

Gender-Based Violence 101- A Quantitative Study



CEDAW COMMITTEE
of Trinidad and Tobago

Convention for the **E**limination of all forms of
Discrimination **A**gainst **W**omen

CCoTT

EQUALITY
NON DISCRIMINATION
STATE OBLIGATION

 868-225-7734 / 489-2185

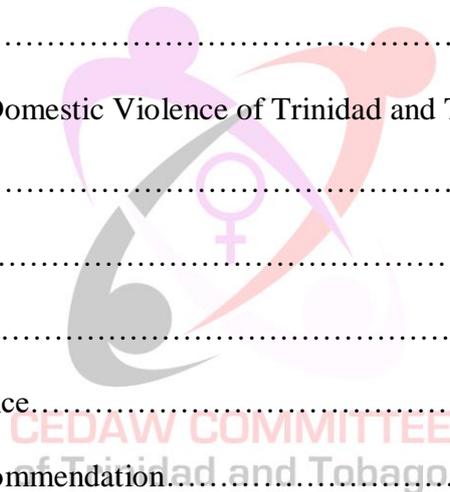
 @TTCEDAWchamps  @CCoT_T  Tnt_cedaw_champs
 tandtcedawcommittee@gmail.com



CEDAW COMMITTEE
of Trinidad and Tobago

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
List of Acronyms.....	4
Key Terms and Concepts.....	5
Executive Summary.....	7
Background and Context.....	8
Relevance.....	11
Methodology.....	12
Methodological Limitations.....	12
Key Findings.....	13
Central Registry on Domestic Violence of Trinidad and Tobago.....	13
Protection Orders.....	14
Shelters.....	15
CEDAW.....	16
Gender-Based Violence.....	16
Overall Conclusion and Recommendation.....	17
References.....	18



List of Figures

Figure 1: Knowledge about the existence of Central Registry on Domestic Violence in Trinidad and Tobago.....	13
Figure 2: knowledge on how to obtain a protection order after experiencing some form of domestic violence	14
Figure 3: Reliability and effectiveness of protection orders	14
Figure 4: Shelters for female victims of Gender-Based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago.....	15
Figure 5: The Government of Trinidad and Tobago and if it has fulfilled its responsibilities under CEDAW.....	15
Figure 6: Comfort and security in reporting Gender-Based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago.....	16
Figure 7: Training for first responders of Gender-Based Violence	16

Acknowledgements

“Gender-Based Violence (GBV) 101, A Quantitative Study” was fielded by the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) with the support of the British High Commission in Port of Spain and the Spotlight Initiative. This research project was coordinated by the CCoTT Convener and members of the Gender-Based Violence-101 project team.



List of Acronyms

CEDAW- The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

CCoTT- CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago

GBV- Gender-Based Violence

T&T- Trinidad and Tobago

VAW- Violence Against Women



Key Terms and Concepts

CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago- is a non-governmental organization focused on Advocacy, Education, and Public Awareness on and for the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) incorporated under the Trinidad and Tobago Legal Articles of Incorporation

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women- is an international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. It is referred to as the International Bill of Rights for women. It was instituted in 1981 and has been ratified by 189 countries.

Concluding Observations- The observations and recommendations issued by a treaty body after consideration of a State party's report.

Domestic Violence/Domestic Abuse- can be defined as a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person.¹

Gender-refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the

¹ United Nations. (n.d). *What is Domestic Abuse*. <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes.²

Gender-Based Violence - Gender-Based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms.³

Victim- Commonly understood, a person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused.

Violence against women -. Violence against women Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.⁴



² UN Women. (n.d). *Concepts and Definitions*. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions>

³ United Nations. (2017, July 24). *Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/SEA%20Glossary%20%20%5BSecond%20Edition%20-%202017%5D%20-%20English_0.pdf

⁴ UN Women. (n.d). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a survey conducted in December 2020 on the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. The survey was based on a framework developed by members of the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) with the support of the British High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. The purpose of this survey was to raise public awareness about Trinidad and Tobago's international obligations on the rights of women and girls, encourage consciousness building on Trinidad and Tobago's progress in meeting these obligations, and advocating for timely implementation of the recommendations. The questions were derived from the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee for Trinidad and Tobago in their 2016 country Review in Geneva, Switzerland. The survey addressed four (4) key issues:

- i. Gender-based violence
- ii. The Central Registry on Domestic Violence
- iii. Shelters for female victims of domestic violence
- iv. Protection Orders

A total of thirty (30) questions were explored.

