

THE CHINESE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN RECENT YEARS

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1. Overview of Women's Political Participation in New China

- There are two peaks in women's political participation: the 1950s and 1970s.
- The number of women participating politics rockets
- The huge gender gap narrows ,many women putting an end to their “Zero” political participation.
- Chinese government has *made* laws and decrees to greatly promote women's political participation.
- Condition of women's political participation has been improved steadily since 1990s.



2.The Current Situation of Chinese Women's Political Participation: Achievements and Main Problems

1) Achievements

- (1) *The degree of democratic participation gets higher and higher.*
- *The turnout rate of local elections for people's congresses has kept at a higher level since 1995.*
- *Countrywide, In the sex structure in 2000, the number of women participating the election amounted to 73.4% and men 77.6%.*

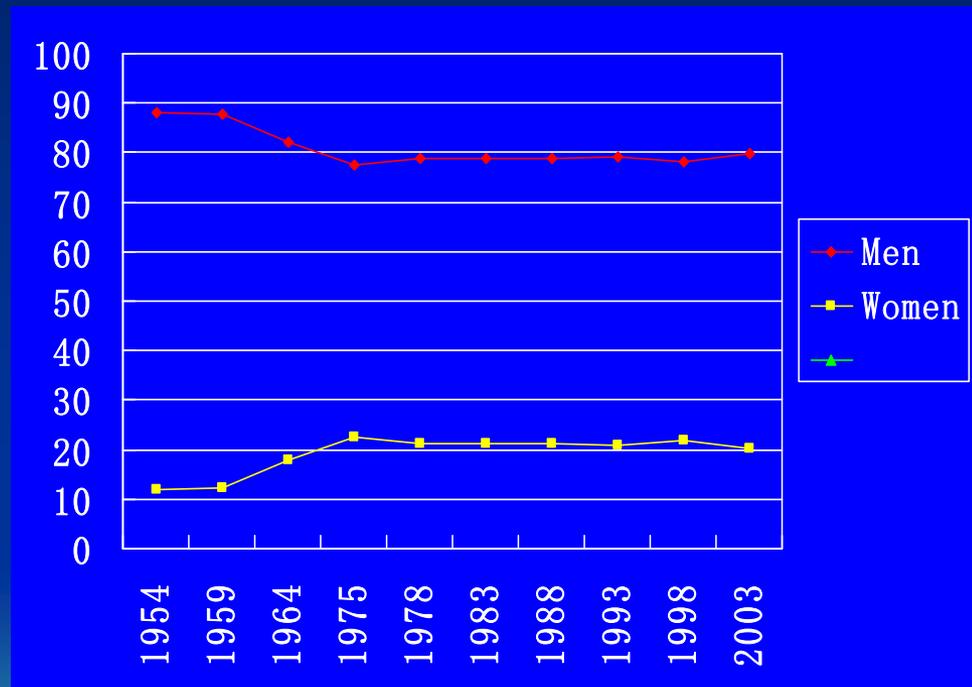
Table 1 Women's participation in local people's congress election (%) in 2000

Sex	Country-wide	Urban area	Rural area
Men	77.6	67.1	80.9
Women	73.4	63.6	76.7

1) Achievements

- **(2) Situation of women's participation in power becomes better**
- **A. Participation in NPC**
- *The proportion of women delegates of NPC came to a peak of 22.6% in 1975.*
- *The figure kept around 21% during 1978-2003.*
- *It amounted to 21.33% in the Eleventh NPC held in 2008.*

