

Report on Major Results of the Third Wave Survey on The Social Status of Women in China

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The Third Wave Survey on the Social Status of Women in China, jointly launched and organized by the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), is a nationwide decennial survey following the first and second wave surveys conducted respectively in 1990 and 2000. The third wave survey, carried out on December 1, 2010, covers the nine aspects of health, education, economy, social security, politics, marriage and family, lifestyle, legal protection and awareness, and gender awareness and attitudes. This survey selects five social groups, including children, senior citizens, college students, people with migration experience and high-level talents, to achieve in-depth analysis of changes in the situation and social status of different groups of women.

This survey has collected 105,573 valid questionnaires filled out by respondents aged 18 and over, and 20,405 valid questionnaires filled out by children aged 10 to 17. I am now giving the presentation on the major results of the survey.

1. Health

This survey shows that 64.2% of women aged 18-64 regard themselves as in 'good' health --- a 9.2% rise compared to 10 years ago. It also shows that the gap between men and women giving 'good' health self-assessments has narrowed from 12.7 to 7.7 percentage points. Moreover, 60.0% women surveyed feel mentally fit.

Over the last three years, 42.2% of women have received health checks and 54.9% have had gynecological examinations --- respective increases of 17.2 and 16.9 percentage points compared with 10 years ago. Results also show, however, that 43.4% of women in central and western rural areas have never had gynecological examinations --- 4.3 percentage points higher than the entire eastern area.

The survey also shows that 94.8% of urban women under the age of 35 had prenatal examinations before delivering their last child, while hospital delivery rate is 97.2%. The corresponding percentages in rural areas are respectively 89.4% and 87.7%, which show respective increases of 13.4 and 40.6 percentage points compared with 2000.

2. Education

This survey shows that the mean years of education for women aged 18 to 64 is 8.8 - an increase of 2.7 years compared with 2000, the gender gap narrowed to 0.3 years from the 1.5 years of a decade ago. 33.7% of women have received high school education and above, 54.2% in urban areas and 18.2% in rural areas. In central and western rural areas, the proportion of women received high school education and above is 10.0% --- 4.6 percentage points lower than that of men in the same regions. Results also show that 14.3% of women surveyed have received education in college and above, and that 25.7% of women in urban areas have received education in college and above --- an increase of 13.3 percent compared with 10 years ago.

3. Economy

The survey shows that 71.1% of women aged 18-64 are in employment. While 60.8% are employed in urban areas, 82.0% in rural areas. The proportion of employed women in the primary, secondary

and tertiary industry is respectively 45.3%, 14.5% and 40.2%. The survey shows that the average annual income of women laborers is respectively equal to 67.3% of that of men in urban areas and 56.0% of that of men in rural areas. Currently, 24.9% of rural female labors and 36.8% of rural male labors are engaged in non-agricultural industry ---- respective increases of 14.7 and 17.9 percentage points compared with 10 years ago. The proportion of rural women who have returned home from cities to do non-agricultural work is 37.8% ---- 16.3 percentage points higher than women who have never left their hometown.

The survey finds that 9.0% of women and 14.0% of men have received loans for production and business. Among beneficiaries of loans, the proportion of women and men receiving small loans that include government- subsidized interest payments are respectively 37.3% and 36.9%, while the corresponding proportion of rural women is 39.9%.

4. Social Security

Among women with non-agricultural household registration, 73.3% get access to social security pensions and 87.6% to social medical insurance, as compared to respectively 31.1% and 95.0% of women with agricultural household registration. In contrast to 2000, the proportion of women in urban working units enjoying social security and medical insurance shows respective increases of 25.4 and 46.1 percentage points. Over the past decade, 87.3% of women in urban working units have taken the national standard maternity leave after delivering their last child ---- an increase of 9.8 percentage points compared with a decade ago.

5. Politics

This survey shows that 2.2% of women in employment are principals of State organs, Party and mass organizations, enterprises, almost half of that of men. Among the high-level talents surveyed, 80.5% of them report that the principals of their units are men. Data indicates that 92.9% of women are concerned about 'major domestic and foreign affairs' ; 54.1% have been involved in democratic supervision on one way or another, and 18.3% take the initiative to raise suggestions in their working units, communities and villages. Over the past five years, 83.6% of rural women have participated in village committee elections, and 70.4% taken elections seriously and 'tried their best to know the candidates well before voting' .

6. Marriage and Family

This survey shows that 85.2% of women are moderately or very satisfied with their family status. The proportion of wives participating in decision-making in domestic production and management is 72.6% and that in buying or building houses 74.4% ---- respective increases of 5.7 and 3.9 percentage points compared with a decade ago. Meanwhile 74.7% of wives play a role in decision-making on domestic investments or loans - an increase of 14.3 percentage points compared with a decade ago. Data indicates that 37.9% of women and 67.1% of men own real estate, including joint ownership.

72.7% of the married feel that wives do more housework than husbands. The survey indicates that, currently, care for children under the age 3 is fulfilled mainly within households. Among care providers, 63.2% are mothers who serve as primary daytime caregivers. The employment rate of mothers in the 25-34 age group that have children under the age of 6 is 72.0%, 10.9 percentage points lower than women of the same age group without children.

