

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INMATE INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

A CASE STUDY AT PUSAT PEMULIHAN DADAH,
BUKIT MERTAJAM,
PENANG.

oleh

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To my supervisor, Dr. Raymond Lee, my gratitude for the helpful tips and pointers that finally helped me to organise my data. In addition, I appreciate the patience he has shown towards my habitual delays with drafts of the report.

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Thank you all again.

SINOPSIS

Kajian ini menumpukan perhatian kepada pengalaman-pengalaman penghuni-penghuni dalam satu jenis institusi yang dikonsepsikan sebagai 'total institution'. Institusi yang dikaji ialah Pusat Pemulihan Dadah, Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang, atau dengan ringkasnya PPDBM.

PPDBM didapati menunjukkan ciri-ciri tertentu yang seakan-akan sama dengan sifat-sifat yang dikaitkan pada konsep institusi 'total'. Seterusnya, pendekatan Goffman yang bercorak 'total institution' telah diterima sebagai sesuai untuk mengkaji keadaan pengalaman-pengalaman penghuni-penghuni di PPDBM. Akibat daripada penemuan-penemuan pengkaji sebagai seorang 'participant observer' di PPDBM, aspek-aspek pengalaman penghuni dan corak perubahan penghuni terhadap keadaan pengalamannya telah dihuraikan dan kemudiannya dibincang.

Selanjutnya, pengkaji telah membuat kesimpulan bahawa aspek fizikal dan komuniti sesebuah institusi seperti PPDBM adalah mempengaruhi pengalaman dan tindak-balas penghuni-penghuni. Syor-syor telah dikemukakan oleh pengkaji, berasaskan pendapat-pendapatnya yang berhasil daripada pengalaman kajian ini. Akan tetapi, kelemahan kajian juga diakui dan cadangan-cadangan sewajarnya disokong.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		ii
SINOPSIS		iii
		<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION		1
1.1 Aim		1
1.2 Theoretical Perspective		2
1.3 Methodology		4
1.4 Methodological Problems		10
CHAPTER TWO : THE INSTITUTION: STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION		13
2.1 Brief History		13
2.2 Administrative Organization		13
2.3 General Description		15
2.4 The Inmates		18
2.5 The Rehabilitation Programme		21
2.6 Discipline		27
2.7 Summary		29
CHAPTER THREE: INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF INMATES		31
3.1 Mortifications of Self		31
3.2 Formal Instructions in Privilege System		52
3.3 Conclusions		53
CHAPTER FOUR : ADJUSTMENTS TO INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCES		54
4.1 Concepts		54
4.2 Examples of Secondary Adjustments at PPDBM		55
4.3 Inmate Social Organization		67
4.4 Conclusions		76
CHAPTER FIVE : AN OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS		77
5.1 An Overview		77
5.2 Conclusions		78
APPENDICES		80
BIBLIOGRAPHY		87
PHOTOGRAPHS (P1 - P24)		88
EXHIBITS		94

(1) A rather detail survey of studies on inmate communities is found in H. (1977), "Prisoner Subcultures", Lexington, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath & Co.

(2) Goffman, E., (1961), "Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates", London, Penguin Books Limited.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The study of inmate communities continue to be of interest in prison research and literature.⁽¹⁾ Why is this so? Individuals in incarceration are moulded into a closed community and this moulding is created by structural barriers against social intercourse with the larger society. Nonetheless, such a social existence has been found to generate its own world. The inmate community is seen as capable of creating a meaningful social environment for its members. By virtue of this characteristic, inmate communities have attracted much attention and research. For this reason, the present paper examined one such community.

1.1 Aim

This study seeks to identify and then examine the various institutional experiences of inmates and their community at a drug rehabilitation centre at Bukit Mertajam, Penang. (The drug rehabilitation centre is hereon referred to as Pusat Pemulihan Dadah, Bukit Mertajam, or PPDBM).

The concept of a total institution as defined by Goffman⁽²⁾ is applied to PPDBM. This is because PPDBM exhibited attributes that are

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- (1) A rather detail survey of studies on inmate communities is found in Bowker, L.H. (1977), "Prisoner Subcultures", Lexington, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath & Co.
- (2) Goffman, E., (1961), "Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates", London, Penguin Books Limited.

characteristic of a total institution. See (1.2) for a discussion on this.

In addition, the study also takes a look at the social experiences of the inmate community. More specifically, it is to examine the inmates' social organization and social control system.

The study does not intend to be critical or evaluative of the rehabilitation programme at PPDBM. However, it is obvious that a discussion of the relevant inmate experiences present at PPDBM and their significance to the community of inmates does provide us with an idea on how inmates had responded to their physical environment and social conditions. Considering these two aspects of residential rehabilitation may lead us to consider the effects these aspects impinged on the programme.

1.2 Theoretical Perspective

According to Goffman, "A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life".⁽¹⁾

A total institution has a dual character. It is part residential community and part formal organization. Furthermore it has a family of attributes, "First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 11. From the definition, Goffman further classified total institutions into five rough groupings. See p. 16.

and under the same authority. Second, each phase of the members daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a pre-arranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution". (1)

These attributes are certainly characteristic of PPDBM. It is a residential centre for rehabilitating drug dependents within the maximum period of six months. The inmates are subject to the same authority, this authority being symbolized in a set of explicit formal rulings and enforced by a body of officials. Institutional activities follow a specified time table and cater to all residents. The institution's goal is to provide a rehabilitation programme.

The institutional character of PPDBM is described further in Chapter Two, "The Institution: Structure and Organization". An institutional perspective of PPDBM is the framework in which the data of this study was analyzed.

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 17.

For a critique of Goffman's formulation of the total institution concept and total institution attributes, see Perry, N., "The Two Cultures and the total institution", in British Journal of Sociology, No.25, 1974, p. 345-355.

Studies of inmate communities in prisons, following the tradition set by Clemmer,⁽¹⁾ focus ed on the concept of a subculture. This penological perspective was not adopted here, as the use of a subculture concept has not proved to be a very satisfactory explanatory concept.⁽²⁾

1.3 Methodology

The principal method of gathering data was participant-observation. Goffman, in choosing the design of his field study said, "... a good way to learn about any of these worlds is to submit oneself in the company of the members to the daily round of petty contingencies to which they are subject".⁽³⁾ In other words, he advocated participant-observation.

Participant-observation as a method of field study is in fact an incorporation of a number of techniques. Some of these techniques do not, in the literal sense, involve participation at all. By this I mean that the researcher does not do everything that the subjects do but that his mere presence amongst members of the particular community qualifies him as a participant.

(1) Bowker, L.H., Op.Cit., p.6.

(2) Fine, G.A. & Kleinman, S., "Rethinking Subculture: An Interactionist Analysis", in American Journal of Sociology, No.1, Vol. 85, 1979, p.1-19. A total institutions perspective is considered one of the contemporary approaches to the study of Prisoner Subcultures, Bowker, L.H., Op.Cit. p. 45.

(3) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.7.

I was in PPDBM from February 20th to April 9th, 1981.

Official permission to conduct a research study at PPDBM was obtained from Kementerian Kebajikan Am, Malaysia. The acting principal at PPDBM granted me permission to enter and conduct the research but I was not permitted to stay overnight throughout the duration of the study. I was told that there was no available space to accommodate me. In addition, I was not allowed to tape formal and informal interviews. No reasons were given to explain this refusal.

On my first day at PPDBM, I was formally introduced to the staff and inmates. My role as a researcher was made known to the administrator, the staff and the inmates. However, it should be pointed out that the precise nature of the study was only vaguely conveyed. I was merely another 'researcher' studying PPDBM in general. ⁽¹⁾

As a whole, I managed to obtain sufficient administrative and staff cooperation. I had sufficient freedom of movement to conduct observations at various sites within PPDBM and there was easy access to official documents. The latter was obtained through official permission from the acting principal and I had to sign for these documents.

My first few days at PPDBM were spent in getting to know the staff, the inmates and the institution. I engaged myself in conversations with members of the staff and members of the community of inmates. For me,

(1) Officially, I was a research assistant for the Institute of Higher Learning, University of Malaya on a project entitled, "Social processes of Drug Addiction and Rehabilitation".

it was an opportunity to establish a working relationship and for them, it was an opportunity to get acquainted to me.

A cultural wisdom of the community was gained through the ability to be present to observe and hear a lot of informal talk, on-going descriptions and discussions. In order to perceive and be sensitive to the meanings found in the community's social processes, I sought to be sufficiently conversant in their ways. I proceeded to establish trust and rapport with individual inmates as well as the general population of the community as a whole. However, care was taken not to be overly identified with certain individuals or cliques as this might be misconstrued as partisan support.

In my dealings with the inmates, I made it explicitly clear that I was not an officer of PPDBM but just an ordinary university student interested in a research undertaking so as to contribute to knowledge and an understanding of certain phenomena. By telling them that I was not allied to anybody nor to any authorities made it possible for me to develop a relaxed informal relationship. Through such an informal relationship both parties were significantly more accessible to one another.

The inmates had my solemn promise that their identities would remain anonymous, regardless of what they chose to share with me about their institutional experiences. With this assurance, a number of inmates had voluntarily come forward to share uninhibitedly. I was also able to recruit informers.

Altogether, I had eight informers and these were inmates from all three ethnic groups found at PPDBM. The major ethnic groups were the Malays, Chinese and Indians. Having informers was an additional methodological tool in addition to my daily direct observation and participation of inmate social life. Informers helped me to penetrate various 'public fronts' and be alert to private behaviour. In protecting their self-images and clandestine activities, inmates are generally experts in the management of fronts. (1)

There was no employment of structured questionnaires. In formal and informal interviews that I conducted, open-ended questions on the same standard issues were either directly asked or hinted at. For instance, "How is life here at PPDBM?"; "How do you find the other inmates whom you are expected to interact and live with?"; "Do the inmates here get along well with each other?"; "Do you see strong friendship ties or conflicts between individuals and cliques, or is there any ethnic tension?".

Not all the inmates that I talked to were willing to divulge information that they considered were in conflict with the closely guarded interests of their community or the institution. Some were evasive and some were apprehensive and hesitant.

In situations like these, I sought to encourage and lead them gently on. I reiterated my neutral stand and my interests in objective research only. I did not continue my line of questioning if a certain

(1) Goffman, E., (1959), "Presentation of Self in Everyday Life", London, Penguin Books Limited, p. 231.

individual appeared to be troubled or adamant in a defensive posture. So as to make him feel at ease again, I would change the subject of our conversation.

For those individuals who appeared uninhibited and eager, I proceeded to be more specific in my questions. In a relaxed and subdued manner of questioning, I would ask; "Were you subjected to any orientation programmes from the senior inmates and if so what were the nature of these orientation programmes?"; "Have you or any of your inmate friends any quarrels with the staff, the administration and the rehabilitation programmes?" and, "Is there anything significant going on here that you think would be of interest to me and you don't mind telling me about it?"

I conducted formal interviews in the privacy of one of the staff's cubicle-like rooms. The individual being interviewed was in full view of my note-taking. Although we were both seated on opposite sides of the desk, the inmate was approached in the manner of an ordinary conversation, punctuated with digressions and jokes. This was to avoid the notion that an 'interrogation' was in progress.

Informal conversations with individuals or groups of individuals were conducted in an impromptu manner and at various sites within the centre's compound. It would be over a game of table-tennis or carrom, over meals or tea breaks. Sometimes, it would just be a friendly 'chit-chat' or an offering of companionship to an isolated individual or groups of individuals resting or relaxing by the benches in the evenings or

during their free time. I talked to twenty-eight individuals and several groups of individuals in this manner.

In formal interviews, I talked to thirteen individuals. By conducting both these formal and informal interviews I was able to check and cross-check discrepancies in accounts. Furthermore, I obtained new or additional information. From the total forty-one individuals, eight finally took the role of informers.

Field notes on observations and informal interviews were made after the observations or interviews. Conspicuous note-taking would have attracted the attention of those being observed. It could also disrupt the continuity of those who were in free-flow conversation with me. However, notes were made as soon as possible while the observations and information gathered were still fresh in my memory.

A day's field work at the centre involved odd hours. On the average a minimum of 7 to 8 hours were spent on observations. By 8 p.m. when all the inmates were locked inside their dormitories, my contacts with the community ended there. Even then, sometimes I would stay on till as late as 10p.m. or later.

I had accommodation at a relative's house about two miles away from PPDBM. At PPDBM, I was not allowed to take meals. At times however, some officers gave me their ration and the inmates invited me to share with them.

1.4 Methodological Problems

The first question that comes to mind is, "Did the presence of the observer influence the behaviour of the subjects who were being observed?"

There is general agreement that the effect of an observer is dependent on the nature of the groups observed, the type of observations and the nature of the subject's activity. Participant observation of the inmates at PPDBM did not bias the observations.

