

# **OSSTF**

# **Status of Women**

# **membership survey**

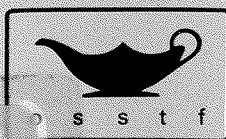
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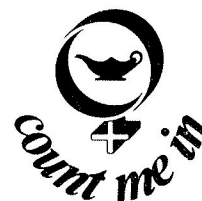
**OSSTF STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE**

**By: Avebury Research and Consulting Ltd.**

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Status of Women Committee  
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation



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BACKGROUND, PURPOSE

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 1976, the newly-formed Task Force on the Status of Women was mandated by OSSTF to study the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in positions of added responsibility within Boards and the Federation, and to recommend remedial action. To carry out its mandate, the Task Force sought to expand its data base by commissioning a comprehensive province-wide survey about the position of women Federation members. The survey was designed to identify:

- the employment status of women relative to men
- the attitudes of women and men teachers concerning the competence of women to teach
- the attitudes of women and men teachers concerning women's promotability
- the attitudes of women and men administrators concerning women's competence and promotability
- the attitudes of women and men teachers and administrators toward the academic achievement and career aspirations of male and female students.

The major conclusions of the 1976 report were that women generally perceived themselves and were perceived by male peers and decision-makers to be less promotable than men and had, in fact, received fewer promotions than their representation among teachers and their qualifications warranted.

In addition, the study found that the factors outlined above were related to each other and to age, marital status, responsibility for housework and child care and to generally liberal versus stereotyped attitudes about appropriate male and female "roles".

In other words, most women and men teachers in 1976 held somewhat traditional attitudes about themselves and their colleagues that were reflected in their career histories and in their current behaviours, priorities and aspirations.

In the 1976 review, it was recommended that such a wide ranging and complex problem should be dealt with on as many fronts as possible, since each factor interacted with virtually all others.

Specific actions recommended were:

- awareness training and counselling for both men and women
- identification and tracking of women with potential
- an Affirmative Action perspective in negotiations and relations with Boards of Education
- creation of non-stereotyped learning environments.

Ten years later, the Status of Women Committee has now re-surveyed the Federation membership to determine whether or not and to what extent changes have occurred in women's employment status and in attitudes toward the notion of women seeking positions of added responsibility. The survey, reported here, also examined attitudes

toward students and explored other issues in more depth than in the original study, (e.g., eligibility for pension, willingness to use workplace child care arrangements).

As in the previous study, the present study used a "process of career development" framework for describing the factors that indicate who may or may not achieve positions of added responsibility. This process includes the following factors:

- Family Responsibilities - refers to the obligations other than financial, for which people are directly or psychologically responsible within the family. Breaks in years of service for maternity and child care are included in this category.
- Career Commitment ("Paying the Price") - refers to the degree of importance attached to one's career and the willingness to undertake activities (gaining extra qualifications, taking on extra work responsibilities) which enhance promotability.
- Formal Qualifications - refers to the years of service and the accumulation of formal, Ministry-required education necessary for performing a given job.
- Job Performance - refers to the level of competence and the degree of innovativeness shown by teachers in the classroom, in the opinion of the teachers themselves, and that of their supervisors.
- Promotion - refers, first, to the encouragement that committed, qualified and competent teachers receive to apply for promotion; second, to the number of applications teachers make for promotion; and third, to the number of times that qualified teachers who have applied for promotion are selected to positions of added responsibility.
- Attitudes - refers to how women teachers feel about their ability to advance in their careers, and how promotable they are perceived to be by male peers and, especially, by those who make decisions about their career aspirations.

The 1976 survey demonstrated that the gender of a teacher had a profound effect on each phase of the career development process and resulted in fewer women attaining positions of added responsibility. Ten years later, the present study provides an opportunity to document any changes that have occurred in these areas and if these changes have resulted in an increase in the representation of women in senior positions.

Thus, the purpose of this study is TO COMPARE THE PRESENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN AND MEN IN OSSTF WITH THEIR 1976 STATUS AND TO DETERMINE IF ANY OF THE CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED HAS RESULTED IN AN IMPROVEMENT IN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To determine changes in the career development of female teachers in terms of:
  - Promotions
  - Applications
  - Training and experience
  - Aspirations
  
2. To assess changes in the perceptions of women themselves, male colleagues and superiors about:
  - The innovativeness of women
  - The promotability of women
  - The career commitment of women
  
3. To assess changes in women's environment in terms of:
  - Encouragement from superiors to apply for promotions
  - Household and child-care responsibilities
  
4. To determine changes in the attitudes of men and women teachers in terms of stereotyping women.