youth. For many, the "breakdown in family" is really a code phrase for the absence of women in the home. While the globalizing influences of industrialization and modernization have had some effect on the family, yet, as in the past, family traditions today reflect strategies for survival of ordinary people pervading all kinship and community life, that is, the provision of supportive relationships, maintenance of economic and social cohesiveness, and retention of a familial identity. These are manifested through both formal and informal relationships, and are similar to past strategies to maintain family.

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[16] Public lecture, Professor Michael Kelly, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, 2002.

The meanings attached to these relationships, however, are different. For example, at all levels of society, marriage no longer confers the status of respectability which it did in the early to the mid-20th century. According to St. Bernard, motherhood outside marriage and consensual unions increased during the 1980s and 1990s (St. Bernard, 1997b, p. 130), but these have always been a characteristic of Afro-Caribbean family life. While the nuclear family [17] is dominant at all levels of society, its structure no longer reflects a rigid pattern of a working male breadwinner/housekeeping female nurturer, although the ideology continues to be strong (St. Bernard, 1997, p. 154).

In her analysis of the 1992 Household Budgetary Survey, Bronte Tinkew identified a minority of single father families. These single fathers were more likely than married fathers to be living in an extended or complex household and therefore to have more adult support available. She notes:

> A multi-family single parent male headed household means that children have potentially more access to adults then children living with just their fathers. The problems of solo parenting differ for men and women in the Trinidad and Tobago context. Solo fathers receive more volunteer help from friends and kin, probably because men are assumed to be less capable of childrearing than women (Tinkew, 1998, p. 31).

2.3.1 Migration

In multi-ethnic Trinidad and Tobago, characteristics of family organization, composition and structure vary and overlap among ethnic communities (St. Bernard, 1998). Two of these trends are particularly significant to this study. The first is migration of parents, often mothers, whose children remain behind; and the other is the increasing trend for women to become household heads, largely as single women. Migration has always been a characteristic of the Caribbean experience. In a region born out of migration, this is often perceived as a solution to personal, financial and other problems. People have migrated internationally, intra-regionally and internally primarily for economic reasons. [18] Families experience long periods of separation as children, in particular, live in households differently constructed when one or both parents migrate. The stable and diverse economies of industrialized countries have been rescuing largely women workers, as well as men from poverty and/or the limited economic opportunities which they experience. [19]

Children experience the separation of one or both parents in a variety of ways. On the one hand, some of them experience supportive relationships within a temporary family structure, along with gifts and money from abroad, and promises to join their parent(s). Others continue to live in an extended household with grandparent(s) and/or other adult relatives. On the other hand, some experience dissatisfaction and a sense of loss at the separation, especially when parents fail to live up to their promises for reunification, particularly when the existing family situation is problematic. Yet children within all categories bear marks of abandonment to varying degrees, particularly related to the loss of a mother to a foreign country.

In 2004, Families in Action (FIA), a non-profit, non-governmental organization in the city of Port of Spain found that, of their 453 female clients, 10 per cent were grandmothers

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[17] Married and common-law units.

[18] The trend is likely to increase with the introduction of the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME) initiative.

[19] We refer to seasonal work, particularly for men, which exists in North America, for example.

in the age group 40+ who had become childcare providers in the absence of parents. These women found it difficult to cope, because of relationship problems with grandchildren. Migration of even one parent, or even migration within the country, destabilizes family life and produces child behavioural difficulties, along with an increase in adult stress levels. [20] Economic migration, while it might bring some relief to poverty for some, is a persistent trend that fractures family life.

Effects of international and internal migration

Case 1

A's mother migrated to North America because she was unable to find employment. A lives with a step-mother, who "bawls" at her a lot. "I am only waiting for the time when I could go with my mother live with her in Virginia", she says, while tears flow.

Source: SJC Young Leaders Project: *Mothers don't come in barrels* (1999), pp. 31-32.

Case 2

B's mother, often on weekends, visits B's father who works in Tobago. Because of school attendance and travel costs, B sees his father on national holidays only. He is dissatisfied and sometimes throws tantrums.

Source: Personal interview with a ferry commuter, 25 September 2005.

2.3.2 Women as household heads

Women's responsibilities as homemaker and worker are both important to the organization of family life. Unfortunately, this is still not accepted. Until the mid-20th century, they were considered two mutually exclusive careers, and middle- class women were made to choose between them. Yet, society sees wage work as the primary activity for men and secondary for women, even when fathers are absent. For women in paid work, the onus is on them to organize their family life so that it does not interfere with their "work" life. Middle-class men in the past and, to some extent even today, can enjoy the luxury of a family *and* a full-time job as their right. This is not yet the case for women.

First, women's desire for economic autonomy through paid work often challenges their parenting role. Second, for historical and cultural reasons, especially among Afro-Trinidadian women, single parenting is common (St. Bernard, 2003, p. 142). Paid work is a necessity for women who parent children alone and need to meet that responsibility totally. Nevertheless, even for women who bear their children in marriage or union, this does not ensure economic support, especially if the relationship breaks down. According to Mindie Lazarus-Black, men of all ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago routinely deny paternity and resist paying child maintenance (Lazarus-Black, 2001). In the context of abandonment, the rising cost of living and the need for an improved quality of life, places added stress on women.

Nevertheless, paid work is not only a means to an end: it is also an avenue for personal achievement and identity. With increased levels of educational attainment, many women see the acquisition of marketable skills as a means to self-fulfilment. All women interviewed for this study, regardless of income levels, see their jobs as avenues for contributing to the social and economic standards they want for themselves and their families. These women speak of having a job, either for its earning potential or as a tool for self-development. Workplace competition inspires them to grasp opportunities for higher learning, in-service training and so on.

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[20] Personal interview with Certified Employee Assistance Professional, 20 September 2005.

Women have articulated their goals as both parenting *and* building careers. This would require both a reduction in the significance of their traditional role as homemakers, and the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities. Society's fear, therefore, that women's employment would have negative effects on families has to be examined, along with the growing evidence that men, although this is still limited, have increased their commitment to childcare. It may be that women are insisting more on support from male partners and/or that increases in women's autonomy have made imperative some changes in the sexual division of labour and men's family responsibilities.

Women with careers remain in principal care providers

Case 3: Married mother, junior executive

"I found myself working at my marriage, while managing the children, often by telephone, yet I felt propelled with what was out there for me: a career." (Personal interview, 10 August 2005.)

Case 4: Single mother, clerical job

"I know what I have to do, as a single parent. I am at work before everyone else in the morning. I prepare my three children and send them to school, yet I find time for classes in the evening, and to take care of my children." (Public officer in Tobago in a focus group, 25 September 2005.)

Case 5: Mother in common-law union

"I work with my man in the tiling business, because they pay women too little in service jobs and they often provide you with less time to earn. So I learned tiling, we make better money this way." (Female tiler, 4 October 2005.)

2.4 Work and changing family traditions

2.4.1 Childcare

Historically, research shows that childcare, fostering and elderly care have traditionally been functions of family and the wider circle of community. Yet, the operations and management of tasks in these areas have been largely women's responsibility in households and communities (Rawlins, 2004; Reddock, 1999; St. Bernard, 1997b). Childcare was a woman's prime responsibility, supported by her "family": kinship group and community of women and men. Childcare included the responsibility for the physical, spiritual and intellectual development of children. As women, including grandmothers, once again became active in the labour force, they sought new avenues for childcare.

There is currently no statistical evidence to show how parents have been coping with career demands. Nevertheless, qualitative research for this study indicates that coping strategies exist, that is, parents utilize the services of paid help for preschoolers, such as daily or live-in domestic help. They place children in the care of neighbours or relatives. They give responsibilities to older siblings. They use private or public child-care services. They hire help for after-school care. They choose jobs which have flexible hours to manipulate their work time around hours for childcare. They establish their own businesses.

These strategies alone are not altogether effective in helping women to balance work and family responsibilities. The main reason is that success in balancing these responsibilities is precarious as the supportive base can be transient. Full-time household help is not easily available and can be unpredictable. Additionally, household helpers are often mothers themselves with their own work-life challenges. There are few affordable organized and comprehensive childcare services, and these may be out of the reach of low-income earners. All of these factors greatly challenge women's skills in balancing work and family life.

For instance, most primary and secondary schools operate from 8:00 to 14:30, while offices and other workplaces function officially from 8:00/8.30 to 16:00/16.30. Some parents are concerned about the stability and security of children who may be temporarily and often voluntarily in care of "strangers". Recent increases in incidents of crime, including kidnapping, perpetrated on children and young people have placed an even greater burden on working parents, many of whom leave work to personally collect children from school. Other parents are concerned that they have to leave children alone too long, or that their children must stay with them at their workplaces until their work time has ended. Both male and female adults speak about these concerns, while many managers are concerned that productivity levels drop considerably between 14:00 and 16:00 on workdays at offices, factories and other workplaces. [21] (See cases below.)

Families' coping strategies: Home to work commuting distances, commuting children and safety

Case 5: Two married couples

Mr. and Mrs. C have three children and Mr. and Mrs. E have one child. Both women and men hold management positions in employment. Both men work offshore in the oil industry on shifts of one to two weeks on and off. Both women work in the capital city and travel 130 km. to and from work each day, sometimes keeping irregular hours. Childcare is dependent on paid live-in household help, and frequent telephone calls to the home, mainly from husbands. In cases of emergencies, grandparents and other family members assist. Husbands do the majority of family tasks during their weeks off, leaving them little or no personal time.

Case 6: A female single parent

Mrs. K has two children. She found that preparing meals, helping children to develop skills, transporting children to school and other activities, supervising homework and doing mandatory household chores was an exhausting experience. It improved when children became latchkey kids, and they were able to walk home from school. Her work responsibilities as a teacher were equally demanding, and compounded her household duties. There was the time-sensitive nature of the classroom coupled with other responsibilities, many of which had deadlines or required her undivided attention. Occasionally, she received help from her mother. She was amazed at how she made work and life possible.

Case 7: Mr. J, a taxi driver

Mr. J takes his three children to and from school each day. Two daughters go to primary school north of the city, and one son goes to a primary school in the heart of the city. His concern for the children's safety will not let him pass the responsibility on to anyone else.

Case 8: Mr. and Mrs. K, both in the public service

Their working hours are flexible. They have two daughters, aged 5 and 7, who attend school in the district in which they live. Mrs. K has developed a network of resources, which consists of a babysitter and a taxi driver who live in her district, as well as her mother, sisters and nieces who live away in a totally different area and play a role occasionally in childcare. Her day begins at 5:00. Because of the flexible time in her new job, which she chose because it helps with her plan, she can fully dress and groom her daughters for school, and give them packed lunch kits before a female taxi driver transports them to the babysitter. They remain there approximately an hour, before the driver takes them to school. They have the reverse trip in the afternoon, when they remain at the babysitter's until she is on her way home from work, between 16:00 to 18:00, depending on the structure of her day. During vacation time, her daughters spend short spells of time with their grandmother and aunts. In addition, they accompany her on job-related trips throughout Trinidad when they have the opportunity to visit members of their extended family while she works. She claims to have succeeded in managing family responsibilities without making demands on her husband, who has made it clear that his job is top priority.

Source: Personal interviews with parents and family members, August-September 2005.

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[21] Interviews were held with female and male parents and human resources managers for this study, September 2005.

2.4.2 Foster care

Child adoption, formal or informal, was also a tradition for women in all classes. The circumstances of these children may have ranged from those abandoned by parents because of death, migration or poverty, to those whom women might adopt to rescue from forms of deprivation in overcrowded households. Some children were beneficiaries of schooling and social upbringing, while others had problems in that "adopted" parents insisted they perform tasks as "servants" to the households. There was no legal monitoring system in the past, so outcomes for adopted children varied in success; and beyond personal anecdotes, documentation is very sparse.

A 2004 study (Cambridge, 2004) found that, for a number of reasons, grandparents from the age of 50 have been accepting parenting roles, especially in cases of abandonment of children by biological parents. This form of informal adoption arises out of unemployment, migration, substance abuse, death caused by HIV/AIDS, murder and incarceration. Cambridge found that sex determined "the acceptance of parenting responsibility" even when the parenting was related to children of women's male partners (Cambridge, 2004, p. 59).

The profile of women taken from a qualitative study of ten grandparents shows that their inadequate income is caused by their very low levels of education, which affect their job possibilities, even though they have passed the age for regular employment. However, they create self-employment, such as occasional catering, babysitting, selling vegetables and small grocery items (Cambridge, 2004, p. 59). Some households' income, therefore, falls below the level of public assistance provided at that time: $TT629.00 (US$100) monthly, by the Social Welfare Department of the Ministry of Social Development (1996). The difficulties of elderly parenting, especially in poorer households, are supported by Bronte Tinkew's finding that "[c]hildren in households that have younger heads under 30 and 30-39 years of age are 80 per cent and 40 per cent more likely to attend school than children in households with older heads – those age[d] 40+"(Bronte Tinkew, 1998, p. 27).

This study endorses Cambridge's recommendation that children in these situations need "to be placed in the care of The Children's Authority because their parents are unwilling or unable to provide and care for them" (Cambridge, 2004, p. 63). Often, these grandparents are in need of financial assistance to develop an improved quality of life, and require legal protection when they are parenting, as they have no legal authority to assume the role of parent.

2.4.3 Elderly care

Elderly care was also the prime responsibility of women with the support of a larger family circle. Active elderly women and men who live in households and formed three-generation families, were usually blood relatives of the nuclear family, and they contributed to decision-making and other responsibilities in the home. According to St. Bernard, 47.3 per cent of his sample of 546 individuals under 65 years perceived that elderly persons over 65 years were continuously contributing to household tasks (St. Bernard, 1997, p. 158). Therefore, they provided unpaid work, which was an asset to childcare and guidance of older children. Generally speaking, the presence of the active elderly in the home created reciprocal relationships, because of a mature presence to assume family responsibilities. In addition, the young grew up amongst the old with a natural affinity. Thus traditionally, when seniors needed care in households of lower to middle incomes, second-generation parents, older children, relatives and other members of the community took turns with nurturing and caring responsibilities.

Joan Rawlins' 2004 study found that 82 per cent of caregivers of the elderly were women. Forty-five per cent were over 50 years old and 7 per cent between 20-29 years old.

Spouses cared for 23 per cent.[22] Rawlins found that, while caregivers claimed to be "in reasonably good health", 50 per cent had conditions for which they were receiving medical treatment (Rawlins, 2004, p. 38). Some of the concerns aired in this study were the inadequacy of health services and hospitals, and the insufficiency of financial resources, the latter particularly being the case for daughters as caregivers.

Elderly care is currently changing and contributes to work-family conflict. Working parents, either single or in nuclear families, do not have enough time to devote to developing and maintaining bonds between the older and the younger generation. The problems that emerge from the quantity of commuting time, ensuring that childcare is adequate, together with meeting the demands of the job, preclude the frequency of traditional family gatherings. Whether or not the grandparent generation starts earlier in age than in the past, in the middle and lower classes, many elderly people occupy separate spaces from their biological families. There is also a tendency for the needy younger person to exploit the small, accumulated finances of older people.

2.4.4 Breastfeeding as a family tradition

Cultural imperialism and the negative impacts of modernization may be factors that affected the breastfeeding tradition in Trinidad and Tobago. In tracing the "history of breast-feeding practices in the English speaking Caribbean", Thomas Marchione drew upon observations of the influence of the white elite "from the time of slavery to 1950", which he found in "personal and official accounts" (Marchione, 1980, p. 2). During the later days of slavery, he argues, enslaved African-Trinidadian women were allowed to breastfeed their children for up to two years. This challenged the planters' desire for increased fertility levels and high productivity. Marchione suggests that on, recognizing the economic impact, they encouraged women to use substitutes as a supplement. Documentation clearly tracing the progress of breastfeeding patterns over the centuries is limited. It would appear, however, that the decline of the breastfeeding tradition took place, extensively during the 20th century (Marchione, 1980).

Later in the 20th century, with the rise of women in the labour force, many urban women in particular resisted carrying on the tradition. Also, during the 1950s and 1960s, when the United Nations International Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) encouraged the use of formulas of imported milk for children throughout the Caribbean, women's adherence to the breastfeeding tradition lessened. By 1970, breastfeeding patterns among a sample of 93 women from rural Trinidad and Tobago showed that 75 per cent weaned their children at 16 months, 20 per cent at 10 months, and 5 per cent at 5 months, using the bottle as a supplement (Marchione, 1980).[23]

Between 1984 and 1988, research findings in health surveys, indicated that "6% to 23% of infants were not breast-fed beyond two months of age" (PAHO, 1993). However, in Trinidad and Tobago, a voluntary organization, The Informative Breastfeeding Service (t.i.b.s) established 28 years ago, provides a counselling service to encourage breastfeeding practices. Its work has been impressive in educating and helping women to make a choice

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[22] The author did not differentiate between female or male spouses or both.

[23] See www.unu.edu/unupress/food/8F022e/8F022E.01.htm.

to succeed as "breadwinners" and as mothers. However, employers have not yet begun to give breastfeeding breaks or to provide nurseries/crèches for mothers at work. [24]

Mothers who cope with work and breastfeeding

Case 9

"I returned to work when my son was 3½ months old. I visit his daycare every working day to breastfeed him and to express milk. How do I do it? My day goes like this: I breastfeed him at about 7:00 before we leave home. I drop my (two) older children to school and then leave my baby in St. James. I begin my lunch hour at 11:00 and drive for 20 minutes from downtown, Port of Spain (capital) to St James (suburbs). When I arrive there, he is usually hungry and looking out for me, so I breastfeed him immediately... I eat the lunch I have brought with me and drive back to work, getting there by 12:30" (Helen Ross, t.i.b.s *NEWS*, April//June 2004, pp. 1-2).

Case 10

Rebecca Gibson has three children, two of whom she breastfed in a non-standard fashion when she worked outside the home. Like many women, she needs to supplement her husband's earnings, so she currently works from home. However, when she learned about breastfeeding she calculated that giving her child a formula was beyond their means. She says: "I am a young mother of three children. I attended the antenatal clinic at the Laventille Health Centre where the nurses encouraged me to breastfeed my baby. My eldest is 7 years and the baby, Samuel, was breastfed exclusively for six months and he is doing great. He is now 9 months old and continues to breastfeed and has started to eat solids. When I go out, I do not stay too long, so as not to miss his feeding, that makes me more dedicated" (t.i.b.s *NEWS*, October/December 2002, p. 3).

2.5 Family work and the sexual division of labour

The tendency for domestic tasks and responsibilities to become the prerogative of women in families still pervades society. However, there is increased sensitivity among some men towards sharing domestic responsibilities. Increasingly whether there is a marital, common law or visiting union, some men are more inclined to make efforts to engage in family responsibilities. Men's participation in transporting children to and from school and extracurricular activities is important. Added to that, some men groom children for school and supervise homework. Yet, women have largely retained that role of care provider in a very significant way, particularly in single-parent households.

