

**Title:**

**The Effects of Public Urination in  
Guyana**

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# Introduction

According to the World's Health Organization (WHO) article<sup>1</sup> *Gender and Health*, gender encompasses the socially constructed traits and roles that define expectations for women, men, girls, and boys, shaping norms, behaviours, and interactions within and across these groups. These characteristics vary across different societies and develop over time. Gender also operates within a hierarchy, contributing to inequalities that are interwoven with other forms of social and economic disadvantage.

Before delving into the core of this article, it's essential to address a critical misunderstanding. There is often the misconception that gender is based on a person's sex whether male or female; however, gender is distinct from sex and this misconception needs to be rectified. While gender is the social construct given to men and women by society, sex refers to the biological and physiological traits—like chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs—that differentiate females, males, and intersex individuals. Although related, gender and sex are separate from gender identity. Gender identity is an individual's deeply personal and internal sense of their gender, which may align with or differ from their biological characteristics or the sex they were assigned at birth.

Furthermore, gender-based discrimination often overlaps with other forms of bias, including those related to race, economic status, disability, age, location, gender identity, and sexual orientation—a concept known as intersectionality. It is important to acknowledge also how social norms play a major role in gender inequality. Unicef defines social norms as *'the perceived informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community, thus guiding human behaviour'*<sup>2</sup>.

In many Caribbean societies, there exists a subtle but pervasive gender inequality regarding public behaviour and legal enforcement, particularly around actions like public urination. This article intends to examine this issue primarily in Guyana. Despite laws prohibiting public urination across the region or more importantly laws on public indecency and Public Nuisance, societal norms often grant men more leniency, while women engaging in similar behaviour face

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (online) 'Gender' [https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1) accessed 11 October 2024.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF 'Social Norms Definitions' (2021) <https://www.unicef.org/media/111061/file/Social-norms-definitions-2021.pdf> accessed 12 October 2024.

stigmatisation and harsher social repercussions. This discrepancy underscores broader patterns of gender bias embedded in legal interpretations and social perceptions. By examining legal frameworks, comparative case studies from countries with a more developed stance on this issue, and recommendations from major organizations, we can explore grounds to address these inequities in Guyana. Implementing gender-responsive policies, investing in inclusive public infrastructure, and promoting community education are key strategies that can help create a more equitable legal and social environment for all genders, thus upholding the enshrined constitutional right to equality before the law in the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

## Body

To explore the inequality between men and women regarding the social acceptance of public urination in Guyana, it's essential to look at both case law and the broader legal and social context in which such norms exist. While there might not be many case laws directly addressing this exact issue, we can explore related legal principles, constitutional rights, and the idea of discrimination or equal protection under the law.

### 1. Constitutional Provisions and Equal Protection

The Constitution of Guyana, like many other constitutions, guarantees equality before the law and the protection of fundamental human rights. For example, Article 149 of the Guyanese Constitution outlines the right to equality and protection against discrimination based on sex, gender, or social status.

*Article 149 (D) (1) 'The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection and benefit of the law'<sup>3</sup>.*

Therefore, using this legislation, a woman could argue that the social acceptance of men urinating in public, while women face different social consequences for similar behaviour, constitutes gender-based discrimination. This argument could be supported by analysing how societal norms and gender roles contribute to unequal treatment, even in the absence of explicit legal differences in enforcement. When men are permitted, either implicitly through societal norms or explicitly through law enforcement practices, to urinate in public without consequences, while women lack such freedom or face greater stigma, this creates a disparity in treatment. The law should not implicitly or explicitly favour one gender over another. Article

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<sup>3</sup> Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana Act Cap 1:01

149(D)(1) underscores that every individual—regardless of gender—should have equal accountability under public behaviour standards.

### **Public Nuisance Law and its Application**

Public urination, regardless of gender, is likely prohibited under laws related to public nuisance or indecent exposure. However, the enforcement of such laws might differ based on societal perceptions.