It was noted that after some time, the presence of the observer was taken for granted. Although the inmates at PPDBM were initially fascinated by the presence of an outsider who is interested in their affairs and who provided an interesting diversion to their daily routine, their interests soon waned. After some time, the inmates began to see me as part and parcel of the institution and my daily presence at the centre became accepted.

There was however, the problem of exaggeration in accounts given by the inmates. In order to resolve this problem, I tried to be as alert as possible to the subtle differences between the inmates' public and private behaviour. In addition, care was taken to note conflicting accounts given by the same individual over time. Consistency of behaviour was quite a reasonable indicator of consistent attitude manifestation.

Even though my presence at PPDBM was gradually taken for granted there were times when I was duped by the many fronts used by certain inmates.

John Irwin⁽¹⁾ talked about a 'limbo membership' in which the researcher was tentatively accepted by his subjects and was allowed to observe only certain selected activities before being allowed to observe other aspects of their way of life. I had such a similar experience with the inmate community at PPDBM. I had to constantly assure certain individuals or groups of individuals that I could be trusted. With each step of progress in mutual trust, I could see more and I could hear more.

In some occasions, I was tested with some privileged information to see whether I would squeal. Since I did not, I gained their trust. My informers were quite apprehensive about some of those information they divulged to me.

They did not want to be over-heard by other inmates, they sought out a private place for a conversation with me, they fidgeted, obviously nervous and for fear of eavesdroppers. Such a behaviour could be attributed to the accepted fact amongst inmates that they don't trust each other very much.⁽²⁾ An individual sharing information would even change the subject if another inmate passed by and decided to join in the conversation.

Many of my informers were inmates who were about to leave PPDBM and felt that the risks they were subject to would soon diminish when they leave the premises. These risks pertain to sanctions instituted by the

(1) Irwin, J., "Participant Observation of Criminals", in Douglas, J.D. (ed.), (1972) Research on Deviance, New York, Random House, p. 117.

(2) This contrasts with their solidarity against authority. See Chapter Three, "Antagonistic Stereotypes".

illegal social control agents of the inmate community. This aspect of the inmates' social existence would be discussed in Chapter Four.

Reliance on key informers does not mean that one accepts the whole sale out-pouring of information, whether privileged or not, without checking and cross-checking for discrepancies.⁽¹⁾ To do this, I tried to witness the phenomenon at hand rather than relying on hearsay evidence alone. If this was not possible, I had to rely on an indepth questioning of the informer. This was then cross-checked with accounts from other informers on the same event. In this way, the authenticity of the information given could be determined.

2.2 Administrative Organization

Both the institutions are under the administration of the Ministry of Welfare Services, Malaysia. With regards to PUSM, the administrative structure at the time of study comprised:-

- (a) Acting Principal - Throughout the duration of the study, the post was filled by the assistant principal who was also the unit head of PUSM.
- (b) Social Welfare Officer - There were altogether four such officers.

(1) Katz, D., "Field Studies" in Festingert and Katz, D. (ed.), (1961) Research Methods in the Behavioural Sciences, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, p.68.

- 14 -

CHAPTER TWO

THE INSTITUTION : STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

2.1 Brief History

PPDBM started operation on October, 1975. It was not originally built for the purpose of rehabilitation of drug dependants but was renovated from an institution known as 'Rumah Kesenangan', a welfare centre for chronically ill and handicapped persons. With the implementation of the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Act, 1975, a section of 'Rumah Kesenangan' was turned into a drug rehabilitation centre. Until today, both these institutions exist side by side.

2.2 Administrative Organization

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- (b) Social Welfare Officer - There were altogether four such officers.
- (c) Assistant Social Welfare Officer - There were altogether five such officers.

- (d) Vocational teacher - There were altogether one permanent and four temporary based vocational teachers.
- (e) Counsellor - There was one local psychologist and another assigned from the American Peace Corps Association. The American psychologist left at the end of February upon completion of term of service. Both counsellors are female staff.
- (f) Recreational Therapist - There was one from the American Peace Corps Association. This was the only other female staff.
- (g) Guards - There were altogether four guards.

The principal is responsible for the overall conduct, management and discipline of the centre. Towards these ends, he is assisted by Social Welfare Officers and assistant Social Welfare officers. However, in view of the treatment orientation of the centre, there is in addition to the custodial staff, the therapeutic staff.

This therapeutic category includes vocational teachers, counsellors and a recreational therapist. With regards matters of health, a doctor from the district hospital, Bukit Mertajam makes a fortnightly visit. In addition, there is a hospital assistant on daily duty.

There is also another administrative machinery, which although not visibly involved in the daily course of life at PPDBM, nonetheless constitute an important organ of the centre. This, I refer to the Board of Visitors. It is responsible for a number of tasks and these include; reporting to the Director-General of Social Welfare any defects in the

administration of the centre, making recommendations on any matter relating to the centre and the usual tasks of reviewing cases for discharge. The Board is made up of members of the public appointed by the Minister of Welfare Services. In the conduct of these duties, the Board meets twice a month at the centre's premises. (See P1)

2.3 General Description

PPDBM is located three to four miles from the town of Bukit Mertajam. Its vicinity is largely a residential neighbourhood. Although PPDBM is a minimum security centre with few guards, it is nonetheless surrounded by barbed wire fencing, has padlocked iron-gate entrances and at designated times, routine roll calls are conducted. (See P2)

Structurally, the centre comprises adjoining single-storey buildings which houses the various activities of the centre. Namely, they are the general staff's office with individual cubicle-like staff rooms, workshops, dormitories, dining hall (see P3) and recreation room, as well as a prayer room for the Muslim inmates.

The maximum capacity of PPDBM with regards to accommodation at any one time is one hundred residents. Food is cooked by the kitchen staff of 'Rumah Kesenangan'. There is a fixed menu based on a dietary scale approved by the Director-General of Social Welfare.

There is ample space in the centre for outdoor recreation or games. Courts for volley-ball, sepak takraw and badminton are available. Table tennis is also played. Just outside the entrance to the centre's

main grounds, there is a garden plot which for purposes of occupational therapy is made accessible to a group of inmate gardeners.

At PPDBM, there are two blocks of dormitories which houses the residents. These are two separate blocks of building facing each other a short distance away. Each dormitory has its own bathrooms and toilets. The two dormitories have different maximum capacities. One of them can accommodate around thirty inmates and the other around seventy. (See P4)

One characteristic of the inmate population is its high turnover rate. For the month of February alone, twenty-six inmates were discharged and seven admitted (see Appendix B). Of the registered number of ninety-two inmates, only seventy-five were physically present at the centre. At the end of March, the registered number was seventy-two inmates but only fifty-eight were in the centre. This was because some inmates were under police custody and some had absconded. (1)

Each resident is provided with a separate bed, a pillow and a blanket. The new inmate is assigned to a particular dormitory and is housed there until his release four to six months later. (2)

(1) Inmates who were caught intimidating fellow inmates through violence, were placed under police custody.

(2) The law stipulates the period of rehabilitation as six months. However, the Board of Visitors may release a resident after four months from the date of his admission.

The dormitory is a place of rest, relaxation and sleep for the inmates. At certain designated times they are allowed into the dormitory and at others, they are locked out of these premises. When daily institutional activities are on, the dormitories are locked. During tea-breaks and meals, the inmates are allowed into their dormitories for a duration of fifteen minutes or so. At noon after lunch, the dormitories are opened to the inmates for a short siesta until roll call at 2p.m. (except on Fridays, which is at 2.30p.m.). These dormitories are opened again after the evening tea-break which is around 4p.m. and remain opened until 8p.m. at night when all the inmates are locked up till dawn. At 6a.m. when the day's physical fitness programme starts, the dormitories are opened again.

This routine of locking out the inmates at specific times of the day is not followed on week-ends, that is on Saturdays and Sundays.

Each of the dormitories has a black and white television set. Although lights are out at 10p.m., the inmates were allowed to finish off the programme they were watching. On week-ends, they were allowed viewing until the station adjourned for the night.

The custodial staff⁽¹⁾ operates on a shift basis. All the other staff members work normal office hours. The temporary vocational teachers work only the hours apportioned for vocational therapy, that is

(1) Although I have classified them rigidly, the administration and the staff themselves see their role as not wholly custodial but in some ways therapeutic too. This is partly because the officers can counsel the inmates under their charge.

from 9a.m. till noon. The recreational therapist work from the hours of 2p.m. onwards and sometimes stay on as late as 10p.m.

PPDBM is a restricted area and only authorized personnel are allowed into the premises. There are attendants on duty at the entrance and permission is required from the principal before any visitors are allowed entry.

2.4 The Inmates

Drug dependants⁽¹⁾ who are admitted to PPDBM are all committed by the Courts under the provisions of the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Act, 1977 and the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment No.3) Act, 1977. PPDBM serves the states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak.

Within a legal framework these drug dependants are classified into three broad categories. They are:-

- (a) The suspected drug dependant;
- (b) The drug dependant convicted of an offence under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance and
- (c) The volunteer drug dependant.

The majority of the inmates are heroin addicts. However, it must be noted that heroin addiction for most individuals seem to be the final phase in an addiction career, a career that has included the abuse

(1) Drug centres in Malaysia use the W.H.O. concept of a drug dependant.

of other drugs. These other drugs include opium, ganja (marihuana), morphine, MXs and Roche pills.

With regards to the ethnic groups of the inmate population, the Malays and the Chinese are the majorities, both groups being more or less equal in numbers. The Indians formed the minority ethnic group with about 10% of the total inmate population.

These inmates are a mixed group of individuals, drawing from the various spheres of wider society. They include drug dependants from government departments, statutory bodies, the private sector, private enterprises, the unemployed and at one time a student. The majority comes from the private sector, private enterprises and the unemployed. Their age ranges from fifteen to forty years old, with a majority found between the ages of twenty-one to thirty. At one time, there were two inmates who were above forty years old.

Upon admission, the new inmate is first seen by the principal or his deputy who explains to him the facts of his situation, the purpose of his admission and the role of the centre in relation to him. He is told to behave accordingly and to participate in the activities designed for his rehabilitation. He is then sent down to the staff-room and there the duty officer or his assistant provides him with a set of centre rules (see Appendix C). In addition, he is also given a set of the centre's cigarette rules (see Appendix D).

All the new inmate's excess personal belongings are removed from him for storage by the authorities until the day of his discharge. The inmate is provided with standard issues by the centre's authorities. These included, shorts, T-shirts, tooth-paste, tooth-brush, soap for bathing and washing, soap for laundry, towels, a pillow and blanket. From time to time, items such as razors for shaving and detergents for laundry are issued. Items like these were replenishable and the inmates could obtain them by requesting it from the officer-in-charge.

The new inmate is asked to write his name on his T-shirt for identification. He is also told to provide urine for analysis before he is admitted into the centre's main grounds. He is also attired in his new clothings prior to entering the community.

Haircuts, provided free of charge by the centre are made available to the inmates at random intervals (see P5). Usually most of the new inmates have very short haircuts. As such, one can easily differentiate between the newer and older residents of the centre.

A file containing records of the inmate's psycho-social history, legal history and other relevant background history of an addict's career is maintained throughout the duration of his stay. Before admission itself the new resident is questioned about his personal particulars. For example, home address, parents' occupation, physical identifying marks and so on. A passport size photograph of the inmate is later taken and kept together with his personal file. Each inmate is placed under the charge of an officer who is in turn responsible for him.

2.5 The Rehabilitation Programme

- (1) The principles of rehabilitation are as follows⁽¹⁾:-
- (a) The rehabilitation programme is directed in such a way that the resident realises beyond any doubt that he himself is responsible for deriving the maximum benefit from his stay at the centre. Motivation is seen to play a crucial role in the rehabilitation process. The therapeutic programme is complimented by psychological treatment, which consists of individual and group counselling. There is also work therapy, moral and religious instruction and a wide range of recreational activities.
 - (b) The Centres are situated some distance away from the concentrated urbanised areas to make separation of the residents from his family possible. At the same time, they are not too far from essential facilities of medical care, access of persons and groups offering voluntary services.
 - (c) The Centres attempt to offer a full and varied programme of purposeful activities designed to encourage the residents to return to a meaningful life with confidence and self-respect restored.

(1) Adnan b. Hj. Abdullah (Director-General of Social Welfare, Malaysia), "Developing a National Rehabilitation Programme for Drug Dependents in Malaysia", in Workshop on Reduction of Demand for Illicit Drugs in South East Asia, Colombo Plan Bureau, Sri Lanka, 1979, p. 214.

(d) The Centres strive to be completely drug-free without assuming a prison-like atmosphere. However, the character of the institution is not static, but flexible to allow variations to meet with changing circumstances.

