Incarceration in the Technological Era: Towards a System of Virtual Visitation for Prisoners in the Caribbean

Wendell C. Wallace
University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

Abstract

Technological advances have ensured that people in the contemporary era conduct their affairs in a manner which is markedly different to earlier times. In this regard, whilst numerous improvements to aspects of the Criminal Justice System have been made internationally due to technological advances, the Caribbean has lagged behind, specifically in the area of video visitation for prisoners. The current effort examines the efficacy of physical visitation for incarcerated individuals in the Caribbean by analysing the existing physical visitation systems in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, as it has been argued that these visits are limited; time consuming, costly and discriminatory. The findings indicate several limitations associated with the traditional physical visitation systems in the three islands and advance our understanding of incarceration, re-integration and developmental issues. The findings are used to posit the creation and implementation of a system of virtual visitation to supplement physical prison visitations in the Caribbean.

Keywords: Incarceration; technological advances; prisoners; virtual visitation; Caribbean.