Summary jurisdiction Act 160 (1) *'No person other than a child under the age of five years shall appear in public without being sufficiently and decently clothed, but the Magistrate may allow any relaxation in the requirements of this section he thinks proper having regard to the traditional mode of dress obtaining in any particular community to which the person charged may belong'*. 160 (2) *'Everyone who contravenes this section shall be liable to a fine of not less than five thousand dollars nor more than ten thousand dollars<sup>4</sup>.'*

The Summary Jurisdiction Act 160(1) and 160(2) most definitely can support the argument that public urination constitutes a form of public nuisance in Guyana. Section 160(1) of the Act emphasises that individuals must appear in public “sufficiently and decently clothed.” Although this section directly references clothing, it implicitly calls for standards of public decency, which can extend to behaviours like public urination, as it compromises the decency of shared spaces.

### **Sexual Offences Act and its Application**

Section 28 *'(1) A person ("the accused") commits the offence genitals. of exposure of the genitals if the accused - (a) intentionally exposes the genitals of the accused; and (b) intends that someone will see the genitals of the accused and be caused alarm or distress. '(2) A person who commits an offence under this section is liable - (a) on summary conviction to a fine of five hundred thousand dollars and to imprisonment for two years; (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for five years<sup>5</sup>.'*

Section 28(1) of the legislation further affirms the argument that public urination can be considered a public nuisance in Guyana. This section defines the offence of "exposure of the genitals" as occurring when a person:

- Intentionally exposes their genitals, and
- Has the intent that someone will see their genitals, potentially causing alarm or distress.

In the case of public urination, the individual exposes their genitals, and even if the intent is not necessarily to cause alarm, it inadvertently can have the same effect on others who may witness it. Public exposure of one's genitals, even without the clear intention to cause distress, can naturally lead to discomfort and unease in shared public spaces. This aligns with the legislative intent to protect the public from behaviours that could cause "alarm or distress." While public

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<sup>4</sup> Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act Cap 8:02

<sup>5</sup> Sexual Offences Chapter 8:03

urination might not always be done with the intent to disturb, its impact on public decency and the comfort of others suggests it should be regulated as a form of nuisance or offence, in line with the idea of Section 28(1).

### **Public Health Ordinance**

72. (1) *Every local sanitary authority may, and shall when so directed by the Board, provide and maintain in proper and convenient situations in their district sufficient water-closets or latrines for the public use as may from time to time be necessary*<sup>6</sup>.

As evident in section 72(1) of the Public Health Ordinance Act Cap 145, the law mandates that authorities provide "sufficient water-closets or latrines" for public use, recognizing that access to restrooms is an essential public need. Meeting this requirement could reduce instances of men urinating in public spaces.

### **Relevant Case Laws and Legal Precedents**

To argue such a case effectively, one would need to look at Guyanese case law dealing with gender equality and discrimination. For example, cases where the courts have interpreted Article 149 or other anti-discrimination provisions might provide precedents.

A prominent case highlighting gender inequality in Guyana is *McEwan and Others v. Attorney General of Guyana (2018)*<sup>7</sup>, which dealt with gender discrimination related to gender identity and expression. In this case, transgender individuals were charged under the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, which criminalised "cross-dressing" in public for "improper purposes." The appellants argued that the law discriminated based on gender and gender expression, violating their constitutional rights to freedom of expression, equality, and non-discrimination. Although the case of Quincy Mc Ewan does not directly address the issue of public urination and interprets gender discrimination more broadly, it is a good example of how the laws and social norms can violate the constitutional right of equality. The case set a precedent for equality in Guyana and therefore should be used as a tool to pave the way for a more evolved outlook on gender in Guyanese society. The principles from this case could be extrapolated to argue that societal norms that permit men more leeway in public behaviour (like urination) compared to women are inconsistent with the constitutional guarantee of equality.

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<sup>6</sup> Public Health Ordinance Cap 145

<sup>7</sup> Quincy McEwan and Ors v. Attorney General of Guyana [2018] CCJ 30 (AJ)

Furthermore, underscores the importance of challenging legal provisions and societal norms that reinforce gender stereotypes, paving the way for a more inclusive interpretation of gender equality in Guyana and other Caribbean nations.

### **Social Norms vs. Legal Standards**

Even if the law does not explicitly distinguish between men and women regarding public urination, the social norms that allow men greater freedom to engage in this act can have a discriminatory effect. Legal arguments could be made that such social norms perpetuate gender inequality, especially if they lead to differential treatment by law enforcement or impact women's freedom of movement and access to public spaces.