(e) The Centre's ultimate goal is to provide a comprehensive rehabilitative programme aimed at reconstructing and remoulding the drug dependant to become a responsible productive citizen.

At PPDEM, as at every Centre, there is a daily programme of activities. There is a drawn-up institutional daily time-table which include the hours of rising, physical training, workshop therapies, meals, tea breaks, moral and religious instructions, domestic work, indoor and outdoor recreation, free-time and retiring.

With regards to the centre's domestic maintenance, it is the policy to allow all domestic and compound chores to be carried out by the residents themselves. It is also regarded as a means of therapeutic treatment. As such upon admission, the new resident is assigned to one of the several workshop sections available at the centre.⁽¹⁾ This is intended to provide him with vocational or occupational therapy.

(ii) Work Sections

There is a 'Paint' section, which is delegated the task of paint jobs that are to be done at PPDEM or 'Rumah Kesenangan' (see P6). Then

(1) Inmates who have some previous skills or experiences in any of the workshop sections may request to be placed in the area of his choice.

there is the 'Gardening' section which look after and maintain the centre's garden plot (see P7). Some residents would be under the 'Rotan' or cane section and they would be engaged in making rattan products for sale. The money is collected and kept by the centre (see P8).

Another section is the 'kimpalan' or welding therapy session. The group here is involved in metal work and their products are also for sale (see P9). Looking after the residents' meal arrangement are a group of inmates under the 'Dining' team. They are in charge of getting the food from 'Rumah Kesenangan's' cafeteria at the appointed time. It is also their duty to apportion out the ration of food for each inmate. Washing of dishes and dry-cleaning them also comes under the team's responsibilities. Members of this team are given a blue-coloured T-shirt which distinguishes them from other inmates (see P10, P11 and P12).

The centre's compound cleanliness and maintenance is the charge of the 'Kawasan' or compound section. They would be joined by the general inmate population for a 'gotong-royong' clean up whenever the centre is to be spruce up when official visitors are expected (see P13).

The 'Tukang Kayu' or woodwork section also produces marketable products. In addition, the members engage in community projects organized by district social welfare officers. These projects involve their outside participation whereby they are accompanied on trips to repair 'kampung' houses or construct new sheds for the villagers (see P14 and P15).

Apart from these major sections where the membership was on the average six to seven inmates, there were two additional sections where the membership was quite restricted in view of its nature. There was the drawing section where there was only one inmate who was engaged in drawing tasks. In the tailoring section, there were only two inmates. This section was given the task of sewing inmates' torn clothings and also to prepare clothings for inmates of 'Rumah Kesenangan'.

(iii) Recreation

There is both indoor and outdoor recreational activities at PPDEM. Recreational therapy is seen as a positive approach towards enhancing the quality of an individual's life by providing recreation and leisure needs, leisure attitudes and values, promoting self-awareness, developing decision-making skills and activity skills. It is believed that through activity involvement, social interaction skills would be acquired.

With these objectives in mind, there are two time slots apportioned for these sort of therapies. On week days, from Mondays to Thursdays, there is an indoor recreational session conducted at the recreational room and dining hall from 2p.m. to 4p.m. On Fridays, this slot is utilized for talks (or dialogues), debates or quiz.

Indoor recreation include the following compendium of games: carrom, 'sahibba' a Malay version of scrabble, 'saidina' a Malay version of Monopoly, draughts which is colloquially called 'Dam' and Chinese chess.

Apart from these games, there are other recreational activities. They include a session of listening to cassette tapes. The inmates are provided with a selection of English, Malay, Chinese and Indian songs.

For those interested in music, there are several guitars available for common use. In addition, there are also other musical instruments. For example, harmonicas, tambourines, cymbals, maracas, quiro, triangle sets, melodin and timbalis drums. In view of this, several musically talented inmates grouped together to officially form the centre's musical band. The band practises in preparation for performances within the centre (that is, when there are visitors) and outside the centre when there are invitations to perform at other institutions, like orphanages or old folk's hime (see P16). At times, there were even sketches and drama presentations.

Games such as carrom or 'Dam' are not necessarily engaged in at only appointed times of indoor recreation. These games are accessible to the inmates at all times and some of the inmates indulge in them during their spare or relaxation hours. This holds true too for merry-making and music-making whereby the inmates just group together and entertain each other.

Turning to outdoor recreation, one finds that these are particularly the sport activities of the centre. Games such as football, volleyball, 'sepak takraw', 'sepak raga', table tennis and badminton are the choices available to the inmates. Apart from that there are also some individual exercises and weight-lifting (see P17, P18, P19 and P20).

Organized sporting competitions in football, volleyball and 'sepak takraw' are held with outside teams and also amongst inmate teams. Sometimes, sport tournaments are also held between staff and inmates.

(iv) Arts and Crafts

Other recreational pursuits such as wood-burning, wood-carving, soap-carving and macrame were occasionally made available. There is also a centre magazine and contributions from the inmates are invited. Although this is the inmate's own magazine, there is supervision from staff in producing it.

There is a small library for the centre but the number and range of books is rather small. This is because the library has just been started. Although comics and magazines are available, the books remain unpopular because few inmates are literate. Even when the inmates were not illiterate, the books are of a different language medium.

(v) Counselling

Regularly scheduled group and individual counselling sessions are provided for all residents. Individual counselling is usually done in the mornings and group counselling in the afternoons, that is after the 2p.m. roll call. Counselling sessions are conducted in three language mediums. The languages are English, Bahasa Malaysia and Mandarin. Some sessions do cater for Chinese inmates with local Chinese dialects, for example, a Hokkien session.

Each individual resident is required to attend several individual counselling sessions, especially so upon admission. Each individual is also a member of a group counselling session (see P21 and P22). Apart from the scheduled sessions, the inmates are encouraged to seek out the counsellors when there are any problems they wished to discuss. The officers of the centre are also available for this purpose.

(vi) Moral and Religious Instructions

For the Muslims, there is a prayer room available for them to conduct prayers as well as religious instructions. 'Ugama' classes are conducted by a religious teacher nightly from Mondays till Thursdays (see P23).

On Sundays, a few Buddhist monks and temple representatives come by to conduct prayers and some form of preaching. These visits are however irregular. There is a Christian worship service and bible study session on Sunday mornings. These sessions are conducted by volunteer workers and the pastor of a nearby church (see P24). There is no Hindu religious instruction.

2.6 Discipline

At PPD&M, there is an overall policy of discipline which is enforced so as to ensure the smooth operation of the centre. Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, 1952 and later the Rehabilitation Centre Rules, 1977, it is stated in part (xvi) that the discipline of the centre shall be maintained by the personal influence of the principal and staff. It

shall be promoted by a system of rewards and privileges.

It was further stated that when punishment is necessary for the maintenance of discipline, one of the following methods shall be adopted:-

- (a) forfeiture of rewards or privileges (including earnings) or suspension from games and recreation;
- (b) extra work of a kind suitable to the resident but not of such nature or duration as to be injurious to health;
- (c) segregation from other residents.

However, it should be pointed out that the last form of punishment under (c) is used only in exceptional cases and is subject to certain conditions. A punishment record is usually kept on the number of offences committed.

With regards to PPDBM, there are three distinct forms of punishment meted out for misconduct and infraction of rules. These are loss of cigarette rations for a period of time, extension of stay and isolation. Corporal punishment as stated by law is not permissible.

As for privileges, there are minor and major ones. The principal privileges are the possibilities of an earlier discharge or an ability to obtain leave from the centre and visit homes.⁽¹⁾ Other

(1) Inmates are also allowed to have visits from parents or family members. However, this privilege is available to an inmate only when he has stayed a duration of two weeks at PPDBM. See item (10) of Appendix C.

privileges include participation on outings and picnics, excursions outside the centre in view of band performances, team games or community projects.

The more subtle unofficial privileges would include a good relationship with certain members of staff. An established rapport made it possible to obtain certain amenities not accessible to others, not to mention the attention and company of important staff members.

2.7 Summary

The description of PPDBM above has enabled us to identify and compare those common characteristics or attributes considered as being descriptive of a total institution.

First and foremost, PPDBM is a formal organization. Its structure is characterized by a hierarchy of officials. These officials are a formally organized group. There is a formal system of explicit rulings designed to enforce discipline and thus specify responsibilities and privileges for the inmates. Activities are regulated by an official time-table and becomes routinized. All these formal structures are organized to achieve an official goal - rehabilitation.

Secondly, PPDBM has a residential community. The drug dependants committed to PPDBM are physically located in one geographical location to form a community. This is a closed community as there are barriers to social intercourse with the larger society built right into the physical

plant. (1) Members of the community are like situated individuals for they derived from one category - drug dependants, and are now subject to the same physical environment and social condition.

This dual character leads us to consider the possible institutional experiences inmates are presented with in a total institution, more specifically in the context of PPDBM. In Chapters Three and Four, these experiences formed the topics of my discussions.

3.1 Mortifications of Self

When an individual is admitted into a total institution he assumes a new identity and status, he becomes an inmate. This new identity and status entails a series of experiences which is seen to mortify the image of his former self. To mortify is to degrade, to humiliate, to subdue.

Since it has been pointed out that the processes by which a person's self is mortified are fairly standard in total institutions, (1) what are these processes at PPDBM?

(a) Curtailment of Self

(1) The inmate community is not completely a world of its own as it bears some connection to structures in the wider society. Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.98.

With regards to the inmate community at PPDBM, examples of these connections are found in the visitations of family members, officials and researchers; excursions conducted through band performances, team games and community projects, and contacts with voluntary workers of Buddhist and Christian Organizations.

(2) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.24.

CHAPTER THREE

INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF INMATES

In this chapter, I shall consider the experiences PPDBM has generated for its inmates. Concepts derived from an institutional perspective are employed to describe these experiences.

3.1 Mortifications of Self

When an individual is admitted into a total institution he assumes a new identity and status, he becomes an inmate. This new identity and status entails a series of experiences which is seen to mortify the image of his former self. To mortify is to degrade, to humiliate, to subdue.

Since it has been pointed out that the processes by which a person's self is mortified are fairly standard in total institutions,⁽¹⁾ what are these processes at PPDBM?

(a) Curtailment of Self

A curtailment of self occurs when a barrier to social interaction with civil life is placed between the inmate and the larger society.

At PPDBM, drug dependants or inmates are confined for a minimum period of four months or a maximum period of six months. In

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.24.

other words, in view of security reasons and the rationale for rehabilitation, these individuals had to spend a period of time in incarceration. This is a curtailment of self as the individuals are not allowed to conduct social intercourse with the wider world of the larger society from which they come from. (1)

Membership in the centre requires that the individual be separated from his former social existence and be placed in a different one. This represents a curtailment of self as the individual now finds himself in a new social condition which the self is not usually accustomed to.

In general, the inmates at PPDBM miss their freedom of social interactions with civil society. However, this experience in curtailment of self generated different mortifying effects for the heterogeneous groups of inmates.

For those inmates who voluntarily submitted themselves for rehabilitation, this curtailment of self presented no mortifying effects. They were willing to pay the price in order to get rehabilitated. However, some admitted that they missed home and regretted that they had taken many aspects of life for granted while on the outside.

Those inmates who have had prison experiences were quick to remark that, "After all, what is six months? It would all be over in

(1) There are provisions for some contact with civil society. Refer to notes in p. 30 of this report.

no time!" As a result, other inmates often joked about how prisoners could sit through one or two years of imprisonment or for that matter life sentences and here they are complaining about six short months.

Lastly, there are those inmates with an involuntary membership at PPDBM. This category refers to those who were caught by police for drug addiction, and later committed by the Courts to undergo rehabilitation. Most of the inmates in this group experienced what Goffman has called a 'release binge fantasy'.⁽¹⁾

Their conversations often revolved around what they would do when they leave PPDBM. Whether seriously or jokingly, they would talk openly about their plans upon release and some of these fantasies included the desire to indulge in sexual exploits once again.⁽²⁾ Some even confided that they would go back to ganja (marihuana) again while others considered the possibility of taking heroin ('kow-kow') to make up for time lost and opportunity forgone while in the centre.⁽³⁾

It was a common theme that those who were 'polis kes' would surely return to drug addiction again. This is because the majority of them are all agreed that they were unfortunate to have been caught and

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.52.

(2) Most of them have had sexual experiences with prostitutes before and thus by sexual exploits, they mean to visit brothels again.

(3) 'kow-kow' is the Chinese addict's way of saying indulging one's self excessively to a treat of heroin or other drugs. This term was also understood and used by the other ethnic groups at PPDBM.

that in the first place, they have no desire of giving up the habit. In addition, they have 'suffered'⁽¹⁾ here and therefore they should make up for this by going back to drugs, especially heroin.

This involuntary group of inmates often conduct a daily count of the number of days they had spent in PPDBM and how many more days to go. In a way, their 'institutional age' becomes of significance because the faster they 'mature' the faster they are discharged. All one has to do is to keep out of trouble while serving one's term.

