



Women and Men in China

Facts and Figures
1995

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Editor: Department of Social,
Science and Technology
Statistics, State Statistical
Bureau

Technical Advisor:

Dr. Birgitta Hedman

Dr. Lorraine Corner

Chief Editor: Xiong Zhennan
Chen Quangen
Liu Wei(f.)

Translation:

Department of International
Cooperation, State Statistical
Bureau

Agency and Personnel are respon-
sible for Gender - statistics:

Department of Social, Sci-
ence and Technology Statis-
tics, State Statistical Bureau
of PRC

Wu Jun (f.) Director

Xiong Zhennan Deputy Director

Liu Wei (f.) Division Chief

Li Suoqiang Deputy Division Chief

An Xinli (f.)

Preface

The equality of the sexes, including the equality of rights, duties and chances, means that women and men take an equal part in society.

Inequality between the sexes expressed in various forms is an universal phenomenon which arises because of different factors, such as the level of social development, economic conditions, living environment, social customs, cultural ideas and religious beliefs.

Traditional ideas dictated that the roles played by women and men in society were quite different. History shows women were once strictly forbidden to take part in social activities in many countries. For example, women were forbidden to go to schools, to vote or to apply for divorce, etc.

Great achievements have been made in promoting the development and position of women with social development and progress. However, sexual discrimination is still widespread and obstructs the development of women.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Constitution and laws of China stipulate that women enjoy exactly the same rights as men in all aspects of life. The Chinese government has made great efforts to eliminate discrimination against women, safeguard the special rights and interests of women and promote the equality of women and men by adopting legislative, administrative and educational measures. The position of Chinese women has improved greatly since the founding of new China over 40 years ago. However the legal equality of women and men has not been completely achieved in reality because of the restrictions of social development and the influence of traditional ideas. Women still experience problems in participating in government and political affairs, obtaining employment and education, and in marriage and family life. Discrimination against

women, and even infringement of the rights and interests of women sometimes occur.

Gender statistics, which means statistics comparing the status in society of women and men, are very important in the realization of equality between women and men. The development of gender statistics requires statistical data and information on the position of women and men, and supports the formulation of gender-sensitive development plans, and monitoring and evaluation of the development process.

On the eve of the convening of the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), we compiled this booklet to reflect the circumstances of life of women and men through statistics in order to acquaint the Chinese people and our foreign friends with the position, role and problems of women and men in China. We sincerely hope this booklet and the statistics will draw your attention and consideration to gender issues in China.

This booklet is our first edition. It could not have been accomplished without substantial help from associated units, especially the care and technical guidance provided by Dr. Rosa Linda Miranda, Dr. Birgitta Hedman and Dr. Lorraine Corner, experts on gender statistics from UNIFEM and Statistics Sweden.

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

1949. The First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of the People's Republic of China was held in Beijing, China. Madam Song Qingling, the outstanding representative of Chinese women, was elected as Vice Chairman of the People's Central Government. The Common Programme with the status of a provisional constitution stipulated that women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social and family life. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, the All-China Women's Federation was established.

1950. The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China was promulgated and implemented. Its basic spirit was to abrogate completely arranged and forced marriage and the feudal marriage system that regards men as superior to women, to put into practice the new marriage system of democracy of monogyny and equality of the sexes, and to safeguard the legal rights and interests of women and children.

1954. The first Constitution of the People's Republic of China was promulgated. It clearly stipulated that women should enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social and family life.

1975. Madam Li Suwen, Vice Chairman, Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, led the Chinese delegation to attend the First World Conference on Women " World Conference of the International Women's Year" held in Mexico City, Mexico.

1980. The new Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China, revised and supplemented on the basis of the 1950 Marriage Law, was adopted at the 3rd Session of the 5th National People's Congress.

Madam Kang Keqing, Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Chairman of the All-China Women's Federation, led the Chinese delegation to attend the Second World Conference on Women " World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Equality, Development and Peace" held in Copenhagen, Denmark and signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women on behalf of the Chinese Government. The Convention was translated into Chinese and disseminated to the public for education in the same year.

1982. The revised Constitution of the People's Republic of China was promulgated. The Constitution once again stipulates that women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social and family life. The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work to women and men alike and trains and selects cadres from among women. Marriage, the family, and mothers and children are protected by the state. Violation of the freedom of marriage is prohibited. Maltreatment of old people, women and children is prohibited.

