

International Women's Day

Women and Jobs

2005-2015

**One step forward, two
steps backward.**

NB Common Front for Social Justice

March 8, 2016

Executive Summary

New Brunswick, the last ten years: 2005-2015

The number of women aged 15 years and over in the population and in the labour force has increased in the last ten years.

The financial crisis in 2008-2009 has had a significant impact on women's employment but women have successfully maintained a strong presence in the job market.

The number of women working at a full-time job has increased by 9,700 while women working part-time lost 4,800 jobs, for a net gain of 4,900 jobs for the decade.

A large portion of this gain occurred in two occupations : in healthcare (+ 2,500) and in education, justice and social, community and government services (+5,500). Job losses (- 3,600) were mainly in the sales and service sector, which employs one third of all working women.

It is important to note that it is jobs in the public sector and not jobs in the private sector that allowed women to make those gains.

Women's average hourly wage has increased by 40% while inflation for the same period rose to 22.68%, so women in general did maintain their buying power over the period.

Meanwhile, the situation of women working at minimum wage has deteriorated. The number of women with full-time minimum wage jobs has more than doubled while women with part-time jobs were nearly three times more numerous at the end of the period. As we shall see, an income from the minimum wage is not enough to live on.

Women's unemployment rate has seesawed throughout the decade, reaching its lowest point (6,62%) in 2007 and its highest at 8.2% (2012).

Women continue to face significant barriers in accessing employment, including shortage and cost of child care in licensed facilities, outdated employment standards, pay inequity especially in the private sector, and women's double or triple work load.

Introduction

March 8, International Women's Day, provides an excellent opportunity to examine the position of New Brunswick women in the labour market. As we are all aware, when women began to join the labour force in great numbers, they were able to attain a much greater financial independence and this helped them in their fight for equality.

In this document we look at the last ten years (2005 to 2015) to analyze women's place in the labour market over that period.

We will ask whether or not women's situation in New Brunswick has improved throughout the decade and in particular review how the financial crisis in 2008-2009 has impacted their presence in the labour market.

We will also look at the barriers that are still in place, preventing women's full participation in the labour market.

Women over the last decade (2005-2015)

1. **Has the number of women aged 15 years and over increased in the province?** (Figure 1)



YES

Yes. The number of women aged 15 years and over has constantly increased in the province's population over the past ten years. In 2005, this age group numbered 312,000 in the province, but ten years later, the figure had increased to 318,000, an additional 6,000 women.

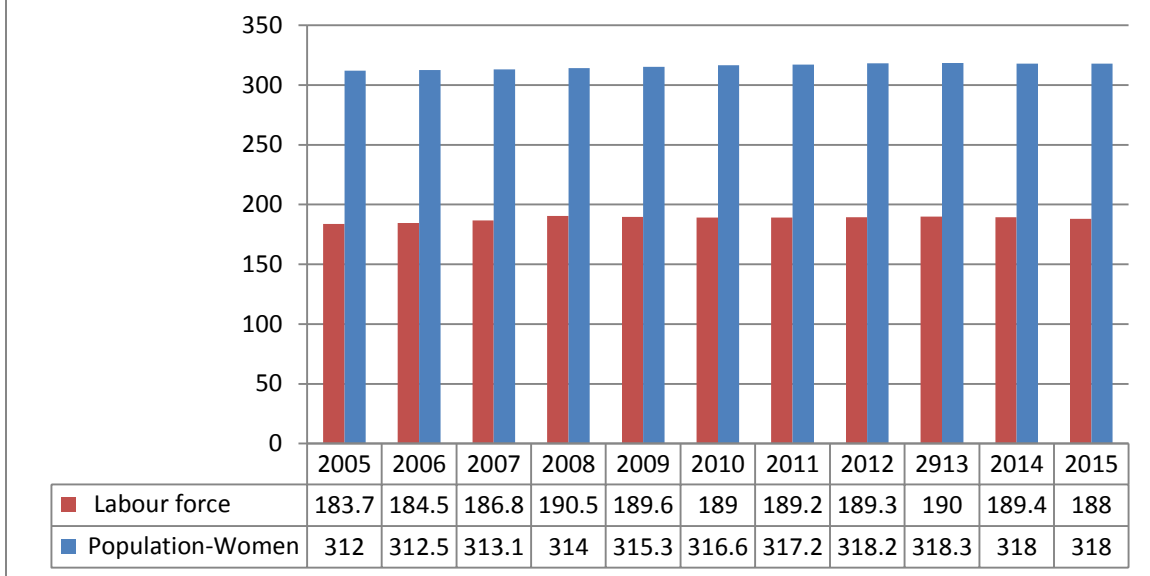


Yes

2. **Have women aged 15 and over maintained their presence in the active population?** (Figure 1)

The number of women in the labour force (available for work, with a job or unemployed) saw an increase of 6,800 between 2005 and 2008, then fluctuated. In 2015, there were 4,300 more women in the labour force than in 2005.