An index on the extent of curtailment of self at PPDBM is best represented by the extent of social excitement over official visits of important visitors, social visits from voluntary organizations and other visits to or from the institution. Personal excitement over home leave (available only upon special request), family visits and discharge is also another index on how real the curtailment of self had been on the inmates.

In both these indices, the higher the degree of excitement, the greater the effects of curtailment of self that had been experienced. From my observations, events in both categories received favourable responses and are looked forward to with enthusiasm.

(1) This is a reference to the physical 'ragging' experienced. This aspect would be discussed later in Chapter Four.

(1) Giffen, L., Op.Cit., p.24.

(2) Refer to notes in p. 28 of this report.

(b) Role Dispossession

By virtue of the barrier that prevented social contacts with an outside world, an inmate loses certain roles he used to play in civilian life. The role of an inmate now supercede all other roles.

It is the intention of many total institutions to initially withhold from the inmates the privilege of having visitors and visiting home. This is to ensure that a clean break with former roles is achieved and that an appreciation of role dispossession is developed.⁽¹⁾ The situation is the same at PPDBM.⁽²⁾

However, the mortifying aspects of role dispossession is not appreciated. In dispossessing past negative roles of the drug dependant, other positive roles also suffered the same fate. This I refer to the role of being a wage-earner or a bread-winner of one's family or a husband or a father.

At PPDBM, inmates have expressed concern over their other role dispossessions as a result of their being institutionalized. This was evident from the sharing during group counselling sessions and also through my personal conversations with them. They were worried and anxious about their jobs, wives, children and families.

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.24.

(2) Refer to notes in p. 28 of this report.

For these inmates, the facts of their other role dispossession is often a source of frustrations. They begin to see themselves as failures. However, not all inmates experienced this mortifying aspect of role dispossession. They approached counsellors and sought their help in getting the Welfare Department to provide financial aids to wives or to contact previous employers and explain the inmate's present circumstances or to contact families.

(c) Admission Procedures

Individuals who are admitted into PPDBM as an inmate were subjected to several stages of admission procedures. These included; the taking down of personal particulars to add to an existing record file of him, ⁽¹⁾ listing personal possessions for storage, ⁽²⁾ photographing, ⁽³⁾ assigning to dormitories, issuing institutional clothings and items, instructing as to rules and lastly to obtain urine for analysis.

These sequence of events can be seen as the initial moments of formal socialization in which the new entrant is 'trimmed' or 'programmed' into a status. For the next six months or so, his official status is that of an inmate and he shall remain so until his discharge.

(1) The file is from the field Welfare Officer in charge of the case.

(2) Goffman views the dispossession of property as a curtailment of self because persons invest feelings in their possessions. Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.27.

(3) Passport size photographs of the new residents are not immediately taken though.

(iii) This stripping and levelling of the new entrant is also a form of initiation as it initiates the new resident of PPDBM into a deferential position, the position being in relation to staff members. I shall discuss the mortifying aspects of this position when I consider the deference pattern of inmate behaviour towards staff.

(d) Staff-inmate Caste Model of Relationship

(i) Self-defining aspect of office

An experience of admission procedures would make obvious to inmates that they and the staff were of two different social categories. This is because the self-defining aspect of office is explicitly clear to those subordinated to that office. In other words, a staff is an officer of the institution and an inmate is only a resident of the institution.

(ii) Caste Model

This caste model has subsequently prescribed a formal relationship in staff-inmate and inmate-staff interactions. To the extent that an officer status is perceived by the inmates as an official and elevated social standing, the inmates have accorded it due respect and authority. Even members of the therapeutic staff were accorded an officer status. This is because the inmates perceived them to be officially identified to the institution.

(iii) Deference

The formal nature of staff-inmate working relationships has brought about an institutionally forced deference pattern of inmate behaviour towards staff. Inmates were often seen to adopt verbal acts of deference in their interaction with staff and at PPDEM, this was illustrated by the greetings directed to officers; "Good Morning, Sir!", "Selamat Pagi, Tuan!" or addressing the officers as "Encik". The Mr. or Miss is always attached to the name of staff members.

I noticed that this deferential position is almost second nature to the inmates. Even I was accorded the title 'Sir' and though I tried to change this, I was unsuccessful. Some of the inmates managed to curb their spontaneity to call me 'Sir' when they saw me. Other inmates still insisted that I be called 'Sir'. They pointed out to me that they perceived me as of a different social category and must thus be given due respect and esteem.

Inmates were also seen to humbly and politely ask for things. However, these polite postures are deceiving as the inmates might just be putting up a front. A number of inmates have confessed that their show of deference was just to salute the officer status and not the man. There were officers that they did not like at all but because of his authority and status, they did not oppose him overtly. Although they have lost their respect for him as a person, they continued to be conscious of the authority he symbolized.

(iv) Antagonistic Stereotypes

In a caste model type of interaction, there is bound to be much formal contact but little mutual penetration. As such there is this tendency for the two distinct categories to conceive each other in terms of antagonistic stereotypes. The inmates suspect that the staff perceives them as untrustworthy and irresponsible, they in return accused the officers of being high handed in their dealings with inmates. In addition, the inmates felt that the officers were unconcern about their welfare and were just interested in discharging the bare minimum of their duties and responsibilities. (1)

Let me quote an empirical case at PPDBM to illustrate tangibly the prevalence of antagonistic stereotyping between inmates and a member of the staff:-

(1) From Inmate's point of view

The majority of inmates at PPDBM felt that they were discriminated against by the hospital assistant. The inmates sensed that in his dealings, the hospital assistant distrusted them. As a result, he held the prejudiced view that inmates faked illnesses and injuries. (2)

(1) However, some inmates hastened to point out that members of the staff are not a homogeneous group. Some staff had been good to them and they have responded with gratitude and cooperation.

(2) Illegitimate use of sick bay is of course a traditional theme in total institutions. Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.200.

Those inmates who found this rigid view of them generalized to those who were innocent, regarded it as unfair and unwarranted. They often criticized this staff member but felt frustrated when they realized that they could not do anything about it. Matters were complicated when they saw that this staff member had the full backing of the acting principal himself.

(2) From the hospital assistant's point of view

It was the contention of the hospital assistant that it has been his experience in the past that inmates always tried to fake ailments and request for specific medications. He cited an example in which he considered a classic case of inmates' abuse of medication. This happened at PPDBM.

An officer was tricked many times into dispensing panadol tablets to some inmates who always complained about headaches. In reality, it appeared that the inmates pounded these tablets into powder form and spiked⁽¹⁾ it in their cigarettes, just as they had done with heroin in cigarettes. They, the inmates were trying to obtain some 'steam' or 'high' from this abuse.

Furthermore, the hospital assistant pointed out to me that inmates preferred cough mixtures with codeine, an opium derivative. As such, he has to be very careful in his dealings with the cunning, desperate and resourceful inmates.

(1) This is one route of administration in which heroin is mixed with the tobacco of a cigarette stick and then smoked.

The inmates are very likely to abuse their medication. Even spirits (industrial alcohol) was stolen from the workshop and then drunk to obtain that much desired 'high'. Not only that, thinner was also siphoned off and then sniffed.⁽¹⁾ The inmates therefore have a potential to abuse substances without considering the consequences of their actions. It therefore follows that there ought to be a certain amount of caution, all the more when it involves a question of potent drugs for medication.

(3) From inmate's point of view again

The inmates contended that it was impossible to achieve any effects considered a 'high' from the use of panadol powder spiked in a cigarette. Panadol, they added, is different from heroin.

Furthermore, no one in his right mind would try to fake illness and get away with it. Considering that they now know the attitude of this staff member, would they still try to fake illness and approach him? The answer is no! Why should someone bother to have himself ridiculed and not get any medication, unless he himself knew for sure that he did not feel well and sought treatment.

(4) Conclusions

This episode of antagonism still persisted on the day I left PPDBM. A few inmates even refused to consult the hospital assistant although they were physically injured and the wound was externally visible.

(1) These offences were committed while I was not yet at PPDBM. It happened in late January and early February 1981. Some of the abusers were sent to the District Hospital when they vomitted.

They swore never to have anything to do with him again. The existence of antagonistic stereotypes highlight for us three other important aspects of staff-inmate relationship.

(1) Staff's conflict of ideals in their relationship with inmates.

The staff is faced with a conflict of ideals. On the one hand, they have to present the demands of the institution to their charges, the inmates. On the other hand, (PPDBM being oriented towards therapeutic ends) they must impress upon the inmates that they strive to be humane in the discharge of their duties.⁽¹⁾

However, there are many areas of an officer's role that requires him or her to maintain a reasonable social distance from his or her charges in order to function effectively. This task of effecting an appropriate distance from one's charges is indeed difficult and therefore requires special skills.⁽²⁾

Custodial and therapeutic staff members are always in conflict. It is not unusual for therapeutic staff in total institutions to complain that their therapy is only given token support.⁽³⁾ The situation at PPDBM is no different.

(1) Treatment facilities have humanitarian advantage over custody facilities but no utilitarian advantage in outcomes. Bowker, L.H., Op.Cit., p.52.

(2) Ibid., p. 126.

(3) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.88.

(ii) Inmate solidarity

Inmates may perceive themselves as being administered to as a single unit, thus giving rise to a lively sense of common fate.⁽¹⁾ There can be an identification with the plight or life situation of one another and this often developed into a mutual supportive relationship amongst members.

Such solidarizing tendencies can lead to a situation whereby members of the community collectively uphold countermeasures in opposition to staff and institution. Let me illustrate an instance of this inmate posture at PPDBM.

In their show of dissatisfaction, inmates who were anxious about their date of discharge often displayed erratic behaviour. Outbursts of temper and frustrations were common. Caught in what was perceived by him to be an uncomfortable and uncertain situation, the inmate became emotional and resorted to picking a quarrel with the institution and the staff. Other inmates were apparently giving their tacit support and sympathy in enacting this sort of behaviour.

The community alternated between passive concern and sudden over-indulgent modes of identification with the plight of the inmate concerned. Certain inmates saw it as an opportunity to voice their own grievances and came forward to discredit the institution and hurled criticisms at the shortcomings of the administration.

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.58-59.

It was usually at this time that the theme in group conversations became anchored on justice, fairness, commensuration of punishment to offences, and favouritism. Inconsistencies in the duration of stay would be excitedly pointed out, specific inmates mentioned with regards their early discharge despite the fact that they had committed worse offences. Whether these claims were founded or not were not questioned. They just brought it up casually as though it was an obvious thing and proceeded to talk about it enthusiastically.

Some inmates even went to the extent of accusing the staff and the administration of cruelty. The latter were seen as deliberately causing hardships by delaying a case for discharge. Looking at the situation from their perspective, most of the inmates tended to ask, "Don't these people (referring to the staff) know that they will drive an inmate crazy by keeping him longer than required? This would surely trigger off intense frustrations in him and make him a likely candidate for the drug scene again! All those months of agonizing rehabilitation would be wasted away by allowing this incident to encroach upon a happy occasion (the discharge)".

(iii) Signs of Disaffiliation and Ritual Insurbordination

As a result of strained relations with staff members as well as the institution, inmates exhibited various reactions that can be seen as signs of disaffiliation. (1)

(1) Examples are; insolence, silence, sotto voce remarks, uncooperativeness, malicious destruction of interior decorations, et cetera. Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.269.

It was pointed out by Goffman that acts of hostility against the institution have often to rely on limited, ill-designed devices.⁽¹⁾ For example, the banging of a chair against the floor. This hostile act of behaviour was also observed at PPDBM.

Several inmates who had their stay extended and several others who have had a bad encounter with staff were seen to uninhibitedly kick chairs and tables in their sudden forceful expression of pent-up anger and frustration. Those inmates in the former category would also simply shout or scream loudly and continuously for quite a substantial period of time. This was done for no apparent reasons at all⁽²⁾ and at anytime and anywhere of PPDBM main grounds.

These inmates also showed signs of disaffiliation by not attending their respective work sections, skipping evening games and other recreational activities and not seeking counselling.

Earlier, I had mentioned that the act of verbal deference towards staff may be a front enacted by inmates. This is an example of ritual insubordination.⁽³⁾ According to Goffman⁽⁴⁾ some acts of ritual

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 269.

(2) According to the actors themselves, such gimmicks appeared to be therapeutic. It helped them to release 'steam' or tension. Their spectators on the other hand found it rather amusing as it provided a few comic moments to be laughed at.

(3) This may also serve as a self-preserving 'rejection of one's rejectors' as pointed out by McCorkle and Kofn. See Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.276.

(4) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 277.

insubordination rely on irony and a standard irony in total institutions is giving nicknames to especially threatening or unpleasant aspects of the environment.