Background and Context

CEDAW is an international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. It is referred to as the International Bill of Rights for women. It was instituted in 1981 and has been ratified by 189 countries.

The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to vote and to stand for election as well as education, health, and employment. The Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women.⁵

Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations.⁶

Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the Convention in 1985 and subsequently ratified it in 1990. T&T was last reviewed in 2016 and in the Concluding Observations were given fourteen (14) recommendations for implementation to comply with their treaty obligations.

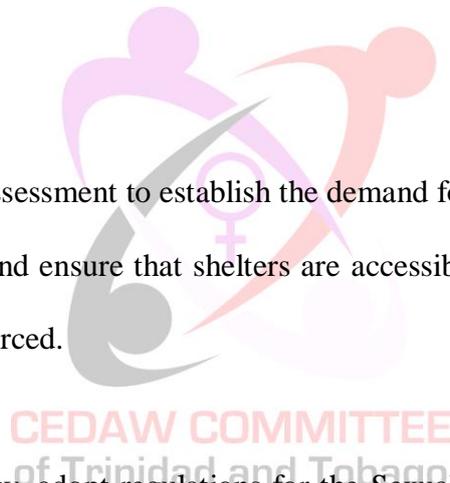
⁵ UN Women. (n.d). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

⁶ UN Women

Five (5) of these recommendations formed the basis for this survey. The recommendations are as follows;

Recommendation 21

- (a) Ensure that all cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, in particular femicide and domestic violence, are thoroughly and effectively investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that the Central Registry on Domestic Violence has up-to-date statistical data on cases focusing on all forms of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, which should be disaggregated by age, type of offence and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator;
- (b) Undertake a needs assessment to establish the demand for shelters by women who are victims of violence and ensure that shelters are accessible throughout the State party and sufficiently resourced.
- (c) As a matter of priority, adopt regulations for the Sexual Offences Act to introduce a sex offender registry, with a view to combating gender-based violence against women by tracking repeat offenders.
- (d) Ensure the effective enforcement of protection orders and promptly investigate and punish breaches.
- (e) Ensure that training for law enforcement officers focuses on the gender-sensitive investigation of cases of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, and adopt programmes, including mandatory courses, aimed at eliminating



traditional attitudes concerning the treatment of domestic violence as a private matter.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) was formed to not only advocate, educate and create awareness but to also hold all stakeholders accountable for the implementation of the substantive articles of the Convention.

The objectives and purpose of CCoTT are to:

- A) To educate stakeholders on the CEDAW convention, including the mandates and responsibilities of the signatories
- B) To advocate for the implementation of the convention mandates and the recommendations highlighted in the concluding observations
- C) To raise awareness and contribute to policy necessary for advancing the convention implementation
- D) To sponsor, host, and/or participate in events and activities that promote the understanding and implementation of the articles of the CEDAW convention
- E) To educate all stakeholders on the convention and its implications to a sustainable and empowered life

Relevance

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a prevalent issue that societies face across the world to which women are disproportionately affected. One in three women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner – a number that has remained largely unchanged over the past decade.⁷ GBV is an umbrella term to describe violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture. GBV can include sexual, physical, mental and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. It also includes threats of violence, coercion and manipulation. This can take many forms such as intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called ‘honour crimes’.⁸

Trinidad and Tobago saw a spike in the number of domestic violence cases in the year 2020. Overall there were 232 cases of assault by beating being reported in 2019 when compared to 558 cases at the end of April, 2020.⁹ In 2020, 47 women and girls were killed. There were

⁷ World Health Organization. (2021, March 9). *Devastatingly pervasive: 1 in 3 women globally experience violence*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>

⁸ United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (n.d). *Gender-Based Violence*. <https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html>

⁹ The Daily Express. (2020, April 23). *Frightening increase in domestic violence cases, as families stay home*. https://trinidadexpress.com/newsextra/frightening-increase-in-domestic-violence-cases-as-families-stay-home/article_77f814f8-7a6c-11ea-ac46-37800a519570.html

over 552 reported cases of sexual offences in 2019 with women making up the majority of the cases. Of these reported cases, 92 have been rape.¹⁰

As a result, there continues to be a need to raise public awareness and advocate for the urgent implementation of the recommendations by the CEDAW Committee.

