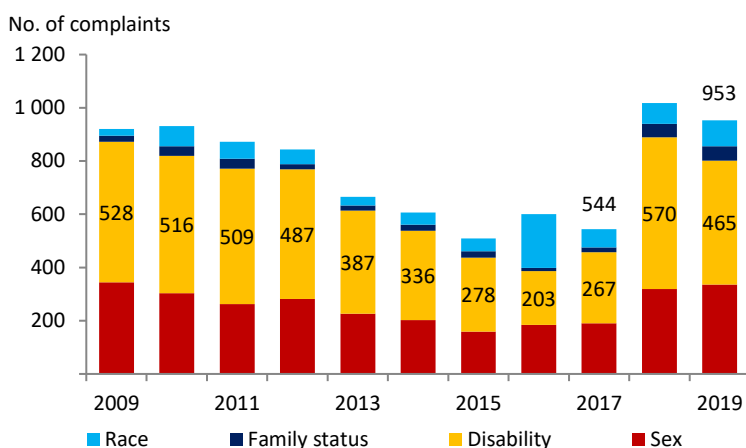




Equal opportunities and disability discrimination

Figure 1 – Discrimination complaints during 2009-2019



Highlights

- Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") is a statutory body established in 1996 to eliminate disability discrimination, on top of other forms of discrimination (e.g. sex, race and family status). During 2009-2019, overall new complaints lodged to EOC increased by 3% to 953 cases (**Figure 1**). Within this total, disability discrimination registered the largest caseload, with an average share of 53% over the decade.

- In Hong Kong, the population of persons with disability ("PWD") had surged by 114% in 13 years to 579 000 in 2013, along with improved awareness and identification method. Their share in total population then doubled from 4.0% to 8.1% (**Figure 2**). Updated survey figures are scheduled for release in 2021.

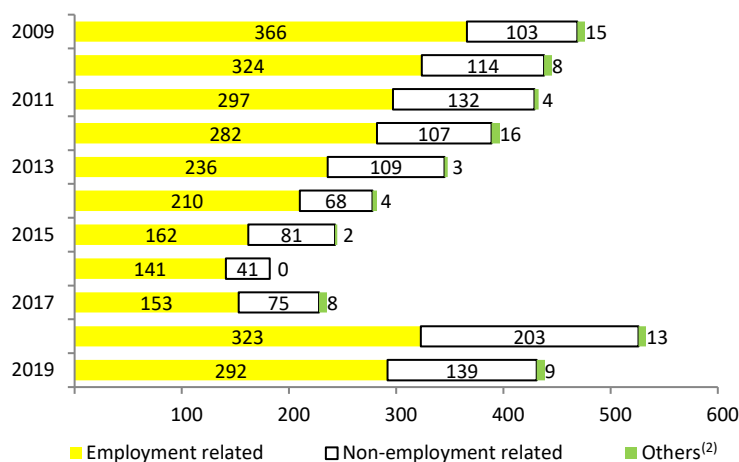
- PWD generally face greater challenges in finding jobs, as manifested in their higher unemployment rate in 2013 (6.0%), as compared with total labour force (3.4%). Worse still, the labour force participation rate ("LFPR") of PWD was 14%, just one-fifth of total population (Figure 2). To a certain extent, this is attributable to the reluctance of employers in hiring PWD, as pointed out in a study of EOC in 2014.

- While the Disability Discrimination Ordinance ("DDO") provides a wide array of protections (e.g. employment, education, provision of goods and services and premises management) to PWD, most of the DDO-related complaints are related to employment. During 2009-2019, employment accounted for some 70% of DDO-related caseload on average (**Figure 3**).

Figure 2 – Key labour market indicators for PWD

	2000	2007	2013
Population of PWD ('000)	270	361	579
- As share of total population	4.0%	5.2%	8.1%
Labour force participation rate of PWD	22.2%	12.7%	14.0%
Local labour force participation rate	61.4%	61.2%	61.2%
Unemployment rate of PWD	12.1%	10.5%	6.0%
Local unemployment rate	4.9%	4.0%	3.4%

Figure 3 – Complaints⁽¹⁾ on disability discrimination related to employment, 2009-2019



Notes: (1) Complaints refer to those handled by EOC.
 (2) "Others" refers to vilification.