With regards to PPDBM, there were such ritual insubordinations as derogatory remarks made out of the hearing of authority and even gestures performed behind the backs of certain staff members. In addition, in relation to irony, almost every inmate in the community knows who 'Dr. KK' is. They have coined this term of address because panadol tablets (marked KK or Kementerian Kesihatan) was the standard medication they obtained for almost all their general complaints of ailments.

(e) Regimentation

Surveillance of large numbers of persons requires regimentation, that is, activities are regulated and there is constant sanctioning of one's actions. In total institutions, regimentation ensures institutional efficiency by designating specific times for the performance of specific activities.

Examples of regimentation at PPDBM include; rising, physical fitness programme, roll calls, therapies, meals, tea breaks, recreation and retiring. Therefore, a day's activities are scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next. The schedule applies from Mondays till Saturdays (this day is a half-day) and the sequence of activities are adhered to.

There is therefore little personal autonomy over one's daily actions and the inmates are without fail⁽¹⁾ expected to submit themselves to this regimentation from the day they were admitted till the day they are discharged,

An interesting character has emerged in the behaviour of inmates as a result of their being subjected to constant regimentation. They have grown accustomed to having certain expectations at specific times. For example, inmates expect food, cigarettes and tea when the time for rationing these items drew near. Therefore, when regimentation was disrupted, when the sequence of events did not follow, they were the first people to feel it and grew restless. They would even go out of their way to remind staff members that a certain activity was late and then inquired about the causes of the delay.

(f) Contaminative Exposure

Living in a closed community in total institutions make for the possibility that territories of self may be violated. To quote Goffman,⁽²⁾ "On the outside, the individual can hold objects of self-feeling - such as his body, his immediate actions, his thoughts, and some of his possessions - clear of contact with alien and contaminating things. But in total institutions these territories of the self are violated; the boundary

(1) Those who were sick were excused. This exemption was made by the hospital assistant.

(2) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.32-33.

that the individual places between his being and the environment is invaded and the embodiments of self profaned". There are however, various types of contaminative exposures.

What was the situation like at PPDBM with regards to this aspect of mortification of self? Experiences of contaminative exposure were as follows:-

(i) Forced interpersonal contact with a mixed group of individuals and some of whom may be undesirable. The experience of being intimidated by a background of physical threats and actual physical violence may result from one's forced interpersonal contact with an undesirable person. This undesirable person is usually a senior inmate who illegitimately exercised social control over the community by way of a 'taiko' or 'abang' system. This aspect of inmate social organization is discussed later in Chapter Four.

Furthermore, within the larger company of other inmates, one is never fully alone. There is no privacy.

(ii) The experience of physical contamination is reflected in complaints about getting a skin disease from another inmate. Several inmates also complained that they had their faces smeared with toothpaste because they happened to sleep earlier than the rest of the inmates. (1)

(1) New inmates experienced this as a form of 'ragging', older inmates experienced it as part of horseplay amongst peers.

(iii) The inmates also experienced contaminative exposure in the sense that they were subject to bodily search by staff. In addition, their personal mail were also read by staff and sometimes part of the contents would be censored.⁽¹⁾

(iv) An inmate's informational preserve regarding self is also exposed. This is because a record of the inmate's past behaviour is kept and such facts about the inmate are available to all staff members. Some inmates were not aware that a record pertaining to matters about him is on file. They therefore try to hide some facts about themselves which staff already knew.

(g) The Demoralizing Aspects of Work and Routine Activities

(i) Work

Work has a different structural significance in total institutions. Since all essential needs of the inmates are provided for, work involved a different set of motives and attitudes.

The various work sections at PPDBM is designed to provide the inmates with occupational therapy. To the inmates these sections provided them with an opportunity to while away time. However, the inmates complained that not only was there little to do, there was also a lack of tools to work with. They often worked at their own pace as there is ample time to spare. In addition, some inmates were not satisfied with the

(1) This usually refers to the negative aspects of the inmate's thoughts, feeling and experiences. One inmate pointed out to me that two of his letters were not passed and thus not sent.

facilities in the workshops. They contended that there was a lack of materials to work with. To complicate this aspect of shortages of materials, supplies that had run out often took a long time to be replaced. They cited an example, the 'Rotan' section. The members of this section had to lay off this particular activity for quite a while when their materials ran out.

These demoralizing experiences could perhaps explain why the majority of the inmates were not too enthusiastic about their involvement in this therapy. The inmate population is also demoralized by the fact that 'Kemajuan' or progress in rehabilitation is assessed in material terms. (1)

In Chapter Two, I showed that not all the inmates are in work sections that produced physical products. However, it appears to the majority of inmates that those who managed to come up with several finished products were applauded as having shown 'Kemajuan'. This was most frustrating to those inmates who did not agree with it.

They contended that there were other inmates who worked equally hard in other sections but it was just that the nature of their efforts were invisible. As such it was not appreciated and rewarded accordingly. They cited as examples, those inmates who have showed 'Kemajuan' in spirit and behaviour though with no physical products to show for it.

(1) This is an inmate's perspective of the situation. It should be pointed out that it is usually in work and custodial institutions that the inmates need only comply with action standards. The spirit and inward feeling with which he goes about his assignment would not seem to be an official concern. See Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.110.

The inmates would also debate amongst themselves the issue of work in the centre. They would tell each other that there was no point in being industrious as they could see that those who were, as well as those who were not, were also released from the centre more or less at the same time. Some even pointed out that as a matter of fact, there were times when it was ironically the hard working ones who were discharged much later than the non-hard working ones. They were quick to suspect favouritism.

It was therefore not unusual for an inmate to remark, "Jangan kerja banyak-banyak, kerjakah tidak, sama-sama lima enam bulan boleh balik!" This attitude had quite a following whether they were Malays, Chinese or Indians.

(ii) Routine activities

In general, inmates complained that there was no variety in programmes and activities. They got the same routine almost everyday of their stay. In activities they are suppose to do the same things over and over again. The same activities, the same food, the same biscuits, et cetera, make the inmates feel that they have a dull and boring existence.

To the inmates, the problem of how to kill time is significant. Institutional life is slow moving when there is nothing to do to while away the time. Routine activities are no help either as they find them to be dull and boring. In addition some of the programmes were quite alien

to them, in the sense that they could not find its relevance to them. To the Chinese inmates, language is another problem.

Inmate's experience of routine activities explains why there is so much social excitement when there are changes in their normal schedule of programmes. However, changes are rare and life often falls back to the same institutional routines again.

3.3 Conclusions

With regards to the same kind of food and biscuits being offered all the time, most of the inmates admitted that there is no alternative but to eat.

3.2 Formal Instructions in Privilege System

I mentioned earlier that one of the sequence of events in admission procedures is instructing as to rules. An inmate is therefore formally given instructions on how he should conduct himself while at PPDEM. He is acquainted with a body of rules which is prescriptive and proscriptive, that is, the do's and don'ts which should govern his behaviour while he undergoes rehabilitation.

In addition, he is also to know that there are privileges (or rewards) and punishments. Punishment is a consequence of breaking the rules and this may cost him certain privileges. A discussion of punishments and privileges had been made in Chapter Two under the topic 'Discipline'. However, my purpose here is to point out to readers that all inmates had this experience of being formally instructed in PPDEM's privilege system.

It is therefore assumed that subsequently they are very much aware of this privilege system in their daily institutional living. This aspect of an inmate's institutional experience is of significance to this study when I consider the adjustments inmates made in response to institutional living in Chapter Four.

3.3 Conclusions

Seen as a total institution, PPDBM has both a formal organization and a residential community. In this chapter, I have discussed at length some of the common experiences at PPDBM that this dual character of a total institution has generated.

These institutional experiences are largely negative as they are said to mortify the inmates who experienced them. However, inmates are not passive objects. They do make adjustments to institutional living as a result of these negative experiences. This other aspect of inmate's experience at PPDBM is discussed in the next chapter.

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 181.

(2) Ibid. p.180. As an analogy, Goffman compared what an underworld is to a city to illustrate what an underlife is to a social establishment such as a total institution.

(3) Ibid, p.172.

- 55 -

CHAPTER FOUR

ADJUSTMENTS TO INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCES

As a result of their institutional experiences, inmates at PPDBM were found to make a number of adjustments. Before I proceed to discuss these adjustments, I would like to stress that these adjustments were not only experiences in itself but that they served to generate other experiences for members of the inmate community.

4.1 Concepts

It was noted by Goffman that those establishments which obliged the participant to 'live in' have the tendency to be rich in underlife.⁽¹⁾ An underlife he added, is those set of secondary adjustments that all members of the organization severally and collectively sustained.⁽²⁾

Secondary adjustment as defined by Goffman is, "any habitual arrangements by which a member of an organization employs unauthorized means or obtain unauthorized ends, or both, thus getting round the organization's assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence what he should be".⁽³⁾ In other words, secondary adjustments by inmates can be seen as an act of standing apart from the role taken for granted

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 183.

(2) Ibid. p.180. As an analogy, Goffman compared what an underworld is to a city to illustrate what an underlife is to a social establishment such as a total institution.

(3) Ibid, p.172.

for them by the institution. On top of that, inmate secondary adjustments generate 'escape worlds' which provided them with either a reduction or an alternative to their largely negative institutional experiences.

What then were the secondary adjustments at PPDBM? I wish to point out that Goffman used the concept of a secondary adjustment rather flexibly. He provided examples which he admitted were activities which need not be in themselves illegitimate.⁽¹⁾ It is in this light that I discussed below the examples of secondary adjustments, inmates at PPDBM exhibited.

4.2 Examples of Secondary Adjustments at PPDBM

(a) Removal Activities

Removal activities are those undertakings that provide something for the individual to lose himself in, temporarily blotting out all sense of the environment which, and in which, he must abide.⁽²⁾ Examples of these at PPDBM were:-

(i) Physical Exercise

Inmates at PPDBM were seen to engage themselves intensively in daily physical exercises. Apart from the official fitness programme at dawn, inmates took the initiative in conducting their own fitness

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.271-273.

(2) Ibid, p.271.

programme. There was a wide range of physical exercises which the inmates were resourceful enough to come up with by themselves.

They jogged round the volleyball court, do push-ups and sit-ups, carried improvised weights and performed other callisthenics. For some of the inmates, these activities became a pre-occupation. Everyday, without fail they would engage in it.

(ii) Gambling in Outdoor Games

Two favourite outdoor games at PPDBM were 'sepak takraw' and volleyball. When I first came to PPDBM, these two games were played with the agreement that the team that loses would be required to do ten or fifteen push-ups.

After sometime, this arrangement changed. Cigarette bets came into the picture. With that the games took on a more vigorous nature, the playing teams injected a greater significance to the games. This was because winning was vital and the players were pretty much aware what was at stake for the winner and the loser, cigarettes.

The crowd in attendance also grew larger and the games more exciting and tensed. The standard of play improved considerably! Not only were cigarettes betted between players in the competing teams, but those non-playing inmates in the audience also betted amongst themselves. This therefore meant that there would be partisan support for and against the competing teams. Sarcasm would be hurled freely at one another, either at the players or at the opposing camps in the audience. However,

an official umpire and linesmen would be appointed before the game.

A game is thus strictly played according to rules.

All these features had popularized the games. They became eventful affairs in the evenings and attracted much interests and attention from the majority of the inmates. There would be the hectic recruitment of players for a team, getting an impartial umpire, settle the bets and then to get on with the game itself.

Every player of the game looked forward to the appointed time when they could get down to the courts and play. Some just couldn't wait, they were restless and waited rather impatiently for the hour when it was not so hot and the game could be played. This eagerness was most evident when one finds that even at noon during the week-ends, the inmates would be playing at the court. Rain would indeed spoil their day.

(iii) Gambling in Spider Fights

A common activity which the inmates enjoy in the evenings when they were already locked up in their respective dormitories was spider fights. It was to be a feature of their night life. Although lights are off at 10p.m. on weekdays, many of the inmates told me that hardly anyone sleeps at 10p.m. Most of them would still be wide awake at even midnight.

Bets are placed on spider fights. These bets are also transacted through a medium of exchange which has wide currency in the community, cigarettes. Prized fighter spiders are caught at the hedges that bordered with a stretch of fencing around the centre.

These creatures were kept and fed with leaves while they remained the property of the catcher. A spider is usually placed carefully in a cigarette box until it is required to clash with another fighter from another inmate. Champions would gain a reputation among all the other owners of spiders, not to forget the punters.

There was always that endless search for another champion to dethrone the present one. The popularity of this past time is public knowledge, even the administration knew about it. However, the reaction was a favourable one, the activity was allowed to carry on. It must be assumed that the administration was not aware that this activity has turned into gambling.

(iv) Masturbation

This activity was quite common at the centre. A considerable number of inmates were engaged in it and some were known to be preoccupied with it to such an extent that it was common knowledge to the community. Such 'interesting' news were much in circulation amongst the inmates who capitalized on it in order to have a good laugh.

