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FROM CONTAINMENT TO CORRECTION AND REFORMATION:
EXPLORING PUNISHMENT AND REFORM IN THE DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM OF FIJI WOMEN’S PRISON

by

Shailin Swaran Gonelevu

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is the Lord who gives wisdom; from him come knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 2:6).

I would like to thank Dr. Jacqueline Ryle for encouragement and supervision with this thesis, as well as staff and students at the University of the South Pacific for their support.

I would also like to give thanks to the Deputy Commissioner of Fiji Corrections Service, and the prison officers of Fiji Women’s Prison. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation goes to all the inmates of Fiji Women’s Prison.

I am grateful to my family members, Jerusel Gonelevu, Makipani Gonelevu and Chandra Wati for their love, support, and patience throughout my research.
ABSTRACT

Punishment and ill-treatment of prisoners has always been a major issue of concern in prisons throughout Fiji. The current penal discourse about prisoner punishment however, has shifted its focus from the previous idea of punishing inmates under the lock and key detainment to the efficacious correction and reformation of inmates for their effective social re-integration into society as productive citizens. This thesis examines punishment and reformation of female prisoners through the related lenses of Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary systems.

This thesis starts from the premise that the prison’s current “reformative” approach toward prisoner treatment and rehabilitation needs to be understood through its disciplinary systems and techniques. Michel Foucault’s seven ‘universal maxims’ for an ideal prison with good penitentiary conditions has been used as a theoretical model to analyze the reflexive ethnographic data of this thesis.

In Fiji Women’s Prison, the idea of inmate punishment has been covertly enmeshed within its rehabilitative disciplinary system. The use of various disciplinary measures through prison’s institutional routines and Rehabilitation Framework has imposed emotional, verbal, physical, and psychological abuse on inmates. I suggest that the current position of inmates as subjugated and vulnerable victims of the prison’s disciplinary system has transformed them into compliant and passive workers for the prison’s garment enterprise. Instead of preparing the inmates for effective
social re-integration, the prison’s disciplinary system is robbing inmates of their individuality, human rights and chances of becoming productive members of society.
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

A universal feature of imprisonment is the way it snatches its participants from everyday life and places them in an abnormal environment, divorced from their routines, and exposed to quite different pressures and imperatives. Prison is an upside down world, a single sex environment with an inverted class structure. Its population reflects the inequities and injustices of the wider society, and relationships with the outside world are mediated through censors and eavesdroppers. Constructive human reactions and behavior become more difficult. Confinement and security impose a range of indignities and absurdities on those who are confined and those who confine them (Stern 1998: 105).

Fiji’s first Prisons Act came into effect in 1966 and was based on the philosophy of ‘lock and key’ detainment of prisoners. Even though the need for rehabilitation in Fiji’s prisons was well recognized, discussed in detail and recommended to be included as a guiding principle for the Prison Service by the then Superintendent of Prisons in 1962 (Seller 1962), the actual 1966 Prisons Act did not include any provision for rehabilitation.

It was not until 2003 that any successful attempt was made by the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) and Fiji Law Reform Commission toward reviewing Fiji’s prison legislation. This review was based within the framework of Fiji’s Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2003-2005 which highlighted the two key issues contradicting the international standard set for the prisons
and prisoner treatments. Firstly, the issue of staff and prisoner ratio of 1:10 in Fiji’s prisons compared to the international standard of 1:4 and secondly, Fiji prisons’ need of providing “efficient and cost effective prisons and rehabilitation services”\(^1\).

Due to this review the need for improvement in the “quality of service delivery within the prison institute in conformity with international standards such as human rights and other related legislations” (Fiji Reform Commission 2004: 3) was recognized and later “became the major focus for prison output in the 2003-2005 Government’s Strategic Plan (GSP)” (Naidu, Reddy & Ratuva 2009:17). In 2006, the old 1966 Prisons Act was repealed by the new Prisons and Corrections Act 2006. It underwent a major paradigm shift from ‘containment and punishment’ to ‘correction and reformation’ of prisoners through rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society.

The main guiding principle of the new Prisons Act was for all prisons to:

…ensure that full regard is [had] to the recognized international standards and obligations relating to the treatment of prisoners (and in particular those stated in the international Conventions recognized in section 43(2) of the Constitution and in The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted at Geneva in 1955), and that these standards are applied to the fullest extent possible (Prisons and Corrections Act 2006, Part 1, 3(a): 31).

\(^1\) Parliamentary Paper No. 72 of 2002.
The new Act further required that all prisons comply with the rights and obligations of the United Nations Convention of Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and International Minimum Standard on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights (Prisons and Corrections Act 2006, Part 1, 3(b-c)).

This advocacy implies that in the post-modern era “the philosophy and practices of penology are rapidly shifting from harsh and punitive to humane and rehabilitative” (Zemans & Cavan 1958: 50). Due to this change the stakeholders’ major focus has also turned to the adaptation of various measures to minimize reoffending upon release. For instance, since 2007 Fiji prisons and its administrative forces have been advocating their adaptation of a more reformatory approach to inmates by: i) – upholding the prisoners’ human rights while working with them as individuals to become law-abiding; ii) - ensuring that each inmate had the required skill and competencies; and iii) - demonstrating a commitment to fairness, equality and respect for each other and those they are in contact with (Annual Corporate Plan [ACP] 2011).

This suggests that Fiji’s Prisons have shifted from the traditional ‘containment and punishment’ system and have adopted a ‘reformative and corrective’ approach— that apart from espousing offenders’ basic human rights also accentuates the prisons’ commitment towards minimizing recidivism. This intention is highly visible in Fiji prisons’ stated paramount Missions (ACP, 2011-13) which emphasizes Fiji prisons’ stride towards providing an effective and efficient prisons and corrections system through the adoption of innovative programmes of offender management and
rehabilitation programmes. Along with the new approach, Fiji has also taken initiatives from other countries like Singapore and changed the name of Fiji Prisons Department to Fiji Corrections Service and Fiji Women’s Prison to Fiji Women’s Correction Centre (ACP 2011).

Under the repealed Prisons Act, Fiji prisons operated under the principle of ‘containment, control and punishment’. This act permitted the prison officers to use arms against the prisoners to disable them when they acted violently toward the prison officers and in cases of attempted escapes (Fiji Prisons Act 1966, 21(1-5). This Act also permitted prisoner punishments including hanging of prisoners (abolished in 1967), flogging, solitary confinement, reduced diets, and prolonged and monotonous labour outside the prisons\(^2\).

Until the ratification of the new Prison’s Act in 2006 and Fiji prisons’ adoption of a more reformative approach toward prisoner treatment and rehabilitation, the use of physical and verbal abuse was the main method of prisoner punishment. The endless cycle of clashes and brawls between prisoners and prison officers within the prisons and settling the unresolved fights in the streets and nightclubs upon the prisoners’ releases was not an uncommon sight in Fiji. Today, prisoners and prison officers who worked under the old prison system have their own tales to tell. Even though Fiji prisons have taken major steps toward endorsing rehabilitative and corrective approach for offender reformation, ambiguity still surrounds the wellbeing of the prisoners. The

\(^2\) Prison Standing Order.
issue of overcrowding and short staffing\(^3\) alone evokes the risk of overshadowing the maximum delivery of Prison Department’s Mission and Values (ACP, 2013) — which underlines the importance of maximum control and reformation of offenders in the prison. For example, three years after the prisons’ shift to the ‘correction and reformation’ approach, the living conditions in Fiji prisons had not undergone any significant changes. Justice Nazhat Shameem reflected on this issue in one of her statements after she visited Suva Prison. She revealed her abhorrence of the derelict situation of Fiji’s male prison by labeling it as “inhumane, degrading and a breach of section 25 of the Constitution” (Shameem 2009: 2).

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that despite the ratification and enforcement of Fiji Prison’s Annual Corporate and Business Plans in accordance with new Prisons Act 2006, the actual perception and realization of the prison’s recent shift from punishment to rehabilitation may not be fully realized by the inmates and the prison officers in Fiji’s prisons. The significance and rationale behind the penal policy shifts in regard to prisoner treatment is limited to the comprehension of its few immediate advocates mainly academics, and the penology and criminal justice system.

Have Fiji prisons undergone the paradigm shift from ‘containment and punishment’ to ‘correction and reformation’ of prisoners? This thesis draws on ethnographic research conducted in Fiji Women’s Prison (also known as Fiji Women’s Correction Centre) to evaluate and discuss the

\(^{3}\) The Suva Correction Center for male prisoners has a staffing ratio of 36 prisoners to 1 prison officer. ‘Probe focuses on inmate, warden ration’, Fiji Times newspaper, December 14, 2012.
relationship between the prison’s disciplinary system, and punishment and reformation of prisoners from social anthropological perspectives.

My choice of the Fiji Women’s Prison was based on the idea that even though women are perceived as the fastest growing sector of the mass imprisonment movement throughout the world, women’s institutions and their inmates have traditionally received negligible attention in academic literature mainly due to their tiny proportion in comparison to the total prisoner population (Rafter 1983; Kruttschnitt 1980-1981; Kruttschnitt & Gartner 2003). I am the first researcher to conduct reflexive ethnographic research in Fiji Women’s Prison. The research methods I employed included participant observation, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews by the use of extensive field notes, voice recordings and systematic documentations of occurrences in the prison.

I conducted my research in Fiji Women’s Prison from April 2013 to May 2014. Prior to going to the Fiji Women’s Prison for research, I held a personal opinion of inmates as notorious criminals who are lawless, devious, and highly dangerous. In my mind’s eye, I always perceived them as individuals held captive in separate cells with heavy padlocks, and prison wardens with batons guarding the doors. Some of these ideas were engrained in my mind from both the Hollywood and Bollywood movies. Others were primed by the negative socio-cultural-religious assumptions of prisoners held by the Indo-Fijian society in which I grew up.
On the day of my first visit to the Fiji Women’s Prison I was greatly surprised that neither the building nor the inmates matched my mental representation. I remember standing outside the prison gate absorbing the scene before me. The prison looked like a primary school and its inmates looked like grown up schoolchildren in pink uniforms. While entering the main gate I watched two inmates sitting on the verandah before the kitchen chopping chickens while three of the inmates were standing behind them talking and laughing.

I looked in the yard and saw some inmates planting flowers in the garden. A three-year-old child (inmate’s dependent child) was amongst them, playing with a water hose. Outside the nursery verandah, an inmate was doing facial threading on another inmate while teasing and enticing the officer-in-charge to try. As the inmates passed by me they smiled and politely greeted me with utmost respect. By the time I reached the officer-in-charge’s office, I remember mentally jostling myself back to reality because for a few minutes I could no longer discern between reality and fantasy.

During the course of my research, I experienced a major transformation in my previous perception and opinion of the women’s prison and its female inmates from negative to a more positive and understanding ground. This impacted on my field study. According to Geertz (1988) “good anthropological texts are plain texts, unpretending. They neither invite literary-critical close reading nor reward it” (1988: 2). Thus, “reflexivity can be based on feelings, fluidity and
undefined components that are very separate from empirical, hard and visual data” (Anna 2012: 2).

Fiji Women’s Prison is dominated by indigenous (*iTaukei*) inmates and staff. Amongst the total prison population, one eighth is Fiji Indians and a fraction from India, Ghana, and Brazil. As an ethnographic researcher, my double ethnic identity and multi-lingual background played a vital role in the fieldwork. My trust with the inmates and prison officers developed when they realized I was an Indo-Fijian, married to an *iTaukei*.

My ability to speak in Hindi, *Fijibaat* (local Hindi), Fijian (*iTaukei*) and English, and my knowledge and understanding of different cultures and religions placed me in a unique position during the fieldwork. These abilities enabled me to hold open conversation with each informant. It also assisted me to understand and interpret their personal views and experiences from their own cultural, ethnic, and religious perspectives.

Similar to other conventional societies, Fiji’s multi-ethnic and traditional society holds a conservative ideology of women as gentle, pure, pious, caring, loving and nurturing mothers, wives, daughters and sisters. Contrary to these traditional assumptions and attitudes, some women in Fiji have digressed from their societal norms and have engaged in a variety of criminal offences such as crimes against lawful authority, public morality, the person, the property, and against the penal law (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2010). These women represent the overall female
correctional population of Fiji—which includes females in prison, jail, probation and parole. Despite the rise in criminal offences by women in Fiji, the Correctional Service of Fiji has only one women’s prison in Walu Bay, Suva.

This prison has an authorized capacity of twenty nine convicted female prisoners. At the time of my research, from 2013 to 2014, it accommodated over fifty convicted and non-convicted prisoners. In Fiji Women’s Prison technological advancements such as internet and surveillance cameras are still perceived as expensive and unnecessary gadgets by the prison administrations. Contrary to the international standard of having one prison officer to four prisoners (Naidu, Reddy & Ratuva 2009) Fiji Women’s Prison faces short staffing by having a ratio of one prison officer to ten inmates.

The prison’s appalling state and inmates’ pitiable living conditions due to overcrowding has been highlighted by the US State Department Report on Human Rights in Fiji (2005) and the decrepit condition of Fiji Women’s Prison— which was perceived as a threat to the inmates and their dependent children’s basic human rights became one of a focus of the CEDAW (2010). Consequently, the New Prisons and Corrections Act incorporated the legislation that supports “…arrangements for female prisoners and their children consistent with the rights and obligations of CEDAW and CRC, and in particular the rights of mothers to feed and care for their infant children while in prison” (Part 14, 54(1.o)) and up till 6 years of age. This provision declared the need for child friendly facilities and environment in Fiji Women’s Prison in order to advocate the
importance of overseeing the inmates and their children’s basic human rights during the incarceration period.

In many aspects female inmates experience the double brunt of punishment due to imprisonment. Most of the women convicts are either pregnant, have families or are holding custody of their children prior to imprisonment (Prison Activist Resource Center n.d). So the incarceration of female family members has an adverse effect on their immediate relations and dependents. For instance, due to only one female prison in Fiji, female convicts are often transported far away from their homes (outer islands and remote towns and villages of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu) thus having less chance of family visitations. Incarceration therefore not only weakens parental relationships but also has detrimental effects on both cohabitation and marriage as well (Pattillo, Weiman & Western 2004).

Continuous attempts toward prisoner rehabilitation and efforts to minimize recidivism remain the centre of focus in Fiji Women’s Prison. According to the officer-in-charge, the lack of appropriate reformation programmes in the past years one in eight prisoners reoffended within two years of their release (Personal Interview, 21/02/2014). Therefore the main focus of Fiji Women’s Prison’s present rehabilitative strategies is to minimize recidivism and ensure that prisoners on their release have gained the ability to find work and have a home to go to.

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4 18.3 percent females reoffend in United Kingdom; 30.6 percent in United States, 48 percent in New Zealand, and 75 percent of indigenous women reoffend in Western Australia.
This thesis represents the first detailed examination of punishment and reformation of female prisoners through the related lenses of Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary systems. It is based on the premise that the prison’s current approach toward prisoner treatment and rehabilitation must be understood through its disciplinary systems and techniques. The thesis was not designed to speculate or to seek essence or truth (Scheurich 1997) regarding Fiji Women’s Prison and its inmates. Rather, it employs a reflexive ethnographic approach (from April 2013 to May 2014 in Fiji Women’s Prison)—through interviews, participant observations and informal conversations, to inquire into and map the prison’s shift from the conventional punishment system to the current post-modern disciplinary and rehabilitative system.

My intention is to understand and gain knowledge, and to capture the plurality ‘of different identities or voices associated with different groups, individuals, positions or special interests’ (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2000: 194) linked with Fiji Women’s Prison. I used “polyvalent data to vivify a base that is used for interpretation” (Lather 1991: 91) in regards to the role of the disciplinary system of Fiji Women’s Prison and its relation to punishment and reformation of prisoners.

Chapter Two theorises prison, punishment and disciplinary systems in relation to the French poststructuralist, Michel Foucault’s (1977) analysis of power, prison, discipline and rehabilitation. It provides an in-depth discussion on punishment under the “sovereign power’, and its shift toward ‘disciplinary power’— which led to the establishment of the ‘carceral system’ or the modern prison. I describe the development and rationale behind the emergence of different types of prisons
and prisoner treatments throughout the world. My theoretical model draws upon Foucault’s representation of seven ‘universal maxims’ for an ideal prison with good penitentiary conditions – which will be used as a theoretical model to analyze the ethnographic data in this thesis. Chapter Three provides a brief description of Fiji Women’s Prison, outlines the methodology used, and also briefly considers some ethical issues of the research.

Chapter Four describes different disciplinary methods employed by the Fiji Women’s Prison to reform the individual prisoner’s behaviour. This disciplinary system takes effect immediately on the inmates’ admission into the prison. It is exercised throughout their stay through various disciplinary strategies (e.g. through the institutional routine, reward and punishment system and individualized punishments) with the intent to reform and amend the inmate’s thoughts, attitudes and behaviour. Under the new Prison and Corrections Act 2006 the prison’s disciplinary system is perceived by reformers as punitive as well as rehabilitative. However, as my study will show, concealed and coercive methods of punishment are enmeshed in it.

In Chapter Five I give an account of different disciplinary techniques and educational mechanisms used by Fiji Women’s Prison to upgrade individual inmates’ social and livelihood skills. These educational mechanisms are categorized under the four-phase rehabilitation framework which each inmate is allocated under is classified within their progress levels. These skills are based on disciplinary developments (such as foot drills, prison rules and regulations, and spiritual empowerment) and personality enhancements (like Drug Offender Module, and Recidivist
Module). In addition to this are vocational and academic skills (such as small business management skills, small engine repair workshops, and sewing and handicraft skills), and community programmes (including life skill projects, community service projects and job placements). The effectiveness of the prison’s rehabilitation programmes is however, highly dependent on appropriate staff training. This, in turn ensures the recommended delivery of prison support of inmates’ successful re-integration into society after their release from the prison.

Chapter Six continues to discuss the punishment and disciplinary system of Fiji Women’s Prison from inmates’ and prison officers’ personal perspectives. It discusses its effect on inmates’ personal lives and behaviour reformation and how it affects prison’s preparation of inmates for their social integration and employment opportunities after their release from the prison.

In Chapter Seven I summarise the findings of the research through the Foucauldian ‘seven maxims of prison’ model outlined in Chapter Two. I suggest that the current position of inmates as subjugated and vulnerable victims of the prison’s disciplinary system has transformed them into docile and passive workers for the prison’s garment enterprise. Instead of preparing the inmates for effective social re-integration, the prison’s disciplinary system is robbing the inmates of their individuality, human rights and chances of becoming productive members of society.

In the following chapter I start by providing a theoretical framework on prison and punishment.

*Chapter Two*
[T]he punishment-body relation is not the same as it was in the torture during public executions. The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property. The body, according to this penalty, is caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions. Physical pain, the pain of the body itself, is no longer the constituent element of the penalty. From being, an art of unbearable sensations punishment has become an economy of suspended rights (Foucault 1977:10-11).

This chapter will explore Foucault’s perspective on ‘Western’ prisons or ‘carceral system’ by discussing the historical relationship of the development of Western models of incarceration that have defined the ‘truth’, and thus treatment of criminality. The term ‘Western’ in this chapter refers to countries such as Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Australia, and most of the European and North American countries, which have a common civilization because of similar religion (Christianity), culture and political views (democracy) (Huntington 1996). I also explore the expansion of the Western prison model into other countries such as Russia, China and Japan.

Through reflexive ethnographic research I use Foucault’s seven ‘universal maxims’ for an ideal prison to explore and analyze punishment and discipline in Fiji Women’s Prison. The main purpose of comparing Fiji’s prison system with the Western prison model is because following
Fiji’s cession to Great Britain on 10 October 1874, the British Colonial government formally introduced the legality of prison and punishment (Sellers 1955). From the day of Fiji’s cession until its independence in 1970 the British Monarch was Fiji’s official Head of State. So it was the Western notion of imprisonment and punishment that framed the ‘Laws of Fiji’.5

During this period, successive British Queens and Kings exercised their sovereign power in Fiji. Queen Elizabeth II continued her reign as Fiji’s formal regent after Fiji’s independence in 1970 when Fiji became part of the Commonwealth. However, after Fiji became a republic on the 7th of October, 1987, the Queen’s sovereign power and jurisdiction as Fiji’s Head of State was cancelled and transferred to Fiji’s President on 5th of December the same year (Fiji Republic Gazette 1990:1-2). During this period only minor amendments to Fiji’s judicial system occurred, mainly through Fiji’s 1997 constitution. To date, Fiji’s judicial system continues to retain elements of the British system and “the heritage is still clearly discernible” in Fiji’s penal system (Colvin 2008: 2).

**Foucault: Sovereign Power**

According to the French poststructuralist, Michel Foucault, the ‘discipline and punishment’ of the 19th century was marked by the privatization6 of sovereign power which was characterized by

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5 *Criminal Procedure Code [Cap 21] (Fiji Islands); Prisons Act [86] (Fiji Islands); Penal Code [17] (Fiji Islands).*

6 Privatization of the sovereign power was the process which shifted open executions of criminals to the disciplining of their souls in private spaces such as prisons.
brutal public executions. Due to privatization, sovereign power was replaced with disciplinary power—a repressive method of transforming ‘souls’ to discipline the body (Foucault 1995: 16). Foucault noted that the dominance of sovereign power during medieval times and the early modern period was exclusively possessed and exercised by the monarchs. This power was marked by a legally sanctioned “violence, discrimination, public ceremony, vengeance, and repentance” (Blomberg and Lucken 2000: 20) and carried out by executioners through painful public punishments of offenders through the gallows, pillory, scaffold, flogging and the wheel (Foucault 1995: 1-10).

The aim of these methods of punishment was to set public punishment as an example to send fear amongst the spectators. Since the ‘body’ was the main object of punishment, it was used in a form of repression to discourage people from committing acts forbidden by the King (Foucault 1995: 30-69). In addition to this, the production of ‘truth’ by means of public confession through torture was also a consistent ritual during the eighteenth century. Since this type of punishment was also highly organized around the knowledge of law, it therefore focused solely on the centrality of the King’s power and authority, the offenders’ bodies, and the validation of truth (Foucault 1977: 1-10).

Eventually, this method of public punishment began to attract public sympathy towards the criminals. Instead of causing fear of the monarch and his sovereign power, the brutal public executions began to raise public anger, rebellion, and resistance. Consequently, punishment began
to take place away from the public sphere and became “the most hidden part of the penal process” (Foucault 1977: 9).

The rise of capitalism in overcrowded seventeenth century Europe further resulted in a population explosion of displaced unemployed people. “The effect of increasing industrialization was growing urbanization but also growing poverty and pauperism” (Duncan 2000:1). Founded on the moral criterion of “hard work, industriousness, and discipline” (Spierenberg 1995: 60) the poor were divided into ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’, and ‘rich’ and ‘depressed’ poor (Duncan 2000: 2; Speirenberg 1995: 61).

The poor were considered threats to the stability of society and were punished by being sent to the prison workhouse, the galley, or transported to penal colonies in North America and Australia. Affluent societies such as Great Britain, on the other hand, turned to a less cruel method of punishing their wayward family members by using the power of states— which necessitated the use of private prisons (Speirenberg 1995: 60-61). The state made use of both private and public prisons in both Britain and the USA in the 19th century.

**Foucault: Modern Disciplinary Power**
The introduction of penal processes replaced early eighteenth century sovereign power and regicide with modern disciplinary power. This power often had numerous consequences. According to Foucault, modern disciplinary power:

leaves the domain of more or less everyday perception and enters that of abstract consciousness; its effectiveness is seen as resulting from its inevitability, not from its visible intensity; it is the certainty of being punished and not the horrifying spectacle of public punishment that must discourage crime; the exemplary mechanics of punishment changes its mechanisms. As a result, justice no longer takes public responsibility for the violence that is bound up with its practice (Foucault 1977: 9).

Incarceration rather than public punishment became the major aspect and norm of nineteenth-century penology. Secret judicial proceedings replaced public trials, and public torture gave way to secret acts. The central aim of the modern disciplinary system such as the prison was to relieve judges from the mortifying task of punishment. Instead, it focused on “reclaim[ing], correct[ing], and cur[ing] offenders” (Foucault 1977: 10). Imprisonment under the modern disciplinary system further slackened the hold on the offenders’ bodies, as practiced under monarchical regimes. This changed morality and connections between punishment and body during torture.

