

Executive Summary

Chapter One: Cultural Capital

Youth are more likely to participate in many types of sporting activities than other age groups and to participate in most organized group sports, basketball, badminton and swimming, but less likely to participate in jogging, cycling, or table tennis. The three most popular physical recreation activities among Hong Kong youth aged 15-24 were basketball (21%), badminton (12%), and swimming (11%). Common characteristics of these activities were low cost, convenience, and casual scheduling.

In addition, young people aged between 15-19 have relatively higher percentage of registered borrowers in the public libraries. It is interesting to note that quite a significant number of children aged 5-9 has registered as borrowers in the period between January 2001 and June 2001.

There were also some differences in the types of recreation and sports activities pursued by young participants. Young male outnumbered young females in all athletics and aquatics activities including swimming, life saving, track and field, and distance running. Young participants aged 20-29 significantly outnumbered those aged 15-19 in aerobic dance and water sports including canoeing and windsurfing.

More than one-third (38%) of the performing arts venues were visited by the youth aged between 15-29. Hong Kong Cultural Centre was the first preferred location of young people aged 20-29 and Hong Kong City Hall was the second favorable location of youth aged 20-29. In general, Hong Kong young people spend considerable amounts of time watching T.V., 52.4% of youth reported watching between 1 and 3 hours of television every week. An additional 35.6% watched 4-6 hours and 12% watched 6 or more hours every week. The youth of Hong Kong spend on average 4.8 hours per day watching television during weekend.

There is insufficient Government support for Art-related programs in the universities. This is more evident when comparing the number of applicants to the very limited number of degree places available in the Department of Fine Arts in HKU and CUHK. It can be seen that English and Putonghua are getting more popular as another language and dialect of the youths in Hong Kong. The proportion of youths who are able to speak English and Putonghua have increased during the past decade.

Chapter Two: Social Capital

Males made up a slight majority of the population as a whole over the last twenty years. Nonetheless, females outnumbered males in the age category (20-29). In 2001, 52.1% of young people aged 20-24 were female and 54% of young people aged 25-29 were female.

The population of Hong Kong is ageing. This means that there are increasing proportions of people in the older age categories and decreasing proportions in the younger age categories. This trend of population ageing is more pronounced for females, suggesting that they may soon outnumber males in all the older age groups.

In Hong Kong, the majority of youths are never married with a significant proportions of them living with parents. About 94.7% of non-working youth are living with parents in Hong Kong. This is largely attributable to the larger proportion of youth who are students.

According to Census data in 2001, about 59.7% of all youth were born in Hong Kong. However, a slight difference was found between male and female youth in the age 15-24. 76% of females were born in the territory, as were 81.7% of males. In contrast, 83.5% of males and females of aged below 15 were born in Hong Kong.

Chapter Three: Human Capital

Compared with 1996, young people with educational attainment of highest level as "Tertiary Education" has also increased by the way of studying full-time in 2001. In 2001, the percentage of youth reporting a university degree as their highest level of education was 14.4%, up from 11.4% in 1996. When viewed over time, it is clear that the number and proportion of university degrees held by youth in Hong Kong has increased significantly. In 1991, only 4.8% of youth reported university degrees their highest level of education, however, 18.5% of Hong Kong young people held university degrees in 2001.

Female students outnumbered male students in the undergraduate and sub-degree program funded by University Grants Committee except taught and research postgraduate degree program where they make up 48.5% and 39.4% respectively. Female students particularly outnumbered males in the sub-degree program, where they comprised 66% of the student population.

A considerable number of respondents (28.9%) browsed the Internet occasionally and this was particularly the case of secondary school students. Most of the students had computers at home connect to the Internet. Although most schools provide Internet surfing facilities to students under the current educational policy, only 33.3% of students said that they accessed the Internet at school (Table3.19).

Many students access funds from various sources in order to finance their education. Government provides public financial aid to the students for their development and improvement of occupational skills. Total government public expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic products has been increased from 3.5% to 4.1%. In addition, amount spent on each student in the school years 1997 – 2002 is also trended upwards.