Various reasons were given by the inmates to account for this behaviour. Some said they did it because they were frustrated. They were bored with the formal routines of institutional life and thus sought to obtain some fantasies beyond the all male associates and drab surroundings. Others felt that they were wasting their time here as they were not benefitting from the programme. They regretted being in the centre and thus found the rest of their term here at PPDBM unbearable with each

passing day. There were also others who admitted that it was to seek temporary relief from the pressures of straying thoughts. According to them, these thoughts often recall a dark past and therefore subsequently, they were 'forced' to anticipate a bleak future.

The pleasurable aspect that motivated that act was not denied. Almost all of the inmates have had sexual experiences before. Some of them were married, the majority had experiences with prostitutes. Women and sex were two important aspects of their lives, even as they were well advanced in their drug addiction careers. (1) Therefore, being deprived of heterosexual relations because of the confinement, masturbation provided an avenue to quell their sexual desires.

At PPDBM, as far as the inmate community was concerned, it was no taboo to engage in masturbation (2) nor was it immoral to joke and talk about it. There was no community sanction against any inmate who wants to masturbate, how regular one wishes to engage in it and when one choses to engage in it. The inmates would tease one another and everyone would

(1) Many inmates at PPDBM denied that heroin addiction subdue their sexual desires. They were willing to vouch for that. However, some admitted that their sexual desires waned after some time.

(2) while I was on a visit to Pusat Pemulihan Dadah, Kuala Kubu Bharu (26th September, 1981), a senior inmate (in fact, a community leader) told me that masturbation is forbidden to a new inmate for the first three months of his stay. This is to ensure that he is able to perform the centre's strenuous physical fitness programme. If he is weak, his performance would reflect unfavourably on the performances of other members of his group.

(3) Not all tattoos on the inmates were done at PPDBM. Some of the inmates already had tattoos on them when they came in. These were noted by the authorities as identifying marks of the inmates.

have a good laugh over the jokes centred around this activity. To describe those who were involved in masturbation, the inmates had coined a word to identify the category. They were referred to as members of the 'Standing Club'.

With regards to aids employed to fantasize sexual desires (as in masturbation), pictures of sexy film stars or semi-nude models were cut out from magazines and calendars. The inmates were cautious enough to have these pictures well camouflaged. There was once when a whole calendar of very scantily clad models was smuggled in from a picnic trip. This calendar became a common property to all those who have wish to 'use' it. Several inmates even boasted that being resourceful, they eventually replaced those pictures that were confiscated.

Apart from conversations centred on masturbation, a number of inmates were seen to engage in much sex talk. They would share their sexual experiences and recommend each other various techniques, approaches and places of sex which were found to be the ultimate in the quest for pleasure.

(v) Tattooing

At one time, inmates were caught for massed tattooing. They stole ink from the staff room and with the use of thorns (from hedges) and needles (from tailoring section) tattooing was made available to any inmate who wanted it. This activity only occurs at night when the inmates are already in their dormitories. (1)

(1) Not all tattoos on the inmates were done at PPDBM. Some of the inmates already had tattoos on them when they came in. These were noted by the authorities as identifying marks of the person.

Although the inmates were caught and punished, warned not to do it again and subsequently closely watched over, the inmates were at it again when I was at PPDBM. Their reasons were simple enough and they casually replied, "There was nothing to do actually", "This guy made such a beautiful design, I couldn't resist having one myself", "Others did it so I got it done".

(b) Make-do's

Make-do's are those sources of materials that are employed in secondary adjustments. To quote Goffman again, "In every social establishment participants use available artifacts in a manner and for an end not officially intended, thereby modifying the conditions of life programmed for these individuals".⁽¹⁾ Examples at PPDBM are as follows:-

(i) Cigarettes

Cigarettes as we have noted earlier, is a medium of exchange between members of the community. Apart from having intrinsic utility as a commodity for consumption, cigarettes acquired significance as a currency in transactions (example, gambling) because of its wide acceptance in the community.

All the inmates are aware that the brand of cigarettes given is of an inferior quality. The brand of the cigarettes given is 'Rough Rider'. Smoking pleasure from this brand is not comparable to other

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 187.

superior brands that they had experienced. As such, it is a common practice for inmates to tear out half of the cigarette's filter before smoking. In this way it was possible to have a heavier draw from a puff and this therefore enhances the smoking pleasure that would not have otherwise been derived from smoking an inferior brand of cigarette.

Since there were no matches provided to each individual inmate to light their cigarettes, an alternative arrangement was made. Some of the inmates would see to it that there is a continuously burning mosquito coil in the dormitories. These mosquito coils are provided by the centre. In this way, the mosquito coil became a cigarette lighter for the inmates.

An outsider visiting the community might be wondering why some of the inmates are wetting their sticks of cigarettes as they are smoking them. When an addict smokes a cigarette spiked with heroin, he would be repeating this procedure too. This is because a mixture of tobacco and heroin burns rapidly and thus by wetting the length of the stick of cigarette, the combustion was slowed down and the smoke could be fully enjoyed. Likewise, a stick of cigarette being a precious perishable commodity when utilized, an inmate would see to it that he harnessed the optimal enjoyment possible while it lasts. In between a puff and a pause till the next puff, the cigarette continues to burn and so precious tobacco would be lost. Wetting the length of the cigarette enables the smoker to hold a puff in his lungs before he proceed to draw another puff and in the meantime he need not worry that his cigarette was burning itself out.

(ii) 'Home-made' cigarettes

The availability of smuggled tobacco was an extra treat and it was usually the practice to roll up the tobacco in ordinary writing paper and smoke it. Since the inmates were encouraged to write home, inmates could request for writing paper from the counsellors or officers. Some of the inmates had exercise books which although meant to be their diaries, have now turn into the major source of paper for these 'home-made' cigarettes.

(iii) Calendars

As described earlier, calendars have become aids in which the inmates fantasize their sexual desires.

(iv) Cigarette boxes

These were used as containers for prized fighter spiders and cigarette savings. (1)

(v) Needles and Thorns

We have seen how inmates made use of needles and thorns as unconventional tools through which tattoos can be made. There were also several inmates who pricked their ears with thorns. (2)

(1) This aspect of saving cigarettes is discussed under (4.3) "Social Organisation".

(2) According to the inmates concerned, this act serves to remind them that they have erred in life and was admitted into PPDBM - a symbolic reminder to remain 'clean' of drugs upon discharge.

(vi) Razor Blades

These were meant for the shaving purposes of inmates. However, several inmates used it to shave a willing inmate's head bald. Another used it to make an incision on his penis in order to obtain a sexual technique which is believed to better excite one's sexual partner. (1)

(vii) Ear-rings

Two inmates occasionally wear ear-rings and these were made from crude metal pieces at the metal work section.

(viii) Draughts

The board and the pieces were made by the inmates themselves. Individuals were seen to make their own sets, on their own initiative (that is, not as required by the workshop programme). The board was made from wood and the pieces from rotan. The whole set is also painted and to do this, the inmates were resourceful enough to improvise pieces of rattan smashed at one end to resemble a brush.

(ix) Chairs and Benches

During afternoon programmes or recreational hours, inmates arranged chairs and benches to approximate a couch so that they can lie down and follow the activity or doze off.

(1) This inmate was hospitalized after this incident as the wound became septic.

(1) Goffman, E., Op-Cit., p.183.

(x) Physical Exercise Equipments

Inmates interested in conducting their own callisthenics often make-do with certain devices to perform it. They used an elevated bench to do sit-ups, heavy metal pieces as weights and the volleyball court was the field in which they could jog.

(c) Working the System

By working the system, inmates are said to exploit the routine of official activity for private ends.⁽¹⁾ Examples of this secondary adjustment at PPDBM were:-

(i) Cigarette Prizes

In the past, the institution had offered cigarettes as prizes in some of its programmes. The inmates on their part had responded favourably, that is, participants were available for programmes. However, such a practice of offering cigarettes as prizes had been scrapped.

With this change, the situation is now such that some inmates would even ask what sort of prizes would be given before they volunteer to participate. There were persistent requests to include cigarettes as an item in prizes awarded. Now that prizes begin to take new forms other than cigarettes, the inmates who participated were disappointed and at times laughed over the chocolate candy bars they got.

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.189.

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.137.

(ii) Smuggling Tobacco

Those inmates who had the opportunity of working at various chores outside the centre's main grounds often take the liberty to casually stroll over to a nearby sundry shop and purchase some tobacco.

This purchase was possible because certain inmates managed to obtain some money from their families who are allowed to visit them at the centre. Although the authorities conduct a body search after such visits, the inmates somehow had some money stashed away in some secret hiding places in the body. However, there had been instances when an inmate was caught for having tried to do just that.

In addition, those working within the centre's main grounds also managed to obtain some tobacco from the old folks at 'Rumah Kesenangan'. Sometimes the old folks just gave away their tobacco to these inmates.

(iii) Workable Assignment

An important way of working the system was through involving one's self in a workable assignment. According to Goffman, a workable assignment is, "Some special work, recreation, therapy or ward assignment that alone could make available certain secondary adjustments - and often a whole set of them".⁽¹⁾

I have discussed two examples of a workable assignment, that is, how inmates manage to procure tobacco through the opportunity to work in certain assignments which bring them into contact with the source of supplies. Now let us examine other such examples.

⁽¹⁾ Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.197.

(iii) Those in the dining team are in charge of food. As such the members could avail themselves to extra helpings when rationing out the meals. In addition, they could obtain ice cubes to make cold drinks for themselves. Inmates involved in community projects managed to obtain cigarettes from ex-inmate friends they met along the way. On top of that, the villagers they came into contact with often supplied them with cigarettes. This was a treat for the services the inmates rendered.

(iv) Participation in Activities

Several inmates felt that by participating in activities, they would be seen as showing signs of being 'treated' and therefore exhibited extraordinary enthusiasm in activities. A new inmate illustrated an adoption of this strategy when he said, "I must faithfully attend to all my activities here, this would reflect well on my stay".

Furthermore, these inmates felt that by participating in therapies they have gained the friendship of the therapists. This therapist-client bond should come in useful when they want to exploit it to achieve motives, such as, efforts to improve their welfare or to secure them an early discharge.

4.3 Inmate Social Organization

I shall discuss three aspects of inmate's social organization at PPDBM. There are as follows:

(1) This term was coined by the inmates themselves. It should be pointed out that not all the inmates were involved in this cigarette partnership system. Membership is voluntary now compared to its involuntary nature when operated by an illegitimate social control figure - a 'talk' or an 'abang' in the past.

(a) Economic Exchange

As we have noted earlier, cigarettes at FPDBM became an unofficial substitute medium of exchange between members of the inmate community. Economic exchange was exhibited in the various gambling transactions the inmates were involved in.

The chief source of supply for this 'money' is the daily ration of cigarettes the inmates were supplied by the authorities. Since the 'money' itself has utility as a commodity for consumption, 'money' is also consistently removed from the community. Gambling is another aspect of the community's social life where there is 'money' input and output for the members.

With these features, the inmate community can be said to have a 'shadow economy'. Let me illustrate further with an account of inmate cigarette partnership system.

A system of sharing cigarettes among close friends is common within the community. These partners are usually of the same ethnic origin. However, there were Indians who participated as partners in the system with other Malay inmates. The system serves various functions.

Two or more inmates could form a cigarette partnership system. Usually in any one group, the membership does not exceed four. The members of the group would then appoint one of the member as the 'banker'.⁽¹⁾

(1) This term was coined by the inmates themselves. It should be pointed out that not all the inmates were involved in this cigarette partnership system. Membership is voluntary now compared to its involuntary nature when operated by an illegitimate social control figure - a 'taiko' or an 'abang' in the past.

The banker was put in charge of the group's stockpile of cigarettes. He was responsible for the safety of this stockpile as every member's cigarette ration was channelled to him for keeping. A characteristic feature of the community is that none of the inmates trusted each other absolutely when it boils down to a question of cigarettes. They would never leave their 'money' lying around unguarded. The 'money' is usually kept in a cigarette box (obtained from those cigarette boxes thrown away by officers after rationing out the cigarettes in it) and always carried around in the person of the banker.

When any member of the partnership wants a smoke, all the others would be informed. One or two cigarettes would then be passed round for the occasion. In this way, let us suppose that there are three of us in the partnership. The day's collection of cigarettes would total fifteen but then we would only smoke twelve, leaving us with three cigarettes as savings.

This stockpile would be use for any contingencies such as when one of us committed an offence and was punished by 'potong rokok'.⁽¹⁾ As such, the partnership system offers support in tangible terms by providing him an opportunity to smoke though his ration was stopped. In so doing, the system helps to bring the members closer to one another.