Women sometimes experience difficulties in devising strategies to share the domestic workload. Many of them claim they do everything that needs to be done to avoid additional stress; that is, they assign tasks occasionally to members of the household, but they still have to manage the activity. Delegation does not mean the responsibility is shared. Others claim that their role is primarily to manage their households, as coordinating tasks and socializing younger members becomes their prime responsibility and takes about 50 to 60 per cent of their time daily (see Table 23).

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[24] Interview with executives of The Informative Breastfeeding Service, 11 October 2005.

Table 23: Total number of hours spent on unpaid housework and other activities during past week, population 15 +, Trinidad and Tobago

Activities	Males	Females
Cleaning the house	128,750	297,094
Washing laundry	122,868	298,639
Meal preparation and related activities	110,840	291,043
Playing and personal care of children	50,212	115,604
Assisting with homework and transport	39,602	81,459
Care of disabled, sick or aged relatives	13,441	20,333
Gardening and rearing of animals	59,969	44,077
Home repair and maintenance	76,902	23,219
Sewing	10,294	32,993
Sub-total	612,878	1,204,461
Participation in sports/cultural activities	38,810	24,499
Participation in social/community work	19,543	23,780
Total hours spent	671,231	1,252,740

Source: Centre for Gender and Development Studies: *Draft national gender policy for Trinidad and Tobago* (2004), p. 64. [25]

In the past, adults passed on to children the value of responsibility by teaching them to perform household tasks. In cases where families maintained enterprises in the home, they taught children related skills. This latter tradition served as training for adulthood, with emphasis on wifehood and motherhood for girls, and fatherhood, wage-work and entrepreneurship for boys. Among the parents and caregivers interviewed for this study, 0.5 per cent claimed to give children responsibility for domestic tasks. Women find it difficult to delegate tasks, and hence remain primarily responsible for almost everything in the household.

In the absence of the large extended family, many people with children and elders develop private networks of adults, mostly outside the family structure, to discharge responsibilities required for quality childcare and elderly care. Some women, because of low income, are dependent on public services, such as government-run ECCE units, which do not always meet their needs because of inaccessibility and unavailability.

[25] Trinidad and Tobago was one of the first countries in the world to enact a Counting Unremunerated Work Act in 1996, which required the country's statistical office to conduct surveys of all unremunerated work, including housework and childcare. The Act requires the Central Statistical Office (CSO) "to produce and maintain statistics relative to the counting of unremunerated work and to provide a mechanism for quantifying and recording the monetary value of such work". The CSO was charged with the conduct of periodic household surveys at least every three years to calculate the monetary value of unremunerated work in Trinidad and Tobago. During the 2000 census, the CSO collected information on hours spent doing household reproductive activities.

Parents' division of labour for household chores

Case 11

Mr. and Mrs. E have a nuclear family with three daughters. Mr. E spends 95 per cent (his estimate) of his personal time shuttling children to and from school, lessons, making visits to health services, and taking them to social and cultural activities. He spent 20 per cent of that time on baby-care tasks. He did no cooking or indoor house maintenance. Although his job separated him from his daughters for many days at a time, in their pre-school stages, he guided them to develop skills in reading and comprehension, and taught them human values. Later on, he regularly supervised their homework.

Case 12

Mr. J is a father separated from his wife. He shuttles his three children to school and back home, where they live with their mother. On weekends, he takes them to social activities, often spending quality time with them at his mother's house. Mr. J is a taxi driver who claims he loses money by taking care of his children that way, but he can see no other way to be correct.

Case 13

Mrs. P is a 65-year old head of a three-generation household, who does not work outside the home. Her residence is large and built on expansive grounds. The household exists in a flexible way, sometimes a daughter lives there with two children. However, her 17-year old grandson lives with her permanently. He undertakes no household tasks, and she says she finds it difficult to assign any to him.

Case 14

Mrs. D is a 51-year old hotel worker and head of a three–generation household of seven persons. Her daughter and three granddaughters, aged 16, 14, 10 years, live with her. She copes by giving her daughter and grandchildren responsibilities for domestic tasks. Her husband, who is a builder, primarily does repairs to the house and yard work. She spends her time organizing and coordinating responsibilities.

Source: Personal interviews, August-September 2005.

2.5.1 Access to social amenities and labour-saving technology

The 2000 Population and Housing Census found that, in a population of 1,292,366 persons of which there were 626, 315 females and 633,051 males, access to the types of facilities in households was as shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Percentage distribution of households and type of facilities for use, 2005

Type of facility	*Percentage*
Water piped into dwelling or yard	69.37
Electricity	91.96
Toilet facility (water borne)	67.04
Stove (electric or gas)	97.36
Microwave	19.74
Refrigerator	83.62
Deep freeze	16.89
Washing machine	49.64
Clothes dryer	8.25
Vacuum cleaner	21.18
Lawn mower	12.12

Source: Central Statistical Office, at www.cso.gov.tt/statistics/cssp/default.asp.

From Table 24 above, we see that electricity is the most well-distributed utility, reaching over 90 per cent of the population. Also, a significant proportion of households own refrigerators, which are a necessity in the tropical climate of Trinidad and Tobago. Water, a most important commodity, is not equally available in all communities. In some rural and urban communities, water is available some days in the week or at certain times

of the day. There are situations where a community may not get a pipe–borne water supply for up to two to three weeks before protests bring water to the taps. This is a matter which affects women in particular. Some women miss work if they are unable to bathe or remain at home to collect water when it arrives. There are also instances where school authorities have to send children home from school when there is no water supply. School principals then call parents to collect children or, in some cases, children return home unattended. Around 50 per cent of households have washing machines, an important labour–saving device, yet public washing facilities such as laundromats are rare in this country. Although most of the country now has access to telephone lines, the introduction of the cellular phone has revolutionized communication among large sections of the population. The cellular phone allows parents to keep in touch with children and to coordinate pick-ups or respond in case of emergencies. They also, however, increase access throughout the day, which can be an additional stress for parents.

2.6 Transportation and implications for work-family conflict

Public transportation in Trinidad and Tobago is a combination of a state-provided bus system and a private taxi system with three variants. The most popular form – the maxi taxi – is a minibus licensed to carry a standard number of passengers on a fixed pre-determined route. The second type – the route taxi – is normally a sedan car licensed to carry four to five passengers, also working on a fixed route. The third type, which is less popular and not available in all areas, is the normal hired taxi, where an individual client hires a taxi service for a required destination. As these are all private, their frequency and availability is determined by the whims of the drivers. It is also possible to hire either of the first two to collect children from school on a regular basis or for a special trip, e.g. to the airport, to take someone to the hospital or for an excursion. In some areas where the fixed route taxis are irregular or scarce, private cars, popularly known as P-H cars, may ply the route. This, however, is unsafe, as the cars are not licensed for hire and not insured for passengers. In addition to the above, a high proportion of the population owns private cars. All of this has resulted in a complex transportation system and congested roads. The growing density of the daily commuting population has grave implications for improving work-family balance for the following reasons:

(a) insufficiency of the road/highway network to accommodate all the vehicles;

(b) inadequacy of the public transport system to accommodate the critical mass of commuters at peak times;

(c) traffic congestion caused by the fragmented transportation system, which necessitates excessive use of private vehicles;

(d) centreing of principal workplaces in the capital city, e.g. government ministries, courts and legal services; commercial and shopping centres; banking and private corporations; and

(e) mushrooming of venues for shopping and other essential uses in rural towns and suburban areas adjacent to main highways.

According to the 2000 Census, the modal form of transportation is the taxi (28.8 per cent) followed by the private car (24 per cent), the maxi taxi (14.2 per cent) and walking (11.2 per cent). More females travel by taxi and maxi taxi than males, and more males travel by private car than females. More females also travelled by PH taxi's than males and less than 1 per cent of males and females used the bus.

Table 25: Adult transportation use, 2000

Mode of transportation	Males	Females	Total
Bus	0.62	0.90	0.73
Taxi	26.72	32.64	28.78
Maxi taxi	13.19	16.01	14.17
Private vehicle	26.14	20.41	24.00
PH taxi	2.92	3.06	2.97
Bicycle	1.86	0.07	1.19
Walk	12.19	9.48	11.18
Other	1.09	0.46	0.86
No mode	8.36	8.07	8.25
Not stated	6.91	8.89	7.65
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Population and Housing Census 2000*, at www.cso.gov.tt/census2000.

Most private corporations and government agencies have strict working hours. As a result, if an employee resides 30 minutes away from her workplace and is due to arrive at work for 8:00, she may leave home at 5:00 and arrive at the workplace at 5:30 to 6:00 in order to avoid the traffic congestion. Parents are forced to leave children at schools around that time. Some parents arrange carpools or hire taxis which take children to and from schools. However, a significant number of schoolchildren do not reside near to their schools, and although government school buses are available for older children, the system is not comprehensive and does not cover all districts. A limited school bus system operates in some rural areas where public or private transportation is negligible.

Normally teenaged children mainly use public transportation (buses) or private transportation (maxi taxis, minibuses or taxis). Primary-school children usually walk to school in rural districts or in the suburbs. Small children are sometimes, but not always, accompanied by older relatives; for instance, in the rural areas of Tobago, the majority of children who attend junior secondary or primary schools walk unless parents choose schools outside their home areas.

In his evaluation of the maxi-taxi which is often used by school children, educator Samuel Lochan observes:

The present maxi-taxi system is not regulated. It appears that any and everybody qualifies as a safe transporter of school children. What recourse does anyone have against a maxi-taxi driver who is driving recklessly or taking advantage of little girls and boys? Furthermore, the personnel operating these maxi-taxis are mainly immature young men brandishing wads of dollar bills and playing dancehall music. In some instances, children are wholly dependent on PH taxis that are not licensed to carry passengers (Lochan, *The Daily Express,* www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/29556256.

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Parents negotiate the transportation system

Case 15

Mrs. C leaves Palmiste (South Trinidad) for her job in the capital city, Port of Spain, at 5:15 and arrives at work at 6:00. Her 7 year-old son travels to school a few miles away in a carpool. When his father is not at work, he takes him to school. She leaves work between 16:00 and 17:00 and arrives home between 18:30 and 20:00 in the evening. She notes that quality time with her son on a daily basis is reduced to merely an hour or less, as she sees him go to bed and perhaps reads to him.

Case 16

Mr. G takes his 14 year-old daughter to school in the mornings. He lives in the university area (St. Augustine). He can reach the school, which is about two miles away, in 12 minutes on Sundays. However, to take his daughter to school and return home takes him 40 minutes. He then goes to work, which is less than a mile away, taking ten minutes. His daughter walks home with her friends in the afternoon.

Source: Personal interviews, August-September 2005.

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2.7 Status of family-related legislation: Enactment and limitations

Trinidad and Tobago ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 5 December 1991 and, in 2003, the Attorney General's *Second Periodic Report 2003* detailed measures adopted by the Government to transform the rights enshrined in the Convention into effective policies for the well–being of citizens. Prior to this, the enactment of legislation relating to the family reflected significant changes towards the status of women and children in the family. For example, among the changes were the abolition of the concept of "illegitimacy"; free access to divorce and judicial separation based on no-fault grounds; and legal recognition of common-law unions of over three years' duration. In addition, Parliament passed The Family Proceedings Act 2003 to establish the pilot project of a Family Court in this country. The following are brief outlines of some of the legislation pertinent to family.

2.7.1 Changes in family-specific legislation

(a) *The Family Law (Guardianship of Minors, Domicile and Maintenance) Act. (Chap: 46:08, 1981)* reflects the principle that the mother and father of a child have equal responsibility for that child, and are joint guardians. It provides for the Court to make a maintenance order in custody cases against either the mother or father of the minor. For children born out of marriage, the mother is the sole guardian. Paternity of the child has to be registered in this case to establish fatherhood.

(b) *The Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act (Chap. 45:51,) Rev. 1980*, deals with "maintenance and related matters" and it ensures children's protection in the proceedings of divorce, annulled marriages and legal separations.

(c) *The Maternity Protection Act, No. 4 of 1998* provides for the entitlement of pregnant employees to 13 weeks' maternity leave. The employee begins her leave six weeks prior to her likely date of confinement. The Act provides access of employees' complaints through the Minister of Labour and to the Industrial Court.

(d) *The Domestic Violence Act No. 27 of 1999* revises the 1991 Act and provides greater protection to children against domestic violence.

(e) *The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, No. 31 of 2000*, provides for "mandatory reporting of sexual offences by a professional", when the offender is a parent or guardian, or is the custodian of a minor. The offender also may be an individual who has temporary custody of a minor, as in the role of teacher, employer or caregiver; and a medical practitioner or registered nurse or midwife where these individuals have performed a medical examination on a minor.

(f) *The Attachment of Earnings Act, No. 14 of 1988*, provides for the Court to make an "attachment of earnings" order to secure maintenance payments. The Act also provides that a person's failure to comply with its provisions results in an offence punishable with a fine or imprisonment.

(g) *The Education Act (Chap. 39:01) Rev. 1980* includes a provision that parents must fulfill their duty to ensure that children attend school regularly. It also provides for the appointment of "school attendance officers" to enforce compulsory rules. Failure to comply with this law results in parents being fined, yet, at the filing of the Attorney General's Report in June 2003, "school attendance officers" were not in place to "institute such proceedings against parents" (Attorney General's Report 2003, pp. 361-362).

2.7.2 Family-related legislation

(a) *The Civil Service Act (Chap. 23:01) Rev. 1980* provides that hours of work are not to exceed 44 hours a week. There is a range of leave periods stipulated for the public services, along with special leave with regard to "religious persuasion", as well as maternity leave.

(b) *The Industrial Relations Act (Chap. 80:01) Rev. 1980* provides that all workers, including workers of state-owned agencies, may join or form unions, if necessary. It also provides for collective bargaining between workers and employers, and gives workers the privilege of strike action. This Act, in brief, outlines certain considerations relating to judicial decisions concerning "employment creation, equitable distribution of resources" and so on. [26]

(c) *The National Insurance Act (Chap. 32:01), amended 2004*, provides for the payment of sickness, maternity, retirement, invalidity and survivors' benefits. [27]

2.7.3 Children-specific legislation

It was noted that the following five pieces of legislation were the result of the examination and review of previous laws to bring about national legislation which conforms to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

(a) *The Children's Act (Amendment), No. 68 of 2000*, stipulates that children under 12 years are not to be employed; children of 14 years cannot be employed in any public or private undertaking or on vessels. Children, however, may be employed in a family undertaking. The State can remove children from any site upon which they are experiencing harm or abuse.

(b) *The Children's Authority Act No. 64 of 2000* empowers the proposed Children's' Authority to receive children under age 18 into its care, and ensure that a package of

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[26] See http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/CARICAD/UNPAN010497.pdf.

[27] See www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/socfas/publ/tcrep/trini15.pdf.

coordinated services is available for families. This Act enables the proposed Authority to investigate complaints by the staff and children's parents with respect to children who are in community residences, foster homes or nurseries.

(c) *The Miscellaneous Provisions (Children) Act, No. 66 of 2000*, has amended a number of domestic statutes, including The Corporal Punishment (Offenders Over Sixteen) Act (Chap. 13.3), deleting "sixteen" and replacing it with the word "eighteen", thus raising the legal age of a child (Attorney General's Report, 2003, p. 6). This amendment changes the age at which a person can sell intoxicating liquor to a minor. It also has an effect on The Defence Force Act (Chap.14:01), whereby a child of 16 to 18 years can only be enlisted when parents give consent.

(d) *The Adoption of Children Act, No. 67 of 2000*, provides for the regulation of procedures governing the adoption of children. Today, much of the adoption system remains informal. This Act, along with the Children's Authority Act of 2000, provides a monitoring function. The National Family Services Division has this responsibility; however, according to the Auditor General's report, it has not yet instituted well-established systems "to facilitate structured and effective monitoring of Children's Homes and Institutions". The Division has conducted courses for caregivers, "training over 150 persons at basic and intermediate levels". [28] The entire system of adoption is in its preparatory stage, thus it creates problems for current needs in this area. For example, according to the National Family Services Division, many people are moving to "legal guardianship" when they require to take the child abroad. One of the limitations in the Act which concerns the Division is that single men cannot adopt children, and women are required to be 25 years older than the adoptee. [29] These are measures which tend to retard the progress of adopting children.

(e) *The Children's Community Residences, Foster Homes and Nurseries Act, No. 65 of 2000*, provides that managers of such institutions maintain essential records of each child. The Act authorizes the proposed Children's Authority to visit the premises to satisfy itself about the standard of health, education, and welfare, and to advise and give guidance to the caregivers, where necessary.

2.7.4 Related children-specific legislation

(a) *The Occupational Safety and Health Act, No. 1 of 2004*, contains clauses relevant to children. The Act defines a "young person" as a child between the ages of 14 and 18. As such, it provides under Chap. 46:01 that, "except as provided by Section 90 (2) of The Children's Act, children do not perform night work from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.". In addition, "they have a twelve hour rest period following the end of a period last worked, as well as, they do not work for more than eight hours a day" (Part IX 54:1).

With respect to pregnant women, the Act provides the assurance for pregnant women that employers provide a safe environment, free from any substances that would endanger the child and, where appropriate, re-assign these women to alternative work (Part II 6:9).

(b) *The Basic Conditions of Work and Minimum Wage Bill, No. 63 Part VII (2000)*, prohibits persons from employing children under situations of forced labour.

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[28] Ministry of the Attorney-General: *Second Periodic Report of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago*, pp. 249-266.

[29] Personal interview with the National Family Services Division, 27 July 2005.

(c) *The Factories Ordinance (Chapter 30), No. 3 of 1948*, provides that children are not employed under the age of 14 years. If factory work is not hazardous to children, they can be employed between the ages of 14 and 18. This clause of the Act poses some contradiction with the Children's Act (Amendment) No. 68 of 2000 (see above).

2.8 Conclusion

To sum up, rapid and complex changes have affected family and household traditions in Trinidad and Tobago. Families and households have had to respond to the quick pace of social and technological change, and the attendant social dislocation. There are many reasons for this, including the increasing industrialization and diversification of the economy and the impact of the women's movement over the 20th century. Although the idea of family continues to be important to women, they insist on increased social and economic autonomy to pursue their potential beyond the household.

It should be noted that not all change in family traditions is bad. Formerly, families in the Caribbean, and indeed Trinidad and Tobago, tended to be very authoritarian, sexist and hierarchical, with corporal punishment of children and violence against women being liberally distributed. However, there is recognition of the need for "quality time" with family. Added to that, the existence of legislation against domestic violence exemplifies positive changes are taking place.

What we have is a situation where parents, especially female parents, are making a valid attempt to combine their need for career fulfilment, economic autonomy and family responsibility in a situation where, as shown in Part IV, few support systems exist for them. We also see that, to varying degrees, men are being made to increase their participation in childcare activities. What is clear is that, as women re-define their lives, men, employers and the state will have to accept more responsibility for family.

