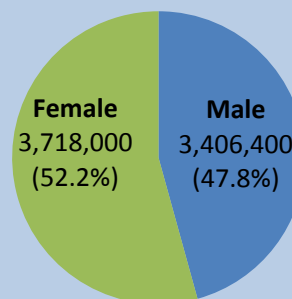


Overview

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 916 in 2018 (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. 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 (2018)



Excluding foreign domestic workers

Education



- In 2018, 79.4% of female (aged 15 and over) had received secondary education and above, as against 85.5% for men.
- Female students enrolled in higher education programmes funded by the University Grants Committee continued to outnumber male students and constituted 53.2% in the 2018/19 academic year.
- More female students enrolled in arts and humanities (71.2%), education (73.8%), health (65.7%) and social sciences (64%) programmes, while more male students enrolled in sciences (61.3%) and engineering and technology (70.6%) programmes.

Employment



- Women had lower labour force participation rate (55.1%) than men (68.5%) in 2018. There were more economically inactive women (1,606,000) than men (921,400). Among the economically inactive women, 620,700 were homemakers, as compared to 20,700 male homemakers.
- The labour force participation rate for never married women was 70.3% in 2018, much higher than that for ever married women at 49.3%. In contrast, the labour force participation rate for ever married men was 68.5%, 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 2018 was HK\$15,500, lower than the HK\$20,000 for men. Over half of the employed women were clerical support workers, workers in the elementary occupations, or service and sales workers, while a higher proportion of employed men worked as managers, administrators, professional and associate professionals.

Social & Political Participation



- Only 29.3% of the non-official members serving on public sector advisory and statutory bodies were female in 2018 (1,723 female Vs 4,150 male).
- Out of the 32 Members of the Executive Council, only 5 were female in July 2019.
- Among the elected candidates in the Legislative Council election in 2016, 12 were female and 58 were male.
- Among the members of the District Council in 2019, 90 were female and 389 were male.

- Of the 1,186 members of the Election Committee in 2018, 16.4% were women.
- The number of male and female Directorate Officers in the Civil Service stood at 841 and 514 respectively in 2018.
- As at 1 April 2020, only 13.4% of the 595 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 **466 complaints** under the SDO in 2019. The majority (78%) 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, such as introducing statutory right for women to return to their previous work position after maternity leave, and introducing express provision to prohibit direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of breastfeeding, including expressing milk.

On 19 June 2020, the Discrimination Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2020 came into effect. The Ordinance amended the SDO to prohibit direct and indirect discrimination, as well as victimisation for breastfeeding women in key sectors. The provisions will come into force on 19 June 2021.

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 (2019 Edition), Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR
2. Hong Kong Women Statistics, Women's Commission
3. Women on Boards Hong Kong webpage, Community Business

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