

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics (2003 Edition)

INTRODUCTION

This paper:-

- (a) presents the draft 2003 edition of the “Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics” prepared by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) scheduled for publication around end July 2003;
- (b) highlights from the draft publication the key statistical profile of women and men in Hong Kong; and
- (c) invites Members’ comments on the draft publication prior to release.

BACKGROUND

2. The Census and Statistics Department compiled the first issue of the annual statistical publication “Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics” in 2001 (2001 edition). The publication serves as a ready source of information for those interested in the profile of women and men and gender equality in Hong Kong. The 2003 edition of “Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics” will be released around end July 2003. This new edition contains the data for 2002, as far as practicable, from various data sources. It provides the latest statistics on the characteristics of women and men in Hong Kong. Moreover, additional information has been included in the publication in response to the earlier suggestions of the Women’s Commission and the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB). This paper extracts relevant information from the 2003 edition of the “Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics” to give a broad profile of women and men in Hong Kong.

NEW INFORMATION IN THE 2003 EDITION

3. The Women's Commission and HWFB had furnished some useful suggestions about the contents of the previous publications. After thorough study, these suggestions have been incorporated into the current edition as far as practicable.

PROFILE OF WOMEN AND MEN IN HONG KONG

Demographic characteristics

4. The population showed a continuing dejuvenation and aging trend during 1981 to 2002. The proportion of persons aged 19 and below decreased from 36% to 23% over the same period. In contrast, the proportion of those aged 65 and over increased from 7% in 1981 to 11% in 2002. Analysed by sex, changes in the age structure for both men and women were virtually the same over the same period.

5. The sex ratio (defined as the number of males per 1 000 females) of Hong Kong Resident Population decreased continuously from 1 087 in 1981 to 946 in 2002. This arose mainly as a result of the large inflow of female one-way permit holders from the mainland of China joining their husbands in Hong Kong and the importation of a large number of female foreign domestic helpers. Indeed, if foreign domestic helpers were excluded, the sex ratio in 2002 would change from 946 to 1 013.

6. Analysed by age, the sex ratio for persons aged 19 and below was above parity in 2002. This was attributed to the fact that the number of female live births was generally smaller than that of their male counterpart. On the other hand, the sex ratio for persons in the age group 20-49 fell below parity due to the presence of large number of female domestic helpers working in Hong Kong and the inflow of female one-way permit holders (a large proportion of whom were of age 25-39). The sex ratio for persons in the age group 50-69 was above parity as relatively few female foreign domestic helpers and female one-way permit holders were of these ages. Furthermore, there were more young men than young women coming to Hong Kong from the

mainland of China during the 1960's and 1970's. For persons aged 70 and over, there were more women than men because the life expectancy at birth for women was consistently longer than that for men.

7. As regards one-way permit holders, there were more females than males as a result of the larger number of female one-way permit holders coming to Hong Kong to join their husbands.

Marriage, fertility and family conditions

8. The number of married (excluding those widowed/ divorced/ separated) women (1 691 200) slightly surpassed that for men (1 681 700) in 2002. Despite that, the proportion of married women (57.7%) in the population was still smaller than that for men (62.1%) in 2002.

9. The crude marriage rates for both women and men increased somewhat in 2001 after the continuous decline from 1981 to 2000. However, they decreased again from 9.5% and 9.9% to 9.1% and 9.7% respectively in 2002.

10. The median age at first marriage had risen steadily for both women and men. The figure for women was 27.6 years and that for men was 30.5 years in 2002.

11. The age-specific fertility rates for women in the age groups 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 showed some increases in 2002 after reaching the record low in 2001. The corresponding rates for those aged 15-19 and 40-44 had steadily decreased in 2002.

12. The proportion of employed persons among female single parents decreased from 64% in 1991 to 60% in 1996 and further to 53% in 2001. Meanwhile, the corresponding proportion for male single parents also decreased from 87% in 1991 to 71% in 2001.

Education characteristics

13. The increase in the proportion of female population aged 15 and over having attained secondary education and above was greater than that

recorded among the male population. Both women and men of school ages had broadly similar school attendance rate.

14. In 2002, there were more female students than male students attending programmes funded by University Grants Committee in the fields of “Medicine, dentistry and health”, “Business and management”, “Social sciences”, “Arts and humanities” and “Education”.

Labour force characteristics

15. During the period from 1986 to 2002, the female labour force participation rates increased for women in all age groups, except for those aged 15-24 and 60 & over. In contrast, the male labour force participation rate decreased substantially for men in all age groups. The female labour force increased by 537 300, which was more than double that of the increase of 250 900 recorded for the male labour force over the same period. The increase in the female labour force participation rate was partly due to the fact that more Hong Kong women could join the labour force as a result of better educational attainment and employment of foreign domestic helpers to take up housework.

16. In 2002, the largest proportion of female employed persons was engaged in the “Community, social and personal services” sector (37.8%), followed by “Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels” sector (34.2%) and “Financing, insurance, real estate and business services” sector (13.4%).

17. In 2002, 54.4% of female employed persons worked as clerks and workers in elementary occupations.

18. The unemployment and underemployment rates of women were consistently lower than those of men. Unlike the situation in the preceding years, female unemployed persons had a longer duration of unemployment than their male counterpart in 2002.

Employment earnings

19. The median monthly employment earnings of female employed persons and male employed persons were \$8,000 and \$11,700 respectively in 2002. The discrepancy could be attributed to a host of factors including the differences between female and male employed persons in respect of industrial and occupational distributions, educational attainment, working experience and nature of work. Also, there were a large number of female foreign domestic helpers working in Hong Kong and their salary was relatively low. If foreign domestic helpers were excluded, the median monthly employment earnings of female employed persons would become \$9,500 in 2002, as compared to \$12,000 for their male counterpart.

Social welfare

20. There were more women than men amongst the recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) noticeably in the categories “Single parent family” and “Old age”.

Medical and health

21. There were more female clients seeking doctor consultation at public day government out-patient clinics than their male counterpart, especially for those aged 65 and over. This could partly be attributed to the fact that there were more women aged 65 and over.

Law and order

22. There were fewer women arrested for crime than men. The proportion of female offenders committing more serious offences was also lower than that of male offenders.

Participation in public affairs

23. There were slightly more men than women in respect of the numbers of registered electors and voter turnout in Legislative Council elections and District Council elections.

24. The proportion of female directorate officers in the civil service increased from 4.9% in 1981 to 23.8% in 2002.

WAY FORWARD

25. Subject to any further views from Members, C&SD plans to publish the 2003 edition of the “Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics” around end July 2003.

ADVICE SOUGHT

26. Members are invited to:-

- (a) consider the draft 2003 edition of the “Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics” prepared by the Census and Statistics Department;
- (b) note the highlighted key statistical characteristics of women and men in Hong Kong; and
- (c) give comments and views on the draft publication.

Census and Statistics Department
July 2003