In the current context, adults who have family responsibilities have created innovative strategies around this situation. Some efforts have been made to facilitate family bonding and solidarity with employers through social and cultural activities like "Family Day" and "Bringing kids to work" events (interviews/press advertisements), but these do not begin to address the problem which this study explores. Some families' experiences of poverty and related social and economic inadequacies result in the negative disruption of past family traditions and an absence of new and positive strategies to address the problems which emerge. This study argues that although the meaning, structure and organization of family may be changing, its importance is not declining, as some researchers have indicated.

Part III: Working conditions and family responsibilities

3.1 Introduction

Conditions of work vary across sectors and within sectors in Trinidad and Tobago. As we saw in Part I, wage differentials exist and are especially sharp in the private sector. Trade union organization is legal, but the extent of unionization also varies across sectors. In 2003, the Industrial Court registered 39 collective bargaining agreements. These agreements related to 29 employers, seven of whom were party to more than one collective agreement (ECA, 2004, p. 1). In that year, the largest number of agreements were registered in the manufacturing sector (14), followed by the commercial and services sector (12); finance, insurance and cooperatives (8);[30] energy (3); and security (2) (ECA, 2004, p. 1).

Data on the proportion of unionized workers are not easily available, but many female-dominated occupations are unionized; for example, teaching, nursing, public service, banking,[31] and some major state enterprises. A 1999 survey carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Cooperatives found that women accounted for 26,770 or 44 per cent of the 61,345 members of 28 trade unions. However, women are not well-represented in the leadership of these organisations. The 1999 survey found that women held 7.5 per cent of executive positions in eight trade unions.

3.2. The industrial relations and labour law framework

The Industrial Relations Act, 1972, Chapter 88:01 of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, provides for free collective bargaining between employer and workers through their representative associations; the development of a peaceful and expeditious procedure for the settlement of disputes; the establishment of the Industrial Court; the recognition and registration of trade unions; the freedom to be represented by a trade union and the right not to associate; and industrial action which may be taken by both employer and employee.

Provision is made for a tripartite industrial relations advisory committee, which has the responsibility of reviewing the IRA and making recommendations to the Minister of Labour. In this way, the Act is supposed to keep abreast with industrial relations trends.

In order to seek the protection and rights afforded by the IRA, a person must fall within the definition of worker set out in the Act, defined as:

- any person who has entered into or works under a contract with an employer to do any skilled, unskilled, manual, technical, clerical or other work for hire or reward, whether the contract is expressed or implied, oral or in writing, or partly oral and partly in writing, and whether it is a contract of service or apprenticeship or a contract personally to execute any work or labour;

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[30] Most likely credit unions.

[31] Three of the four main banks are unionized: Republic Bank, Scotiabank and First Citizens Bank. The other major bank, RBTT, is not.

- any person who by any trade usage or custom or as a result of any established pattern of employment or recruitment of labour in any business or industry is usually employed or usually offers himself for and accepts employment accordingly; or

- any person who provides services or performs duties for an employer under a labour-only contract, within the meaning of subsection (4)(b); and includes:

  - any such person who has been dismissed, discharged, retrenched, refused employment, or not employed, whether or not in connection with, or in consequence of, a dispute; or whose dismissal, discharge, retrenchment or refusal of employment has led to a dispute; or any such person who has ceased to work as a result of a lockout or of a strike, whether or not in contravention of Part 5, as the case may be.

The following categories of workers are excluded from the scope of the IRA:

- a public officer, as defined by section 3 of the Constitution;

- a member of the Defence Force or any ancillary force or service thereof, or of the Police, Fire or Prison Service or of the Police Service of any Municipality, or a person who is employed as a rural constable or estate constable;

- a member of the Teaching Service as defined in the Education Act, or someone employed in a teaching capacity by a university or other institution of higher learning;

- a member of staff and an employee of the Central Bank established under the Central Bank Act;

- a person who, in the opinion of the Board, is responsible for the formulation of policy in any undertaking or business or the effective control of the whole or any department of any undertaking or business; has an effective voice in the formulation of policy in any undertaking or business; is employed in any capacity of a domestic nature, including that of a chauffeur, gardener or handyman in or about a private dwelling house and paid by the householder; or is an apprentice within the meaning of the Industrial Training Act.

The Court has the responsibility of deciding whether a person is a worker under the IRA. The fact that domestic workers have been excluded from the definition of "worker" in the IRA has been an issue of contention for their association and the women's movement. As a result, both the Minimum Wages Order, Legal Notice No. 40 of 1999, and the Maternity Protection Act, No.4 of 1998, included domestic workers as employees, guaranteeing them the same rights and benefits as other workers (Rahim and Texels-Wiser, 2004). [32] The IRA itself, however, has not changed in this regard.

3.2.1 Earnings

Earnings in Trinidad and Tobago are characterized by great disparity. Data available from Kairi Consultants for 1997/98 show that, at that time, the Gini index (ratio of inequality) was 0.39. In other words, the income and consumption expenditure of the poorest 10 per cent was 39 times that of the richest 10 per cent. [33]

In spite of the relative increases in women's participation at all levels of the labour force, and in spite of their high levels of educational attainment and increased participation in various professional fields, women continue to fall at the lower end of the socio-

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[32] See http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/ll/observatory/profiles/tt.htm.

[33] The 2003 UN Human Development Report, however, uses a rate of 0.43.

economic ladder and face discrimination in the level of wages which accrue to them, when compared to men (see Table 26) No equal pay legislation exists.

Table 26: Average monthly income by type of worker by sex, 2001 (in $TT)

Sector of employment	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percentage difference
Paid employee	2,574	2,729	2,328	14.6
Public sector/statutory board	3,274	3,267	3,284	-0.5
State enterprise	3,664	3,743	3,382	9.6
Non-government (private sector)	2,163	2,361	1,865	21.0
Employer	3,328	3,457	2,868	17.0
Own-account worker	1,573	1,750	1,190	32.0
Learner/apprentice	807	813	783	3.6

Source: Central Statistical Office: *Continuous Sample Survey of the Population: Labour Force Report 2001,* pp. 60-62.

Table 26 shows that wage differentials between women and men are greater in the private and non-governmental sector than in the public sector. This may be due to the lower rates of unionization as well as less monitoring of conditions of work or adherence to labour legislation. Indeed, in the public sector, where opportunities for career advancement are greater for women, income levels are relatively equal with a very slight negative difference for men (0.5 per cent). These data support the United Nations' observation that, throughout the world, women have greater chances of career advancement in the public or state sector (UN, 2000). Few women have been able to ascend to the top positions in the private sector. The thrust toward privatization of state sector activities therefore cannot be seen as a gender-neutral macro-economic policy, but one with serious implications for gender equity.

Provision of minimum wages are made in the Minimum Wage Act, No. 35 of 1976, and several national Minimum Wages Orders have been established in relation to sectors of low-wage workers, including domestic/household assistants and store clerks and shop assistants, who are mainly female. In 1991, the Minimum Wage (Household Assistants) Order provided maternity leave and an increased minimum wage. In 1998, a new Minimum Wages Order established a new minimum wage of $TT7.00 per hour or just over US$1 for all categories of workers covered by the Act, [34] and minimum terms and conditions for all workers, including an eight-hour working day. This wage was later increased to TT$8.00 an hour and then to TT$9.00 an hour from January 2005.

The Minimum Wages Order also sets overtime rates. For the first four hours of overtime, the worker shall receive one-and-a-half times the hourly rate; for the next four hours, twice the hourly rate; and thereafter, three times the hourly rate. For time worked on an off day, twice the hourly rate is payable for the first eight hours, and thereafter, three times the hourly rate. The Minimum Wages (Amendment) Act 2000 removed the necessity to go to the Magistrates' Court. Matters can now be dealt with at the Industrial Court. However, the onus is on "the trade union if one exists to monitor and pursue this matter" (Rahim and Texels-Riser, 2004).

In 2000, a *Basic Conditions of Work Bill* was developed, which aimed to implement internationally acceptable labour standards for basic terms and conditions of work for all employees and to repeal a range of other legislation, including the Minimum Wages Act. It would also protect workers affected by HIV and AIDS. The Bill was introduced into the Senate in October 2000, but lapsed after the dissolution of Parliament in November

[34] This includes domestic workers, sales clerks and gas station attendants.

2000. [35] There have been calls by the labour movement and the draft NGPPTT for it to be re-introduced.

Between 2004 and 2005, Trinidad and Tobago has experienced an increase in retail prices in a number of areas, the most important being food prices, particularly fresh produce. The cost of buying and renting houses has also increased. The Index of Retail Prices of August 2005 indicated that the annual rate of inflation for the period January to August 2005 was 6.8 per cent, compared with 3.2 per cent for the same period in 2004. Over this period, whereas the change in cost for all items was 7.3 per cent, it was 24.7 per cent for food and non-alcoholic beverages (CSO, 2005).

3.2.2 Leave entitlements

As with working hours, there are no statutory leave provisions which apply to workers in general in Trinidad and Tobago. State employees have leave entitlements set out in legislation that deals with each service. These entitlements include paid vacation leave and usually 14 days' paid sick leave, with three working days' bereavement leave when the death occurs in Trinidad and Tobago, and five days when it occurs outside (Rahim and Wexels-Riser, 2004). Many institutions also have provisions for casual leave, about six to 14 days per year, which can be used for personal business. Some private sector firms, however, require staff to use their vacation leave for personal business.

With the exception of the police, prison and fire services — where special provisions are made since employees are required to work on Sundays and public holidays — all permanent government employees are guaranteed paid public holidays. Where an employee is required to work on a public holiday, and that day is a normal working day, the employee is entitled to a day off.

Leave entitlements for government daily-rated workers are provided for in the collective agreement between the Chief Personnel Officer and the National Union of Government and Federated Workers. In both the public and private sectors, employees are only eligible for paid vacation leave after having 12 months' continuous service. The State also provides for no-pay leave to be granted to employees who wish to further their education, and leave for trade union business, when the employee holds a post in a trade union.

In the private sector, employers and unions may agree on leave entitlements which become part of a registered collective agreement which is binding on both employer and employees. Where no collective agreement exists, paid public holidays, vacation and sick leave are at the discretion of the employer (Rahim and Wexels-Riser, 2004).

Although leave entitlements exist, workers may not be free to take leave when they wish to. In some instances, this has to be negotiated among staff in order to ensure the smooth continuation of work; in other cases, leave has to be taken in relation to business demands. In some sectors, such as the sales and distribution sector, no leave can be taken during November and December, the busy Christmas period. [36]

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[35] See http://www.ttparliament.org/bills/senate/2000/b2000s.htm.

[36] E-mail interview response, Human Relations Consultant, 2 November 2005.

3.2.3 Maternity leave and maternity protection

Maternity leave in Trinidad and Tobago is governed by the Maternity Protection Act, No. 4 of 1998, which binds both private employers and the State. The Act establishes minimum rights and benefits for female workers. It does not apply where any written law, industrial award or collective agreement prescribes conditions more favourable than those specified in the Act (Rahim and Wexels-Riser, 2004).

Under this Act, the definition of an "employee", who is entitled to protection, includes domestic and agricultural workers, and a person working under a contract of apprenticeship, provided the employee has been in the service of the employer for a continuous period of no less than 12 months.

Under the Act, female employees are entitled to 13 weeks' paid maternity leave (six weeks prior to confinement, seven weeks after) and one month's pay during such leave. An employee on maternity leave has the right to return to work. The employee is required to submit a medical certificate stating the probable date of confinement, as well as a written expression of her intent to return to work after maternity leave. Female employees are also allowed time off with pay for the purpose of receiving pre-natal medical care (Rahim and Wexels-Riser, 2004).

Similar leave entitlements for adoptive parents are not yet available, although these parents claim that their needs are similar, since they require time to establish a new relationship through early bonding with their new child.

In Trinidad and Tobago, workers on maternity leave are also entitled to National Insurance benefits. Companies and the State usually pay the difference between the normal salary and the National Insurance payment. In some instances, due to bureaucratic delays, this payment may be late. Some firms pay the full amount up front and recover the difference when it becomes available, so that there is no loss of earnings for the mother. [37] An employee whose child dies during the period of leave is entitled to the remaining period of leave with pay.

The 2004 Draft National Gender Policy and Action Plan called for the revision of the existing Act to meet the standards of the ILO Convention on Maternity Protection, as well as for the implementation of monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and discourage discrimination in relation to maternity leave (Centre for Gender and Development Studies, 2004, p. 59).

3.2.4 Paternity leave

The issue of paternity leave is one of growing importance in Trinidad and Tobago. This is in keeping with new understandings of fatherhood and the desire to see men play a more significant role in the care and upbringing of children. There is no legislation on paternity leave, although this is included in a limited way in many collective agreements and is normally from two to four days, as in the following example:

A male employed by the Regional Health Authority is eligible for paternity leave of four working days at or about the time of delivery, on each occasion that his spouse gives birth. The term "spouse" used above includes a common-law relationship and the employee shall be required to furnish a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner stating his spouse's expected date of delivery. The male employee is required however to register with

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[37] Interview with a human resource officer.

the Regional Health Authority the name of his common-law spouse (Centre for Gender and Development Studies, 2004, p. 72).

In keeping with its vision for gender relations in Trinidad and Tobago, the draft gender policy recommended the review of the practice of paternity leave locally and internationally, including ILO recommended provisions, and the establishment of these provisions locally (p. 72). Both the Employers' Consultative Association (ECA) and trade union representatives have acknowledged that this item has not yet been addressed in keeping with any vision to regenerate the family as a fundamental unit in society. [38]

In the absence of paternity leave, some men may make private arrangements or take vacation leave if they need additional time. In relation to this provision, there is always concern that this practice may be abused. In order to reduce this possibility, close monitoring is necessary, but also a change in perceptions of fatherhood and childcare, so that the time is used for the purpose for which was intended.

3.3 Working time

According to Rahim and Wexels-Riser (2004), legislation regulates the hours of work for State employees. In the private sector, however, collective agreements or contracts may determine the hours of work. For employees in general, other than shiftworkers, the normal hours of work are eight hours a day, usually from 8:00 to 16:00, five days a week, with one hour for lunch. The Minimum Wages Order, Legal Notice No.40 of 1999, attempts to set down hours of work for all workers in Trinidad and Tobago, including State employees. The Order stipulates that the normal working day shall not exceed eight hours, exclusive of meal and rest breaks, and the normal working week shall not exceed 40 hours. Where workers work only four days in the week, the normal work day shall not exceed ten hours. The Order also provides meal and rest breaks for workers. However, the Order only applies to workers who receive an hourly rate of $TT10.50 or less, thus excluding many workers.

Unionized workers may rely on their representative associations or trade unions to negotiate fair hours of work on their behalf. However, non-unionized workers who earn more than $TT10.50 an hour in an establishment where no collective agreement exists must fend for themselves, and these are in the majority. Working conditions may be particularly onerous at the two ends of the spectrum. At senior management level, staff is expected to show company loyalty and to go the extra mile if necessary. Some executives are expected to be at work from 7.00, and this is extremely difficult for persons with family responsibilities. Many women actually give up opportunities for promotion because of the demands of senior positions. Indeed, women are often hard-pressed to show that they do not require any "special treatment". A human resource officer from a local branch of a well-established international firm reported that the main issue raised by workers in the yearly global survey over the last three years has been the issue of work-life balance. She noted further that in recent times she has observed a trend for persons to refuse promotions because of the challenges of combining the new responsibilities with family responsibilities. She reported:

In recruiting for executive searches, the recruitment section has found that people are valuing their time more, so they want jobs that are not so time-consuming. They are taking job cuts to have more family time. This includes males as well, but also female directors. Some work part time or give up paid work because their husband can afford it (interview, 27 September 2005).

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[38] Interviews with representatives of both establishments in December 2005.

It was not surprising that this human resource officer concluded that the majority of female senior managers were single and/or childless. As evidence of the importance of this issue, the Association of Female Executives of Trinidad and Tobago (AFETT) engaged in 2005 in selecting the top ten female-friendly workplaces in the country. The results of this exercise are of value to future initiatives in reconciling work-family issues.

At the other end of the spectrum, workers such as security guards (male and female), gas station attendants, some low-wage factory workers and sales workers in supermarkets and pharmacies have a range of working hours, including Sundays and public holidays, and sometimes as late as 23.00 at Christmas time. In most instances, being in non-unionized environments, they complain that they are not always paid the special shift allowances or overtime rates for work on Sundays, weekends and public holidays, or late at night. The Ministry of Labour has so far been unable to monitor these establishments.

Table 27: Employed persons by sex by hours worked per week, 2000-2002

Hours worked per week	2000		2001		2002	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
None	6,700 (2.1%)	7,500 (4%)	6,300 (1.9%)	5,700 (3%)	6,900 (2.1%)	5,000 (2.5%)
1 to 8	1,500 (0.5%)	1,600 (0.9%)	1,100 (0.3%)	1,000 (0.5%)	1,200 (0.4%)	1,000 (0.5%)
9 to 16	2,600 (0.8%)	2,900 (1.6%)	2,400 (0.7%)	2,500 (1.3%)	3,000 (0.9%)	3,000 (1.5%)
17 to 24	6,900 (2%)	5,500 (3%)	5,400 (1.7%)	6,100 (3.2%)	6,100 (1.9%)	6,000 (3.1%)
25 to 32	11,200 (4%)	8,600 (4.6%)	11,200 (3.4%)	8,700 (4.6%)	11,900 (3.6%)	9,000 (4.6%)
33 to 40	169,800 (54%)	107,100 (58%)	179,000 (55%)	110,800 (59%)	180,800 (55%)	117,000 (60%)
41 or more	116,300 (37%)	52,500 (28%)	118,600 (36%)	52,100 (28%)	117,900 (36%)	55,000 (28%)
Not stated	1,700	400	1,900	1,100	1,100	1,000
Total	316,700	186,100	325,900	188,000	328,900	196,100

Source: ILO, at www.ilocarib.org.tt(digest/tt/tri11.htm.

Table 27, which is based on the CSSP Labour Force Surveys of 2000-2001, shows that the modal number of hours worked per week for males and females in all three years was 33 to 40. Much of this would have been full-time work, as this is the norm in many workplaces. Female workers were more likely to work between 33 to 40 hours per week than male workers and, in keeping with this trend, a larger proportion of male workers worked over 40 hours per week. A slightly larger proportion of women worked fewer than 33 hours per week, but the proportional differences between the sexes were minimal. [39]

The issue of working hours is important not only for workers, but also for their working clients. Some state agencies have adapted working hours by starting earlier to accommodate persons who have little flexibility in working time. Examples of these are the Inland Revenue Taxation Division and the Passport and Immigration Division. Decentralization of these services would also be an important further step.

