

REPORT ON POLICIES FOR WOMEN IN THE RURAL SECTOR
(Republic of Trinidad and Tobago)

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IICA TRINIDAD & TOBAGO OFFICE

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Report on "Policies for Women in the Rural Sector (Republic of Trinidad and Tobago)" prepared by a team of consultants from the Women and Development Studies Group, UWI, St. Augustine for Inter-American Institute of Co-operation in Agriculture (IICA).

Table of contents listing sections such as Acknowledgements, Preface, List of Abbreviations, Socio-demographic Analysis of the Trinidad & Tobago Rural Population, Major Conclusions, Policies, Programmes and Projects for Rural Women, Identification of Alternatives for Action, References, Interviews, and Appendices.

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- The Minister of Social Development and Family Services
- The Minister of Education
- The Secretary of Agriculture
- The Tobago House of Assembly
- The Women's Bureau
- Co-operative Department of the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism
- Adult Education Division of the Ministry of Education
- The Agricultural Development Bank
- The National Agricultural Development Co-operation
- International Labour Organization of the United Nations
- United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
- Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development
- Paramin Women's Group
- President of the Multipurpose Co-operative
- National Foodcrop Farmers Association
- Agricultural Research and Extension Project and;
- Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies

PREFACE

This programme document was prepared as part of regional programme of the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA). It was one of six (6) case studies carried out on countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the principal objective of which was the identification of alternative actions to strengthen and support the role of women in the rural development process.

The document provides a diagnosis of the role of women in the development of rural sectors in Trinidad and Tobago during the decade beginning in 1980. Section I deals with a socio-demographic analysis of the population which provides the necessary national framework for interpreting the context in which Trinidad and Tobago rural women live and operate. It goes on to provide a social and economic assessment of women in rural development with an in depth look at the composition of the rural population including: family structure, ethnicity, education, health and labour force participation with special reference to the Agricultural Sector.

Section II and III provide a critical analysis of existing governmental policies related to Agriculture and the rural sector and the conceptual and operational difficulties related to such policies. This includes an examination of the role played by the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services in which the Women's Bureau is situated and the Ministry of Education. In addition, the policies, and programmes of non-governmental organizations who work in the area of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Agricultural Research and Extension Project of the University of the West Indies were examined.

The final section of the document deals with recommendations for new projects pertinent to the institutional activities related to rural women in Trinidad and Tobago and which is hoped will raise the consciousness of rural women and empower them to make positive changes.

Information in the document was collected mainly through the analysis of secondary data pertinent to the 1980s which were updated through interviews with senior government officials and representatives of governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

The demographic data were based primarily on the 1980 Census of the Population and the 1982 Agricultural Census compiled by the Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago and the Trinidad and Tobago 1985: A Demographic Analysis, edited by Norma Abdulah. This was supplemented where necessary, by other relevant statistical data.

In order to arrive at concrete proposals of alternatives for action a meeting was held to which members of government, non governmental organizations and the University of the West Indies were invited. The organizations represented were the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development, Agricultural Research and Extension Project and the Research Team. Personal interviews with farmers were also examined at this meeting.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank
AREP	Agricultural Research and Extension Project
CAFRA	Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
CMA	Central Marketing Agency
CNIRD	Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development
DMTMPF	Draft Medium-Term Macro Planning Framework
DNADP	Draft National Agricultural Development Plan
FAC	Food and Agriculture Co-operation
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
MFPME	Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation
NAMDEVO	National Agricultural Development Co-operation (formerly CMA)
NFFA	National Foodcrop Farmers Association
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
TTRDN	Trinidad and Tobago Rural Development Network
UWI	The University of the West Indies
WID	Women in Development

SECTION I

1.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POPULATION

Trinidad and Tobago is a two-island democratic republic, the most southerly of the Caribbean archipelago just off the north eastern tip of Venezuela. It is situated 10° to 11° north of the equator between 61° and 62° west longitude, with a total area of 5,128 square kilometres in size, Tobago being 300 square kilometres and Trinidad 4,828.

Characteristics of the population of Trinidad and Tobago

In 1980 ¹ the population of Trinidad and Tobago was 1,079,791 of which 539,540 were male and 540, 251 female. Due to historical reasons which include the decimation of the aboriginal populations, European colonization, the enslavement of Africans and the indentured immigration of Africans, Chinese, Madeirans and Indians the population has traditionally been described as multi-ethnic. Increasingly however, the population has become dominated by two ethnic groups - Africans 40.8% and Indians 40.7% (Annual Statistical Digest).

Also due to historical reasons, the ethnic groups are not evenly distributed throughout the country. Tobago for example which did not have a history of Indian indentureship is almost totally African, while the Borough of Arima which has a high population of descendants of the aboriginal Trinidadians has the highest proportion of mixed persons. Similarly, County Caroni, a centre of the sugar plantation system to which indentured Indian immigrants were the most recent group of workers, has a population which in 1980 was over two-thirds Indian as shown in Table I.

1. The 1990 Census is presently being undertaken (April - May 1990); these data will not be available until late 1991.

TABLE I

Percent Distribution of Population by Administrative
Area and Ethnic Group - 1980

	African	Indian	European	Mixed	Other ¹
Port-of-Spain	57.3	11.8	1.5	26.4	3.1
San Fernando	45.1	28.9	2.1	22.1	1.7
Borough of Arima	34.5	20.9	0.3	42.9	1.4
Borough of Point Fortin	73.2	14.8	0.3	11.9	0.6
St. George	50.6	25.3	1.7	21.2	1.2
Caroni	20.0	71.1	0.2	8.2	0.4
Nariva/Mayaro	28.7	54.3	0.4	16.3	0.4
St. Andrew/St. David	37.3	38.3	0.1	23.9	0.4
Victoria	27.0	62.6	0.6	9.4	0.4
St. Patrick	32.3	55.5	0.2	11.6	0.5
Tobago	93.7	1.6	0.4	3.6	0.6
<hr/>					
Total All Areas	41.0	40.8	0.9	16.4	0.9

1. Includes: Chinese, Syrian-Lebanese, Other and Not Stated.

Source: Norma Abdulah (ed).

The population of Trinidad and Tobago is also predominantly Christian country although adherents to non-Christian denominations comprise a sizeable proportion of the population. The two largest Christian religions are the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans while the two largest non-Christian religions are Hinduism and Islam. While the proportions registered as belonging to the two major Christian denominations appear to have declined between 1960 and 1980, the proportions of Hindus and Muslims have remained relatively constant over the same period.

TABLE II

Distribution of Population by Religion 1980

	Number	%
Roman Catholic	347,740	32.9
Anglican	155,155	14.7
Presbyterian	40,275	3.8
Methodist	15,118	1.4
Seventh Day Adventist	26,268	2.5
Pentecostal	36,451	3.5
Baptist	25,333	2.4
Jehovah Witness	8,021	0.8
Hindu	262,917	24.9
Muslim	63,333	6.0
None	10,392	1.0
Other/Not Stated	64,760	6.1
<hr/>		
Total	1,055,763	100.0
<hr/>		

Source: Annual Statistical Digest

EDUCATION

In comparison with other Third World countries, standards of education in Trinidad and Tobago are described as relatively high. Nevertheless in recent times concern has been raised over the quality of this education. Critics argue that whereas access to schooling has definitely increased over the past forty years the acquisition of many basic and applied skills is not uniform throughout the education system.

Significantly, however, as shown in Table III, differentials in access to education by sex are less marked than in many societies. In 1980 such differentials were still significant however in relation to the attainment of university level education but changes in the decade since the 1980 census may show a reduction of this gap.

TABLE III

Percentage Distribution of Population 15 Years and Over
by Highest Level of Education by Sex - 1980

	Total	None	Primary	Second- ary	Uni- versity	Other/ Not Stated
Both Sexes	686,636	4.9	58.9	32.6	2.2	1.4
Male	339,942	3.3	61.0	31.3	2.9	1.4
Female	346,694	6.5	56.8	33.9	1.5	1.4

Source: N. Abdulah (ed).

Some differences still exist however (Table IV) in the choice of subjects available for study especially at the secondary and tertiary level.

TABLE IV

Trinidad and Tobago Graduates from The University
of the West Indies, By Faculty, 1979-1988

Year	Sex	Total	Faculty					
			Agriculture B.Sc.	Arts and general studies B.A.	Engineering B.Sc.	Natural science B.Sc.	Social science B.Sc.	Medicine
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1979... ..	Male	166	19	31	51	31	34	-
	Female	163	5	36	3	35	34	-
1980... ..	Male	227	18	50	74	33	52	-
	Female	161	16	77	6	36	26	-
1981... ..	Male	198	15	48	71	35	32	-
	Female	164	10	30	9	31	34	-
1982... ..	Male	199	10	42	76	36	35	-
	Female	195	30	34	9	37	35	-
1983... ..	Male	188	16	36	65	42	29	-
	Female	188	13	79	24	31	41	-
1984... ..	Male	197	16	32	56	44	49	-
	Female	207	17	36	13	35	56	-
1985... ..	Male	228	20	35	74	48	37	14
	Female	205	19	72	21	48	39	6
1986... ..	Male	234	16	31	64	66	46	11
	Female	240	20	90	7	64	51	8
1987... ..	Male	234	24	21	62	67	40	20
	Female	286	30	30	20	68	75	13
1988... ..	Male	257	21	22	31	33	51	14
	Female	286	24	70	9	37	32	14

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION

Patterns of domestic organization (or family structure) vary in Trinidad and Tobago, with characteristics similar to other parts of the Caribbean and Latin America and increasingly with other parts of the world. Analysts have identified three main categories of 'union' -

1. Legal marriage where partners live together.
2. 'Common-law unions' where partners live together without legalization.
3. Visiting unions, where partners have a sexual relationship but do not live in the same household.

Until now, census and survey data have concentrated on data related to marital status while union status data are collected only from women in relation to their childbearing years.

Data from the 1980 Census suggests that over the period 1960 to 1980 there has been a consistent decline in the proportion of married persons in the population in the age groups 15-19 and 20-29. Also, in spite of its relatively small numbers, the numbers of divorces and legal separations have in some instances doubled and quadrupled. (Abdulah et al, 1985:48).

Recent Union Status data are available from the Demographic and Health Survey carried out by the Family Planning Association in 1987. This data shows clearly that in spite of the close to 50 per cent of the population which is 'never married' almost all women enter some type of union during their reproductive years. As shown in Table IV, the proportion reported as being 'never in a union' falls from 75% for women in the 15-19 age group to 1% for women 45-49. The rates of legal marriage tend to increase with age as some unions move through all three stages from visiting through common-law to legal marriage.

Interestingly, the data suggest that more women of lower educational levels tend to be in stable unions (married or common-law). For example 74.7% of those with incomplete primary education were in these unions; compared with 68.2% who had completed primary; 41.4% with some secondary and 42.4% with completed secondary and more. At the same time however, rates for widowhood, divorce and separation were also greatest for women with incomplete primary education.

Rates of legal marriage also tend to be higher for Indian women than for Mixed and African women. Indian women also have the lowest rates of common-law unions, visiting relationships and of widowhood/divorce or separations.

TABLE V

Percent Distribution of Women by Age at First Union and
Median Age at First Union, According to Background
Characteristics,

Background Characteristic	Never in Union	Age at First Union						Total	Number	Median ¹
		<15	15-17	18-19	20-21	22-24	25+			
Age										
19-19	75.4	6.6	14.3	3.7	--	--	--	100	683	--
20-24	31.8	6.0	28.3	19.1	11.8	3.0	--	100	745	19.7
25-29	9.9	5.1	24.6	23.2	16.9	14.5	5.8	100	745	19.8
30-34	4.4	5.5	26.2	21.0	16.4	15.7	10.9	100	543	19.7
35-39	3.4	5.2	28.1	20.6	16.8	13.6	12.2	100	441	19.7
40-44	3.0	10.5	21.1	20.5	15.9	13.8	15.1	100	370	19.8
45-49	1.4	11.1	30.5	20.8	14.7	11.5	10.0	100	279	18.8
Residence										
Urban	20.2	7.0	22.9	18.9	13.7	10.4	6.9	100	1,690	20.1
Rural	25.4	6.3	25.2	17.0	11.6	8.6	5.8	100	2,116	20.2
Education										
<Complete primary	7.4	16.0	35.9	19.9	9.6	5.4	5.8	100	312	17.9
Completed primary	10.2	8.4	31.0	21.0	12.7	10.1	6.5	100	1,445	19.0
Secondary I ²	34.7	4.6	20.2	15.5	12.4	7.7	5.0	100	1,609	21.6
Secondary II ³	34.3	1.1	8.2	14.8	14.5	16.1	10.9	100	440	24.1
Ethnicity ⁴										
African	18.6	9.2	26.2	18.7	12.2	8.9	6.1	100	1,342	19.6
Indian	26.5	4.8	22.1	17.2	13.2	9.7	6.4	100	1,787	20.8
Mixed	23.0	6.3	26.3	17.3	11.2	9.6	6.3	100	649	20.0
Total	23.1	6.6	24.2	17.8	12.5	9.4	6.3	100	3,806	--

Source: Trinidad & Tobago, Demographic and Health Survey 1987.

Data from the 1980 Census shows that of the 59,375 female heads of households 26% were married and living with a husband, 11% were in common-law unions and 39% were no longer living with a husband or spouse.

It is important to note that whereas 73% of male household heads were married only 26% of female heads were. Thirty-two per cent of all female heads were widows. This was the case

for only 4% of male heads. It is clear that males have a greater tendency to remarry than females with a ratio during the period 1979-1983. (1639:1000).