Figure 1- Labour force survey estimates, women 15 years and over. New-Brunswick. (x 1,000)



Source : Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 282-0002

3. Have women aged 15 years and over maintained their presence in employment? (Table 1)



Yes. The number of jobs held by women rose until 2008, then fell back somewhat, levelling off at 4,900 more women with a job in 2015. A positive outcome, all in all.

Data on women's employment for the past seven years show that while women have not regained the number of jobs they held in 2008, they have still maintained a strong presence in the labour market.

Table 1. Employment. Women 15 years and over. New Brunswick- 2005-2015 (x 1 000)

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
169.4	171.4	175.2	177.9	175.6	175.1	174.7	173.7	175.2	174.6	174.3

Source : Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 282-0002

4. In what type of jobs did women aged 15 and over make gains? (Table 2)

Public Sector

When looking at the ten (10) occupations where women are employed, it can be seen that their jobs fall mainly in four of them: 1) business, finance and administration, 2) health, 3) education, law and social, community and government services, and 4) sales and service.

An analysis of Figure 3, reporting data on employees in the various occupations, reveals that women did rather well over the past decade, despite the negative impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis, and held 4,100 more jobs in 2015 than in 2005. These gains were mainly in full-time jobs than in part-time jobs.

New jobs were mainly within two occupations: health (+ 2,500), and education, law and social, community and government services (+5,500). Job losses were mainly in sales and services (-3,600), a sector that employs one third of all women.

It is important to consider that the average hourly wage in the health sector has increased by \$6.04, or 30%, over the decade, and by \$5.36 (29%) in the combined education, law and social, community and government services sector, while the inflation rate held at 22.68%.

But most importantly, the rise in employment for women happened in two occupations offering decent wages: 26.26 \$ (2015) for health and 23.76 \$ (2015) for the education, law and social, community and government services sector, whereas the losses were mostly in the low-wage (\$13.93 in 2015) sales and service sector.

Growth in employment figures mostly occurred in the public sector while areas with fewer jobs were part of the private sector.

Without employment increase in the public sector, where they are present in large numbers, women's situation over the past ten years would clearly have been much different.

Table 2. Percentage of women (15 years and overs) employed by occupations, job gains or losses and average hourly rates between 2005 and 2015.

Occupations (National Occupational Classification)	% of women in the occupation	Jobs gain or loss between 2005 and 2015	Average hourly rate between 2005 and 2015
Management occupations	4%	+ 200	\$9.54
Business, finance and administration occupations	23%	- 400	\$6.08\$
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	2%	+800	\$8.43
Health occupations	13%	+ 2,500	\$6.04
Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	15%	+ 5,500	\$5.36
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sports	1%	0	\$2.39
Sales and service occupations	36 %	- 3,600	\$4.02
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	1%	+ 600	\$5.41
Natural resources, agriculture and related occupations	1%	- 500	\$5.22
Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	3%	- 1,000	\$3.76