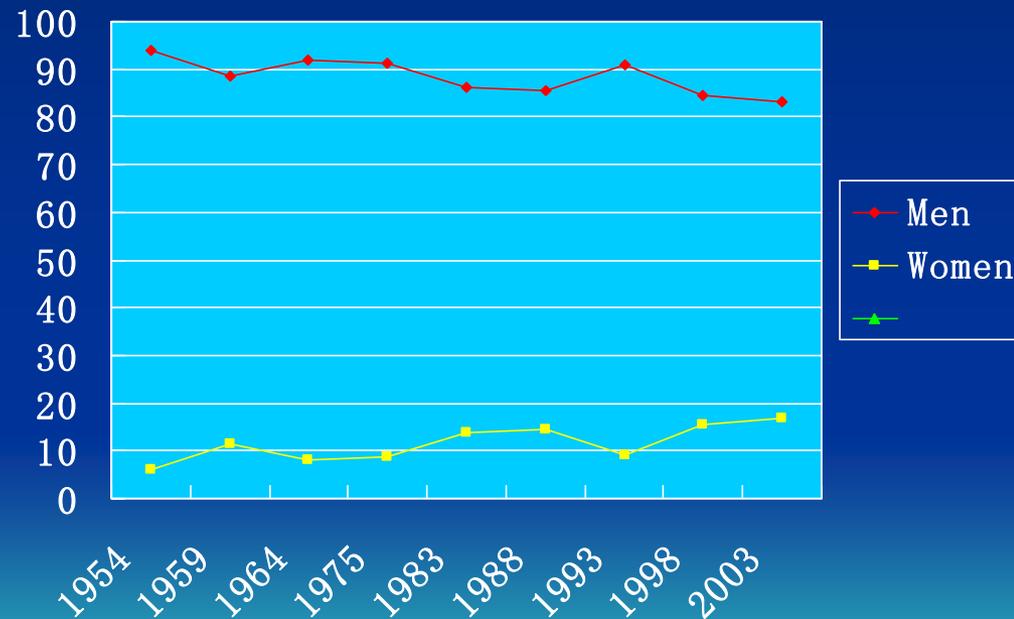
Table 2 Change in the delegates' sex structure of the past NPC



1) Achievements

- ***B. Participation in CPPCC***
- The proportion of women members of CPPCC increased from 13.8% in 1983 to 16.8% in 2003.
- In the Eleventh CPPCC held in March 2008, the proportion of women members amounted to 17.7% .

Table 3 Change in the members' sex structure of the past CPPCC (%)



1) Achievements

- **C. Participation in CPC and democratic parties**
- Women's participation in CPC and democratic parties has maintained its momentum since 1990.
- The proportion of women in democratic parties is greatly higher than that in CPC.

Table 4 The sex structure of CPC members in 1990 and 2002 (%)

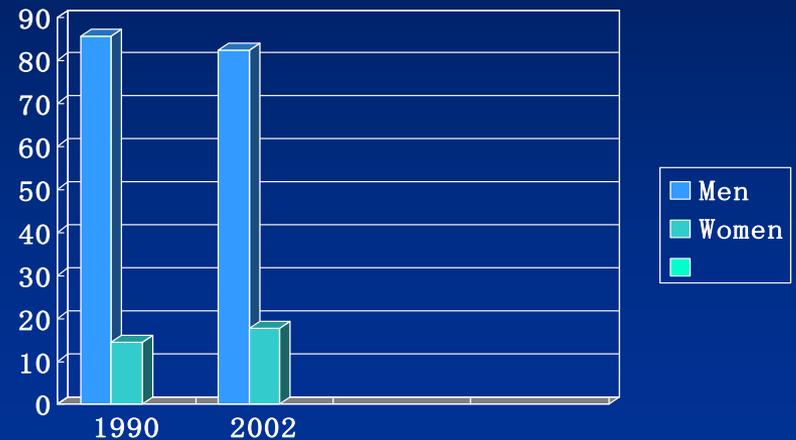
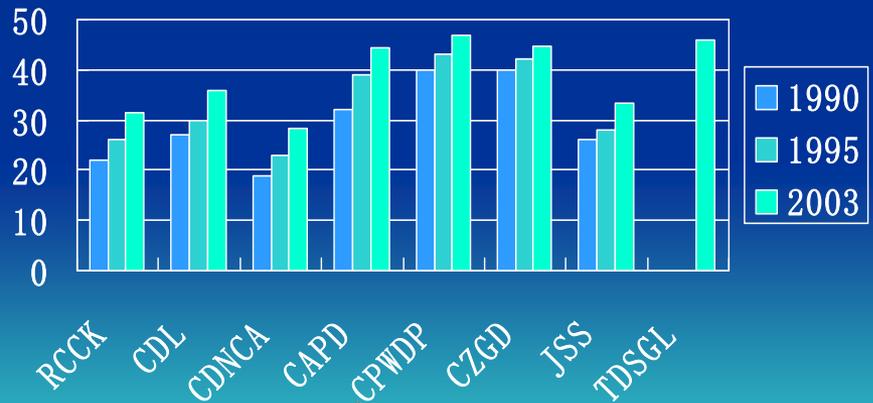