The exercise of disciplinary power by means of imprisonment took the form of a more subtle and private way of exercising power upon offenders. Here, the focus was on a more punitive method of changing and rehabilitating offenders’ souls rather than focusing on punishment of the body and pain (Foucault 1977: 16). The judgment of offences shifted from sovereign laws to the
encompassment of societal norms. It is where “a whole set of assessing, diagnostic, prognostic, normative judgments concerning the criminal have become lodged in the framework of penal judgment” (Foucault 1977: 19).

Foucault indicated a shift of power from monarchical ‘super power’, to the ‘micro-physics’ of power of the entire judicial system. Karl Marx viewed power relations as class conflict. Power struggle, according to Marx, is the main element which divides a society into two classes. It is where super-ordinates (bourgeoisie) exercise power over subordinates (proletariats) to suppress and gain control over them. Power is centralized, permanent and predictable (Wallace & Wolfe, 1999; Hawthorn, 1976). Foucault, on the other hand, recognized the subjugating nature of power but he also acknowledged the contesting fact of control. He argued that subordinates are not completely powerless but possess the potential to altersocial structures through resistance. Foucault called this the microphysics of power (Giddens, 1971; Ritzer, 2009).

Foucault posited that “micro-physics presupposes that the power exercised on the body is conceived of not as a property, but as a strategy” (Foucault 1977; 26). This thought changed the previous approach of obligatory torture of criminals. Instead under disciplinary power calculated, tactical and intentional approaches were used as strategic mechanisms to dominate and control criminals’ bodies. The effect of this dominion, according to Foucault (1977), “attributed not to ‘appropriation’, but to dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, [and] functioning” (26).
During this process the “corpus of knowledge, techniques, and ‘scientific’ discourses is formed and becomes entangled with the practice of the power to punish” (Foucault 1977: 23). A new power of judgment replaced the earlier role of executioners with technicians and scientists. The role of these experts was to employ scientific knowledge and equipment to transform and treat deviant individuals’ souls. The main tenet “of the humanization of the penal system and of the knowledge of man” (Foucault 1977: 23) thereby became a productive rather than repressive method of transforming souls to discipline the offenders’ bodies.

**Bentham’s Panopticon Prison Model**

The new disciplinary system came into effect after the rejection of numerous reformative proposals. The enlightenment philosophers strongly rejected the punishment system of the Old Regime. They wanted to humanize punishment by abolishing torture and diminishing monarchical power by regularizing the judicial system (Foucault 1977: 62-63). Since the reformers of the enlightenment era based their views on reason they emphasized the need to shift the locus of punishment from body to mind instead of body to soul. The rationale behind shifting punishment from body to mind was that by allowing criminals to recognize that their acts would lead to more pain than pleasure, they would learn to evade committing crimes (Foucault 1977:62-64).

The blueprint of Jeremy Bentham’s ‘Panopticon’ however, overshadowed the suggestions of the eighteenth century reformers and philosophers. According to Foucault, nineteenth century prison systems were, “explicitly criticized by many reformers. Because [they were] incapable of
corresponding to the specificity of crimes… [they had] no effect on the public… it [was] useless, even harmful, to society” (Foucault 1977: 144).

Unlike nineteenth century prisons, Bentham’s Panopticon became the main precursor of the new technology of power. The application of the architecture of Panopticon became an efficient and effective technique of en masse control of inmate populations. The ingenious purpose behind the Panopticon structure was to instill self-consciousness in prisoners through continual surveillance by the authority figure, the guard. The guard held the power to observe the inmates at will, scrutinizing their behavioural changes to mete out rewards and punishments accordingly (Hudson 2003: 19-21).

Integrating Panopticon design facilitated the regulation and maintenance of discipline in prisons. It nonetheless turned simple confinement into an appalling means of punishment. “The major effect of the Panopticon: [was] to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that [assured] automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 1977: 201). The motivation behind imprisonment was no longer restricted within the boundaries of offender-segregation from society. Instead, the incorporation of the Panopticon system in prisons turned it into an apparatus for the exercise of total power over the inmates (Foucault 1977). This led to the origination of a newer and sophisticated structure of dominance in prisons. The use of the Panopticon system shifted focus from inmate reformation to the process of individual normalization. This was achieved by placing a supervisor in a central tower and locking in each
cell a condemned man (Foucault 1977: 201). Since the main rationale behind the surveillance system in prisons was to monitor the effective regulation of the norms of prison routine this technique generated an automatic surveillance system that selected deviant inmates’ behaviour and movements for examination.

Foucault argued that (1977):

“in a disciplinary regime…individualization is ‘descending’: as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized; it is exercised by surveillance…, by observation…, by comparative measures that have the ‘norm’ as reference” (1977: 193).

This process enabled the prison administration to regulate, judge, compare, rank, standardise, exclude, include and document abnormality in the deviant inmates’ routines. The triple benefits of detecting deviant prisoners were that, firstly the deviant inmates were reinstated to the penitentiary norms. Secondly, it generated automatic self-regulation of individual inmate behaviour in the prisons. Lastly, the inmates became the instrument of their own observation, control, order, and conformity (Foucault 1977).

**Early American Prisons**

After independence, America rejected the British use of prisons on the grounds that the problem of crime was due to the severity of British codes and methods. “In America certainty in
punishment became most important to produce the effect of deterrence, rather than the internal routine and management of the prison that was so emphasized in England” (Blomberg & Lucken 2000: 38). Similarly to British prisons in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the American prisons were also marked by over-crowding, mingling of men, women and boys, violence, riots, escape and disorganization.

An example of the earliest American prison is the Walnut Street Jail. This prison was characterized by incidents such as new prisoners’ money being forcefully taken and their clothing sold by other prisoners to buy alcohol at inflated prices from the jailer. This resulted in some nearly naked prisoners in jail. Due to no separation between male and female prisoners, in order to consort with male prisoners some women had themselves arrested and confined for fictitious debts (Johnston 2004: 2).

Heavily influenced by Bentham’s architecture of Panopticon, the reformers of American prisons adopted John Haviland’s ‘radial’ design (cf. Johnston 1995). Their main intention was to solve the problem of “obvious influence of bad associations; idleness that led to disorder and violence; overcrowding that had plagued each prison built in Philadelphia and other American cities; poor supervision by sometimes venal and untrained personnel; abysmal health conditions of the inmates and the questionable rehabilitative value of such incarceration” (Johnston 2004: 5). By now reformers in Europe and America no longer viewed crime as the “product of religious destiny or
free will, but the result of a contagious moral and social disease linked to the evil environment of the disorganized city” (Blomberg and Lucken 2000: 48).

**The Philadelphia Model: Solitary Confinement**

The Philadelphia model of solitary confinement was based on the reformers’ ideas of ‘true’ prisoner reformation. By 1829 it had become the new method of prisoner control in America. In this prison system inmates were completely isolated from one another by being put in solitary confinement in one cell throughout their imprisonment. The purpose of solitary confinement was to provide inmates with equal mixtures of solitude for reflection and Bible reading, vocational training and meaningful work.

Only the guards, who brought in work materials, food, fresh bedding and clothing visited prisoners in solitary confinement. Inmates were required to work, sleep, learn and worship in their single cells. They exercised in the personal exercise yard attached to the cell and wore a hood when outside the cell (Johnston 1955: 514-515; McGowen 1995: 92-93).

The prison population was totally homogenized by stripping inmates of their individual identities and personal needs. Each inmate was reduced to the number on his or her uniform (McGowen 1995: 92). The rationale behind the establishment of solitary confinement system was based on the reformers’ beliefs that:
the dread of the experience of generally extroverted, sociable criminals being isolated from contact with their fellow prisoners for years on end would deter them from further crimes, whatever their earlier motivations had been…[and] allow the prisoners, in their solitude, to reflect on the error of their ways and to be exposed to moral guidance, appropriate reading, and to regular work habits through some trade (Johnston 2004: 5, 9).

A few years after the opening of the Pennsylvania system of solitary confinement, its separate and no-contact system was breached by various incidents. This included inmates being outside their cells, walking unescorted and without their hoods, having the freedom of their yards, reading newspapers with the guards, escaping, and drunken women inmates being escorted back to their cells in the middle of the night. Rumours of mental illness due to solitary confinement also began to surface and gained the reformers’ attention. Apart from issues of internal corruption, this prison was costly, and due to overpopulation in Philadelphia, it became over-crowded.

By 1841 two inmates occupied a single cell and by 1876 four prisoners were accommodated in a single cell. Until the introduction of machines into the manufacturing of consumer goods this prison supported itself on prison labour profit. Due to Philadelphia laws prohibiting the use of machines in prison labour, the prisoners’ labour was underutilized. By the nineteenth century the high cost of running the solitary confinement system had doomed this model’s widespread adoption around the country (Johnston 1955; Johnston 2004; McGowen 1995).

**Auburn Model: Silent System**

After the failure of the Philadelphia model the states of New York and Massachusetts adopted the Auburn model. This prison model was also known as the ‘silent system’ where prisoners slept in
tiny cells of 7 feet 6 inches by 3 feet 6 inches and 6 feet 3 and a half inches (7’6”x3’6” and 6’x3.5”).

The prime example of the Auburn model was the Sing Sing prison where one thousand prisoners were housed in five tiers of cells. The Auburn model prison was renowned for its military style management. This included meticulous routines for prisoners and enforced silence induced on inmates working during the day. Every aspect of the prisoners’ behaviour was regulated with iron discipline. To maintain order the guards meted out harsh punishment through flogging (cf. Johnston 1971; Johnston 2004; McGowen 1995). The Auburn model prison’s management, discipline and its internal and external designs resembled the newly forming factories of this period (McGowen 1995: 101-105, 110-11).

**The British Pentonville Prison Model**

Out of the two models (Philadelphia and Auburn), the Philadelphia model was still in its infancy when it caught the attention of European reformers. By this time reformers had begun a serious search for an effective system of penal treatment. The radial plan of the Philadelphia model originally began in England but was stopped due to lack of space. It was reintegrated with Jeremy Bentham’s 1792 Panopticon design to form a new and refined Pentonville prison model in 1842. The main preference of the ‘silent system’ in the Pentonville prison models was based on the notion that “a silence rule, in association, is impossible to enforce without excessive punishment” (Duncan 2000: 7).

The rules of the ‘silent’ and ‘separate’ systems of the Pentonville prison replaced severe flogging and physical punishment and became an effective method of eliminating the corruption of young offenders by the old. Within six years at least fifty-six prisons in Great Britain were modeled on
Pentonville. All “prisoners were dressed in brown trousers and brown jackets and they wore a cloth cap with a large cloth peak, the peak had slits in it to enable the prisoners to see through. Whenever he left his cell, the prisoner had to drop the large peak over his face (to hide his shame)” (Duncan 2000: 14).

The unique aspect of the British Pentonville prison which separated it from American prisons was its fundamental purpose of providing a temporary incarceration of not less than eighteen months for prisoners between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. These were the prisoners who had been sentenced to be transported to the penal colonies of Australia and Tasmania (Van Diemen’s Land) (Duncan 2000).

The purpose of incarcerating prisoners for one and half years at Pentonville was to provide them with vocational training in trades and crafts. This included tailoring, shoe making, tin making, blacksmithing and watch making. The prison also provided a religious and moral instruction before the prisoners’ transportation to their designated penal colonies. Thus, the time spent in Pentonville became a period of instruction and probation instead of a ‘gaol’ of oppressive punishment.

The short incarceration in Pentonville was aimed at developing the prisoners’ ‘real’ character, form new habits, and mould a better frame of mind. The integration of the reward and punishment system encouraged good prisoner conduct, progress, and industriousness. This determined the

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7 Gaol is an old British term for jail.
kind of passage they would have and the status they would receive in Tasmania. The industrious prisoners received a first class pass for deportation as opposed to the third class ‘chain gangs’⁸ (Duncan 2000).

The Pentonville Prison Model: Colonial Australia and Tasmania

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Pentonville model prison spread to other parts of the world through British and European colonization. In the early 1840s the British colony of Australia and Tasmania adopted the Pentonville model prison such as Port Arthur’s Separate Prison (1847) and Fremantle Prison (1851). This marked a shift from corporal punishment to the psychological punishment and moral regeneration of ‘convicts’⁹.

Prior to the introduction of the Pentonville model prisons, punishment of convicts in colonial Australia and Tasmania was based on physical violence. This included excessive flogging which at times led to illness and death. As a part of daily punishment routines convicts were exposed to strenuous and hazardous labour such as working in chain gangs on road building, mining, land clearing and sleeping in ‘mobile boxes’¹⁰ at nights (Commonwealth of Australia 2008; Smith 2008). The rationale behind the use of harsh punishment in colonial Australia and Tasmania was to impart psychological pain on convicts in order to instigate terror, humiliation, and degradation in them. The aim of this was also to set an example to deter crime in Britain.

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⁸ ‘Chain gangs’— a group of prisoners chained together to perform menial and physically challenging work as a form of punishment.

⁹ Convicts- refers to British and Irish criminals exiled from Great Britain under the penal transportation to Australia and Tasmania.

¹⁰ “Mobile wooden boxes used to accommodate road gang convicts at night. Two tiers of ten convicts were chained throughout the night”. Kerr, J. S. (1984). Design for convicts, Library of Australian History, Sydney, page 63.
After incorporating the reformative ideals and features of the British Pentonville prisons, the ideals of colonial Australian and Tasmanian prisons began to shift from a harsh punishment system to a new form of surveillance and control of convicts. Prisoners were controlled through classification systems, cellular isolation and separate system, record systems and penal practices (Commonwealth of Australia 2008; Smith 2008).

**Russian Prisons**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century large prisons in Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, Austria and Hungary were established in a similar design and following the reformative ideals of the Pentonville prison model. In 1879, Japan built its Miyagi prisons on the Pentonville prison model. *Hubei*, China’s first radial prison was constructed on the basis of a similar architectural model in 1906 (Duncan 2000; Johnston 2004; Stern 1998).

By the 1860s, Russia was still debating how to improve fundamental conditions of the Russian prisons and the country’s need for a modern prison. The need for a modern prison became apparent in Russia in 1845. It was after the simple barrack-like holding facilities for detaining prisoners posed the problem of overcrowding. By 1848 the Russian government found a cheaper alternative to overcrowding problems. It sent many of its prisoners to military correctional units for active
service, putting them into work companies or exiling them to Siberia (Adams 1996; Kriukelytė 2012).

It was not until 1862 that Russian reformers sent two young men to study European Pentonville prisons systems for a year. On their recommendation correctional prisons, where daily work was seen as a part of rehabilitation, were established. Nevertheless, the Russian government rejected the Western correctional method of probation and, specifically, the isolation cells widely used in the West (Adams 1996; Kriukelytė 2012).

“The Russian government believed that these cells would drive Russians mad rather than correct their behaviour” (Kriukelytė 2012: 22). It was almost a century after the first prison was built in the West that Russia attempted the task of building a modern prison system. By then this prison system was already considered to have eroded in Europe and the United States (Kriukelytė 2012).

Fiji Prison: Establishment
It was not until 10 October 1874 that Fiji’s first prison was established, in Totogo government station, in ‘Levuka’ by the British colonial government—historically the day Fiji was ceded to the Great Britain. Due to the lack of space for expansion in Levuka, the main seaport and capital later shifted to Suva. Fiji’s main prison, Suva Gaol, was established there in 1887. In contrast to the architectural composition of the famous Pentonville model prisons of the Western Countries, Suva Gaol was a collection of huts. They were placed behind a reed fence and from the main road a track along the beach led to the prison and the adjacent cemetery (Seller 1955).

It was not until 1912-1913 that the colonial government erected a modern accommodation of 171 ferro-concrete cells in the Suva Gaol. This task was entirely completed by prison labour. The front wall of the prison was constructed from coral rock. The rear and sides of the prison were still of reed construction (Seller 1955). By the late 1890s at least eight other prisons and lock-ups were established within the buildings of the stipendiary magistrates’ stations around Fiji. This enabled the resident magistrates to monitor the prisoners’ movements with the help of binoculars from their residence at all times (Panapasa 2009; Royal Gazette 1890).

The rationale behind the opening of prisons in Fiji was to detain and punish people who broke the laws of the Colony. The punishment of prisoners was meant to deter possible offenders and at the same time to train existing prisoners to become useful citizens. Along with imprisonment, the colonial government passed the laws of servitudes, corporal punishment, and death penalties in

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1 Levuka is Fiji’s old capital located in the island of Ovalau, the sixth largest island in Fiji’s Lomaiviti Archipelago. Situated at 17.70° South and 178.8° east, (60 km northeast from the Suva City and 20 km off the east coast of Viti Levu).
Fiji’s penal system. Under penal servitudes the offenders were punished through transportation to distant plantations for up to a period of seven years\textsuperscript{12}.

Criminals sentenced to prison and lock-up were subjected to either non-corporal punishment or corporal punishment. The non-corporal punishment included endless cutting of grass throughout the day, solitary confinement, commonly known in Fiji as ‘dark cells’, and reduced diets\textsuperscript{13}. Corporal punishment which included infliction of strokes on bare buttocks with a light 42” rattan cane of a $1/2$ inch diameter was mandatory in prisons around the country. During the punishment the prisoners were tightly fastened to the whipping bench before their bare buttocks were covered with a thin cloth soaked in an antiseptic solution. Before commencing with the punishment of prisoners a folded blanket was placed on the small of their backs to prevent accidental injuries. Prisoners were caned until the blood appeared\textsuperscript{14}.

Capital punishment included the death penalty for criminals penalized under Fiji’s Penal Code\textsuperscript{15}. Prior to the construction of a fixed execution chamber within the Suva Gaol in 1905, and until the abolition of the death penalty in 1967, the colonial government hanged condemned prisoners on a temporary gallows on the hill behind Suva Gaol (Seller 1955). During the executions the hangman


\textsuperscript{15} Laws of Fiji. Penal Code. Chapter 17.
would place a rope around the prisoner’s neck to rest on his shoulder and instruct him in iTaukei (Fijian) to rai ki Beqa (look towards Beqa\textsuperscript{16}) before pulling the lever. The lever opened the drop doors to leave the condemned hanging by the neck (Seller 1955; Wesley 2007).

The first reformative discussions in response to Fiji’s prison conditions and issue of overcrowding, and the Western idea of reform to rehabilitate prisoners took place in 1962 and took effect legally in 2006 (Seller 1955; Fiji Prisons and Corrections Act 2006)\textsuperscript{17}.

**Fiji Prison: Female Indentured Labourers**

One of the prime examples of sovereign jurisdiction through the penal system was in relation to the Indian indentured labourers in Fiji. The sovereign power of the British colonial government subjugated female indentured labourers through violence and brutality. This power was exercised through the indentured system’s penalty clause. It warranted prosecution, fine, or imprisonment of the indentured labourers for the conviction of a range of labour offences. These included “desertion, unlawful absence from work, failure to show ordinary diligence or to complete a task; and offences related to discipline, such as using language or disobedience” (Shameem 1998: 60; Gillion 1962).

\textsuperscript{16} Beqa is an island located 10 kilometers south of Suva City, Viti Levu, Fiji Islands.

\textsuperscript{17} Due to limitations on the thesis word limit, discussion on reformation in post-modern prisons could not be included in this chapter.
Working under extreme conditions, breaking laws through resistance, and the imprisonment of indentured women became a common feature in the colony of Fiji in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{18} The following excerpt describes the crime rates and the types of crimes that indentured females were imprisoned for from the year 1896 to 1907:

In most years of indenture, women were convicted, and their services extended in fewer numbers than male labourers. [A]s exploitation increased, the proportion of women sent to gaol, fined or forced to work after their indentures had expired exceeded the male proportion... [T]here were more charges laid against women than against men. In 1898, for instance, 44.2 per cent of the men and 56 per cent of the women were prosecuted (Shameem 1998: 60-61).

\textbf{Western Prisons: Female Prisoners, Treatments, and Rationale}

The use of imprisonment as a medium of correcting prisoners through harsh punishment was a common practice in the early modern prisons. So was the justification and rationale behind the maltreatment of female convicts in Western prisons around the world. “Prison, as structures built and run by men, fail to take into account important gender-specific accommodations for women and produce an environment where women face hostile conditions because of their gender” (Skiles 2012: 657). Female convicts in early prisons came from poor socio-economic backgrounds, generally from the non-ruling and minority class, perceived to have deviated from prevailing social norms for their gender (Rafter 1983; Smith 2005).

\textsuperscript{18} During my research the staff of Fiji National Archive claimed not having any materials on female \textit{i-Taukei} prisoners from 1800s—which delimited my literature review. Therefore, please refer to Robert Nicole’s book “Disturbing History: Resistance in Early Colonial Fiji” in which he briefly mentioned some incidences where \textit{i-Taukei} women and children were sent to prisons with men for resisting the colonial government.
Prior to the establishment of the first separate prisons for women in America and Britain\(^{19}\) female offenders lived in dreadful conditions in male prisons. These prisoners were regularly subjected to hunger, discrimination, moral degradation, and physical and sexual violence from male inmates and prison wardens (Freedman 1975; Purvis 1995; Rafter 1983; Skiles 2012).

A visiting Ladies’ Committee in the 1820s described the conditions of the women’s wing of the Philadelphia jail:

Numbers of female prisoners were confined together night and day, in dark, close, and dirty rooms, in which scenes of the most revolting character were witnessed. They had no other employment than picking oakum, and the want of classification and of separate dormitories rendered nugatory in great measure the instructions of their visitors. The women were placed entirely under the charge of men, whose only means of keeping the refractory in subjection was by the infliction of the lash, or other corporal punishment. No wonder that when liberated from prison most of them are believed to have returned to their former evil courses, and many were recommitted again and again, for fresh offences (Wrench 1852: 304).

Female penal convicts in colonial Australia and Tasmania were treated in similarly inhumane ways. In addition to being flogged and exposed to hard labour, such as the crushing of rocks, female convicts were forced to wear heavy and often spiked iron collars (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). These convicts were further assigned the critical roles of populating the colonies

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\(^{19}\) Mount Pleasant Female Prisons in New York in 1839 and Brixton Women’s Convict Prison in Britain in 1853.
as mothers, working as domestic service workers, and protecting the male dominant society from homosexuality.

These ascribed roles, coupled with their previous criminal convictions, labeled female convicts as ‘damn whores and prostitutes’. This labeling was done by Australia’s patriarchal social structure that favoured non-convict virtuous middle class females as ‘God’s police’ (Summers 1975). The demoralizing title and negative perceptions of female convicts was based on the social notion of females being delicate, meek, subordinate, apolitical, and publicly asexual. These notions were in opposition to the female convicts who had not only transgressed the boundaries of the law but had also contravened the code of femininity (Demousi 1997; Dixon 1999; Summers 1975).

The degrading perceptions of female convicts further exposed them to male brutalities. This included the enforced shaving of heads to demoralize the women, gang rapes by prisoners and wardens and forced marriages with other male convicts. Women convicts were subjected to even harsher punishment when their husbands accused them of adultery. An example is a woman with a two month old baby. She had brought a charge against her husband for brutal treatment. In his defense he accused her of adultery. Because she could not prove her allegation to the satisfaction of authorities they charged her with adultery. “She was sentenced to walk 35 miles with a six and a quarter pound iron collar around her neck” (Commonwealth of Australia 2008: 215).

In the United States by the 1860s the sexual exploitation of female prisoners by male guards and the luring of female prisoners into prostitution had become a major concern for women prison
reformers (Smith 2005). Despite the reformative reasons behind building separate women’s prisons, other disciplinary problems like violent battles and knife attacks amongst inmates continued. So did old methods of control through punishment such as “strait-jacketing, solitary confinement, extended bread and water diets, and the ‘shower bath’ that bombarded prisoners with water until they were close to drowning” (Rafter 1983: 140).

The rationale behind the establishment of women’s prisons and the harsher treatment of female inmates was based on the perception that “women convicts were more depraved than men since, having been born pure; they had fallen further than had their male counterparts in crime” (Freedman 1975: 78). While deviant men were considered to have violated the social contract, deviant women were treated as innately insane and immoral (Chesney-Lind 2002).

Prison therefore became a medium through which female inmates were domesticated by being taught gender appropriate work such as sewing, cooking and laundering in an attempt to bring them back to their “truth in femininity” (Davis 2002: 72). By the 1860s minor work such as whitewashing prison walls and flower gardening were also incorporated into female inmates’ daily work schedules. Its aim was to “nurture womanly virtues” (Davie 2010: 41) because the absence of these ‘feminine skills’ were considered to be the reasons why female convicts were getting into trouble in the first place (Davie 2010; Davis 2002).
Foucault: The Modern Penitentiary System and Rationale

According to Foucault, in the modern penitentiary system imprisonment became the main form of punishment depriving offenders of their liberties. Prison according to Foucault maintains became an institution where discipline was instilled with the intention to reform. Discipline rather than punishment ensures the minimization of recidivism and the maximization of the reformed offenders’ chance of becoming a contributing member of society upon release (Foucault 1977: c.f. Robinson 2008).

