

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the legal status of the illegitimate child in the Commonwealth Caribbean and makes special reference to Saint Lucia.

Chapter 1 concerns itself with the historical background and development of the current law relating to the illegitimate child in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The Chapter discusses the reception of English common law and English statutes relating to the illegitimate child. The Chapter also examines the reception, in Saint Lucia, of French civil law relating to the illegitimate child.

Chapters 2 to 6 examine the current law in Saint Lucia and in other Commonwealth Caribbean countries, as it affects the illegitimate child. Discussions in these Chapters concentrate on the establishment of the filiation of an illegitimate child and on the legal rights and obligations between the illegitimate child and his parents as regards maintenance (Ch.3), inheritance (Ch.4) and custody (Ch.5) respectively. Emphasis is also placed in these Chapters on those Commonwealth Caribbean countries with Status of Children Acts; namely; Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, St. Christopher and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

Chapter 7 considers and evaluates the current law in Saint Lucia as it relates to the illegitimate child, against the background of existing social norms. This Chapter also

examines the ratio of illegitimate births for the period 1973 to 1982 in Saint Lucia and the factors for this phenomenon. The Chapter deals with proposals for reform on the basis of the evaluation made therein and conclusions are also drawn therein. The need, in Saint Lucia, for appropriate laws to equate the legal status of the illegitimate child with that of the legitimate child is stressed in this Chapter.