Significantly, female-headed households tend to have lower income levels, as quoted from the 1985 Demographic Analysis:

'... an income of less than 500 dollars per month is very much greater for those with female heads than for male-headed households. Indeed as many as 30 per cent of female heads had no income at all, as compared with only 3 per cent of male heads' (Abdulah et al, 1985:184)

the report goes on to state:

'Furthermore, among female heads the proportion with no income increases as household size increases, this proportion ranging between 11 per cent of one-person households and 47 per cent of those comprising 8 or more persons. These figures add tremendous weight to the earlier assertion that poverty is more likely found among female-headed households' (Abdulah et al, 1985:184).

FERTILITY

Between 1955 and 1970 Trinidad and Tobago experienced a significant decline in the crude birth rate from 40 per thousand to 26 per thousand. Since then, there has been a slight increase to 28 per thousand in 1980. (Abdulah et al, 1985:144).

Births to teenage mothers were 13 per cent of total births in 1980 but this represented a reduction from earlier rates. The Demographic and Health Survey of 1987 confirmed this trend towards declining adolescent fertility. It traced the decline in fertility rates for the age group 15-19 from 115 per thousand, 15 to 19 years before the survey to 84 per thousand, 0 to 4 years before. (TTDHS, 1988:20).

The Demographic and Health Survey also showed that the earlier trend where fertility among Indian women exceeded that of their African counterparts has been reversed. Indeed at the time of the survey, Indian women had a lower fertility rate than African women 2.8 to 3.5 respectively).

HEALTH

As with most countries, females have lower death rates than males. This is true for almost every age group except the group 85 and over when the proportion of females in the

population is greater. In 1987, the main causes of death were diabetes mellitus, malignant neoplasms (cancer), heart disease, pneumonia and accidents. As shown in Table VI below, female deaths from diabetes mellitus slightly exceeded those of males during the period 1979-1981 but the tables show an increased rate overall for both sexes. Over the years, deaths from accidents have declined substantially especially among males, but the numbers are still higher than those of females.

TABLE VI

Number of Deaths and Death Rates for Five Main Causes of Death, By Sex - 1959-1961 to 1979-1981

Cause of Death	Number						Rate per 1,000 mid-year Population					
	1959-1961		1969-1971		1979-1981		1959-1961		1969-1971		1979-1981	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Diabetes Mellitus	49	83	113	176	202	281	12	20	23	36	37	52
Neo-plasms	205	288	321	353	380	393	49	68	66	72	70	73
Heart Disease	817	714	955	833	1,135	958	195	169	198	171	210	177
Pneumonia	225	202	187	168	181	156	54	48	39	34	33	29
Accidents	220	62	292	85	310	92	53	15	60	17	57	17

Source: Norma Abdulah (ed)

In spite of the lower rates of mortality, rates of morbidity tend to be significant. In the past, national health policy has tended to concentrate on maternal and child health, virtually ignoring those aspects of women's health which are not related to reproduction. Cervical cancer for example is one of the largest cause of cancer deaths among women in Trinidad and Tobago and is treatable if detected early. The Demographic and Health Survey found however that 57% of the sample knew about the pap (cervical) smear test. Thirty-one per cent had never had a test and only 11% had had a test within the last year (TTDHS, 1988:37).

As mentioned earlier, females have lower death rates than males. However, a Pan American Health Organization study (1989) conducted in Trinidad and Tobago showed that women are more susceptible to chronic illnesses than males (Table VII) especially in the 40-49 age group. After age 50 the percentage of women with no illness declines rapidly and at a faster rate than men. (Primary Health Care 1989:102).

Women therefore, are more likely to be ill and to suffer from chronic illness throughout their lives. The results of the study (Figure I) also suggests that the housewife and skilled manual worker consistently have some of the highest frequencies of both acute and chronic illness (Primary Health Care 1989:110).

TABLE VII

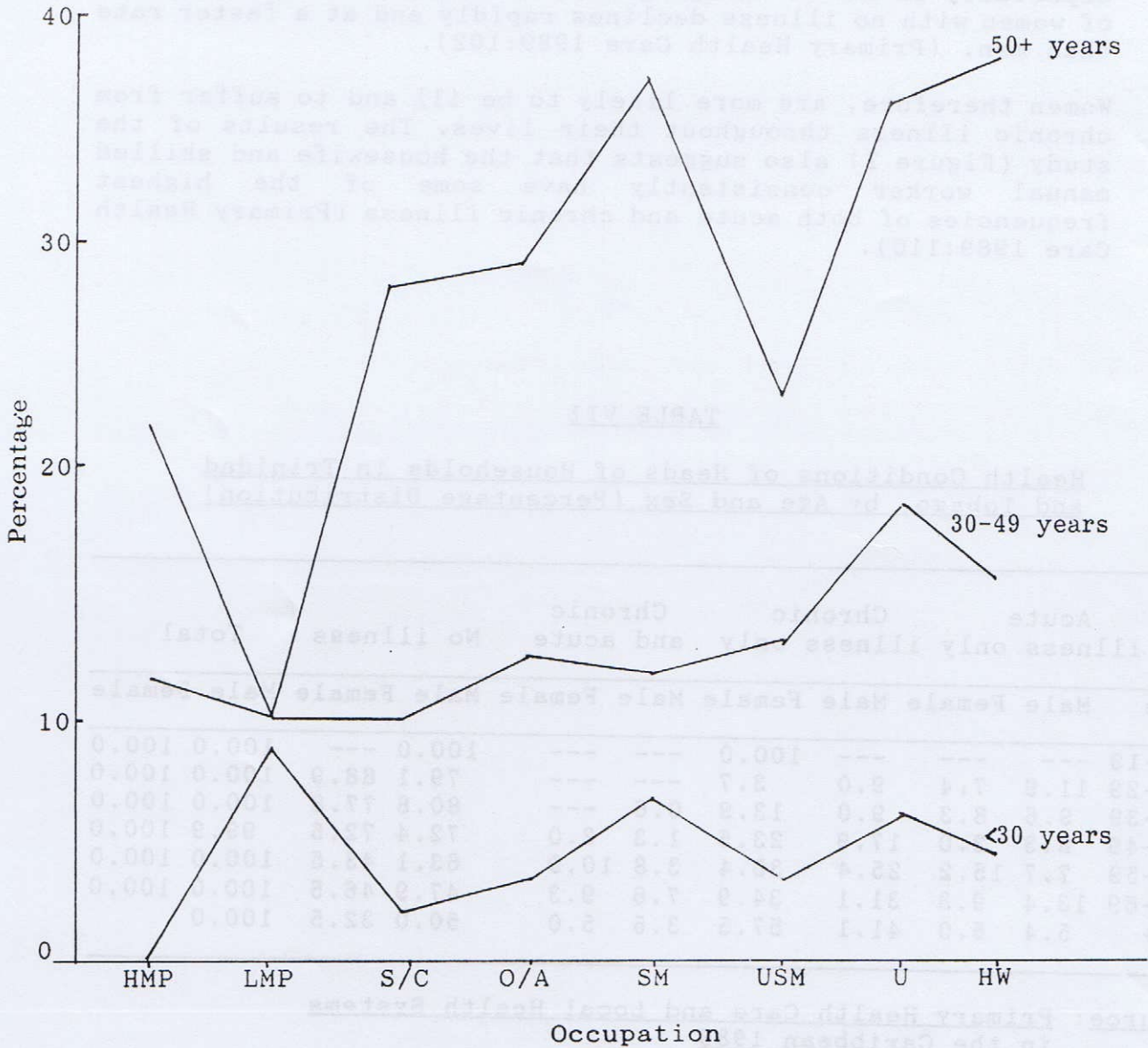
Health Conditions of Heads of Households in Trinidad and Tobago, by Age and Sex (Percentage Distribution)

Age	Acute illness only		Chronic illness only		Chronic and acute		No illness		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-19	---	---	---	100.0	---	---	100.0	---	100.0	100.0
20-29	11.9	7.4	9.0	3.7	---	---	79.1	88.9	100.0	100.0
30-39	9.6	8.3	9.0	13.9	0.6	---	80.8	77.8	100.0	100.0
40-49	8.3	2.0	17.9	23.5	1.3	2.0	72.4	72.5	99.9	100.0
50-59	7.7	15.2	25.4	30.4	3.8	10.9	63.1	43.5	100.0	100.0
60-69	13.4	9.3	31.1	34.9	7.6	9.3	47.9	46.5	100.0	100.0
70+	5.4	5.0	41.1	57.5	3.5	5.0	50.0	32.5	100.0	

Source: Primary Health Care and Local Health Systems in the Caribbean 1989

FIGURE 1

Percentage of Adults in Trinidad and Tobago Reporting Chronic illness, by Occupation and Age.



Key:

HMP = Higher managerial and professional employers of 10+ persons
 LMP = Lower managerial and professional employers of 10+ persons
 S/C = Secretaries, clerks, sales agents, etc.

O/A = Artisans, traders, small
 SM = Skill manual workers
 USM = Unskilled manual workers
 U = Unemployed
 HW = Housewife

Other areas of concern to women's health unfortunately are not yet the subject of systematic statistical analysis. These include abortion which medical estimates suggest is the largest cause of maternal death in this country. Indeed at a regional conference of nurses earlier this year, the Minister, then responsible for the Status of Women, put the figure at as high as 40 per cent. (Express, 1 January 1989): Unfortunately, due to local religious resistance and U.S. Governmental influence, this subject is still taboo and little attention is paid to this problem except by the small but vociferous 'right to life' lobby.

Another area is that of violence, in particular, sexual and other forms of domestic violence including child sexual abuse. Increasing attention is being paid to this issue, largely as a result of initial action, by women's organizations. Today, approximately six Homes for Battered Women and two Rape Crisis Centres, exist. They have begun to collect statistics based on reports and referrals but these are not easily available to the public. The Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has recently presented new legislation for public comment on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.

The issue of suicide is also a problem, for both males and females and all ethnic groups, but especially for Indian females. Data on admissions to hospitals as a result of chemical exposures indicate that over 90% of these were due to the 'wilful ingestion of listed chemicals agents' (Ministry of Health 1983:4). The most important of these is paraquat or gramoxzone a chemical used in agricultural production.

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Data on labour and employment for Trinidad and Tobago are available from two main sources; the censuses which are held every ten years and the Continuous Sample Survey of the Population (CSSP) which takes place every three months. Although the two sets of data are not comparable the latter tends to provide an up to date monitoring of the employment situation between censuses.

Feminist social scientists have many problems with the mechanisms used to measure labour, employment and unemployment, namely the labour force approach which was introduced internationally in the 1940s and 1950s. Over the years minor changes and adjustments have been made to it in various countries but its basic structure remains the same.

The 1980 Census reveals that of a female population 15 years and over, only 26.6 per cent were recorded as having worked

or had a job in the twelve months preceding the Census. (A 6.6% increase over the 1970 figure). A further 4.6 per cent were either looking for work or available for work. Significantly the rest of this number 66.5 per cent are traditionally classified as 'Not in the Labour Force'. Of this number, 48.1 per cent were recorded as being involved in 'Home Duties' (the proportion of males in this category was 0.9%).

Because of the traditional definition of women in western culture as 'priority housewives' this becomes a handy label for unemployed, underemployed or even self-employed women of all ages.²

In 1980 of the 346,694 women 15 years and over, less than one third 110,106 were recorded as being in the labour force, just over 40 per cent of the number of males in the labour force. Of this number 10.4 per cent were recorded as being unemployed, over one third of which was in the 15-19 age group.

Of those employed in 1980, the largest proportion (31%) were employed in the services, (sanitary, community, social, personal, household and other). The next largest proportion, 21.2%, were in the wholesale and retail trades including restaurants and hotels. Only 5.4% were employed in agriculture.

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2. Interestingly, published wedding banns in local newspapers use 'housewife' as the occupation of unemployed women even before they are actually married.

TABLE VIII

Percent Distribution of Employed Persons by
Industrial Group and Sex - 1980

Industry	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Agriculture	11.7	5.4	9.9
Petroleum and Mining	7.2	1.2	5.5
Manufacturing	10.6	11.1	10.7
Electricity and Water	3.0	0.6	2.3
Construction	23.5	5.9	18.5
Wholesale and Retail Trade	9.9	21.2	13.2
Transport and Communication	9.5	3.7	7.9
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	3.3	7.4	4.5
Public Administration and Defence	6.7	9.5	7.5
Services	11.1	31.0	16.8
Not Stated/Not Adequately described	3.4	2.9	3.3

Source: Norma Abdulah (ed).

Using data from the CSSP we can now trace developments over the period 1981-1988 (2nd quarter June each year). Over this period the female labour force increased from 136,200 in 1981 to 153,500 in 1985 to 161,100 in 1988. This could be the result of both population increases and an increased self-definition of women workers. In June 1988 however, 252,300 or 61% of the female population of working age were recorded as being not in the labour force.

It is important to note that a significant proportion of women who lose jobs do not turn up in the unemployed statistics but in the category - 'Not in the Labour Force' as shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX

Labour Force by Employment Status and Sex, June 1988

	Male	Female
Total non-institutional Population	478,300	413,500
Not in the Labour Force	90,100	252,300
Total Labour Force	314,400	161,100
Persons with Jobs	252,400	123,400
Total Unemployed	64,800	37,800

Source: Annual Statistical Digest.

1.2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Rural areas of Trinidad and Tobago

The concept 'rural' has until recently, not been very much in popular or official use in Trinidad and Tobago. Popular conceptions range from the view that all of the country is urban or at least urbanized because of its small size and the influence of urban or industrial centres, to the view that there is a rural Trinidad and Tobago characterized by certain fixed criteria.

