

**LegCo Panel on Education
(Meeting on 15 April 2002)**

**Briefing on the Summary Results
of the 2001 Population Census
Relating to Education Matters**

Purpose

This paper briefs members on the summary results of 2001 Population Census in the area of education and analyzes the key trends and policy implications.

Background

2. The 2001 Population Census was conducted in March 2001, with the first report “Summary Results” released in October 2001. The census provides a wealth of data on the socio-economic characteristics of the population in Hong Kong, thus allowing studies to be undertaken on various facets of the community. Key statistics in respect of education are contained in Annex I. More detailed data and analysis of the 2001 Population Census will be made available in the reports to be released later.

Key trends and phenomenon

Improved educational attainment

3. The educational attainment of the population continued to improve. While the proportion of the population aged 15 and over with no schooling/kindergarten dropped from 12.8% in 1991 to 8.4% in 2001, the corresponding figures for those with primary education also dropped from 25.2% to 20.5%. In contrast, the proportion of persons aged 15 and over having attended secondary and higher education increased from 62.1% in 1991 to 71.1% in 2001. These reflect the marked growth in educational opportunities above the primary level as a result of the operation of the nine years compulsory education in Hong Kong starting from 1978.

4. With the rapid expansion of tertiary education in Hong Kong, the proportion of the population aged 15 and over who had attended tertiary education increased from 11.2% in 1991 to 16.4% in 2001. In particular, 1 in 6 persons in the non-student population aged 20 and over had attended tertiary education in 2001, as compared with 1 in 10 persons in 1991.

Well-educated young population

5. The greater opportunities for education available to persons aged 15-34 improved markedly their level of educational attainment. In 2001, there were 98.1% and 94.4% of the population aged 15-24 and aged 25-34 who had secondary and higher education respectively. The proportions having attended tertiary education increased from 13.7% to 19.3% for those aged 15-24 and from 15.5% to 29.5% for those aged 25-34 over the past ten years.

6. For persons aged 35-54, the proportion with secondary and higher education was 80.3% among those aged 35-44 and 59.7% for those aged 45-54. However, relatively lower proportion of those persons aged 45-54 had tertiary education. Detailed statistics on the population by educational attainment and age group are at Annex II.

Disparity in educational attainment between women and men

7. For Hong Kong as a whole, women appeared to have lower level of education attainment than men. However, this was because the figures included older generation women who generally had a smaller chance of receiving education when they were young. The proportion of males having attained secondary education or above in 2001 was 75.0% for the population aged 15 and over, as against 67.4% for females; while the corresponding proportions for males and females in 1991 were 66.8% and 57.2% respectively. Detailed statistics on the population by educational attainment and sex are at Annex III.

8. Notwithstanding the overall sex differential in educational attainment, it is observed that younger females are as well-educated as their male counterparts in 2001. Of females aged 15-24 and aged 25-34, 97.7% and 93.6% respectively had attended secondary and higher education; the corresponding proportions for males were 98.4% and 95.5%.

Increased school attendance rate

9. Pre-school education was common. The school attendance rate (i.e. the number of full-time students per 100 persons in a particular age group) was stable at around 95% among children aged 3-5 over the past ten years. This indicates that most parents send their children to kindergartens to prepare them for entering primary education.

10. Since the introduction of six years of compulsory primary education in 1971 and an addition of three more years of compulsory lower secondary education in 1978, it is natural to see that school attendance rates for children aged 6-11 and 12-16 came very close to 100% in the past ten years.

11. For young persons aged 17-18 and 19-24, school attendance is no longer related to compulsory education. Nevertheless, over the past ten years, the school attendance rate for the age group 17-18 increased significantly from 58.3% to 71.0%, and that for the age group 19-24 from 15.1% to 26.4%. These suggest that more young people stayed at school to continue their higher education as a result of the greater educational opportunities available in tertiary institutions.