(1) This punishment refers to a temporary withdrawal of an inmate's privilege of receiving his cigarette rations. The withdrawal is of varying duration, corresponding to the seriousness of offence committed.

(b) Social Exchange

I have mentioned earlier that inmates experience contaminative exposure as a result of their being in a closed community. By virtue of this closeness, there is much social exchange. For example, every member of the community smokes and therefore those individuals who try to give up smoking found it difficult to be not influence by this fact. Here, I examine two other aspects of social exchange. They are:-

(i) Institutional Argot Terminology

In response to their social conditions at PPDBM, inmates developed their own set of vocabularies to symbolize some of their more significant experiences. For example, the inmates were very fond of using such remarks as:

"Rumahkah?", meaning to ask a sarcastically begging question whenever an inmate gave the slightest hint of complaining about life at PPDBM.

"Jawab!" a retort to an inmate to warn him to be prepared to answer for the offence he has committed or for which he has been accused of.

"Siap!" which means you are asking for it.

(ii) The Existence of a Charity Relationship

In placing so much importance in the cigarette as an aid to pass institutional life each day, the inmates crossed ethnic lines to share a widely held belief. The belief was that, an inmate without

cigarettes suffered physical and mental torture. They have experienced it personally and knew what it was like.

As a result of this common belief, members of the inmate community exhibited a charity relationship in which any inmate who ask for a smoke from another inmate would not be turned away. Let me describe a situation in which this charity relationship was in operation.

I saw an inmate asking another inmate (not a close friend) who was enjoying a cigarette to let him have a smoke. The inmate with the cigarette obliged most casually and handed the cigarette to the inmate who asked. This inmate would then draw furiously a few hectic puffs from the cigarette, return it to the owner, thank him and walk away. There had been other inmates who got carried away on a borrowed cigarette and the owner had to ask it back from him, sometimes tactfully telling the borrower that he had taken more puffs than he ought to.

(c) Inmate Social Control System

(i) A Brief Account of its Origin⁽¹⁾

In the past, some senior inmates who regarded themselves as responsible for the social order of the community became self appointed social control agents. Their sole purpose was to exert control over new inmates in order to obtain in return, obedience and subservience.

(1) As related to me by several older inmates who had lived through the period when this occurred.

To achieve these ends, a 'taiko' or 'abang' system came into being. The former refers to the system that operated for the Chinese inmates and the latter for the Malays.⁽¹⁾ However, it should be pointed out that not all the older inmates in the centre took on the role of a senior in an inmate social control system.

New inmates were subjected to 'ragging', a form of initiation into the community. This 'ragging' involved harsh physical punishments and were carried out by the seniors themselves. Punishments by means of physical violence were also meted out to those errant new inmates who disobeyed the 'taikos' or 'abangs' and their inmate code of behaviour. Those punished or ragged were not allowed to reveal to the authorities what they had undergone. They were threatened with further injuries if they did.

Elderly inmates were however, not subjected to this 'ragging'. An elderly inmate related to me that he was only told to behave himself properly while in the centre and in addition, to perform duties meant for new inmates. These duties include, the cleaning of toilets and bathrooms and the dining hall after meals. A new inmate, he adds should never show disrespect to the seniors.

(1) There used to be a common inmate social control system for all ethnic groups in the centre. However, such a system was abandoned when there were complaints about preferential treatment to specific ethnic groups as a result of a senior's ethnic identity.

Several inmates however, have made formal complaints on the illegal activities of the seniors to the authorities. As a result, five sixteen inmates who operated the illegal inmate social control system were caught and sent to jail.

The administration has always kept a constant vigil on the community to ensure that such a system is never revived or even to get started at all. Stringent warnings have been issued with regards to this matter. For example, inmates were told that this use of physical violence to intimidate another is a very serious offence and the administration has decided to let the police handle this matter if ever it should crop up again.

(ii) The present inmate social control system

What was the situation like at the time this study was conducted? The present system is very much refined compared to its predecessor. According to informers and seniors alike, the system operates with less physical violence and thus avoid detection by authorities.

The present system imposed the bare minimum in carrying out its policies. Only when the new inmates concerned tried to take advantage of a lenient community ruling, did the seniors get serious with him. The seniors would 'teach' him an unforgettable lesson in community living at PPDBM. It is a sort of undercover policing action.

However, 'ragging' still persists. Apart from the usual teasing, like asking the new inmate to sing or perform some physical gather at a place. The seniors have adopted this well understood phrase to instruct new inmates to likewise gather at the toilets or bathtubs.

exercises, seniors still insists that the new inmate 'fall-in tandas' or 'fall in bathrooms'.⁽¹⁾ It is here that the new inmate receive five or eight blows to the abdomen. There is a difference in the number of blows received because various seniors were involved in meting out the ragging of a new inmate or the punishment of an errant new inmate.

Victims of these raggings or punishments would often deny that they had been handled by the seniors. Unless they file a complaint, there is no evidence to confront the seniors with. These victims when asked how they had obtained the bruises often reply with a variety of excuses. For example, one would say that he fell in the toilet and another would just as casually say that he fell down the drain, or he had a fall while playing games.

These new inmates don't usually like to talk about it and as usual insists that they have told you the gospel truth, and that is the end of the matter as far as they are concerned. An inmate who reveals to the authorities the hidden going-ons of the community, whether a new inmate or a senior, is considered a 'Hantu'. The sponsors of an inmate social control system do not tolerate a 'Hantu' at all and they are quite efficient in knowing the identity of the 'Hantu' soon after the 'Hantu' betray them to the authorities.

What was the rationale behind the recurrent formation of an inmate social control system? What made it so essential to have the

(1) Inmates refer to roll calls as 'fall-in', that is, when they have to gather at a place. The seniors have adopted this well understood phrase to instruct new inmates to likewise gather at the toilets or bathrooms.

illegitimate system? The seniors and the sponsors of the system gave these reasons below.

(iii) Why an inmate social control system?

According to the seniors, all they are asking is that the new inmate realizes the fact of his new situation. The new inmate should be made to understand that he could no longer behave as he had while he was a civilian on the outside. As a civilian, he might enjoy certain freedom and rights, and lived an irresponsible life as an addict. He might even be able to throw his weight around because he had been involved with secret societies or gangsterism but once inside the centre, he ought to leave behind all that and start anew in a different environment. The new inmate must become a 'no-body' in this recently adopted community.

He must accommodate the community, and not the community accommodate him. A new inmate who tries to act tough and show his defiance to the existing harmony of the community would not be tolerated. As such a new inmate is always 'disciplined' first and then given the opportunity to resocialize himself to the community.

Not only must he show respect to seniors, he must also show respect to officers. Like the previous social control system, a new inmate must perform certain duties - cleaning toilets, bathrooms and the dining hall after meals.

In summary, a senior inmate remarked emphatically, "we do not intend to make punching bags out of these new inmates. The time will come

when they too will get the opportunity to assume these responsibilities of a senior. Some abuse the system, others like our present group operate within limits and contribute positively in some ways the administration will never know.⁽¹⁾

4.4 Conclusions

What I have done here is to provide a picture of those adjustments made by inmates in response to their institutional experiences at PPDBM. Incidentally, the adjustments made can be seen as the unique institutional experiences of inmates at PPDBM. Adjustments made by inmates in other total institutions are also therefore their own unique institutional experiences.

What can be said about these institutional experiences of inmates at PPDBM? The inmates have shown that they are quite capable of altering the physical environment and social condition provided for by the institution. These adjustments tell us a theme - involvement and disaffection.⁽²⁾ in inmate orientation to the institution. We can only conclude that inmates are not passive objects of institutional programmes nor are they totally unresponsive to other organizational and physical characteristics of an institution.

(1) The seniors 'disciplined' those inmates who neglected their duties and some even forced the new inmates to attend certain activities offered by the institution. Whether the authorities would agree that this was a positive contribution of the system is an opinion the inmates have yet to ask for.

(2) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p. 271.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.2 Conclusions

AN OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 An Overview

This study is concerned with identifying and examining the various institutional experiences of inmates and their community at a drug rehabilitation centre. The centre is seen as a total institution because it exhibited attributes that are characteristic of the ideal type concept of a total institution. As such, a total institution perspective is the approach considered appropriate to guide the efforts of this study.

In Chapter Two, it was pointed out that as a total institution, PPDBM has a dual character - part formal organization and part residential community. It was therefore asked, "what kind of institutional experiences these two aspects of PPDBM might generate for the inmates?"

Inmate institutional experiences at PPDBM were subsequently discussed in Chapter Three. It was found that these institutional experiences were largely negative ones and thus a situation exists whereby the inmates either submit passively to these experiences or adapt themselves to it. Chapter Four deals with the various adjustments inmates have shown in response to their institutional condition. An important fact is said to have emerged as a result of the variety of adjustments inmates displayed, and this is the observation that inmates actively pursue and produce changes in a given physical environment and a given social condition.

5.2 Conclusions

A total institution perspective is both a theoretical framework and an analytical tool useful for a study of organizations that fits the ideal type of what a total institution is.

Its emphasis on institutional experiences in relation to the structural characteristics of the institution - a physical environment and a formal organization, helps us to focus our attention on the effects this aspect can impinge on the inmates and the programmes of the institution.

Subsequently, its emphasis on institutional adjustments is reasonably based on the assumption that, "the individual possessed an array of needs, native or cultivated, and that when lodged in a milieu that denied these needs, the individual simply responded by developing makeshift means of satisfaction".⁽¹⁾ This assumption should help us to understand why inmates had adjusted themselves the way they did. Did they feel justified in doing so because the institution has presented them with a milieu that denied or ignored certain needs?

With regards to PPDBM, these issues are of significance and especially so when the institution claims to provide rehabilitation for those drug dependants who were admitted there. Do we perceive these individuals as receptive containers ready to fit into a residential rehabilitation programme or do we anticipate the inmates to indulge in secondary adjustments in opposition to the programme?

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit. p.279.

In studying the secondary adjustments of inmates, Goffman has pointed to the possibility of the inmates trying to:-

- (i) make legitimate incidental use of the institution as a convenience, or
- (ii) illegitimately making a convenience of an institution. (1)

Our survey of secondary adjustments at PPDBM has revealed that inmates have either opted for one of these or both as well.

However, a word of caution. A description of underlife in institutions, as I have done for PPDBM, can provide a systematically biased picture of life in it. (2) It is therefore suggested that follow-up studies be conducted to better determine the intensity and extent of negative institutional experiences and subsequent adjustments in a total institution like PPDBM.

Longer longitudinal studies combined with objective measures or tests should be employed to give a more precise picture of the situation. (3) This could help us better understand the inmate and his institutional world. Being aware of what he experiences may yet help us to accommodate him in our programmes to help inmates of drug rehabilitation centres in general. (4)

(1) Goffman, E., Op.Cit., p.175.

(2) Ibid, p. 262.

(3) An example is M. Karmel's "Total Institution and Self-Mortification", Journal of Health and Social Behaviour, 10 June 1969, in Bowker L.H., Op.Cit., p.60.

(4) The urgent need to deal with this aspect of residential rehabilitation is further illustrated by the recent newspaper publications of inmate experiences at Pusat Pemulihan Dadah, Kuala Kubu Bharu and Pusat Pemulihan Dadah, Taman Harapan at Besut. Please refer to exhibits (1) and (2).

APPENDIX A

Field Experiences

(a) Ethics

Each researcher stands in an ethical relationship with his or her subjects. The dilemma of this particular research undertaking is all the more salient when one appreciates the fact that the researcher also stands in an ethical relationship with the authorities who allowed the study to be conducted. Is it then an excusable research offence to have 'guilty knowledge' of a certain clandestine activity and 'obstruct justice' by not revealing it to the proper authorities?

Being a novice in field research of this nature (that is, at PFDBM), it had not been easy in trying to answer the question asked above. However, after much academic and ethical conflicts, I was able to resolve the issue. I believed that Polsky tackled the issue appropriately when he said,

"If one is effectively to study adult criminals in their natural settings, he must make the moral decision that in some ways he will break the law himself. He need not be a 'participant' observer and commit the criminal acts under study, yet he has to witness such acts or be taken into confidence about them and not blow the whistle".⁽¹⁾

Hence, I made the moral decision 'not to blow the whistle'. This decision was made in the interest of obtaining vital information which otherwise would have remained closely guarded secrets.

⁽¹⁾ Polsky, N., "Hustlers, Beats and Others", in Douglas, J.D. (ed.), Op.Cit., p.9.

(b) Interaction with inmates

In seeking to experience the inmates' responses to institutional living, I felt their hurt, anger, frustrations, despair, anxieties and excitement. In the field it was my policy to lend my ears to anyone who had anything at all to say. This posture however, has brought about some interesting unanticipated encounters.