3.3.1 Part-time work

Part-time work exists in Trinidad and Tobago but there appear to be few labour standards that apply to this work. In recent times, part-time work has become more noticeable, especially in certain sectors. Data on part-time work are not easily available and are not directly collected by the CSO. In the past, the concept of "underemployment" was more frequently used to suggest that workers were working fewer hours than they would like. Distinctions can often be made between the voluntary part-time worker and the involuntary part-time worker. According to the ECA, on the one hand, workers at the

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[39] These tables are probably based on official working hours and may not include voluntary overtime.

minimum wage level do not see benefits in accepting part-time work, because of the high cost of commuting as opposed to their earnings for short periods. On the other hand, employers consider that part-time schedules constitute some risk because of the inflexibility of the legislation.

Part-time work can be defined in a number of ways. According to the United Nations Department on Economic and Social Development, part time work is defined in many countries as work for less than 30 to 40 hours per week. In other countries, part-time and full-time workers are classified on the basis of the respondents' interpretations of their personal work situations, i.e. whether they view themselves as full-time or as part-time workers. [40] If we use the former definition, taking 33 to 40 hours per week as the demarcation point and based on Table 27 above, the proportion of part-time workers in 2002 would be 9.7 per cent for females and 6.8 per cent for males. This was a slight decline from the 2000 figures. Of the total number who worked less than 33 hours per week in 2002, 53.9 per cent were male and 46.1 per cent female.

Employers frequently use this category of work to provide skills that may not be easily available; for others, it simply provides additional workers at lower cost. For some employees, part-time work is additional to full-time work; while for others, it is the only income-earning activity. Part-time work may be a preferred option for some: tertiary level students who wish to combine work with full-time study, mothers of young children who wish to spend more time in childcare, or retired persons who prefer to remain active but for fewer hours.

Some of the areas where part-time work is important are media houses, both the print and electronic, where photographers, writers, sub-editors and copy-editors may be employed on a part-time basis or for a specific assignment; and tertiary level institutions, including colleges and universities, where adjunct teachers/lecturers and research staff may be hired.

In addition, some companies (for example, Eve Anderson and Associates), which in the past provided temporary workers, are now able to supply part-time workers on request. Currently, banks are hiring part-time workers, where necessary, at credit card centres for data entry, and at banking branches in shopping malls, where later opening and closing hours conform to these locations. One respondent reported that banks often employ university students for these positions.

While part-time may work may suit the needs of parents of young children, university students and the elderly, it has many disadvantages at this time. There are usually no medical or pension benefits, and companies are able to circumvent the payment of statutory requirements like National Insurance and Health Surcharge by hiring individuals as independent contractors. In addition, there may be few opportunities for career advancement.

The emergence of the field of true independent consulting among professionals has opened up the possibility for autonomous work with flexible working hours. In this case, consultants are understood to be responsible, in all cases, for their statutory payments of taxes, etc., as well as medical and pension benefits.

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[40] See http://unstats..un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/ww2005/tab5b.htm.

3.3.2 Work hours and school hours

Work hours differ from school hours and this is often a cause of much stress; for example, schools may end at 12.15, 13.30, 14.00, 14.30, 15.00 or 17.15. This stress has been heightened with the increase in violent crime, including kidnapping, robbery with violence, rape and murder, causing discomfort for parents and children. In the interviews carried out, there was one case of an employed mother who had four children, each with a different school closing time. As discussed earlier, many parents deal with this by leaving work to collect their children, or having them collected by a taxi service (minibus). These children may then have to hang around parents' (usually women's) workplaces until the end of the working day. Some parents may arrange to have family members collect their children, for example, grandparents, older siblings or household helpers; yet there are many other children who find their own way home using public transport.

The shift system for junior secondary schools is particularly problematic. The school shifts are 7:00 to 12:00 *or* 13:00 to 17:15. Children attending these schools attend either the morning or afternoon shift, which results in numerous unsupervised hours: all morning or all afternoon at home, or on the street. The Ministry of Education has begun de-shifting these schools by building new schools. The completion of this exercise may alleviate some of these difficulties. Some de-shifting of schools has already been completed and, within the next five years, all schools should be operating on a single shift similar to other schools (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 9).

3.3.3 Flexible schedules

Trinidad and Tobago has not yet developed fully the practice of flexible schedules (or flexitime). It is most possible at tertiary level institutions, where university and community college lecturers manage their time to suit their teaching and research schedules. In the private sector, BP Trinidad and Tobago, a local branch of the international corporation, is one example of an institution with a work period of 80 hours over a nine-day period with every other Friday off. Where companies or ministries serving the public adjust their opening hours, then some opportunities for flexitime may arise.

For the most part, however, flexible work arrangements are the result of internal agreements between employers, managers and/or human resource managers, and individual members of staff. This transaction occurs when:

■ the employee arrives at work very early because of children's school hours to avoid traffic, therefore starting earlier and trying to leave earlier;

■ the employee is attending a training course which requires her/him to leave work earlier;

■ the employee requests time off for personal reasons and agrees to "work back the time".

While senior and managerial staff have more flexibility in relation to work hours, they are often required to work on weekends and public holidays with no additional pay.

According to one human resource officer, arrangements where employees "work at home" are not easily made for non-managerial staff, as there is a basic distrust of workers and monitoring is seen as necessary.

In some sectors, shift work and night work are the norm. Depending on the position (e.g. night watchmen), night work may be continuous. These workers complain that such work takes them away from their families and homes; they are unable to attend after-work

training programmes which could improve their employment options; and they express fear about security arrangements and returning home at nights. [41]

3.4 Family support benefits

Family support programmes are limited in Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed this is a concept that is only recently being developed and trade unions, in spite of their large female membership, have not seriously addressed these issues. The Draft National Gender Policy for Trinidad and Tobago put forward a number of recommendations which would address some of these concerns; however, this study provides additional support for such interventions. Part IV of this report examines this area in more detail.

3.4.1 Widows and Orphans Fund

During the early part of the 20th century, the colonial government instituted the Widows and Orphans Fund for male public sector workers. It was based on the premise of the family wage, that is, the assumption that the male breadwinner was economically responsible for the maintenance of his wife and children. Male public sector employees [42] pay into this fund, so that their families receive this benefit in the event of their death.

3.4.2 The National Insurance Scheme

A national insurance system was established in Trinidad and Tobago by Act of Parliament No. 35 of 1971. This was the first comprehensive attempt to acknowledge the family responsibilities of workers. It is compulsory for all workers and employees, and provides benefits in relation to sickness, maternity, employment injury, invalidity, retirement and death. Though amendments of the Act are continuous and have resulted in increased benefits, neither contributions nor benefits are substantial. Of relevance to this study are the maternity benefits, to which we have already referred, and the death/survivors benefit.

The maternity benefit comprises a weekly payment of a Maternity Allowance (for a maximum of 13 weeks, paid in a lump sum) and a Maternity Grant of $TT2,000. The benefit is not paid for a pregnancy that has lasted less than 26 weeks unless the pregnancy resulted in a live birth. The employee, however, may be entitled to the sickness benefit.

The Death/Survivor Benefit is a payment or periodical payments made to specific survivors of a deceased insured person who died as a result of an accident or of a prescribed industrial disease in the course of employment. Claimants may be a widow/widower, legal or common-law, children or a dependent parent. Payment to a common-law spouse is only made if the deceased was legally a single person living with the claimant as husband or wife and for a minimum of three years up to the date of death of the insured person. A single person is one who was never married, or who is widowed or divorced. A common-law spouse may either be nominated or not as beneficiary by the insured person prior to his or her death. For nomination after death, the spouse must show evidence of cohabitation for three years prior to the death. Payments are made until the spouse remarries or until the child of the union is 19 years of age. A fixed grant equivalent to 52 weeks' payment is made upon remarriage.

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[41] Ashton, e-mail interview, 2 November 2005.

[42] Excludes daily paid workers.

Prior to the recent amendments, the notion of the dependent female spouse underlay its provisions. As a result, for example, male partners or children did not automatically receive benefits on the death an employed female spouse. This has been addressed, so that male and female workers are now recognized as having dependants and as being dependent.

3.4.3 Employee assistance programmes (EAPs)

An important development, however, has been the emergence of employee assistance programmes in a number of private and state organizations in Trinidad and Tobago. The employee assistance programme provides a range of counselling support to workers either in-house, as in the Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (Petrotrin), or more commonly through contracting private social service enterprises, individuals or non-governmental organizations.

In 1988, Petrotrin established one of the earliest of these in-house programmes initially to support its own employees. Today, Petrotrin's EAP is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Petrotrin Ltd., which offers its services to other companies in Trinidad and Tobago: [43] other companies include Eastman and Associates, Elders and Associates, Frank Dolly and Associates, and John Ramkeesoon Ltd. Families in Action, an NGO, also provides EAPs as a paid service to contribute to its economic self-sufficiency along with its other support programmes, which are of minimal cost or free to users.

Most EAPs provide the following services: counselling and psychological services; assessment and referral; health promotion; personal financial management; substance abuse and HIV/AIDS counselling; as well as internal job-related training programmes, for example, time management, supervision and management, workplace prevention programmes and so on. [44]

EAPs usually operate through a roster of service providers to whom staff and, in most instances, their immediate family can be referred. These programmes, however, operate primarily in large organizations such as British Gas, the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT), the University of the West Indies and so on. While they are available, access to these services is not infinite. The number of visits may be limited and workers may have to choose from a select group and not have the freedom to access the service provider of their choice. There has been an increasing call for the establishment of such programmes where they are not currently in place. In an interview with social workers of the National Family Services, they called for access to counselling services for themselves because of the high levels of stress brought on through their jobs. In other words, the counsellors also need to be counselled. The Judiciary has also called for such programmes to be instituted.

At the lower end of the spectrum, however, low-income workers tend to have less access to such services and these programmes are not instituted in the government's free social services. However, for all workers at large corporations, EAPs form part of their working conditions.

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[43] See www.petrotrin.com/peapslweb.

[44] See www.familiesinaction.com.

3.4.4 Homework centres and after-school and vacation care

Homework centres, popular in the United Kingdom, are areas designated in libraries, community centres and other such spaces that are equipped with computers, reference resources and other tools to assist children with their homework. Children use these facilities while waiting for parents or caregivers to take them home, or because of the lack of an appropriate space in their own homes. Throughout Trinidad and Tobago, there is an apparent and urgent need for homework centres. This is mainly because these facilities would replace the inappropriateness or inadequacy of a parent's workplace as temporary accommodation for children after school.

These centres would ensure supervision until parents and children connect in the early evening, and minimize the times that children arrive at home and remain unsupervised for long periods. Some employers have been tardy in responding to requests for after-school accommodation for children. For example, the Women and Development Studies Group of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, has requested the establishment of a homework centre for children of workers and students for over a decade, but this has not yet been instituted. Yet, a foreign-owned company, BHP Billiton TT, has established a homework centre in a rural area, Toco, as part of its community outreach programme. The centre employs five people, three of whom are teachers. It is available to children of the community, from all school levels, from 15:30 to 18:00 on school days. [45]

Supervision of children also becomes a problem during school vacations. Vacation camps are sometimes very costly and therefore are not generally affordable, even though children throughout the country attend them. They often last from one to two weeks of a vacation that may extend to six weeks. During the rest of the vacation, children sometimes accompany their parents to workplaces where they may spend the entire day. Some workplaces allow such practices, while others do not. However, some of the social programmes conducted by the government and NGOs provide underprivileged and disabled children with short-term camping facilities. The firm, bptt, has shown itself to be an exemplary employer by establishing a vacation camp for children of its employees.

3.5 Conclusion

Employers and unions need to address urgently the question of their responsibility for changes in collective bargaining agreements to reflect workers' rights and working conditions compatible with workers' family responsibilities. While the establishment of EAPs is an important step, they do not address the complexities of balancing work and family in a proactive manner. Indeed, these are the very issues that may eventually result in the need for counselling. These programmes appear to have as their main aim and justification the facilitation of workplace productivity. Employers — state and non-state, large and small — need to recognize the importance of families in producing future workers and in overall societal stability and social peace. The upbringing of children and the harmonizing of family can no longer be seen purely as the responsibility of individual women or individual parents.

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[45] Television interview with CEO and Community Outreach managers, Channel 6, 21 December 2005.

Part IV. Support facilities: Impact on workers with family responsibilities

Introduction

In this section of the study, we identify some of the mechanisms and provisions made by the public and private sectors that facilitate the reconciliation of work-family responsibilities in Trinidad and Tobago. Each of the mechanisms identified is examined and evaluated, as well as the organizations and institutions that currently offer these facilities and services. The mechanisms identified are as follows:

■ **employment of individual caregivers** (including domestic/household workers as live-in or daily support for children between 3 months and 3 years, along with assistance from neighbours or an extended family);

■ **use of available private and public childcare and elderly care facilities** (including babysitters, nurseries, nursing homes and special needs homes);

■ **government provisions to the public and to its workers** (a network of services that are free or low fee-paying);

■ **private-sector provisions made by corporations and businesses** (facilities or benefits for workers with families);

■ **provisions made by non-governmental organizations** (**NGOs**) (either independently or through government cooperation with community initiatives).

Any of the above may be used individually or in combination by families at various stages in the family life cycle or depending on other current circumstances. They may also need to use one or more of these occasionally due to unscheduled and unanticipated situations which may arise. Some of these facilities may not be available in all parts of the country. Many of the formalized programmes, like private day-care centres, may be more easily accessible in urbanized areas of the north and south and, to a lesser extent, Tobago.

4.1 Employment of individual caregivers

4.1.1 Domestic service/household assistants

The tradition of paid domestic work dates back to the post-emancipation period in this region. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, elite families could employ up to six different "servants" in one household. These could include cleaners, cooks, scullery maids, nurses (for children), groundsmen and drivers. Today, domestic workers are drawn from a pool of women, most of who have limited education and therefore are unable to access other jobs. These women become care providers for many middle-and upper-income families on either a full-time or a part-time basis. Very often reliable domestic workers remain with families until the children have become independent teenagers or beyond. The distribution of domestic workers varies by households and their earning capacity, but a majority of workers can be found working with urban and suburban families.

In the past, domestic workers were not covered by legislation and indeed today, domestic workers, or household assistants as they are referred to in the legislation, are not defined as workers under the Industrial Relations Act (1972) and therefore do not qualify for all the legal benefits of other workers. The work of the National Union of Domestic

Employees (NUDE), led by Clotil Walcott and Ida Le Blanc, have brought the concerns of this group to public attention and domestic workers have been covered by minimum wage legislation over the past two decades. This and other recent legislation contributed to protect the rights of domestic workers. For instance, the Minimum Wage Order, Legal Notice No. 40 of 1999, guarantees them the same rights and benefits as other workers; that is, the legal minimum wage of $TT9.00 an hour, paid public holidays, overtime, annual vacation and sick leave. Next, the Maternity Protection Act, No. 4 of 1998, as well as, the National Insurance Act (Chap. 32:01) 1980, includes domestic workers as employees. However, as noted earlier, the status of the domestic worker is still unresolved under the Industrial Relations Act (Chap. 80:01) Rev. 1980. [46]

Domestic workers may bring complaints to the Ministry of Labour when they are dissatisfied with their conditions of service, or they may resort to a union in a situation of crisis. However, the Ministry of Labour has found that often employees know little about the requirements of the law. While the Complaints Unit of the Ministry can resolve their issues in mediation, there are infrequent complaints. [47] For middle-class families, the domestic worker can be a very satisfactory solution, except when domestic workers, who do not live-in, are absent or late for work, or when they need time for their own families. There is no binding contract, hence employers frequently do not adhere to the laws quoted above. Some of the employers who do adhere appear to act gratuitously. They pay National Insurance contributions; provide their employees with transportation costs and other benefits, as well as give time off to attend to their own family emergencies. [48] Many parents prefer live-in domestic support, as it appears to stabilize the development of the child, particularly when they employ a reliable employee. But fewer domestic workers accept this option. Differences in the quality of care and guidance between parent and helper can be vast and conflicting.

In some instances, workers with sole responsibility for childcare or elderly care may be hired. In this case, their domestic tasks would be limited to those associated with this responsibility.

4.1.2 Extended family

Across all income groups, but particularly in the lower income levels, there is a cultural dependence on neighbours or family members living nearby to give support, particularly during crises. Most families interviewed have from time-to-time depended on this community. Lower income mothers often have to do this when free or less expensive support is not available or accessible. The voluntary help from the extended family is often unreliable, and sometimes means a shift in location for the child.

There are instances where mothers migrate either to towns, to Trinidad in the case of Tobago or to North America. In these instances, the extended family can be very important. In Tobago, a concept of village life still exists which includes the tradition of co-dependence among neighbours and family. For instance, the Department of Health, Social Services and Environment, Tobago House of Assembly, claims that at the close of school many clients send their children home to neighbours until someone in the household

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[46] Interviews with a labour inspector, Ministry of Labour, 24 August 2005, and with Diana Mahabir-Wyatt, human resources pratitioner and member of the Coalition on the Rights of the Child, 20 September 2005.

[47] Interview with a labour officer, Ministry of Labour, 24 August 2005.

[48] Interviews with married couples, August and September 2005.

arrives. [49] This, of course, is an unpaid, yet reciprocal service that guarantees a reasonable amount of safety and generosity.

In urban and suburban areas, some single female parents get regular support from mothers and siblings who live in proximity or in the same household. This support may sometimes include transporting or taking children to and from school and keeping them until the parent collects them after work. This is a preference which may remind them of their own upbringing, but it depends on a stay-at-home grandmother to facilitate this mechanism. [50]

4.2 Use of private childcare enterprises

4.2.1 Babysitters

Babysitters are women who develop childcare services privately in their homes as an income-earning activity. They usually provide a service for a limited number of parents, responding to demands in their communities. Not all of them may be trained in childcare, but training opportunities exist, for example through the UWI School of Continuing Education and SERVOL. With the Government's thrust towards standardizing practices and upgrading early childhood care and education (ECCE), there is a likelihood of increased professionalism within the next five years.

Many parents utilize the services of babysitters in their neighbourhoods for children from 3 months to 3 years old. The service is often flexible, as children remain in their care beyond the times stipulated in initial agreements when mothers (parents) have to respond to work responsibilities that prolong their regular hours. Many children and families who are in excellent relationships with babysitters retain these services for after-school care until the children become "latchkey" kids, children who return home alone after school until parents return from work.

Mothers seem to like this choice, as it gives necessary support when their work schedules shift, and they feel their children are in homes to which they have grown accustomed. At times, a reciprocal relationship binds the child and babysitter, which increases the mother's comfort level considerably. The babysitter's home serves as a "home away from home" as it tends to solve safety and stability concerns. [51]

4.2.2 Nurseries

The private nursery or day-care centre provides a more comprehensive childcare service and encompasses the age group from 3 months to 5 years. By observation, these are used mainly by middle income parents. Nurseries often provide up-to-date facilities and more trained personnel. Parents get their preference for reliability and adequate facilities; for example, outdoor swings and clear play spaces in enhanced environments. Generally, these nurseries maintain high standards but are few in number. From observation, the nurseries of lesser cost tend to have lower standards overall, less space and sometimes may become hazardous to children's health because of a lack of consistent hygiene and cleanliness.