Durkheim, on the other hand, believed that “deprivations of liberty, and of liberty alone, varying in time according to the seriousness of the crime, tend to become more and more the normal means of social control” (Durkheim, 1961, p.114). This means that as society evolved, incarceration began to replace execution as a more common means of punishment. Punishment, as described by Durkheim, is a “normal” social fact since its “general character” or function is “related to the general conditions of collective life in the [society] under consideration” (Durkheim, 1982: 97).

The existence of punishment as a normal social fact indicates that a lack of punishment, like a lack of crime, would be a pathological state (Durkheim 1982: 97-104). From a Durkheimian perspective, punishment is principally a mechanism through which moral values are transmitted and enforced. For Durkheim the essence of punishment “is irrational, unthinking emotion fixed by a sense of the sacred and its violation” (Garland 1990: 32).
From Durkheimian perspective, rehabilitation has been thought to be ‘expressive’ of a collective sentiment. It has tended to be seen as an expression of care for the individual offender and his or her future well-being. Robinson argued that ‘expressive punishment’ in modern rehabilitative framework does not have instrumental goals or aim to reduce crime or render offenders better people. Rather, it should seek to communicate to the offender and to wider society the moral wrong inherent in the offender’s actions (2008: 435; Foucault 1977:62-64). Reformation of offenders on the other hand also means ‘education in subjection’. It is where the inmates submissively accept their own inferiorities by becoming the subjects of need (Melossi & Pavarini 1981: 154).

Disciplinary power and system ‘trains’ the moving, confused and useless multitudes of bodies. It forces them into a multiplicity of individual elements—small, separate cells, organic autonomies, genetic identities and continuities, combinatory segments (ibid). The reform system moulds asocial, disorganized criminals into disciplined and productive inmates. The aim of this is to produce disciplined and well-adjusted individuals who, when reintegrated into society, will behave as law abiding citizens.

In seventeenth century ideology strict discipline was “regarded as an art of correct training” (Foucault, 1977: 170). Discipline in the modern penitentiary system however is regarded as an apparatus which “makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals
both as objects and as instruments of its exercise” (Foucault 1977: 170). Foucault described this disciplinary power through his description of quarantine during an epidemic:

“This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead – all this constituted a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism” (Foucault 1977, p. 197).

The exercise of disciplinary power in the modern penitentiary system revolves around normalizing judgment. This is a system of rewards and punishment. Achievements are rewarded. Lack of achievements or non-conformity is punished. Modern prisons regulate inmates through enforced discipline, stringent drills, constant supervision, and surveillance by prison wardens and through sophisticated technologies.

The exercise of disciplinary power in modern prisons breaks the wills of criminals and makes them into “docile bodies” (Foucault 1977: 137). Disciplinary power is “general formulas of dominations” which produce “subjected and practiced bodies” (Foucault 1977: 137) by turning the convicts’ bodies into “objects and targets of power” (Foucault 1977:136). Docile bodies in modern prisons are created by subjecting, coercing, manipulating, using, shaping, training, and improving them for easier control by people in authority (Daniel 2000; Foucault 1995).
Karl Marx argued that prisoners should neither be deprived of ‘productive labour’ nor to be treated ‘like animals’ from fear of their competition. Prison workers, according to Marx, belong to a different sort of capitalist society. Free labour therefore must be available to all without the economic and political blackmail of the house of correction (Melossi & Massimo 1981: 62).

The idea of rehabilitation is closely allied with the goal of specific deterrence— the attempt to use sentencing to reduce the chance of re-offence. Punishment in the rehabilitative ideal could simultaneously work for the improvement of individual criminals and effect a reduction in crime (Menninger 1968; Vuli 1994). Levitt (1996) argued that fear of an amplified risk of imprisonment not only dissuades people from engaging in criminal activities but the imprisoned offenders are also handicapped from committing crimes during the period of incarceration.

The 1970s rehabilitative interventions were found to have little impact on re-offending rates. It failed to deliver the ‘social goods which previously had been taken for granted by the project of penal modernism (Robinson 2008). In Fiji, due to the lack of appropriate reformation programmes, approximately three in five prisoners reoffend within the two years of their release (Annual Report, 2012). This failure is mainly attributed to the flaws in the reformative approaches in the post-modern prison system. For instance, skills taught in prisons often only helps inmates with limited education and job experience. Training for unskilled inmates trainings (Visher & Travis, 2003) and diminished job skills due to long terms of confinement (Hamlyn & Lewis, n.d) limit inmates’ chances of finding good employment after their release (Hagan & Dinovitzer 1999).
Despite the existence of various rehabilitation programmes, low prison staffing levels, poor administration and overcrowding are other contributing factors hindering the success of rehabilitation programs in many post-modern prisons. Correctional officers’ behaviour and attitude towards inmates strongly contribute to how prisoners adjust their attitudes toward prison life and the correctional officers and carceral experiences. To curtail the problem of failed rehabilitation system suggestions such as homogeneous rules and regulations, and rehabilitation programmes based on friendly counsel and advice has been suggested by scholars and reformers (Gartner & Kruttschnitt 2004; Vuolo and Kruttschnitt 2008). This approach is expected to effectively control and replace repression, fear, bitterness and futility by instilling confidence and renewed hope in inmates.

To combat problems of the prison system and prisoner attitude towards reformation programs, Gullberg and Halford (2013) proposed the importance of incorporating holistic rehabilitative services in collaboration with the community and statutory organizations. They maintain, the need for specialists with expertise in gender-specific issues to achieve a clear understanding of the different needs and issues affecting inmates.

‘Modern’ rehabilitative strategies in many prisons today include rehabilitation programmes which foster inmate empowerment. Through these inmates learn the essentials of intrapersonal,
interpersonal and social power. These skills then become essential tools for the effectual transformation of inmates from prison into the society (O’Brien’s 2001; Raynor and Robinson 2005: ch. 2; Garland, 1985). However, notions of empowering female inmates in prisons have been criticized on the basis that women in prison cannot be empowered, and the empowerment notion denies the reality of their carceral lives” (Kruttschnitt 2002: 473). In relations to Fiji, Vuli (1994), on the other hand, argues that communal based mechanism to reform offenders offer more potential in traditional based countries like Fiji, because of it is a smaller society and has strong sense of community spirit (p.11)

Foucault was concerned that despite the shift from sovereign to disciplinary power in relation to prisoner treatment, modern prisons are still ineffective in reducing crime and recidivism. These limitations are inevitable because the modern prison “impose[s] an unnatural existence” on prisoners through segregation and meaningless work. Furthermore prison records brand ex-prisoners as ‘criminal’. The hierarchical organization of delinquents in modern prisons further provides platforms for criminals to become more professionalized (Foucault 1977: 264).

**Theoretical Model**

Foucault drew upon the seven ‘universal maxims’ (listed below) of the ‘good penitential condition’ which, he argued, would hallmark an ideal prison:

1. the main function and result of a prison is to reform the individual’s behaviour;
2. the requirement for an accurate method of classification and distribution of prisoners according to their act, age, mental attitude, correction techniques used and the stage of their transformation;

3. punishment must be individualized with the possibility of penalty alteration determined by individuals’ personal progress reports;

4. the need to use work as one of the indispensable elements for prisoner transformation and progressive socialization;

5. integration of educational mechanisms in reformation processes;

6. skillful training of prison staff in the technique of imprisonment;

7. the need for the prison to support inmates to successfully re-integrated in society (Foucault 1977: 267-270).

Through reflexive ethnographic research I use this framework to explore and analyse the Fiji Women’s Prison’s shift from ‘containment and punishment’ to ‘correction and rehabilitation’. Foucault’s ‘seven maxims’ of an ideal prison provides a unique framework for researching punishment and disciplinary system in the Fiji Women’s Prison.

The next chapter provides a description of Fiji Women’s Prison and the methodological approach used for data collection where I also address the ethical considerations I employed during the research.
Chapter Four discusses Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary system and inmate behaviour reformation. Chapter Five explores the prison’s disciplinary techniques and inmate skill upgrades. And Chapter Six evaluates inmates’ and prison officers’ perceptions of the prison’s disciplinary system and disciplinary techniques.
Chapter Three

RESEARCH SETTING & METHODOLOGY

Our mission is to maintain a clear and responsible operating procedure for the [Fiji] Women’s Correction Centre. We are to ensure the efficient and effective operations and administrations which will be beneficial to its excellent management that is vital in achieving high quality service delivery and maintaining a safe and secure Institution.20

Fiji Women’s Prison

In this chapter I describe Fiji Women’s Prison, the demographic representation of inmate participants, and the methodological approach and ethical considerations used during the research. Fiji Women’s Prison— which since 2006 is also referred to as Women’s Correction Centre sits in a half acre area, approximately two miles west of Suva City, the capital of Fiji. The location of Fiji Women’s Prison marks the end of the busy industrial area of Walu Bay on the Queens Highway—which is the center of Suva’s seaport, numerous factories, commercial properties, office spaces, shops, a service station and Suva Correction Centre for the male convicts.

From the Suva bus station, the journey costs seventy cents on the bus while a taxi fare ranges from FJ$5.50 to FJ$6.50 depending from where it has been hired. The bus stops at the bus bay a couple of yards after the main gate of Suva Correction Centre, from where a hundred meter walk across

the road leads to an approximately half a mile paved driveway up the steep hill towards the women’s prison. There is no visible signboard at the junction of the driveway to indicate the location of the women’s prison, except for a big signpost displaying ‘Suva Remand Centre’—which is a newly erected building located next to the women’s prison on the other side of the hill. One must ask for a quick direction from either the gate keeper of the Suva Correction Centre or any male convicts working nearby or passing along the road.

The walk up the driveway overlooks the government quarters for the senior prison officers, a church and a community hall surrounded by tall mango trees and African Tulip trees. These buildings are situated in an approximately one acre of land at the foot of the hill, enclosed within the right angle of the main road and the prison driveway. From the top of the hill the road turns two hundred meters downhill into the car park—which interconnects both the women’s prison and the Suva Remand Centre for men. A few yards before the entrance of the women’s prison lay a shed used as a waiting room for the visitors who come to meet the convicts. It has built-in benches on all three sides where visitors wait before being summoned by the gate guard to meet the prisoners on the visiting days.

The prison’s strict rules require visiting families to wait in the shed outside the prison compound before being summoned inside the prison by the gate guard. Inside the shed a signboard indicates a list of contraband items that visitors are prohibited from taking inside the prison during the visiting days. Inside the shed is a signboard on which ‘contraband’ is written in large, red capital
letters. Underneath is given a list of contraband items such as mobile phones, sim cards, phone chargers, money, knife, hacksaw blade, cigarettes, drugs, suki (tobacco leaves), matches, lighters, pornographic magazines and movies, and extra clothes (for inmates). The bottom of the notice board lists different visiting days and time allocated to the convicts and non-convicts/remand prisoners. The visitation day for the convicts is Saturday from 10am to 4pm and for the non-convicts is from Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm.

The main prison is surrounded by an eight feet high iron chain linked fence, above which runs the razor ribbon prison fence. Outside this barricade runs another enclosure of a neat row of brown picket fence of matching height, which blocks the prisoners’ view of the adjacent car park and the men’s remand center. The eight by ten feet wide main gate opens to a short pebbled pathway leading to the main prison office situated in the front building. This pathway is lined with white washed stones, potted palm trees and miniature bougainvillea. The front yard of the prison displays a wide variety of multi-coloured flowers such as zebras, impatiens, and roses. The white washed stones line the flower beds alongside the fence and the frontage of the main building verandah— in which neatly trimmed golden hedges are grown and courtyard maintained by the inmates on compound labour.

The structure of the main office building resembles a small primary school building found in the interiors of Fiji Islands where rooms are located next to one another in a single row with an equivalent length of verandah. The main building contains a chapel, main office, a workshop,
kitchen, a nursery room for convicted mothers and their dependent children, and counseling and a medical room. The ‘humility dorm’\textsuperscript{21}, a remand centre for the non-convicted prisoners is located below the end of the main building and is only accessed by a narrow footpath and a dozen flights of steps from the front of the kitchen verandah. Four concrete blocks have been placed in the dirt on which one has to carefully place the footings before reaching the grilled door of the remand center. This room contains four double bunks and four single beds with an enclosed washroom. At times it accommodates a maximum of eight remand prisoners at once.

Apart from the main office building, there are three other separate buildings; the ‘confidence dormitory’\textsuperscript{22}, garment workshop and the prison coffee shop within the prison’s vicinity. The confidence dormitory contains twenty nine beds with two toilets, two bathrooms and three hand basins for the convicted prisoners who have been classified under the high risk prisoners. Four double beds are closely aligned on the length of the two sides of the concrete walls while the single beds are fashioned in three neat rows with thirty centimetre gaps in between them and half a meter gap in between each row.

Each bed is covered with light coloured bedspreads with old, tattered blankets of varied colours, a pillow and a mosquito net. At the opposite side of this room is an emergency exit which opens

\textsuperscript{21} ‘Humility Dorm’- by being locked in this dorm one is believed to lose her respect to the society. Thus locking remand prisoners’ in the humility dorm intends to allow them time to reflect on their crimes and humble themselves to the laws of the country.

\textsuperscript{22} Confidence dormitory is reserved for prisoners who lack discipline and break the prison’s rules.
onto the verandah and the yard outside. At all times all three doors of the dormitory are heavily locked and safeguarded by the prison officer in charge of the dormitory and the back. Apart from being the prison’s only dormitory this further highlights the fact that Fiji Women’s Prison has a maximum holding capacity of twenty nine convicted prisoners only (Fiji Correction Services, 2013).

The garment workshop is separated from the main building and the confidence room by a fence. At present this is the only commercial (entrepreneurial) activity in Fiji Women’s Prison through which inmate labour is regulated to mobilize business and generate income for the Prisons and Correctional Service Department. This workshop has seven commercial sewing machines and a workbench with an electric pattern cutter fitted on it. A special prison officer with background tailoring knowledge is in charge of monitoring prisoners working in the garment factory and their daily garment production of items such as prison uniforms (staff and inmate), quilts, comforters, peg bags, and pot holders. Inmates working in the garment factory are also engaged in making crocheted doilies, knitting babies’ garments, cardigans, pompoms, and embroidering pillow cases during their labour hours throughout the week.

Their consignments are each week collected by staff from the male prison who supplies the items to the commercial outlets in the city. Interested private customers also pay regular visits to choose from the items on display. These customers are either directed through word of mouth from the
families and friends of the prison staff or from regular customers. Each inmate working in the garment workshop is paid a wage of $FD2.00 per day—which they will receive on their release.

The newly constructed coffee shop is located on the top of the hill from where a picturesque view of the Suva harbour and the adjacent bay opening into the Pacific Ocean can be seen on the right hand side. The other two sides display the landscape of dense forests and mountain ranges in the horizon. The main entrance of the coffee shop is only accessible from the main driveway, which lies a few meters before the driveway turns downhill into the main car park. Prior to the prison’s relocation into the new prison buildings in 2007, this coffee shop was the main women’s prison since its shift from Levuka in 1976. Contrary to its name, the prison coffee shop is not open to the public but instead is only used to hold functions, workshops, and courses conducted by the prison’s department.

Due to lack of space for structural expansion most of the rooms in the main prison building are used for multiple purposes. The chapel contains a video and a DVD player which is placed on a stool near the front door, an old two door cupboard in which the inmates store their bibles and hymn books, a pulpit covered with a white piece of cloth in which a red cross has been sewn into by the inmates and two arm chairs on its each side. The cushions on these chairs also contain red crosses in it.
Apart from using the un-grilled chapel for the Saturday and Sunday church services it is further utilized as a recreational room. This is where selected prisoners who have achieved their third and fourth rehabilitative stages watch television programmes and movies during their free time during the week. These prisoners are in the special stage which bestowed them the privilege of watching movies and television programs during their recreational periods and until nine o’clock at night after their final lockups at five o’clock in the evening.

Because of the persistent problem of overcrowding in Fiji Women’s Prison, which exceeds the prison’s maximum holding capacity of only twenty-nine convicts in the confidence dormitory, the chapel along with the prison’s nursery has been turned into makeshift dormitories for the occupancy of selected convicted prisoners. To eliminate the prison’s need of fitting these rooms with extra beds, the prisoners are required to spread their mattresses on the traditional Fijian mats and tie the two ends of their mosquito nets to the window panes and the other ends with the adjacent mosquito nets.

Each morning the inmates occupying the chapel fold and pile their beddings on both chairs in the corner. They leave their mattresses strewn on the floor where they prefer lying and watching movies during their recreational periods. The inmates occupying the nursery on the other hand have to make room for the occupying children and pregnant inmates during the day, therefore they tie their mattress with twine and stack them outside in the verandah with their bedding.
Similar to the chapel, the prison’s workshop is also used for multiple purposes. The two walls of the workshop are lined with four low tables and four-sitter benches on both sides—which have a maximum holding capacity of thirty-two inmates at a time. The rest of the floor is strewn with old, tattered mats on which inmates sit to do their assigned work. During the daytime, inmates who are not on ‘compound labour’ sit quietly in this room also making crocheted doilies, embroidery and door mats as part of their daily rehabilitative tasks. At least four times a week this room is used by visiting prayer groups from the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Catholic Church, Methodist Church, and Prison Mission Fellowship to conduct devotions, and literacy and numeracy classes with the inmates.

For breakfast, lunch and dinner the workshop is transformed into the dining hall where all inmates bring their plates from the kitchen and occupy the tables first while the rest of the inmates sit with their meals in three neat rows on the floor. Throughout the day, the gate keeper and a prison officer sit at the table outside the workshop to keep watch on the main gate and to monitor the movements and behaviour of the inmates inside and outside the workshop.

Likewise, the counseling room is also utilized by inmates during their recreational periods. Even though Fiji Women’s Prison requires a mandatory counseling sessions each week it however, only takes place upon inmates’ special requests at least once a month. The prison’s only female

23 Compound labour in Fiji Women’s Prison includes mowing, weeding, and raking of prison lawn and gardening flowers, vegetables and root crops during labour hours.
A counselor is mostly summoned from the men’s prison to attend the requests of the subject inmate but most often the inmates’ requests specifically ask for male counselors on the ground that they are more compassionate and empathetic towards their needs and wants in comparison to the female counselor. The male counselors on the other hand claim that female inmates are often looking for opportunities to make first hand contact with males and this is the most viable method of achieving it.

Majority of the time the counseling room is used by some of the inmates during the recreational periods. This is when the close inmate friends sit in a group of two or three quietly catching up with either the latest prison gossip or quietly venting their dissatisfactions towards many injustices of the prison and penal system. During this period they are occupied with the task of making plastic purses of differed sizes and colours. The main materials used in making these unique purses are zips, needles, threads, and plastic wrappers obtained from discarded biscuit and snack packets, gift wrappers, and bottle labels found within the vicinity of the prison. The price of each purse ranges from $FD10.00 to $FD15.00 depending on its size.

Female Inmates and Institution Routine

The process of prisoner classification plays an important role in Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary system. It not only maximizes the prison’s disciplinary level but also helps prison officers efficiently and effectively separate, safeguard and mobilize the distinctive groups of prisoners in
accordance with the institution routine. Apart from that, the prison’s classification system also dictates the distinctive treatment assigned to each class of prisoners.

During the classification process all prisoners are separated into two main groups; convicted and non-convicted classes. The convicted class prisoners are those who have been sentenced to imprisonment by the court. The non-convicted prisoners are those who are still awaiting trial and sentencing by the court. The latter class of prisoners is also referred to as remand prisoners. The major distinctive feature highlighting the segregated classes of prisoners is the dissimilarities in the colour of their prison uniforms.

The rationale behind the use of overt distinction and separation of each class of prisoners through their uniform colours is that it facilitates easier prisoner identification. The colour scheme technique also dictates the nature and the level of treatment allocated to each class of prisoners as well. For instance, the convicted prisoners’ uniforms are comprised of either pink dresses or pink tops and pants, and they are regulated under the institution routines. On the other hand, the non-convicted prisoners are distinguished by their khaki dresses and less freedom of movement outside the remand room except for their daily ten minutes of exercise in the back yard. The prison’s attempt at total segregation of these two classes of prisoners is further maintained through the breakfast, lunch and dinner operations whereby the non-convicted are served their meals and relocked ten minutes prior to summoning convicted prisoners for their meal parades.

24 The distinction between the remand prisoners’ and prison officers’ khaki uniforms are the uniform patterns. The remand prisoners wear knee length khaki dresses while the prison officers wear khaki skirts/pants and blouses.
Each week four convicted inmates are assigned to kitchen duty. The selection of these inmates is based on the rotation in accordance to the sequence of their beds and as well as their ethnicity (Indo-Fijian and iTaukei\textsuperscript{25}). Through this sequence each inmate’s rotation is predetermined by the officer-in-charge and they follow the order without question. Each morning the inmates on kitchen duty are awoken by the night guard. They make their beds, brush their teeth, take showers and leave for the kitchen to prepare meals for the convicted and un-convicted prisoners at 5.30 am. A day before the commencement of one’s rotation, inmates often decide beforehand on the duty each will take. For instance, each pair takes turn either cooking, or cleaning dishes and the kitchen.

All dirty plates and pots are washed under the tap outside the kitchen verandah where the appointed inmates have to squat on the floor to clean the dishes. The tiny kitchen has a four burner gas stove on which four large pots of food are prepared simultaneously. Apart from prison meals, inmates on kitchen duty are also required to prepare meals for the prison officers from the main headquarters and males prisons during meetings, workshops, and courses as well. The food for inmates is prepared according to the respective scales given to the inmates upon their admission into the prison.

These scales are determined by the inmates’ ethnic backgrounds whereby, all Indo-Fijian/Indian inmates’ meals fall under ‘scale B’ which consists of curries, rice, and/or rotis (Indian flat bread).

\textsuperscript{25} I refer to Fiji Islanders of Indian descent as Indo-Fijians and indigenous Fijians as iTaukei.
The iTaukei inmates are categorized under ‘scale C’ and their main meal consists of boiled or fried vegetables/meat with root crops like cassava, taro or yam. Inmates of other ethnic backgrounds are classified under ‘scale A’ thus, their food is prepared accordingly.

The international prisoners’ meals are provided by their respective embassies— which either comes directly from the restaurant or is prepared by the inmates themselves, provided their dry rations have been supplied by their embassies upon inmates’ requests and upon the officer-in-charge’s discretion. Prior to serving inmates with meals, it is mandatory for one of the inmates’ assigned on kitchen duty to present a food sample to one of the duty officers for tasting. Once the food has been cleared as ‘good enough to eat’ and its particulars and taste recorded in the ‘taste book’ and signed by the respective officer, only then are the inmates summoned to eat.

The prison laundry has five washtubs and a washing machine. The washing machine is only used for drying clothes on rainy days. The inmates wash their own clothes during their free time. During the weeks the appointed convicts are also required to hand wash and dry the male prison officers’ rugby jerseys and shorts. For a fortnightly ration, inmates are each supplied with a piece of washing soap and a bathing soap. Apart from that less than a dozen plastic pegs are also allocated to each inmate for drying their clothes on the line. Stealing of others’ soaps, clothes pegs or undergarments from the clothes lines is not an uncommon practice in the Fiji Women’s Prison.
Prison Staff, Duty, and Responsibilities

The Fiji Women’s Prison has a workforce of eighteen prison officers who work on a night and day shift basis. During the day guards are on duty from 6.30 am to 5 pm each day. The daily duty is undertaken by five to seven duty officers, depending on the duty roster which rotates the eighteen officers per week. On weekdays an officer-in-charge, a chief officer, a gatekeeper, an officer in charge of the back yard, and at least two duty officers are on duty. Since, Saturdays and Sundays are the busiest of the days due to inmates’ visitors’ day, and church services an extra dorm officer is placed in charge of the confidence dorm along with a ‘roving officer’, who make up part of the prison’s manual surveillance team. The institution’s night operation however, is looked after by two night guards only.

