

Women's Commission
Findings of Survey on Community Perception on Gender Issues

I. BACKGROUND

1. The survey was commissioned by WoC and conducted by telephone from January to February 2009. It aimed at gauging the community's views and perceptions on gender-related issues, including the extent of gender stereotyping in society, factors hindering women's full development of their potentials, and the need to incorporate women's needs and perspective in policy making (i.e. gender mainstreaming). The survey successfully interviewed 1,530 people aged 15 or above (of which 53.5% were female and 46.5% were male).

II. SURVEY FINDINGS

A. Overall Situation of Gender Stereotyping

2. Society's view on gender:
 - ❖ 50.1% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that "women should put more emphasis on family than career".
 - ❖ 33.2% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that "men are more knowledgeable about politics than women".
 - ❖ 16.7% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that "women are relatively less capable of making important decisions than men".
3. On women and men's roles in family:
 - ❖ 93.9% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that "father and mother have the same responsibility in parenting".
 - ❖ 85.9% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that "men and women have the same responsibility in the family and so they should share the housework equally".
 - ❖ 26.0% strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed that "there is no problem for husband to stay at home while wife work for supporting the family".

- ❖ 19.1% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that “mothers are responsible for taking care of children while fathers are not”.
- ❖ 6.2% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that “wives should take the responsibility for housework even if they need to work outside. Husbands do not need to handle housework”.
- ❖ On “father and mother have the same responsibility in parenting” and “men and women have the same responsibility in the family and so they should share the housework equally”, there was discrepancy between responses from respondents and the actual experiences. According to the survey regarding the time use pattern of women and men in Hong Kong and their pattern of participation in society conducted by the Census and Statistics Department, and other similar local surveys, women spend much more time than men on taking care of family and other family related matters. This reflects that public perception sometimes is different from the actual situation.

4. On works and participation in the society:

- 7.8% strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed that “Hong Kong needs to have more women to act as community or organization leaders”.
- 25.3% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that “it is not right for women to work in jobs traditionally held by men”.
- 14.6% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that “it is not right for men to work in jobs traditionally held by women”.

5. Gender perception on different occupations at the workplace:

- For those traditionally considered as “men’s jobs”, 40.4%, 33.6% and 28.3% strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed women to take up jobs such as construction workers, fire fighters and electrical technicians respectively.
- Percentages that strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed women to take up jobs such as pilots, restaurant chefs and bus drivers were smaller, at 14.4%, 12.3% and 6.0% respectively.
- On the contrary, 1.3% and 4.1% strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed women to take up jobs such as investment consultants

and chief executive officers, respectively.

- For those traditionally considered as “women’s jobs”, 38.1% and 22.2% strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed men to take up jobs such as domestic helpers (home caretakers) and kindergarten teachers respectively.
- On the other hand, 14.1% and 6.2% strongly disagree and somewhat disagree men to take up jobs such as secretaries and nurses respectively.
- The findings reflected that many people believed jobs that required more on physical strength or male dominated skills should be taken up by men; while jobs related to family or taking care of children should be taken up by women.
- On the contrary, majority of people agreed that both women and men could take up jobs in office setting, even those some of these positions were high rank management positions or had a higher demand on academic attainment.

6. On education and selection of subjects:

- 12.3% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that “male students should study science subjects; female students should study arts subjects”.
- Although the percentage is not a big number, gender stereotyping in the education area has long lasting impact on the development of women and men and therefore cannot be ignored.

7. When asked if gender stereotyping was serious in Hong Kong:

- The percentage replying very serious and quite serious (32.8%) and the percentage replying not serious at all and not quite serious (35.7%) were very similar.
- More men found that gender stereotyping was not serious at all and not quite serious (39.1% for men versus 32.6% for women).
- The age group of 35 to 44 years old had the most profound experience of the seriousness of gender stereotyping in Hong Kong. 36.8% of them found gender stereotyping was very serious and quite serious in Hong Kong. Older age groups tended to find gender stereotyping in Hong Kong not serious at all and not quite

serious. (40.9% for age group of 55 to 64 years old, and 39.3% for age group of 45 to 54 years old)

8. Everyday life experiences affecting the mindset of gender stereotyping:

- 42.0% strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that the mass media affected their attitudes towards gender stereotyping, 7.0% more than family life which was ranked the second among all choices.
- Other everyday life experiences affecting the mindset of gender stereotyping:
 - Occupations (30.7%)
 - Social life (30.1%)
 - School textbooks (25.6%)
 - School life (24.7%)
 - Cultural activities (22.2%)

9. Everyday life experiences affected by gender stereotyping:

- Social life (37.7%)
- Sports activities (37.3%)
- Working environment (34.0%)
- Family life (25.7%)
- Subjects taken at school (15.5%)

B. Gender Mainstreaming

10. On awareness of the concept of gender mainstreaming:

- 10.5% had heard about gender mainstreaming.
- 35 to 44 years old is the age group that the highest percentage of people had heard about gender mainstreaming.
- More than half of the people believed it was definitely necessary and somewhat necessary that the Government should introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming when formulating legislation and policy. (The percentage was 52.8% for women and men together, 52.1% for men and 53.4% for women.)
- More men (43.2%) than women (37.0%) believed that it was not necessary at all and not really necessary that the Government

should introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming when formulating legislation and policy.

