

AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTS PROMOTED BY TAIWANESE WOMEN'S POLICIES

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Abstract— Women's awareness of power in Taiwan originated from the May Fourth Movement in 1919, when women began to become aware of "human rights". After the publication of the Constitution of the Republic of China in 1947, equality between men and women began to obtain legal protection. In recent years, Taiwan government has been working hard to revise women's laws. The "Women's Policy Platform" passed in 2004 included women's political participation, women's labor and economics, women's welfare and poverty alleviation, women's education and culture, women's health and medical care, and women's personal safety, as subjects of focus to enhance the rights of women.

This study was based on the results of the "Women's Policy Platform" and was compared with the "Gender at a Glance in R.O.C." from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics of the Executive Yuan to understand the implementation progress of Taiwan's women's policy. Sources included "OECD Gender Equality Indicator", "United Nations Development Programme" and Taiwan's Gender Inequality Index (GII) from 2008 to 2015, with reference to advanced and neighboring countries including the eight OECD member states, which were Japan, South Korea, the United States, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia, to cross-examine the effectiveness of women's policy in Taiwan.

The study results found that Taiwanese women outperformed in several categories, including women's share of parliamentary seats, female unemployment, the ratio of female business owners, the average salary ratio of female employees in industry and service industries to male salary, the proportion of population above 25 years of age with education above average, the ratio of female with higher education and the birth rate of underage females at age 15 to 19. In comparison with international indices where the policy implementation must be reinforced, the ratio of female public servants, the difference in gender employment ratio, the average female life span, the gender suicide mortality rate and the suicide rate of working women in Taiwan, particularly showed poorer scores in ranking. Although there was no international data available to compare "women's welfare and poverty alleviation", the government's effort did show a trend of improvement from relevant data. The number of women's welfare service centers, the general condition of nursery care in the community, the marriage and childbearing (resuming) profile of married women aged 15 to 64 and many others, have greatly improved, especially when the government actively promoted the kinship care policy, where apparent increase was observed in the number of primary caretakers for children of women in marriage and the number of relatives as caretakers. The most pressing indicator for improvement was "women's personal safety", which barely showed any progress. The ratio of female as victims has remained at 8 to 90%.

International gender rating showed Taiwan as one of the countries with fair equality to both genders that women in Taiwan enjoyed high level of education, low fertility rate, low child care rate and low labor participation rate. It was clear that Taiwanese women have gradually moved away from traditional role, even though they still encounter difficulty in workplaces. Compared with other advanced countries, women in Taiwan spent more time in education, and yet show lower labor participation rate. If Taiwanese women choose family over job, there are problems of decreasing child care ratio and fertility rate. Taiwan's gender inequality index was low and women's roles and responsibilities were not balanced. In general, citizens were able to enjoy rights, but they tend to dodge obligations, marriage, maternity and employment as they seemed to be unwilling to bear more burdens, which could be contributed to Taiwan's employment environment, or there was still much room for discussion about gender education in Taiwan.

Index Terms—Women's Policies, Gender Equality Indicator, Gender Inequality Index

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's awareness of rights in Taiwan originated from the May Fourth Movement in 1919, when women began to become aware of "human rights". After the establishment of the Constitution of the Republic of China in 1948, equality between men and women began to obtain legal protection. From the 60's to the 80's, rapid economic growth and development, as well as rapid migration of agricultural population to industry and service industries, led to insufficiency of men as labor source for industrial needs, that women's

status as a labor force was gradually elevated to strategic important part of national policy for economic development. Such change would require adjustment to gender role and awareness. In recent years, Taiwan government has been working hard to revise women's laws. The "Women's Policy Platform" passed in 2004 included women's political participation, women's labor and economics, women's welfare and poverty alleviation, women's education and culture, women's health and medical care, and women's personal safety, as subjects of focus to enhance the rights of women. Its implementation

progress and various indices must be cross-examined.
 Procedure for Paper Submission

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *The rise of women's movement in Taiwan*

In 1970, the activists in women's movement in Taiwan proposed "New Feminism" and began to actively care about the inequality between men and women in the society. That marked the beginning of women's movement in Taiwan. The "Awakening Press", which was established in 1972, was the only organization involved in women's movement at that time. It paid attention to issues related to women in all aspects and played the role of "awakening and education" in concept and consciousness for women. They also actively participated in politics and promoted relevant laws through formulating and supervising government policies to improve the status of women in Taiwan. The establishment of the "Foundation of Women's Rights Promotion and Development" in 1997 was a center of resources and information exchange for women in term of a starting point for pioneering women's policies in the country as a whole. It served as a response to the women's movement.

B. *Research and Policy Toward Women's Issues in Taiwan*

Research and policy toward women's issues in Taiwan have evolved from women's awareness to a policy formulation for problem solving. Issues of concern along the way initially included anti-sexual harassment, marital violence, personal safety, reproductive health and care, work equality, and women's participation in politics, as well as multicultural integration, training and empowerment for immigrants. Women's movement in Taiwan has persisted for over 50 years. The government continues to actively revise and enact laws to ensure women's rights and interests. The "Women's Policy Platform" in 2004, the "White Paper on Women's Policies" in 2005, and the "Program of Gender Equality Policy" in 2010 were all devoted to the revision of women's related laws and regulations to create a gender-equality society and work environment.

C. *Women and Gender Indicators*

Most of the inspections on the effectiveness of the implementation of women's policies were based on gender indicators. The international indicators for women's status mainly include the "OECD Gender Equality Indicator" and the "United Nations Development Programme". In Taiwan, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) was instead used to measure the gender equality of different countries in terms of five indicators over three fields in reproductive health, empowerment and labor market.

This article compared the review results of the "Women's Policy Platform" with the "Gender at a

Glance in R.O.C." from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics of the Executive Yuan over the past 12 years in order to provide a reflection and perspective of future policy development.

III. METHODOLOGY

D. *Literature analysis*

This study was intended to collect information on the history of women's movement in Taiwan, as well as promotion and development of women's policy and relevant laws. It would be cross-examined with various international data of women and gender indicators as the basis for this study.

E. *Secondary data analysis*

This study was based on the results of the "Women's Policy Platform" and was compared with the "Gender at a Glance in R.O.C." from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics of the Executive Yuan to understand the implementation progress of Taiwan's women's policy. Sources included "OECD Gender Equality Indicator", "United Nations Development Programme" and Taiwan's Gender Inequality Index (GII) from 2008 to 2015, with reference to advanced and neighboring countries including the eight OECD member states, which were Japan, South Korea, the United States, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia, to cross-examine the effectiveness of women's policy in Taiwan.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The indicators of women's policy in Taiwan were based on the inspection indicators of the "Gender at a Glance in R.O.C." from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics of the Executive Yuan. According to the connotation of the women's policy, the following indicators (Table 1) were compiled to compare the differences among countries.

TABLE 1

Corresponding indicators for women's policies in Taiwan

No.	Women's policy	Corresponding indicators
1	Women's participation in politics	1.1 Women's share of parliamentary seats 1.2 Ratio of female public servants
2	Women's labor and economics	2.1 Labor participation rate for age above 15 2.2 Gender employment ratio 2.3 Difference in gender employment ratio 2.4 Gender unemployment ratio 2.5 Ratio of female startup loan 2.6 Ratio of female business owners

		2.7 Average salary ratio of female employees in industry and service industries to male salary
3	Women's welfare and poverty alleviation	3.1 Number of women's welfare service centers 3.2 General condition of nursery care in the community 3.3 Care for child below age 6 by married women aged 15 to 64 3.4 General condition of leave and reinstatement of married women aged 15 to 64 3.5 Employment rate for married women aged 15 to 64 with child of age below 15 3.6 Number and ratio of insured females under social security
4	Women's education and culture	4.1 Proportion of females with education above average in population of age above 25 4.2 Ratio of female with higher education 4.3 Ratio of female students in technology department of universities and colleges 4.4 Ratio of female students in technology department of universities and colleges in Taiwan
5	Women's health and medical care	5.1 Birth rate of underage females at age 15 to 19 5.2 Maternal mortality rate 5.3 Gender suicide mortality rate 5.4 Women's life expectancy
6	Women's personal safety	6.1 Statistics of types of female victim in reported domestic violence incidents 6.2 Ratio of types of female victim in reported domestic violence incidents 6.3 Statistics of female victims to the number of reported sexual assaults 6.4 Ratio of female child victims 6.5 Enrollment rate of female police officers

proportion of females with education above average in population of age above 25(e.g. Fig. 5), the ratio of female with higher education(e.g. Fig. 6) and the birth rate of underage females at age 15 to 19(e.g. Fig. 7) .

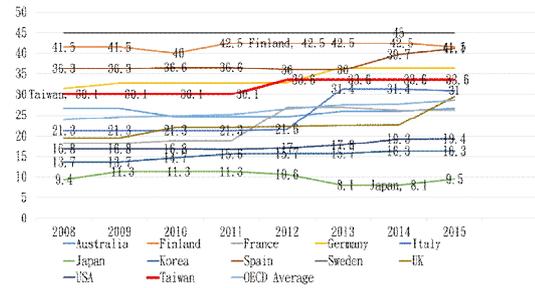


Fig. 1 Women's share of parliamentary seats

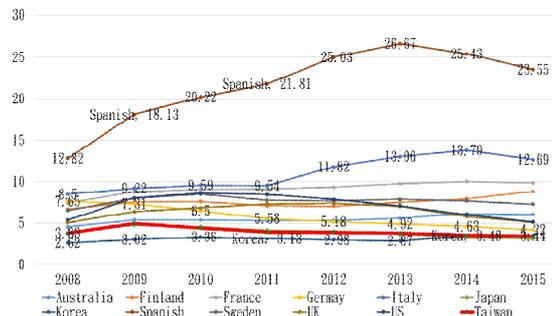


Fig. 2 Gender unemployment ratio

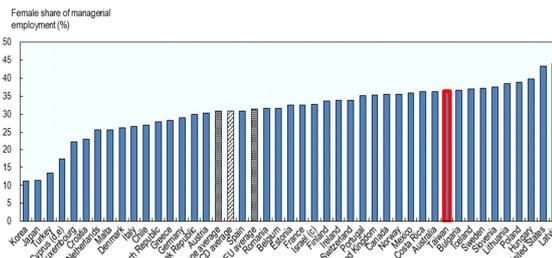


Fig. 3 Ratio of female business owners

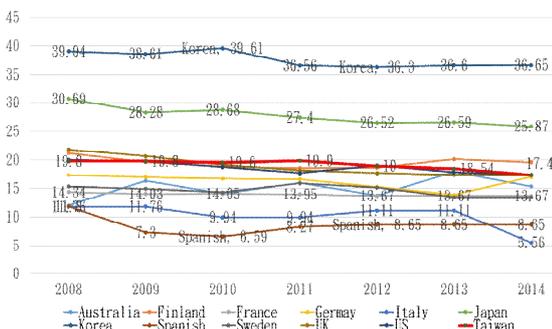


Fig. 4 Average salary ratio of female employees in industry and service industries to male salary

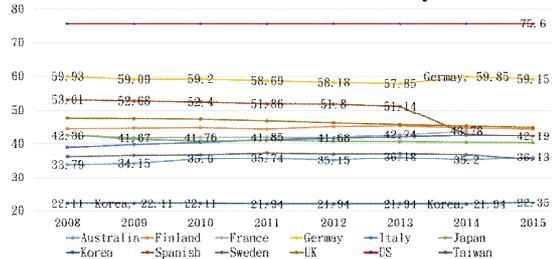


Fig. 5 Proportion of females with education above average in population of age above 25

F. Indicators of better performance in comparison with international result

Indicators of better performance in Taiwan included women's share of parliamentary seats (e.g. Fig. 1), Gender unemployment ratio (e.g. Fig. 2), the ratio of female business owners (e.g. Fig. 3), the average female employee salary in the industrial and service sectors and difference to male salary(e.g. Fig. 4), the

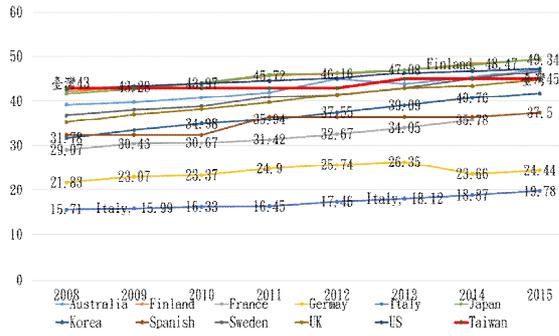


Fig. 6 Ratio of female with higher education

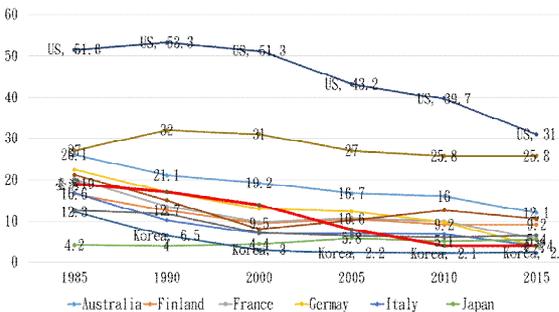


Fig. 7 Birth rate of underage females at age 15 to 19

G. Indicators to be strengthened in comparison with international result

The indicators of women in public sector, average life expectancy and suicide mortality rate in Taiwan were relatively unsatisfactory, including the ratio of female public servants(e.g. Fig. 8), the difference in gender employment ratios(e.g. Fig. 9), the gender suicide mortality rate(e.g. Fig. 10)and the average life expectancy of women (e.g. Fig. 11).

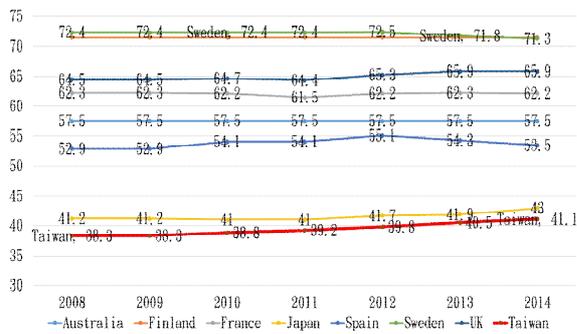


Fig. 8 Ratio of female public servants

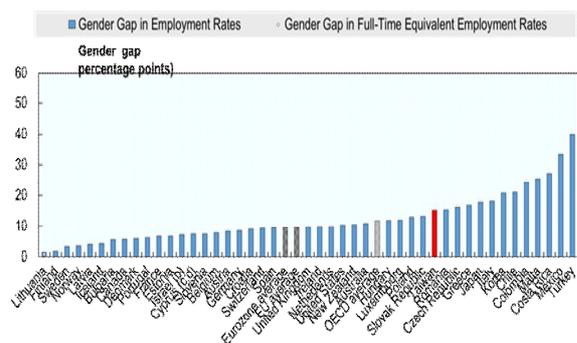


Fig. 9 Difference in gender employment ratio

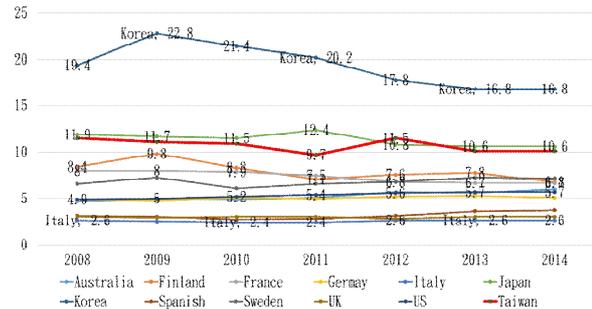


Fig. 10 the gender suicide mortality rate

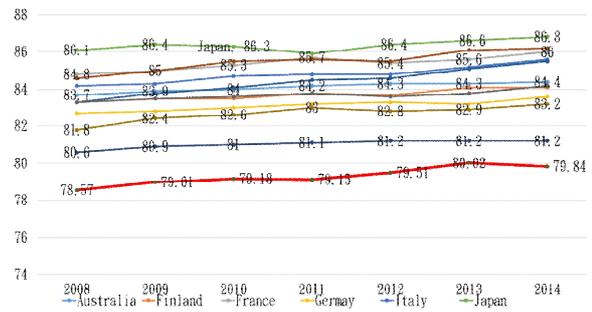


Fig. 11 Gender suicide mortality rate (female)

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

H. Conclusion

1) Indicators of better performance in comparison with international result

Indicators of better performance in Taiwan included women’s share of parliamentary seats, female unemployment rate, the ratio of female business owners, the average female employee salary in the industrial and service sectors and difference to male salary, the proportion of females with education above average in population of age above 25, the ratio of female with higher education and the birth rate of underage females at age 15 to 19.

2) Indicators to be strengthened in comparison with international result

The indicators of women in public sector, average life expectancy and suicide mortality rate in Taiwan were relatively unsatisfactory, including the ratio of female public servants, the difference in gender employment ratios, the average life expectancy of women and the gender suicide mortality rate. The number of female suicide deaths at work in Taiwan was particularly high and government must actively intervene in this matter. In addition, because of the high suicide mortality among Asian women, could it be under the influence of suppressive aspect of Asian culture? These aspects must be considered and discussed accordingly.

3) In term of “Women’s welfare and poverty alleviation”, the condition has gradually improved.

Although there is no international data available for

comparing "women's welfare and poverty alleviation", its progress could still be learned from other relevant data on the situation, such as the number of women's welfare service centers and the general condition of nursery care in communities, the general condition of leave and reinstatement of married women aged 15 to 64, which all showed significant improvement, especially government's active devotion in the kinship care policy and the increasing number of relatives as caretakers, proving remarkable achievement in policy implementation.

4) For "women's personal safety", it requires more improvement.

In term of "women's personal safety", which barely showed any progress, the ratio of females as victim has remained at 8 to 90%. The ratio of types of female victim in reported domestic violence incidents, the ratio of female victims in the number of reported sexual assaults and the ratio of female child victims remained quite constant over the past 8 years.

5) Discussion of indicators

Result showed that women in Taiwan enjoyed high level of education, low fertility rate, low child care rate and low labor participation rate. It was clear that Taiwanese women have gradually moved away from traditional role, even though they still encounter difficulty in workplaces. Compared with other advanced countries, women in Taiwan spent more time in education, and yet showed lower labor participation rate. If Taiwanese women choose family over job, there are problems of decreasing child care ratio and fertility rate. The gender education must be improved to facilitate the necessary change for women's status in society.

With low gender inequality index, are the roles and responsibilities of female character balanced? In post-modern thinking, Taiwanese generally enjoys rights, but it seems that they are more reluctant to bear more responsibility in marriage, progeny and employment.

I. Suggestion

Taiwan was transformed from an agricultural to an industrial society. The role of women was also shifted from an economic dependency to a provider. Women's status was gradually improved through series of consciousness awakening, problem discovery, issue discussion, problem solving and policy formulation, in which the international gender rating has shown Taiwan as one of the countries with fair equality to both genders. Genders should enjoy equal opportunities and rights. They should also avoid the narrowing of the concept of "gender equality" into the "fight for the same treatment as men at work". The employment challenge for women is not only to increase the labor participation rate, but also to improve the work environment and condition.

"Gender mainstreaming" is an important tool for

countries to review and assess their policies and legislative measures in regard with gender equality. When we talk about the ideal of work condition for women, gender equality in the workplace is not the only ultimate goal, even if men and women enjoy the same professional opportunities, we still face an inevitable problem, which is "what kind of workplace environment and condition satisfies human dignity and fulfills people's living standard?". Women in Taiwan must weigh in on the relationship between responsibilities and rights, which are not as simple as division between men and women to perform their duties in society, and only then, can such understanding truly be the blessing of the country.

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