The prison officers’ uniforms either are a knee length khaki skirt and blouse or khaki shirt and long pants as uniforms. Their blouses and shirts have brass buttons, cloth belts and badges of their respective ranks. It is mandatory for all staff to wear black shoes and carry a whistle attached to a lanyard. At 6.00 am in the morning, the chief officer holds a parade with the incoming officers during which they undertake marches and exercises for thirty minutes before being briefed on their day’s duties. The safety and security of prisoners and prison officers is maintained through prison’s stringent disciplinary system in which mandatory surveillance and monitoring of prisoners’ movements is considered the highest priority. For that reason the institution’s security features such as grills, locks, door hinges, building structures and other institutional physicals are checked on a daily basis and recorded in the Institution/Building Search Register.
On a daily basis at least three to four extra duty officers are prescribed with extra duties in the women’s prison. Their main duties institutional physicals are checked on a daily basis and recorded in the Institution/Building Search Register.

The gatekeeper performs a very significant role in the prison. She helps the chief officer maintain a close scrutiny and supervision of prisoners especially when each party or gang (assigned convicted inmates) is taken out of the prison for outside labour. They monitor the number of prisoners in each gang and the equipment (knives, spades, forks and hoes) they are carrying with them. They also ensure that each inmate is properly clothed and equipped for their assigned labour. Since, the prison’s disciplinary rules forbid unauthorized persons from entering the prison premises for that reason the gate keeper thoroughly examines all the articles coming into the prison and going out of it. These measures are taken to eliminate the entry of contraband items in the prison premises and the leak of confidential documents out of it.

include the implementation, coordination and control of the prisoners’ overall internal and external activities in order to maintain the prisoners’ treatment and security at all times. For instance, if one of the prison officers has taken over the clerical work for the day, the other officer will look after the prison taskforce responsible for the general prison labour such as weeding, raking, and vegetable and flower gardening and farming inside the prison premises as well as outside.
Due to staff shortage, multi-tasking by prison officers is not an uncommon practice in Fiji Women’s Prison. For instance, the prison officer responsible for clerical duties often has to leave her work to accompany the other officer to monitor the taskforce working on labour outside the prison. During outside labour, both prison officers take responsibility for the safety and security of the inmates and keep track of their movements, the quality and the quantity of their work and prisoner number under their care, before and after arrival to the prison. These officers also take over all the tools and equipment required for the work while ensuring that the prisoners do not interact with outsiders or amongst themselves during the work.

For the maximized regulation of prison’s monitoring and surveillance system, the prison officers continuously check the allocated muster of prisoners in their care before and during the labour breaks prior to marching them in a single file to the their assigned destinations. It is only during the rehabilitation programmes and normal labour within the institution that all officers are able get together and monitor the inmates in their care simultaneously.

During nights, the officers refer to women’s prison as ‘under Patrol’ where two night guards constantly patrol the prison premises throughout the night. After their arrival for duty, they accompany the day duty officer for the final lock up check. During the process, all prisoners accommodated the chapel, nursery, remand dorm and the confidence dorm for the night are checked to ensure that all prisoners are in custody and the lockup muster is correct. Apart from
that they also confirm and record the respective accommodation’s security features like the bar grills, padlocks and the building structure.

During the night patrols, the night guards stay alert and do not engage in any unnecessary conversations with the prisoners or amongst themselves. Throughout the night, they take turns checking all accommodation and take head counts every thirty minutes and record it in the Dorm Register and Gate Diaries. After the 6.00 am alarm is sounded by the day duty gate keeper, the night guards retire from duty after ensuring that all prisoners have woken up, have had their shower, made their bedding and are prepared for their final unlock check at 7.00 am.

**Prisoner Demography**

Since the prison’s ‘muster’\(^\text{26}\) fluctuates every other day as a result of new prisoner admissions and releases I am using the 8\(^{th}\) November 2013 muster to describe the demographic representation of the inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison. There is a total of 53 prisoners out of which 48 are convicted prisoners, 5 are remand prisoners and a 3\(^{1}/2\) year old child of a convicted prisoner. 50 prisoners are locals (6 Indo-Fijians; 43 iTaukei; 1 Rotuman) and 3 international criminals (1 Mexican; 1 Indian; 1 Ghanaian).

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\(^{26}\) Muster—refers to total number of inmates in the prison.
The youngest prisoner is 19 years old and the oldest is 63 years old. These prisoners have been convicted for a wide range of crimes such as murder/infanticide, being in possession of illicit drugs like cocaine, fraud, money laundering, obtaining money by false pretense, causing grievous bodily harm, aggravated robberies and thefts. The inmates’ sentence period ranges in accordance to their crimes which is from the minimum of 3 months to the maximum of 20 years of imprisonment. The prison sentence for long term prisoners who are commonly referred as ‘lifers’ by prison officers ranges from 12 years to 20 years depending on the severity of their crimes and their parole eligibility.

Under the new prisons act each prisoner has been given the right to exercise his or her religious freedom during their incarceration period and for that reason it authorizes each prison to

“take into account the spiritual needs of prisoners… provide religious books and texts to prisoners… conduct religious ceremonies and observances” (Fiji Prisons & Corrections Act 2006, part 4(21) 2, 4.a-c).

At the time of my research, Fiji Women’s Prison was dominated by Christian inmates and prison officers. Even though most of the Indo-Fijian inmates were previously Hindu, they converted to Christianity in the prison, joining one of the dominant Christian denominations (Methodist; Assemblies of God; Seventh Day Adventists) active in the prison.
Despite the fact that under the new prisons act “prisoners may not be forced to participate in religious services and observances, or in those of a religion that is not of their choice” (Fiji Prisons & Corrections Act 2006, part 4(21)5) the forced and/or coerced conversion of non-Christian inmates to Christianity continues to takes place in Fiji Women’s Prison. The prison’s rationale towards these conversions is on the basis that Hindu, Sikh and Muslim religious organizations refuse to visit inmates in the prison and conduct religious rites with or for them.

Their refusal is based on the fact that Indian religious perception of female inmates is based on the religious and conservative ideology of women as gentle, pure, pious, caring, loving and nurturing mothers, wives, daughters and sisters. Therefore, women who have been convicted are often perceived as ‘low lives’ who have digressed from their societal and religious norms. As a consequence these inmates are most often looked down upon, frowned upon and completely ostracised by their respective religious leaders and societies in Fiji.

The other reason for their conversion to Christianity is the prison administration’s and Christian inmates’ negative outlook on the engagement of other religions within the vicinity of Fiji Women’s Prison. Since non-Christian religions are perceived as heathenism and idol worshipping by the Christian inmates and prison wardens, the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim inmates continue to be socially marginalized and ostracized by Christian inmates and prison officers until they agree to convert to Christianity. Their religious perceptions and attitudes toward the non-Christian inmates are highly
influenced by the dominant visiting Christian groups in the prison, whose main motives are to save new souls and gather more sheep into the kingdom of God.

Having now described the research setting and provided some background information on Fiji Women’s Prison and inmates, I shall discuss the methodology used to collect data.

**Methodology: Reflexive Ethnography & Ethics**

Ethnography is the most basic form of social research—and resembles the way in which people ordinarily make sense of their world … It can include observation, participation, interviewing and almost any other form of interaction between ourselves, the researchers and the social world (Liebling 2001: 475).

Reflexivity induces increasing awareness of the researcher’s influence on those under observation; it allows one to reflect on the politics behind the production of ethnographic material (Anna 2012: 2).

The first few months of my research were mostly spent at the Fiji Corrections Service headquarters, Suva, where I underwent briefings on prison orders, rules and regulations. During that period, I was given the opportunity to informally meet many prison officers working in the men’s prisons around Fiji from whom I was able to gain invaluable information about the general workings of the prisons under their care, and their personal attitudes and perspectives towards the prisoners in relation to punishment, correction and reformation.
In addition, I continuously negotiated with the Deputy Commissioner of the Fiji Corrections Service, who is also the Director Rehabilitation, regarding my research topic. In his approval letter to me, the Commissioner clearly stated that “we would also wish to see that your findings have some bearing on our work, in particular on the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes currently in place”.

In the first week of October 2013, the Staff Officer Rehabilitation from the Fiji Correction Service headquarters escorted me to the women’s prison where he formally introduced me as a researcher and an attaché staff member to the staff and inmates of Fiji Women’s Prison. I was given an identification card as proof of my informal recruitment which at the same time also affirmed the prison’s trust in me. I was given unlimited access to all prison documents, prisoners’ files, computer data, and prisoners during my research. As a token of thanks, I provided the prison officers and the inmates with counseling services on the basis of my undergraduate degree in psychology.

After the first day’s official tour of the prison with the officer-in-charge followed by a brief get-together in the afternoon with other prison officers, I was officially released to conduct my research and mingle with the inmates on my own accord. From October 2013 until the end of August 2014, I visited the women’s prison at least four to five days per week. My intention was to observe the
inmates in their natural settings and gain a holistic understanding of the prison’s socio-cultural environment before my initial research so I spent my first two months on focusing on my research settings and mingling with the inmates and prison officers with the intention of gaining their trust. I achieved this by holding simple, lighthearted conversations with the inmates during their daily activities such as cooking, sewing, watching movies and other labour works in the compound. My trust with the inmates and the prison officers developed when they realized that I was of Indian descent married an iTaukei (indigenous Fijian). Therefore, both ethnic groups began to trust me alike and regularly approached me for professional counseling which always ended in customary Christian prayers for spiritual guidance and blessings.

I based my research on the tenet of ‘minimizing participant harm’ and ‘maximizing benefits’ during the research (Research Office 2009). This was also based on the understanding that “prison inmates are characterized by their official lack of power, personal autonomy and freedom. Anthropological research with such a population, if done ethically, encourages a significant degree of empowerment” (Waldram 1998: 238). Therefore, throughout my research I always ensured that after the professional counselling and/or spiritual guidance, the inmates go out of the counseling room in a better state of mind than they came in.

The proof of my help on their psychological and spiritual wellbeing became evident in a few days’ time when the inmates began to approach me to thank me for my help and for understanding their problems. This trust later became a vital instrument in my reflexive ethnographic research through
which I was also able to collect a wide range of data in relation to punishment and disciplinary system in the women’s prison.

Throughout the research I was conscious and mindful of the fact that prisoners are one of the most vulnerable groups in the general population. Prisoners are very vulnerable because they are imprisoned. Therefore the ethics of conducting research in prisons are extra important (cf. Hornblum 1997; Hornblum 1998). For that reason I informed all inmates as well as the prison officers about the state and the purpose of the voluntary nature of this research. I also explained to them in English, Hindi and iTaukei (Fijian) about their rights to participation and withdrawal along with the assurance of their anonymity, privacy and confidentiality if they volunteered to partake in any of the informal conversations I intended to have during the research. Most of the informal conversations which informed my ethnography took place in the chapel, workshop, kitchen and the garment workshop during the inmates’ labour and recreational periods– where inmates either relaxed or worked in groups of four to six.

Since most of the interviews were conducted in groups, I had to use my voice recorder on a regular basis. Before the recording of any interviews, I provided the inmates with participant consent forms (cf. Appendix A) to give their consent to have their interviews recorded. I used pseudonyms that the inmates themselves chose to be identified with. At the beginning of each recording I again ensured that all inmates and prison officers alike had given both their verbal and their written consent. Upon the completion of each recording I debriefed, thanked and reassured them again of their confidentiality and anonymity. I also took care to accurately record all the responses so that I did not have to repeat questions to the same participants again.
At the end of each recording I took my data home to code, transcribe and analyze on the same day of the interview. At other times I also took field notes—which I expanded and used simultaneously with the recorded interviews to transcribe the data as I developed on my research thesis. The writing up of each thesis chapter was only done after all transcribed data were arranged in order. As part of my verbal agreement with the Deputy Commissioner of Fiji Corrections Service, I continued to give the Deputy Commissioner monthly feedback on my findings throughout my research. However, the disclosure of my findings to the inmates has been left to the discretion of the Deputy Commissioner of Fiji Corrections Service.

Chapter Two outlined a theoretical model for an ideal prison, serving as a starting point for the discussion that now follows. This chapter described the research setting of Fiji Women’s Prison, the demographic representation of inmate participants, and the methodological approach and ethical considerations used during the research. The next chapter will examine the disciplinary system of Fiji Women’s Prison, focusing primarily on specific techniques used to reform prisoners’ behaviour.
Chapter Four

DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM AND BEHAVIOUR REFORMATION

But a punishment like forced labour or even imprisonment – mere loss of liberty – has never functioned without a certain additional element of punishment that certainly concerns the body itself: rationing of food, sexual deprivation, corporal punishment, solitary confinement … There remains, therefore, a trace of ‘torture’ in the modern mechanisms of criminal justice – a trace that has not been entirely overcome, but which is enveloped, increasingly, by the non-corporal nature of the penal system (Foucault 1995: 15-16)

In this chapter, I describe various disciplinary processes used by Fiji Women’s Prison and their implications in relation to inmate behaviour reformation. The prison’s disciplinary regime begins from the moment prisoners are admitted into the prison and continues until their discharge: playing a significant role in determining the duration of prisoners’ imprisonment and the nature of discipline and punishment required to achieve reformed prisoners, ready to be released into society as “productive and responsible citizen[s]” (Fiji Corrections Service 2012:11).

Prisoner Admission and Classification Process

Throughout my research in Fiji Women’s Prison, I witnessed dozens of new prisoners being admitted into the prison and undergoing several disciplinary processes, from the time of their arrival with the police officers— who carry with them warrants or orders for the prisoners’
detention with them. I observed that prior to the official handing over of the prisoners into the custody of the prison officers, the prisoners’ warrants or orders are verified by the gatekeeper by checking the documents against the identification of the actual prisoners brought for detention.

The chief officer informed me that the duty of admitting new prisoners into the prison belongs to the reception and discharge officer but due to staff shortage in Fiji Women’s Prison, the prison’s gatekeeper has to undertake this role.

Once the gatekeeper makes the confirmation, the police officers sign the Prisoner Register and leave the prisoners in her custody. The stores officer then takes the prisoners’ surrendered personal belongings including money, valuables, and medication, for safekeeping. She labels each item with the prisoner’s name and documents it in the Prisoner Property Register in the presence of the prisoner. From this moment on, the prisoner is totally institutionalized within the prison’s disciplinary system.

The classification of new prisoners is done immediately after their formal admittance into the prison. According to the Commissioner’s Local Orders 27:

the Central Allocation and Classification Board must, when determining a classification of a prisoner, consider...the age and sex of the prisoner; the offence for which the prisoner is charged and circumstances of offence which prisoner is convicted; any previous convictions against the prisoner; the prisoner’s attitude and demeanour; eg. level of anger; any known associates of the prisoner in the institution; the prisoner’s skills and training; the prisoner’s needs; which may include medical, psychiatric, psychological consultation,

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27 Fiji Prisons Service. Classification of Prisoners. *Commissioner’s Local Orders*, no. 007, 3.6 (a-j).
referral and or counseling re: family conflict or family support; the prisoner’s preference regarding work location; and the current security assessment; the prisoner’s Province of origin.

In Fiji Women’s Prison, the prison officer on clerical duty does the classification of new prisoners. She opens new prisoner files and writes each prisoner’s personal details such as health and welfare needs, personal problems, prisoner’s identity, name of the prisoner’s next of kin, and details of surrendered personal property. This classification process is commonly referred as ‘prisoner interview’ by the prison officers.

During the prisoner interview, the new prisoners have to describe in detail the crime for which they have been convicted, the circumstances surrounding it and the court’s verdict. The prisoners’ own version, personal interpretation and justification of the committed crime is noted in the prisoner files along with the official copies of the particulars and details regarding the prisoners’ crimes, court proceedings and verdicts.

When I enquired into the objective of conducting prisoner interviews the prison officers informed me that the record of prisoners’ interviews in their personal files helps the Central Allocation and Classification Board28 (C.A.C.B) to review their progress on a three-month basis. During the

28 The Central Allocation and Classification Board consists of Assistant Commissioner Operations as the Chairman; Supervisor (Divisional); Director Education and Training/Rehabilitation; Officer-in-charge; Welfare Officer; Parish Chaplin; Medical Orderly; and Staff Officer Operations as the Secretary. Fiji Prisons Service. Classification of Prisoners. Commissioner’s Local Orders, no. 007, 3.5.
review, the C.A.C.B monitors and compares the progress in the prisoner’s behaviour and attitudinal change, and the level of remorse or anger in her since the day of her admission into the prison.

After thorough scrutiny of all prisoners’ files and close interviews of some of the prisoners I noted that through verbal description of their crimes, prisoners are able to mentally revisit their crime scene and reflect, interpret, and analyze the motivation behind their criminal acts and the circumstances surrounding it. Through personal reflection and justification of their criminal acts, the prisoners are also able to evaluate and compare their received penal penalties with their personal estimation of the prison sentence they should have received. The latter realization gives prisoners renewed hopes of early acquittal. It also enables them to fight against the injustice of the judicial system.

Under the prison’s disciplinary system, the prisoner classification process further plays a significant role in categorizing and determining the level of discipline each prisoner requires to achieve the targeted goal of reformed prisoners by the end of their sentences. To achieve that the new prisoners’ date of admission, months and/or years of sentence passed by the court, and the non-parole period ordered by the judge are noted down in their personal files. The prison officer calculates and writes each prisoner’s parole eligibility date alongside his or her release date. A prisoner’s release date is determined by subtracting ten days per month. For example, the subtraction of 10 days /month for 6 months sentence will result in 4 month
imprisonment and two months remission where the inmate could apply for EMP (Extra Mural Punishment) to serve the remaining months from outside the prison as a community worker or could apply for early release.

The prisoner classification process replaces each inmate’s personal names with allotted ‘case numbers’ — which are then written on the front cover of the prisoners’ personal files and on the front pocket of their prison uniforms. By these numerical numbers, all prisoners are supposed to be identified by the prison officers and other inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison. The prison’s primary objective for replacing prisoners’ personal names with individual case numbers is to diffuse and neutralize prisoners’ differed personal, racial, cultural and national identities.

This principle in turn serves double purposes under the prison’s disciplinary system. Firstly, it generates equity and uniformity amongst inmates which allows easier control and efficient management of prisoners by the prison officers. Secondly, it functions by attaining speedy inmate head counts during parades to determine prison muster throughout the day. For this, the inmates parade in neat rows according to the sequence of their case numbers and either respond to the callings of their respective case numbers or call their numbers in sequence while the prison officer checks them against the prison roll.

The formal disciplinary protocol of Fiji Women’s Prison requires new prisoners to be briefed on the prison’s rules and regulations and expected consequences for disobeying the institution’s laws and orders. This information, according to the officer-in-charge, allows new prisoners to
understand their status in the prison and the purpose of having personal files. In these files prison officers will diligently record the progress and behaviour of each inmate for review every three months.

The new prisoners are informed about the prison’s restriction of the use of contraband items and the associated penalties. Contraband items usually have a high chance of being smuggled into the prison during family visitation days. Thus, visiting families and friends also are cautioned on the crime of bringing the prohibited items into the institution and the penalty involved.

The new prisoners are briefed on the purpose of safe health practices especially, on sharing of toothbrushes, razors and tattooing needles. In the past years, a few cases of homosexual relations between inmates emerged in Fiji Women’s Prison. Inmates mostly caught the offenders in the dormitory bathrooms at nights. Since the prison is largely dominated by Christian inmates and prison officers, these incidents became highly controversial.

According to Zemans & Cavan’s (1958: 50-57) report, conjugal visiting— which allows privacy for intimacy, if incorporated as a means of rehabilitation, will not only secure prisoners’ marital relationship but will also minimize sexual tensions and homosexuality in prisons. However, such provisions are still absent in Fiji Women’s Prison. Instead, on the day of admission, the new
prisoners are cautioned about the prison’s prohibition of engaging in sexual relations with other inmates and are briefed on the subsequent consequences of breaking the prison’s rules.

**Prison Rules and Regulations**

On the day of admission into the prison, the new prisoners obtain a fair understanding of the requisite code of conduct expected under the prison’s disciplinary system. Misbehaviour such as talking back to prison officers, negligence of the prison officers’ orders, gossiping about the prison officers and other inmates, talking loudly or making noise in the dormitories or during mealtimes, being in a place where one is not required to be, and disrupting the good order and management of the prison through one’s prejudicial behaviour are considered as acts of disobedience and rebellion against the prison’s rules and orders. Under the prison’s disciplinary system, transgression of any of the prison rules and orders thus calls for punishment.

The rationality behind the use of disciplinary punishment is to reform the deviant inmates’ attitudes and behaviour. The chief officer explained to me that during the subsequent three instances of disobedience, the prison officers caution the accused prisoner. This is known as ‘three warnings’ stage. On the fourth occasion the accused inmate gets a ‘red pen’—where her behaviour is noted down in her personal file in red ink and is punished by subjecting her to hard labour with the compound gangs.

If the same prisoner is caught misbehaving a fifth time, the reporting officer reports the matter in writing to the officer-in-charge and records the offence in the prisoners’ Punishment Register and
in the prisoner’s personal file. The officer-in-charge then proceeds to investigate the offence by obtaining the statements from the reporting officer and witnesses. At this stage, the officer-in-charge personally views the physical evidence of the offence, if there is any before rounding off the investigation off with the accused prisoner’s statement. After reviewing the offence, the officer-in-charge decides upon an appropriate punishment which will either be the loss of the accused prisoner’s privileges\textsuperscript{29} or the forfeiture of her remission.

Despite the five stage disciplinary protocol in Fiji Women’s Prison, I realized that the actual disciplinary procedure is often contrived according to the officer-in-charge’s state of mind or mood at the time of the report. For instance, if the officer-in-charge is angry, perturbed due to prison administration problems, or aggravated by the prisoners’ and/or prison officers’ noncompliance with her orders, she is most likely to skip the first four disciplinary stages and carry out the final stage of charging the inmate for disobedience instead.

An example of the breach and consequence of the prison’s disciplinary system is Maria (pseudonym), who during my research was serving a twelve-month sentence for theft since early 2013. On the day of her admission the commissioner approved her a four month remission. Thus she only had to serve eight months of imprisonment instead of twelve months. After two months in prison Maria received a warning from the night guard for making noise in the dorm after the final lockup. She was warned and told to become an exemplary inmate since this was her second time in the prison.

\textsuperscript{29} An inmate’s privilege depends on the rehabilitative stage she is in.
Within a month’s time, Maria was caught by the night guards breaching the prison’s rule during the afternoon bathing operation. She was washing her dirty clothes in the bathroom despite knowing it was prohibited. According to Maria’s charge sheet, the night guards give her numerous reminders to leave the bathroom and go to bed but she continued to wash and showed no respect to the officers.

Due to Maria’s disrespect toward the night guards and breach of the prison’s rules she was neither given a second warning, nor did the prison officers hear her pleas and explanations. Instead she was charged with disobedience and found guilty of the above crime. The aim of punishment in Fiji Women’s Prison has shifted from pain infliction on prisoners’ bodies toward reforming their behaviour through disciplinary systems\(^\text{30}\) (cf. Foucault 1977). The tribunal punished Maria by depriving her of three days of remission. Consequently, Maria was denied discharge from the prison on her actual release date and instead had to spend extra three days serving her punishment. Maria’s case is an example of how Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary system obstructs the effective delivery of prison’s offender management and reformative approach.

**Strip-Search and Hair Cutting Ritual**

Followed by the admission formalities the new prisoners are taken into the main office for a strip-search. The gatekeeper conducts the strip-search in the presence of two other female prison officers in the main office. Strip-search of prisoners is normally conducted when prisoners are admitted into the prison and before they are taken outside the prison premises to the court or hospital and after their return. It is also done in cases of any suspicions where prisoners are suspected of concealing contraband items on themselves.

During the admission of a nineteen year old remand prisoner, the chief officer invited me in the room to witness the strip-search. When I entered the room, the prisoner was removing her blue top and brassiere for the gatekeeper to search her top and upper body, hair and ear for any hidden contraband items. After putting on her top again, she was ordered to stand with her legs apart over the search mirror and face towards the wall, away from the officers.

The search mirror is a circular convex mirror of a thirty centimeter diameter with a long black handle attached to its side. The gatekeeper stood behind the girl and asked her to slide her denim shorts and panties down to her knees, after which the gatekeeper tilted the mirror, in order to an approximately 25° angle off the floor and asked her to squat three times over the mirror to determine any article concealed in her lower body cavities. Within a week, the particular remand prisoner went through strip-search twice before leaving for her trial and after her return and handover to the gatekeeper by the police officers.
When I enquired of the chief officer about the necessity of such a rigid search, she informed me that it was because of male inmates, who are often caught concealing items such as drugs, cigarettes and mobile phones in their anuses. As a consequence, female convicts are ordered by the prison headquarters to undergo strip-search as well. While no contraband items have yet been found on the bodies of the female convicts, the mandatory strip-search nevertheless took a new disciplinary role in Fiji Women’s Prison by imparting the fear of indignity and humiliation amongst inmates.

