

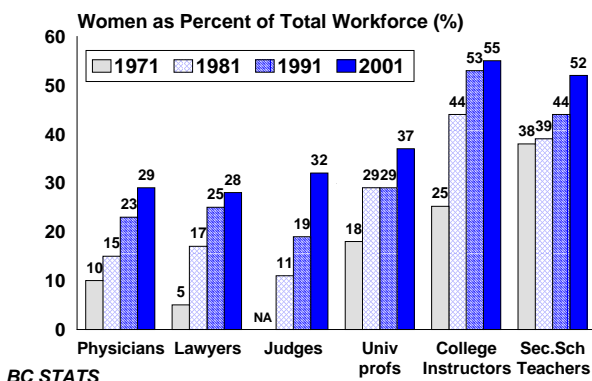
Earnings & Employment Trends ♦ July 2003

Progress in women's integration into the traditional male-dominated occupations.

Women's education levels have continued to increase relative to men's, so that today, more women than men are graduating from high school and are obtaining post-secondary credentials. As one would expect, this is reflected in a shift in the occupational distribution of women into higher-paid occupations. This shift has been very dramatic throughout the '90s. Below are some examples of what women have achieved in the professional occupations, traditional male-dominated trades, and in senior management.

To put the issue into an historical perspective, it is useful to observe women's integration over the last 30 years into some of the more highly paid/influential occupations.

Among many of the more influential professional jobs in society, women have made substantial progress. However, their representation in some jobs, remains well below their overall workforce representation of 47%.



Among university professors, college instructors and secondary school teachers, a group of occupations that provide important role models for youth in the process of making career choices, there are now as many women, as men.

Importantly, the medical and legal professions, often considered the more prestigious occupations, have been opened up to women. Considering that only one in twenty lawyers was a woman back in 1971, it is very impressive that they now represent more than one of every four. While that represents a considerable gain, there remains some distance to go if their numbers are to equal their overall representation in the workforce (47%). The same applies to women physicians.

The dramatic increases in women's representation in these high profile occupations in the last 30 years is also evident in most occupations that demand good salaries, do not require physical strength and have historically been considered "male occupations". Below we look at some of these jobs and the progress women have made in the 1990s.

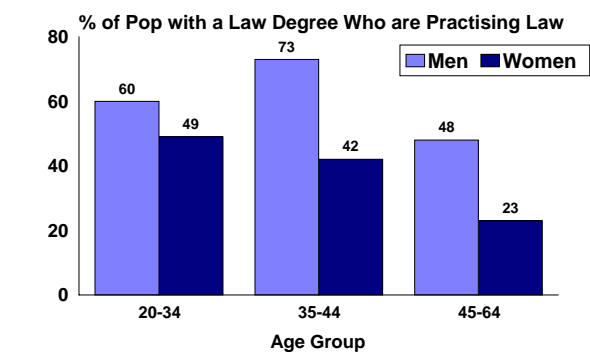
For decades, women have outnumbered men in the Business and Finance occupations, such as bookkeepers and accounting clerks, but they were extremely under-represented in the management of these jobs. They have now successfully moved into the field—*Financial administrative managers* saw women increase their representation from 35 to 52 per cent. Women also outnumber men (58%) among *Banking, credit and other investment managers*.

In the Teaching profession, traditionally, women have outnumbered men among *Elementary school and kindergarten teachers* but were under-represented among *Secondary school teachers*. Women's representation among elementary teachers has stayed pretty constant over the decade at approximately 81 per cent, but they now outnumber males among *Secondary school teachers*, increasing from 44 to 52 per cent. Of importance was the increase in the proportion of women in education management roles. For a sector that is so female dominated, the dominance of men in management has been questioned for decades. Among *School principals and administrators of elementary and secondary schools*, women are still the minority but in 2001, women represented 38 per cent of principals, compared to 29 per cent in 1991.

In the Health Services sector, women have improved their representation in some of the highly paid health professions such as physicians and dentists—they now comprise 30 per cent of the *General practitioners and family physicians*, up from 24 per cent 10 years earlier. Women dentists have doubled their relative representation in *Dentistry*, from 11 to 22 per cent. In addition, there are now as many women *Veterinarians* as there are men.

