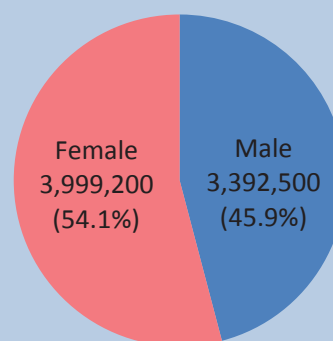


## Overview

There are more women than men in Hong Kong. The sex ratio (number of males per 1,000 females) declined from 1,062 in 1986 to 848 in 2017.

Notwithstanding the advancement in educational opportunities in the last few decades, women still lag behind men in terms of their economic participation. There is also huge wage gap disparities, and low representation of women in top executive and professional roles, as well as in the social and political arenas.

### Hong Kong Population



## Education



- In 2017, 79.0% of female (aged 15 and over) had received secondary education, as against 85.1% for men.
- Female students enrolled in higher education programmes continued to outnumber male students and constituted 53.3% in the 2017/18 academic year.
- More female students enrolled in arts and humanities (71.6%), education (73.4%), health (66.1%) and social sciences (63.9%) programmes, while more male students enrolled in sciences (61.6%) and engineering and technology (69.9%) programmes.

## Employment



- Women had lower labour force participation rate (55.1%) than men (68.3%) in 2017. There were more economically inactive women (1,592,600) than men (924,100). Among the economically inactive women, 629,700 were homemakers, as compared to 17,400 male homemakers.
- The labour force participation rate for never married women was 70.1% in 2017, much higher than that for ever married women at 54.3%. In contrast, the labour force participation rate for ever married men was 71.0%, reflecting the trend for married women to exit the labour market after marriage temporarily or permanently.
- The median monthly employment earnings (excluding foreign domestic helpers) for women in 2017 was HK\$13,000, lower than the HK\$19,000 for men. About half of the female employed persons were workers in the elementary occupations or service and sales workers, while a higher proportion of male employed persons worked as managers, administrators, professional and associate professionals.

## Social & Political Participation



- Only 28.5% of the appointed non-official Members serving on Government Advisory and Statutory Bodies were female in 2017 (1,612 female Vs 4,042 male).
  - *Out of the 32 Members of the Executive Council, only 4 belonged to the female sex in July 2017.*
  - *Among the elected candidates in the Legislative Council election in 2016, 12 were female and 58 were male.*
  - *Among the elected candidates in the 2015 District Council election, 79 were female and 352 were male.*

- The number of male and female Directorate Officers in the Civil Service stood at 855 and 475 in 2017.
- In 2017, only 12.4% of the board directors of Heng Seng Index-listed companies were female.

## Legal Instruments

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was extended to Hong Kong in 1996. In the same year, the **Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO)** came into force, following its passage in 1995. The Ordinance prohibits discrimination against either men or women on the basis of sex, marital status and pregnancy in seven public domains, including employment; education; and provision of goods, services and facilities. It also prohibits sexual harassment of either men or women.



The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) handled **271 complaints** under the SDO in 2017. The majority (91%) belonged to the employment field, with most related to **pregnancy discrimination** and **sexual harassment**. While the law protects both men and women, the majority of the sexual harassment complaints were filed by women.



**1 in 5**

**mothers reported experiencing discrimination** during pregnancy, maternity leave and/or within first year after returning to work

Only **17%**

employers reported having implemented family-friendly measures in the workplace



Source: "Study on Pregnancy Discrimination and Negative Perceptions Faced by Pregnant Women and Working Mothers in Small and Medium Enterprises" by the EOC, May 2016

### *Give Everyone a Safe & Discrimination-free Workplace*

The EOC has recommended under the Discrimination Law Review to amend the SDO so that women can enjoy stronger protection. The amendments include:

- Introduce statutory right for women to return to their previous work position after maternity leave.
- Introduce express provision to prohibit direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of breastfeeding, including expressing milk.

About the Discrimination Law Review: <http://www.eoc.org.hk/eoc/graphicsfolder/inforcenter/dlr/default.aspx>

#### Sources:

1. Women and Men in Hong Kong Key Statistics (2018 Edition), Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR
2. Hong Kong Women in Figures, 2015 Edition, Women's Commission
3. Women on Boards Hong Kong 2017, Community Business

Copyright © **Equal Opportunities Commission**, August 2018

Address: 16/F, 41 Heung Yip Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong

Tel: 2511 8211 Fax: 2511 8142 E-mail: [eoc@eoc.org.hk](mailto:eoc@eoc.org.hk) Website: [www.eoc.org.hk](http://www.eoc.org.hk)