The majority of inmates agreed that the process of strip-search is the worst form of punishment they have received in the prison. This new form of punishment is perceived as a psychological weapon used by the prison officers to strip inmates off their dignities and self-respect—which otherwise they believe remained intact despite their criminal acts, conviction and confinement in the prison.

Though the cropping of new prisoners’ hair is not mandatory in Fiji Women’s Prison it is nevertheless performed on selected inmates upon the officer-in-charge’s discretion and command. From my personal observation and enquiry, I found out that the hair cutting ‘ritual’ in Fiji Women’s Prison is performed on iTaukei convicts only. This ritual is based on the iTaukei traditional punishment that subjects deviant females to public shaming by cropping their hair to the roots. Due to the dominance of iTaukei administration staff, prison officers and inmates this particular traditional punishment system has been sustained since the establishment of Fiji Women’s Prison. The iTaukei prison officers therefore continue to consider the hair cutting ritual as an integral part of the prison’s punishment system.
According to the prison officers, it is an important tool for imparting the message of disapproval and intolerance of the criminal behaviour for which inmates have been penalized. The punishing of iTaukei prisoners through the ritualized hair cutting process is believed to have an appropriate socio-cultural impact, integral to modifying deviant behaviour. Since the implication of the hair cutting ritual is strictly limited to a specific racial group; prisoners of other ethnic groups have never been subjected to it.

Prisoners’ Personal Kits

Before new prisoners are locked up in their respective dormitories, the stores officer issues them with a kit in accordance with their respective classification. The categorization of prisoners under respective scales plays an integral role in the prison’s disciplinary system. This determines an inmate’s respective food scale\(^{31}\) and defines the items she would receive in her personal kit. The allocation of individual kits is determined by the prisoner’s accorded class; a remand/un-convicted prisoner- (who is either a criminal prisoner on remand, awaiting trial, debtors or a civil prisoner\(^{32}\)), a convicted prisoner, or a recidivist.

The convicted prisoner’s kit contains a tooth brush, a piece each of bath soap and washing soap, two pink dresses or two pink top and pants or one of each, and two sets of night wears, two blankets, a mattress cover, a pillow with two pillow cases, two bed sheets, a mosquito net, two

\(^{31}\) Please refer Chapter 3 for detailed description of food scale.

\(^{32}\) Fiji Prisons Service. Classification of Prisoners. *Commissioner’s Local Orders*, no. 007, 3 (3.2).
towels and a pair of flip flops. The remand prisoner’s kit is comprised of only essential items like two khaki dresses, toiletries, one blanket, a mattress cover, a pillow and a pillow case, one bed sheet, a mosquito net, and a towel.

The recidivists’ (reoffenders) kits, on the other hand, contain similar items as those of the convicted prisoners except for their uniforms. This is marked by black strips on both sleeves and on both lengths of the pants for identification purposes. The prison does not provide panties, brassieres, tights and half-slips, therefore prisoners have to make their own arrangements with visiting family members and friends for a maximum of five panties and four brassieres, and other necessities.

I realized during my research that the allocation of personal kits to each prisoner and its inventory by the stores officer plays a significant role in the prison’s disciplinary and rehabilitative system. Each item is allotted with its own duration period, (for e.g. bathing and washing soaps for two weeks, a toothbrush for one year, and bedding and uniforms for up to two years). In this way the inmates learn the importance of being responsible and answerable for the safe keeping, usage and management of their personal kits throughout their duration periods.

This strict disciplinary process further functions by breaking and restructuring the inmates’ previous mentality of disregards and disrespect of others’ property. The tiresome process of safekeeping one’s kit from inmate intruders and constant search for one’s lost or stolen property—which is later found in another inmate’s custody has become a daily struggle in Fiji Women’s
Prison. The anxiety experienced after losing one’s personal items, the anguish of being penalized by the prison officers’ for carelessness, the embarrassment of being caught in possession of other inmate’s personal property, and the experience of humiliation and distrust by other inmates has become an indispensable method of imparting moral and social obligatory lessons to inmates. Through this disciplinary process, inmates are taught to self-regulate and self-reform their individual behaviour and attitudes by undergoing self-reflection through one’s lived experiences in the prison.

Even though Fiji Women’s Prison advocates safe health practice it does not provide inmates with individual toothpaste. Instead the night duty officer puts an inch of toothpaste on each inmate’s index finger each morning and afternoon before their showers. Since the regular change of toothbrushes is based on the supply from the visiting donor bodies, each inmate’s toothbrush is expected to last for a minimum of one year. Besides that, the officer-in-charge has further prohibited the use of body lotions and face creams by the inmates. She provides coconut oil for the inmates to apply on their hair and bodies. The only form of deodorants granted by the officer-in-charge is roll-ons however; its provision is only guaranteed upon the supply from the visiting donor bodies such as church groups.

Apart from that, the prison also does not provide individual combs to the prisoners. Each dormitory has a ‘communal comb’ which the inmates use by taking turns after their baths. According to the inmate informants, the use of a single comb has been a major issue of concern
for a very long time. The sharing of the comb not only makes inmates late in the mornings and consequently gets them in trouble with the night duty officers, it also has become the main source of spreading dandruff and nits and lice in inmates’ hair.

Hierarchical Observation, Normalizing Judgment & Examination

Foucault identified three vital elements within the disciplinary power: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination—in which observation and the gaze were acknowledged as the paramount instruments of power (Foucault 1995). He argued that the interrelated roles of power and knowledge in the disciplinary power uses the above three instruments to deliberately subject individuals to becoming objects of science. This in turn makes them into objects for power, to produce serviceable individuals and bodies.

These techniques have been integrated into Fiji Women’s Prison—which generates an automatic surveillance system to regulate, judge, compare, rank, standardize, exclude, include and document people as individual “case[s]” (Foucault 1995: 191). This is in order to reinstate inmates within the hierarchy of society and to generate automatic self-regulation of individual Behaviour.

The three prominent elements of surveillance, hierarchical observation, and normalization play an integral role in Fiji Women's Prison’s disciplinary system. Under this disciplinary method, the performances and conducts of the prison staff for instance, are subjected to the constant
surveillance and gaze of the staff and the prison headquarter administration. Within the prison, the junior prison officers are subjected under the gaze of the chief officer and the officer-in-charge. The chief officer’s performance on the other hand falls under the direct surveillance of the officer-in-charge—who in turn comes under the gaze and surveillance of the superior authorities based at the main headquarters.

Similarly, prisoners in Fiji Women’s Prison are regulated under the watchful gaze of the hierarchy of monitors. Each inmate’s behaviour and movements are regulated under the direct supervision of their assigned prison officers (such as the prison officer in charge of tailoring monitors all inmates working in the garment workshop). These inmates are then simultaneously monitored under the gaze and surveillance of other prison officers, the chief officer, officer-in-charge, inmate group leaders, covert inmate informers, and fellow inmates. Through this hierarchy, each observer is in turn subjected to the surveillance of the superior observers, therefore generating self-regulated behaviour in both the prison officers and the prisoners.

Apart from formal punishment in Fiji Women’s Prison, its disciplinary system has also incorporated an informal and individualized form of reward and punishment system. Through this process the inmates are anticipated to work towards the prison’s norm of behaviour excellence and discipline, and are arranged in accordance to the hierarchy of the proximity of norms. Here the positive encouragements are used in the forms, which I will refer to as Sleeping Arrangement Tactic and Rehabilitation Framework.
The Sleeping Arrangement Tactic operates by firstly separating the convicted class prisoners from the un-convicted/remand class. The un-convicted prisoners are given ‘humility dorm’ to occupy while the convicted prisoners undergo further classifications to determine their differed security risk levels. Through this process each convicted prisoner is either categorized under the ‘ordinary class’—which have prisoners with high security risks or adult prisoners who are not suitable for the star class; or categorized under the ‘star class’—which have prisoners with low security risks and relatively good character and behaviour.

The ordinary class prisoners are allocated the highly secured confidence dormitory while the star prisoners undergo another sorting to select out ‘honour/special prisoners’. The selection of honour/special prisoners’ is based on their excellent performance and behaviour levels which determines their eligibility to occupy the nursery room with either the convicted mothers and their children, or the un-grilled chapel.

The individualized reward and punishment system has been one the most effective techniques employed by the Fiji Women’s Prison for the inmate behaviour reformation. For example, when an inmate is relocated from other dorms to the chapel, it is perceived by all inmates as the highest form of reward for the prisoner’s exemplary behaviour and performance. Apart from gaining trust from the prison officers and being starred as the honour/special prisoner, she is further awarded extra privileges which includes watching of movies and T.V. programmes during recreational hours and until 9.00 pm after the final lockups, the use of shampoos and conditioners twice per week, leg and armpit shaving every Saturday, dying of greying hair, and the use of body lotions,
face creams and perfumes. This set of prisoners are also allowed to do weekly eye brow and facial threading, and apply light make-up and lipstick during the day.

Likewise, when a prisoner is transferred to the nursery room she is considered to be the recipient of the reward of trust from the prison officers which is based upon her good behaviour and performance and perceived as a launching pad of achieving the honour prisoner position and attached privileges in future.

The New Prisons Act 2006 authorizes a set of punishments intended for punishing the poorly oriented, disobedient and rebellious inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison. These punishments include the:

- forfeiture of remission of sentence for a period not exceeding 90 days; deprivation of earnings, or part thereof, for a period not exceeding 60 days; forfeiture of privileges in accordance with this Act for a period not exceeding 60 days; or separation for a period not exceeding 14 days (New Prisons Act 2006 Part 8 (39) 2. (a-d).

In Fiji Women’s Prison, however, the deprivation and denial of inmates’ privileges is one of the most favoured forms of punishments. Under this punishment system, the guilty inmate will be denied family visitations by the officer-in-charge and her visiting family members will be turned away on visiting days for the allocated number of weeks.

Since Fiji Women’s Prison is the only female prison in Fiji, the majority of visiting family members have to travel long distances to meet their detained family members. On one occasion I
witnessed the arrival of the husband of a young prisoner, Nora who at the time was undergoing punishment for disobedience. The husband had travelled from Tailevu33 with their six-month baby and three years old son to visit her. Due to financial constraints and geographical distance it was the family’s first visit in three months.

I watched Nora setting the table and chairs in the verandah in anticipation of meeting her spouse and children. Meanwhile the husband stood outside the main gate waiting for the gatekeeper to let them in. The gatekeeper and the chief officer explained the situation to him and refused him permission to meet his wife. After Nora’s husband’s many requests, they proceeded to call the officer-in-charge on her mobile for approval. While the chief officer made numerous pleas to the officer-in-charge, the other inmates, prison officers, Nora, her family, and I waited quietly praying for the approval which was firmly declined by the officer-in-charge. The subject inmate was left standing at the proximity of only 12 yards from the main gate, waving teary good byes to her husband and children while the rest of us watched in dismay.

Even though this form of punishment breaches the clause of Fiji Prisons Act 2006— which explicitly states that under the impermissible penalties “a total denial of visitation rights or the right to communicate with friends, family, medical practitioner or the prisoners’ chaplain or religious representative” is forbidden (Part 8 (38.d), it nonetheless is practiced and has become one of the most favoured methods of punishing disobedient inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison. This

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33 Tailevu is in the interior highlands of Viti Levu
suggests that the rehabilitative value of family as the ideal group for moving criminals from internment to freedom (Zemans & Cavan 1958) is yet to be recognized by Fiji Women’s Prison.

Depriving inmates of their daily privileges of watching T.V. programmes and their participation in weekly sports is the other form of punishment used in Fiji Women’s Prison. During this punishment, the subject inmate is segregated from the other inmates and locked into the humility dorm with remand prisoners. Thus, during the duration of punishment the guilty inmate will neither have access to television nor be permitted to partake in the weekly sports activities.

The old inmates and prison officers often compare this form of punishment with the traditional solitary confinement system which since the prison department’s shift towards the rehabilitative approach had been abrogated five years ago. Solitary confinement (dark cell) was based in the old women’s prison (where the new coffee shop is located). It was a 6’x8’ cell, with a single bed in one corner, a few books including the Holy Bible, prisoner’s clothes, and a sanitation bucket. Throughout the sentence, the condemned prisoner was allowed only ten minutes of exercise outside the cell. Instead of joining other inmates for meals she ate her meals in solitary confinement until the completion of her punishment period.

Reducing food diet is another example of the old punishment system in Fiji Women’s Prison. This is when rebellious inmates were punished for trivial crimes such as swearing and arguing with the
prison officers or with other inmates. Inmates however, were never sentenced to both punishments simultaneously. Unlike solitary confinement, the inmates punished under the latter punishment system were subjected to the reduction in their food diet during which their meals would contain only bread and sugared water for the duration of their punishment.

Depriving inmates of their privileges and segregating the punished inmates from other inmates by locking them in the humility dorm during the recreational periods continues to reflect the ideology of the abrogated punishment systems. This suggests that Fiji Women’s Prison continues to unofficially integrate and conceal diverse forms of punishment within its current disciplinary system of reform.

**Rehabilitative Framework**

While an inmate’s behaviour is gauged by her compliance with the prison’s law and order, her good or outstanding performance is based on her ability to perform the assigned tasks specified under her assigned rehabilitation stage. This is another form of reward and punishment system enmeshed within the prison’s four stage Rehabilitation Framework (cf. Chapter Five for more discussion). To be promoted to the upper level of the rehabilitative framework each prisoner is required to spend an assigned number of months at each stage undergoing specified programmes.

Since promotion to the next level is not automatic but based on the assessment of the inmates’ performances and behaviour, each prisoner therefore has to earn her promotion and gratuity by
demonstrating good behaviour and performance at each given stage. These assessments are then noted in each prisoner’s personal files and their eligibility for promotion is dependent on the reviewed report on every three months basis.

During my research I noted that the progressive stage system and stage gratuity of the rehabilitative framework works by imparting both reward and punishment on inmates. This in turn imparts discipline in the prisoners and motivates behaviour reformation in them. The progressive stage system could be likened to a ‘snake and ladder’ game in which the majority of prisoners are encircled within the first three stages through continuous promotions and demotions. Despite the prisoners’ hard work and performance in the hope of qualifying for the subsequent stages, mostly in anticipation of achieving gratuity of the last stage, they continue to find themselves spiraling down to the lower three levels due to trivial misunderstandings by prison officers and incessant relegations of Fiji Women’s Prison.

Throughout my research only two honour/special prisoners qualified for the last stage. Apart from sleeping in the chapel and enjoying the attached privileges these inmates also received the chance of engaging in various community programmes prescribed under the last stage of the rehabilitative framework (cf. Chapter Five). The intention of these programmes is to reintegrate the prisoners back into society as productive members. Ironically, the only two qualifying prisoners are currently serving life imprisonments. They are in their mid-thirties and will not be discharged from the prison for another ten years.
The inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison commonly perceive the last progressive level of the rehabilitative framework as the final stepping-stone towards freedom. This interpretation holds a high implication for inmates who are serving over two years of imprisonment. The successful completion of the final stage determines the inmate’s eligibility for gratuities such as early releases, pardons, and ‘extra mural punishment\(^\text{34}\)’. As a result stiff and constant competition among prisoners to outdo one another has become a common ground for jealousy and distrust in Fiji Women’s Prison.

**Institution Routine**

In Fiji Women’s Prison, a norm of discipline and behaviour excellence is instilled in inmates by regulating their days by the institution routine. The institution routine dictates and controls the inmates’ time for waking up and showering, morning unlocks, morning duties, breakfast, morning devotions, labour, labour breaks, lunch, recreational hours, labour, dinner, final lockups, shower, evening devotion and bedtime. The intention of the institutional routine is to modify and reform inmates’ old behaviour pattern and attitude by instilling in them discipline, respect, obedience, and the significance of time management through rigid institution routine.

\(^{34}\) Extra mural Punishment (EMP) - “where prisoner who is serving a sentence of imprisonment for any period exceeding twelve months and who is within twelve months of his earliest possible date of release with remission, may, with the written consent of such person, release his to undertake public work outside the prison... suitable arrangements can be made for his accommodation” (Prisons Act 86. Part XI 61(2.b): 28).
Since the main purpose of the strict daily routine is to teach inmates the importance of time-management, the inmates are required to complete their assigned daily activities within the given period each day. The non-completion of assigned tasks and complaints is understood as non-compliance and resistance towards the prison’s laws and orders. As a consequence, prisoners are held liable for charges of disobedience either by the forfeit of their remissions or by undergoing stage reductions in the rehabilitative framework.

The prison’s covert punishment and disciplinary system concealed within its institutional routine further exposes an unrealistic timeframe. Within a very narrow timeframe inmates are coerced for fear of punishment to complete their daily tasks. For instance, the twenty-nine inmates sleeping in the confidence dorm are given forty-five minutes in the mornings to wake up, visit the toilet, brush their teeth, shower, get dressed, make their beds and stand-by for the morning unlock. Technically, the forty-five minute timeframes set for the twenty-nine inmates—who share two toilets, two showers and two hand basins—pressurizes each inmate to accomplish the assigned tasks within the unrealistic narrow window of three minutes.

Equally impractical is the timeframe of two minutes per inmate for doing laundry and ten minutes for meals— which includes picking up the meals from the kitchen, finding a place to sit in the workshop, eating, returning the dirty plates to the table outside the kitchen and taking turns washing their hands under the single water tap. This shows that the prison’s institution routines
are based on an impracticable timeframe and are the main contributing factor towards major mental, physical, and psychological challenges of inmates\textsuperscript{35}.

To summarise, the formal process of prisoner admission and classification is a vital part of Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary system. It works by imparting to new prisoners the adverse experiences of the harsh reality of confinement into an unfamiliar precinct, accommodated into new social groups and subjected under the control of a super-ordinate authority. The prison’s disciplinary system employs diverse tactics such as strip search, hair cropping, punishment of reward system and institution routine. This gives prison officers the upper hand over the prisoners and enables them to exercise superior power and control over the entire prison population.

Fear of and obligatory respect towards the prison’s disciplinary system is contrived by the mechanism of adverse reprimand through punishments. Therefore, the inmates’ desire to attain incentives through good behaviour becomes a tool in gauging the level of reform each inmate will achieve during imprisonment. At the same time, this tactic poses difficulty of escaping the prison’s disciplinary orbit.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the disciplinary mechanisms employed in Fiji Women’s Prison to upgrade inmates’ social and technical skills in preparation of their successful social integration into society after their release.

\textsuperscript{35} Please refer Chapter Six for more discussions.
Chapter Five
Rehabilitation in the first instance refers to offering prisoners options to change offending behaviour in order to live in the community in a law-abiding manner upon their release. It involves a gradual process of developing new skills and enhancing existing skills, which challenge offence related behaviours. A rehabilitative environment encompasses all aspects of the prison environment, including prison operations, programmes and prison culture. It is therefore important that prisons provide an environment that encourages lawful behaviour.\textsuperscript{36}

The notion of prisoner training in Fiji Women’s Prison is based on the concept that “there is no known programme of training that will ensure the reform of criminal offenders”\textsuperscript{37}. Therefore, the prison’s main intention of providing rehabilitation programmes and training for the inmates is only to “prevent physical and mental idleness of the prisoners” because it is perceived to be “destructive to the human personality”\textsuperscript{38}. To stimulate positive personality growth and to prevent physical and mental deterioration during imprisonment, Fiji Women’s Prison provides inmates with various occupations and recreations to engage in every day.

This chapter examines various disciplinary techniques employed under the four-staged Rehabilitation Framework. The intention of this is to teach, train, and instill livelihood skills and

\textsuperscript{36} Fiji Prison Service. ‘Prisoner Rehabilitation’. \textit{Commissioner’s Orders}. No.019, 1(1.1).

\textsuperscript{37} Fiji Prison Service. ‘Prisoners-Training’. \textit{Fiji Prison Standing Order s}. Section 6(133).

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
the habit of respect and obedience in inmates. To accomplish the above, the need for appropriate staff training is however, crucial.

**Prison Staff Training**

The right people, for the right jobs, at the right place and the right time with the right frame of mind.

Training is a systematic development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job. Staff training and development plays a very important part and to mould an officer to be an effective ‘Correction’s Professional’. The necessary standards of performance can only be obtained through training which is realistic and demanding, and which emphasizes the ultimate aim of being ‘Captains of Lives’.

Similar to all staff of Fiji Corrections Services, the prison officers of Fiji Women’s Prison have a mission of providing an effective and efficient corrections service. To achieve this mission, the prison officers are required to adopt innovative programmes of offender management and rehabilitation programmes while simultaneously working in collaboration with the community. Consequently, instead of being the custodians of prisoners, the prison officers have become ‘captains of lives’ of offenders. Their new role under the new Prison’s Act 2006 is be instrumental in steering the inmates toward becoming productive and useful citizens after their release from the prison.

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To fulfill the new mission, the Fiji Corrections Service provides its staff with related training, courses, workshops, seminars and conferences. In Fiji Women’s Prison, staff training is provided twice a year. The three week workshop is held in the prison coffee shop. During prisoner labour hours, the prison officers on duty take turns attending the workshop. However, at inmates’ lunch breaks, all prison officers are able to attend the workshop after locking in the inmates in their respective dormitories.

According to the prison officers these workshops serve as refresher courses and practical exercises derived from the prison’s guideline book (Standard Operation Procedure). The refresher course include an overview of the prison’s standard procedure for managing and controlling emergencies in the prison; different techniques that could be employed in times of crisis like hunger strike, and prison breaks, along with the safe use of prison keys. The prison officers are also given stern reminders of their assigned duties and disciplinary requirements expected from both the staff and inmates. Through practical exercises the prison officers are able to rehearse safe use of batons and handcuffs, and self-defence techniques to protect themselves and the inmates in times of emergency.

Fiji Corrections Service provides other training and development programmes for prison officers to develop the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected under the new Prisons Act 2006. These training programmes intend to equip prison officers with various disciplinary techniques. This will enable prison officers to employ systematic and logical approaches to increase efficiency
in their work. The dual benefits of an efficient workforce are improvement in the quality of work, and elevated morale for the prison officers.

The prison officers’ attendance in these programmes is crucial for the efficient delivery of the ‘mission’ endorsed to them. However, according to some of the prison officers the selection of nominees is based on bias and favouritism:

It is whom you know business here [Fiji Women’s Prison]…, if you have someone up there [prison headquarters] you can have all the trainings and certificates you want. They even send their favourites [prison officers] overseas for conferences, courses, and trainings (Interview, Prison Officer 16/9/13).

The junior prison staff members confirmed that the officer-in-charge spends most of her time attending these courses alone while leaving the administration of the prison in their hands. Upon return, she gives a brief review of what she learned during the training programmes and highlights the new disciplinary mechanisms implemented by the Prisons Department. However, instead of internalizing, mentally processing, and regulating these disciplinary techniques in their daily prison routine, the prison officers choose to deliberately bypass and negate them. Likewise, the officer-in-charge also pretends to live in oblivion. Until the end of my research, the officer-in-charge remained the only staff member selected to attend the required staff training workshops and courses with few other selected prison officers from the male prisons.
Rehabilitation Framework: Phase 1-4

The process of rehabilitation requires the preparation of the prisoner for reintegration into society upon release. The quickest and surest way of a former prisoner becoming a productive and useful citizen is when he/she has employment and accommodation. To attain this most conducive state of affairs, there is a need to put in place a process of building a prisoner’s capabilities towards rehabilitation on the very day that he/she enters the prison gate to serve his/her term (Naidu, Reddy & Ratuva 2009: 30).

Phase 1: Disciplinary Development

The rehabilitation framework is the main disciplinary technique employed in Fiji Women’s Prison to upgrade inmates’ skill levels. After the inmates’ formal admission into prison, they are put into the first phase of the four-staged rehabilitation framework. Each prisoner spends at least two to three months of her sentence at the first level before being promoted to the next level. The intention behind the first phase is to provide new inmates with diverse rehabilitation programmes to instill and develop disciplinary skills in them. In addition to learning the prison’s rules and regulations (cf. Chapter Four), the practical imparting of discipline to each inmate is achieved through differed disciplinary techniques.

One of these techniques is the ‘foot drill’. It is a newly introduced disciplinary mechanism in Fiji Women’s Prison. During foot drills, the new inmates join inmates from other rehabilitative phases in parades in the prison yard at least three times a week. Before the inmates’ lunch breaks a male training officer from the nearby male prison parades the inmates in the foot drills. The foot drill is comprised of marches in the prison yard followed by many sets of different physical exercises.
The twofold rationale behind foot drills is to instill discipline in inmates while imparting on them the importance of earning one’s meals through hard work.