Source. Statistique Canada. Cansim Tableau 282-0152

5. Did the 2008-2009 economic crisis have an impact on employment for women aged 15 years and over? (Figure2)

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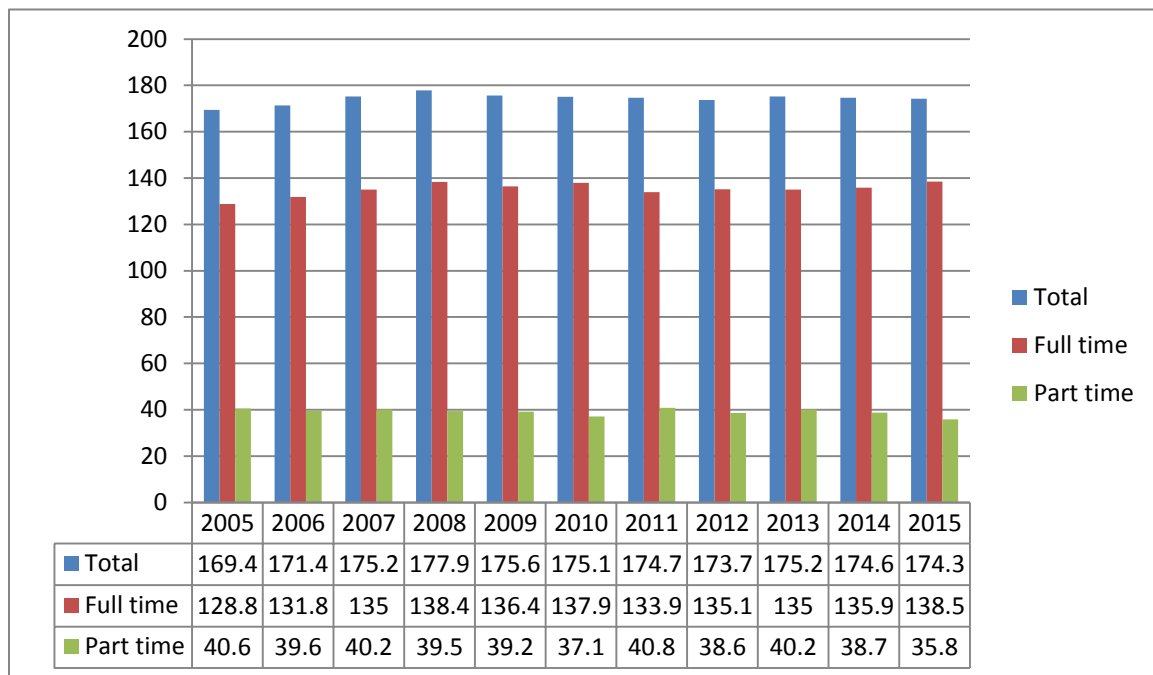
Bouncing figures. From 2005 to 2008, the number of women with a full-time job rose steadily (+ 9,600). The financial crisis in 2008 had a negative impact on employment for several years, but last year, 9,700 more women had full-time jobs than ten years before.

Over the same decade, the number of part-time jobs rose and fell. At the start of the period there were 40,600 part-time jobs, a record high for the entire period. Subsequently the number fell to a low of 37,100 in 2010, then rose to 40,800 in

2011; the decade closed on a net loss of 4,800 part-time jobs as compared to 2005.

This reduction in the number of women in part-time jobs is good news, due to the accompanying increase in the number of women in full-time jobs. The total annual income from a full-time job is assuredly larger than from a part-time job, and therefore provides greater financial independence for women.

Figure 2. Women’s total jobs. Full-time and part-time jobs. New Brunswick. 2005-2015



Source : Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 282-0002

6. Women remain under-represented in jobs at the minimum wage? (Figure 3)

Yes

Yes. The number of women working at minimum wage has almost tripled between 2004 (4,800) and 2014 (13,100), according to the latest available annual data.

At the start of the decade (2004), women employed at minimum wage worked in 3 % of the total number of jobs held by women, but 10 years later minimum wage jobs accounted for 8% of all jobs held by women.

The number of women working at full-time jobs has more than doubled, increasing from 2,100 (2004) to 5,500 (2014).

During the same period, the number of women working at part-time jobs has tripled, rising from 2,700 to 7,600.

This constant increase in the number of minimum wage jobs held by women is a matter of concern since the income from these jobs is insufficient to afford a decent living.



Source : Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation. Labour forces estimates for employees earning adult minimum wage or less. Document from the New Brunswick department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.



7. Is the minimum wage sufficient to afford a decent living? (Figure 3, Table 3)

No. As we saw in Figure 3 above, more and more women are working at minimum wage, be it in part-time or full-time jobs.

Minimum hourly wage in New Brunswick is set at \$10.30, the lowest among all Canadian provinces. At this rate, the gross annual wage is \$21,424 providing the employee gets a full 40-hour work week throughout the year – this is barely above the poverty line for a single individual.

A research paper entitled *An Economic Reality: Living on Minimum Wage* published by the Common Front for Social Justice clearly shows that single individuals, single-parent families and even couples working full-time can't afford a decent living with the income from minimum wage jobs. Part-time workers are even worse off. As we have seen, the number of women working at minimum wage has significantly increased over the past decade, hence women's economic situation has considerably deteriorated.

Table 3: Net annual income from minimum wage, Total annual spending, Deficit – 2015 (\$)

Year 2015	Single individual	Single parent Family + 1 child	Single parent Family + 2 children	Couple 1 child 1 income	Couple 1 child 2 incomes	Couple 2 children 1 income	Couple 2 children 2 incomes
Net Annual Income	18 978	27 284	31 825	26 094	39 579	31 630	43 127
Net annual expenses	23 489	32 570	41 124	37 981	41 080	44 291	53 210
Deficit	-4 511	-5 286	-9 299	-11 887	-1 501	-12 661	-10 083

Note : These figures reflect calculations from *An Economic Reality: Living on Minimum Wage*, Table 2.