In many places, including Guyana, public urination by men often goes unchecked, highlighting a social norm that tolerates male behaviour differently than female behaviour. This tolerance exposes a type of gender inequality that allows men freedoms in public spaces that are denied to women. When men urinate in public without consequences, it underscores a double standard that gives men more autonomy over public spaces and bodily behaviour. On the contrary, women are expected to adhere to stricter standards. If women were to engage in similar behaviour, they would likely face societal backlash, public shaming, or even legal consequences, highlighting how societal expectations limit women's actions and freedoms.

Furthermore, this gender disparity can lead to issues of accessibility and equity, as men are often able to adapt to a lack of restroom facilities by resorting to public urination, while women, who face physical and social barriers to doing so, are often forced to seek proper facilities, which may be scarce. Thus, the normalisation of public urination by men not only highlights gender inequality but also points to how societal norms can inadvertently reinforce male privilege in shared spaces.

These cases underscore how legal systems and workplaces worldwide have begun to address gender inequality through both judicial decisions and legislative reforms, setting important precedents for gender justice.

## Recommendations

To address the gender inequality in how public urination is socially perceived and treated in Guyana, the government could implement a plethora of policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at promoting equality between men and women in this context.

### **Strengthen and Enforce Public Nuisance Laws Equally**

Ensure that laws related to public urination and public decency are enforced uniformly, regardless of gender. This means that law enforcement should be instructed and trained to apply penalties without bias, holding men and women to the same standards.

Clear Guidelines should be developed and disseminated for police officers and community policing groups on how to handle public urination incidents to avoid selective enforcement.

These guidelines should emphasise gender neutrality in enforcing such laws.

Although Guyana does not have legislation directly targeting the issue of public urination, some other legislations can be argued under to enforce and fine persons in particular men for public urination.

Enforcement of the Public Nuisance Act sections 160(1)<sup>8</sup> and 160(2) can target the issue indirectly. Public urination is an act that exposes individuals in a way that could be perceived as indecent, especially if done in public view. Therefore, it aligns with the intent of this legislation, which emphasises protecting public decency and maintaining standards that prevent offensive exposure. Moreover, under 160(2), individuals who breach this standard may be fined between five and ten thousand dollars. This fine mechanism indicates that any action that undermines decency in public spaces could be classified as a punishable offense. By framing public urination as an offence that disregards decency requirements outlined in the Summary Jurisdiction Act, it can be argued that public urination should be treated as a public nuisance in Guyana.

By penalising the intentional exposure of genitals in public according to section 28(1),(2)<sup>9</sup>, the law challenges the social acceptability of men urinating in public spaces. Often, men are less stigmatised or penalised for public urination, while women face harsher judgment or are deterred by safety concerns. Enforcement of this law could reduce this gender-based double standard. Enforcing fines and potential imprisonment for genital exposure creates a significant deterrent. The high penalties associated with this offence emphasise the importance of public

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<sup>8</sup> See fn 4

<sup>9</sup> See fn 5 (Sexual offences Act)

decorum, pushing society to view open urination as unacceptable behaviour for all genders, not just women.

Additionally, enforcing Section 72 of the Public Health Ordinance Act, which mandates that local sanitary authorities must provide public restrooms when directed by the Board, could help address gender inequality related to public urination. Strict oversight and directives from higher authorities would ensure more public restrooms are available, helping to reduce the disparity between men and women in access to sanitation facilities.

### **Increase the Availability of Public Restrooms**

The lack of adequate public restrooms can lead to the necessity of public urination, particularly affecting women. The government can invest in building more gender-neutral public restrooms, especially in crowded and high-traffic areas.

According to Section 72 of the Public Health Act<sup>10</sup>: The law requires authorities to provide, as directed by the board "sufficient water-closets or latrines" for public use. This mandate reflects an understanding that public access to restrooms is a basic necessity, and fulfilling it could discourage men from urinating in public spaces.

Men urinating in public often stems from the lack of available facilities, creating a stigma where men are expected, or even permitted, to relieve themselves openly. This reinforces gender norms that tolerate public urination for men but not women, who face greater restrictions and social stigma for similar behaviour. The lack of accessible public restrooms contributes to unequal treatment: men are often viewed more leniently when forced to urinate in public, while women face greater repercussions for doing so. By building more public restrooms, we create an environment where both men and women can meet their needs discreetly and equally, reducing gendered stigma. With enough public facilities, the argument that men have "no other choice" is weakened. This would not only discourage public urination but also hold everyone to the same standard, eliminating the implicit double standard that exists due to facility scarcity.