The basic reason behind each rehabilitation phase is to impart and/or upgrade skills in each inmate. My enquiry, however, revealed otherwise. The new inmates in the first phase are tasked into three distinctive labour groups: Garment Labour, Indoor Labour, and Compound labour. The officer-in-charge enquires of the new prisoners about their previous experiences and interests in handicraft and sewing.

The new inmates with previous sewing skills are immediately assigned under the Garment Labour—where they work in the prison tailor shop during the labour hours. The difference between the inmates in the first phase and the inmates from other rehabilitation phases is their wages. Unlike the other inmates who are paid $2.00 wages for working in the prison tailor shop, the first phase inmates are required to provide free labour.

Likewise, the new inmates who have experience and knowledge of handicraft are assigned under Indoor Labour. Under Indoor Labour each inmate is required to produce specified quantity of doormats, knitted garments, crocheted doilies, and embroidered pillowcases per day. The new inmates have to show an expected level of enthusiasm by learning specific skills and techniques
from older inmates. The inmates’ quick learning demonstrates their requisite ability to accomplish the given task.

The new inmates, whose skills and interests neither fit the Indoor Labour nor the Garment Labour categories, are tasked to Compound Labour. Inmates assigned under Compound Labour are required to clean the prison compound with other Compound Labourers from different rehabilitation phases. These inmates manually weed the grass with knives and rake the compounds. Their duties also include maintenance of the greenhouse, and shifting and preparing of new flower gardens on regular basis. They also look after the prison farm located on the outside slope of the prison compound where they grow various types of vegetables and root crops for prison consumption.

From my observations and enquiry I learned that other inmates and prison officers rank the Compound Labourers as social outcasts. This notion is derived from various ideologies encompassed around their lack of skills, abilities, and personal interests in traditionally feminine task (cf. Davie 2010; Davis 2002). Thus, one’s assignment to Compound Labour is perceived as a clear indicator that the particular inmate neither values her life as a human being nor has pride in her womanhood, or cares much about her livelihood in future.
According to the prison officers, the Compound Labourers overtly display their ineffectiveness and ineptness in all areas of their lives throughout their incarceration period. These inmates’ deliberate assignment to Compound Labour is one such strategy they use to send eloquent signals to the prison officers, indicating that they do not want to be reformed. According to one of the prison officers:

It is futile to work with them. They won’t learn anything because they don’t want to. They are just passing their time here. They have no interest in anything at all. We can only draw the horse to the water but we can’t force them to drink. It’s up to them (Interview, 25/9/13).

After talking to most of the inmates assigned to Compound Labour, I found that their disinterest in learning new skills under the Indoor and Garment Labour does not correspond to other inmates and prison officers’ presumptions. Instead, most of the compound labourers confirmed lacking any form of formal education and skills that could help secure their livelihoods after release from the prison.

In addition to educational deficiency, the majority of these inmates also come from the interior areas where none of the skills taught under the prison’s rehabilitation programmes are believed to be relevant in securing them a source of income. Some of the informant Compound Labourers explained as follows:

We live in villages and are used to teitei [plantations]. It is not a hard job for us. We can work in the hot sun and rain…we will go back doing the same work at home. If we learn sewing here, we have no use of it in the village. None of us own sewing machines. They
[prison] also don’t teach different sewing skills as well. How can we design, cut and sew different patterns of clothes if they don’t teach us here? (Adi, Mere, Lusi, & Tima, 17/10/13).

Nonetheless, the prison provides the interested illiterate inmates with the chance of learning basic literacy and numeracy skills. For the literacy and numeracy programme, volunteers provide a weeklong class twice per year. In this class, interested inmates learn to speak, read, and write in Basic English. In addition, basic mathematical skills such as simple subtraction, addition, multiplication, and division are also taught.

During the literacy and numeracy class I also joined the interested inmates who gathered excitedly around the teachers to learn the new skills in the chapel. One of the inmates later enlightened me that this programme to some extent had fulfilled her inner desire for formal education:

Now I can sing from the choir book on Sundays…I try hard to join the letters and form words…You should see their [inmates] faces when I sing from the choir book. I am still learning for the past two years. I never miss this class. My friends here [inmates] are also very helpful. That is why I can read now (Nanise, 5/10/13).

Skepticism toward the literacy and numeracy course remain high amongst majority of inmates for two reasons: firstly, its short duration period and, secondly, the interested inmates’ shorter prison sentences.
The most popular programme provided under the first phase of Fiji Women Prison’s rehabilitation framework is the ‘spiritual empowerment’ programme. Through observation, enquiry and interview I discovered that this programme has positively influenced the lives of nearly all inmates in some way or the other. The majority of the inmates I interviewed were eager and excited to share how at least one of the spiritual empowerment programmes had influenced their spiritual lives. The inmates are adamant that these spiritual programmes have helped them understand better their individuality and the various instigators that influenced their criminal acts. The spiritual empowerment programme is provided by different church groups and is divided under three main groups: True Identity, Encounter Class, and Alpha Programme.

i. **True Identity**

The True Identity programme is a one-week course provided only once a year. The inmates’ attendance on this course depends on their individual interests. Therefore, inmates from all rehabilitation phases sign up with the chief officer beforehand. Most often nearly all inmates and prison officers alike participate in this course. The participant inmates are provided with course materials. Inmates are also permitted to carry their notebooks and pens to this class.

Over weeklong classes, the True Identity programme teaches inmates different facets of human development. They learn about human lives from the time of conception to old age and death. This course links human development with biblical verses and scripture. As the class progresses, the inmates learn to reflect on their own lives and the motivations for their criminal acts from the
biblical perspectives. In this class the inmates also learn to assess their present state of life, such as imprisonment. They link this state to generational curses (such as soul ties, and sins and transgression against the Christian God). Environmental, social or psychological instigators and sources are not taken into account.

Throughout the True Identity class, the inmates are constantly referred to the biblical readings on God’s Blessings and Curses from Deuteronomy 28. They learn how generational curses influence their behaviour and negatively empower and convince them to commit crimes. The inmates also learn about the adverse effect of generational curses such as poverty, non-communicable diseases, accidents, and failures in peoples’ lives.

The main intention of this spiritual empowerment programme is to help inmates find their identity as Christians. An Indo-Fijian inmate explained to me on behalf of other inmates present in the kitchen:

Prior to this course, we all blamed ourselves for our crimes. Now we can clearly see and understand how the wrongs of our ancestors have affected our lives. We no longer blame ourselves now. It is others’ karma on us…it is generational curse. But now we have learned how to alter the curse (Komal, 19/3/14).

Towards the end of the one-week course, the concerned inmates who believe that generational curse had adversely influenced their lives undergo a further class. In this class a Christian method of breaking generational curses from one’s life is taught. The first step of this method requires the concerned inmates to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Ironically, Christian inmates are also
required to undergo this process. Then the inmates are asked to confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors to God, repent, and ask for forgiveness. After the completion of these rituals, the inmates are guided into the salvation prayer. They are asked to pray to God and request Him to break generational curses from their lives and from the lives of their families and descendants. Then the inmates are led to specific Old Testament biblical scripture passages that indicate the importance of one’s personal choice and its impact on one’s life and descendants:

I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God’s blessing and God’s curse, and I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19).41

Since the overt evidence of the cancellation of generational curse is believed to take substantial time, the inmates are also offered an easier and quicker alternative of quick redemption and cancellations of curses through fasting for three consecutive days. Some inmates have vouched on the effectiveness of the latter method in their personal lives.

**ii. Encounter Class**

The Encounter class is a two-week course and takes place only once a year. In this course, the inmates and prison officers learn about the negative impact of un-forgiveness, sin, and rejection of a child since the time of their conception. Through this class, the inmates learn to examine their

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41 Good News Bible.
lives from the above perspectives and evaluate the possibility of having been rejected by their mother or family members since birth. This method is believed to help one to assess the adverse impact of rejection in one’s life since birth.

Various possible causes of child rejection including long birth, traumatic birth, sex preferences, deformity at birth, and parental rejection of the child are discussed at length in this class. Other possible causes of child rejection such as unwanted pregnancy, financial problems, and unplanned conception after marriage are also explored. Similar to the True Identity class, the Encounter class also encourages inmates to repent of their sins and those of their parents. The repentance of sins is based on the following biblical scriptures:

You do not want sacrifices, or I would offer them;  
You are not pleased with burnt offerings.  
My sacrifice is a humble spirit, O God;  
You will not reject a humble and repentant heart (Psalms 51: 16-17).

I have sinned against you—only against you—  
and done what you consider evil (Psalms 51:4)

As far as the east is from the west,  
So far does he remove our sins from us (Psalms 103:12)

Even though most of the course materials are based on scientific reasoning and explanation such as social, environmental and psychological causes of one’s actions, the high usage of biblical emphasis and implications, however, overrides it. Throughout the Encounter class, individual spiritual counseling is offered to both inmates and prison officers where they are encouraged to confess their own sins and the wrongdoings of their parents and families to the spiritual counselors.
These counselors then hold the inmate’s hands and offer prayers to God on their behalf. Even though many of the non-Christian inmates get the chance to repent of their sins and accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, the prison does not permit formal baptisms.

**iii. Alpha Class**

The Alpha programme is a one week class conducted by the ‘prison ministry’ twice a year. Firstly, it targets non-Christian inmates. Secondly, it targets all inmates. According to the Alpha programme providers, the non-Christians include inmates from Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh religious backgrounds. It also includes inmates from the Latter Day Saints Church, Catholic Church, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

The distinctiveness of the Alpha class that separates it from other spiritual programmes is its high level of condemnation of other religions and targeted church groups. Throughout this class, the speakers continuously make comparisons between these religious practices and other church groups and the Bible and their own church. Therefore, inmates categorized as non-Christians are coerced to leave ‘heathenism’ and abstain from ‘idolatry’ in the prison. The concept of sin is explained from the Old Testament Bible passages and its negative impact on one’s thoughts and behaviour is also discussed in this class.

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42 Prison Ministry involves the family members, friends, and pastor of the Fiji Corrections Service Officers (prison officers).
Some of the inmates I talked to raised concerns regarding the methods used to bring salvation to the inmates. According to them, even the Christian inmates are authoritatively inveigled to undergo spiritual transformation by accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. One of the inmates vented her anger as follows:

How many times do we have to repent of our sins and accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour? Everyone who comes in here see us as sinners. If we tell them that we have already received salvation through Christ Jesus in another programme or during one of the church services, they tell us that they used the wrong method and it won’t work for us. Which method is right and which one is wrong? I still don’t understand (Fulori, 9/6/24).

The providers of this programme ardently believe that an inmate’s criminal behaviour can only be altered through a real spiritual change in them. True repentance by following the guidelines provided by the Alpha class, is believed to be the mandatory tool. The course providers maintain that true repentance is an intricate tool that would work as a spiritually guide for the inmates. Only through true repentance will the inmates be able to discern positive changes in their lives and gain spiritual abilities to distinguish between the right and wrong decisions they make in their lives.

“Obedience is better than sacrifice” is the main motto of the Alpha programme and it is biblically based on the book of 1 Samuel 15:22 in the Old Testament. Through this scripturally based motto inmates are primed to live obediently under the prison rules and orders while respecting the prison officers and following their instructions. The prescribed procedure to attain redemption of sins and to gain spiritual transformation is therefore to a great degree based on the inmates’ compulsory obedience to the prison rules.
The juxtaposition of the Alpha programme’s main motto with constant references to Old Testament passages in which God demands extreme levels of obedience, is intended to stimulate fear and respect for God amongst the inmates. Since God, according to the Alpha programme, is interested in obedience only, leaving one’s problems and grievances in God’s hands is highly commended. The inmates are strictly forbidden to discuss their personal problems with other inmates, prison officers, and prison counselors. This Alpha class also forbids the inmates to raise grievances about the prison officers or about the prison rules and regulations.

The majority of the inmates and some prison officers showed antipathy to the Alpha class. They confirmed that condemnation of their religion and religious practices in the class is both spiteful and hurtful. However, due to the lack of choice, the inmates have no alternative but to attend the class. As one inmate explained:

The prison ministry provides this course so we are forced by the prison officers to attend it. Their [Alpha programme providers’] husbands and family members are prison officers so they think they also have the right to insult our religion and us (Kalisi 17/6/14).

The reason for integrating the spiritual programmes (True Identity, Encounter, & Alpha) in the prison’s rehabilitation framework is to enhance (and upgrade) each inmate’s spiritual and social wellbeing. Though the providers of these spiritual programmes and their techniques differed, the intention behind the programme remains the same. Spiritual classes work as an indispensible tool for spiritually convincing the inmates of the importance of conforming to the prison rules and
regulations and respect for the prison officers. Such acts of obedience spiritually classify the inmates as reformed and obedient to God.

**Phase 2: Personality Enhancement**

Inmates in phase two of the prison’s rehabilitation framework are required to spend at least eight to twelve months at this stage before being promoted to the next level. Even though the distinctive feature of this rehabilitation stage is based on personality enhancement through a Drug Offender Module and a Recidivism Module no set rule is in place to regulate this programme for the second-phase inmates. Thus, similar to other programmes provided under different rehabilitation phases, lectures on personality enhancement are available to all inmates. Likewise, the distribution of prison labour in stage two remains consistent from the first rehabilitation phase, despite the inmates’ promotions to subsequent phases of the rehabilitation framework.

The Drug Offender Module is conducted at least twice a year when a police officer from the Police Drug Unit is invited to talk on the negative health, social, and economic impact of drugs on individuals, society, and the government. Inmates parade in the hot sun in the prison yard to hear the speakers. In addition to the visiting police officers, the officer-in-charge also highlights the importance of drug abstinence.

Since the Drug Offender Module is a newly implemented programme, discouragement and restrictions on the usage of cigarettes in the prison has been integrated into the prison’s rules and
regulations. Unlike the previous prison rules regulated under the Repealed Prisons Act—where smoking of cigarettes during labour breaks was permitted, the new prisoner reformation approach has eliminated the use of cigarettes in prison by classifying them as contraband. One of the recidivist inmates vented her dissatisfaction as follows:

Before it was good in the prison. We were given ten minutes smoke break at recess and fifteen minutes smoke break after lunch. Now, new people [prison staff], new laws...smoking is no longer allowed in the prison. They think cigarette is marijuana and all smokers are drug users (Litia, 27/1/14).

The Recidivist Module is the other part of the personality enhancement programme. The success of this programme is based on the persuasiveness of the officer-in-charge’s monologues during parades where she relentlessly dissuades prisoners from reoffending and returning to the prison. Both the inmates and the prison officers in Fiji Women’s Prison are aware of the correlation between the prison’s rehabilitation framework and the recidivism rate: the higher the success of the reformatory programmes provided under the prison’s rehabilitation framework, the lower the recidivism level.

The officer-in-charge summoned me into her office one day and put before me a seven-inch prisoner file of a serial recidivist. The officer-in-charge pointed to the file and explained:

I am nearly forty five years old and the year I was born, she [recidivist] had already served her sentences several times…I started my career as a prison warden and during my time, I saw her coming in and out of prison countless times…it is a nonstop process. Now I am
the officer-in-charge of this prison and she is still here. She can’t stay out of the prison for more than six months. I just don’t understand. Other inmates are looking up at her like a hero…a veteran. She has become their role model and no matter what advice I give them [inmates] they continue to listen to her [recidivist] instead of me (Interview, 28/1/14).

At the time of my research, at least one in eight inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison reoffend within two years after their release. These recidivists are mostly penalized for petty crimes such as theft and fraud, and sentenced to short-term imprisonments that never exceed six months. There is a lack of recidivism around major crimes. This could be because the convicts are already receiving long term sentences. It could also be attributed to the fact that long term sentences are more of a deterrent than short term ones.

The significance of encouraging inmates to strengthen their personality through the ritualized Drug Offender Module and Recidivist Module is to develop new stamina in them. Through positive stamina, the inmates are believed to embrace new outlooks. Thus, through Personality Enhancement Programmes the inmates are encouraged to develop positive attitudes by evaluating the pros and cons of drug usage and re-offense in relation to their personal lives and their expectations of their future lives.

**Phase 3: Vocational Skills/Trade & Academic**
Once an inmate has spent at least a minimum of fifteen months in the respective first two phases of the rehabilitation framework, she is promoted to the third stage. Here she is required to gain a specified set of skills for another fifteen months before qualifying for the final stage. An inmate’s promotion to the third stage indicates that she has shown the expected level of progress in the areas of disciplinary development and personality enhancement taught under the previous two progressive stages. Thus the inmates’ upgrade to the third stage deems them ready and eligible to gain the necessary vocational, trade and academic skills requisite for their successful assimilation into society after their release from the prison.

The officer-in-charge selects soon-to-be-released inmates in the third phase, to participate in some of the programmes provided by private, government, and non-government organizations. During my research only one of the rehabilitation programmes offered by the Fiji Council of Social Services Microfinance furnished the participant inmates with certificates. This is a two-week course based on small business management skills and is offered to the selected inmates once a year.

The inmates are taught basic management skills in running small businesses that they could operate from their homes. This course also provides inmates with some necessary skills in the management of their income and profits. Some of the small scale businesses the inmates are encouraged to undertake include operating of small canteens; baking and selling of cakes, and pies; cooking and selling of food parcels such as *roti* and curry, and fried fish and cassava parcels; farming and
selling of produce on a small scale; and tailoring. During this course inmates are encouraged to take loans under the Microfinance Loan Scheme—which offers a maximum of $FD1000.00 to start up a small business.

Other skills, such as baking and small engine repair courses, are also provided for selected inmates in the third phase. Lessons on baking are provided once a month by a volunteer who works in one of the hotels. During the baking class the inmates gather in the prison kitchen to watch baking demonstrations shown by the volunteer while taking notes of the cake recipes in their notebooks. Since the prison does not allow inmates to engage in practical baking classes\(^{43}\), they learn by watching and reenacting the baking demonstrations with each other in their spare time.

The small engine repair course is another programme provided to the nominated inmates. During my research, it was the first time when three of the female inmates were chosen to join the other eighteen male prisoners to attend the small engine repair workshop. During the four-day course, these inmates were provided with the practical lessons on small engine repair techniques. However, unlike the male inmates, the female inmates were specifically taught to detect and fix problems in brush cutters and sewing machines only. One of the participant inmates explained the reason for the bias:

> When problems occur in sewing machines and brush cutters, the prison has to hire outsiders to fix it. It is wastage of money and time. Now after we have learned to repair these things on our own, we no longer have to rely on outsiders. This has made our work faster too (Moreen, 26/2/14).

\(^{43}\) I asked both the inmates and the prison officers why this is so and there were no specific answers.
The inmates assigned to the third phase of the rehabilitation framework had previously been provided with the chance of attaining academic qualifications from educational institutions such as the University of the South Pacific (USP). Mere is one of the inmates who took some certificate level units in Early Childhood Education. However, after she breached the disciplinary code of conduct the officer-in-charge cancelled the rights to education of all inmates. The following is the officer-in-charge’s explanation for stopping inmates from attending classes outside the prison:

A prison officer had to escort Mere (inmate) to attend her lectures and tutorials in USP. After a couple of months, we caught a love letter in her mail and we grew suspicious. The letter was from one of the male inmates, who was also taking some units in the university. That is when we came to know that excuses of tutorials and lectures were just a decoy. In fact these two [inmates] were meeting each other during these class. Few of our prison officers were involved in it. We can’t tolerate such behaviour here…so it is better to stop all these nonsense classes. It won’t do them any good either way.

The prison tailor shop (garment workshop) is the only enterprise run by the Fiji Women’s Prison. The selection of inmates to work in the prison tailor shop is determined during the inmates’ first rehabilitation phase. Apart from sewing uniforms for prison officers and inmates the appointed inmates on Garment Labour also sew funeral casket covers, pillows and pillowcases, bags, potholders, peg holders, quilts, and comforters. The other set of inmates who also work in the prison tailor shop, make crocheted doilies, knitted baby wear, pompoms, and embroider unsewn pillowcases and bedspreads.
The daily production of garments and handicrafts is determined by its demand and order from the retail shops and private buyers around Suva. Inmates working in the prison tailor shop are paid $FD2.00 wage per day. Some of the inmates I talked to agreed unanimously that after joining the prison garment they developed new skills:

I had a sewing machine at home. I learned sewing in home economics class in school. However, I never developed deep interest in it. After working in the prison garment for the past six months, I realized a new interest in me. I was so happy the day I successfully completed my first patchwork quilt (Jocelyn, 10/5/14).

I never cared about crocheted doilies before. I thought it was out of fashion. It was after I was came under the garment labour, I learned to crochet doilies. Now I am so much into it. Like other friends of mine, I am also trying new designs from the pattern book on regular basis (Mahek, 10/5/14).

None of us knew knitting here. It was one of the inmates who was here two years ago who volunteered to teach us. Knitting was new to us so we learned it quickly. The prison officers from the headquarters were informed about it and before we realized, they provided us with wools, knitting needles, and pattern books. What started as a hobby, has become part of our daily labour. Now we have to work tirelessly to meet the weekly demands (Mere, 10/5/14).

From my observations and interviews, it became apparent that apart from having previous sewing skills, the inmates’ selection for the prison tailor shop is also based on their sentence terms. The longer an inmate’s prison sentence, the higher her chance of working under the ‘garment labour’. The use of this strategy ensures that the skills being taught and developed in inmates through extensive training is not lost when they are released earlier. Instead, the selection and employment of long-term prisoners in the prison’s tailor shop economically optimizes the profits of Fiji Women Prison’s only garment enterprise for an extended period.
Since this programme requires a minimum of fifteen months imprisonment for an inmate to be eligible it therefore cuts out the inmates with shorter prison terms but with higher rates of recidivism. The prison should have offered this programme to inmates serving shorter prison sentences in order to discourage recidivism.

**Phase 4: Community programme**

Phase Four is the last rehabilitation stage of the prison’s rehabilitative framework. When promoted to this stage the inmate is required to spend at least eight to twelve months undergoing the provided community programmes intended to prepare inmates to secure a livelihood and home after their release from prison.

Amongst the given community programmes, Life Skills is one such programme delivered by one of the volunteer groups. It is an innovation programme primarily based on life skill techniques. This programme trains inmates in specific skills with regard to setting smart goals in life by maintaining a positive mindset. The inmates are taught important aspects of developing life skills by realizing that their past does not control their future but rather they can still be successful if
they develop a positive mindset, attitude, and approach. The inmates learn the acronym of SMART goals whereby, S stands for specific, M for measurable, A for achievement, R for realistic, and T for timeframe. Through specific acronyms, the soon-to-be-released inmates learn to develop positive social skills. One of the inmates’ who is serving a six-year sentence explained that:

Through Life Skill programme, we learned how to overcome stigma, and move on in life and become successful. It has given us a new hope by showing us that we still have a chance if we could only start seeing things from a positive point of view (Mela, 27/5/14).

Unlike the inmates from the previous three rehabilitation phases, the inmates in the fourth stage are considered as individuals who display exceptional behaviour in the prison and have successfully learned and mastered the social, personal, and livelihood skills provided in the previous three phases. Throughout my research only two inmates were deemed qualified to reach the last phase of the prison’s rehabilitation framework.

Due to the acquired level of trust throughout their progressive stages, the prison allowed the two inmates to take part in civic services such as cleaning in Samabula Old Peoples’ Home and St. Giles Mental Hospital. Over Christmas the two honour prisoners were also permitted to join the male prisons’ choir team to sing Christmas carols in selected places around Suva City.
Inmates qualifying for the last rehabilitation framework are also provided with job placement opportunities. They are able to work and gain experiences in a selected few companies in accordance with their area of expertise. Experience acquired through job placements is meant to give inmates a better chance of finding employment after their release from the prison. Nevertheless, since the beginning of the prison’s Rehabilitation Framework, only one inmate got the privilege of a job placement. After being imprisoned for twelve years she was allowed to work for six months in the packaging section of a fish factory. After completing her six-month job placement she had to return to her previous job in the prison tailor shop.

In sum, the new reformative approach under the New Prisons Act 2003 requires prison officers to become ‘Captains of Lives’ for offenders. To achieve the prison’s goal of effective reformation and recidivism reduction, the prison officers are to undertake relevant training and attend courses. However, due to the inconsistency of the prison administration system, the majority of the prison officers in Fiji Women’s Prison remain ignorant of the new disciplinary mechanisms undertaken by the Fiji Corrections Services.