Methodology

Methodologies used were an online survey with a series of multiple-choice questions created via google forms and administered via emails through random sampling.

An online survey is a set of structured questions that the respondent completes over the internet, generally through filling out a form. It is a more natural way to reach out to the respondents as it is less time consuming than the traditional way of gathering information through one-to-one interaction. It also less expensive than other ways of gathering information.

Methodological Limitations

There may be a lack of quality random sampling as a full list of the entire population cannot be obtained.

¹⁰ Trinidad and Tobago Guardian. (2019, Nov. 30). *Over 552 sex assault cases against women in 2019*
<https://www.guardian.co.tt/news/over-552-sex-assault-cases-against-women-in-2019-6.2.997901.da21814c5f>

Key Findings

Central Registry on Domestic Violence of Trinidad and Tobago

Respondents were asked if they heard about the Central Registry of Trinidad and Tobago (Fig.1). Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents answered 'no' while thirty percent (30%) answered 'yes'. On the question of if they were aware of how the Central Registry can be accessed, eighty-eight percent (88%) were unaware while twelve percent were aware.

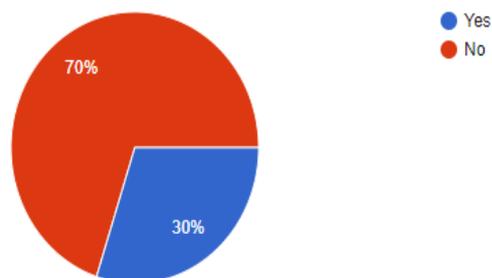


Figure 1: Knowledge about the existence of Central Registry on Domestic Violence in Trinidad and Tobago

Protection Orders

Of those surveyed forty-nine percent (49%) knew how to obtain a protection order if they have experienced some form of domestic violence while thirty-two percent (32%) did not and nineteen (19%) responded as “maybe”. See (Fig.2)

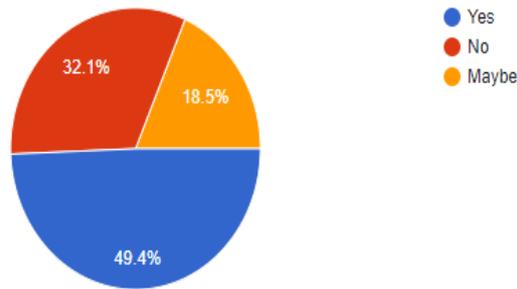


Figure 2: knowledge on how to obtain a protection order after experiencing some form of domestic violence

When asked if they think protection orders were reliable and effective, seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents did not think that this was the case while others had responses such as “yes”, “not always”, “not sure” and “not in its current form”. See (Fig.3)



Figure 3: Reliability and effectiveness of protection orders

Shelters

Respondents believe that there is a need for shelters for female victims of GBV in Trinidad and Tobago. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents strongly agree with this question, seventeen percent (17%) agreed, nine percent (9%) were neutral, and seven percent (7%) strongly disagreed. See (Fig.4).

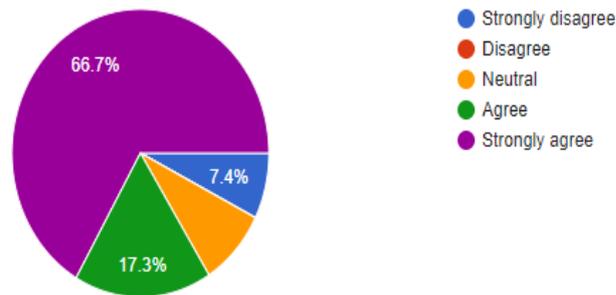


Figure: 4 Shelters for female victims of Gender-Based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago

Convention on the Elimination of All form of Discrimination Against Women

Respondents confirmed that they do not think the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (60.5%) had fulfilled its responsibilities under the CEDAW while (35.5%) responded as “maybe”. Only four percent (4%) thought that the responsibilities were fulfilled. See (Fig.5).