7. Lifestyle

On work day, the average working minutes per person is 574 for women and 537 for men. On day off work, the average leisure time per person is 240 for women and 297 for men. The survey shows that

women's lifestyles are becoming more diversified. Of women surveyed, 72.2% have traveled outside their residential counties and districts, and tourism has been the purpose of 35.2% of women's longest trips. The survey also shows that 55.2% of women do regular physical exercises consciously, that 20.2% have participated in village or community cultural and sports activities, and that 29.1% use the Internet. 12.6% of women have religious beliefs. 10.1% women in urban areas and 15.4% in rural areas hold beliefs in religions.

8. Legal Protection and Awareness

Of the surveyed, 83.4% know that there is a special law protecting women's rights and interests in China ---- an increase of 9.6 percentage points compared to a decade ago. A further 76.3% are in favor of 'daughters having rights of equal inheritance to parental property, like sons, when they have supported their elderly parents'. More than 70% of women have a clear understanding of gender discrimination, as they discern prejudices against women in such norms as 'personnel recruitment and promotion based on gender', 'equal work without unequal pay for', 'being fired upon getting married/pregnant or procreation' and 'being looked down upon because of giving birth to a female child.'

Survey results show that 10.0% of women have encountered sexual discrimination in the job market, and that 7.8% have encountered sexual harassment in the workplace or at school; 24.7% of women report that they have experienced various forms of domestic violence from their spouses, including verbal and physical violence, restriction of their personal freedom, economic control, rape within marriage and etc. 5.5% of them stated unequivocally that they have suffered seriously physical violence from their spouses, 7.8% in rural area and 3.1% in urban area.

9. Gender Awareness and Attitudes

Of those surveyed, 83.5% agreed that 'women's capabilities are no worse than men's', 88.6% that 'men should shoulder housework responsibilities consciously', and 86.7% that 'gender equality will not be achieved on its own but only through proactive promotion.' A further 61.6% of men and 54.6% of women agree that 'the field for men is in public and the domain for women is within household' ---- respectively increases of 7.7 and 4.4 percentage points compared with the year 2000.

10. Situation of Girls

The survey shows that among minors aged 10-17, 87.5% of girls and 88.9% of boys live with both of their parents, while 3.8% girls and 3.2% boys live with neither parent for a long term. The proportions of urban girls and boys aged 10-15 attending school are 99.3% and 99.1% respectively, while those for rural girls and boys in the same age group are 97.6% and 96.7%.

11. Situation of Elderly Women

The survey shows that 39% of women aged 65 and over have had health examinations in the past three years ---- 3.1 percentage points lower than men of the same age group. For urban elderly residents, the percentage of those who depend mainly on their pensions as the major source of living is 54.1% for women and 79.3% for men. For rural elderly residents, the percentage of those who depend on the support from their family members apart from their spouses as the primary source of living is 59.1% for women and 38.8% for men. 23.1% of rural elderly women still take part in agricultural labor. In the last three years, 37.5% of urban elderly women have involved in such non-profit public activities as providing volunteer services, contributing donations to charity, and etc.

12. Situation of female College Students

The survey finds that 62.4% of female college students show an excellent academic performance

---- 9.7 percentage points higher than male students. It also finds that 64.5% of female students participate in volunteer activities ---- 4.8 percentage points higher than men. 87.5% female students hope to advance in their careers, and that 83.8% are willing to make great efforts to achieve success in their professional work. Among female students hunted for jobs, 24.7% of them report to have encountered unequal treatment.

13. Situation of Migrant and Left-behind Women

The survey shows that 87.9% of female migrants are doing paid work and that 61.5% are satisfied with their job and life in urban. Rural female migrants' marriage circle has expanded, 15.7% of them met their spouses outside their hometown. The main problems migrant women workers encounter while working out of town are 'being looked down upon' (14.7%), and 'salary default or deduction' (14.2%). The main concerns of women left behind in rural areas are such issues as the safety of their husbands migrating out for working (91.7%), short of persons to talk with upon family affairs (61.5%), lack of assist when the elderly fall ill (60.1%), scarcity of aid livelihood and production in busy farming season (56.0%).

14. Situation of Female High-level Talents

The survey shows that 81.4% of female high-level talents hold college and postgraduate degrees ---- 7.1 percentage points higher than men. 95.9% of female high-level talents take the initiative to update their knowledge and skills, 93.7% of them have regular exchanges with colleagues and peers regarding their work knowledge and skills, and 79.1% of them have well-defined self-development plans.

Over the recent three years, high level talents surveyed report the following phenomenon extant in their working units: 'hiring men exclusively or prioritizing men over women when both have the same capabilities' (20.6%), 'promoting men faster than women with same qualifications' (30.8%), 'more men concentrating in posts that require high skills and have good prospects' (47.0%).

The above are the preliminary analysis results of the Third Wave Survey on Social Status of Women in China. We will organize working teams to do further research and apply the results to social practice.