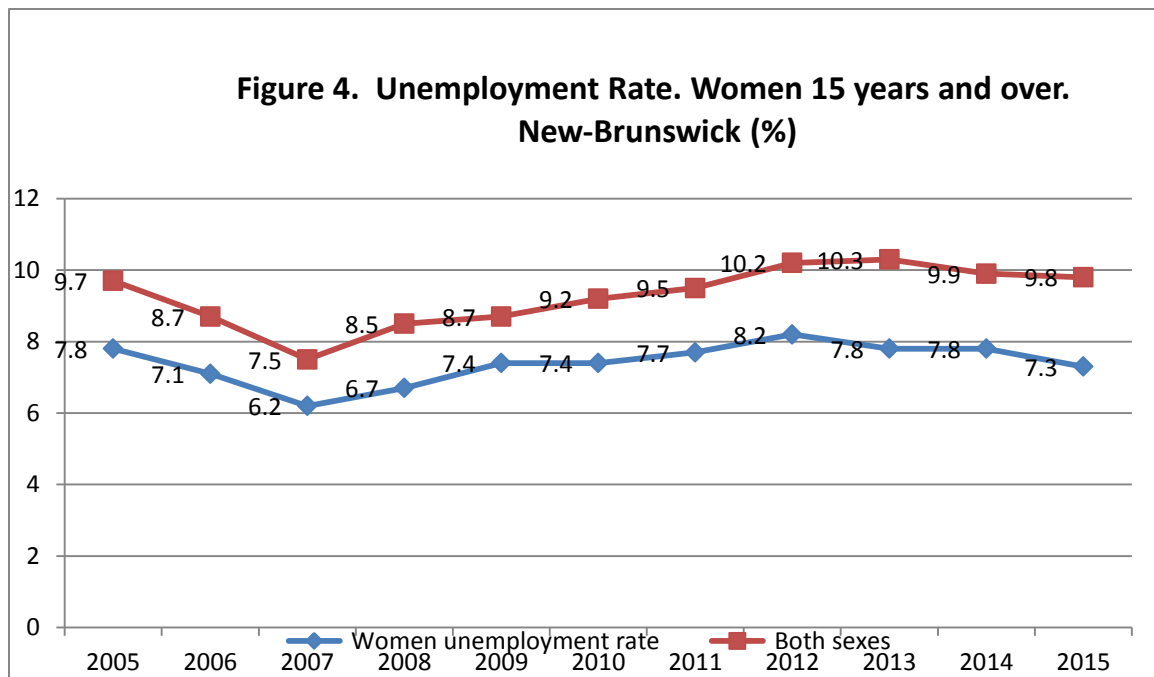
8. Have women of 15 years old and over experienced more unemployment over the last ten years? (Figure 4)



Yes and No. Women started the decade with a high unemployment rate (7.8%). This rate decreased up to 2008, then increased to a summit of 8.2% in 2012. Since it has decreased slightly and last year it was 0.5% below the 2005 rate.

A woman working full-time at the minimum wage earns a gross weekly salary of \$412.00 (2015). In the event she loses her job, she will only receive 55% of that wage, or \$226.00 per week, which is a considerable loss of income. As we have seen in the past decade, more women than ever are working at minimum wage,

so clearly, their financial situation has deteriorated, since a minimum wage just barely keep them over the poverty line..



Source. Statistics Canada. CANSIM, Table 282-0002

What are some of the barriers that still prevent women from fully participating in the labour market?

a) Shortage of spaces in licensed child-care facilities



In 2005, children aged 2-10 years old numbered 102,000 in the province while a decade later (2014) there were 111,000 children in the same age group that would require spaces in daycare.¹

In 2014, the 25,491 spaces in New Brunswick's licensed child-care facilities could accommodate 27.9% of all children aged 12 or less in the province, as

compared to 11,897 spaces in 2004.¹ Nice progress, but it means that three quarters of NB's children still cannot access licensed services.