The strategic location of these restrooms is of major importance, restrooms are to be positioned in locations that are accessible to everyone, including in markets, parks, and areas with high

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<sup>10</sup> Public Health Ordinance Cap 145

pedestrian traffic. This would reduce the need for public urination for all and minimise the perception that it is more acceptable for men. Targeting an estimated amount of restrooms for each 10 towns in Guyana, thus covering the highly populated areas and the rural areas. A population-based approach for at least 1 public restroom per 1,000-200 people in urban areas. According to the Worldometer<sup>11</sup> Guyana has approximately 800,000 people as of 2024, Thus a rough target of 400 to 800 public washrooms nationwide should be essential. As the focus is slightly shifted to rural areas it would be strategic to have restrooms adequately spaced but still positioned close to public roads and near popular attractions.

### **Public Awareness Campaigns**

Launching campaigns that focus on public decency and the importance of respecting shared spaces, emphasising that public urination is inappropriate for both men and women. These campaigns can address the double standard in how such behaviour is perceived based on gender.

A great mention of a well-established campaign on the issue of Public Urination is the *Right to Pee* campaign<sup>12</sup>. The *Right to Pee* campaign in Mumbai, led by 33 nonprofits, advocates for free, clean, and safe public toilets for women, highlighting a severe gender disparity—only a third of the city's 11,000 pay-to-use toilets are for women. Activist Supriya Sonar emphasises that both men and women face inadequate sanitation and encourages men who urinate in public to support the cause. Therefore, recognizing that poor sanitation impacts everyone, costing India over 6% of its GDP. Women endure unsafe, unhygienic conditions, often holding their bladders for hours, harming their health. The 2014 'Clean India Mission' and the "Smart Cities" initiative aim to improve sanitation, but progress remains slow despite identified sites for new toilets and potential economic benefits.

Implementing the key points of Mumbai's Right to Pee campaign in Guyana could be effective in addressing similar gender disparities in sanitation. Thus highlighting the impact of a public campaign in Guyana against the public urination issue. Some points the campaign targets are to increase public restrooms, raise gender sensitivity awareness, engage local authorities and

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<sup>11</sup> Worldometers (online) 'Guyana Population'  
<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/guyana-population/#:~:text=The%20current%20population%20of%20Guyana,831%2C087%20people%20at%20mid%20year> accessed 12 October 2024

<sup>12</sup> Hindustan Times (online) 'Right to Pee: Mumbai Women Want Men to Join Their Fight' (30 June 2022)  
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/right-to-pee-mumbai-women-want-men-to-join-their-fight/story-MxpDVda6LTqLTWXhXucwPK.html> accessed 15 October 2024.

NGOs, Promote Health and economic benefits of sanitation, address sanitation needs in schools, and finally public and government accountability.

The main target of campaigning would be to raise Gender Sensitivity Awareness, as evident, in the *Right to Pee* campaign calls for male support, which would encourage men in Guyana to advocate for women's sanitation needs, building a culture that respects privacy and hygiene for all genders. This can be part of public outreach efforts to foster understanding and collective action, furthermore addressing the social norm that have been adopted by the society. When men understand the added challenges women face without proper restroom access, they may recognize the unfairness of a system that implicitly allows men more freedom in public spaces. This awareness can foster empathy, making it less socially acceptable for men to urinate openly while women lack safe alternatives.

With men actively supporting the creation of more public restrooms, the emphasis shifts from relying on informal solutions, like public urination, to pressuring authorities to provide adequate facilities for everyone. This advocacy can help ensure long-term changes in infrastructure and expectations, making public urination less necessary or excusable for men.

A Public campaign can educate the public on the constitutional rights to equality and non-discrimination, focusing on dismantling harmful stereotypes. Address how social norms that accept certain behaviours from men but stigmatise them for women perpetuate gender inequality.

### **Gender Sensitivity Training for Law Enforcement**

The Implementation of mandatory gender sensitivity training for law enforcement officers to address implicit biases that might lead to unequal treatment of men and women in the enforcement of public nuisance laws. This training can help officers recognize and address unconscious gender biases.

