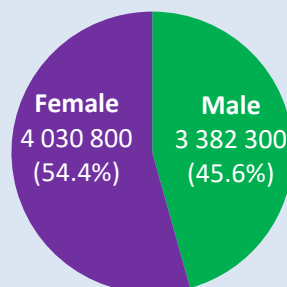


Overview

There are more women than men in Hong Kong. The sex ratio (number of males per 1,000 females) declined from 971 in 2006 to 910 in 2021 (excluding foreign domestic workers).

Notwithstanding the advancement in educational opportunities in the last few decades, women still lag behind men in terms of their economic participation and employment earnings, as well as their representation in political and public affairs, and in top executive and professional roles.

Hong Kong Population (2021)



Education



- In 2021, 79.4% of female (aged 15 and over) had received secondary education and above, as against 85.4% for men.
- The number of students enrolled in higher education programmes funded by the University Grants Committee reached 101 442 in the 2021/22 academic year. Female students (52.0%) continued to outnumber male students.
- More female students enrolled in arts and humanities (70.7%), education (72.5%), health (65.7%) and social sciences (62.5%) programmes, while more male students enrolled in sciences (63.0%) and engineering and technology (71.4%) programmes.

Employment



- Women (excluding foreign domestic workers) had lower labour force participation rate (49.6%) than men (65.7%) in 2021. There were more economically inactive women (1 646 500) than men (1 001 700). Among the economically inactive women, 605 800 claimed they were inactive because of the need to engage in household duties, as compared to 34 100 men who claimed so.
- The labour force participation rate of never married women was 70.2% in 2021, much higher than that for ever married women at 48.2%. In contrast, the rate for ever married men was 64.2%, reflecting the trend for married women to exit the labour market temporarily or permanently after marriage.
- The median monthly employment earnings (excluding foreign domestic helpers) for women in 2021 was HK\$17,500, lower than the HK\$20,000 for men. About half of the female employed persons were workers in elementary occupations or service and sales workers. The proportion of female working as managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals stood at 35.3% in 2021, lower than the 46.2% for male.

Social & Political Participation

- Only 31.3% (1 835) of the 5 857 non-official members serving on public sector advisory and statutory bodies were female in 2021.
- Out of the 90 Legislative Councillors in 2022, 17 were female and 73 were male.
- Of the 1 448 members of the Election Committee in 2021, 18.7% were women.

- The number of male and female Directorate Officers in the Civil Service stood at 819 and 555 respectively in 2021.
- As at March 2021, the proportion of female directors of all Hong Kong-listed companies stood at 14.2%.

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 **472 complaints** under the SDO in 2021-22. The majority (82%) belonged to the employment field, with most related to **pregnancy discrimination (109 cases)** and **sexual harassment (202 cases)**. 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 recommended in 2016 under the Discrimination Law Review to amend the SDO so that women can enjoy stronger protection. The Government subsequently adopted some of the EOC's recommendations and introduced amendments to the law.

On 19 June 2020, the Discrimination Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2020 came into effect. The Ordinance amended the SDO to protect workplace participants in common workplaces from sexual harassment. It also prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, as well as victimisation of breastfeeding women in key sectors. On 17 March 2021, the Legislative Council passed the 2020 Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to protect breastfeeding women from harassment. These breastfeeding-related provisions have come into force on 19 June 2021.

Sources:

1. Women and Men in Hong Kong Key Statistics (2022 Edition), Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR
2. "Missing Opportunities – A Review of Gender Diversity on Hong Kong Boards" Report, Hong Kong Institute of Chartered Secretaries, March 2021