- The younger the respondents, the higher the tendency to support the introduction of gender mainstreaming.

C. **Empowerment**

11. When asked if women could fully realise their potentials:

- 83.4% found women could definitely and probably realise their potentials in full
- 4.2% of women found that women definitely could not fully realise their potentials.
- The older the respondents, the more they believed women could not realise their potentials in full.
- More men (36.0%) than women (25.6%) believed that women could definitely realise their potentials in full.
- More working women (86.1%) than non-working women (77.3%) found women could definitely and probably realise their potentials in full.

12. Reasons hindering women's full development:

- The top three reasons are:
 - Gender prejudices on the roles and abilities of women (78.7%)
 - Need to take care of children (77.0%)
 - Existence of sex discrimination and gender inequality in society (76.4%)
- More men than women chose the three reasons above.
- The most number of women chose the need to take care of children as the reason hindering their full development.
- Other reasons hindering women's full development included:
 - Limitation in physical condition (71.6%)
 - Concern of personal safety (64.2%)
 - Lack of self-confidence, underestimation of their ability (63.6%)
 - Less opportunities are given to women (63.6%)

- Lack of Government support in promoting gender equality policy (60.1%)
 - Weak social network (56.2%)
 - Low education level (50.2%)
 - Insufficient financial ability (49.8%)
 - Health problem (37.9%)
- More women than men chose the forth to twelfth reasons above. The discrepancy between women and men is most notable in the last four reasons (i.e., weak social network, low education level, insufficient financial ability and health problem). The last nine reasons are all closely related to every day life experiences, reflecting that men may not be able to appreciate the problems faced by women because of different genders.

13. On action taken to enhance own ability:

- 31.9% of women replied that they had taken action to enhance their own ability. Actions taken by the most number of women were:
 - Pay more attention to things around (95.0%)
 - Pay more attention to your diet (89.0%)
 - Spend more time on reading (85.7%)
- Other actions included:
 - Work harder (82.0%)
 - Further study (78.7%)
 - Participate in more sports activities (73.7%)
 - Expand social network (64.2%)
 - Spend more time on Internet surfing (52.8%)
 - Participate in community activities (50.9%)
 - Participate in public forums on women issues (20.7%)

14. On priorities of the Government to enhance women's ability:

- Areas chosen by the most number of people as the top three priorities:
 - Women's safety issues (42.6%)
 - Education and vocational/professional training (40.7%)
 - Women's employment issues (33.8%)
- Other areas included support services for family (32.0%),

elimination of gender stereotyping / sex discrimination (30.4%), health / medical services for women (30.1%), encouragement of women to participate in decision making (29.3%), enhance women's self-image and buildup of confidence (27.6%), and enhance women's awareness on their rights (25.6%).

- Areas chosen by the most number of men as the top three priorities:
 - Women's safety issues (46.8%)
 - Education and vocational / professional training (40.5%)
 - Elimination of gender stereotyping / sex discrimination (35.8%)
- Areas chosen by the most number of women as the top three priorities:
 - Education and vocational / professional training (41.0%)
 - Women's safety issues (39.0%)
 - Women's employment issues (35.3%)

D. Contribution of Women

15. When asked about area in which women contributed the most:
- 87% chose aspects that were related to family, which included:
 - Educating children (41.7%)
 - Taking care of families (32.7%)
 - Housework (12.6%)
 - Only 12.8% chose economic development, public service and voluntary services together.
 - Majority of people in the age group 65 years old or above found educating children was the most important contribution of women.
 - More women (44.3%) than men (38.8%) found educating children was the most important contribution of women.

E. Major Concerns of Hong Kong Women in the Coming Five to Ten Years

16. In the coming five to ten years, aspects concerned by most of the women are:
- Health (99.2%)
 - Family (97.1%)
 - Economical ability (92.9%)

- Other concerns include nuturing children (81.0%), employment (80.3%), education attainment (74.5%), and social status (63.0%).
- Majority of the women aged 15 to 24 concerned about their economical ability in the coming five to ten years. (98.3%)

F. **Overall Situation of Gender Equality in Hong Kong**

17. On the overall situation of gender equality in Hong Kong:
 - 58.9% very satisfied and satisfied with the overall situation of gender equality in Hong Kong.
 - 12.1% very dissatisfied and dissatisfied the overall situation of gender equality in Hong Kong.
 - More men (64.6%) than women (53.9%) were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall situation of gender equality in Hong Kong.
 - The age group of 15-24 years old was most satisfied with the overall situation of gender equality in Hong Kong (62.2%).
18. Public attention on women's issues:
 - Proportion of people replying definitely enough and quite enough as well as proportion of people replying definitely not enough and not quite enough are around the same. (34.7% enough versus 31.1% not enough)
 - More men found public attention on women's issues definitely enough and quite enough (42.5%). Only 26.7% of men found public attention definitely not enough and not quite enough.
 - On the contrary, only 27.8% of women found public attention on women's issues definitely enough and quite enough. More women found public attention definitely not enough and not quite enough. (34.9%)

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March 2009