There were inmates who tried to seek my sympathies by eagerly sharing with me their multitude of problems. But that was not all, they never failed to follow it up by requesting favours. Some merely sought counsel, others implicitly demanded attention at least once a day, or else it appears that they feel slighted. How did I cope with these?

It was not easy and I had to exercise discretion and be extra careful how I ought to respond. My position as a research worker could have been jeopardized either way if (i) I had turned these inmates away without at least a little interested concern in their problems and requests or (ii) by honouring the inmates, I have meddled in institutional affairs, a privilege not within my role.

Although I was inclined to listen to their problems and hear out their requests for favours, I also explained my position and thus the technical problems involved in living up to their expectations of what I could do for them. This was tactfully done so that the inmates fully realized that I was also bound by certain regulations and not because I chose to be unsympathetic or be indifferent to their plight. I could only do what I can and that much only. For example, I could if they agree,

convey their wish to have ^{an} appointment with the counsellor to discuss a difficult problem which they have previously been unable to open up. In addition, I told those who asked favours of me this prerequisite, I would be happy to do it if they could obtain prior permission from an authority of the institution.

(c) Language

With regards to those inmates who only spoke Cantonese, I was faced with some difficulties in communication. The only way to overcome this was to 'employ' an interpreter or to engage in a conversation that is a mixture of a little English, Mandarin and Bahasa Malaysia. On the whole, a majority spoke reasonably good English and Bahasa Malaysia. With these inmates, there was no communication problem. Several inmates provided tutelage in the use of argot terminologies used in the centre.

(d) Interaction with Staff

On the whole, I had a cordial relationship with the staff at PPDBM. They were helpful in accomodating me and I was most impressed by the manner in which differences in opinions between us were brought to the fore, discussed and resolved without much official ceremony.

In closing I wish to say that my field experiences at PPDBM have been most enlightening to me as a person and as a researcher. These experiences should come in useful in future research endeavours.

APPENDIX B

Intake and Discharge PPDBM 1981, February

	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Others	Total
(a) Intake	5	1	1	-	7
(b) Discharge	7	16	3	-	26
(c) Absconded	2	7	2	-	11
(d) Leaving Compound without permission	2	5	1	-	8
(e) Police Custody	-	8	1	-	9
(f) In Hospital	-	-	-	-	-
(g) Actual Attendance	40	28	7	-	75
(h) On Register	42	41	9	-	92

Source: Laporan Bulanan PPDEM, Februari, 1981.

APPENDIX C

Kaedah-Kaedah dan Peraturan-Peraturan Pusat Pemulihan Dadah, Bkt. Mertajam

1. Tiap-tiap pelatih hendaklah mematuhi semua kaedah-kaedah Pusat dan hendaklah bekerjasama dengan kakitangan dan mematuhi semua perintahnya yang sah, termasuk apa-apa perintah memeriksa dirinya dan barang-barang miliknya yang diberi apabila jua perlu oleh Pengetua atau Pegawai Pegawai Pusat.
2. Tiap-tiap pelatih hendaklah menghadirkan diri untuk semua dan lain-lain rawatan perubatan yang ditetapkan bagi pemulihannya, termasuk ujian-ujian klinik dan makmal.
3. Tiada seseorang pelatih boleh memiliki, menghisap, meminum, menelan, menyedut, membekal, memberi, mendispensa atau mengenakan apa-apa dadah yang dilarang atau tidak dibenarkan atau memiliki apa-apa kelengkapan yang sesuai atau dimaksudkan untuk menghidap, menggunakan, mengenakan, menyuntik atau menelan dadah itu.
4. Tiada seseorang pelatih boleh meninggalkan Pusat tanpa kelulusan Pengetua.
5. Tiada seseorang pelatih boleh membawa apa-apa jenis makanan atau minuman, liquor, spirit, tembakau atau rokok ke Pusat.
6. Suatu akaun simpanan boleh dibuka bagi tiap-tiap pelatih tertakluk kepada apa-apa syarat yang dikenakan oleh Ketua Pengarah.
7. Tiap-tiap pelatih hendaklah, apabila diterima masuk, diperiksa dengan perlunya untuk mencari apa-apa barang yang disembunyikan.
8. Semua wang, dokumen, barang kemas, pakaian dan lain-lain barang kepunyaan seseorang pelatih yang tidak dibenarkan disimpan olehnya hendaklah diletak dalam simpanan Pengetua.
9. Tiap-tiap pelatih yang diberi tempat tidur, hendaklah tidur di tempat itu dan tidak boleh dipindah tanpa kelulusan Pengetua.
10. Pelatih-pelatih baru tidak boleh biasanya dibenarkan menerima pelawat bagi dua minggu yang pertama mereka tinggal di Pusat.
11. Pelawat-pelawat adalah biasanya dihadkan kepada ahli-ahli keluarga yang karib.
12. Pelawat-pelawat boleh dikehendaki membenarkan diri mereka diperiksa.
13. Pelawat-pelawat tidak dibenarkan membawa apa-apa jenis makanan atau apa-apa minuman, liquor, spirit, tembakau atau rokok masuk ke Pusat.

14. Tiada seseorang pelawat pun boleh dibenarkan masuk ke dalam kawasan tempat-tempat tidur pelatih-pelatih pada bila-bila masa.
15. (i) Pelatih-pelatih hendaklah digalakan menulis surat kepada ibubapa atau penjaga dan saudara mara mereka dan bagi maksud ini pelatih-pelatih tidak payah menggunakan setem.
(ii) Pelatih-pelatih boleh dibenarkan menerima surat-surat daripada ibubapa, penjaga atau saudara-mara pada lat-lat tempoh yang menasabah sebagaimana ditentukan oleh Pengetua, melainkan jika hal keadaan menjadikan pemberian atau penikmatan konsesi seperti itu tidak pratik atau tidak diingini.
(iii) Tiap-tiap surat atau bungkusan kepada atau daripada seseorang pelatih hendaklah diperiksa dan dibuka oleh Pengetua atau oleh seseorang Pegawai yang bertanggungjawab yang diwakilkan olehnya bagi maksud tersebut, dan Pengetua boleh menahan mana-mana surat atau bungkusan jika ia berpendapat kandungannya tidak diingini.
16. Jadual waktu harian bagi Pusat, termasuk waktu bangun dan waktu tidur, pelajaran dalam kelas, latihan amali, kerja domestik, makan dan rekreasi, hendaklah diikuti oleh pelatih-pelatih.
17. Absen tanpa kebenaran dan melarikan diri dari Kawasan Pusat adalah satu kesalahan dan akan dilaporkan oleh pihak Pusat untuk tindakan Polis.
18. Apabila loceng dibunyikan bersambung-sambung (tiada putus-putus) maka semua pelatih-pelatih hendaklah segera berbaris di padang pada bila-bila masa juga, khususnya setiap kali roll-call.
19. Sekiranya tak hadir di dalam tiap-tiap kali roll-call adalah dianggap tak hadir di dalam Pusat.
20. Semua pelatih-pelatih dimestikan memakai pakaian yang disediakan oleh Pusat dan tidak dibenarkan sama sekali memakai pakaian sendiri.
21. Tiada kekerasan dari apa jenis boleh digunakan di Pusat.

Saya sedia mematuhi kaedah-kaedah tersebut diatas:

.....
(Tandatangan Pelatih)

.....
(Nama Pelatih)

Saksi: _____ Nama: _____ Tarikh:.....

.....
(Tandatangan Pegawai Bertugas)

.....
(Nama Pegawai)

Tarikh:.....

APPENDIX D

Pengakuan Pelatih Tentang Menghisap Rokok
di Pusat Pemulihan Dadah, Bukit Mertajam.

BAHAWA saya _____ No. K/P: _____
bersetuju hendak mengikut syarat-syarat yang diatitkan tentang kebenaran
saya menghisap rokok di Pusat mulai 12hb Jun, 1980. Syarat-syarat adalah
saperti berikut:-

- (a) Saya akan menghidap rokok cap jenis yang diberi oleh Pusat. Rokok ini mesti dihisap di tempat dan masa yang ditetapkan oleh Pengetua.
- (b) Masa-masa dibenarkan menghisap rokok adalah:
 - 1. Satu batang pada 7.30 pagi selepas sarapan pagi.
 - 2. " " " 10.30 pagi selepas minum teh.
 - 3. " " " 12.45 tengahari selepas makan tengahari.
 - 4. " " " 4.15 petang selepas minum teh.
 - 5. " " " 6.45 petang selepas makan malam.
- (c) Habuk-habuk rokok mesti dimasukkan ke dalam tempat-tempat buang rokok yang disediakan kepada saya.
- (d) Saya mesti habiskan rokok yang diberi dan tidak dibenarkan bawa keluar daripada tempat menghisap atau pun ke bilik tidur dan mana-mana pun di luar.
- (e) Jika saya melanggarkan syarat-syarat yang telah diator Pengetua boleh memberhentikan kebenaran saya menghisap rokok serta merta dan terus menerus.
- (f) Saya tidak akan keluar tanpa kebenaran daripada Pusat.

Saya sedia mematuhi syarat-syarat tersebut di atas.

Saksi:

Pegawai Bertugas:

(Tandatangan Pelatih)

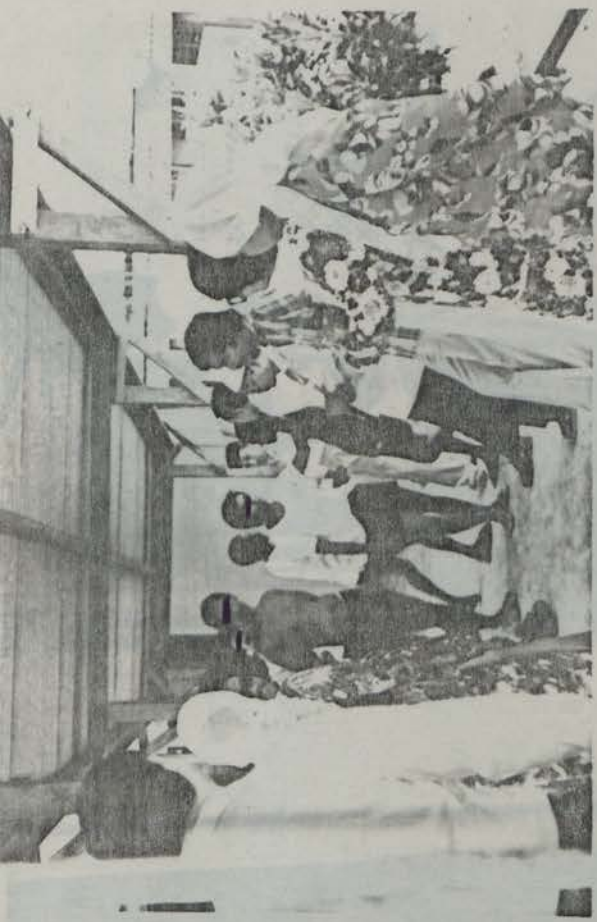
Nama: _____

Nama Pelatih: _____

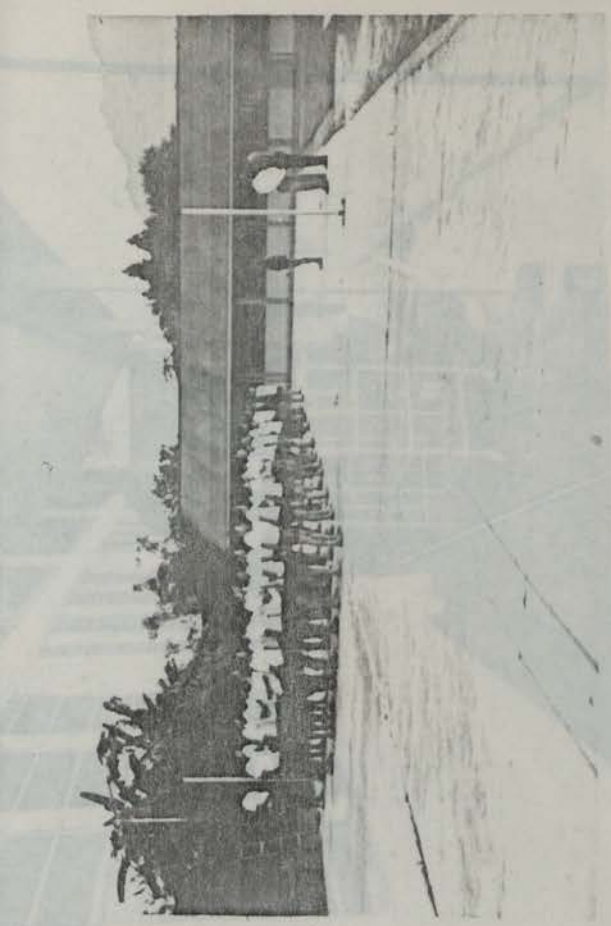
Tarikh: _____

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(P1)



(P2)



(P3)



(P4)

1-19-