Official policy however, since the 1950s has tended to operate within the parameters of a British colonial policy of community development based on a programme of village councils and community organizations linked to the government department responsible for community development.

In addition to this, the former Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Food Production now the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, operates, as with other government divisions, through administrative areas comprising cities (Port-of-Spain and San Fernando), boroughs (Arima and Point Fortin) and County Councils - St. George, Caroni, Nariva/Mayaro, St. Andrew/St. David, Victoria and St. Patrick. Tobago is run by a semi-autonomous House of Assembly.

A clear definition of urban dating back to the 1946 Census Reports has been used to class geographic areas of Trinidad and Tobago based on:

1. a minimum size of population - 2,000 in the case of small towns

2. good quality roads, a high level electrification and adequately served by an established source of water supply and
3. the presence of institutions such as schools, hospitals, government offices, court houses, police stations and cinemas. (Norma Abdulah ed :110).

However no clear, official definition of rural is presently in operation. Recently some scholars have attempted to do so.

P.I. Gomes for example, in the introduction to his edited collection Rural Development in the Caribbean (1985) uses the concept 'countryside'...

'to convey a demographic, economic and social entity distinct from areas such as capital cities, main towns or dormitory suburbs. The main characteristics of the rural sector of Caribbean societies will therefore include varying degrees of agriculturally-based economic activities such as occupations on plantations/large estates as technical staff or wage labour, small farm subsistence cash-crop farming, fishing and low skilled trades and crafts ... industrial/urban and agricultural/rural development'. (Gomes, 1985 xii).

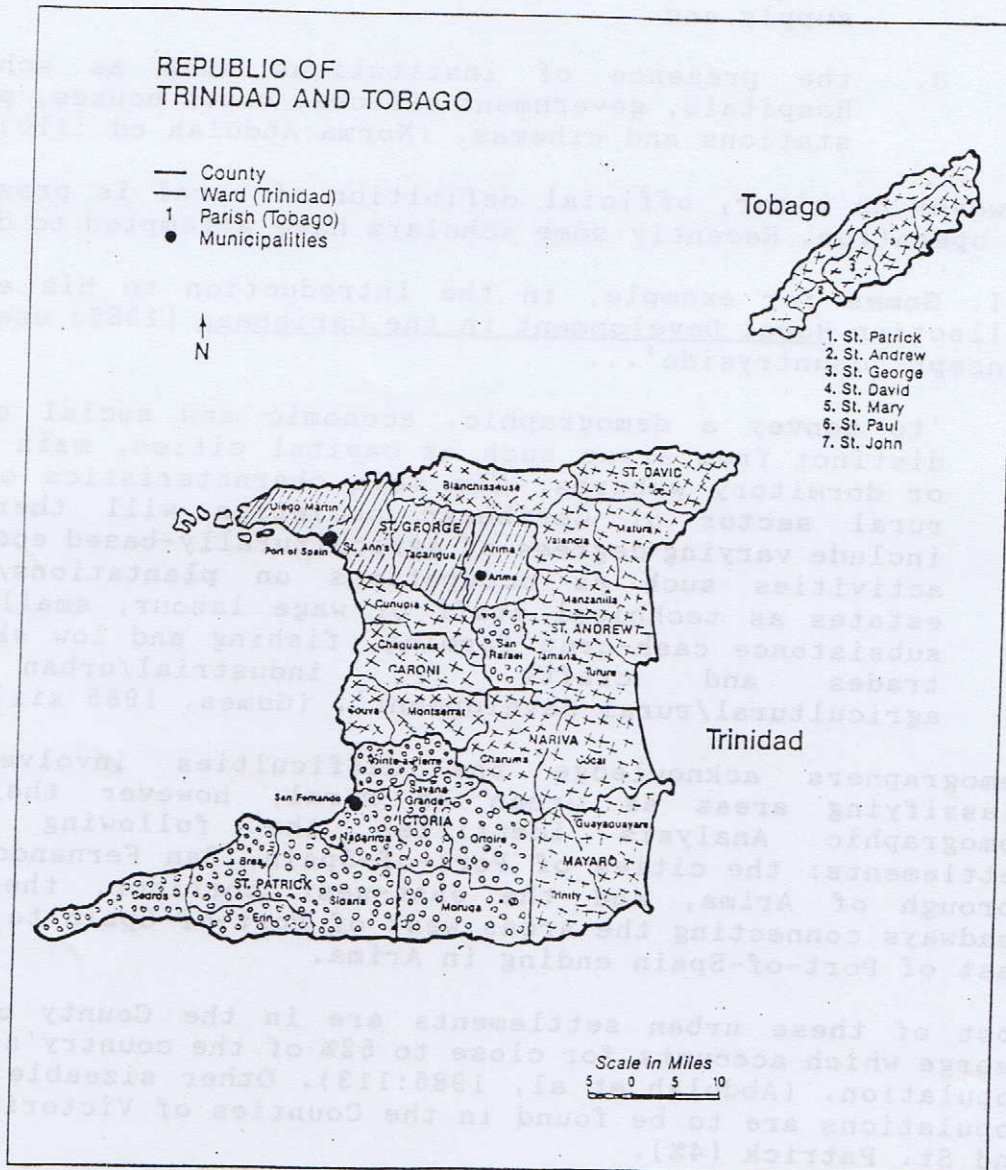
Demographers acknowledge the difficulties involved in classifying areas as urban or rural, however the 1985 Demographic Analysis identifies the following urban settlements: the cities of Port-of-Spain, San Fernando, the Borough of Arima, and the east-west corridor, the main roadways connecting the areas west of Port-of-Spain to those east of Port-of-Spain ending in Arima.




Most of these urban settlements are in the County of St. George which accounts for close to 52% of the country's urban population. (Abdulah et al, 1985:113). Other sizeable urban populations are to be found in the Counties of Victoria (6%) and St. Patrick (4%).

By default therefore most of the rest of the country is defined as mainly rural to fully rural with the counties of Nariva/Mayaro and St. Andrew/St. David being the most rural. Interestingly, as we see in Figure I, most rural areas are on the east of the island and Tobago while urbanized areas are mainly on the west. Possible reasons for this include:

1. the development of ports and transshipment points along the more sheltered Gulf of Paria and
2. the longer existence of settlements based on the petroleum industry and surrounding districts.

FIGURE 2



-  Mainly to fully Rural (Over 50% Rural)
-  Mainly Rural (Less than 50% Rural)
-  Mainly to fully Urban

Thus using criteria based on population size, population density and percentage employed in primary occupations as well as administrative developments, the rural population was estimated as 393,050 of which 336,767 were in fully rural locations and 56,283 in mainly rural locations. In contrast

662,713 persons were estimated as being resident in urban locations, 581,093 in fully-urban and 81,620 in mainly urban locations.

TABLE X

Distribution of Population According to Level of Urbanity by Administrative Area

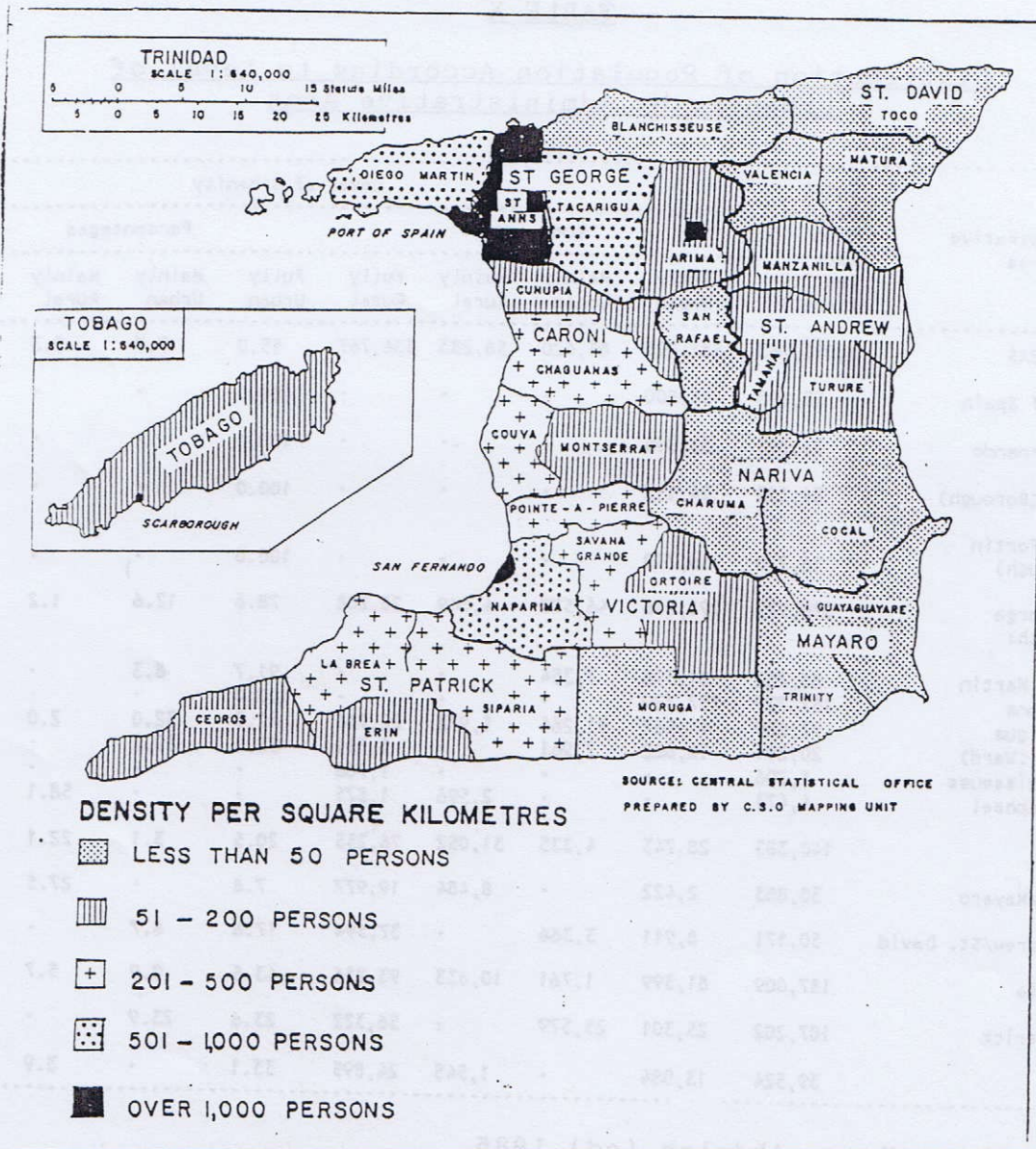
Administrative Area	Total Population (Non-Institutional)	Level of Urbanity							
		Numbers				Percentages			
		Fully Urban	Mainly Urban	Mainly Rural	Fully Rural	Fully Urban	Mainly Urban	Mainly Rural	Fully Rural
ALL AREAS	1,055,763	581,093	81,620	56,283	336,767	55.0	7.7	5.3	31.9
Port of Spain	55,800	55,800	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-
San Fernando	33,395	33,395	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-
Arima (Borough)	24,112	24,112	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-
Point Fortin (Borough)	16,710	16,710	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-
St. George of which:	370,572	291,216	46,579	4,569	28,208	78.6	12.6	1.2	7.6
Diego Martin	88,752	81,398	7,354	-	-	91.7	8.3	-	-
St. Ann's	157,729	157,729	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-
Tacarigua	97,620	41,467	31,264	1,973	22,916	42.5	32.0	2.0	23.5
Arima (Ward)	20,294	10,622	7,961	-	1,711	52.3	39.2	-	8.4
Blanchisseuse	1,706	-	-	-	1,706	-	-	-	100.0
San Raphael	4,471	-	-	2,596	1,875	-	-	58.1	41.9
Caroni	140,365	23,743	4,335	31,052	76,255	20.5	3.1	22.1	54.3
Nariva/Mayaro	30,883	2,422	-	8,484	19,977	7.8	-	27.5	64.7
St. Andrew/St. David	50,171	8,911	3,366	-	37,594	17.8	6.7	-	74.9
Victoria	187,009	81,399	1,761	10,633	93,216	43.5	0.9	5.7	49.8
St. Patrick	107,202	25,301	25,579	-	56,322	23.6	23.9	-	52.5
Tobago	39,524	13,034	-	1,545	24,895	33.1	-	3.9	63.0

Source: Norma Abdulah (ed) 1985.

According to Table IX therefore 31.9 and 5.3% of Trinidad and Tobago's population is resident in fully rural and mainly rural areas respectively. This includes 8.8% of County St. George, 76.4% of County Caroni, 92.2% of Nariva/Mayaro, 74.9% of St. Andrew/St. David, 55.5% of County Victoria, 52.5% of St. Patrick and 66.9% of Tobago.

FIGURE 3

Population Density by Administrative Area - 1980



Source: N. Abdulah (ed)

CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL WOMEN

In spite of the more detailed analyses of rural population given above for ease of analysis the rural population is usually calculated as all persons inhabiting the counties of Caroni, Nariva, Mayaro, St. Andrew, St. David, Victoria, St. Patrick and Tobago.

As noted earlier, close to one third of the population inhabits the rural areas usually with equal numbers of males and females. According to mid year estimates for 1985, close to one third of the rural population is under 14 years of age, except for the counties of St. Andrew and St. David where it is closer to two fifths.

The ethnic distribution of the rural population also differs somewhat from the urban population as shown in Table VIII. Indians exceed all other ethnic groups in rural areas while Africans are in the majority in urban areas. As shown in this table also, the numbers of males slightly exceeds that of females in rural areas.