High participation in tertiary education

12. Owing to the increased tertiary education opportunities in the past ten years, persons with tertiary education had increased substantially both in number and in their share of the population. In 1991, about 0.49 million persons (or 11.2% of the total) aged 15 and over had tertiary education, whereas by 2001 the number was almost doubled and reached 0.92 million (or 16.4% of the total). This development was particularly prominent for the younger population. For those persons in the age group 20-24, the proportion rose from 20.9% in 1991 to 33.1% in 2001. The increase for the age group 25-34 from 15.5% to 29.5% in the same period was also remarkable.

13. The median age of those persons with tertiary education increased from 31 in 1991 to 33 in 2001. This was mainly due to a dramatic increase (by 335%) in the number of persons aged 25-44 attending tertiary education through part-time and distance learning courses. It was also noted that there were 8 300

part-time and distance learning tertiary students aged 45 and over. This reflects that more working persons were pursuing higher education, regardless of age. The median age of those studying full-time in tertiary institutions remained at 21 throughout the period, owing to the fact that these institutions drew in youngsters of the same age band to study.

14. In 1991, the proportion of women (9.4%) with tertiary education was lower than that of men (13.0%). At that time, 44.9% of all students (including full-time, part-time and distance learning courses) attending tertiary education were women. However, the growth over the decade was slightly faster for women; and by 2001, 15.1% of women were with tertiary education, compared with 17.8% of men. Women also made up more than half (51.6%) of the students studying in tertiary institutions in 2001.

15. There were shifts over the past ten years in the types of tertiary education for persons with tertiary education. On the one hand, the proportion of the population with tertiary education who had studied or were studying non-degree courses dropped from 47.9% in 1991 to 22.8% in 2001. On the other, the proportion of the population with tertiary education who had studied or were studying degree courses increased significantly from 52.2% in 1991 to 77.2% in 2001. In particular, there was a marked growth in the proportion of persons having attended post-graduate courses over the period from 3.8% in 1991 to 13.4% in 2001.

Changing way of acquiring tertiary education

16. The way of acquiring tertiary education was changing. The number of persons in full-time tertiary education increased by 72.4%, from 66 777 in 1991 to 115 115 in 2001. The majority of the increased full-time places were taken up by young persons aged 20-24. As a result, among this age group of persons with tertiary education, the proportion of those studying full-time increased from 44.7% in 1991 to 52.3% in 2001. On the other hand, as a result of the increasing opportunities available to the population to acquire tertiary education through part-time studies and distance learning where working persons with job ties and mature persons without the basic qualification could do so, the number of part-time and distance learning students in tertiary education grew by over 230% from 36 353 in 1991 to 120 630 in 2001. Detailed statistics on the population with tertiary education are at Annex IV.

“Business and commercial studies” as most popular field of education

17. The most popular field of education amongst persons with tertiary education was “Business and commercial studies”. The proportion of the population with tertiary education in this field increased from 22.9% in 1991 to 28.7% in 2001. “Arts and social science” and “Mechanical, electrical, electronic and marine engineering” were the next two more popular fields of education. In relative terms, the largest increase was recorded in the field “Computer studies” during the past ten years, from 4.0% to 8.3%. Detailed statistics on the field of education of the population with tertiary education are at Annex V.