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[49] Interview with the Department of Health, Social Services and Environment, 26 September 2005.

[50] Interview with single female parent, 3 October 2005.

[51] Talking with mothers in general, August and September 2005.

Some women with responsibilities of caring may choose to stay at home until their child reaches school age as highly professional substitutes are difficult to obtain. [52] The absence of professional standards of training, monitoring and maintaining practices makes it difficult for families to have confidence about using care facilities away from "home".

4.2.3 Nursing homes, special needs homes and special schools

The nursing or geriatric home is the popular facility for care for the elderly when the family is unable to do so and cannot afford the costs of a visiting nurse or nursing assistant. The Government has units for geriatric care in public hospitals that are free to citizens and many in lower income groups take advantage of these facilities. Religious organizations also provide similar facilities in places such as the Home for the Elderly run by All Saints Anglican Church, and the Roman Catholic L'Hospice. Some of these facilities double as spaces for palliative care. There is no palliative care facility in the country.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including religious organizations, have taken strides in developing the diverse facilities required to care for adults and children with special needs. The Lady Hochoy Home for the Mentally Disabled, the Princess Elizabeth Home for the Physically Challenged and, more recently, the Centre for Children with Downs Syndrome have been providing care for children with special needs for over three decades. These facilities have often had to turn away clients due to limited human and physical resources. Most of these facilities are located in the north-west of the country. In San Fernando, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), formerly the San Fernando Rehabilitation Centre, offers skills-training opportunities to differently abled persons in south Trinidad.

The Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of Disabled Persons International (DPI), a recently formed organization, has focused on the lack of mobility access, facilities, and employment for disabled people and has advocated remedial change. The Disabled Women's Network (DAWN), a member organization of DPI, focuses on specific needs of women. Facilities for the mentally challenged are also inadequate, as well as public knowledge and understanding of mental health. Health authorities have no other venue to refer persons with disability-related illness than to the St Ann's Psychiatric Hospital. This is a highly stigmatized venue. More than eight of these facilities, including the Princess Elizabeth Centre for Children, the Lady Hochoy Home and the Audrey Jeffers Centre, are operated by NGOs. In addition, religious bodies, mainly the Roman Catholic Church, offer several care facilities throughout the country. [53] The Alzheimer's Association provides support to caregivers of persons afflicted with this disease. Many of these facilities function with some measure of government subvention.

People generally prefer not to place the elderly and family members with disabilities in institutions outside the home. The responsibilities are excessive for workers, however, and professional home-based care is expensive. Professional homes therefore become a last resort. These homes operate at various levels with poorer conditions existing in low-cost facilities. Clients complain about the care which residents of homes receive, especially those at the lower income levels, but placing the elderly or persons with disabilities in homes is often the only solution for those who can afford it. Many households may have limitations on equipment and supplies, and are unable to maintain the required high

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[52] Interview with staff of the National Family Services Division, 27 July 2005.

[53] Conversation with an officer of the TT Chapter for Persons with Disabilities, 3 October 2005.

standards of hygiene and care. Legislation to establish standards and monitoring mechanisms for these homes has been developed and is awaiting approval.

For elderly care, both in Trinidad as well as in Tobago, the Geriatric Adolescent Programme (GAP) run by the Community Development Division, is a vehicle for reviving some family traditions where young and old used to interact. The programme trains young persons to provide geriatric care as a form of employment.

4.3 Government: Provision of support facilities

4.3.1 Public as beneficiaries

As mentioned earlier, the Government emphasized its goal to provide universal access to early childhood education in the 2005-2006 budget. In 2000, the pre-school sector had approximately 390 private schools for 3- to 4-year olds. At that time, the state had begun its programme with a small number of schools under the Ministry of Education, School Supervision Division. [54] In 2002, the Ministry established the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Unit with "overall responsibility for the provision and management of early childhood care and education". [55] This Unit manages 156 pre-schools, now called ECCE Centres, which cater for 7,000 children from 3 to 5 years. This accounts for 14 per cent of the population in that age group which, according to the 2000 Census, was 48,955. [56] There is currently no provision for children from 3 months to 3 years.

According to the 2005-2006 budget, the ECCE Unit will complete construction of 13 more ECCE Centres in areas throughout the country, and has slated 30 more to begin construction later in the year. The Unit is collaborating with community centres and village councils in operating these Centres, to reconfirm the tradition of the extended family and communities taking responsibility for children. [57]

The Ministry of Social Development has a major responsibility for social service delivery, welfare, probation services, disability, substance abuse, alcoholism and family services. It also provides subventions to organizations whose purpose is child development, protection and survival. This Ministry also monitors services and facilities that are related to work-family issues; for example, the Child Welfare League, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Cyril Ross Nursery (for children living with HIV/AIDS) to name but a few. [58] Other units relevant to this study which come under this Ministry are the Division of Aging, the Disabilities Unit and the Community Mediation Programme.

The National Family Services Division (NFS) also comes under the Ministry of Social Development. It serves seven counties in Trinidad, and addresses a variety of issues

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[54] TT National Human Development Report, 2000, pp. 42-43.

[55] Ministry of the Attorney-General: *Second periodic report of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago* (2003), p. 25.

[56] See www.gov.tt/cso/census2000.

[57] TT Social and Economic Policy Framework, p. 25; *The Daily Express*, 27 September 2005, p. 8.

[58] ibid., p. 25.

that pertain to work-life balance. [59] In this Division, a small staff of social workers [60] carries out diverse and multiple tasks to meet its mission "to promote healthy family functioning through the provision of preventive, developmental and remedial programmes and services" (NFS information brochure). The number of staff is inadequate for the large volume of their work. [61] This small group of workers cannot adequately address the complexity of family problems today, including poverty, family violence, substance abuse and addiction, migration of parents and adolescent fertility. However, in 2005 for the second year, they conducted a Family Life Management Programme in Trinidad, which touched the lives of over 500 adults and children. This programme empowers parents, guardians and caregivers "through training on issues including parenting, violence and the family, and support for caregivers – birth to 3 years". [62] This study recommends, in the first instance, an increase by at least 100 per cent in the number of professional staff for each county and even more for large and complex areas, such as County St. George. This Division is accessible through its seven county offices in Trinidad.

4.3.2 Homework centres

In 2003, the Gender Affairs Division of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs set up a project of eight homework centres to offer services to "children of single parent families in need of supervision at the end of the school day". While this is a commendable start, it does not match the volume of the student population that requires this service, as this project targeted children "deemed as problem children" (Ministry of the Attorney-General, 2003, pp. 169-170). In 2005, the Ministry of Education "through its Project Peace initiatives" collaborated with the Soroptimist Club and Parent Teachers' Association to provide homework centres that aim to heighten the achievements of children. They are open to all and, of the eight locations, three are in the city of Port of Spain, three are in the east/west corridor, and two are in central Trinidad. The Ministry is inviting other communities to join in the project. [63]

4.3.3 Child support measures

Modestly started in the 1970s in the wake of the first oil boom, the School Nutrition Programme had been preceded by a milk and nutritious biscuit facility which was available to "needy" children. At the start, the programme operated with its own kitchens, catering staff and distribution mechanisms. It was re-organized in 1989 with the outsourcing of catering to contracted caterers who are provided with recommended menus to be prepared under specified conditions and delivered to public schools in the areas. By the late 1990s, the programme was delivering 80,000 lunches and a breakfast three times weekly. In the 2005-2006 budget, the Prime Minister announced that the programme was currently distributing "95,000 lunches and 30,000 breakfast meals".

The School Nutrition Programme of the Ministry of Education serves meals daily to 813 schools through 76 independent caterers contracted to the Ministry. In 2004, 31,761

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[59] Tobago has its own, but similar, division: the Division of Social Services.

[60] One officer is assigned to each county. Not all positions were filled at the time of the interview (27 July 2005).

[61] Focus Group interview, National Family Service Division, 27 July 2005.

[62] *Sunday Express*, 28 August 2005, pp. 48-49.

[63] "The transformation continues", in *The Daily Express*, Section 2, 27 September 2005, p. 9.

breakfasts and 96,447 daily lunches were distributed (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 29). A 2005 newspaper supplement stated that the programme served 132,044 meals daily to students from early childhood to secondary school. [64] This programme is of great value to a wide range of working parents and continues a tradition started by the Coterie for Social Workers since the first half of the 20th century. The Ministry monitors the nutritional content and quality of the food supplied. It also regulates the approval of contracts to providers. This programme is important as it ensures that the basic nutrients required by growing children are available in their diet. It also removes the pressure on parents, usually mothers, to provide lunches daily. Women in particular feel that their situation would improve even more if the number of breakfasts served could be expanded.

The Ministry of Education also used to provide a school book allowance for each child. However, it has recently begun to implement a Textbook Rental Programme. In 2004, the programme provided 175,000 essential textbooks on loan to primary school students, 75,000 to secondary school students and 46,200 to students of Special Schools and Early Childhood Centres (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 29), and was expanded further in 2005. Where the rental programme was not available, parents were provided with a textbook allowance of $TT 1,000 for this purpose.

This programme is fully accepted by middle- and low-income families because of the high cost of living generally and the extra high cost of books in particular. Monitoring mechanisms would be needed however to ensure the sustainability of the rental programme.

A limited school transportation service is available, especially in rural areas. According to the 2004 report, 200 maxi taxis contracted to the Ministry of Education transported 21,500 students daily, while 15,000 were transported by buses from the Public Transport Service Corporation (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 29).

In Tobago, the Tobago House of Assembly provides support facilities through the administration of the Department of Health, Social Services and Environment. This includes the School Feeding Programme and the Breakfast Programme, which caters to 20 per cent of primary school children.

4.3.4 Reaching poor families

In a discussion with social workers of the National Family Services Division, they expressed concern about the State's failure to reach and support very poor and vulnerable families. Yet, according to the Ministry of the Attorney-General (2003), the Government has shown a great deal of benevolence in providing a variety of monetary help and services to alleviate depressing poverty levels. The question then is whether illiteracy, a lack of effective communication or the structural inadequacies of the programmes themselves have prohibited those in most need from accessing and using such assistance.

The draft report of the Committee to Examine the Status of the Family in Trinidad and Tobago revealed that:

> Low-income single mother households are particularly vulnerable to socio-economic stresses, especially in instances in which their support networks were either non-existent or inadequate. … A major problem of low-income single parent households, with children, was the lack of supervision of children due to parents having to work long and irregular hours at low paying jobs (Ministry of Social Development, 2004, p. 46).

[64] *The Daily Express*, Section 2, 31 August 2005, p. 15.

Focus group interviews with low-income mothers highlighted their situations of stress due to their low incomes; lack of support from partners, relatives and the community; working hours incompatible with parenting; inability to attend PTA meetings; and fear for the child's future due to the inability to provide consistent supervision. The cases of two low-income mothers were highlighted in this report:

Ms. V has to reach to work for 1.30 p.m. She is supposed to work for five hours, but many times she has to work beyond this. Ms. S works eight hours a day. She has to start work at 4 p.m. When she leaves home at 3.30 pm, her children do not see her in the night because she arrives home at 11 p.m. She has no guarantee of work every day. Ms. V and Ms. S both agree, *"it's difficult to work in the evening time as a single parent. The children are in bed when you reach home from work!"* Ms. S was particularly concerned that her children would be *"messed up"* because she was not around to supervise them. They are both desirous of becoming more involved in their children's school life. Ms. V says that she can't go to PTA meetings as a result of her work hours. Ms. S has the same difficulty and says that when she attends, she has to walk out of the meeting early because it's difficult to reach to work on time (Ministry of Social Development, 2004, p. 45).

There are instances where the Family Services Division recognizes that government support has made a difference to the poor or to those with inadequate incomes to manage essentials: (1) the provision of water and electricity to squatter settlements; and (2) the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP) introduced in March 2003, which enables people (including children under 18) to access over 36 drug items free of charge and "hassle" at private pharmacies.

Effects of CDAP assistance for the chronically ill

Case 17

Lana, a 67-year old, was diagnosed with depression before the programme started. She jokingly wishes that the advent of this assistance had come at the same time as her diagnosis as she previously spent TT$ 400 a month for her prescribed drugs, and had the increasing concern about their availability.

Source: See www.guardian.co.tt/archives/2004-06-14/features1.htm.

The government also offers free hospital and health care at institutions, including the more modern Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex which houses the paediatric section. Service at these institutions, however, can be lengthy, uneven and challenging, and sometimes fail to deliver quality.

The Youth Employment Training Programme, an example of a work-training programme, aims at reducing poverty using as a target 15- to 25-year old unemployed school leavers. Since its inception in 1988, many reports note that around 8,000 graduates have completed nine-month courses each year. An evaluation of the programme carried out by the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean claims that 60 per cent of these graduates, in the 1993 Tracer Study in Trinidad and Tobago, felt their attitudes to life and work had improved, and that their earning potential had increased with the number of "employment and self-employment prospects". [65]

Nevertheless, efforts to alleviate poverty sometimes seem insufficient and leave social workers with puzzling challenges and disillusionment at their inability to reach the vulnerable. Investigative reports broadcast in the media suggest that some of the poor leave the devastation of poverty for a life of crime and drugs. More government interventions to alleviate poverty can be found below.

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[65] www.ilocarib.org.tt/oldwww/infsources/labour_employment/youth_unemployment/youth.html.

Social Help and Rehabilitative Efforts (SHARE) is a government effort which combines tangible with rehabilitative assistance. It distributes hampers of food, worth TT$ 200, to household representatives who are in need and "between the ages of 18 to 65 years of age on a (six-month) rotational basis". Over 100 NGOs collaborate with government ministries and agencies in administering the programme, and make referrals to the relevant authorities on the needs of the recipients for other rehabilitative measures (Ministry of Education, 2003, pp. 24-25).

The National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP) is administered through various organizations. It provides advice about treatment and rehabilitation. The programme conducts lectures at schools and business organizations. Bearing in mind the high levels of substance abuse in Trinidad and Tobago, the work of NADAPP is hardly effective. Alcoholism is a major challenge to families, many of whom are unable to cope. The pressure on a spouse with an alcoholic partner to hold family and work together is immense and many fail. This complicates the normal challenges of combining work and family. Children are also traumatized from the effects of substance abuse and may escape into homelessness in the cities and towns to avoid these family problems.

Alcoholism and drug addiction continues to challenge the population, most of whom are under-informed about the issue. On the one hand, there is limited monitoring of alcohol restrictions and, on the other, there are inadequate facilities for treatment and rehabilitation for growing numbers of alcoholics and drug addicts. Indeed only one facility – Serenity House – caters for women. It is the view of this study that the work of the NADAPP needs to be seriously re-examined, re-assessed and improved in order to adequately address this problem.

The Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building (CMU/PEEB), the implementing agency responsible for the European Commission-sponsored Poverty Reduction Programme, is responsible for a strategy to create "partnerships" between business organizations and poor communities to ensure that the gap between the rich and poor can be reduced. One example of this is the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago, which includes some members of the private sector together with community members, which assists in financing and organizing sports facilities and events in communities at risk of gang violence. [66]

In Tobago, social workers claim that the provision of funding to persons in need, along with subsidies for transportation costs to children attending primary and secondary schools, has satisfactorily reduced some of the hardships of poverty. Officers of the Department of Health, Social Services and Environment administer funds to persons who apply or who come to them for counselling. With respect to alcohol and substance abuse, they find that only a minority of the citizens affected seek help. More than likely the public is unaware of the facilities which may be available.

4.4 Government employees as beneficiaries

Government employees have their rights protected under the Public Service Act (PSA) and the Industrial Relations Act (IRA). The Public Service Act covers leave, working time and leave entitlement which Part III of this report discusses. The State, as an employer, however has no record of specific support facilities that directly address work-family conflict. The Draft National Gender Policy has recommended the introduction of

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[66] Televised national information report, September 2005.

such support mechanisms, e.g. breastfeeding breaks, crèches, day-(child)care centres, homework centres and so on.

As noted in Part III, employee assistance programmes are present in some corporate workplaces. However in 2000, Elders' Associates, a private consultancy administered for the State a four-year pilot project to teachers, their spouses and children through the Ministry of Education. At the time of the interview, this company had among its clients a number of government employees referred by supervisors/managers. It also conducts workshops on family-work balance to assist human resource managers in becoming sensitive to the issues, and to help employees keep that balance. The company conducts many of its counselling activities on the weekends to facilitate its clients, since authorities, including government, do not readily give time off to attend sessions during the workweek. [67]

4.4.1 State corporations

State corporations by legislation have an independent jurisdiction for human resource activities. One example is the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT). It maintains a Junior Staff Collective Agreement with the Communications Workers Union with provisions similar to those in the Public Service Act with respect to all leave entitlements and other standard requirements (for example, maternity leave). The collective bargaining agreement does not cover managers and supervisors, who are represented by the Managers and Supervisors Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MASATT). The collective bargaining agreement is comprehensive and is clear on rules that govern issues. However, support facilities that affect all TSTT employees are a group health plan, family support benefits, an EAP, housing subsidies, staff clubs and vacation leave subsidies.

Although TSTT provides employees with opportunities to enjoy family-oriented social activities, it has not implemented childcare facilities or breastfeeding breaks. The company allows managers and supervisors their discretion on matters of family emergencies, yet sometimes technical managers show a lack of perception of human issues. Industrial and human resource managers frequently counsel technical managers when they seem not to appreciate the issues arising from work-family responsibilities. [68]

4.5 Private sector employees as beneficiaries

Corporations and business employers range from ambivalent to resistant in taking steps to alleviate the stress faced by workers with family responsibilities. These workers experience varying forms of discrimination in the hiring and recruitment practices of many firms and, when employed, they may also be victimized in relation to promotion or "bonus payments". [69] In Tobago, it was stated that many business places do not want to have a collective bargaining agreement or any sort of contract that fixes rules. The Tobago House of Assembly is making an effort to stimulate awareness among businesses of the need for more empathy to the issue of work-family conflict. In this regard, it is exploring two initiatives: paternity leave, and "after birth centres" or crèches at workplaces so that

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[67] Interview with the assistant director of Elder Associates, 16 August 2005.

[68] Interview with the Industrial Relations Manager, TSTT, 11 August 2005.