Among the Legal Professions, judges and lawyers, women increased their representation in the first half of the decade, from 19 to 32 per cent for judges and from 25 to 28 per cent for lawyers, but then their representation remained unchanged between 1996 and 2001. This flattening-out in the share may reflect that the long hours and stress required to practise law are not compatible with raising a family, so women lawyers are switching careers. The data illustrated in the chart below support this theory.

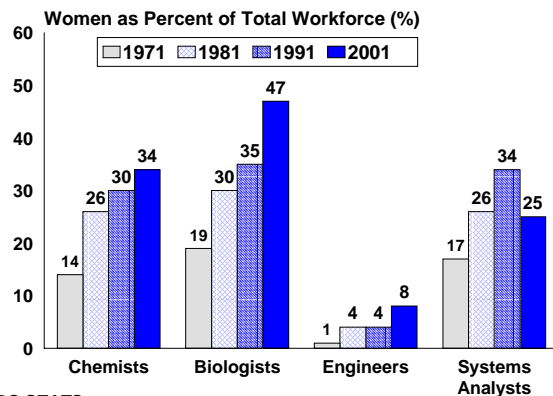
The data from the 2001 Census show that many more men than women with law degrees are practising law



BC STATS

Within the professional occupations in the Natural and Applied Sciences, women continue to gradually increase their presence, rising from 13 per cent at the beginning of the decade to 16 per cent by the 2001 Census.

Among Scientists, only Systems Analysts have seen a decline in women's representation over the 90's



BC STATS

Women have not increased their participation in the Systems Analyst field to the same extent men have. A big drop occurred between 1991 and 1996, when women's representation fell from 34 to 27 per cent. The decline continued in the last half of the decade when a further 2 percentage point drop occurred, so by 2001 only one out of 4 systems analysts were women.

In the Construction Trades, women comprised only 3 per cent of the workforce in 2001. That number had remained virtually unchanged throughout the '90s. It is difficult to understand why more women do not apprentice in the construction trades, as they represent 12 per cent of the *construction trades helpers and labourers*. For some reason, they do not appear to continue on and undertake formal training. In occupations such as *plumbers* and *carpenters*, the representation of women is only 1.5 per

cent. The only construction trade where the number of women is significant is among painters—10 per cent of *painters and decorators* are women.

A sample of Other trades where women's presence is virtually non-existent are:

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|---------------------------------------|------|
| <i>Electricians</i> | 2.5% |
| <i>Machinists</i> | 2.6% |
| <i>Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics</i> | 1.3% |
| <i>Motor vehicle mechanics</i> | 1.4% |
| <i>Sheet Metal Workers</i> | 1.8% |

Women's representation is somewhat more significant in *Telecommunications installation and repair* (12.5%), *Printing press operators* (10.5%), and *Cabinetmakers* (4.7%). Women dominate in *Tailors, dressmakers, furriers and milliners* (88%).

For the Senior Management occupations, the pre-1991 and the post-1991 occupational classification systems are not consistent enough to be able to make comparisons of women's representation in senior management over a 30-year time frame. However, it is possible to compare the management group as a whole, which shows that women increased their representation from 12 per cent in 1971 to 36 per cent in 2001.

During the 1990s, women's representation in *Senior Management* trended upwards at an average annual rate of one per cent per year, from 16 per cent in 1991, to 21 per cent in 1996, to 26 per cent in 2001. As the chart below shows, women now dominate

senior management positions in the area of Health, Education, Social and Community Services, which all are primarily within the public sector. As well, *legislators*, (includes MPs, MLAs, City Councillors, School Trustees, and other elected officials) now have a gender mix verging on the gender mix in the overall workforce.

However, by far the majority of Senior Managers are in the private sector, and women have not been as successful in moving into those areas. Three out of four senior managers are in the sectors represented by the three categories in the right hand side of the chart above. It becomes obvious that despite a very high representation of women in many of these sectors, they have not made very substantial headway into senior management. The successful movement of women into senior management in the public sector begs the question as to whether the Employment Equity Programs, which are more prevalent within the public sector, have proved beneficial for women.

Women still hold only 26% of Senior Management positions. However, they have made considerable inroads into Senior Management in the Public Sector.