TABLE XI

Rural Population by Ethnicity and Sex - 1990

	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Africans	177,361	89,529	87,832
Indians	312,316	157,625	154,691
Europeans	1,978	1,034	944
Mixed	60,056	29,892	30,164
Syrian-Lebanese	35	22	13
Chinese	1,314	748	566
Total	553,060	278,850	274,210

Source: Annual Statistical Digest 1988

RELIGION

Overall, the Hindu population is the largest among women in rural areas - 101,259 (36.8%) with the Roman Catholic population as the second largest - 58,741 (21.3%).

TABLE XII

Distribution of Rural population by Religion, Sex and Administrative Area - 1980

Area	Religion							Religion					
	Total	Anglican	Baptist	Jehovah Witness	Hindu	Methodist	Pentecostal	Muslim	Presbyterian	Roman Catholic	Adventist	None	Other not stat
	Female							Female					
Trinidad and Tobago ...	529 529	75 705	13 751	8 405	129 447	7 657	20 249	31 135	20 187	175 003	14 301	3 647	34 042
Port-of-Spain ...	29 572	7 660	607	309	751	686	633	644	1 469	15 560	634	190	1 559
San Fernando ...	17 481	3 359	424	175	1 497	333	1 042	618	338	6 690	170	89	1 175
Arima Borough ...	12 027	1 166	147	105	806	97	356	477	206	7 722	355	50	540
Point Fortin Borough	8 338	1 660	322	138	649	61	273	183	153	3 460	384	59	1 034
St. George ...	186 873	34 284	3 821	1 501	24 485	3 090	7 508	7 318	3 691	11 974	5 229	1 811	10 744
Caroni ...	69 533	4 656	1 024	485	33 997	544	2 005	7 518	3 044	8 830	956	288	3 109
Marika ...	11 011	392	405	45	4 623	4	396	1 091	3 044	11 974	5 229	1 811	10 744
Mayaro ...	3 872	315	159	65	434	9	44	75	3 044	2 735	267	48	404
St. Andrew ...	22 160	1 764	510	132	5 298	23	1	972	92	2 036	956	25	399
St. David ...	2 462	574	124	5	23	1	1	12	92	956	327	16	1 084
Victoria ...	93 308	8 574	4 699	580	36 026	507	4 372	9 039	6 147	14 706	1 326	483	5 247
St. Patrick ...	52 975	4 538	992	360	20 768	224	1 473	2 800	2 519	13 904	1 001	179	3 917
Tobago ...	19 917	6 756	507	145	92	2 043	1 257	48	24	1 893	2 190	262	4 696

Source: Annual Statistical Digest, 1988

EDUCATION

Of the 469 government and religious (government assisted) schools in Trinidad and Tobago, close to two-thirds are in rural areas. The enrolment of boys (50,418) in the rural counties and Tobago slightly exceeds that of girls (48,840) by close to 6% (Annual Statistical Digest 1988:61).

In general, primary school education is available to all children throughout the country. These are of varying quality and have differing access to resources. Increasingly, urban, middle and upper class parents send their children to private primary schools where conditions and resources are above those of public schools.

Of the 89 Government, Assisted, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools in Trinidad and Tobago, 36 (40%) were in rural areas in 1988. However, of the 7 Composite Schools in the country, 6 were situated in rural areas. (Annual Statistical Digest 1988:64).

Access to these Secondary and Composite Schools is through the competitive Common Entrance Examination. Poorer children of less educated parents unable to afford additional private classes compete unfavourably in these examinations for a hierarchy of Secondary and Composite Schools. Unfortunately, data on secondary enrolment by sex are not available but it is known that relatively equal numbers of girls and boys gain places through the Common Entrance Examination. It is well known, however, that throughout the Caribbean region, the passing level is lower for boys than for girls and this has been justified by reference to the earlier maturity of girls.

Data from the Demographic and Health Survey carried out among women of childbearing age (15-49) suggests that the level of educational attainment is much lower for rural than urban women.

TABLE XIII

Percent Distribution of Women by Residence and Highest Level of Education Attained - 1987

Residence	Incomplete Primary	Completed Primary	Secondary I	Secondary II	Total
Urban	5.7	32.0	47.0	15.3	1,690
Rural	10.2	42.8	38.5	8.6	2,116

- I - Some or full secondary education but fewer than 5 O'Levels passed
 II - Some or full secondary education with 5 O'Levels passed

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Demographic and Health Survey, 1987

This low level of education is probably accounted for by the fact that Indian women who comprise the largest proportion of women in rural areas had the lowest levels. For example 12.4% of Indian women had not completed primary school in comparison with 3.8% African and 6.0% Mixed. The Other Group (European, Chinese, Syrian-Lebanese and Others) had the highest levels of education overall; close to 3/4 had completed secondary school with full certificates.

It is interesting to note however, that an examination of participation in the Ministry of Education's Adult Education

Programme shows that approximately 56% are rural women. These women are particularly involved in the Literacy Programme and in other traditional women's courses, for example, Cake Icing, Handicraft and Food Preparation.

FERTILITY

As mentioned earlier overall fertility has in the main declined over the decades of the 1960s and 1970s in 1987 the Demographic Health Survey (TTDHS) showed lower levels for Indian than African women. Interestingly however, in spite of the predominance of Indians in Rural areas in 1987, rural fertility rates were still higher than in urban areas although only slightly so. Education was found to be the most significant variable affecting differentials in fertility.

It was found however that rural women enter unions earlier than their urban counterparts and in spite of a desire not to have more children they tend to have more children than their urban counterparts. Rural women therefore classified 20% of their births as unwanted while this was true for 15.9% of urban women (TTDHS, 1988:50-55).

TABLE XIV

Total Fertility Rates for Calendar Year Periods
(81-87) and Mean Number of Children Ever Born to Women
40-49, 1987

	Calendar Period I 1984-1987	Calendar Period II 1981-1983	0-4 Years preceding of the survey	Mean No. children born to women 40- 49 years.
Rural	3.1	3.6	3.2	4.8
Urban	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.8

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Demographic Health Survey, 1987

HEALTH

The administration of health services takes place through a system of hospitals and health centres. There are five main hospitals, all in urban areas or settlements and Tobago and

103 health centres (in 1988) 29 of which are in urban areas and the majority in rural areas. Socio-demographic data on health is less available than other areas. Indeed, the most well developed data are on fertility-related health and deaths.

Data available for 1987 for example shows that whereas there are fewer male deaths in urban areas the opposite is true in rural areas. On the other hand there are more female deaths in urban than rural areas. To some extent this can be attributed to the one slightly larger female population in the urban areas, but this may not be the only explanation.

TABLE XV

Number of Deaths by Area and Sex - 1987

	Male Deaths	Female Deaths	Total
Urban Areas	2,030	1,832	3,862
Rural Counties	2,382	1,746	4,128

Source: Population and Vital Statistics Report, 1987
CSO, P. 52.

What is significant however is that there are more deaths overall in rural areas.

A detailed breakdown of the causes of death is given in the CSO's Deaths Report 1986 points us to areas of differentiation in rural as opposed to urban morbidity and mortality. For example (although data not bifurcated by sex) 61% of all deaths due to complications of pregnancy and child birth occurred in rural areas. Similarly if we look at deaths due to specific diseases or injuries, we find that 12.4% of these were found in County Caroni. This county in 1986 had the only case of death in the country of food poisoning, measles, late effects of poliomyelitis, acute rheumatic fever, acute tonsillitis, inflammatory diseases of the uterus, vagina and vulva, rheumatism excluding the back and cleft palate and cleft lip. No other rural county had as large a list of singular deaths due to curable diseases and this may be an indication of health standards in that particular county.

County Victoria however had the highest incidence of death in the rural areas. Diabetes mellitus was the largest cause of death and malnutrition was the cause of death of 12 persons

in 1986.

In 1986 there were 90 deaths due to violence (excluding homicide and suicide) 43 occurred in urban areas while 47 occurred in rural areas mainly Caroni (14) and Victoria (14).

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

As noted earlier between 60-66% of the female non-institutional population 15 years and over was recorded as being 'not in the labour force' in the 1980s. The larger proportion of this amount as with female unemployed was in the rural counties as shown in the Table below.

TABLE XVI

Percentage Distribution of Unemployed by Area and Sex - 1980

Administrative Area	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Port-of-Spain	7.1	8.1	7.5
San Fernando	9.0	9.0	9.0
Borough of Arima	6.9	9.5	7.7
St. George	6.7	9.2	7.5
Caroni	7.5	8.7	7.8
Nariva/Mayaro	11.0	14.6	11.7
St. Andrew/St. David	9.6	14.2	10.7
Victoria	9.5	12.0	10.1
St. Patrick	11.0	14.7	12.3
Tobago	9.3	17.3	12.0

Source: N. Abdulah (ed), 1985

It is clear that existing socio-demographic statistics do not give an adequate picture of the work situation of women in Trinidad and Tobago in general and of rural women in particular. It is clear therefore that a much more in depth qualitative and more appropriate quantitative analysis is necessary if we are to have a more complete picture.

The 1982 Agricultural Census provides some specific information on women's participation in Agriculture. It is

found for example that of the 30,422 private holders,³ 24,105 or 79% were male and only 21% female. This is not really surprising as the definition used for a 'holder' by the Census was ...

'... the person who has the economic and technical responsibility for the operation of the agricultural holding which he may operate directly or through some other person ...' (Agricultural Census, 1982:140 emphasis added).

The majority of private holders had only attained primary level education. This accounted for 70% of female and 77.2% of male private holders.

There was, however, a significant number of females employed on these private holdings.

Approximately 11,404 or 24% of the workers hired on private holdings in 1982 were female. The majority however 9,321 or 82% were employed as occasional workers, 13% as seasonal and only 5.1% as permanent workers. Over three times as many males were hired - 36,358 but the distribution was similar. The proportion of females employed on government and state holdings was slightly less at 20.2%.

These data give the impression of a relatively minor role for women in agriculture, largely attributed to the fact that women work on land owned by husbands or fathers and are often defined as housewives and receive little or no income. As noted by Jack Harewood (1974) however, the undercounting of women workers in agriculture is an acknowledged problem which continues to exist. Clearly a new approach and new techniques are needed in order to correct this situation.

SECTION II

POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS RELATED TO THE RURAL SECTOR IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

2.1. Governmental Level

✓ It must be stated, first of all, that no specific policy or programme pertaining to women in the rural sector existed during the decade of the 1980s. This reality was confirmed by

3. Including individual/household and joint partnership holdings only.

the incumbent Minister of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, Dr. Brinsley Samaroo, during an interview on April 10th, 1990. The Minister did indicate, however that his Ministry, at present, was working on such a programme. To the extent, then, that any projects geared to rural women may have been undertaken, these were not guided by any underlying philosophy, but rather took place on an ad hoc basis.

✓ Additionally, rural women are not identified as a specific category of persons with specific need, hence governmental responsibility for their welfare tends to fall under various ministries: Agriculture or Food Production; the ministry incorporating the Status of Women (Social Development and Family Services); the ministry with responsibility for Co-operatives; and the ministries of Education and Health.

✓ Further, rural development is not a concept that has been employed in the Trinidad and Tobago context. Therefore, governmental attention to the rural sector would be incorporated within its agricultural development thrust and its community development focus. This was also confirmed at ministerial level, by the Minister of Education, Senator Clive Pantin, during an interview on April 11, 1990.

✓ In view of the above, and recognizing, then, that there exists no co-ordinated policy or programme aimed at rural women, an examination will be undertaken of those policies and/or programme which were geared towards agricultural development, as well as those geared towards the advancement of women in general, in order to assess their impact. The programmes/activities of the Ministry of Education insofar as their specific relevance to the rural sector is concerned will also be examined briefly.

2.1.1. The Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation (MFPME)

The focus of this ministry is perhaps well explained in its name, the emphasis being on food production rather than on the rural sector. But to the extent, though, that one acknowledges a prominence of the rural sector in the production of food, is the extent to which policies geared to food production will be aimed at the rural sector.

Trinidad and Tobago had a change of government for the first time in 30 years at the end of 1986. This particular ministry therefore came into being in 1987, replacing the former, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Food Production. In the Draft National Agricultural Development Plan (DNADP) of 1987, the new ministry

highlighted the Agricultural Development Policies of the former government as:

- a) to increase domestic food production in order to reduce the food import bill;
- b) to ensure adequate levels of food supply;
- c) to secure minimum nutritional targets;
- d) to raise agricultural production and incomes so as to lay the foundation of a solid, stable agricultural sector;
- e) to create employment;
- f) the development of non-traditional exports;
- g) the promotion of proper land use;
- h) the modernization and diversification of agriculture.

The strategies employed to give effect to the policies (DNADP, 1987:1) included:

- a) the need to subsidize agricultural activity in order to neutralize the effects of negative economic mechanisms (comparative disadvantage due to high labour and input costs etc.) which hamper its development;
- b) the need to establish an adequate land zoning system and proper land use regulations (including taxation) in order to stop the progressive alienation of arable land to housing or industrial use;
- c) the need to give security of land tenure to farmers and to establish farm units of economically viable dimensions (family size farms, medium and large commercial farms) through a more dynamic programme for the distribution of state lands (DNADP 1987:2)

In particular, the following courses of action were emphasized:

- a) the expansion of agricultural infrastructure and agricultural services (food control in the Caroni plain, training, development of co-operatives, marketing, research and extension);

- b) the fostering of new and positive attitudes towards Agriculture and increased farmer participation in the formulation and implementation of agricultural development policy and programmes;
- c) detailed recommendations on products to be considered priority areas for Government development activities: rice, milk, livestock (especially beef) cereals, pulses and vegetables;
- d) various subsidy programmes to stimulate production;
- e) the institution of a system of guaranteed prices for certain agricultural commodities (DNADP, 1987:2).