Equal opportunities and disability discrimination (cont'd)

Figure 4 – DDO-related complaints by nature, 2009-2019

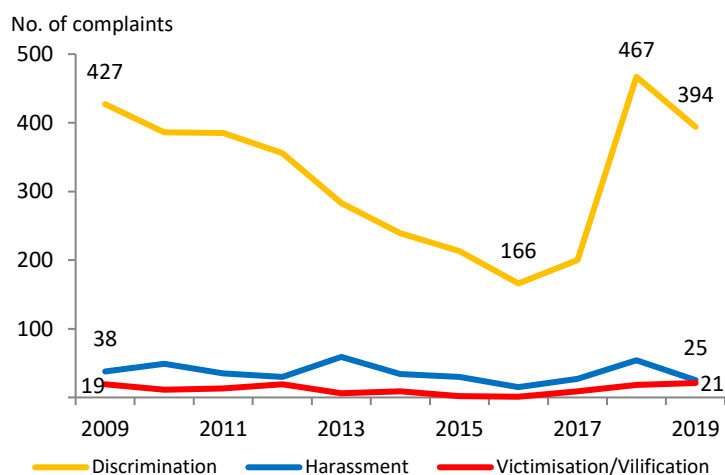


Figure 5 – Conciliation attempts of DDO-related complaints, 2009-2019

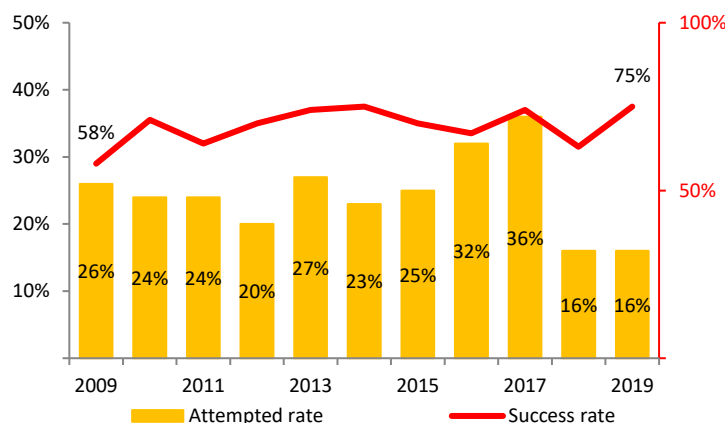
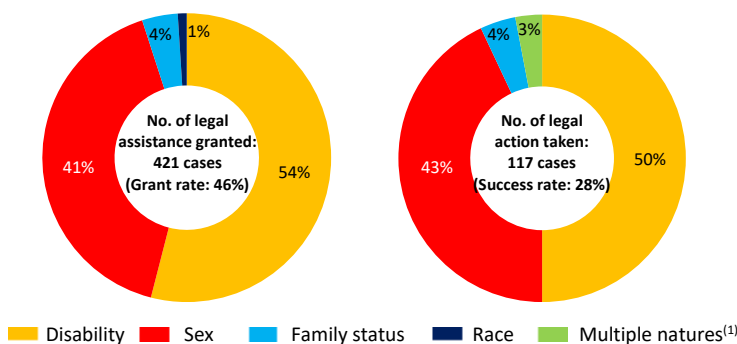


Figure 6 – Legal assistance granted and legal action taken by EOC by nature, 1996-2019



Note: (1) "Multiple natures" refers to cases contravening both the Disability Discrimination Ordinance and the Sex Discrimination Ordinance.

Highlights

- Analysed by the nature, discrimination is the most dominant amongst DDO-related complaints, with its share of caseload within a range of 81%-90% over the past decade. Actually, the number of DDO-related complaints on discrimination has more than doubled to 394 cases during 2016-2019. As regards harassment and victimization or vilification, their annual number averaged at 36 and 12 respectively during 2009-2019 (Figure 4).
- EOC is responsible for complaint investigation and dispute mediation via conciliation before taking legal action. On DDO-related complaints, there were attempts to settle the disputes through conciliation in recent years, with the share of conciliation attempts in overall caseload rising from 26% in 2009 to 36% in 2017. However, the share fell back to a 10-year low of 16% in 2018-2019. In terms of the success rate of conciliation on DDO-related cases, it was broadly similar to other discrimination cases, averaging at 69% within a decade (Figure 5).
- As a last resort, EOC may provide legal assistance (e.g. designated lawyers) to eligible complainants and take necessary legal action for the assisted persons if conciliation does not work. During 1996-2019, legal assistance was granted to 421 cases (with a grant rate of 46%), within which 54% was DDO-related (Figure 6). Over the same period, legal action was taken in 117 cases (with a success rate of 28%), within which 50% was DDO-related.
- Since late 2018, the Legislative Council has been scrutinizing an amendment bill of discrimination to enhance protection of the rights of the disadvantaged, including PWD.

Data sources: Latest figures from Equal Opportunities Commission and Census and Statistics Department.

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