The same goes for the use of the four-phased Rehabilitation Framework in Fiji Women’s Prison. Similar to prison staff training, the Rehabilitation Framework has specific disciplinary techniques and educational mechanisms to upgrade inmates’ social and livelihood skills. These skills are intended to equip the inmates for an efficient and effective societal re-integration into society after their release from prison.
The successive rehabilitation of prisoners through the four-staged rehabilitation programmes intends to gradually develop necessary skills in inmates before their release from prison. These skills are based on disciplinary development (such as foot drills, prison rules and regulations, and spiritual empowerment), personality enhancement (like the Drug Offender Module, and Recidivist Module), vocational and academic skills (such as small business management skills, small engine repair workshops, and sewing and handicraft skills), and community programmes (including life skill projects, community service projects, and job placements).

This chapter has highlighted the prison’s hidden agenda for tasking inmates from all rehabilitation phases to non-paid work in the prison’s garment enterprise. The inconsistency in the rehabilitation programmes could be perceived as a major barrier that hinders inmates’ skill development and impedes their chances of attaining a quality source of livelihood post release from the prison.

The lack of suitable training and appropriate educational preparation of individual prison officers is another factor that obstructs the optimum delivery of the prison’s rehabilitation programmes. These discrepancies in turn inhibit the inmates’ chances of gaining appropriate educational and skill upgrades required for securing livelihoods after their release from the prison. Consequently, the inmates’ chances of getting re-integrated into society as productive citizens are impeded.
In the next chapter, I continue to discuss the Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary system and disciplinary techniques intended to reform inmates, focusing specifically on positive and negative impacts of these on inmates’ lives.

Chapter Six

DISCIPLINE & REFORMATION: INMATES’ PERSPECTIVES

[P]unishment is not merely the quantity of time in prison. The reality of each criminal's punishment consists in the experience of that punishment. What actually happens to prisoners—their daily pain and suffering inside prison—is the only true measure of whether the traditional concepts have meaning, the traditional goals are fulfilled, the traditional definitions apply. Only through the prisoners’ experience, can we test the categories, clarify these concepts, and set priorities (cited in Blecker 1990: 1149).

This chapter explores inmates’ perspectives and interpretations of the disciplinary and reformatory systems of Fiji Women’s Prison. I have provided considerable space to include inmates’ voices as much as possible. This is in an effort to understand the effect of the prison’s reformatory
approach and disciplinary mechanisms on their lives and how the prisoners think it will impact their societal re-integration after their release from prison.

Institutional Routine

The institutional routine in Fiji Women’s Prison is part of the prison’s disciplinary mechanism to instill discipline in inmates. As discussed in Chapter 4 I discovered that the institutional routine poses various challenges to inmates through the constrained and unrealistic timeframe set for inmates to perform their duties. To avoid being penalized and punished under the prison’s disciplinary system, inmates are obligated to make personal adjustments and sacrifices to be on schedule with the institutional routine. These challenges are mostly faced during the morning routines. This is when each inmate is given only three minutes to the visit toilet, brush her teeth, shower, get dressed, make her bed, and stand-by for the morning unlocks. During breakfast, lunch, and dinner these inmates undergo further constrained timeframes of ten-minutes to complete their meals.

During my interviews with the inmates, they expressed their personal experiences of the difficulties they faced due to the strict institutional routines. Some of the inmates voiced their concerns as follows:

It is difficult for any person to perform all the tasks in three minutes. To be on time, we have to brush our teeth in the toilet. Then we rush to the bathroom and take a quick shower. There is no time to rub ourselves with the soap (Ema, 11/6/2014).
Many of us here [in prison] are suffering from constipation. We can’t complete nature’s call under pressure. Sometimes we cannot empty our bowels for days...It is very difficult. By the time we feel the need to go we realize we are constipating (Agnes, 11/6/2014).

How can we eat in the morning when our stomachs are aching? Most of us are too shy to ask permission to visit toilets during the day. Even if we do ask for permission, we are given only a minute (Lydia, 13/6/2014).

Every day, we rush ourselves to complete our meals. Instead of slowly chewing the food, most of us swallow the food as fast as possible. It was difficult for me in the beginning but later on, I get adjusted to both the irregular bowel movements and the gulping of food during meals (Kiran, 13/06/2014).

The majority of the inmates further expressed their anxieties of eating lunch immediately after the foot drills. Inmates are required to have hasty meals in the stuffy workshop while acrid smells from sweaty bodies are emitted from the closely quartered inmates. Side effects such as constipation and indigestion are also some of the examples indicating the flawed institutional routine of Fiji Women’s Prison. According to the inmates, the failings of the institutional routine have subjected them to further psychological, medical, physical, and mental challenges.

**Rehabilitation Framework**

Inmates serving over two years of imprisonment consider the stage systems in the prison’s Rehabilitation Framework as instruments of punishment. Ili, for instance, is serving twenty years of imprisonment since 2000. She was nineteen years old when she was convicted of infanticide.

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44 cf. Chapter Five, Phase1: Disciplinary Development.
She was eligible for parole and pardon after completing twelve years of imprisonment in 2012. Ili recounted to me how the stage gratuity system impeded her early release from prison:

I was not pardoned even though I served thirteen years of sentence. All this happened because of the rehabilitation stage system. In 2009, I was in stage four. Then one day they caught me talking on a mobile phone and demoted me to stage two for three months. I also got the loss of privileges for two months. After serving three months, I was required to climb my way up to the last stage once again. I was told to spend fifteen months in stage three before being promoted to the fourth stage. Now it’s 2014…since 2010, I am still in stage three.

Despite Ili’s excellent performance and completion of her fifteen-month period in the third stage, the review committee gave her another six-month extension that was due to end in June 2013. Until the completion of my research in June 2014 Ili was neither pardoned nor was she promoted to the final, fourth stage of the rehabilitative framework.

**Telephone Usage**

Inmates like Ili often pay a high price for breaking the prison’s rules and regulations. Similarly to Ili, many inmates are often caught transgressing prison rules and regulations. In consequence, they receive punishments of stage reduction. However, inmates told me that their disobedience is often due to personal needs. Inmates’ longing to talk to their families is one such need that prompts them to use telephones without permission.
According to the inmates the fear of stage-demotion is less than the pain caused by the circumscribed calls to their loved ones. The prison’s strict rules concerning limited phone usage is based on the following idea:

Recent experience has shown that the abuse of telephone by inmates has clearly indicated organized crime planned from within the correction facilities. It is also a contributing factor to a chaotic society and portrays an image that defeats the vision or purpose and mission of the Fiji Corrections Service45.

Therefore the inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison are only permitted to make calls on Mondays and Fridays from 10.00am to 10.30 am. The duration of the local inmates’ calls are restricted to three minutes. The international prisoners on the other hand, are permitted ten minutes’ international calls to their next of kin. Some of the inmates voiced their anguish of prohibited telephone usage:

The officer-in-charge has to okay it first. We then have to ask our family members to buy recharge cards for us. Even then, the prison officers do not allow us to call home (Mere, 9/4/2014).

There is no privacy here. They [prison officers] will dial our numbers to find out if we are calling home. Then they will stand there listening to your conversation. It is very hard to talk to your families on phone here [in prison] (Sera, 9/4/2014).

My husband works in Koro Island. My four-year-old daughter and eleven-year-old son are living with my elderly father in Nadi. The prison allows only one call for three minutes per week. Now, you tell me…how can I talk to my children and dad in three minutes? How can I manage calling my husband and my children in the same week? (Karuna, 10/4/2014).

The prison tells us to return to our families. How can we establish good relationship with our family members through three-minute calls per week? Before I exchange greetings to

45 Standard Operating Procedure-Women’s Correction Centre. Prisoners’ Use of Telephone-New, no. 035 (3.2).
my husband, the prison officer presses the hang button and cuts off the line (Sophia, 10/4/2014).

Due to the restricted telephone usage, inmates feel they have no other alternatives but to sneak into the reception room and make quick calls to their family members. Inmates, whose families live far away, expressed their heartache at neither being able to see their children nor being able to speak to them. Nearly all inmates who had left their children behind related how their children cry and complain at not being able to talk to their mothers. These inmates perceive the restricted telephone usage as the worst possible form of punishment.

**Basic Human Rights**

The inmates elaborated on the fact that after their admission to the prison, the prison officers informed them that due to imprisonment they have lost their human rights and rights as citizens of Fiji. Two inmates who have served more than three years of imprisonment, confided to me during the lunch break:

It is only two month ago that we came to know that we have human rights. The prison officers continue to remind us that we should be thankful for every good thing we get in prison and consider it as privileges because we do not have any rights at all (Makereta, 16/6/2014).

It was only in March, 2014 when one of the prison officers told us that we have rights. Some of the inmates were looking at each other not understanding what human rights meant. All this time, we were told that we prisoners have no rights at all (Alisi, 16/6/2014).
Despite the prison’s shift from the ‘containment and punishment’ strategy to the ‘correction and reformation’ approach, the inmates continue to suffer under the administration hands of Fiji Women’s Prison. The lack of awareness amongst inmates regarding their basic human rights has given prison officers the illegal power to inflict incessant and consistent abuse and victimization of inmates. The inmates are prevented from exercising their freedom of religion in prison (cf. Chapter Three) and the prison’s restriction of the inmates’ freedom of communication with their family members are two such examples of abuses of inmates’ human rights in Fiji Women’s Prison.

The inmates I spoke to told me that due to their deprivation of basic human rights, they have been subjected to both verbal and physical maltreatment. For instance, throughout my research, the inmates continued to plead for my intervention in regard to their meals. I spent much of my time in the prison kitchen watching the inmates’ lunch and dinner being prepared. After weeks of monitoring the inmates’ meals, it was apparent that their basic human rights to healthy and balanced diets were neglected by the administration of Fiji Women’s Prison.

I observed that inmates’ breakfasts were comprised of only one menu. It included a third of a loaf of buttered white bread (long loaf), a cup of dhal (split pea soup), and a cup of sugared black tea or lemon leaf tea. For lunch, the inmates were given half a loaf of white bread each with sugared

milk tea or lemon leaf tea. Only on Tuesdays and Fridays were inmates provided with a banana or a slice of pawpaw each for lunch. The provision of such luxury however, is based on its cheaper price and availability. On Sundays and holidays inmates’ dinners were swapped with their regular lunch. Thus, they would eat a meat-based dish such as fish or mutton with vegetables and rice, roti, or root crops for lunch and have bread and tea for dinner.

Due to the eating of similar meals for weeks, months and years, inmates experience various kinds of health problems. While going through the prisoner files, I noticed that many of the inmates’ weights oscillate by four to six kilograms per month. Inmates told me how they felt about the prison food and its effect on their health:

When I came to prison, I was 38 kg. Within a couple of months I went over 45kg. I think my body is swelling because of eating bread every day. We are not used to eating it. Many inmates developed gastritis by eating bread and *dhal* everyday…banana makes it worse. Rohini [inmate] here, and some of the other inmates are also suffering from hypertension and other sicknesses because of the food we eat everyday (Sandy, 20/2/2014).

We are tired of eating the same food for lunch and dinner. On most days, I don’t feel like eating anything at all. The very thought of bread, tea and dhal makes me feel sick. At times I feel dizzy and weak. Nearly every day, I experience the surge of bile and stomach acid coming in my mouth. They [prison officers] know about our problems but they refuse to change our food. They also don’t allow us to share our food with other inmates (Vasemaca, 20/2/2014).

We never ate *dhal* with bread at home. It tastes horrible. To make matters worse, the *iTaukei* inmates prepare *dhal* most of the time…yuk, the very look of the dhal can make you puke. But, we have no choice. Either you eat or go hungry. When we complain, the prison officers tell us that this food is better than what we got at home. They say we should feel privileged to get free meals three times per day (Mohini, 20/2/2014).
Apart from eating the same breakfast and lunch each day, the inmates further raised concerns about their dinner. According to the institution routine, inmates are required to eat their lunches at 11:30 am and dinners at 3:30 pm. In between the early dinner and the breakfast at 7:30 am the following day, inmates have to undergo nearly sixteen hours of fast each night. The inmates collectively raised their grievances regarding early dinner:

We get very hungry at nights. Sometimes in the middle of our sleep, we will wake up with hunger pangs. So we just get up and drink water to calm down our hunger and wait until morning. Whenever we complain, the officer-in-charge says that we eat a lot during the day and that much is enough to take us through the night (Roslyn, Milika, & Cynthia, 13/2/2014).

A couple of years back, the prison provided us with snacks at night. After some prisoners escaped from the male prison, the Commissioner [Fiji Prison Service] stopped our snacks to punish us. It has been months and we are pleading them to provide such with some snacks at night but every time they [prison officers] refuse. They say the order is from the commissioner and they can’t do anything about it. The prison officers tell us that this is not a hotel and as prisoners we shouldn’t expect to be treated like honoured guests (Litia, & Marica, 14/2/2014).

When I asked them, the prison officers explained that the prison is providing inmates with a more than adequate amount of food. A four-liter bucket containing the leftover meals was shown to me as a proof of extra supply of food to the inmates. I was told that the main reason for denying inmates snacks during nights is to teach them a lesson for not appreciating the prison food. Towards the middle of my research, the prison further cut down the inmates’ lunch ration from
half a loaf of bread each to one third of a loaf. The reason for this action was attributed to food wastage.

Apart from food deprivation, abuse of inmates’ basic human rights in Fiji Women’s Prison has also materialized into verbal and physical maltreatment of inmates. Throughout my research I witnessed the officer-in-charge continuously subjecting the inmates to abusive and hurtful words and curses. The victims were mainly iTaukei inmates. Some inmates later confided to that the officer-in-charge also beats the inmates when she catches them transgressing the rules and orders of the prison. One of the inmates later told me that during the first week of my research the officer-in-charge in front of all inmates and prison officers incessantly slapped one of the inmates. This incident took place after I left for home in the afternoon. The following is the inmate’s recollection of the incident:

Mere [subject inmate] waved back to a male worker from the adjacent Men’s Remand Centre and someone reported it to the officer-in-charge. The officer-in-charge went outside and started swearing loudly and slapping Mere. All of us were watching...even the male workers from the Remand Centre were watching too (Karesi, 18/3/2014).

Later the officer-in-charge confirmed that she was too agitated by the inmate’s behaviour and was compelled to teach her a lesson. The prison officers at Fiji Women’s Prison hold the belief that inmates are too obstinate to follow the prison rules and orders. Therefore, no form of rehabilitation can reform their behaviour except the traditional method of inflicting physical and mental pain on
them. The method of discipline necessitates the infliction of physical agony and verbal anguish on inmates.

Nearly all prison officers disagreed with the prison’s present reformatory approach. They compared it with the previous method of prisoner punishment and considered that containment and punishment of prisoners was more effective. I was told of incidents when prison officers would form gangs and fight with the inmates in the prison. The officer-in-charge showed me a two-inch long scar on her ankle. Pointing to it, she told me that she was wounded while kicking an inmate who fell to the ground during a brawl. Accidentally, she kicked the inmate’s mouth and her teeth left a deep gash on her ankle. The prison officers reminisced the time under the repealed Prison’s Acts 86, when they were allowed to beat the inmates as much as they wanted. Now, due to the prison’s shift to prisoner reformation and prohibition of physical torture and punishment on inmates, the prison officers confirmed not being able to use that previous level of physical punishment on inmates.

**Docile Workers**

According to Foucault, disciplinary power breaks the will of the criminals and makes them into a “docile bodies” (1977: 137) by turning their bodies into the “objects and targets of power” (1977:136). The inmates’ involuntary subjection under the prison’s disciplinary system and its detrimental hold on them have turned inmates of Fiji Women’s Prison into passive victims of varied forms of abuse. Despite the prison’s claim that rigid disciplinary procedures reform
inmates’ behavior, its covert use of disciplinary mechanisms to produce passive workers for prison’s garment enterprise is evident.

Due to the commercialization of the prison’s garment shop, each inmate is selected according to their skill level, categorized and trained accordingly to work for the prison’s garment enterprise (cf. Chapter Four). The prison’s disciplinary system is used as a mechanism to produce submissive, compliant, and obedient workers for its garment enterprise. During my research I found out that inmates are being forced to work over-time and on weekends to meet the targeted demands from the retail shops:

When orders come from the shops, the officer-in-charge tells us to meet the demands on time. Last week four of us were given five days to sew five hundred pieces of ribbon pillowcases. Sewing ribbons in different designs on pillowcases is difficult and time consuming. It is very challenging too. After we think we have achieved our targets and can relax a bit, they give us another set of order and the same process goes on and on (Tima, Ruci, & Pipa, 5/8/2014).

Nearly every week, we have to work overtime to fulfill the orders. When we are doing overtime, we do not go to the dining hall [workshop] to eat. Our meals are brought here [tailor shop] and we have to eat sitting at our sewing machines as quickly as possible and go back to work. We are not given breaks at all unless we have to go to the toilet (Sudha & Seema, 5/8/2014).

It is good that we are paid $FD2.00 per day but I think it is not enough compared to the amount of work we are doing here. We are sacrificing a lot by working in the tailor shop. We have to skip our recreational periods, work for long hours and on weekends, and eat late dinners (Mahek, 5/8/2014).

Similarly, the inmates assigned to make handicrafts and knitting also agreed that they are frequently pressurized to complete their targeted quota of items on time. These inmates told me
that they have been experiencing many medical side effects resulting from overdoing eye-straining
tasks assigned to them. Due to prolonged bending of heads to sew, knit, embroider and make
handicrafts the inmates are experiencing stiff necks, head and shoulder pains, pains in fingers and
bouts of dizziness throughout the day. Many also complained of having strained and painful eyes
that they believe give them their headaches. Some of the inmates confirmed developing migraines
after coming to the prison.

As compliant workers, they are forced to work in the prison’s garment enterprise. Since
disobedience to the prison’s rules and regulations is synonymous with rebellion in Fiji Women’s
Prison, inmates are obliged to perform the tasks and duties assigned to them without question. The
inmates’ compliant positions as prisoners therefore subject them to dehumanizing tasks as well
(cf. Leonard & Auerhahn 2000). One of these tasks, according to the inmates I spoke to, involved
looking after an HIV positive inmate. An inmate who was forced by the prison officers to attend
to the wounds of an HIV positive inmate recounts:

This inmate [HIV positive] was running from the police and got wounded by a roofing
iron. She got a deep gash on her thigh which oozed blood every day. I was told to look
after this inmate and change her bandage. We all we very scared. All inmates were under
stress. She was sleeping with us in the same dormitory, and was using the same toilet and
shower. During meals and labour she would be working and sitting beside one of us. I
was very scared especially when changing her bandage. But I had no option but to follow
the orders of the prison officers. I just didn’t want to get into trouble (Ili, 20/11/2013).

The fear of disobeying the prison rule and regulation and the inmates’ enforced obligation to
perform tasks that go beyond their personal endurance levels is common in Fiji Women’s Prison.
The fear of punishment has made these inmates yielding and compliant. This in turn produces subjective and obedient workers who could perform health risk tasks such as looking after the HIV inmates and carry out prolonged period of sedentary and monotonous tasks.

Rohini, for instance, is one such inmate whose prescribed duties in the kitchen challenged her, physically and mentally. I was told that due to the inconsistency in the prison’s ‘food scales’\(^\text{47}\), the iTaukei inmates demand eating under the Indian food scale. Most often these demands are backed by the prison officers. So, therefore the burden of preparing Indian meals for over fifty inmates falls on the shoulders of the Indian inmate on kitchen duty. I stood for an hour watching Rohini making one hundred and twelve rotis for fifty-six inmates. Rohini expressed her anguish:

> Today, I am on kitchen duty and I was told that they [iTaukei] inmates wish to eat under the Indian scale. I have no option but to prepare the dough, roll the rotis, and bake them on the hot griddle one at a time. The kitchen is so hot and I will have to stand for hours making rotis. I am suffering from hypertension and gastritis. This work is making me very tired and weak (Interview, 21/1/2014).

After an hour and a half, I returned to the kitchen and noticed Rohini still standing and making rotis. Her ankles swelled due to prolonged standing and her face was flushed from the heat emitted from the stove. Her exhaustion was evident.

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\(^{47}\) Food Scale A: Reserved for inmates from other ethnic groups; Food Scale B: Food prepared according to Indo-Fijian diet and menu; Food Scale C: Food prepared according to iTaukei diet and menu. (cf. Chapter Three).
Prisoners’ Attitudes

The prison officers’ explanations of overtasking the inmates were attributed to the notion that inmates consider the prison as a hotel and their incarceration periods as vacation. Prison Officers explained that due to this attitude inmates often reoffend and return to prison within a couple of months’ time. I was told that recidivists often take the formal admission process into the prison very lightly. Later, when these inmates meet the resident inmates, they gladly announce to them that they are back for a vacation. So, due to a few inmates’ attitudinal problems the prison officers confirmed overtasking all inmates. The intention of overtasking the inmates is to prove to them that Fiji Women’s Prison is not a holiday destination but a place of confinement and punishment.

Inmates’ attitudes towards the prison as a place of vacation could be attributed to their poor socio-economic backgrounds. Most of the inmates neither possess adequate education and skills to earn an honest living outside the prison nor do they have a home or family to go to and depend on for financial, emotional, and moral support. Many inmates therefore perceive prison as a safe haven because it provides them with their necessities such as food, clothing and shelter.

For some inmates the luxury of using sanitary pads, toilet paper, bathing soap, night-ware, good clothes, bedding, and three meals per day, is beyond their daily expectations when living outside prison. The majority of the inmates live with the knowledge that the prison is their only safe haven from the cruelty of an uncertain future in the outside world. These inmates have been deprived of social, financial, economic, and emotional securities at home. The securities of life in prison outweigh the punishment and hardship they under its disciplinary system.
Some of the inmates told me how they learned to value small things and privileges after living in prison. For instance these inmates recollected their joy of listening to the Prison Band singing Christmas carols at 6.00 am at the prison gate on Christmas Day. Even though they could not see the Prison Band, just listening to it from their dormitories was considered a privilege.

As an exception to the daily institutional routine, all inmates were unlocked at 6.30 am on Christmas Day and were greeted by the Assistant Commissioner of Fiji Corrections Services. After the greetings the inmates attended the church service conducted by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The church provided the inmates with breakfast that included rare treats such as pies, cakes, pancakes, milk and cereal, and milo. While the inmates ate their breakfasts the church choir entertained them with Christmas carols.

During the Christmas and New Year holidays the inmates had the exceptional opportunity to play volleyball and watch television programmes and movies throughout the day. Though the inmates had the usual bread and tea for dinner at Christmas and New Year, they nonetheless were treated to chicken chop suey with rice and dalo for Christmas lunch and tinned mutton stew and dalo for New Year lunch.
Ethnic Tension

The majority of inmates believe that being treated to rare luxuries cannot take away the daily experience of injustice and prejudice they face in Fiji Women’s Prison. Because of personal biases from the prison officers inmates are facing both the brunt of ethnic tension with other inmates and the wrath of punishment from the prison officers. An example of ethnic tension during my research was between the Indian and iTaukei inmates. The inmates explained the involvement of iTaukei prison officers to instigate ethnic prejudice:

Like iTaukei inmates, our [Indian inmates’] families also come from far to visit us. But on family visitation days, the prison officers give us only fifteen minutes to meet our families. As soon as it is fifteen minutes, the prison officers come and tell our families to leave. We feel very bad especially when we see the iTaukei inmates sitting with their families for one to two hours during visitation days. It is not fair at all but we can’t do anything about it (Mohini, 18/2/2014).

Before the new officer-in-charge [Indo-Fijian] took charge of the prison, we were facing many difficulties in the kitchen. The prison officers never brought their own food to work. They were eating our food and we had to survive on fewer rations. Now, few of the iTaukei inmates have started complaining of having medical complication from eating their traditional food. They demand to get their scales changed to Indian food scale and the prison officers are backing their demands (Agnes, 20/2/2014).

The iTaukei prison officers tell the iTaukei inmates to comment on our [Indian] food. Flour is sent for the Indian inmates’ ration but the iTaukei inmates demand to eat under the Indian food scale. This is the doings of the prison officers. They are prompting the iTaukei inmates to harass us after the new Indian officer-in-charge stopped them from eating our food. So all this is happening just to remove the new officer-in-charge and to bring the old officer-in-charge [iTaukei] back (Sadhana, 20/2/2014).