### **Raising Awareness of Gendered Behavior in Public Spaces**

Gender sensitivity training helps law enforcement officers recognize how social and cultural norms shape different behaviors in public spaces. In many societies, public urination is more commonly associated with men, especially in the context of high-traffic areas where facilities

may be limited. Training can help officers understand that while this behavior is widespread, it is also gendered—meaning men may feel more entitled or more likely to urinate in public due to a combination of habit, lack of access to facilities, or social norms.

By acknowledging this, officers can approach the issue with more nuance and sensitivity, recognizing that public urination might not be an inherently criminal act but rather a symptom of deeper infrastructural and cultural issues.

Implicit biases often influence how law enforcement responds to different genders. In the case of public urination. Officers who have not received gender sensitivity training may unconsciously ignore men urinating in public or treat women who do the same more harshly, reinforcing gender inequality in how laws are enforced. By training officers to recognize and correct these biases, the likelihood of unequal treatment diminishes. Gender-sensitive law enforcement ensures that men and women are treated fairly and equally when it comes to public nuisance laws, encouraging more equal enforcement of the law.

### **Review and Reform of Existing Legislation**

Conduct a review of laws related to public behavior, including public urination, to assess whether they have a disproportionate impact on men or women. This assessment could inform legislative reforms to ensure the laws are equitable in their impact. Furthermore, amend existing laws or introduce new provisions that explicitly require equal treatment of individuals under the law, regardless of gender, in cases related to public decency or public nuisance.

In the context of Guyana a review and reform of existing legislation regarding public behavior, particularly public urination, could be a crucial step toward addressing gender-based inequality in law enforcement and societal treatment. The first step in addressing gender-based inequality in the enforcement of public behavior laws, such as public urination, is to review the existing legislation. Guyana, like many countries, has laws that penalize public urination under public nuisance or indecency provisions. However, these laws may not account for the gendered dimensions of public urination. Typically, public urination is more common among men, due to differences in social behavior and accessibility of facilities.

The goal of this review would be to identify any imbalances in how the laws are applied and whether certain groups (e.g., women) are unfairly penalized due to factors such as societal expectations or greater difficulty in finding private places to relieve themselves. Following the review, legislative reforms should aim to amend existing laws or introduce new provisions that address the issue at hand. Reforms could explicitly be addressed to prohibit public urination and defecation directly, applied equally to both men and women. This would ensure that law enforcement does not implicitly target women more severely due to cultural perceptions of women's "decency" and modesty.

A great example of a law directly purported to public urination is in Minnesota Code of Ordinance section 130<sup>13</sup> If Guyana were to adopt this legislation there would be a need for a clear law stating that public urination is prohibited in public spaces such as streets, sidewalks, alleys, and any public building or place accessible to the public. The law should specify that urinating outside of designated restroom facilities is prohibited. Additionally, Instead of focusing solely on fines or criminal penalties, the revised legislation could allow for alternative responses that focus on solving the problem rather than punishing individuals. For example, public education campaigns or community service (such as cleaning public spaces) could serve as alternatives to fines or arrests.

In conclusion, these recommendations aim to address both the practical challenges, like the availability of facilities, and the broader social norms that contribute to gender inequality in the treatment of public behaviour. By focusing on equal enforcement, public education, and access to facilities, the government can foster a more equitable approach to this issue.

### **The issue in other Caribbean countries.**

#### **1. Trinidad and Tobago**

An article written by Susan Mohammed addressed the issue in Trinidad regarding Public Urination<sup>14</sup>. The article highlights the issue of public urination in Trinidad and Tobago, where it is classified as a misdemeanor under the Summary Offences Act (section 46h), which states that anyone who willfully and obscenely exposes their body may be deemed a rogue and vagabond,

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<sup>13</sup>Goodview City Code (online) 'Chapter 50 - Public Health and Safety'  
[https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/goodview/latest/goodview\\_mn/0-0-0-3813](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/goodview/latest/goodview_mn/0-0-0-3813) accessed 3 November 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Trinidad Express (online) 'Gentlemen and Ladies, This Is a Crime' (7 January 2019)  
[https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/gentlemen-and-ladies-this-is-a-crime/article\\_07f8c1d4-1b45-11e9-a4ec-27ab75bab76b.html](https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/gentlemen-and-ladies-this-is-a-crime/article_07f8c1d4-1b45-11e9-a4ec-27ab75bab76b.html) accessed 4 November 2024

carrying a two-month jail term. It discusses an incident in which Port of Spain Mayor Joel Martinez witnessed a man urinating against the Red House fence, despite a public restroom being nearby. Martinez condemned the act, emphasizing the importance of using public toilets and maintaining cleanliness in public spaces. The article underscores the legal and social expectations around public decency and the responsibility of citizens to respect communal spaces.