In 2014, over 75 % of women with children were working, and therefore needed quality child care services, but access is limited.¹

¹<http://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/PreliminaryData-ECECinCanada2014-FINAL.pdf>

The cost of child care services is a constant challenge for parents. In New Brunswick, the average annual rate in 2014 for child care in licensed facilities was \$9,003.12 in the case of infants, \$7,625.88 for pre-school-aged, and \$4,286.26 for school-aged children (Source: An Economic Reality: Living on Minimum Wage. Common Front for Social Justice). Fortunately a provincial Day Care Assistance Program is available to low-income families but this does not cover the whole costs and does lessen the financial burden on families who do not qualify.

b) Outdated Employment Standards



The protection afforded by Labour laws has always been denied to specific categories of wage earners. In New Brunswick, for instance, women dominated jobs such as family support and child-care providers who work in private homes for the owner are excluded from the protection of the Employment Standards Act. These people work and receive wages, but without being considered employees.

This point to a single example of the amendments that need to be made to New Brunswick's Employment Standards Act to better protect the interests of working men and women.

Some of the standards should be modified to reflect a greater sensitivity to women in the labour market.

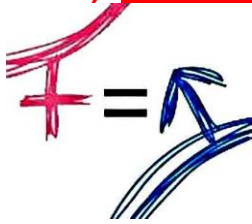
First of all, a work week should be limited to 40 hours. All overtime should be paid one and a half times the employee's salary, and not time and a half at the minimum wage as is the current practice. It should be possible to compensate overtime hours worked as time off, at a rate of 1.5 times the employee's hourly

wage, instead of financial retribution. A clause should also be inserted to ensure employees are allowed to refuse to work overtime.

A great number of women are working in the service and hotel industry. The practice in this industry is to require workers to pay for their uniform. We consider that women working at minimum wage should not have to pay for their uniform nor its upkeep. For women at higher than the minimum wage, upkeep or cleaning expenses should not reduce their wages to a level lower than the minimum wage.

The Act does not provide for paid leaves whether sick leave, maternity leave, family responsibilities leaves, compassionate care leave, or critical illness leave for critically ill child. As we all well know, women are the most likely to require these types of leaves because of their gender and their social role in our society. Employment standards should be updated now to reflect this reality and cease penalizing women if we want them to remain in the labour market, and more importantly if we want them to stop losing income because of their gender.

c) The lack of pay equity, particularly in the private sector



The hourly wage gap between men and women in New Brunswick has gone from 14.3% in 2005 to 11.2% in 2015. Part of this remaining wage gap is the result of pay inequity, that is, under valuing and under-paying people in female-dominated jobs as compared to male-dominated jobs.

NB's Pay Equity Act, SNB 2009, which applies to the public sector, has been an important step in a positive direction. While job evaluations are overdue, and compliance to pay equity in several job categories can't always be ensured, the Act can be useful in leveraging further improvements.

Between 2008 and 2012, government implemented pilot projects in pay equity for child care services, home support agencies, transition houses and group homes. We are aware that the methodology was faulty and yielded wage levels that were much lower than the work's real value. However the current government has promised to remedy the situation. We must now go on to the next step: that all personal care services offered in the private sector and overseen by government be evaluated, and pay equity be established.

Another election promise should lead to changes in the procurement and funding processes so that employers with more than 50 employees are required to establish pay equity planning.

d) Women's double and triple work load



As it was ten years ago, women in the labour market are still the ones required to perform household chores, and take care of children and elderly parents in addition to their day on the job. This double or triple work load is an extra burden that often discourages women from entering the job market.

As a result of this double or triple workload means, many women are forced to take part-time or temporary positions instead of full-time jobs.

This situation has a negative impact on their everyday financial independence, but also on their capacity to build a retirement pension plan.

Conclusion

There are now more women in the general population and in the labour force than ten years ago.

Women, aged 15 and more, are still present in the labour market and, in the last decade, they maintained their place. The total number of women with full-time jobs increased in the last decade while their presence in part-time jobs decreased, which is positive. The gains were mainly in predominantly women jobs in the public sector. No gains for women in terms of jobs in the private sector.

The average hourly salary for women aged 15 and more improved by about 40% while the inflation rate was 22.68%. Therefore, women were able to maintain their purchasing power.

However, the situation is not the same for women earning minimum wage. Their number more than doubled in full-time jobs and almost tripled in part-time jobs.

Unemployment rates remained rather high during the decade, and revenue from that program does not allow women working at minimum wage to have a decent life.

Traditional obstacles, such as lack of affordable daycare services, salaries and employment standards, pay equity, and double or triple workload, are still very present and limit the full participation of women in the labour market.

Women fought to get access to the labour market and have decent jobs but we must recognize that they still have a long way to go in 2016.