

## Background

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### Women in the Labour Force

There are more women in the work force today than ever before and their numbers are steadily increasing. They are highly mobile: over two million women change their jobs each year. Of the over five million women in Canada's labour force, more than four million are employed in the service sector.

As indicated in Table 3.1 and Chart 3.1, the increasing participation of women in the labour force has been one of the most significant changes in Canadian employment patterns in the last decade. In 1986, 5.5 million or 55 per cent of all working-age women were in the labour market, an increase from 44 per cent in 1975. The change has been most noticeable for women between the ages of 25 and 44 years.

Almost 84 per cent of employed women were working in the service sector in 1986, compared with 12 per cent in the manufacturing sector, and four per cent in the primary sector. Part-time employment accounted for 26 per cent of women's employment in 1986.

### *Occupations*

In looking at women's employment, it is important to consider not only individual industry sectors, but also the occupations in which women work within these sectors. Chart 3.2 shows the employment levels of women and men in 1975 and 1986, and Table 3.2 provides a profile of

the different industries in which women are employed. Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of women's occupations across all sectors. There is a difference when the two tables are compared. For example, according to Table 3.2, 573,000 women work in manufacturing industries, whereas Table 3.3 shows that 312,000 women actually work in manufacturing (processing) jobs. The remainder work in sales, and managerial, professional and other occupations in the manufacturing sector.

In 1986, 58 per cent of all employed women were in clerical, sales and service occupations, compared to 26 per cent of all employed men. Women have made gains in the managerial and professional category, and now represent 45 per cent of this category, compared to 39 per cent in 1975.

According to the 1986 Census, 77 per cent of immigrant women in the labour force worked in the service sector, as compared to 85 per cent of Canadian-born women in the labour force, while 19 per cent of immigrant women were employed in manufacturing, with just 10 per cent of Canadian-born women in this sector.