The proportion of primary and secondary students who were dropouts fell between 1997 and 2001. The dropout rate for the secondary students fell more rapidly, from 0.67% in 1997 to 0.46% in 2001.

Throughout the age range 1-14, the young male rate of death surpasses the female rate primarily due to external factors such as injury and poisoning. As might be expected, the highest death rates are for infants (first year of life). Just as mortality rates provide some insight into the health of young population, so do fertility rates. Over the past decade, the number of births has fluctuated from year to year, showing a general pattern of decline in the number of births since the early 1980s.

It can be noted that children aged 0-4 have high proportion of both out-patient and in-patient visits in the clinics and hospitals. Among the youth population, young people aged 25-34 were more easily affected by depression and worries and there were increasing number of cases of mental problem in the out-patient clinics of Hospital Authority from 1998 to 2001.

Most of the young people disagree that one can be engaged in more than one relationship at a time. "Courtship followed by marriage" was the most popular among respondents. A majority of respondents considered getting married the final goal. A relatively high number of respondents had a positive attitude, saying that they were confident in sustaining a marriage forever.

Chapter Four: Employment and Unemployment

The unemployment rate of 20 to 29 year old young people showed some changes during the 1991 to 2001 period, fluctuating with the overall economy. The unemployment rate of youth was higher in 1999 than in 1991, but exhibited some of the same fluctuations as were seen in 2000 and 2001. Between 1999 and 2001, there was a decline in the unemployment rates for 15 to 29 years olds, especially among females.

Underemployment rates for male youth were about three times higher than those for females in 2001. Unemployment rates for males were correspondingly higher than for females. Youth are still concentrated in occupations relating to wholesale, retail, import/export trades, restaurants, hotel and services industries. Males are over-represented in manufacturing and construction occupations as well as transport industries. Youth tend to be concentrated at the lower occupational levels.

Chapter Five: Substance Abuse and Crime

Female youth in Hong Kong are less likely than male to be drug abusers. However, youth in the age range of 16-20 are more likely to be drug abuser than youth in the other age group as a whole. Males aged below 21 are almost three times as likely to be current users of Ketamine and MDMA (Ecstasy) than are females. Both male and females are more likely than to report current use of Ketamine in 2001.

The percentage of youth aged 15-19 who is daily smokers declined from 3 percent to 1.5 percent between 1990 and 1998. In 1998, 52.1% of the daily smokers of Hong Kong started smoking aged 15-19 years. These figures were slightly higher than for other age overall.

Males were somewhat more likely than females to be smokers, with 52.7% of male ever-smoker and 31.1% of female ever-smoker reporting regular smoking behavior in the age of 15-19. Males also smoked more cigarettes than did females. While 10.4% of male ever-smoker and 6.4% of female ever-smokers reported smoking eleven cigarettes or more per day and 33.2% of females and 54.4% of males smoked between 11 and 20 cigarettes on a daily basis.

Female youth are considerably less likely than males to be charged with criminal offences. In 2001, there were 1,766 females aged 21-29 charged with criminal offences as

compared to 7,603 males. Thus, females comprised 18.8% of those youth charged with criminal offences in Hong Kong. For juvenile offender aged 7-15, shop theft was the most common offence.

Chapter Six: Poverty

During 1997-2002, the number and percentage of youth applying and receiving student travel subsidy and school textbook assistance rose slowly and continuously. The median monthly income of male youth is higher than the female. However, the gap between male and female wages is small.

Nonetheless, the median monthly income for full-time working youth did not change between 1996 and 2001. However there was an income decline among young female by \$400 and corresponding increase for males during the period 1996 to 2001 period. So the gap between young men and women incomes increased.

Less than half (48.3%) of the youth labour force aged between 15-24 works full-time. An increasing number of youth aged between 25-34 are working full-time with 86% labour force participation rate in 2001