Table 5 Change of women members of each democratic parties in 1990, 1995 and 2003. (%)



1) Achievements

- ***D. Condition of women's participation in grass-roots authorities***
- the proportion of women members in urban residents' committee rose from 59.1% in 2000 to 60.5% in 2002.
- The proportion of women members in villagers' committee rose from 15.7% in 2000 to 16.1% in 2002. It stabilized at this level in 2003.

- **Table 6 Proportion of women members in urban residents' committee and villagers' committee in 2000—2003**

year	In residents' committee	In villagers' committee
2000	59.1	15.7
2001	58.7	15.5
2002	60.5	16.1
2003	58.0	16.1

2) Main Problems

- ***(1) The Chinese women's participation in power has been at a standstill, and the gap between China and western countries has become larger.***
- For example, the ratio of women delegates of NPC has ranged between 21%~22% in the past three decades while the proportion of women parliament members in other countries rocketed.
- China ranked No.12 in the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1994
- it fell to No.20 at the end of 1999.
- On September 30, 2005, it continued to fell to No 42.
- If based on the proportion of standing women members, China would have ranked after No 70.



2) Main Problems

(2) The unreasonable structure of women's participation in power has limited influence on the mainstream decision-making and legislation

- In the current structure of participation in power, very few women can be found in top authorities and only a few of women have their position in middle and grassroots authorities.*
- Among chief leaders, men occupy 83.7% and women occupy 16.3% in urban area, and in rural area, men occupy 97.5% and women occupy 2.5% only.*



2) Main Problems

- ***(3) Women's democratic election and social participation are inefficient***
- Among the people who report to authorities, women occupy 7.7% and men occupy 17.2% of the total samples: men are 9.5% higher than women.
- Among the people who make suggestions to organizations, communities or villages, women occupy 15.1% and men occupy 31.3% of the total samples: men are 9.5% higher than women



3. Women's Participation in Employment in Recent Years: Progress, Problems and Suggestions

- 1) Progress
- *(1) The total employment of women, the opportunities of flow and employment for rural women has been increased.*
- Among the 744 million employed, women occupied 337 million in 2004, the total employed women increased by 5.6% over 2000.
- Among the 265 million urban employed, women occupied 114 million in 2004, increasing by 13.2% over 2000.
- Up to 2000, the proportion of women emigrants was 43.1%, 12% higher than that of the Fourth National Population Census in 1990.
- The proportion of young rural women employed in non-agricultural industries increased: 13.3% of rural women under age 40 were employed in non-agricultural industries, 7.5% higher than those of over age 40.



1) Progress

- ***(2) The number of women who are self-employed, doing business and economic management increased.***
- 60% of proprietresses and women entrepreneurs made their success in the past decade.
- By the end of 1999, there had been 19.59 million proprietresses and women corporate representatives, amounting to 20% of all the proprietors and corporate representatives in China----this figure was only 10% ten years ago.
- In the ten years from 1990 to 2000, women in charge and female professionals raised 3.2% and 5.4% while the male professionals raised only 1.5%.
- Among the senior professionals in 2002, the proportion of women raised to 37.0% from 35.1%, that is, 1.9 percent was increased.



1) Progress

- ***(3) The human capital of women has been reinforced generally.***
- The most noteworthy is that the gap of schooling years between men and women became narrower.
- According to the fourth and fifth national census and 1% sampling of the population, the lengths of schooling of women and men were 6.1 years/7.8 years in 1995 and 7.0 years/8.3 years in 2000 respectively.
- the gap was narrowed to 1.3 years from 1.7 years in five years.