Census and Statistics Department
April 2002

Key Education Statistics

	1991	1996	2001
I. Educational attainment (highest level attended) of population aged 15 and over			
No schooling/kindergarten	557 297 (12.8%)	480 852 (9.5%)	469 939 (8.4%)
Primary	1 100 599 (25.2%)	1 146 882 (22.6%)	1 148 273 (20.5%)
Lower secondary	837 730 (19.1%)	958 245 (18.9%)	1 060 489 (18.9%)
Upper secondary and Matriculation	1 383 848 (31.6%)	1 712 019 (33.8%)	2 001 771 (35.8%)
Tertiary: non-degree	234 912 (5.4%)	243 004 (4.8%)	209 878 (3.7%)
Tertiary: degree	255 979 (5.9%)	525 516 (10.4%)	708 622 (12.7%)
Total	4 370 365 (100.0%)	5 066 518 (100.0%)	5 598 972 (100.0%)
II. Proportion of non-student population aged 20 and over having attained tertiary education	10.7%	14.6%	15.9%
III. School attendance rate of population by age group			
Age group			
3-5	94.9%	94.6%	94.7%
6-11	99.8%	99.8%	99.9%
12-16	93.6%	96.0%	97.5%
17-18	58.3%	63.9%	71.0%
19-24	15.1%	21.0%	26.4%
IV. Proportion of tertiary educated population by type of tertiary education			
Non-degree courses			
Higher diploma/Diploma/Certificate courses	25.4%	13.0%	12.3%
Associateship or equivalent courses	2.2%	1.2%	1.6%
Others	20.3%	17.4%	8.9%
Degree courses			
First degree courses	48.4%	59.2%	63.8%
Post graduate courses	3.8%	9.1%	13.4%
V. Proportion of tertiary educated population with field of education as			
Business and commercial studies	22.9%	25.7%	28.7%
Arts and social science	18.9%	18.5%	18.8%
Mechanical, electrical, electronic and marine engineering	13.7%	11.8%	8.9%
Computer studies	4.0%	5.7%	8.3%
Architecture and construction engineering	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%
Pure science	6.9%	6.8%	7.0%
Medical and health related studies	7.8%	6.8%	6.4%
Education	7.2%	6.1%	5.3%
Textile, design and other industrial technology	4.0%	3.6%	1.4%
Other fields	7.4%	7.9%	7.9%

Population Aged 15 and Over by Age Group and Educational Attainment (Highest Level Attended), 1991, 1996 and 2001

Age Group	Educational Attainment									
	No Schooling/ Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary/ Matriculation ⁽¹⁾		Tertiary		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1991										
15 - 24	4 096	0.5	29 131	3.5	691 336	82.3	115 278	13.7	839 841	100.0
25 - 34	22 299	1.9	214 261	18.2	759 044	64.4	182 684	15.5	1 178 288	100.0
35 - 44	39 945	4.5	304 084	34.1	452 613	50.8	94 390	10.6	891 032	100.0
45 - 54	68 082	14.0	189 351	38.8	173 131	35.5	57 094	11.7	487 658	100.0
55+	422 875	43.4	363 772	37.4	145 454	14.9	41 445	4.3	973 546	100.0
Total	557 297	12.8	1 100 599	25.2	2 221 578	50.8	490 891	11.2	4 370 365	100.0
1996										
15 - 24	2 693	0.3	18 652	2.1	686 997	79.0	161 169	18.5	869 511	100.0
25 - 34	11 224	0.9	95 381	8.0	788 798	66.4	293 021	24.7	1 188 424	100.0
35 - 44	31 139	2.6	309 837	26.3	668 533	56.7	169 013	14.3	1 178 522	100.0
45 - 54	45 402	6.6	247 866	36.3	314 569	46.0	75 732	11.1	683 569	100.0
55+	390 394	34.1	475 146	41.4	211 367	18.4	69 585	6.1	1 146 492	100.0
Total	480 852	9.5	1 146 882	22.6	2 670 264	52.7	768 520	15.2	5 066 518	100.0
2001										
15 - 24	1 923	0.2	15 965	1.7	725 314	78.8	177 243	19.3	920 445	100.0
25 - 34	7 512	0.7	54 036	4.9	719 971	64.9	327 010	29.5	1 108 529	100.0
35 - 44	25 578	1.9	242 746	17.8	855 175	62.9	236 988	17.4	1 360 487	100.0
45 - 54	45 001	4.7	341 902	35.6	477 289	49.7	96 225	10.0	960 417	100.0
55+	389 925	31.2	493 624	39.5	284 511	22.8	81 034	6.5	1 249 094	100.0
Total	469 939	8.4	1 148 273	20.5	3 062 260	54.7	918 500	16.4	5 598 972	100.0

Note : (1) The figures include the equivalent educational attainment (highest level attended) of "Technician level (other further non-advance education)" in the 1996 Population By-census and "Diploma/certificate courses in Institute of Vocational Education / former polytechnics" in the 2001 Population Census. However, the similar group "Diploma/certificate courses in technical institutes / polytechnics" was included under "Tertiary: Non-degree course" in the 1991 Population Census.

Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex and Educational Attainment, 1991, 1996 and 2001

Sex and Educational Attainment	1991		1996		2001	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male						
No schooling/Kindergarten	157 473	7.1	128 395	5.1	124 670	4.6
Primary	576 381	26.1	569 431	22.7	552 983	20.4
Lower secondary	506 431	22.9	569 097	22.7	608 889	22.5
Upper secondary	576 058	26.0	667 664	26.6	702 076	25.9
Matriculation ⁽¹⁾	109 345	4.9	148 683	5.9	240 510	8.9
Tertiary : Non-degree course	126 489	5.7	128 246	5.1	104 156	3.8
Degree course	160 770	7.3	300 338	12.0	377 703	13.9
Total	2 212 947	100.0	2 511 854	100.0	2 710 987	100.0
Female						
No schooling/Kindergarten	399 824	18.5	352 457	13.8	345 269	12.0
Primary	524 218	24.3	577 451	22.6	595 290	20.6
Lower secondary	331 299	15.4	389 148	15.2	451 600	15.6
Upper secondary	593 213	27.5	735 547	28.8	771 605	26.7
Matriculation ⁽¹⁾	105 232	4.9	160 125	6.3	287 580	10.0
Tertiary : Non-degree course	108 423	5.0	114 758	4.5	105 722	3.7
Degree course	95 209	4.4	225 178	8.8	330 919	11.5
Total	2 157 418	100.0	2 554 664	100.0	2 887 985	100.0
Both sexes						
No schooling/Kindergarten	557 297	12.8	480 852	9.5	469 939	8.4
Primary	1 100 599	25.2	1 146 882	22.6	1 148 273	20.5
Lower secondary	837 730	19.1	958 245	18.9	1 060 489	18.9
Upper secondary	1 169 271	26.7	1 403 211	27.7	1 473 681	26.3
Matriculation ⁽¹⁾	214 577	4.9	308 808	6.1	528 090	9.4
Tertiary : Non-degree course	234 912	5.4	243 004	4.8	209 878	3.7
Degree course	255 979	5.9	525 516	10.4	708 622	12.7
Total	4 370 365	100.0	5 066 518	100.0	5 598 972	100.0

Note : (1) The figures include the equivalent educational attainment (highest level attended) of "Technician level (other further non-advance education)" in the 1996 Population By-census and "Diploma/certificate courses in Institute of Vocational Education / former polytechnics" in the 2001 Population Census. However, the similar group "Diploma/certificate courses in technical institutes / polytechnics" was included under "Tertiary: Non-degree course" in the 1991 Population Census.

**Population with Tertiary Education⁽¹⁾ by Sex, Age Group and Whether Studying, 1991, 1996
and 2001**

Year, Sex and Age Group	Whether Studying						Total Number	Proportion of Population with Tertiary Education in Age Group (%)	
	Studying				Had Completed Study/Withdrew				
	Full-time		Part-time and Distance Learning Course		Number	%			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
1991 ⁽²⁾									
Male									
15 - 19	9 443	79.8	1 368	11.6	1 027	8.7	11 838	100.0	5.5
20 - 24	22 670	50.0	6 012	13.2	16 697	36.8	45 379	100.0	21.0
25 - 34	3 721	3.6	10 790	10.4	88 769	85.9	103 280	100.0	17.6
35 - 44	200	0.3	2 601	4.4	56 399	95.3	59 200	100.0	12.8
45 - 54	-	-	29	0.1	37 155	99.9	37 184	100.0	14.0
55+	-	-	-	-	30 378	100.0	30 378	100.0	6.5
Total	36 034	12.5	20 800	7.2	230 425	80.2	287 259	100.0	13.0
Female									
15 - 19	10 499	77.1	1 877	13.8	1 238	9.1	13 614	100.0	6.9
20 - 24	17 537	39.5	5 721	12.9	21 189	47.7	44 447	100.0	20.8
25 - 34	2 553	3.2	6 912	8.7	69 939	88.1	79 404	100.0	13.4
35 - 44	154	0.4	1 030	2.9	34 006	96.6	35 190	100.0	8.2
45 - 54	-	-	13	0.1	19 897	99.9	19 910	100.0	9.0
55+	-	-	-	-	11 067	100.0	11 067	100.0	2.2
Total	30 743	15.1	15 553	7.6	157 336	77.3	203 632	100.0	9.4
Both sexes									
15 - 19	19 942	78.4	3 245	12.7	2 265	8.9	25 452	100.0	6.2
20 - 24	40 207	44.7	11 733	13.1	37 886	42.2	89 826	100.0	20.9
25 - 34	6 274	3.4	17 702	9.7	158 708	86.9	182 684	100.0	15.5
35 - 44	354	0.4	3 631	3.8	90 405	95.8	94 390	100.0	10.6
45 - 54	-	-	42	0.1	57 052	99.9	57 094	100.0	11.7
55+	-	-	-	-	41 445	100.0	41 445	100.0	4.3
Total	66 777	13.6	36 353	7.4	387 761	79.0	490 891	100.0	11.2
Median Age									
Male	21		27		36		33		
Female	20		25		32		29		
Both sexes	21		26		34		31		