My food is provided by my embassy. Every time I sit to eat my food, the iTaukei inmates begin to comment on my food. I was later told that some of the prison officers were telling the inmates to remark on my food. If I will eat whole meal bread for breakfast then few of the iTaukei inmates will demand to eat the same breakfast as well (Susan, 21/2/2014, International Inmate).
Due to the ethnic tensions instigated and fueled by the prison officers, unity between the inmates from both ethnic groups is still inconceivable in Fiji Women’s Prison. Inmates prefer forming their own groups based on their ethnic backgrounds. Suspicion and distrust towards inmates and prison officers from the other ethnic groups has become routine in the prison. This suggests that correctional officers’ behaviour and attitude toward inmates strongly contributes to the prisoners’ adjustment to prison life and their attitude towards the correctional officers and carceral experiences (cf. Gartner & Kruttschnitt 2004; Vuolo & Kruttschnitt 2008).

Inmates and some of the prison officers confirmed incidents where some of the iTaukei inmates have gone to the length of hiding the Indian inmates’ embroidered doilies and knitting to get them into trouble. One of the international inmates explained from her personal observation:

When the iTaukei inmates see the Indian inmates being praised by the officer-in-charge on their performance…they jeopardize it by hiding their doilies from the workshop. They hide their clothes from the line too. Once, an Indian inmate’s cardigan was drying on the line and someone snipped it with the scissors. Sometimes they hide prohibited items in their belongings so that the Indian girls are caught and charged with stage reduction (Maria, 25/2/2014).

From my personal observations and interviews I found out that there are two main reasons behind ethnic tensions amongst the inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison. Firstly, the iTaukei prison officers’ employ a strategy to use ethnic bias amongst inmates as a tool to raise doubts about the leadership skills of the new officer-in-charge who was Indo-Fijian. The prison officers’ alliance with iTaukei inmates took place after the new Indo-Fijian officer-in-charge stopped her staff from eating from
the inmates’ rations. The officer-in-charge also prohibited her staff from using the inmates’ supplies of sanitary pads and toilet paper—which they were taking home from the prison.

Similarly to the prison officers, the iTaukei inmates also had grievances towards the new officer-in-charge. Their hatred toward the new officer-in-charge began when she transferred some of the iTaukei inmates occupying the nursery and the chapel, to the Confidence Dormitory. In replacement, Indo-Fijian inmates were sent from the Confidence Dormitory to sleep in the chapel and the nursery. In addition to this, both the iTaukei prison officers and the iTaukei inmates disapproved of the new officer-in-charge’s tactics of marching the inmates from one root point to another and taking head counts before parades throughout the day. Under the old officer-in-charge, the inmates were paraded and their head counts were taken only once after the morning unlocks.

In defense of these allegations, the officer-in-charge claimed that she was aware of her volatile position as the only Indo-Fijian senior officer amongst the ethnic majority of iTaukei prison officers. She informed me that her method of operation is exclusively guided by the prison’s guide book; Standard Operating Procedure- Women’s Correction Centre and from the direct commands of the Commissioner of Fiji Corrections Service.

A week before Christmas the iTaukei prison officers and inmates planned to express their discontent with the new officer-in-charge through a hunger strike. However, their plan was halted
after one of the inmates leaked it to the officer-in-charge. According to one of the prison officers, the main purpose for the hunger strike was:

to protest against the officer-in-charge and to reinstate the old officer-in-charge. They also wanted the old rules and regulations to be restored. Prison rules and regulations under the old officer-in-charge was very lax…so the inmates and prison officers had the freedom to do whatever they desired. There was no one to correct them or discipline them. When the new officer-in-charge put a stop to everything and tightened the rope they didn’t like it (26/2/2014).

The second reason for the cause of ethnic jealousy and tension amongst inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison is linked to different cultural interpretations of discipline. Each inmate’s personal understanding of discipline and obedience to the prison rules and orders is associated with their different socialization processes since birth. Inmates’ cultural background and upbringing therefore plays a significant role in influencing their cultural and social perceptions of the prison’s disciplinary system. To confirm my notion I asked two international inmates about their personal views of the disciplinary differences between Indian and iTaukei inmates:

Fijian girls [iTaukei inmates] don’t take discipline very seriously. They don’t understand the significance of rules. They also don’t care about getting into trouble and being punished. For example, when they are told not to go from bed to bed at night, they disobey. They think they won’t face the consequences. The Indian girls, on the other hand know and understand what respect is. They never talk back at the officers and you will never see them fight. They just mind their own business (Cindy, 4/3/2014).

When our parents instruct us something, we understand it and obey. We know that there is a consequence for not obeying. The same is with the Indian girls [inmates]. They know what instruction means. But for Fijian girls [iTaukei inmates],…their understanding of instruction is different. That is why they repeat the same mistakes and continue to disobey and get into trouble (Grace, 4/3/2014).
**Prison Preparation: Inmates’ Social Integration**

One of the aims of Fiji Women’s Prison is to reduce recidivism rates. For that, the prison engages in various disciplinary mechanisms to reform inmates’ behaviour and upgrade their skills. However, poverty and lack of suitable employment for the released inmates poses obstacles for inmates’ successful re-integration into society. The prison officers informed me that to prevent inmates from reoffending and coming back to prison, Fiji Women’s Prison provides the released inmates with various forms of assistance.

This assistance is provided under the prison’s Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). According to the prison officers I spoke to, the officer-in-charge chooses the eligible inmates beforehand. The inmates’ eligibility for assistance is based on their skills, and overt display of reformed behaviour. Three months prior to their release the selected inmates are asked to lodge their applications with the officer-in-charge.

Inmates are required to provide three quotations for the items needed to start up their small businesses to generate income. These items mainly include sewing machines, baking accessories, or groceries for small canteens. However, this assistance is provided for inmates who have been imprisoned for over twelve months. The qualifying inmate is eligible for assistance of up to $FD1000.00.
So far, only two inmates have received assistance under the Poverty Alleviation Programme since its implementation in 2011. One of the prison officers explained the process:

The officer-in-charge has to go and check the inmate’s house and the place from where the business will be operated. It is only upon inspection and full satisfaction, the officer-in-charge will approve the application. Once the inmate will be released, the materials will be bought for them. Usually, we don’t exceed $FD500.00. The officer-in-charge will then follow up with the inmate’s progress on every two months basis. If needed, only then the extra $FD500.00 worth of items will be given to the inmate (12/8/2014).

When I asked the inmates about their views regarding the assistance given under the PAP, they told me of the difficulties inmates face in relation to its application. Nearly all the inmates expressed dissatisfaction with the PAP. To prove their point some inmates took me to an inmate named Kalisi:

I applied for the assistance in March 2013. It was three months before I got released in June. I wanted them to buy me an oven and baking materials so I could start up my own business. But they [prison officers] never got back to me. I came to the prison many times to follow up my application but every time they said they are still processing it (15/8/2014).

Six months after Kalisi’s release she reoffended and went back to prison. She is still following up her application from within the prison. She was hoping to get it approved before her release within
a few months’ time. The other inmates who were with Kalisi also expressed their concerns regarding the prison officers’ inefficiency regarding granting financial assistance, and lack of positive participation and concern toward inmates’ post-release welfare:

They [prison officers] take us to our families and expect us to live with them without providing us with any assistance. For how long do you think someone can look after us free of charge? It is not easy to go out of the prison and start earning your living straight away. Most of us have to live with our mothers and children but we have nothing to support them. No income, no job, and no help from anyone. So we have no other alternatives but to join our old groups to earn the money the old way and get in trouble with the law again and again (Mareta, Kini, Lucy & Mili, 15/8/2014).

Foucault argues that modern prisons are still ineffective in reducing crime and recidivism because the modern prison “impose[s] an unnatural existence” on prisoners through segregation and meaningless work. Furthermore prison records brand ex-prisoners as ‘criminal’ (Foucault 1977, p. 264).

The success of inmates’ re-integration into society as productive and law-abiding citizens depends on both the prison and the inmates’ immediate family members. Due to the lack of social, moral, and financial support from both parties, the inmates often have difficulties in securing livelihoods and re-integrating back into society after their release from prison. Some of the inmates highlighted the factors they believe are hindering their progress:

The prison approved to release me on EMP [Extra-Mural Punishment] so that I could serve the rest of my sentence from home. The officer-in-charge went to my home many times
but my family i.e brother and sister-in-law dodges her every time. Because of them, I am unable to apply for my EMP. Now I have to serve the rest of my sentence in the prison. I am not sure where I will go after my release from the prison (Oli, 16/07/2014).

We don’t want marked vehicles [Fiji Correction Service] to drop us home after our release from the prison. Our neighbours and most of our families don’t know that we are in the prison. It leaves stigma on us because people will speculate after seeing us being dropped by the prison officers in the official vehicle. Our lives will become more difficult (Mere, Sera & Taina (16/07/2014).

The reformative process inmates undergo under the Fiji Women’s Prison’s strict disciplinary regimen and the skills they learn during imprisonment also play important roles in reducing recidivism rates. The majority of inmates agreed that the skills learned in Fiji Women’s Prison are inadequate to secure any form of job after their release from prison. Even though the majority of inmates claimed that they had undergone positive attitudinal change through spiritual classes, they considered these as irrelevant to their real lives.

The inmates further agreed that daily punishment and subjugation to the prison’s disciplinary system had increased their anxieties about the financial, social, and emotional hardship they would be facing outside the prison. Due to the constant physical, emotional and psychological torments endured under the prison’s disciplinary system, the majority of inmates have lost their ability to develop the positive self-esteem and self-efficacy needed for effectual societal re-integration. The prison officers’ attitudes toward inmate behaviour reformation have also increased the inmates’ feeling of inferiority and insecurity in all areas of their lives as well.
To summarize, inmates in Fiji Women’s Prison articulated being exploited and punished through the prison’s disciplinary and reformative mechanisms. These punishments take the form of physical, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse. The inmates related to me their personal experiences as passive recipients of prison’s rules and regulations (such as institutional routine, rehabilitation framework, and restricted telephone usage) and being punished for breaching it.

The continuous breach of inmates’ basic human rights such as experiencing physical and verbal abuse, lack of religious rights, inhumane and degrading diets increases their vulnerability to human and labour exploitations. The prison’s rules, regulations and orders coerce prisoners into submissive and passive workers for use in the prison’s garment enterprise.

In contrast, the prison officers’ personal interpretation of the prisoners’ attitudes (such as prison being perceived as a hotel and prisoners’ lack of appreciation for prison food) compels them to take a strict approach. They reduce prisoners’ food rations. They have extended the period of time between the last meal of the day and breakfast by removing 9 p.m tea. And they force the prisoners to work under difficult and unpleasant working conditions. In their view, the prison’s present use of a reformatory approach is insufficient to reform and correct the prisoners. Therefore, they favour punishment under the repealed Prison’s Act over the New Prisons Act 2006.

The prison officers’ disapproval of the present (Indo-Fijian) officer-in-charge’s administration has led them to instigate ethnic tension amongst inmates. This has brought prejudice, division and
partiality between Indo-Fijian and iTaukei ethnic groups. Even though the main intention of Fiji Women’s Prison has been to reform and correct inmates’ behaviour and attitudes, the injustices and discrepancies in its disciplinary processes and techniques, have subjected inmates to being vulnerable recipients of punishment through ritualized oppression and harassment. This impedes the inmates’ successful re-integration into society as productive individuals and law-abiding citizens after their release from prison.

The previous chapters focused on Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary mechanisms for inmate behaviour reformation (Chapter Four), and disciplinary techniques for inmate skill upgrades (Chapter Five). This chapter focused on inmates’ personal perception and impact of Fiji Women’s Prison’s disciplinary system and skill upgrade techniques. These three chapters provide accounts of the three general contexts of punishment and reformatory approaches in Fiji Women’s Prison. In the following chapter I summarise the findings of my research through the Foucauldian model of ‘seven maxims of prison’ outlined in Chapter Two.
Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. It is not a triumphant power...it is a modest, suspicious power, which functions as a calculated, but permanent economy (Foucault 1977:170)

In this thesis I have used a reflexive ethnographic approach to examine punishment and reformation of female prisoners through the related lenses of the disciplinary systems of Fiji Women’s Prison. It is based on the premise that the prison’s current approach toward prisoner treatment and rehabilitation must be understood through its disciplinary systems and techniques.

I theorised prison and punishment from Michel Foucault’s perspective by drawing on examples of prisoner treatment under Western modeled prisons such as Panopticon prison and Pentonville prison models. I drew on the Foucauldian model of ‘seven maxims of prison’ required to attain good penitential conditions (cf. Chapter Two). The purpose of Foucault’s proposed ideal prison
is to produce reformed inmates who could be successfully re-integrated into society as disciplined and productive members.

The main function and result of an ideal prison therefore, is to have good penitentiary conditions which includes an accurate classification and distribution of prisoners according to their act, age, mental attitude, and correction techniques used. The prison should monitor the stages of prisoners’ transformations and individualize punishments according to the individual inmate’s progress. It must also provide skillful staff training in the techniques of imprisonment to equip prison officers with relevant skills and techniques to monitor and integrate appropriate work and educational skill in prisoners to achieve behaviour transformation and progress in them. Lastly, Foucault’s envisioned ideal prison should have a system which supports inmates until they are successfully re-integrated into society after their release from the prison (Foucault 1977: 267-270).

The principles of the Fiji Women’s Prison disciplinary system limit this negotiation by structuring inmates’ behaviour reformation largely through punishment and disciplinary techniques. The disciplinary system of Fiji Women’s Prison is used to systematically and concurrently stimulate the self-monitoring of inmates’ individual behaviour and inmate group behaviour. Inmates’ self-reflection of personal conduct through self-scrutiny, self-monitoring and supervision of personal conduct and its assessment with other inmates’ conducts within the realm of prison’s disciplinary system maximizes individual prisoner and general prison discipline.
On the one hand, by optimizing maximum prisoner control by prison officers the rigid disciplinary system such as the prison’s disciplinary rules and orders and inmate punishment system has minimized the prison’s need for regular manual surveillance of prisoners. On the other, the relentless coercion of inmates through the disciplinary system poses mental, emotional, psychological and physical challenges on all inmates. The design of the prison’s building structure has been used as a strategy to minimize inmates’ movements. It has also increased inmates’ manual surveillances despite staff shortages.

Inmates continuously struggle to cope with the challenges of the disciplinary system. These challenges include a pressured timeframe to complete institutional duties, eating the same food each day and forced labour to reach garment and handicraft production quotas from retailers. In addition to this noncompliant inmates are unfairly treated and punished through stage demotion. Their telephone usage is restricted. General humiliation and prolonged detention of prisoners impedes the prison’s aim of instilling genuine self-reflection, self-monitoring and self-reformation of inmates.

The prison’s disciplinary system imposes informal and ritualized methods of punishment. This includes cutting of iTaukei inmates’ hair, strip-search, physical and verbal abuse and harassment. Furthermore, foot drills and prolonged and monotonous tasks in the tailoring and handicraft workshops make inmates even more vulnerable and susceptible to breaking rules and being punished.
The fear of punishment under the prison’s disciplinary system has turned the inmates into oppressed instruments of control by the prison officers. Paradoxically, the disciplinary system which was intended to reform individual inmate behaviour, has constricted the inmates’ individuality by dehumanizing them through its rigid disciplinary and punishment protocols.

The formal prisoner classification process replaces inmates’ personal, ethnic, cultural and national identities by individual case numbers. By neutralizing inmates’ individualities, the assessment of inmates’ individual progress and the level of discipline each inmate needs to become totally reformed are easily determined by the prison officers. And so is the level of control the prison officers are able to exercise over the inmates.

By categorizing the inmates as Convicted, Non-Convicted or Recidivist Prisoners, prison officers are able to determine the dormitory each inmate will be allocated to. In addition, the inmates are marked by the colour of their prison, number of items they will have in their personal kits and its duration period, their specified institutional routines and duties, and the level of freedom each inmate would be offered. This classification process has however reached its extremity through its integration with the prison’s informal reward and punishment system. The Convicted, Non-Convicted and Recidivist prisoners are being forced to undergo further categorizations to determine their eligibility for rewards and privileges. These are usually based on favouritism and ethnic preferences of the prison officers. Inmates with good behaviour are classed as Honour/Special Prisoners. Inmates with high security risks are classed as Ordinary Prisoners.
I have identified the intertwinement of classification processes with the individual reward and punishment system as ‘Sleeping Arrangement Tactics’. Inmates with good and exemplary behaviour and performances for instance are rewarded. They are given the opportunity to sleep in the chapel which has no grills. Other privileges include watching of movies, use of shampoos, hair dyes and makeups. The second best inmates are those with good behaviour. They are awarded the nursery room for sleeping with the hope of achieving the title and privileges of the Honour Prisoner.

The informal reward and punishment technique is also found in the prison’s Rehabilitation Framework. The initial idea of incorporating the Rehabilitation Framework in the institutional routine was to instill relevant social and livelihood skills in inmates to reform and prepare them to re-integrate into society as productive members. However, the prison officers in Fiji Women’s Prison have covertly enmeshed the Rehabilitation Framework into the prison’s disciplinary system.

The prime purpose of the Rehabilitation Framework has been delimited to punishing disobedient inmates for transgressing prison rules and regulations and rewarding favoured inmates for good behaviour and performance. This is done through stages of gratuity system and privileges. During my fieldwork I noticed that inmates’ fear of being unduly punished under the prison’s disciplinary system remained a salient factor which continuously forced inmates to conform to the prison’s rules, regulations and orders. Such susceptibility in turn has transformed the inmates into obedient
and passive workers. I realized this was the principal objective behind the use of various disciplinary techniques: to produce subjugated, compliant and submissive inmates. The prison’s primary motive of reforming individual inmate’s behaviour and upgrading their social and livelihood skills for their effective re-integration into society has therefore fallen short of its claim.

Returning to the question posed in the introduction: has Fiji Women’s Prison undergone its claimed paradigm shift from ‘containment and punishment’ to ‘correction and reformation’ of prisoners? Prison officers in Fiji Women’s Prison have been assigned with a mission of becoming Captains of Lives of offenders who are committed to their custody. Their main goal is to be instrumental in steering the offenders towards being productive and responsible citizens\(^{48}\).

For the successful achievement of the endorsed responsibilities given to the Captains of Lives of offenders, the type and level of training provided for the staff of Fiji Women’s Prison is inadequate. The lack of appropriate staff training has impeded the prison officers’ chances of developing the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for becoming instrumental in steering inmates toward becoming productive and useful citizens after their release from the prison.

The chances of prison officers undertaking and effectively delivering the systematic and logical approach in innovative programmes is therefore still questionable in Fiji Women’s Prison. Prison

officers’ personal preconceptions of inmates holidaying on free accommodation and food in the prison has developed negative attitudes towards the inmates. So is its reflection on their approach toward inmate reformation.

Punishment like forced labour or even imprisonment – mere loss of liberty – has never functioned without a certain additional element of punishment that certainly concerns the body itself: rationing of food, sexual deprivation, corporal punishment, solitary confinement … There remains, therefore, a trace of ‘torture’ in the modern mechanisms of criminal justice – a trace that has not been entirely overcome, but which is enveloped, increasingly, by the non-corporal nature of the penal system (Foucault 1995: 15-16).

Inmates I interviewed emphasized their feelings of relative powerlessness under the prison’s covert punishment through its disciplinary system. I suggest that the current position of inmates as subjugated and vulnerable victims of the prison’s disciplinary system has transformed them into submissive, compliant and passive workers for the prison’s garment enterprise (c.f. Melossi, & Pavarini 1981). Instead of preparing the inmates for effective social re-integration, the prison’s disciplinary system is robbing the inmates of their individuality, human rights and chances of becoming productive members of society.

REFERENCE


**APPENDIX A**
Good morning/afternoon! My name is Shailin Gonelevu.

For my Master’s thesis in Sociology, I am conducting a study designed to explore prison system, rehabilitation programs and types of power practiced within Fiji’s Women Prison. I wish to invite you to participate in this study which is undertaken with the approval of my supervisor—Dr. Yoko Kanemasu of School of Social Science – Sociology department at University of the South Pacific, and USP Research Committee and follows the Code of Research Ethics in accordance to the guidelines set by the University of the South Pacific.

This means that if you decide to participate in this study all possible steps have been undertaken when designing the study to safeguard your rights, protect your identity and ensure that you will not be exposed to any additional risks because of your participation. Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information given below and ask questions if you cannot understand anything, before deciding whether or not to take part in the study.

**Purpose of Study**

The aim of this study to use French poststructuralist, Michel Foucault’s perspective of discipline, rehabilitation, and power in prisons as a framework to examine disciplinary system in *Fiji’s Women Prison*; its effectiveness in reforming and rehabilitating the inmates successfully into the society; and the view of power from inmates perspective.
**Importance of the Study**

Information derived from this study will determine the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs in Fiji’s Women Prison. Therefore, it is extremely important that you answer all questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Your contribution will be much appreciated.

**Method**

After reading the consent form, and giving your written consent to take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview up to an hour long. The interview will include questions regarding the following:

- Exercise of different types of disciplinary regimes in the Prison.
- Prison’s aim for various rehabilitation programs.
- Inmates’ personal view of Prison’s disciplinary system and rehabilitation programs.

The interview will be recorded with your consent. There are no “right” answers; I am only interested in your views on the above issues.

Please rest assured that I will abide by the confidentiality clauses discussed below.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

I respect your privacy and will undertake the following measures to protect your identity:

1. You are not required to reveal your true name and address, even if you do share your real name, these won’t be recorded.
2. Details which can potentially identify you will not be shared with anyone.
3. The only person who will have access to the recordings and your responses is the interviewer.
4. The actual recording will only be used so that the interviewer is able to correctly write down all your responses, which is difficult to do while conducting an interview.

5. **Storage and security of data** – all audio recordings used during your interview will be destroyed once the data has been transcribed (written down) and analyzed, after which you will be referred to by your pseudonym (fake name).

6. The interview will take place in a private room and your responses **will not be discussed with any other individual**, including those who have assisted in recruiting you.

### Your Rights to Participation and Withdrawal

- Your participation in this study is entirely **VOLUNTARY**, which means you can choose whether or not you want to participate in the study.
- If you give consent to participate, you can choose to stop answering questions when you want to and/or refuse to answer any questions that you don’t want to answer.

**APPENDIX B**
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Pseudonym: ____________________

Consent to Participate in Research

I have read and I understand the information provided above. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions that I may have and all of the questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

1. By signing in the space provided below, I give my consent to participate in the research that the attached Participant Information Sheet describes.

____________________________ (signature)                           __________________(Date)

2. By signing in the space provided below, I give my consent to have my interview session recorded:

____________________________(signature)                         _____________________(Date)

Witnessed by: _________________________ (name of interviewer)

____________________________ (signature)               _____________________(Date)

If you have any additional questions regarding the research, please contact the Chief Supervisor—Dr. Yoko Kanemasu on Kanemasu_y@usp.ac.fj or 3232516.

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM

Pseudonym: ............

Informed Consent Form

Dear Madam,

Your permission is requested to take part in the research for my Master’s Thesis – Sociology. This research is conducted to explore the lives and experiences of women in Fiji’s Women Prison. As such, you will be asked questions regarding your personal experiences and views of Fiji’s Women Prison and Rehabilitation programs offered by the Prisons Department. Participation is entirely voluntary and will take only 10-15 minutes of your time per week. Please note that once you start answering (1) you can refuse to answer questions that you don’t want to and (2) choose to withdraw from the study at any point you wish to. Please also note that responses will be kept anonymous. For this reason you are not required to reveal your name or any other details that can potentially identify you. Your permission is also required for the use of voice recorder. Your honesty in your responses will be highly valued as it will have implications on the research output.

If you have any questions regarding this research please contact the supervisor, Dr. Yoko Kanemasu on Kanemasu_y@usp.ac.fj or 3232516

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<th>I agree to participate in a completely voluntary manner</th>
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Please sign below if you wish to proceed with the survey

Signature _____________________  Date: _____________

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH INMATES

Pseudonyms:
Agnes  20/02/14; 11/06/14; 18/08/14
Alisi  16/06/14
Cindy (International Inmate)  04/03/14
Ema  11/6/14 & 05/08/14
Fulori  09/06/14
Grace (International Inmate)  04/03/14
Ili  20/11/13
Kalisi  15/08/14
Kini  18/08/14
Kiran  13/06/14
Lucy  18/08/14
Lydia  13/6/14
Mahek  05/08/14
Makereta  16/06/14
Mareta  18/08/14
Maria  25/02/14
Mere  16/07/14
Mili  18/08/14
Mohini  18/02/14
Mohini  20/02/14
Oli  16/07/14
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