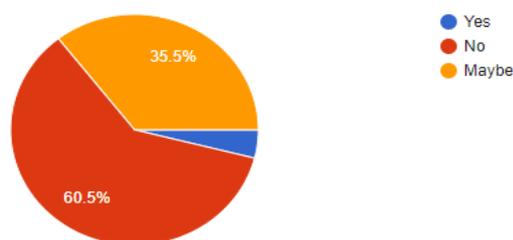


Figure 5: The Government of Trinidad and Tobago and if it has fulfilled its responsibilities under CEDAW.

Gender-Based Violence

When asked if they would feel comfortable and secure, should they be required to report gender-based violence; sixty-six percent (66%) of the respondents said “no” while thirty-four percent (34%) said “yes”. See (Fig.6).

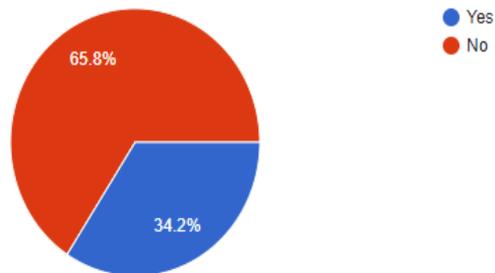


Figure 6: Comfort and security in reporting Gender-Based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

Of those surveyed, ninety-six percent (96%) believed that first responders should undergo training while four percent (4%) said “no”. See Fig.7).



Figure 7: Training for first responders of Gender-Based Violence

Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

There continues to be a need to raise public awareness about Trinidad and Tobago's international obligations on the rights of women and girls and timely implementation of the recommendations. Protection orders and its reliability and effectiveness continue to be a critical issue of the State. This issue also speaks to the level of confidence that the citizens have in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) in protecting them in the event of a domestic violence dispute. This was reflected in the survey results where more than seventy percent of the respondents thought that protection orders were not reliable or effective.

On a related note, it is important for the State to be able to identify those issues most pertinent to the mandates of the CEDAW Convention in a Trinidad and Tobago context. The extent to which respondents were aware of the Central Registry but did not know how it can be accessed is concerning. It means that members of the public awareness of the implementation of some of the recommendations of the Convention are limited. In general, there is a lack of communication or coordination with regards to the State's policies and its implementation.

The need for more shelters for female victims of domestic violence is likely to be a direct result of the prevalence of this issue in Trinidad and Tobago. In general, respondents do not believe the mandates of the Convention are being fulfilled. It is important that the State implement those recommendations with urgency and effectively communicate such to the members of the public.

References

“16-365 – Collaborate for Impact: From recommendations to action. (2018,2019). *Report prepared by the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago.*

Concluding Observations – CEDAW/C/TTO/CO/4-7

The Daily Express. (2020, April 23). *Frightening increase in domestic violence cases, as Families stay home.*

https://trinidadexpress.com/newsextra/frightening-increase-in-domestic-violence-cases-as-families-stay-home/article_77f814f8-7a6c-11ea-ac46-37800a519570.html

Trinidad and Tobago Guardian. (2019, Nov. 30). *Over 552 sex assault cases against women in 2019* <https://www.guardian.co.tt/news/over-552-sex-assault-cases-against-women-in-2019-6.2.997901.da21814c5f>

United Nations. (2017, July 24). *Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.* <https://www.icmec.org/glossary-on-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/>

United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (n.d). *Gender-Based Violence.* <https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html>

United Nations. (n.d). *What is Domestic Abuse.* <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

UN Women. (n.d). *Concepts and Definitions.* <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions>

UN Women. (n.d). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.* <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

World Health Organization. (2021, March 9). *Devastatingly pervasive: 1 in 3 women globally experience violence.* <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>