[69] Interview with an internal human resources officer, 27 September 2005. Bonus payments are based on performance and the firms' profits during its financial year (July to June).

mothers can breastfeed their babies while at work. These have not yet been implemented. The Assembly is, however, introducing an employee assistance programme for its staff. [70]

4.5.1 Business corporations

In Trinidad, sensitivity towards work-family conflict is not very pronounced in the larger corporations. This study draws upon examples from three large companies: Guardian Holdings Limited (GHL), British Petroleum of Trinidad and Tobago (bptt) and the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (RBTT). None of these companies as yet provides childcare facilities. GHL, which has a 90 per cent female staff, proposes to relocate one of its departments from its city headquarters to Chaguanas, an area in the centre of the island. This space at its city location was originally intended as a support facility. The plan is to utilize it in future as a day-care centre, after it has been vacated. The company's plan to have a central location anticipates less commuting time for those who reside in the south, central and even north, but it will also introduce one of the mechanisms to reduce the issue of work-family conflict.

Like GHL, both bptt and RBTT provide financial support to assist families through medical and health plans and bursaries, and non-financial support through the availability of an EAP, three days' paternity leave, family emergency leave, and family-oriented social activities. Morever, bptt has offered facilities for after-work care and a vacation camp for employees' children. None of these companies has scheduled breastfeeding support in their employee plans. [71] The Informative Breastfeeding Service (t.i.b.s.) reports that it has had to reject funding support from several corporations, including these three. They argue that corporate financial offers do not guarantee t.i.b.s the meaningful support it requires, that is, the establishment of breastfeeding breaks and facilities at the workplace. [72]

4.6 Non-governmental organizations: Provision of support facilities

NGO services supplement those that the government offers to the public, especially those involved in poverty-alleviation and social support. This section discusses some of the principal organizations and their foci.

4.6.1 Breastfeeding

In 1977, a midwife who breastfed her own children was responsible for bringing together a group of concerned mothers to discuss the growing tendency towards the use of milk substitutes for babies. The Informative Breastfeeding Service (t.i.b.s.) provides counselling and information on breastfeeding in many health centres and to individual members of the public throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Through counsellors and nurses at hospitals and health centres, this organization has emphasized to employers the need for "mother-friendly workplaces", while encouraging mothers to understand the value of breastfeeding babies. The government provides a subvention which is supplemented through fundraising, partly through rentals of equipment and garage sales.

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[70] Interview with the Manpower and Labour Relations Manager, Tobago House of Assembly, 27 September 2005.

[71] Interviews with human resources personnel and employees, as well as from brochures (August-September 2005).

[72] Interview with administrators of t.i.b.s., 11 October 2005.

The administrators are not satisfied that only a minority of women, from all income groups, makes use of this service. The organization consists of qualified counsellors who are volunteers, yet their services are underutilized. Much of the absence of clients is the public ignorance of the facts on nutrition and well-being that breastfeeding produces for both mother and baby. Parallel to this is the mega-advertising and marketing of baby formulas, including the fact that children's literature shows babies with bottles in their mouths.

Women who breastfeed testify to their high satisfaction with their babies' health, even when they are exposed to common illnesses at nurseries. Women who oppose breastfeeding as a choice, it was suggested, regard it as retrograde, outdated and a means of inhibiting their freedom. Some even admit to catering to their men's prerogative to the breast. [73] In Tobago, breastfeeding is more prevalent, and mothers gain the empathy of employers who are more sensitive about family life than in Trinidad. They are more likely to allow mothers time to either express their milk at the workplace for later use, or to return to the baby during the workday. [74] Breastfeeding facilities are sparse in public spaces in the country, and a few employers have begun to consider providing facilities in their employment packages.

4.6.2 Early childhood centres and education and parenting programmes

Since 1970, Service Volunteered for All (SERVOL), a Roman Catholic NGO, has been conducting programmes for children and young people in low-income communities, and has developed its work comprehensively throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Their ECCE programme targets 3- to 5-year olds from the lowest socio-economic quintile (UNDP, 2001, p. 43). In 1980, SERVOL effectively expanded its programme through a Regional Training and Resource Centre to meet the needs of and requests from many communities within the country and regionally. As a result, it has trained many teachers, field officers and others in strengthening parenting awareness and knowledge about child development, so that children are prepared for school. These services are much in use, and graduates of the programme continue to establish nursery schools.

In addition, SERVOL conducts the Parent Outreach Programme (POP) throughout the country: ECCE teachers receive in-depth training to work face-to-face with parents on an individual basis, particularly in "remote areas and ghettos", helping them to understand issues of living. These encounters create links with health centres and other public care providers, to which parents can turn for guidance on nutrition, breastfeeding, sanitation and hygiene. Each year, this programme reaches about 2,000 families (Ministry of the Attorney-General, 2003, pp. 168-169). In 2000, in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, the Parent Outreach Programme hosted a seminar on *What are young men saying about fatherlessness?* [75]

In the 1990s, the first group of SERVOL graduates saw the need to come together and established the Association of Early Childhood Education, which maintained links with the government in the preparatory stages of the development of the ECCE Unit of the Ministry of Education. The Association gave advice on licensing requirements, standards and criteria of practices. It also promotes community involvement that would facilitate the

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[73] Interview with administrators and clients at t.i.b.s., 11 October 2005.

[74] Interview, Department of Health, Social Services and Environment, Tobago, 27 September 2005.

[75] See www.servoltt.com.

Association's role as a watchdog for the maintenance of standards of early childhood education and care.

The Association comprises three chapters: one in Tobago and two in Trinidad. Each chapter conducts workshops for parents at alternating venues. Members of the Association also conduct a Family Day on the first Monday of the month in their respective workplaces, using this occasion as a strategy to keep focusing on family and community. The agenda for the day usually includes prayers, a seminar for parents, and fun activities that engage both children and adults. Periodically, the Association holds a Teachers' Day to renew vows of commitment and to exchange ideas. Guest speakers are sometimes invited. The Association, however, keeps its advocacy role prominent through regular exchanges about the present and future of early childhood care and education.

The President of this Association considers that her school — Esther's Early School, which she has managed for 20 years — is a typical pre-school. The school, which is fee-paying, is in the reach of middle- to lower middle-income families. It consists of a population of 50 3- to 5-year olds, with a staff of seven, including the Principal, all of whom are female. The teachers are either graduates of SERVOL, or the School of Continuing Studies, University of the West Indies, St Augustine; however, when necessary the school uses external counselling services. The Principal teaches and does the administrative work, as there is no separate administrator. This may account for the lack of record keeping. According to the Principal, the curriculum follows guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, which maintains a focus on "mental stimulation and enrichment" which can prepare children for formal schooling (UNDP, 2001).

Opening hours of this school are from 8:30 to 14:00, yet students arrive one or more hours before, and leave two or more hours after the end of the school day. As teachers disappear, the hours after the close of school can become tense and restless moments for those children left longest, as this researcher witnessed. The Principal advised that the janitor, who comes on duty after 14:00, "throws an eye on" (partly supervises) the children. [76] Part II of this study has already dealt with the reasons for children having abnormally long waiting periods after school, often unattended until caregivers/parents arrive.

Esther's Early School provides a balance in the curriculum by offering parenting programmes similar to those of the Child Welfare League-run *Choices* programme; and the SERVOL-run Parent-Oriented Programme (POP).

The NGO Families in Action (FIA) is an example of an organization with a strong focus on assisting persons to maintain family and community solidarity. It receives subventions from the government and clients pay a TT$50 fee for walk-in service. They also provide parenting programmes to caregivers in homes. FIA has a hotline and, through the calls, they learn from neighbours of family crises and abuse that would prevent children from going to school. The trauma children experience from witnessing the abuse in some cases results in their leaving school, and if there is police intervention, the father might lose his job. Thus the cycle of poverty leading towards illegal activities begins.

4.6.3 Adolescent care: Children at risk

Quite often, society blames the disruption of family life and, by extension, working women for the rise in social ills that are expressed in crime and violence. Teenagers and

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[76] Interview with the President of the Association, ECCE and Principal, Esther's Early School, 20 September 2005.

young people are most vulnerable either as victims or as perpetrators. SERVOL has been instrumental in developing programmes that strengthen other programmes conducted by government and smaller NGOs to reduce the risks to which children are exposed. The Junior Life Centre Programme for 13- to 15-year olds, and the Adolescent Development Programme for 16- to 19-year olds are examples.

The Cocorite Learning Centre, an initiative of the TT Federation of Women's Institutes, provides academic training to 120 adolescents marginalized in the low-income environment of Cocorite and surrounding areas. Some of these children either have never attended primary school, failed to procure a place in secondary school or have dropped out. Many of them are prime targets to recreate their situations of poverty, or to become objects in illegal and criminal activities.

4.6.4 Child labour: A growing phenomenon

A growing concern is the increasing levels of child labour. Two previously introduced ILO reports, one for each island in the state, attested to the difficulties of research in this area. A public information pamphlet aimed at sensitizing the public reported that:

> The UNICEF-sponsored Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in 2000 found that about 1.2 per cent children aged 5 to 14 years were estimated to be engaged in paid work. 0.3 per cent was [sic] found in unpaid work for someone other than a household member (*Facts on Child Labour*, 2005.) [77]

The Trinidad and Tobago Coalition on the Rights of the Child has been advocating for effective measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. So far, the state-owned Sanitation and Waste Management Company Ltd (SWMCOL) has been preventing children from working on the Beetham Landfill, which is closest to the capital city. The company has not been as successful in the rural area of Forres Park, which researchers have identified as a target location for child labour. The ILO has sponsored a programme to rehabilitate children who SWMCOL has removed from working at the site. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) designed and administers this programme to ensure that children attend school, receive counselling and take part in relevant activities to enable their transition. Other NGOs are also assisting to bring awareness of the problem through the media, as well as to directly assist those children "at risk" to develop self-esteem and other personal skills for enhancing their lives. [78]

4.7 Conclusion

In Trinidad and Tobago, the government has recently shown tremendous interest in boosting the provision of childcare and educational services and facilities to meet its goals for universal access. One example is the promise in the 2005/2006 budget to increase the number of ECCE centres and pre-schools to achieve the country's goal by 2010. To meet the requirements of delivering these services effectively, the government also intends to provide 1,500 trained ECCE teachers. [79] However, school locations and transport systems have become the prime concern of those citizens who have been unable to access the

[77] A leaflet circulated at a rally held in Tobago in August 2005 to promote awareness about the magnitude of this issue on the island.

[78] Interview by e-mail with the Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA, 5 October 2005.

[79] *The Daily Express*, 27 September 2005, p. 35.

ECCE centres which are now operating. The cost of living and unreliability of resources seem to plague a large percentage of the population, from the middle- to lower-income levels. The focus on strengthening and stabilizing the education system is a positive one, as many of the programmes aimed at out-of-school youth tend to be piecemeal and less effective than required. In relation to its own employees, however, the government has not set a standard in relation to work-family reconciliation which the other employers can follow.

The business sector, in general, has not made the reduction of the work-family conflict a priority by developing appropriate measures. The government has addressed poverty alleviation to some extent through training programmes, financial assistance, and providing free health and other services. Yet, for parents on the whole, there is still a strong reliance on personal responsibility to cope, with little to no coordination among the public, private and non-profit sectors to address the issues created by and resulting from work-family conflict.

Part V: Assessment of the current situation

5.1 Overview

Work-family conflict poses a problem of increasing dimensions in Trinidad and Tobago. This study suggests that, while the challenges of work and family have always existed, they have taken on new forms today. The reasons for this are many:

- the general process of urbanization and decline of intimate community relations;

- the increasing demands of the workplace;

- the absence of family members to provide childcare and family support;

- the insistence on the part of women, including grandmothers, for a life beyond the household;

- the non-synchronization of work hours with school hours; and

- the difficulties of public transportation and school transportation.

The state, private sector, trade unions and NGOs have not yet accepted the real challenge of addressing the problems and issues that occur. This is so even though there is gradually increasing recognition by employers in this country of the worker, especially in middle-and upper-income occupations, as a more holistic being with a life beyond the workplace. For example, the introduction of employee assistance programmes, the hosting of Family Fun Days and, in a few instances, the institution of alternative Fridays off indicates that the challenge is being identified. Although there are activities in that direction, there remains a lack of adequate commitment and efficient coordination to produce an infrastructure at the state, corporate, labour organization and community levels which would fully represent the rights and interests of workers with families. These developments would need to take place at different levels. Effective social services, transportation systems, and improved working conditions are all required and need to be operating in a coordinated way.

5.1.1 Gender perspectives on work and family responsibilities

This study found that children are perceived as an individual's personal responsibility and, in particular, women's responsibility. Women as workers remain responsible for solutions to family problems and for directing family affairs. The sexual division of labour in Trinidad and Tobago, as in many societies, is one where family and household responsibilities are seen as primarily women's responsibilities. Indeed, society has not fully accepted the right of women to work outside the home. A woman's economic activity is often justified as a means of supplementing her spouse's income or to provide an income in the absence of a male partner. A woman's acceptance of paid employment when she has "no real reason to do so" causes her to have deep-seated feelings of guilt, which result in her making every effort to personally ensure that the family is not inconvenienced by her work outside the home.

Thus work and family are still very gendered concepts. A woman's presence in the labour force has not lessened her role as nurturer or her responsibility for caring. This does not ignore the reality that some men are accepting caring responsibilities; however, in a crisis, their income-generating work becomes a priority because the tradition of the male

breadwinner is so well-established. Men, by definition, are supposed to work outside the home and jobs traditionally considered "high risk" (for example, the police service or the energy industry) are organized to favour male participation. The idea of the man as "breadwinner" remains a shadow underlying the participation of women in the labour force. Male parents need to be supported to foreground their parenting responsibilities at the workplace and to challenge the underlying assumptions of the male-breadwinner ideology.

The growing number of single female-headed households is significant. Female-headed households have always existed, yet they were often embedded in a larger extended family framework. Although less so in the Caribbean, traditional gender ideology assumes that all mothers have some male support or that "someone is at home", and does not take into account women as sole providers who have had, in many cases, to accept family responsibilities in total. Sending children home in the middle of the day because of a lack of water at school assumes that one of the two parents can come to collect children or that someone is at home to receive the children. Neither is often the case.

5.1.3 Support structures and facilities

As noted above, a comprehensive strategy to address this problem would need to incorporate effective social services; a transportation policy; sensitization, including gender sensitization, of key stakeholders; and improved working conditions. From our assessment, facilities for childcare for children from 3 months, elderly care, after-school care, vacation programmes and other necessary support systems are not readily available in an accessible, effective and systematic way. The proposed introduction of a comprehensive system of early childhood education and care is an important development, but it has to be seen both in its relation to education as well as its relation to work-family support.

There has to be coordination among efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, the National Family Services, trade unions, employer organizations and other relevant agencies to address work-family life conflicts. The purpose of a coordinated system is to ensure, at least, that worktimes and school times coincide and/or that facilities are provided at workplaces, as well as public spaces (community centres) for after-school care, vacation breaks and to respond to *ad hoc* school closures, breastfeeding and other emergencies.

Both the lack of professional standards and the high costs of services create tensions in families when they seek to fulfil the need for work-life balance. The limited choices available to workers with families are often a cause of much stress. Both the free and the affordable facilities need regularizing based on standards of quality and care. The Division of Aging is currently developing legislation to monitor homes for elders, while similar legislation for childcare facilities has been imminent for some time. The speedy completion of this process would be an important component of an effective strategy.

5.1.3 Society's infrastructure

The transportation infrastructure emerged as an issue for serious consideration. We heard of one parent having to make four different travel arrangements for children whose school days ended at different times. Long commuting times due to an uneven distribution of work locations and parents' concern about children's safety have a negative impact on workers' strategies to produce a harmonious relationship between work and family. Commuting time reduces quality time with family and results in frustration and sleep deprivation, as workers opt to spend long hours at work to avoid traffic congestion. Children who must be left unattended or waiting, whether at home or at other sites, become

a cause of major concern for parents. Consequently, there are cutbacks in productivity in the workplace at strategic times of the workday.

5.1.4 Workplace commitment

Reconciliation of work and family must by definition include increased commitment on the part of employers and trade unions towards fully appropriate working conditions. In our assessment of the situation, this is still quite weak at all levels of employment: there were no workplaces with childcare facilities, including crèches; None allowed breastfeeding breaks; formal systems of flexitime were not in place; and few had facilities for after-school care or vacation programmes. Structured part-time work, where workers at various points in the lifecycle may opt for 50 per cent or 80 per cent employment with the commensurate level of benefits, did not exist. Where part-time work existed, no benefits were available and workers were responsible for their own social security and health benefits. The absence of necessary working conditions is reflected in the point made that some women are rejecting senior management positions because of the implications for their family responsibilities. It is in the interests of both employers and workers that a supportive working environment be created. Trade unions and the Employers Consultative Association may discuss, for example, how childcare facilities at large workplaces could prevent parents having to rush out at 14:30 to collect children or women having to stay at home when problems with babysitters arise. As mentioned earlier in this study, the state and the workers' organizations should take a lead in this regard, providing examples for the rest of society to follow. The development of legislation based on the relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations should also be seriously considered.

5.2 Effects of the work-family conflict

5.2.1 Poverty

Poverty is a structural problem. Its roots lie in a history of inequality, where certain groups tend to be more disadvantaged than others, and from the unequal reach of educational and social services. The impact of the neo-liberal structural adjustment policies of the 1980s has exacerbated these historical inequalities, resulting in a situation of extremes of income distribution reflected in the Gini coefficient of 0.45 in 1981-1982. By 1998, it had declined to 0.39 (Henry, 2005, p. 6).

The existing economic environment has provided the government with the opportunity to address or redress this inequality, and it has sought to do this in many ways. The main mechanisms chosen have been special employment programmes in poor communities (URP and CEPEP), financial resources for self-help and home improvement programmes; food distribution for up to three to four months; and skills training programmes. Another programme which is extremely important has been the re-injection of funds into the education sector which, if combined with the right policies, should show results in the years to come. The improvement of the public health-care system is also receiving attention.

Yet, workers with families are not satisfied with the distribution of these resources. There are too many complaints about the quality of service and its availability from service agencies: sometimes social service delivery is impaired through lack of staff and equipment; sometimes there is a lack of creativity in providing services, which impacts negatively on otherwise important programmes. Workers seeking health care for themselves, their children or the elderly, for example, have to wait long hours to receive attention at public institutions, even longer for a date for surgery, and may not be able to access the medications prescribed. This is also true for women attending ante-natal and

post-natal clinics. These difficulties have implications for their jobs and the health of the newborn. Low-income workers, in particular, who choose to attend these public institutions often suffer loss of income. They may therefore delay visiting medical facilities until their health or that of a family member is compromised.

The poor also cannot afford the multiple coping strategies used by some of our middle-income respondents; for example, child-sitters before school and after school, private school transport for each child or vacation camps during school vacations. They also cannot afford the after-school extra-curricular activities which others may arrange for their children. These children therefore tend to be unattended, unsupervised and more likely to get involved in anti-social activities. Yet, within these communities, strategies are different; for example, the panyard, [80] street or yard football and cricket, rehearsals for the Best Village competitions, carnival, chutney and tassa competitions, and so on. These contribute greatly in reducing the stress of scarcity of cash and social and economic marginalization. The panyard, in particular, has been an important space to channel youth creativity and time.