Notes : (1) The figures refer to persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) as "Tertiary Education".

(2) The figures include persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) of "Diploma/certificate courses in technical institutes / polytechnics".

**Population with Tertiary Education⁽¹⁾ by Sex, Age Group and Whether Studying, 1991, 1996
and 2001 (Continued)**

Year, Sex and Age Group	Whether Studying						Total Number	Proportion of Population with Tertiary Education in Age Group (%)	
	Studying				Had Completed Study/Withdrew				
	Full-time		Part-time and Distance Learning Course		Number	%			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
1996									
Male									
15 - 19	10 407	80.7	1 804	14.0	688	5.3	12 899	100.0	6.0
20 - 24	34 588	52.0	9 082	13.7	22 838	34.3	66 508	100.0	29.5
25 - 34	5 299	3.5	22 990	15.4	121 010	81.1	149 299	100.0	26.8
35 - 44	703	0.7	10 085	9.9	91 091	89.4	101 879	100.0	17.2
45 - 54	-	-	736	1.5	48 173	98.5	48 909	100.0	13.4
55+	-	-	42	0.1	49 048	99.9	49 090	100.0	8.8
Total	50 997	11.9	44 739	10.4	332 848	77.7	428 584	100.0	17.1
Female									
15 - 19	8 424	78.6	1 593	14.9	701	6.5	10 718	100.0	5.3
20 - 24	31 706	44.6	9 893	13.9	29 445	41.4	71 044	100.0	31.3
25 - 34	4 720	3.3	20 436	14.2	118 566	82.5	143 722	100.0	22.8
35 - 44	619	0.9	7 290	10.9	59 225	88.2	67 134	100.0	11.4
45 - 54	-	-	498	1.9	26 325	98.1	26 823	100.0	8.5
55+	-	-	14	0.1	20 481	99.9	20 495	100.0	3.5
Total	45 469	13.4	39 724	11.7	254 743	74.9	339 936	100.0	13.3
Both sexes									
15 - 19	18 831	79.7	3 397	14.4	1 389	5.9	23 617	100.0	5.7
20 - 24	66 294	48.2	18 975	13.8	52 283	38.0	137 552	100.0	30.4
25 - 34	10 019	3.4	43 426	14.8	239 576	81.8	293 021	100.0	24.7
35 - 44	1 322	0.8	17 375	10.3	150 316	88.9	169 013	100.0	14.3
45 - 54	-	-	1 234	1.6	74 498	98.4	75 732	100.0	11.1
55+	-	-	56	0.1	69 529	99.9	69 585	100.0	6.1
Total	96 466	12.6	84 463	11.0	587 591	76.5	768 520	100.0	15.2
Median Age									
Male	21		29		36		33		
Female	21		28		32		30		
Both sexes	21		29		35		32		

Notes : (1) The figures refer to persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) as "Tertiary Education".

(2) The figures include persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) of "Diploma/certificate courses in technical institutes / polytechnics".