In respect of implementation, it was stated in the document that some of the policy measures were in fact implemented, among them being:

- a) the creation of the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), the Central Marketing Agency (CMA) and the Food and Agriculture Corporation (FAC);
- b) the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Food Production (MALFP) now renamed Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation;
- c) the distribution of sizeable tracts of state land under a settlement scheme oriented towards the establishment of livestock production within a mixed farming system;
- d) the expansion of the subsidy system to stabilize and increase farmers' incomes (DNADP 1987:2 and 3).

Although the formidable list of strategies identified for implementation (see Appendix I) was apparently not totally effective, the document did acknowledge the significance of those achievements which 'were successful', increasing from practically zero, the production of a substantial proportion of domestic supplies of several basic foodstuffs eg. dairy, beef, poultry and pork. Similarly, the increase in the production of vegetables, may have been strongly influenced by the subsidies given to farmers for the purchase of vehicles, machinery and fertilizer (DNADP, 1987:4). On the negative side, however, it was pointed out that most of the essential inputs into production were dependent on foreign supplies.

In the area of subsidies, it was noted that in the recent

past, substantial incentives were given in the form of: (a) input subsidies; (b) import restrictions; (c) minimum guaranteed prices; (d) deficiency payments; and (e) fiscal incentives and substantial agricultural credit (DNADP, 1987:5).

However, some of these subsidies were either reduced or removed during the period 1984-1986, in keeping with the provisions of the 1984, 1985 and 1986 budgets.

This expansion and subsequent contraction of the programme must be viewed within the context of the overall Trinidad and Tobago economy which benefitted from substantial revenues between 1974 and 1980/81 resulting from increased revenue from petroleum, and the decline in revenue with the fall in oil prices towards the middle of the 1980s.

It is clear from the above that none of these policies were specifically geared towards women in the rural sector. They were intended to assist those involved in the agricultural sector and to the extent that women were involved, they too, it was assumed, would have benefitted. There is no documented evidence to indicate whether women were beneficiaries in their own right or simply within the context of belonging to households which received these benefits. More specifically, the records do not indicate whether households headed by women and where an adult male was not resident benefitted to the same degree and extent as households headed by men, which, in keeping with the dominant ideology, is viewed as the norm.

The new government, as mentioned earlier, came into power in late December, 1986. At the end of 1987 and 1988, documents were prepared listing proposed action and achievements of the various ministries. For the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, these included, for the agriculture sector, plans to:

- provide security of tenure for those who occupy land for agricultural purposes;
- develop efficient marketing systems and the establishment of wholesale markets in strategic places;
- increase food production for both human and animal consumption;
- engage in land reform and re-distribution of state lands;

- employ modern scientific techniques of production through research and development programmes;
- review the operation of agricultural agencies.

(Trinidad & Tobago Reconstruction Programme 1987 and 1988).

Further, in July 1988, the Draft Medium Term Macro Planning Framework (DMTMPF) 1989-1995, was published, and within it the government's agricultural policy was stated.

This policy is intended to address deficiencies with respect to: infrastructure, land distribution and land tenure, pricing of special produce, subsidies and price support arrangements, agricultural credit, technology and research development, marketing facilities, training programme, extension services and water resource management.

One of the objectives of these policy measures is the:

"improvement of incomes and the standard of living of the agricultural population as a contribution towards a more equitable distribution of national income, and as a means of arresting the rural/urban drift" (DMTMPF, 1988:125).

But this government, like its predecessor, appears to be assuming homogeneity of the agricultural population. It does not, therefore, include in either its policy instruments or intended objectives, an understanding of gender differences and hence the possible differential impact that policies and objectives may have on rural women and men.

We can conclude, then, that none of the agricultural policies of the present and past governments of Trinidad and Tobago focussed on rural women as a category worthy of specific attention. We look next at the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services under whose portfolio falls concern for the status of women.

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

It is interesting to document the ambivalence which seems to characterize government's concern for women. Following the coming to power of the new government in late 1986, responsibility for women was placed within the Ministry of Health, Welfare and the Status of Women. By the next year, 1988, this had been shifted to the Ministry of Community Development, Welfare and the Status of Women. In 1989 this latter ministry underwent a name change to Social Development and Family Services. Concern for the "Status of Women" disappears from the name but 'securing the rights of women' remains as part of the role of the ministry. But before discussing the policy of the current government in respect of women, let us look, briefly, at what obtained under the former regime.

A National Commission on the Status of Women was established in 1976, within the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Co-operatives in response to the United Nations Declaration of 1975 as International Women's Year, followed by the Decade for Women. (See Appendix II for the functions of this commission) In the 1980 report of the Commission, several recommendations were made in respect of agriculture and rural women as follows:

- Appropriate technology should be introduced in agriculture and other spheres so as to make tasks less laborious. (para. 21)
- Continuing education should be provided for rural women. (para. 22)
- Special training programmes in agricultural skills for rural women should be provided or steps should be taken to ensure the continued accessibility of available agricultural training programmes to women as well as men. (para. 22)
- Steps should be taken to establish accessible marketing outlets for agricultural and other produce. (para. 22)
- Special attention should be paid to the introduction of a communication system. (para. 23)

- Security and protection for agricultural communities should be given priority. (para. 23)
- Efforts should be made to provide health centres and day care centres for servicing farming communities. (para. 23)
- Exchange visit programmes among rural and urban women should be organized and supported with a view to building confidence and self-reliance among them. (para. 24)
- Rural-oriented training programmes in such areas as cottage industries, vocational training, family planning, literacy, sanitation, nutrition, maternal and child care etc. should be organized by appropriate government agencies. (para. 24)

However, according to the 1981 report, "there was no positive response to the Commission's 1980 recommendations ..." (1981 Report, p.2). The report further stated that "for the year 1980, the Commission made recommendations which impinged on the work of several ministries. Regrettably, these ministries did not respond to a request for their comments and recommendations, and it was therefore not possible for Government to take decisions on these recommendations" (1981 Report, p.2).

With the establishment of the Ministry of Community Development, Welfare and the status of Women under the new government in 1988 a Draft National Policy Statement on Women was published. The Draft, with minor modifications, became policy in 1989 (See Appendix III). Nowhere in this policy statement is reference made to the particular needs of rural women. In fact, according to information received from the now Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, rural women are not considered a priority for the ministry at this time. The rationale for this stance being that the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, and the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism are concerned with rural women (interview of 23 April 1990).

In 1987 an Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee for Women in Development Issues was established. This committee is composed of representatives of every government ministry. It meets once per month and is expected to focus on current issues of importance to women. It is purely a forum for the exchange of information and the monitoring of various activities, and does not have decision making

power. As far as could be ascertained, this committee has not focussed on rural women as a group requiring specific attention.

✓ From the list of programmatic activities for the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services for the years 1987 and 1988, the only reference made to rural women is their incorporation into the workforce through the encouragement of cottage industries.

✓ The Draft Medium Term Macro Planning Framework 1989-1995, Vol. II of August 1988, highlighted 'Women' among its major areas of concern, noting that priority will be given to improving the status of the most disadvantaged women. But here, too, the policy pronouncements are rather general and make no specific reference to rural women (See Appendix IV). It is important to note, too, that in the final version of this Planning Framework 'women' as a category of major concern was replaced by 'Gender in Social Development'. The emphasis is now on ensuring equal opportunities to both women and men without acknowledging that women, historically, have faced certain disadvantages.

Ministry of Education

✓ There are no specific policies or programmes of this ministry which are geared toward the rural population. But insofar as one assumes that Agriculture has more relevance to the rural than to the urban population, we can look at programmes in respect of Agriculture.

✓ The curricula provides for the teaching of Agriculture at all levels of the education system, with particular emphasis at the primary school level in rural areas. At that level, however, the teaching suffers from a lack of formal agricultural training on the part of the teachers involved. At the Junior Secondary level, more specialized teachers are utilized, usually graduates of the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry. It was noted, however, that Agriculture has quite a low status within the school curricula, and that prejudices against it exist among teachers, principals and parents (DNADP, 1987). This state of affairs results in the subject being pursued as a last resort by the lowest percentile of students (DNADP, 1987:195). Further more, this subject is not offered in the more prestigious schools. The implications of this for succession within the farming population are quite serious, given that the net replacement rate is already negative.

During the interview held with the Minister of Education on April 11, 1990, he confirmed that it was the weaker academic students who pursued agriculture, and that while the subject was open to both boys and girls, it was mainly the boys who took up the option. This avoidance of agriculture by girls has to be viewed within the context of deliberate attempts in an earlier period to discourage their involvement. Reddock and Huggins (1988) referred to the differentiated curricula established after 1917 for girls and boys: the former were taught 'domestic science' and the latter 'handicraft' (a term used for activities such as carpentry and shoemaking, among others). "Any education in Agriculture was limited to 'gardening' for girls" (Reddock and Huggins, 1988:17). As mentioned earlier, recent trends at the Faculty of Agriculture, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago reveal, that women and men are entering and graduating from the Faculty in equal numbers. In 1985, for example, 20 men and 19 women graduated from the Faculty.

As mentioned earlier, participation in the Ministry of Education's Adult Education Programme shows significant participation by rural women. Unfortunately, however, agriculture is not one of the courses offered due to a lack of qualified staff.

Having looked at the policies and programme of three of the relevant ministries, we will now take a look at some government and government related projects.

Government/Government-Related Projects

In terms of actual projects which have been undertaken, a few can be highlighted. In 1988, through the sponsorship of ILO, a project was undertaken to determine the prospects for horticultural development in the Sangre Grande area, in the county of St. Andrew. The targeted group included housewives, the unemployed, and women engaged in farming. The file, unfortunately, was not available for reference. In 1987 the ILO also conducted a feasibility study on the tanning of leather with a view to providing employment for rural women and men. The report of the study was submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Mobilization and is still awaiting governmental action.⁴ The ILO has acknowledged, however, that unlike the territories in the Eastern Caribbean, the Trinidad and Tobago government has not requested assistance from the ILO in terms of major projects for women in the rural sector.

⁴. The report was submitted to government since the agency which requested the study, the Sugarcane Food Centre, is a governmental one.

The Co-operative Department, Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism has also undertaken projects in the form of the establishment of co-operatives geared towards rural women. One co-operative, in the St. Andrew/St. David county, focusses on Cottage industries in the preparation of jams and jellies while another, the Rio Claro Women's Garment Factory in the County of Mayaro, focusses on the production of garments.

While it was acknowledged by the Co-operative Department that women as a specific group has been receiving the attention of the department for the past four years, it was also conceded that no specific projects were or are planned for rural women.

Having looked then, at policies, programmes and projects at the governmental level, let us now turn our attention to the non-governmental organizations, as well as to the Agricultural Research and Extension Project of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of the West Indies.

2.1.2. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

We will discuss here two regional Non-governmental Organizations, with headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago, which have demonstrated a concern for rural women. These are:

- the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)
- the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD)

Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)

Formed in 1985, CAFRA is committed to improving the conditions under which women live and work in the Caribbean. This commitment is informed by a recognition that women suffer certain forms of oppression on account of being women, and CAFRA is thus concerned with trying to understand the relationship between women's oppression and other forms of oppression and exploitation in society. To this end, CAFRA has undertaken, and intends to undertake, programmes and projects that will assist in the achievement of these objectives.

Recognizing then, that a vast number of Caribbean women are involved in Agriculture and that Agriculture has played a key role in Caribbean Development, CAFRA undertook a major research/action project, 'Women in Caribbean Agriculture', with the Commonwealth of Dominica

and St. Vincent and the Grenadines chosen as two case studies for intensive investigation. The aim of the project, stated in terms of both short and long-term objectives, was to improve the position of women involved in Agriculture in the region through a compilation of relevant and comparative data, and through a process of empowering the women themselves. (See Appendix V for these objectives).

CAFRA has plans to undertake similar projects in Belize and Trinidad and Tobago, in order to widen its data base.

Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development

This organization is just two years old, having been launched in March 1988. Its mission is to highlight the importance of the rural areas in Caribbean development, and to promote the involvement of rural dwellers in policies and programmes that are intended for, or impact upon them. It has undertaken national surveys of rural community activities in several territories of the region, including Trinidad and Tobago.

CNIRD has indicated that women will be a special focus, given their important contribution to rural life as both producers and reproducers. The local affiliate of CNIRD, The Trinidad and Tobago Rural Development Network (TTRDN) has recently embarked on two projects with the women of Moruga (in the county of Victoria) where it was found that 100% unemployment existed among the women there. One is for the development of handicraft and the other for the establishment of a bakery.

CNIRD has also recently compiled a (1989) directory/inventory of organizations participating in rural development activities in Trinidad and Tobago. Three main types of organizations were identified:

- governmental agencies,
- national non-governmental organizations,
- regional or international agencies.

The Agriculture, Research and Extension Project (AREP) of the Faculty of Agriculture, UWI

In addition to the various teaching programmes conducted within the Faculty, the Department of Agricultural Extension, in 1980, embarked on a project - the Caribbean Agricultural Extension Project - in collaboration with

the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities.⁵ Our focus, then, will be on that project. The aim of the project was to improve the economic and social well being of households involved in small scale farming in the Eastern Caribbean, through a programme extension reform. While it is true, then, that Trinidad and Tobago was not targeted for attention within the project's portfolio, various training programmes conducted for extension officers, including the Diploma in Extension, did secure participation from Trinidad and Tobago personnel.