In order to be independent, people at the poverty line often choose external migration, but also internal, such as from Tobago to Trinidad and the reverse. Finding work in foreign lands and leaving children behind often has negative results, such as behavioural difficulties among children who may feel abandoned or who lack effective and legitimate parenting. It is also mainly from this income group that child labour emerges, as their only goal is to help themselves and their families to survive.

5.2.2 Families and their dependents

The coordination and management of households can be a cause of stress in itself, but additional problems arise from the prolonged hours of work, commuting time, and the other problems mentioned above. Some families are able to access a network of extended family to assist with dependants; others find it difficult and sometimes impossible, although, generally, there is an acknowledgment of the benefits of this bonding tradition.

5.2.3 Labour force patterns and human resources

While unemployment rates for both men and women declined in 2005 (CSSP, 2005, p. 4), fewer women are employed than men, and women's average incomes tend to be less than men's. Women outnumber men in the services and associate professional sectors (for example, teaching, nursing and sales) and, excluding Tobago, are slightly fewer in number in the category of legislators, senior officials and managers. In the elementary occupations, many more men are represented, while the number of women in agriculture has declined.

Families that relied on women for family support services no longer have that privilege, since the number of employed women has increased. As mentioned earlier, even grandmothers have options that go beyond child-bearing and child-rearing and therefore may no longer be available. These would be some of the families who now look at private facilities to meet their needs for care.

The organization of work in executive and professional positions demands very early and late hours, meetings and travel assignments. These tend to inhibit the progress of work-life balance. Human resource managers have not been sufficiently flexible with arrangements for workers with families, although both the public and private sectors are

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[80] Panyard (steelband location), where practice sessions are held and pans stored. They have also been used for educational purposes.

becoming more attuned to the needs for work-life balance and some are providing relevant training for managers.

Another discernible pattern is the emergence of self-employment and entrepreneurship among a growing number of men and women. While this is an age-old work tradition, its promulgation as an important component of neo-liberal economic policy has given it renewed importance. Workers are advised to take responsibility for their own employment, especially in the context of the decline of the labour-intensive agricultural sector and manufacturing industry. One example of this is the construction industry which often finds men and their sons engaging in skilled labour. Frequently, the work is both time-intensive and flexible, potentially giving men time to attend PTA meetings and so on. [81]

However, of significance are women entrepreneurs, many of whom are lower-income earners who prefer home-based work because it can facilitate work-life balance. Breastfeeding a baby according to standard practices for six to 12 months is not facilitated at the workplace; therefore, some women choose to leave factories and other low-paying jobs to experience the development of a healthy baby at home. This can result in savings, as they are no longer dependent on purchasing artificial baby food. Examples of these are women who work at catering, sweet-making or babysitting from the home. Small-scale self-employment normally falls within what is referred to as the informal sector. This sector is extremely visible in Trinidad and Tobago and often operated in confrontation with the legal system. Private consulting work is another option for middle-class professionals. According to the Draft National Gender Policy and Action Policy, only 31 per cent of such entrepreneurs are accounted for in the official statistics (Center for Gender and Development Studies, 2004, p. 35).

5.2.4 Gender equality in the labour market and in the home

As we saw in Part I, labour force participation rates have remained relatively stable, and there has been a gradual rise in male and female participation rates. It also found that many married women and women with children made "a conscious decision to remain in the labour force" (Center for Gender and Development Studies, 2004, p. 54). Women's participation in the labour force has had the impact of challenging the traditional roles that society has imposed on them. In many cases, women show a capability of functioning equally well at family tasks *and* at productive employment. They usually bring innovative strategies to the solution of problems, and thus reduce levels of conflict. There are some less successful cases, in which single women or even those in unions because of constraints in finances, location, and capability, have not been able to experience a balanced life. Yet, research studies have established that highly motivated persons, women in particular, do better at balancing work-life responsibilities than others who are less motivated. [82] Comprehensive research on women's actions to survive the work-family conflict in Trinidad and Tobago might well yield similar findings.

The Maternity Protection Act No. 4 of 1998 was an important development for women workers. Women only become eligible for maternity leave, however, after a continuous 12-month period with an employer. The Act provides pregnant women with 13 weeks' leave, six of which are to be taken before the birth. A seven-week leave period for

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[81] Interview with a father, who has a small painting business, 19 August 2005.

[82] A. Bookman: "Integrating work and family life: Research at the MIT Workplace Center", in *MIT Faculty Newsletter*, Vol. XV, No. 1, at http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/docs/facnsl.pdf.

bonding is insufficient, since the mother does not return to work with adequate support facilities during this critical period of the child's life. Women who are pregnant when hired or who become pregnant two years in succession are not entitled to paid leave, and this could be a source of financial and other difficulty.

There is no equivalent leave for fathers, although more and more collective agreements include short periods of paternity leave, and a few employers show empathy by allowing men, on proof of paternity, three to four days' leave. If the society is seeking to promote new approaches to family and fatherhood for men, then the question of paternity leave for fathers will have to be considered.

Children and elderly care, as discussed in Part III, is still primarily the responsibility of women in the home. The division of labour is mostly traditional, as women continue to strategize around this unremunerated work more frequently than men do. At the same time, however, the pressure brought on by long hours of commuting, the concerns about safety and the inadequacy of professional caring services have forced some men to participate more in caring activities. The reality is that not all families are two-parent families, so any clear division of labour is not always possible. The cases where children have to perform adult roles may seriously affect their having a normal childhood.

5.3 Evaluation of past policies and measures

As this study has shown, policies and measures to address work-family conflict are few and far between. Where some fit has been attained, it may not have been the original aim of the policy implemented. The policies to be examined below address leave arrangements, school transportation services, early childhood care and education, the school feeding programme, employee assistance programmes, and the Disability Assistance Grant.

5.3.1 Leave arrangements

As shown in Part III, with the exception of maternity leave, there are no statutory leave arrangements; for example, workers in the public sector are entitled to "casual leave". This form of leave allows them to attend to personal matters, e.g. banking and other business matters, or to respond to family emergencies. Not all private sector companies have this facility, therefore workers would have to use their vacation leave allocations for this purpose. As noted earlier, the Maternity Protection Act was an important step in resolving work-family conflict as it recognizes the need for all women to have this right and ensures that maternity should not provide a basis for discrimination and loss of earnings. The Act, however, only provides minimum standards and paid leave is only available after 12 months of continuous service. Collective bargaining agreements have been important in adding to this base of provisions, but where this is not the case, the minimum standards apply.

An important and relevant aspect of the Act is its provision for ante-natal visits prior to delivery and for the continuation of leave with pay in the event of the death of the baby. This recognizes the trauma of such an eventuality and the need for women and their families to grieve and adjust to this development. There are cases where these rights are not provided, especially to non-unionized, low-income workers in certain establishments who may not feel empowered to complain to the Minister of Labour and seek redress.

Paternity leave is not statutory and, where it is included in collective bargaining agreements, is limited to two to four days. While this is a major advance on the past in that it acknowledges men's relationship to their new offspring, it does not acknowledge any larger role for fathers in the lives of their newborns. There are instances when a woman's

period of confinement is extensive due to complications with pregnancy or other health matters. In this situation, fathers may have to take over many of the responsibilities of the mother, especially when there are children or other family members involved. This may entail use of casual and/or vacation leave if this is available. Additionally, as these early days are very important for bonding between infant and parent, fathers should have the option to spend a longer period of time with newborns in order to facilitate this closer connection. A new approach to fatherhood would also entail additional challenges in the work situation: fathers and not only mothers would require time off to take a sick child to hospital, or have to miss work if the babysitter is unavailable. This would remove some of the discriminatory repercussions of parenting which currently disproportionately affect women.

5.3.2 School transportation

Experiments with a school bus service have taken place at various points in the recent history of Trinidad and Tobago. In the 1980s, a comprehensive system operated for a large number of secondary schools. This was discontinued. At present, a limited service exists in certain rural areas using buses of the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) and specially contracted maxi-taxis. In October 2004, one of these school buses was involved in an accident, after which 20 students were treated for injuries. This bus served the Nariva area, one of the poorest rural communities, where there is no active public transport system and at the time of the accident was carrying students from five schools. This incident brought to the fore some of the problems affecting this limited service. According to the parliamentary representative for the area, Harry Partap, M.P.:

> Within the past three weeks, the transport provided by the Ministry for the pupils had been irregular and late when they did come … last Monday the two buses arrived late, one at about 8.a.m. and the other at 9.30 a.m. By that time, the children had gone home losing valuable school time (*The Daily Express,* 28 October 2004).

In June 2004, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago commissioned the preparation of a comprehensive National Transportation Plan, which was supposed to be submitted by June 2005. In response to this, a daily newspaper noted:

> The National Transportation Plan is clearly increasingly vital and of urgent importance. We are already way behind the rate of road-building required and something must be done to reduce the dependence of our citizens on cars for every aspect of their lives outside their homes. Efficient mass transit must be fast-tracked, as must be government (and business) decentralisation. A dedicated school bus system (as in the USA and UK) is another important factor. Staggered or flexible work hours must be seriously examined, and then implemented (Simon Kelshall, *The Daily Express*, 13 October 2004).

This shows that an integrated national transportation plan would be concerned not only with issues of engineering and infrastructure, but also with some of the issues which have emerged in relation to the resolution of work-family conflict. This transportation plan would also consider a mass transit system, possibly a light rail system, which could go a long way in reducing the long commuting times which have emerged as a problem for workers and their families.

Educator Samuel Lochan, in an article in *The Daily Express*, recalled the days of the rail system of the 1960s and early 1970s. Lochan noted that the railway system was abandoned at the same time as the process of universal secondary education was coming on stream. He notes that "while we were adopting patterns of schooling that required an efficient mass transit system, we were abandoning the trains and moving towards a private

vehicle system". [83] The preparation of a National Transportation Plan provides the opportunity to ameliorate some of the issues that arise from excessive commuting time, raised earlier in this study, particularly with regard to establishing a school transportation system.

5.3.3 Early childhood education and care

With reference to Part IV, this study examined systems of early childhood education and care, and found that the existing services were fragmented and limited. With respect to both the free and low-cost facilities, problems of poor standards and professionalism existed. The government's proposed new expanded programme should go a long way towards addressing problems of access. The training of early childhood educators is anticipated to address some of the problems of quality. However, unless adequate systems of monitoring and continuous evaluation are instituted, problems of maintaining standards will occur.

In addition, there is a need for care facilities to have opening and closing hours that synchronize with the times parents bring children and collect them at the end of the workday. In very many cases, children of 3 to 5 years old remain under-supervised for long periods that begin before the start of the school day at 8:00 and end after its close at 14:00. Some parents have no alternative but to place children at ECCE facilities very early on their way to work before 8:00, and to collect them after 16:00.

It is strongly recommended to establish crèches at large workplaces, office complexes and industrial estates, which would address this need as well as facilitate the breastfeeding breaks at the workplace. This has long-term positive health implications for the society as a whole and could result in fewer "sick days" in the future.

5.3.4 School nutrition programme

The School Nutrition Programme can possibly be described as a "best practice" in Trinidad and Tobago. It has been able to address two aspects of the issue: (1) the reduction of pressure on parents by providing one or two meals daily; and (2) the provision of meaningful home-based income-earning opportunities for some parents, which also allowed them to expand their catering operations beyond the programme and to improve their hygiene, sanitation and food handling practices. [84] In addition, this programme has reduced some of the nutritional inequities which children from poorer homes may have faced which impact on their educational performance. Although this has not materialized, this programme was also projected as a mechanism to provide a more stable market for the local agricultural sector. This should be pursued more vigorously.

The School Nutrition Programme is accepted by parents at all income levels, who recognise its many benefits — health, economic and social. The meals are distributed free of charge; there is no stigma attached to accepting the meals, as they are widely available and not only for the poor. Some parents recognize that it takes away the responsibility of one aspect of daily meal preparation and thus provides them with some more time for other essential duties; others at low-income levels are able to improve the "stretch" of their small or irregular incomes. The programme enables all groups to experience the satisfaction that their children are receiving nourishment regularly. While parents are grateful for the

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[83] See www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/29556256.

[84] See http://foodetcetera.com/schoolfeeding.htm.

programme as it currently exists, the extension of breakfast offerings to more children would greatly reduce the stress of food preparation during the early hours of the morning, which is the responsibility of many working parents.

5.3.5 Employee assistance programmes

Employee assistance programmes were an important introduction into the human resources landscape of Trinidad and Tobago. They represent in a real way employers' commitment to the emotional well-being of their employees. They are also a cost item, and decisions to introduce them must have been based on some cost-benefit analysis which reinforced their importance to worker productivity.

But EAPs have done something more: they have brought the realm of emotional and mental health care into the mainstream of Trinidad and Tobago more than had been the case before. Mental health is still a grey area in this society. The extremely mentally ill are described as "mad" and misunderstood, and professional counselling is out of reach for the poor and even some middle-income households. A more sophisticated understanding of mental and emotional well-being still needs to be developed. EAPs can go a long way towards demystifying this subject as well as opening the possibility for counselling to a wider range of persons. Access however is still limited, and must be expanded and made available to a wider cross-section of the population, possibly through public health-care institutions in the future. Through these programmes working parents are able to take their problem children to counselling as the school counselling services are limited and difficult to access. Parents themselves are able to address some of their own emotional problems and those of their spouses. EAPs have been particularly important in dealing with problems of alcoholism, substance abuse and addiction, although long-term treatment facilities are extremely limited.

It should be noted, however, that EAPs at some workplaces may be perceived as the final chance for a difficult employee. The employer or manager may consider it as a "we tried everything" option prior to dismissing that employee; for example, where an employee is drug dependent, failure to make use of the company's EAP programme could be a legitimate basis for dismissal. Similarly, dismissal of a worker whose performance fails to improve even after accessing the EAP may be more easily rationalized. But EAPs must be seen as more than this. Employers need to go one step further to create and implement proactive programmes that provide an enabling and supportive working environment, one which addresses the combination of values, ethics and practices integral to work and family responsibilities.

5.3.6 Disability Assistance Grant

The Disability Assistance Grant was first established in 2000 when a monthly amount of TT$520 was granted to assist care-givers of the disabled. This was increased to TT$600 in 2002, TT$650 in 2003 and to TT$800 in 2004. The grant is payable to persons aged 18 to 65. The grant was one of the first attempts to come to terms with the problems of the disabled community in Trinidad and Tobago. It was important but limited, in that it did not contribute to the independent living needs of disabled persons.

Because the employment climate has not historically been disabled-friendly, the majority of disabled persons are unemployed due to limited educational and employment opportunities, and confined to the house because of problems of mobility and transportation. The Disability Assistance Grant provided the disabled and their care-givers with a small, but much-needed, financial support, but the community requires much more. In 2003, the newly revitalized organization, Disabled Peoples International (DPITT), staged a protest outside of a state enterprise demanding employment. This protest action,

which drew support from various sectors and greatly embarrassed the government, lasted over 100 days and resulted in a greater awareness of the needs of disabled people. The State and others agencies have begun to respond, for example by providing a disability bus. Special attention is being paid to transportation needs,[85] as well as access to employment and educational institutions. More general issues of access and mobility to public buildings and on streets and sidewalks still need serious consideration. The lack of independence of the disabled presents a real challenge to working family members, especially women care-givers.

Parents or spouses of disabled persons have a particularly difficult time in reconciling work with family. The existing institutions are inadequate to respond to the needs of the entire community. The 1995 National Health Survey estimated disability prevalence rates of 12.5 per cent for males and 15.2 per cent for females. Disabled women have specific problems, in that they are less likely to have spouses to care for them and even less likely to be employed (Huggins, 1999).

5.4 Conclusion

This assessment provides an evaluation of the degree of progress made in confronting the constraints and dilemmas faced by workers in meeting their family responsibilities. While it is true that this may not have been the initial intention of most of the policies discussed, they do represent a greater recognition of the social, economic and emotional needs of the population. These are traditionally areas where women have intervened with innovative strategies.

While this start is commendable, the limitations and shortcomings identified provide possibilities for improvement. Critical reflection on these findings is necessary if a comprehensive programme aimed at reconciling work with family is to be introduced. The positive interventions which have emerged in this study require moving the current level of the social service delivery and working conditions in Trinidad and Tobago to another level. The specific recommendations in Part VI suggest some ways forward.

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[85] According to the DPA North America and the Caribbean website, two wheelchair-accessible buses were acquired by the Tobago House of Assembly in 2003, but up to July 2005 were not in use. See http://caribbeandpi.org/regionhappen/Sep05.htm.

Part VI: Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This study has attempted to evaluate the current situation of work-family conflict in Trinidad and Tobago and the mechanisms used by employed women and men to address this situation. It concludes that, on the one hand, both the modification of family traditions and family structures have had an impact on changes of lifestyles of workers with family responsibilities. On the other hand, many workers are trying to cope with the rapidity and complexity of industrial and technological change that surrounds the building of households. However, a comprehensive national plan to strategize a reconciliation of the issue of work-family is urgently required to reduce the stress of individual coping mechanisms.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the research and analysis presented above and the interviews and discussions held with parents, care-givers, educators, social workers, policy-makers, human resource officers, trade unionists and employers. Two forms of recommendations are provided: broad, general recommendations that provide an enabling framework for change; and specific targeted recommendations that focus on the responsibilities of the relevant sectors. While some recommendations may be directed at one agency or institution, it is recommended that a multidisciplinary task force be established to address this issue and develop a coordinated approach to implementation. If such a group already exists, then this document could be seen as a catalyst for faster and more comprehensive attention.

This study recommends that the State take the lead within its own institutions and actively encourage other employers to do the same through legislation and other means. A starting point would be the ratification of ILO Convention on Workers with Family Responsibilities (No. 156), 1981, and the Convention on Maternity Protection (No 183), 2000, and their accompanying Recommendations. The State should also ensure that necessary support structures are put in place and systems for monitoring and evaluation established. Measures aimed at resolving work-family conflict have not been a major component of collective bargaining. Trade unions need to be sensitized about the importance of this issue and to institute changes beginning with their own worker organizations, setting examples for the collective bargaining process. The draft National Gender Policy for Trinidad and Tobago and the draft Policy on Aging both strongly support many of these measures, which would have positive repercussions for society in general and which go far beyond the workplace.

The following targeted recommendations and proposals are divided into categories: the state sector, private sector, trade unions and the labour movement. They should, however, be considered in total in order to ensure an integrated approach to implementation.

6.2.1 The state sector

1. The examination of state policies and legislation in different countries and jurisdictions as a basis for the introduction of new legislation and policies in Trinidad and Tobago.

2. The review of the ILO Conventions on workers with family responsibilities and maternity protection with a view to ratification and gradual implementation.

