The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in the Caribbean Family
We can see that in many modern Caribbean households women are working outside the home. Many Caribbean women are juggling multiple jobs namely as ‘mothers’, ‘wives’ and ‘career-women’. This, believed by many has affected what is considered their traditional, primary roles as caregivers and housekeepers. These changes have also had an effect on men and the role they play in the family.
Spiggie's wife, a teacher is swamped with work and has left for work without washing his clothes. She begs him to do it for himself. His friend Damion comes over to borrow a pair of pliers. Spiggie then proceeds to complain to Damion about his dilemma.

Boy Damion women these days are so busy. It seems as there roles just as caregivers has really changed man.....

I have to agree with you there man. They have become so involved in all career fields look at Kamla Persad-Bissessar and Portia Simpson-Miller, current female prime ministers in the Caribbean, who could have thought?

Read Spiggie and Damion's conversation. List other careers Caribbean women have apart from taking care of their family?
What are some of the traditional responsibilities of women in the Caribbean family?
The Changing Roles of Women in The Caribbean Family

The following are considered some of the traditional roles of women in the Caribbean family:

• Cleaning the house.
• Planning and cooking meals for the family.
• Ensuring that the children do their homework.
• Changing the baby’s diapers.
The Changing Roles of Women in The Caribbean Family – Activity 1.1

Activity 1.1: Can you think of other traditional roles of Caribbean women in the family?

- Doing the laundry
- Ironing clothes
- Mending clothes
- Washing dishes
- Shopping for groceries
- Going to the market
- Taking care of older family members
The Changing Roles of Women in The Caribbean Family

The following are considered some of the new roles of women in the Caribbean family:

• Planning the house budget.
• Meeting the demands of employers.
• Paying the bills.
Changing Roles in the Caribbean Family

Activity 1.2: Can you think of three ways these new roles of women affect the role of Caribbean men in the family?

1. Men no longer sole breadwinners
2. Men no longer sole disciplinarians
3. Men no longer sole decision-makers
4. Men now must help with household chores such as cooking, cleaning, doing dishes and laundry, ironing
5. Men must now help with childcare
6. Men feel emasculated!
Causes of The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family

She no longer washes.

But seriously though what caused these changes?
# Causes of The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family

## Table Showing the Major Causes of the Changing Role of Women in the Caribbean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Main Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women have greater rights and are now seen and treated as equals to men.</td>
<td>• Women have the right to equal job opportunities and equal pay for work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More employment opportunities for women</td>
<td>• Women are no longer SOLELY confined to the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available technology</td>
<td>• Some devices save the amount of time spent on housework hence more time can be spent on paid jobs outside the home or learning required skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Causes of The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family (Cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSES</th>
<th>MAIN RESULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Strain</td>
<td>• High cost of living has forced some women to take up work outside the home to cater for the needs of their family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Education Opportunities</td>
<td>• Women can now learn many skills and acquire the knowledge once only accessible to mostly men.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Way boy! Sometimes I does feel the same way enuh. What does it mean to be a real man anymore?

Damion, thinking about this. What is my role anymore in this place? Is only ah sissy who does stay home and wash de clothes! Marissa barely does anything ah woman should do, like cooking and carrying the children to school .... Women these days I tell you!
Effects Of The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family

So how exactly does the changing role of Caribbean women affect Caribbean Men?

• Men are no longer the sole disciplinarians.
• They have become more involved in shopping chores.
• They are sometimes forced to become more involved in child rearing activities.
• Men feel EMASCULATED since they are no longer the sole decision makers for the family.

These factors have in turn led to Male Marginalization and a Male Identity Crisis.
Effects Of The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family

Male Identity Crisis

The fact that men are no longer certain of their roles in the family and hence even in society they begin questioning their masculinity and their role in the family.
Effects Of The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family

With women becoming more independent, the primary role of men as chief breadwinner for the family has become less, other roles of men have also become less such as their roles of disciplinarians and being top of their career fields. With regard to this and to the family Men are now said to be marginalized, because their value to the family has decreased. These men may not consider themselves as important to the family as how they are used to or socialized to be.

Hence these men usually feel less certain of their role in the family.
Effects Of The Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family

With more women becoming more “career-oriented” they have become more:

• Independent of men.

• Confident and have developed a greater sense of self esteem.

• Appreciated since they are making a contribution to society via their skills and knowledge.
Effects of the Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in The Caribbean Family

Effects on The Family: The Issue of Conflict

• Sometimes many men may reject the new or additional roles of women. Many may not have even accepted their new roles of sharing certain responsibilities. Some women may also want to have less children with their significant other.

• These issues sometimes lead to spousal conflicts which can lead to divorce, breakdown of the family and a myriad of other social ills such as physical abuse.
Effects of Marginalization of the Male

- Being unproductive at the workplace if the boss is a woman
- Violence against women
- Depression/loss of self esteem
- Alcoholism and drug abuse
- Infidelity
- Suicide

Men who have been educated to treat all sexes with respect lend their support both at home and in the workplace.
An identity crisis in the family occurs when a person’s status and image are eroded by social changes.

- Working mothers (spend more time at workplace that taking care of their families)
- Fathers assisting with household chores traditionally performed by women (may be uncomfortable doing so in front of friends/visitors)
- Patriarchal family structure challenged by newly independent working women/men no longer sole breadwinners
- Sperm banks/artificial insemination etc. – reduced importance of male as a sex partner – affects male identity
- Prevalence of HIV/AIDS – increased number of sibling households – identity crisis for children who must now perform adult roles of homemaker and breadwinner.
Role Conflict

• A role is defined as a set of behaviours which go with a particular social position.
• Role conflict occurs when inconsistent types of behaviour are required in carrying out a particular role.
• Father may be uncomfortable explaining menstruation, puberty and other sex-related topics to his daughter(s)

• Working parents may be unable to spend quality time with their children due to the demands of their jobs.

• Working wives who earn more than their husbands may expect to share decision-making with them but may defer to their husbands to avoid conflict.

• Working mothers resort to bottle-feeding rather than breast-feeding even though the latter is considered better for the child.