**Population with Tertiary Education⁽¹⁾ by Sex, Age Group and Whether Studying, 1991, 1996
and 2001 (Continued)**

Year, Sex and Age Group	Whether Studying						Total Number	Proportion of Population with Tertiary Education in Age Group (%)	
	Studying				Had Completed Study/Withdrew				
	Full-time		Part-time and Distance Learning Course		Number	%			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
2001									
Male									
15 - 19	9 023	88.3	941	9.2	251	2.5	10 215	100.0	4.4
20 - 24	39 480	54.8	8 243	11.4	24 326	33.8	72 049	100.0	32.0
25 - 34	6 319	4.1	25 985	17.0	120 196	78.8	152 500	100.0	30.5
35 - 44	1 345	1.0	18 498	14.0	111 986	84.9	131 829	100.0	20.3
45 - 54	-	-	3 959	6.6	56 288	93.4	60 247	100.0	12.3
55+	-	-	310	0.6	54 709	99.4	55 019	100.0	9.0
Total	56 167	11.7	57 936	12.0	367 756	76.3	481 859	100.0	17.8
Female									
15 - 19	10 359	88.9	894	7.7	397	3.4	11 650	100.0	5.3
20 - 24	41 740	50.1	9 424	11.3	32 165	38.6	83 329	100.0	34.0
25 - 34	5 184	3.0	31 634	18.1	137 692	78.9	174 510	100.0	28.7
35 - 44	1 665	1.6	16 711	15.9	86 783	82.5	105 159	100.0	14.8
45 - 54	-	-	3 775	10.5	32 203	89.5	35 978	100.0	7.6
55+	-	-	256	1.0	25 759	99.9	26 015	100.0	4.1
Total	58 948	13.5	62 694	14.4	314 999	72.1	436 641	100.0	15.1
Both sexes									
15 - 19	19 382	88.6	1 835	8.4	648	3.0	21 865	100.0	4.9
20 - 24	81 220	52.3	17 667	11.4	56 491	36.4	155 378	100.0	33.1
25 - 34	11 503	3.5	57 619	17.6	257 888	78.9	327 010	100.0	29.5
35 - 44	3 010	1.3	35 209	14.9	198 769	83.9	236 988	100.0	17.4
45 - 54	-	-	7 734	8.0	88 491	92.0	96 225	100.0	10.0
55+	-	-	566	0.7	80 468	99.3	81 034	100.0	6.5
Total	115 115	12.5	120 630	13.1	682 755	74.3	918 500	100.0	16.4
Median Age									
Male	21		32		38		35		
Female	21		31		33		31		
Both sexes	21		31		36		33		

Notes : (1) The figures refer to persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) as "Tertiary Education".

(2) The figures include persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) of "Diploma/certificate courses in technical institutes / polytechnics".

Population with Tertiary Education ⁽¹⁾ by Field of Education, 1991, 1996 and 2001

Field of Education	1991		1996		2001	
	Number ⁽²⁾	%	Number	%	Number	%
Business and commercial studies	112 085	22.9	197 542	25.7	263 783	28.7
Arts and social science	92 895	18.9	142 146	18.5	172 275	18.8
Mechanical, electrical, electronic and marine engineering	67 152	13.7	90 778	11.8	81 919	8.9
Computer studies	19 687	4.0	43 479	5.7	76 615	8.3
Architecture and construction engineering	35 462	7.2	55 280	7.2	66 276	7.2
Pure science	33 969	6.9	52 095	6.8	64 227	7.0
Medical and health related studies	38 322	7.8	52 120	6.8	59 092	6.4
Education	35 368	7.2	46 815	6.1	48 968	5.3
Textile, design and other industrial technology	19 806	4.0	27 566	3.6	12 757	1.4
Other fields	36 145	7.4	60 699	7.9	72 588	7.9
Total	490 891	100.0	768 520	100.0	918 500	100.0

Notes : (1) The figures refer to persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) as "Tertiary Education".

(2) The figures include persons with educational attainment (highest level attended) of "Diploma/certificate courses in technical institutes / polytechnics".