1985. Madam Chen Muhua, alternate member of the Political Bureau of Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, State Councilor, led the Chinese delegation to attend the 3rd World Conference on Women " World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievement of the United Nations Decade for Women, Equality, Development and Peace" held in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Law of Succession of the People's Republic of China was adopted at the 3rd Session of the 6th National People's Congress. Article 9 of this law stipulates that men and women are equal in their right to inheritance.

The Regulations on Maternity and Child Hygiene were issued by the Ministry of Public Health.

1986. The Law of Compulsory Education and General Principles of the Civil Law of the People's Republic of China was adopted at the 4th Session of the 6th National People's Congress. Article 5 of the Law of Compulsory Education stipulates that all children at the age of six shall go to school to obtain the compulsory education of a fixed number of years, regardless of sex, ethnic group or race. Articles 105 stipulate that citizens shall enjoy the right of marriage by choice. Mercenary marriages, marriage upon arbitrary decision by any third party and any other acts of interference in the freedom of marriage shall be prohibited. Marriage, the family, old people, mothers and children shall be protected by law. Women shall enjoy equal civil rights with men.

1988. The Committee of Women and Youth was set up under the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Regulations on Labor Protection of Women Employees were issued by the State Council.

The Circular on Issues of Treatment of Childbearing Employees was issued by the Ministry of Labor.

1989. The Special Working Group on Women and Children was set up under the Committee of Internal and Legislative Affairs of the National People's Congress.

1990. The Regulations on Restricted Work for Women Employees were issued by the Ministry of Labor.

The Working Committee on Women and Children was set up under the State Council.

1992. The Law Protecting the Legal Rights and Interests of Women of the People's Republic of China was discussed and adopted at the 5th Session of the 7th National People's Congress. Taking the protection of rights and interests of women as its starting point, the Law systemized, regularized and codified the regulations concerning the rights and interests of women in the Constitution and different laws defining all guaranteed, coordinated, supplementary and sanctioning articles.

1993. The Working Report was passed at the 7th National Conference of Chinese Women. The Document Targets of Development of Chinese Women was proposed at the Conference. Its main contents were divided into 10 parts, including participation in the government and political affairs by women, the education and employment of women, the health and hygiene of women, the protection of the rights and interests of women and the elimination of poverty.

1994. The Law of Labor of the People's Republic of China was discussed and adopted at the 8th Session of the Standing Committee of the 8th National People's Congress. The Law regulates the labor protection of women, especially during the menstruation, childbearing and breast-feeding.

READER'S GUIDE

The main purpose of this booklet is to provide the reader with an overview of the living conditions and social roles of women and men in China, using facts and figures from different fields. The booklet reflects the diversity among different geographical areas, age groups, marital status, and educational attainment etc. The booklet only presents the national overview. Provincial data could not be provided due to the limitation of length. However, data on some major indicators by provinces are issued at the end of the booklet so as to provide more detailed information to the reader. In addition, comparative data for different years are also included for analysis and comparison.

The data used for the tables and statistical charts in the booklet are derived from the results of professional censuses or sampling surveys. The source of the data is noted under each chart.

The data used in this booklet do not cover Taiwan, Hongkong and Macao.

The rounding-off method is adopted in our booklet.

Explanation of symbols:

"..." indicates figures less than the minimum unit.

"blank spaces" indicate no information available.

"*" refers the reader to a note under the graph or table.

"+" after age indicates that it includes all the population whose ages are within or above the age group.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO CHINA

The People's Republic of China is located in East Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean. It has an area of about 9.6 million square kilometers, and a population of nearly 1.2 billion, which is about one-fifth of the world population. China has 56 ethnic groups, among which the Han accounts for 92%. Forty-nine percent of the total population are women and 51 percent are men. China is administratively divided into 30 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions under the central government. Beijing is the capital of China. Women representatives account for 21% of the total representatives of National People's Congress and 79% are men.

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. Since the policy of reform and opening to the outside world in 1978, economic development has accelerated rapidly. The per capita GNP has increased from 375 Chinese yuan in 1978 to 2663 Chinese yuan in 1993. The total share of exports and imports in GNP increased from 5% and 5% respectively in 1978 to 17% and 19% in 1993.

China has a vast territory with great differences in development in the different regions. The majority of the population live in the east and coastal areas where the economy has developed very quickly, while fewer people live in the middle and west inland areas.

MAP OF CHINA BY ADMINISTRATIVE REGION



The Main Indicators

Indicator	1965	1975	1980	1985	1990	1993
Total Population (million)	725	924	987	1059	1143	1185
Women	354	449	479	511	554	580
Men	371	476	508	547	589	605
Pop. Density (P/KM ²)	76	96	103	110	119	123
Per capita GNP (yuan)			456	814	1559	2663
Per capita National Income (yuan)	194	273	376	668	1267	2111
Resident Consum ption (yuan)	125	158	227	403	723	1148
Ratio of total value of Imports/exports to GNP (%)			13	24	31	36
Import			7	15	15	19
Export			6	9	17	17

Note: Exchange rate is \$ 1 to ¥ 5.75 in 1993.

Source: China Statistical Year Book.

Major Indicators on Women and Men in China

	Women	Men
Life expectancy at birth (1989)	71	67
Infant mortality (1990)		
(per thousand live births)	35	37
Total fertility rate (1989)		
Urban	1.7	
Rural	2.6	
Population 65 years and over (%) (1990)	6	5
Illiteracy rate (%) (1990)		
Urban	18	6
Rural	37	16
Employment rate (%) (1990)		
Urban	97	97
Rural	76	87
Marriage rate of population 15-19 (%) (1990)		
Urban	2.0	0.8
Rural	5.5	2.1

Note: 1. Sources and indicator definitions can be found in the chapters of the booklet.

2. See page 88 for indicators by provinces.

POPULATION

Population 1949-1993 and Estimates
for 1995, 2000

Number in Millions and Sex Distribution (%)

Year	Number		Sex Distribution		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
1949	260	281	542	48.1	51.9
1953	283	305	588	47.5	52.5
1964	344	361	705	48.6	51.4
1970	403	427	830	48.2	51.8
1982	493	524	1017	48.0	52.0
1990	554	589	1143	48.2	51.8
1993	580	605	1185	48.7	51.3
1995	590	622	1212	48.8	51.2
2000	621	651	1272	48.8	51.2

Source: Population Statistics, the State Statistical Bureau.

Family planning is a basic policy of China. Since this policy was implemented in the 1970s, China's birth rate and population growth rate have fallen sharply. However, due to the large absolute size of China's population, the annual net addition to the population has been constant at nearly 15 million.

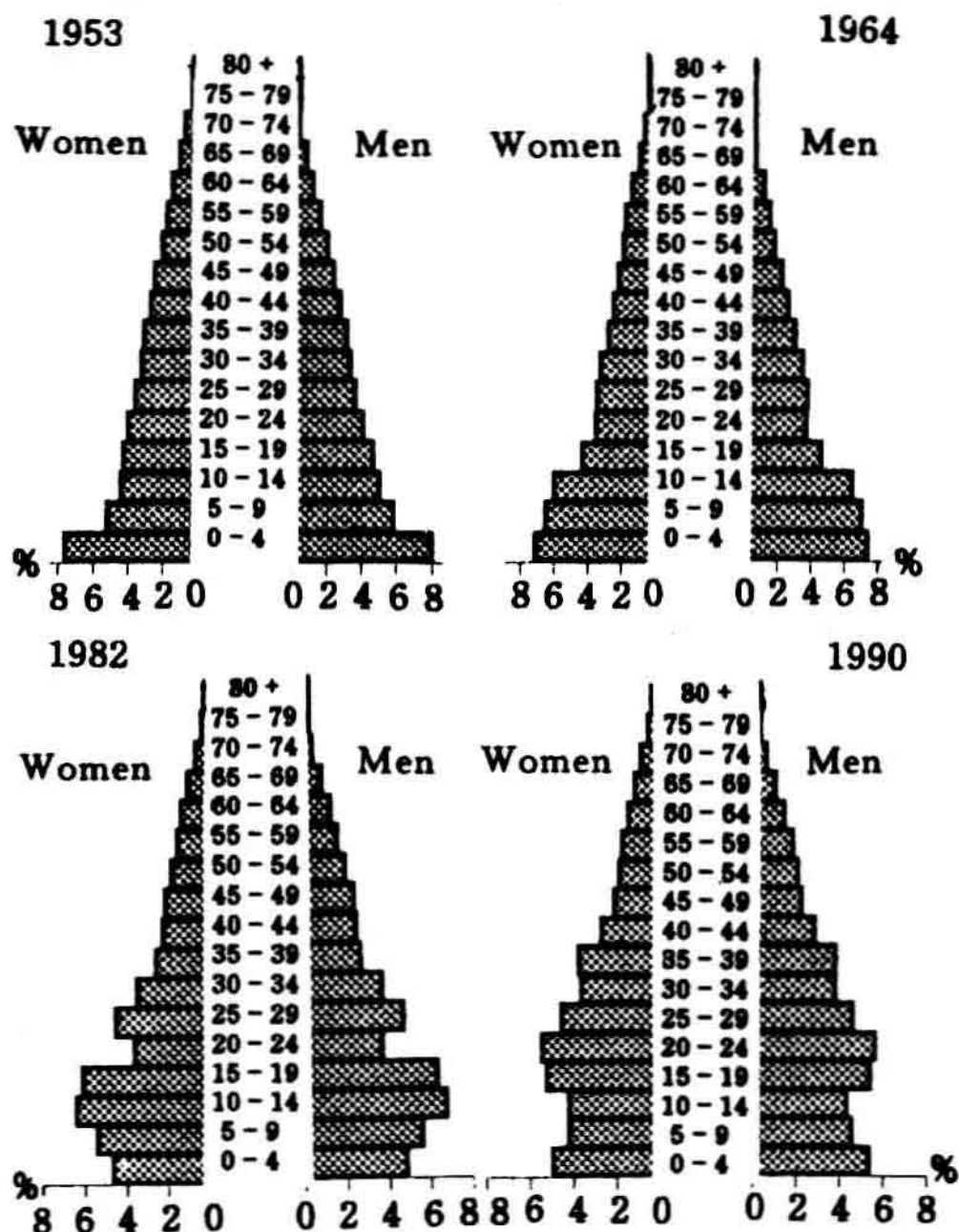
Annual Growth Rate, Population Density and Sex Ratio 1949-1993

Year	Annual	Population Density
	Growth Rate (%)	Person/km ²
1949	1.9	56
1953	2.3	61
1964	1.9	73
1970	2.9	86
1982	1.6	106
1990	1.4	119
1993	1.1	123

Year	Sex Ratio (men per 100 women)	
	Total Population	Sex ratio at birth
1949	108	
1953	108	105
1964	105	104
1970	106	
1982	106	107
1990	106	114
1993	104	

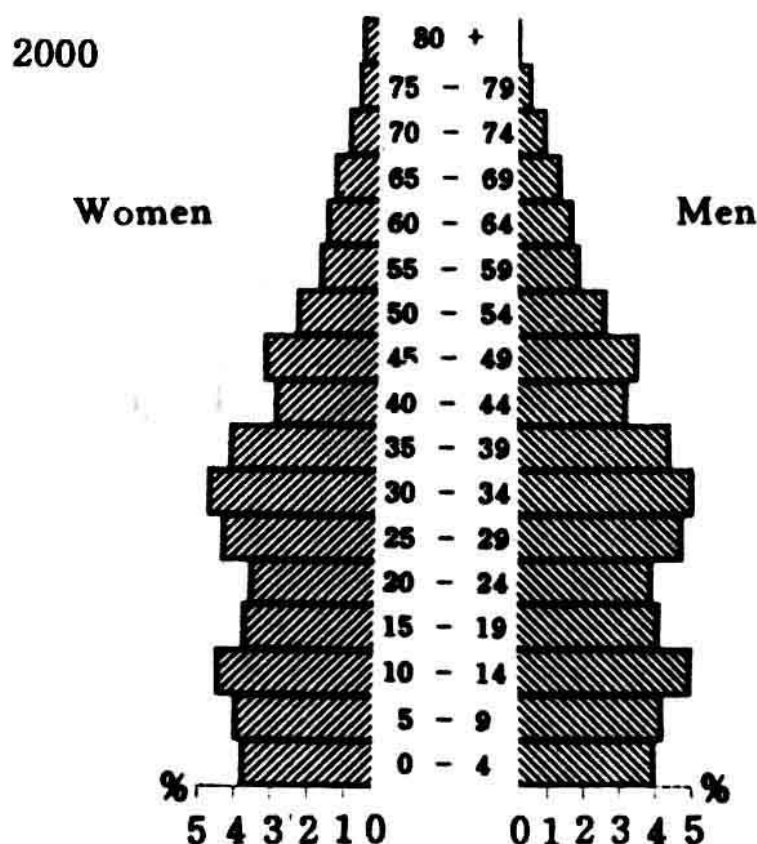
Source: Population Statistics, the State Statistical Bureau.

Population Pyramids for Population Census in 1953, 1964, 1982 and 1990



Source: Population Statistics, the State Statistical Bureau.

Projected Population Pyramid for the Year 2000



Source: Population Projection, the State Statistical Bureau.

Compared with the previous pyramids, the proportion of children decreases and the proportion of the old age increases significantly by 2000. This trend is important for women because the proportion of women is higher than that of men among old people.