It must be pointed out, however, that the majority of extension officers in the region, including Trinidad and Tobago, are male. This reality does not easily promote an understanding of differences between female and male farmers. According to an officer of the project, women and men farmers are perceived in the same way by extension officers, and hence they do not see the need for specific attention to be focussed on women. She also revealed that participation by women in the various extension training programmes was quite low. However, the training programmes have begun to sensitize officers about the need to focus on women and men as separate entities in the farming process, in order to ensure that policies and programmes do not impact on them in significantly different ways.

We have looked, then, at the various policies, programmes and projects pertaining to agriculture and the rural sector. It is clear that women, as a specific category within this sector, have not been the target of special attention by the government nor the AREP Project of the Faculty of Agriculture. It is only within the two Non-governmental Organizations discussed, CAFRA and CNIRD, that women constitute a category for specific attention at policy and programmatic levels. We turn, next, to an examination of some of the institutional measures adopted for policy and programmatic implementation.

5. This project, the Caribbean Agricultural Extension Project, ended in June 1989 but was immediately followed by the new project, Agriculture, Research and Extension Project, under the sponsorship of USAID.

2.1.3. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Governmental Level

The Draft National Agricultural Development Plan (DNADP) acknowledges that the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, (MFPME) has "sole responsibility for policy formation and co-ordination of the functions of the institutions serving agriculture" (DNADP, 1987:20). The document concedes, however, that the Ministry does not possess a monopoly in this area, as "effective power and authority are actually scattered at random throughout the public administration and lines of responsibility and control are diffuse" (DNADP, 1987:20).

Three key institutions which were created for implementing agricultural policy were:

1. The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB)
2. The Central Marketing Agency (CMA)
3. The Food and Agriculture Corporation (FAC)

The ADB, established in 1968, has as its objectives the encouragement of agricultural development and the mobilization of funds to that end. Its lending policy is intended to:

- increase total productive investment in Agriculture;
- increase productivity of individual farmers and actual production of commodities most needed in the country;
- increase the level of employment and earnings among farmers;
- provide credit and technical assistance

Loans range from short-term, up to 18 months, to long-term, up to 30 years, and security is determined by the applicant's historical loan performance as well as credit ratings with other financial institutions. Viability of the project is also considered. Valid instruments of security include: guarantor, plant machinery and equipment, stock and crops, first mortgage on land and building, fixed deposits and life insurance policies.

Contact with bank indicated that no statistics were available on the number of women who use the bank's facilities, although it was stated that women do not

generally apply for credit in their own right. They tend to apply jointly, with a male, either husband or some other male relative. The bank's officer was of the view that this may be due to a lack of collateral in their names, given that the instruments of security cited above tend to be in the name of the men. It would seem, therefore, that while the bank's lending policy does not deliberately discriminate against women, they may nonetheless be debarred from access to facilities on account of their dependent economic status.

The CMA was established in 1966 to replace the Ground Provisions Depot, with responsibility for overall marketing in respect of agricultural produce, in order to guarantee food supplies. In 1988 this agency was reorganized and renamed 'The National Agricultural Development Corporation'. It now has a purely facilitative function, providing the basic infrastructure within which marketing takes place, and is no longer involved in trading.

In 1988 the Food and Agriculture Corporation was reviewed by the Rampersad Committee which was undertaking the review of several State Enterprises.⁶ In 1989 this corporation was disbanded.

The Extension Services Division of the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, which is involved in direct interfacing with farmers through its Extension Officers, decided in 1989 to include within its programmatic concern the issue of "Women in Agriculture". To this end, a survey was conducted among Extension Officers in Trinidad and Tobago with a view to determining the status of farm women in the country. While it was recognized that a survey among the women farmers themselves would have been more appropriate, time did not permit the adoption of this option. The survey found that "although women were involved in various aspects of agricultural activities, female participation in training courses, demonstrations and farmer meetings were as low as 0-25%" (Rajack, 1990:5). The reasons given by the Extension Officers for the low female participation rate were: lack of involvement in the decision making process, inadequate formal education, family household responsibilities, public perception of farming as a male occupation causing inherent prejudices, and lack of adequate extension services (Rajack, 1990:5).

6. We were unable to obtain information regarding the origins and function of the Food and Agriculture Corporation.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action

Being a regional organization, this association is committed to working with organizations which exist at the local level in terms of implementation of its programmes and projects. This was the strategy employed in both St. Vincent and Dominica with regard to the "Women in Caribbean Agriculture" project, and it will also be followed in Trinidad and Tobago context. In this respect, discussions have already begun with CNIRD's local branch, the Trinidad and Tobago Rural Development Network (TTRDN), and the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, regarding the Trinidad and Tobago aspect of this "Women in Caribbean Agriculture" project.

Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development

CNIRD is a regional network intended to facilitate and co-ordinate the work of organizations involved in rural development at the local level. Its aim, then, is to strengthen links and collaboration among the local groups. To this end, its local branch, the Trinidad and Tobago Rural Development Network, has begun publishing a newsletter to facilitate the sharing of information among the various groups in Trinidad and Tobago which are involved in Agriculture and Rural Development. Through the medium of the newsletter it is publishing the name, address and functions of these various local groups.

The Agriculture, Research and Extension Project (AREP) of the Faculty of Agriculture, UWI

The main mechanism used for implementation of policies and programmes is training through both short and long term courses, workshops and seminars. The target group for such training is the Extension and Agricultural Officers of the various Ministries of Agriculture, as well as the farmers themselves. It is worth noting that the experience of the UWI project and that of the Government Extension Services Division is quite similar in terms of low participation rate by women in training programmes.

SECTION III

MAJOR CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES REGARDING POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS FOR RURAL WOMEN

3.1. Lack of a Policy Framework for Rural Development in Trinidad and Tobago

The last chapter highlighted the fact that no specific policy framework exists in Trinidad and Tobago for dealing with issues and problems of the rural sector. It was noted, too, that even the concept of rural tended to be minimally employed, more attention being focussed on agriculture and on community development. Given this scenario, it is not difficult to understand why the rural sector in general, and rural women in particular, have remained invisible in respect of policy formulation.

But if one recalls the data presented in Section one, the notion that Trinidad and Tobago is predominantly an urban society can be called into question. Utilising a definition of rural as the degree of involvement in agriculturally-based economic activities, the rural population was calculated as all persons inhabiting the Counties of Caroni, Nariva, Mayaro, St. Andrew, St. David, Victoria, St. Patrick and Tobago. It was found that approximately 40% of the population lived in rural areas. Further the demographic data also revealed that in terms of race/ethnicity, a significant number of rural dwellers were of Indian origin or descent, and that they overwhelmingly outnumbered all other ethnic groups in those areas. Additionally, educational levels tended to be lower for the rural than for the urban population, 47% of rural dwellers having access to secondary education as opposed to 62% of the urban population. It was found, in particular, that Indian women had the lowest levels of education. Finally it was also stated that health facilities tended to be less in the rural than in the urban areas.

The above serves to highlight the fact that although close to one-half of the population of Trinidad and Tobago may be residing in rural areas, depending on how rural is defined and assessed, successive governments have not focussed on this sector of the population as an area requiring specific attention, in spite of disparities in terms of access to services. Further, in terms of the women who inhabit these rural areas, it is clear that they must be treated as a special sub-set of the rural sector, if the information on educational levels of Indian women, who predominate in the rural areas, is taken as an indicator of the disadvantages they face.

It would seem, however, that major conceptual difficulties need to be overcome before the rural sector in general, and rural women in particular receive special attention. These difficulties have to do with a lack of consciousness on the part of policy planners and policy makers regarding the concept of rural. It is this lack of consciousness which allows the Women's Bureau within the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to state that rural women are not a priority for its attention, and to assume that these women are receiving the attention of other Ministries. This assumption is, incorrect according to information received from MFPME and the Co-operative Department of the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism. In fact, although the Co-operative Department has undertaken some projects for women, rural women did not feature as a specific area of concern, and so far as the Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, is concerned, rural women as a specific category has never received attention nor are Agricultural statistics disaggregated in terms of women and men in any consistent way.

From the data gathered it would appear that the National Commission on the Status of Women, under the former government, did treat rural women as a priority area. However, since its proposals and recommendations appeared to be dependent, for implementation, on reactions and comments from other ministries, they suffered from stagnation when these ministries failed to respond. This thus raises the question of power and influence. To the extent that responsibility for monitoring and upgrading the position of rural women, and by extension women in general, is located within an advisory body which has no power in terms of decision-making and implementation, is the extent to which the concerns and needs of women will remain peripheral to issues of national importance. This is precisely the case with the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee for Women in Development Issues which was established in 1987.

It is obvious, then, that responsibility for monitoring and upgrading the position of women in the society needs to be vested in an entity with the power to plan and implement policy. In the case of rural women, this will entail working closely with the MFPME, as well as with other relevant ministries as the need arises, for example the Ministries of Education and Health. Further, the entity with such responsibility for women's affairs must be imbued with an awareness of the multiple roles currently performed by women so that this knowledge will inform its policy formulation and implementation. It must be recognised that women are involved in both production and reproduction, whereas men tend to be involved merely in production. Women reproductive role is further subdivided into biological or human reproduction, and the domestic activities of housework and child-care, which

ensures that the society itself is reproduced (See Edholm Harris and Young, 1977; Beneria 1979, for discussions on production and reproduction). Policies must encompass a recognition of this reality as well as a will to bring about change. If women are to become more involved in production, i.e. in producing goods and services for exchange, then men must become more involved in the reproductive tasks of housework and childcare. The list of programme activities of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services for the years 1987 and 1988 made mention of incorporating rural women into the workforce. But unless the current imbalance in the workloads of women and men is addressed, women's further involvement in the workforce will result in them being overworked and over-burdened, which is the plight of many women today.

Having looked, then, at some of the obstacles with regard to formulating policies and programmes for rural women, we look next at some of the practical difficulties women face in accessing resources and services.

3.2. Women's Limited Access to Available Resources and Services

We have seen from our discussion of the Agricultural Development Bank in the last chapter that although its lending policy does not overtly discriminate against women, they tend to be debarred from access to its funds on account of lacking in the main, of the valid instruments of security. This hypothesis was in fact put forward by an officer of the bank as a possible explanation for the failure of women generally, to apply for credit in their own right. This means, therefore, that rural women involved in Agriculture, for as long as they continue not to have security instruments in their own name, will continue to be dependent on their husbands and other male relatives for access to credit, which undoubtedly has implications for decision-making about types of agricultural activities which are pursued. In the case of husbands and wives, separation, and even death, may increase the vulnerability of these women, given their weak economic circumstances.

Insofar as extension services are concerned, it was already reported, according to information received from extension officers, that women's participation in activities tend to be very low. The extension officers, who are predominantly male, pointed, inter-alia, to women's domestic responsibilities and the perception of farming as a male activity as possible reasons for women's minimal involvement. These are crucial issues which have been identified, for even when women are directly involved in farming, these activities tend to be

perceived, by them and by others, as an extension of their domestic role. Actual interviews with female farmers have produced self-definitions on their part as 'housewives', emphasising the potency of the housewife ideology (See Reddock, 1984, for a discussion of the process of housewifization in the region).

It is important, then, to recognise the strength of traditional cultural attitudes when dealing with rural women. It becomes a vicious circle when these women define themselves as housewives even when actively engaged in farming, and when their husbands, other male folk, and the predominantly male extension officers also perceive them as such. Given this perception on both sides it is understandable why rural women are left out of major farming activities. "Access has often been identified solely with availability. Experience and research, however, show that there are physical, social, and organizational constraints which prevent people, particularly women, from availing themselves of even existing services" (UNICEF, 1977:27).

It is only through sensitising the extension officers that change will take place and according to an officer of AREP this process of change has already begun. It will also be necessary to engage in a process of re-education and conscientization of these rural women, so that they will cease to define themselves principally as housewives, and will instead see themselves as both producers and reproducers. Such a process will help, too, to empower these women to achieve greater control over their own lives. In the section which follows we look briefly at the situation in some other territories of the region.

3.3. Experiences from other countries in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Data from other parts of the English-speaking Caribbean pertaining to governmental action in respect of rural and/or agricultural development, and to women's access to resources and services, reveal a number of similarities with the Trinidad and Tobago situation.

In Belize, agricultural development has ignored women while extension services, in the main, have been targeted towards men. "Fewer women, vis-a-vis men, take advantage of agricultural training and credit since these are considered to be male domains" (C. Ellis, 1988:112). Of particular interest is the fact that agricultural loans to women actually decreased between 1985 and 1987 (C. Ellis, 1988).

A study of female and male farmers of the Mabouya Valley in St. Lucia revealed an interesting picture in terms of constraints experienced by these farmers. Table XVI below indicated that while women experienced limited capital as the major constraint, inadequate markets was cited by men as the most severe constraint. What is even more revealing is that inadequate markets apparently affected female farmers to a greater degree than male farmers, even though it did not constitute the major constraint.

The women's limited capital base no doubt affected their access to credit, resulting in a major disparity between their perception of availability to credit and that of the men. Finally, with respect to extension services, here again there existed a significant difference between female and male perceptions of this service, women viewing the lack of it as a major constraint, even though it was, for them, the least significant of the constraints (Chase, 1988).

TABLE XV

Constraint Identification

Type of Constraints	% of Response	
	Male	Female
Limited Capital	75	100
Inadequate markets	90	94
Unavailability of inputs	59	91
Insufficient land	68	90
Unavailability of credit	36	83
Lack of agric. extension	45	82

Source: Chase:1988

In respect of Antigua, "for Agriculture and rural development ... reflect very little, if any, knowledge or understanding of the reality of the lives of rural women or of their particular concerns and needs". (P. Ellis, 1988:95) While these programmes may be targeted towards the 'farm family', they do not include mechanisms to ensure that all members of the household benefit equitably. Ellis also made mention of the inflexibility of some senior male policy makers and planners who resist any move to include a gender component in

policies, plans and programmes.