3. The establishment of a multidisciplinary task force to examine the implications of introducing relevant changes into the public and private sector and the wider employment context. This task force should include, among others, representatives of trade unions, the Employers Consultative Association, the International Labour Organization, the Gender Affairs Division, the Division of Aging, the National Family Services Division, the Ministry of Labour, the ECCE Division of the Ministry of Education, and related NGOs (e.g. t.i.b.s, AFETT).

4. The development of a legislative framework to implement the recommendations of the task force. This would involve the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development and other relevant agencies.

5. The coordination and rationalization of all relevant agencies and initiatives related to service delivery in order to improve effectiveness and to adjust to fit the needs of working parents and persons in different locations (rural/urban and Tobago). These agencies include the Ministry of Education, the National Family Services Division of the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Labour, trade unions, the Employers Consultative Association and the Transportation Division of the Ministry of Works. For example, in relation to the problem of work hours and school hours, the issues to be addressed would include opening and closing hours of government offices, such as the licensing department, social, health care and other service delivery centres; school hours; transportation policy; flexible work hours; etc.

6. The decentralization of essential services and public offices to main towns and Tobago to prevent time lost in transacting personal business (e.g. passports, ID cards, motor vehicle licenses, taxation related matters, etc.).

7. The strengthening of the relevant section(s) of the Ministry of Labour with responsibility for monitoring conditions of work in the public and private sector throughout the country, especially in low-wage sectors. This would be necessary to alleviate the problems faced by poor employed mothers with regard to hours of work, leave entitlements, minimum wages, etc.

8. The reintroduction of the Basic Conditions of Work Bill to ensure improved working conditions for low-income workers, many of whom are female parents.

9. The urgent standardization of policies and practices, based on pertinent laws and regulations which are in effect, in order to maximize the building and implementation programme for the ECCE programme by 2010.

10. The speedy establishment of the Children's Authority for the administration of policies that relate to children and family issues and require urgent attention at this time. This would facilitate the monitoring of childcare facilities, crèches and nurseries which generally provide support to working parents.

11. The institution of adoption leave for parents of newly adopted children to facilitate bonding and the establishment of a healthy relationship.

12. The review of the work programme of NADAP to facilitate stronger interventions in the development of treatment programmes, public education on the biophysical effects of substance use and the monitoring of relevant legislation, e.g. serving of alcohol to minors, alcohol advertising. This is to address the impact of addiction on the increased responsibility/workload and emotional well-being of employed spouses/parents of substance abusers.

13. The production of a comprehensive document including information on all social and other services, facilities and programmes available for employed family members and their dependents.

14. The speedy ratification and implementation of the Policy on Ageing which includes provision for a range of options for quality elder care and support to caregivers.

15. The speedy passage of legislation on homes for the aged and the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and quality control.

16. The introduction of a pilot project on family-friendly provisions in **one** government ministry to include a crèche, breastfeeding breaks, childcare centre for after-school care, vacation programmes, etc. After one year of operation, this facility should be evaluated and recommendations for expansion prepared.

17. Consider the implementation of tax incentives for companies that introduce practical measures which address work-family conflict, e.g. nurseries and crèches, breastfeeding breaks, etc.

18. The collaboration with the Division of Gender Affairs of the Ministry of Community Development and Gender Affairs in the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Draft National Gender Policy and Action Plan, e.g. the paternity leave provision, reconstructing notions of fatherhood among men and the wider society, etc.

19. A review of the draft National Transportation Plan to ensure that it responds to the issues of school transportation and other issues raised in this study *or* the integration of a National School Transportation Programme within the National Transportation Plan. This would involve the Ministry of Works (Transport Division) and the Ministry of Education.

6.2.2 The private sector

1. Through their organizations (e.g. ECA or the Chamber of Commerce), undertake a study to examine the costs of work-family conflict to the companies and the wider society and the benefits of implementing practical strategies to reduce this.

2. Based on this research, develop a reference manual to guide the implementation of relevant measures be prepared for distribution to the private sector. A related training manual could also be produced.

3. Private sector organizations such as the ECA and Chamber of Commerce should organize education/sensitization programmes for their members on mechanisms to address work-family conflict.

4. The examination of the AFETT report on firms friendly to female executives and consideration of the findings with a view to implementation.

5. The evaluation and publicizing of best practices which have already been established, e.g. the bptt vacation programme.

6. The possibility of collectively funded solutions could also be considered, such as crèches or homework centres, organized in specific geographic locations, e.g. industrial estates, office complexes, etc., to serve workers in a number of nearby establishments.

7. Adopt a positive approach towards the inclusion of measures aimed at reducing work-family conflict within collective bargaining agreements.

8. The development of a workplace culture, which involves employers' and workers' participation in the transformation of work and family ethics. Employers should encourage workers to contribute to the development of policies, which would bring about increased satisfaction with both work and family life.

9. The collaboration with government and trade unions in developing practical strategies to reduce work-family conflict.

10. Consider the implementation of flexitime arrangements with full benefits to facilitate both staff and clients.

11. Institute part-time work arrangements with proportional benefits, e.g. leave, pensions, etc.

6.2.3 Trade unions and the labour movement

1. The introduction of sensitivity and awareness programmes among trade unions and workers' organizations about the problems of work-family conflict and its impact on the workplace and the wider social situation.

2. In collaboration with the ILO and other relevant agencies, review the developments that have been introduced in other societies and their impacts with a view to their introduction in Trinidad and Tobago.

3. Facilitate gender sensitivity training for trade union personnel throughout Trinidad and Tobago and introduce into the education programmes at the Cipriani Labour College.

4. Introduce measures aimed at addressing work-family conflict into collective bargaining agreements and mobilize public opinion for their support, such as breastfeeding breaks, crèches and day-care centres at workplaces, flexible working schedules, etc.

5. Where opportunities for part-time work exist, ensure that benefits are paid proportionally to the time worked. This should be included in collective agreements.

6. Provide an example to government and the private sector by implementing practical programmes within their own work environments, e.g. crèches, after-school care programmes, breastfeeding breaks and vacation programmes. [86]

7. Develop a public education campaign to increase the understanding of workplace characteristics as they affect workers' rights and responsibilities, and to encourage innovative ideas and solutions for building bridges between work and family responsibilities.

The ILO should also make this report public and available to all relevant organizations and the media for public discussion and debate.

Creating family-friendly work situations demands a change in the mindset which separates income-earning work from family and household. It is a challenge to all sectors and the entire society, and requires creativity and long-term commitment. While a justifiable aim in itself, there are also long-term advantages for social peace, family and household well-being, and worker productivity. Trinidad and Tobago must accept this challenge.

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[86] These may be organized collectively with other trade unions.

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Appendix 1: List of interviews

Banking, Insurance and General Workers Union

> Mario Als, First Vice President (21 July 2005)

Oilfield Workers' Trade Union

> David Abdulah, Research and Training Officer (19 December 2005)

Ministry of Social Development

> Antonia Popplewell (22 August 2005)

National Family Services Division (27 July 2005)

> Anissa Andrews, Graduate Trainee
>
> Charmaine Bailey, Family Service Social Worker
>
> Cheryl Berkeley, Graduate Trainee
>
> Maurice Connelly, Graduate Trainee
>
> Colleen S. Huggins, Graduate Trainee
>
> Ralph Heera, Social Worker
>
> Angela Mendoza, Family Service Social Worker
>
> Jacqueline Pinder, Family Service Social Worker
>
> Kauna Ramessar, Graduate Trainee
>
> Sharon Winchester, Community Family Social Worker

Ministry of Labour and Microenterprise Development

> Beverley Hudson (24 August 2005)
>
> Marylin James, Complaints Division (24 August 2005)
>
> Angela Edwards, Disabilities Unit (30 August 2005)

Tobago House of Assembly

> John Phillips, Division of Labour, Tobago (27 September 2005)
>
> Janet Duncan, Division of Social Services, Tobago (26 September 2005)

Family Court of Trinidad and Tobago

> Radica Seunarine, Library (28 September 2005)

Human resources/management personnel

> Lyndon Jones, Industrial Relations Office (10 August 2005)
>
> Grace Talma, Management Consultant (28 August 2005)
>
> Keston Nancoo, Human Resources Manager (29 August 2005)
>
> Nidra Williams, Human Resources Officer (27 September 2005)
>
> Erica Ashton, Human Resources Consultant (2 November 2005, by e-mail)

Employers' Consultative Association (19 December 2005)

>Brian Rooplal, Industrial Relations Officer

>Marsha Naidoo, Industrial Relations Officer

Non-governmental organizations

Coalition on the Rights of the Child

>Diana Mahabir-Wyatt (19 September 2005)

>Gregory Sloane-Seale (4 October 2005)

Families in Action

>Norma Ottley (20 September 2005)

Association of Early Childhood Education

>Esther Wiggins (20 September 2005)

The Informative Breastfeeding Service (11 October 2005)

>Marilyn Stollmeyer

>Rosemary Anatol

>Rebecca Gibson

>Helen Ross

TT Chapter of Disabled Persons International

>An official (12 October 2005)

Parents and family members

>Karen and Donald Robertson, nuclear family household (10 August 2005)

>Randolph Gabriel, male head of family with children (15 August 2005)

>Rawle Gibbons, male head of household with child (10 October 2005)

>Dalon Wiltshire, single father, three-general household (6 September 2005)

>Anne Job, head, three-general household (26 September 2005)

>Delcina Edwards, hotel worker, three-general household (27 September 2005)

>Dexter Joseph, single parent (28 September 2005)

>Valerie Taylor, single parent (3 October 2005)

>Lorraine Granderson, single parent (3 October 2005)

Other

>Ronald Tagallie, Elder Associates (16 August 2005)

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for departments, NGOs and advocacy groups on family traditions and childcare

1. Name:

   Organization:

   Position:

---

2. How is your department/unit/NGO/group organized? Do you have a special area to deal with work-family issues? How many people are on the staff? What are their responsibilities?

---

3. Has your organization maintained any statistics or data on family structures, trends, etc.?

---

4. Are there many three-generation families? Nuclear families? Single parent families? Any other?

---

5. What do you know of the impact of (a) internal; (b) regional; (c) international migration on families? What are the main and frequent reasons for migration?

---

6. Who is responsible for childcare when parents migrate without children? Do families often migrate, under (a) (b) and (c) as a whole unit?

---

7. How do families arrange childcare? Do families depend on a network of support for childcare among relatives, immediate family and/or community?

---

8. Are there many care providers who have received training? Usually, where?

---

9. What options are there for government childcare support? What are there for private childcare support?

---

10. What are some results of inadequate provision for childcare? What are some of the societal/public issues—water, electricity, transportation supply—that affect adequate arrangements for childcare?

---

11. What do you consider family traditions in Trinidad and Tobago? Do you regard fostering or adopting as a family tradition? What patterns exist now? What is the status of breastfeeding?

---

12. Do you know of any families that have children who do not attend school? What are the reasons for their children missing school? Who monitors attendance?

---

13. How, in general, do families cope with work and family responsibilities?

14. How do families divide or share childcare/family responsibilities? Male/female? Adults/children? Is child labour prevalent; that is, do children have to do paid work in the home or out of the home? How do parents respond?

15. In what ways, if any, do work responsibilities affect family relationships?

16. Do you think that women's family responsibilities affect their work performance and/or career advancement?

17. Do you think that men's responsibilities affect their work performance and/or career advancement?

18. What are some of the specific effects which the disease HIV/AIDS has on families? Have you noticed any specific effects on families who have had experiences of crime or domestic violence or substance and alcohol abuse?

19. Do you have any documents or any additional information on your work that you would like to share?

20. In your view, are you aware of anything that clearly depicts the country's attempt to reduce the work-family conflict? What recommendations would you like to make at a national level?

Thank you!

Dr. Rhoda Reddock

Dr. Yvonne Bob-Smith

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for parents and family members on work-family issues and parents as workers

Category

☐ Couple with children as dependents	☐ Couple with adopted children
☐ Couple without children	☐ Single with children as dependents
☐ Couple with other dependents	☐ Single without children but other dependents
☐ Couple with family helpers	☐ Single with adopted children
☐ Couple with both children and other dependents	☐ Single with both children and other dependents

Interview questions

I. Identification

Names: _____

Age range: _____   Age at marriage/union: _____

II. Family background and structure

1. What is your family background? (Nuclear, two- to three-generation household; single parent; extended family; institutional; other.)

_____

2. Current status:

☐ Married   ☐ Single   ☐ Common-law   ☐ Visiting union

☐ Divorced/separated   ☐ Other

III. Family responsibilities: Children and other dependents

1. How many children? _____   Ages: _____

2. How many are in school?

Daycare: _____ Primary: _____ Secondary: _____ Tertiary: _____

3. How many children live at home? _____ How many children work? _____

4. Do children contribute to household expenses?

☐ Economically   ☐ Providing services   Other: _____

5. How many other dependents do you have? _____

What is their relation to you? _____

What are their ages? _____

6. Do they live in your home?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If not, how far away are they from you? _____

7. Who provides care for children regularly? _____

IV. Household care provision

1. Who is directly responsible for the home during your working hours?

(a)   Hired help   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Female   ☐ Male

(b)   Family member ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Female   ☐ Male

(c)   Community   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

2. What measures do you take in the absence of this support?

3. If there is one person, under what conditions does she/he work?

☐ Salary/wages   ☐ Insurance benefits   ☐ Accommodation

☐ Salary with accommodation   ☐ Other

☐ Travelling expenses   ☐ Vacation with pay   ☐ Emergency leave

4. If you have family or the community serve your household needs, describe how this works.

_____

_____

V. Division of household labour

1. (a) What percentage of time, as a **couple**, do you each spend on each item below?

(b) What percentage of time, as **a single person**, do you spend on each item below?

Items	Female (%)	Male (%)
Cleaning		
Cooking		
Laundry		
Gardening		
Animal support		

House maintenance
       Indoor
       Outdoor		

Vehicle maintenance		
Groceries		
Market shopping		
Store shopping		
Shuttling children to school		
Shuttling children to lessons/social/cultural activities		
Shuttling children to other activities		
Children attending health services		

2. How do you find solutions for care problems when family or hired help or community support is not available? _____

VI. Conditions of work and employment programmes

1. Did your workplace give you leave, as settling time, for marriage/union/adoption?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   If yes, how much? _____

2. How much maternity leave did you have after each birth? _____

3. How much paternity leave did the father of your child have after each birth? _____

4. How many years of your living together did each of your work?

Woman: _____   Man: _____

5. How many years have you been a single parent? _____

6. Have you ever stopped working? _____

7. How many hours do you work in each day?

Woman: _____   Man: _____

8. Has your work provided you with a career?

Woman: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Man: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

9. What level of position have you attained at your institution? _____

10. How long did it take to achieve this position? _____

Why? _____

11. Have you worked in temporary or part-time or contract jobs?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

What are the reasons for leaving? _____

VII. Earnings and other sources of income

1. What are approximately your joint net earnings? What are approximately your single earnings? _____

2. Are there any other sources of income related to family support? _____

3. Have you sought to utilize any other areas for earning income? _____

VIII. Employment satisfaction

1. How satisfied are you with work conditions: salary, leave, benefits, other?

_____

2. What support facilities are available from your place of employment?

☐	Childcare facilities	☐	Family support benefits
☐	Breastfeeding breaks	☐	Medical insurance
☐	Homework centres	☐	Wellness programmes/gym studios
☐	Bereavement leave	☐	Employee assistance programmes
☐	Family emergency		

IX. Employers' attitude to work-family issues

1. Do you believe that employers are acknowledging that there is conflict reflected in the way employees try to maintain the dual responsibilities of work and family?

_____

2. Have you experienced barriers in

(a) getting a job: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

(b) being selected for a particular assignment: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

(c) being promoted to a position for which you are qualified: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

(d) advancement because of pregnancy: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

(e) advancement because of increased family responsibility: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

(f) recognition because of family disaster or emergencies: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

3. Do your managers or superiors as necessary make an effort to accommodate your needs to meet family responsibilities? _____

X. General factors affecting work/home responsibilities

1. How does commuting time affect bridging the gap between work and family?

_____

2. How adequate is your time to have access to services that are essential to you and family life? _____

3. What percentage of the time do you devote to fulfill your personal goals? _____

XI. Possible societal changes

1. What would you suggest are ways that the public and corporate sectors in Trinidad and Tobago can show that they are able to enhance a life balance?

_____

_____

_____

Date: _____

Appendix 4: Human resource responsibilities: Working conditions

Name: _____

Company/ministry/other: _____

Position: _____

1. How long have you been in this position? _____

2. How many employees are there in this company? _____

(a) Employees with families: _____%

(b) Female employees: _____%

(c) Employees in management: Technical: _____%   HR/IR: _____%

(d) Employees in clerical/administrative positions: _____%

(e) Employees in technical jobs: _____%

(f) Employees in non-technical jobs: _____%

(g) Part-time employees: _____%

2.1. Do you compile statistics of dual-career families, single parent, ailing dependents or any other category that facilitates the development of HR policies for work-family issues?

_____

3. Whom does the collective bargaining agreement cover? _____

Whom does it not cover? _____

Give the size of each group. _____

4. Does collective bargaining make demands of your institution for family-friendly concessions? _____

5. What support facilities does the company provide to reconcile work-family issues?

☐	Maternity leave	☐	Family support benefits
☐	Paternity leave	☐	Family-oriented social activities
☐	Childcare facilities	☐	Employee assistance programme
☐	Breastfeeding breaks	☐	Health insurance
☐	Medical plan	☐	Housing subsidy plan
☐	Family emergency	☐	Staff clubs
☐	Bereavement leave	☐	Vacation leave subsidies

6. Are employees entitled to any other benefits? What sort of feedback do you receive about your package of support? Do employees utilize benefits appropriately and adequately?

_____

_____

7. Have employees ever challenged your institution because they perceived that family responsibilities hampered their progress in the following ways?

Access to promotion: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Accepting special assignments: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Loss of recognition: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Termination of appointment, restructuring: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Loss of privilege: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Other: _____

8. How do employees indicate that they are comfortable? _____

9. Does commuting time account for differences in work behaviours or ethics? Do opening hours of service of important facilities become an issue for employees? _____

_____

10. Are employees encouraged to set their own agendas? How? At what levels? What concerns does management give to employees' tendencies to work long hours? _____

_____

11. Are managers' attitudes and support consistent with your institution's policies for a family-friendly workplace? Do managers encourage the expansion or development of programmes to heighten the resolution of work-family conflict? Are many of your managers/supervisors flexible in their attitudes? _____

_____

12. What are some of the advantages your institution has gained from your policies and practices to promote a work-life balance? How do you define the "ideal" worker?

_____

_____

13. What do you consider to be the current challenges to reconcile work-family conflict in Trinidad and Tobago? Are you engaged with any other institutions or professions in realizing some future initiatives to develop job-life satisfaction for employees? _____

_____

_____

Signature: Date: