

15 increased from 50% to 72%. In 1998, two thirds of Canadian mothers of young children (i.e. at least one under 6) were in the paid labour force (Scott, 2000).

Women's Employment Patterns Have Become Like Men's

Recent data would suggest that in Canada, women's patterns of employment are becoming like those of men (Fast and de Pont, 1997). Traditionally Canadian women left the workforce once they started their families. In the 1990s this was no longer true as the majority of women (55%) returned to work within two years of giving birth (Scott, 2000).

Changing Family Patterns: More Dual-Income Families

At the beginning of the new millennium the dual-income family has replaced the traditional male breadwinner/homemaker wife as the prototypical Canadian family type and both husband and wife work for pay outside the home in seven out of ten Canadian families (up from 34% in 1967) (Statistics Canada, 1997d). Only 20% of Canadian families now fit into the male breadwinner, female homemaker model (Vanier Institute, 1997).

Changing Family Patterns: More Single Parent Families

A second family configuration, the lone parent household, also become more prevalence in the 1990s. The number of lone-parent families reached 1.1 million in 1996, up 19% from 1991 and 33% from 1986 (Statistics Canada, 1997e). Although these figures include both male- and female-headed households, lone parenthood is largely the domain of women. In 1996, lone-parent families headed by women outnumbered those headed by men by more than four to one (Ibid.). Roughly half of female lone parents work for pay (Lero & Johnson, 1994).

Lone parents in the labour force face considerable challenges in terms of balancing their work and home lives. Like parents in dual-income families, they must cope with the combined demands of their paid work and their domestic responsibilities. Unlike parents in two-partner families, however, they often must do so without the assistance and emotional support of a spouse, and often under the additional burden of financial stress (Statistics Canada, 1997e).

Canadian Fathers Spending More Time In "Family" Labour But

Although Statistics Canada only began to include unpaid labour in the 1996 census, that data which is available suggests that in the 80's and 90's men (particularly husbands and lone fathers) spent more time in unpaid work activities such as housework, child and elder care than was the case earlier in the decade (Vanier Institute, 2000). The movement of women into the Canadian workforce has not, however, resulting in sweeping changes in family roles. For many families, women's paid employment is still viewed as secondary to their unpaid caring work, particularly when the woman's earnings are less than those of her spouse (Scott, 2000). The research that is available (see Hochsfield, 1989) would suggest that women's paid employment has lead to the expansion of women's roles (i.e. the second shift) rather than lead to a redefinition of gender roles for both men and women. As the Vanier Institute (2000, pg. 144) notes,

"... men have a long way to go before they catch up with their wives who still do by far the greatest share of housekeeping, even when they are also working in the paid labour force."