CAFRA's 'Women in Agriculture' Project which was carried out in Dominica and St. Vincent also produced some interesting findings. Project Co-ordinator, Joan French, writing in CARFA News, noted that the research clearly showed that women's access to land was primarily through men, either spouses or other male relatives. "Generally, women squat, rent, lease and share crop land controlled by men, or are simply allowed to work the land at the discretion of the men usually in exchange for services ..." (CAFRA News, 1989/90:6). This pattern of male ownership of land tends to be reinforced by government land reform programmes which give priority to male spouses. The Grand Bay community in Dominica provides a good example of this. Out of 400 farmers scheduled to receive land under such a programme, only 24% were women.

According to French, women's dependence on men has implications for their access to credit, and also results in the retention by men of the best land which they use to grow cash crops, mainly bananas. Government further assists the male farmers by focussing its extension services on bananas, the crop grown mainly by men. Complaints by the female farmers that the aerial sprays used for the bananas do damage to their vegetables has been met with indifference by the authorities. They are simply advised to cover their vegetables with plastic for protection. It was also revealed that the marketing services too, are geared towards bananas.

The project also found that the women involved in Agriculture in both Dominica and St. Vincent spent upwards of 3 hours per day on domestic work while men spent about 24 minutes per day. Child-care constitutes a major time consuming activity of domestic work, followed by cooking, washing wares, washing clothes and ironing. "In St. Vincent up to 65% of domestic work-time was spent on child-care, and up to 47% on cooking and washing wares. In Dominica the figures were 38% and 51% respectively" (CAFRA News, 1989/90:12). These findings support the need for policy makers to be sensitive to the multiple roles of women as stated earlier.

It would seem then, that there is a paucity of Governmental Policies and Programmes for rural women, not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but in the wider English-speaking Caribbean as well. Also highlighted is rural women's lack of accessibility to resources and services across the region. It is within the context of these findings and observations that our 'Alternatives for Action', the subject of the next section, will be proposed.

The entire study has highlighted a lack of adequate data on women in Agriculture and in the rural sector generally. It has

revealed, too, the need to empower these women, and to sensitize policy planners and makers, as well as personnel with responsibility for women's issues, about the necessity of analysing gender differences.

"Agricultural policies have to avoid the misconception that women will automatically benefit if resources are targeted exclusively to the male head of household"
(Longherst, 1987:189).

Our alternatives will thus revolve around these deficiencies and, in this connection, it is interesting to record here, some of the recommendations proposed by P. Ellis (1988:54).

"Strengthen local women's organizations and build their capacity to mobilize and organize groups of workers around specific issues, and to act as pressure groups to influence agricultural and rural development policy, plans and programmes;

Devise strategies for involving more men and senior male planners in discussions on issues of gender in a systematic way and on a regular basis".

SECTION IV

IDENTIFICATION OF ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION

Introduction

The identification of alternatives for action necessary for upgrading the institutional activities related to rural women in Trinidad and Tobago as described in this section, was based on the following premises.

- 1) that in order to cope with the debt crisis of the 1980s which is still present in 1990 and is likely to remain until the year 2000, programmes and policies must be directed towards sustainable overall development, of which development of the Agricultural sector has been identified as a critical component;
- 2) that to succeed in ameliorating rural conditions by increasing Agricultural support, cognizance of gender issues must be taken into account;
- 3) that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago having ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women endorses women's rights to participate in all forms of development and to have control over their activities in the process. Article 14.2 which deals with the specific rights of rural women reads thus:

"States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discriminations against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right: (g) to have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes".

The proposals suggested is directed towards addressing the deficiencies in policies for rural women as highlighted by the study, taking into account the prevailing climate which appears to be extremely favourable for their implementation. Suggestions are as follows:

- 1) Mounting of two (2) national training workshops, one each targeted at (a) policy-planners and (b) members of the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee for Women in Development.

- 2) Support for CAFRA's Research/Action project on Women in Caribbean Agriculture to be carried out in Trinidad and Tobago
- 3) Establishment of a mechanism for documenting and disseminating information which will assist in the empowerment of rural women.

Project Profiles

Proposal I: National Training Workshops

- (a) TITLE: National Training Workshop on: "Gender analysis as a tool in Development Planning".

Problem Statement: There is a lack of (a) gender-sensitive programmes and plans targeted for rural development in Trinidad and Tobago and (b) specific projects for women in the rural sector.

Background: In spite of the growing awareness of the need to incorporate a gender analysis in policy planning, skills needed to do so are lacking among the decision-makers and top management who are still mostly males. Countries which have attempted to integrate women into rural development introduced small agricultural projects which lacked financial resources and expertise to make them sustainable. Such projects contribute to the reproduction of women's subordination by maintaining the existing sexual division of labour: women provide a cheap source of labour to promote increases in agro-industrial exports and unpaid help in the low cost production of food in the urban sector. Furthermore, a major drawback has been the traditional attitudes of men regarding changes in women's roles.

Objectives:

- (i) To underscore the importance of integrating women into the mainstream of national food and development strategies.
- (ii) To enable policy planners to develop expertise in gender analysis and skills in implementing policy with and from a gender perspective.
- (iii) To formulate gender-informed policies for rural women which (a) integrate women in sustainable Agricultural Development both at the macro- (Policies and programmes) and micro-levels (project activities) and (b) ensure equity in targeting women as well as men as participants in and beneficiaries

of development policies and programmes.

Agencies:

- Women and Development Studies Group, The University of the West Indies.

These groups have within them a considerable number of members who have training and experience in Women in Development Issues and have also developed a fair amount of expertise in mounting regional and national workshops.

- Inter-American Institute for Co-operation in Agriculture (IICA)

Activities:

- Provision of Administrative and technical expertise required for mounting such a workshop.
- Delineation of a programme of lectures/workshops to achieve the objectives.
- Identification of resource persons.
- Reporting and Documentation of findings and recommendations.

- (b) Title: National Workshop on "Mechanisms for strengthening the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Development Issues".

Problem Statement: There is a need for effective communication and interaction between women's units and line ministries to ensure their consideration of gender issues.

Background: An Inter-Ministerial Committee comprising representatives of all ministries of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was set up in 1987. However, as stated earlier in the document the functioning of this committee needs to be strengthened. It is envisaged that such a body could perform the following functions:

- (i) serve as a catalyst in sensitising Ministries, Financial Institutions and other relevant Agencies to gender issues;
- (ii) influence policy-making and,
- (iii) assist in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of activities for rural women.

Objectives:

- (i) To devise strategies for mobilising political support for women's units at the highest levels of National government.
- (ii) To integrate Women in Development focal points into the mainstream of policy and planning activities of Ministries.
- (iii) To develop Women in Development checklists and guidelines for promoting, monitoring and evaluating projects.

Agencies:

- Women and Development Studies Group, The University of the West Indies
- Inter-American Institute for Co-operation in Agriculture.

Activities:

- As for Proposal I (a).
- Development of strategies for mobilising political support e.g. increased staffing of the Women's Bureau, strengthening membership of the Inter-Ministerial Committee.
- Development of WID checklists and guidelines: literature and documentation needed, to be identified and made available.

Proposal II:

Title: Support for the Development of a Research/Action Project on Women in Caribbean Agriculture: Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Problem Statement: There is a lack of comprehensive, reliable and unbiased statistics that could be used to diagnose accurately the nature and role of women's contribution in food and agricultural production. The powerlessness of rural women prevents them from bringing about any meaningful changes in their lives.

Background: Death of specific agriculture data, disaggregated by sex, results in the invisibility of women's contribution to Agriculture. This has been highlighted by the socio-demographic analysis of rural women in Trinidad and Tobago.

The methodological problems associated with the collection of sex-differentiated statistics have been discussed at several fora and reported in several documents. CAFRA addressed these problems in the execution of their Research/Action project in Women in Caribbean Agriculture for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Commonwealth of Dominica, using a variety of methodologies including the participatory approach. The objectives to this project are listed in Appendix V.

Objectives: To provide financial assistance to CAFRA in the development of a Research/Action project on Women in Caribbean Agriculture: The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which will have as some of its objectives the following:

- (i) To collect accurate and reliable statistical data on the role and contribution of women in Agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago, which would be used to inform policy and develop action programmes aimed at strengthening the position of women in Agriculture.
- (ii) To develop statistical indicating for the quantification of women's work in the Gross Domestic Product.
- (iii) Using participatory method of research to raise the consciousness of rural women so that they could be empowered to bring about positive changes.

Agencies: CAFRA with the assistance of CNIRD, TTNRD, The Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, WDSG and AREP, UWI, St. Augustine, IICA.

The profiles of these agencies are presented in Section II of this document.

Activities:

- (i) Identification of 3 to 4 Agricultural rural communities in which the research will be undertaken. Each would represent a different agricultural thrust e.g. fishing, seasoning production, poultry farming, rice farming.
- (ii) Identification of National Agencies and Women's Organizations which will assist in carrying out the research and developing the action programmes identified.
- (iii) Development of a comprehensive research proposal to be submitted to funding agencies.

Proposal III:

Title: The empowerment of rural women by increasing their knowledge base.

Problem Statement: Rural women have less access to education and training. They therefore lack the knowledge and power needed power to institute meaningful changes in order to improve the quality of their lives.

Background: The situational analysis of rural women in Trinidad and Tobago with regard to education and training, health, labour and employment as highlighted in Section I of the document, revealed that they have been marginalised.

Objectives:

- (i) To support through education and training the agricultural activities of rural women.
- (ii) To empower women to enable them to take a more active role in lobbying for their own needs.
- (iii) To assist in the formation of organizations and co-operatives and to strengthen existing ones.
- (iv) To improve the status of rural women and to involve them in the process of national development.

Agencies: The Caribbean Network for Integration of rural Development (CNIRD) is well poised to implement this proposal. It is a regional NGO which has among its membership affiliates from farmer's organizations, NGOs, Governments and regional inter-government agencies. Its mission is to promote co-operation and sharing among organizations which are working to improve the quality of life in rural communities in the Caribbean. Their plan of action includes:

- documentation and sharing of information on rural development activities
- provision of training in management skills for community workers
- advocacy of policy changes to benefit rural communities

Assistance in the implementation of this project, which is envisaged to run for two (2) years, will be given by TTNRD, WDSG, St. Augustine and IICA.

Activities:

- (i) Organization of rural women into communities and developing a network among these groups, existing organizations, Government and non-governmental agencies.
- (ii) Formulation of community development programmes with content and method appropriate for rural women.
- (iii) Development and mounting of training programmes to assist in agricultural activities:
 - legal rights including marital laws, land tenure, property rights, accessing loans
 - organization building and leadership training
 - occupational safety, health, pre-school needs
 - management, book-keeping and marketing
 - production technology.
- (iv) Dissemination of relevant information e.g. resources available from support agencies, through newsletter, radio programmes.

The chart flow indicates the linkages among the agencies identified to implement the proposals. Such a multi-pronged approach to the development of policies for rural women in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was deemed necessary since this disadvantaged group has largely been neglected in the past.

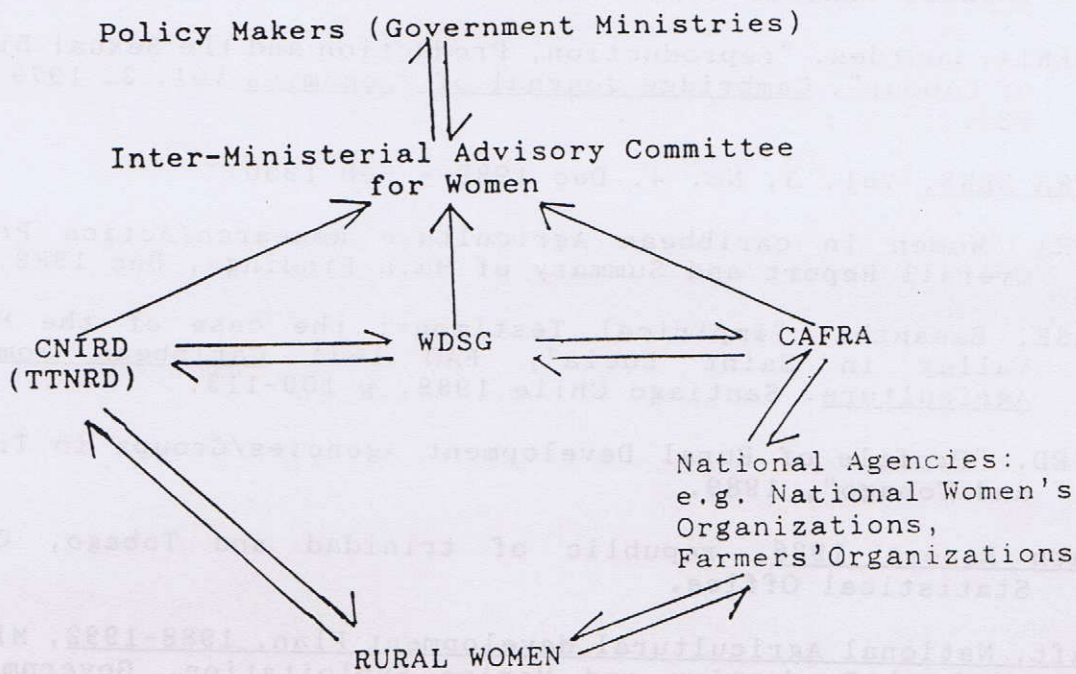


Chart Flow of Linkages among Organizations Concerned with Rural Women.