Enforcement: The Port of Spain City Corporation and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service collaborate to enforce anti-public urination measures. In a media release in Trinidad, A 64-year-old man was charged for urinating in public at Woodford Square in Port-of-Spain on February 27th, 2021. During a routine patrol, City Police observed him urinating on a plant and advised him to use nearby public washrooms, but he claimed he couldn't stop. He was arrested, granted \$500 bail, and will appear virtually before a magistrate on April 26th, 2021. The release highlights the enforcement of public decency laws and the availability of alternatives like public restrooms<sup>15</sup>.

## 2. Jamaica

An article from The Gleaner New outlet highlighted the stiffer penalties for peeing in public by the councillor<sup>16</sup>. The article discusses the Kingston and St Andrew Municipal Corporation's (KSAMC) move to increase fines for public urination, a practice deemed to be widespread. Donovan Samuels, a councilor, highlighted that the current fine of \$2,000 is inadequate, pushing for stronger penalties. Eugene Kelly, another councilor, expressed concerns about the impact on vulnerable groups, such as the homeless, and pointed out the lack of public sanitary facilities, which could contribute to the problem. Mayor Delroy Williams acknowledged the issue but emphasized the need for proper consultation and better provision of public toilets. He noted the inconsistency of having some areas well-served with facilities while others, like the Ward

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<sup>15</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (Facebook post): Media Release - Man, 64, Charged for Urinating in Woodford Square' (28 February 2021) <https://www.facebook.com/PoliceServiceTT/posts/february-28th-2021media-releaseman-64-charged-for-urinating-in-woodford-square-4058145910870726/> accessed 4 November 2024.

<sup>16</sup> The Jamaica Gleaner (online) 'Stiffer Penalties for Peeing in Public – Councillor' (15 August 2018) <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20180815/stiffer-penalties-peeing-public-councillor> accessed 5 November 2024.

Theatre, face serious issues. The article underscores the need for both stricter enforcement and better infrastructure to address public urination.

### 3. Barbados

In an article from Barbados, it was examined how health officials demand laws addressing public urination be enforced<sup>17</sup>. The article reports on efforts by the Ministry of Health in Barbados to combat public urination, with Senior Environmental Health Officer Maurice Gaskin announcing that violators could face legal consequences, including a fine of \$5,000 and/or 12 months in prison. Gaskin emphasized the availability of public toilets in various locations, making it unacceptable for individuals to use alleys as restrooms. He called for the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) to assist in enforcing these laws. Minister of Culture, Sports, and Youth, Stephen Lashley, echoed this sentiment, advocating for stricter enforcement and suggesting the use of cameras to capture offenders. The article highlights the need for better public discipline and law enforcement to address this public nuisance.

While the articles are not recent, they highlight that public urination remains a persistent issue across the Caribbean. Throughout in particular, Trinidad, Jamaica, and Barbados, local authorities have acknowledged the problem and are considering stricter penalties and enforcement measures to curb the practice. The fact that these discussions have occurred for years suggests that public urination continues to be a challenge in urban areas, with insufficient public sanitation facilities and a need for greater public discipline. The recurring nature of the issue underscores its widespread presence in Caribbean cities including Guyana.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, public urination is not merely a social nuisance but a reflection of deeper gender inequalities that exist in society. While men often have the freedom to relieve themselves in public spaces without significant social or legal consequences, women face more complex

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<sup>17</sup> The Barbados Advocate (online) 'Clampdown on Public Urination'  
<https://www.barbadosadvocate.com/news/clampdown> accessed 5 November 2024.

barriers due to the lack of accessible public restrooms and the societal stigma surrounding female bodily functions. This disparity underscores broader issues of gendered public space, where women's needs are often overlooked or undervalued. Addressing this inequality requires not only improving infrastructure to ensure safe and accessible facilities for all but also challenging the cultural norms that perpetuate the idea of women as outliers in public spaces. By acknowledging and addressing these disparities, we can work toward a more inclusive society that respects the bodily autonomy and dignity of every individual, regardless of gender.

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