2) problems

- ***(1) Women's right to acquire economic resources equally is often violated.***
- The violation can be found in many fields, such as in managing land for rural women.
- There were 2076 cases concerning the unequally contracting land between men and women, amounting to 40.85% of the 5081 cases concerning the violation of property which were entertained by the Women's Federations of 22 provinces in the first half of 1999.
- Another example is that women can not gain loans on equal terms. The possibility both for individual women owners and rural women is much smaller than for men. Men not only gained most loans from regular departments, but also gained most from irregular departments. Among the irregular money borrowers two out of three are women. The small loan for women has been limited to small scaled experiments until now.
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2) problems

- ***(2)The non-agricultural transfer of women labor lags behind that of men and the agricultural work is mainly carried out by women.***
- Men kept over 60% in the 142.5 million labor emigrated from rural area in 1978~2003.
- Among the rural labor who worked far away in 2003, men occupied 65.7% while women occupied 34.3%.
- The proportion of women employed in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery was 46.79% in 1985 and 48.52% in 1995. Especially in crop-production. Women labor, which averagely occupied 48% in all rural labor, occupied 55.9% in crop-production. In some provinces the percentage was as high as over 62%.



2) problems

- ***(3)The sex discrimination exists in labor market and tends to become worse.***
- It can be found most obviously in two ways:
- First, women are unequally treated in job application. For example, many employers stated directly that they would not employ women.
- Secondly, women are unequally treated after they are employed. For example, women during pregnancy and baby nursing period are unreasonably relieved. Some companies even demand women sign contract of non-pregnancy before they are employed.
- Further more, the employed women would have to make more efforts if they want to get better treatment and higher positions.



2) problems

(4) A trend of marginalizing women labor exists in city and town.

- First, it is more difficult to be employed for women than for men. The percentage of employed men and women decreased somewhat.
- the decrease of employed women was greater than men: the employed women decreased 12.6% in 10 years while the employed men decreased 8.5% only. The gap was 4.1%.
- Secondly, women are much easier to lose their jobs than men and they have more difficulties in being reemployed. Women were 13% higher than men in the laid-off workers.



2) problems

- The percentage of women who experienced unemployment in the past three years is 17% higher than that of men and the percentage of women remaining unemployed is 20% higher than that of men.
- Thirdly, the sex isolation makes women employed at low level. Although more and more women become professionals or are raised to management level, as a whole, there is a trend that professions are isolated by sex, the gap of income between men and women becomes larger and larger and most women are employed at low level.
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2) problems

- Fourthly, women's work is characterized by non-standardization and non-stabilization.
- In the 5 years from 1995 to 2000, the number of employed urban women decreased by 147.77 million. Sex considered, the ratio of women employed by units dropped by 1.5% in the 5 years. This indicates that more women than men changed from standard employment to non-standard employment in the structural adjustment and this trend continues: the proportion of women employed in urban units from 38.0% in 2000 to 37.8% in 2002.



2) problems

It can be seen in Table 9 that the proportion of women employed in non- standard way is 52.2% while that of male is 40.2%, 12% lower than women. The non-standardization of women's employment has become a clear fact.

Table 9 Forms of Employment by Sex (2000)

Form of Employment	Male (%)	Female (%)
Standard employment	59.8	47.8
Non- Standard employment	40.2	52.2
Total	100	100

3) Suggestions

- At the worldwide level, a mechanism is in need to raise the national ability to coordinate and participate in the global economic development.
- At the middle level, we need to turn the gender equality into mainstream decision-making and change the current socio-economic structure that leads to the gender inequality.
- At the micro level, the specific measures are as follows:
 - A. To integrate gender analysis into all fields that concern with the making, execution and appraisal of government policy.



3) Suggestions

- B. To better the content relating to women's equal right to engage in economic development in *The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women*, to make it more specific and operative; to promote the ratification of *Convention against Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation*, to accelerate and promote the introduction of *The Law on Employment with Gender Equality*.
- C. To include childbirth security in the social insurance; to improve the social security system to improve the degree of social security shared by women in different kinds of employment.
- D. To guarantee women equally acquire economic resources; to provide more effective skill training and career guidance to improve women's ability of economic participation.
- E. To increase women's organizational resource, to strengthen the cooperation among government, mass organizations and NGOs, so as to provide more extensive support for women's rights and economic development.



THANK YOU

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