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<u>Governmental organizations</u>	<u>Date of Interview</u>
Phyllis Augustus, Administrative Officer V, The Women's Bureau, The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services	4th April, 1990
Torence Bihinsingh, Researcher, The Agri- cultural Development Bank	May, 1990
Kelvin Branche, Acting Education Extension Officer II, Adult Education Programme, The Ministry of Education	26th April, 1990
Ethelbert Harris, Agricultural Officer II The Tobago House of Assembly	17th May, 1990
Maritza Hee Hong, Librarian, Farmers Training Centre, Ministry of Food Pro- duction and Marine Exploitation	
Gloria Henry, The Honourable Minister of Social Development and Family Services of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago	23rd April, 1990
Charmaine Lewis, Agricultural Officer I, Farmers Training Centre, Ministry of Food Production and Marine Exploitation	6th April, 1990
Jerry McFarlane, Secretary of Agriculture, The Tobago House of Assembly	17th May, 1990
Hayden Newton, Researcher, The Agricultural Development Bank	3rd April, 1990
Senator Clive Pantin, The Honourable Minister of Education of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago	11th April, 1990
Laureen Phillips, Representative of MFPME on the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee for Women in Development Issues	April, 1990
Shirley Renaud, Co-operative Officer III, Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism and Representative on the Inter- Ministerial Advisory Committee for Women in Development Issues	

Dr. Brinsley Samaroo, The Honourable
Minister of Ministry of Food Production and
Marine Exploitation of the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago 10th April, 1990

Dr. Lennox Sealey, General Manager,
NAMDEVCO formerly CMA 3rd May, 1990

Non-governmental organizations

Dr. Shango Alamu, President, Multi-
purpose Co-operative, NFFA 3rd April, 1990

J. Angela Bailey, Sectoral Specialist.
Finance and Accounting, IADB April, 1990

Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Co-ordinator,
CAFRA 30th March, 1990

Hilary Boisson, Farmer and Member,
Paramin Women's Group 9th May, 1990

Regina Dumas, Programme Director,
CNIRD 3rd April, 1990

Lucille Duprey, Programme Officer, ILO 30th March, 199

Theresa Anne Rajack, Research Assistant,
AREP of UWI 3rd April, 1990

Senator Amrika Tiwari, Hindu Women's
Organization 21st May, 1990

Maria Van Veen, Associate Expert on
Women in Development Issues, ILO 30th March, 1990

Dr. J. Seepersad, Head, AREP, UWI 3rd April, 1990

APPENDIX I

LIST OF STRATEGIES OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LANDS AND FOOD PRODUCTION NOT ADEQUATELY IMPLEMENTED

- The provision of security of tenure to farmers (even now in 1986, a large proportion of the farming population are squatters of farmers on the basis of short-term rented or leased holdings).
- The enactment of land taxation aimed at penalising land idleness and encouraging its use for priority food production according to the strategy.
- The expansion of the co-operative movement within an appropriate legal framework.
- Raising the level of farmers' participation in the planning and implementation of development programmes.
- The introduction of a system to ensure better planning, programming and co-ordination of investment programmes, agricultural policies and national fiscal, financial and import policies.
- The improvement of infrastructure in the agricultural sector and most importantly, the acquisition of an adequate degree of water control (irrigation and drainage).
- The provision of adequate markets and marketing facilities, both domestic and external, such as to ensure remunerative prices to farmers.
- The establishment of an agro-processing industry based firmly and primarily on domestic agricultural production.
- The creation of a mechanism to ensure the relevance of agricultural research programmes and the effective transfer and replication of research results in farmers's fields.
- The availability of agricultural inputs (seed, fertilizer, etc.) and machinery appropriate to the domestic ecology as well as of adequate quality, and at prices commensurate with level of output prices determined by national price policy.
- The achievement of adequate levels of soil conservation through the effective management of forest resources in the upper reaches of the watersheds as well as the

integration of agricultural and forestry development in these areas.

- The assessment of management of national marine resources (including control of their exploitation by local and foreign fishermen).

Source: Draft National Agricultural Development Plan 1988-1992
p. 3-4

APPENDIX II

FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

- (a) To create an informed approach to the new role of women.
- (b) To identify and study the problems confronting women, with special emphasis on the obstacles which prevent them from exercising full civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and propose measures and strategies to resolve them.
- (c) To encourage women to contribute their creative resources to the development effort. To prepare them for participation in the development process and in the formulation of plans at the local, regional and national level relating to their overall advancement.
- (d) To act as a consultative organ to government and private enterprise in matters related to the problems and status of women.
- (e) To promote and facilitate at all levels inter-agency co-ordination in the preparation of joint action plans and programmes for the advancement of women.
- (f) To establish and maintain a register of all non-governmental organizations active in this field and co-ordinate their activities.
- (g) To establish communication with regional and international organizations involved in advancing the status of women with a view to serving as a central source of information on matters pertaining to the status of women.
- (h) To keep legislation under constant review with a view to making appropriate representation to Government with respect to the implementation, amendment or enactment of laws related to the status of women.
- (i) To make appropriate representation to Government concerning the implementation of resolutions and declarations and the ratification of regional and international conventions and treaties aimed at the advancement of women, which have been adopted by international and regional bodies in which Trinidad and Tobago participates.
- (j) To facilitate the local execution of Government's International commitments in the cause of women.

- (k) To submit comprehensive annual reports to Parliament on the activities of the Commission.
- (l) To submit the required reports to the Inter-American Commission of Women

APPENDIX III



*Trinidad and Tobago's
National Policy Statement
on Women*

INTRODUCTION

The Government is firm in its commitment to undertake progressive measures to eliminate the obstacles which hinder the development of women in the society and to further promote their full participation at all levels of national life.

It is recognised that the family is the foundation of the society and that women have traditionally played a significant role in the maintaining of stable family relationships and providing, supporting and supplementing family incomes. Cognisance must also be taken of the large number of female headed households and single parent families and the special needs of those family groupings.

Women's contribution to society is mostly unrecognised, generally under-valued and unrewarded and this perception of the almost fifty percent potential of the society is directly related to the undervaluing of the nation's resources.

The women of Trinidad and Tobago like their sisters in the Caribbean have borne more than an equal share of the burden of structural adjustment and yet have not played a significant role in the development process nor in the executive decision-making that affects the society as a whole.

It is against this background that the Government is advocating a policy statement for women so as to re-affirm its commitment to bringing women into the mainstream of the development process and have them play an integral part in defining objectives and modes of development.

PRINCIPLES

A national policy for women must be placed within the framework of the country's total national development policy, the constraints of the limited available resources and the following broad principles to which Government is committed:

- i. The concept of human dignity as an essential attribute of every single human being at every level of the society.
- ii. Social justice for all peoples and the elimination of any lingering discriminatory provisions against women in the country's legislation.
- iii. Recognition of the equal and complementary roles of women and men, their concomitant responsibilities and particular concern for the increasing number of female headed households and single-parent families.
- iv. Promotion of self-awareness and self-worth of all people and the development of policies and programmes in support of these goals.
- v. Raising the national consciousness and pride in individual and cooperative achievements especially in the history of our cultural experience and traditional heritage.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- i. All sectors of Government and all sectoral policies must provide for the full and meaningful involvement of women.
- ii. Government will provide the supportive administrative structures which would facilitate meaningful dialogue and information exchange.
- iii. Government has given an undertaking to promote regional integration and will therefore support Trinidad and Tobago's participation in regional programmes for the advancement of women in the region subject to the availability of resources.
- iv. In its commitment to uphold human dignity which is an essential attribute of every single human being in whatever condition of life, Government will support the programmes and activities which will provide equal opportunities for both men and women to recognise and uphold their dignity.

- v. Government will make full and extensive use of local expertise on women's issues and encourage their further development.
- vi. Government will encourage non-governmental organisations to participate in its programmes and projects for promoting the integration of women in the Development process and would also lend its support to the programmes of the non-governmental organisations concerning women's issues.
- vii. Government will also seek to encourage non-governmental organisations to liaise with international non-governmental organisations which have similar identified concerns in order to further enhance the impact of their work.
- viii. Government recognises the need for more efficient compilation of data on women to inform adequate and meaningful programmes and projects if the position of women in the society is to be properly assessed. Accordingly the conducting of special surveys and investigations on issues relating to women will be encouraged. Government will also co-operate in efforts to measure and reflect the remunerated and unremunerated contribution of women to the gross national product.
- ix. Equality of educational opportunities is guaranteed in the constitution. However, it is recognised that traditional barriers may hamper the educational progress of the female population. Government will seek to redress these situations and provide where possible for the removal of those barriers. The development of the full potential of a highly trained and literate population must be assured in order to allow for meaningful participation and integration in a modern technological environment.
- x. Unemployment and underemployment are the everyday concerns of the population. Government's plans for reducing the unemployment levels will include special measures to encourage and assist female entrepreneurs including rural women particularly as regards access to credit and banking facilities.

Women will be encouraged to aspire to positions at the decision and policy-making levels in all sectors including the trade unions, co-operatives, media, politics and non-traditional areas.
- xii. The provision of support social services including day care centres for the young, elderly and disabled will be encouraged. Relief for women in crisis is another area of particular concern and government will endeavour to provide the necessary support.

- xiii. Provision will be made for the special health needs of women including the dissemination of relevant information. Health care for all by the year 2000 is another goal of the Government which will be of particular benefit to women.
- xiv. The Government has taken cognisance of the need for strengthening laws where women are disadvantaged and will examine the possibility of establishing mechanisms to offer redress to women who have been discriminated against on the basis of gender.

Government's commitment is to introduce measures aimed at ensuring that the women of Trinidad and Tobago have an equitable share of the resources of the country and participate fully in all spheres of the nation's development.

July 6th 1989.

APPENDIX IV

STRATEGY FOR INVOLVING WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

To provide for the full and meaningful involvement of women in development, a process which will redound to the benefit of women themselves and of the society as a whole, the Government will:

- (i) be committed to ensuring that women as a category are not the subjects of discrimination by virtue of gender of historic situation. In this context the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Integration of Women in Development, on which all Government Ministries are represented, will function as an instrument for ensuring the application of just principles and practices as these related to women;
- (ii) ensure that women's role in community and nation building is supported, by establishing:
 - (a) a National Women's Council, the composition of which will draw upon women from all sectors and areas of the national community with the village council as its base unit; and
 - (b) a National Homemakers Association which will be mandated to make recommendations to Government on measures to increase economic opportunities for women and to implement such measures, including the formation of producer and consumer co-operatives. Emphasis will be placed on devising practical programmes which will increase income earning potential of those women who are in the most disadvantaged socio-economic positions in both rural and urban contexts;
- (iii) ensure that development agencies such as the Co-operative Division and the National Self-Help Commission are sensitized to the relationship between women and development since they will be expected to make a positive contribution to programmes for improving the socio-economic status of women;
- (iv) encourage the establishment of support services which will facilitate the participation of women in the labour force. In this regard, day care centres for the young, the elderly and the disabled will be

encouraged and supported. This measure will also serve to provide some relief for those who continue to remain at home as full time careers;

- (v) review and amend legislation which impacts adversely on the status of women;
- (vi) examine education and training programmes with a view to eliminating biases which are contrary to the principle of equality of opportunity;
- (vii) seek to ensure that popular cultural perceptions about women are consonant with their real significance in the economy and society. This will require a change of attitudes where relevant, in both men and women, encouraging them to transcend constraining gender-based role stereotypes;
- (viii) support programmes that are designed to promote consciousness among women of their self worth and of the importance of their commitment to the development effort whether in the home or in paid employment.

Programmes in the foregoing areas will be based on local conditions and will be informed by local cultural concepts pertaining to women and will not simply be carbon copies of action taken in societies with different historical backgrounds and goals. These programmes will also be executed with the collaboration of the educational and cultural agencies in the society and community and readily available international resources will be mobilised for programmes to improve the socio-economic status of women.

Generally, therefore, the desired improvement in the socio-economic status of women will be effected through the encapsulation of the appropriate measures in plans, programmes and projects in areas such as Health, Education, Manufacturing, Handicrafts and Cottage Industries, Youth, Sports, Culture and the Creative Arts and importantly in Community Development and Welfare. The institutional structure will be established in the Ministry of Community development, Welfare and the Status of Women to monitor and ensure the implementation of the Government's policy for the integration of women in development on terms that are equitable and just.

Source: Draft Medium Term Macro Planning Framework 1989-1995, Vol. II, August 1988, pp. 344-346

APPENDIX V

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH (CAFRA 'Women in Caribbean Agriculture' Project)

Long-term:

- to strengthen the position of women involved in agriculture, and in doing so assist in providing a viable economic base for Caribbean countries;
- to raise governmental and popular consciousness of the contribution of women to all aspects of Agriculture;
- to bring an understanding to female agriculturalists of their economic importance and their potential for development;
- to develop parameters for the quantification and analysis of women's work in agriculture and their contribution to the economy.

Short-term:

- to generate a concrete data base on the situation of women involved in agricultural production, redivision of labour, remuneration, and male-female relationships;
- to develop a participatory framework among women researchers and agriculturalists for the analysis of their current situation and the possibilities for change;
- to compile comparative data on women and agricultural production in the Caribbean region;
- from this data, to develop action programmes aimed at improving and strengthening the position of women in agricultural production.

Source: Women in Caribbean Agriculture Research/Action Project, Overall Report and Summary of main findings, December 1988, pp. 8-9.