

A Study of Sexual Violence on Women and Children in Hong Kong

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Abstract : With the rise of the recent social movement, namely #MeToo, it shows that a lot of women and children in fact suffered from sexual abuse and some even suffered from child abuse, including in Hong Kong. In view of the ongoing social movements, this paper argues that we have to look beyond their impacts and understand the roots of the problem: what if the underlying cause of the recent social movements was the inherited values that were rooted in us since we were young, or the public's lack of confidence in the legal system when it comes to this type of personal matters? What if the movements reveal the problematic issue of the lack of protection plans, either in the private or public sphere? If the legal system is presumed to not be able to preemptively protect everyone or effectively punish all perpetrators, can other pillars provide supports to fill in the loopholes of the legal system? This paper takes a theoretical approach to look into current sexuality education, the legal system in Hong Kong and the adoption of Asian values in society to argue that difficulties that are being placed onto victims in disclosing sexual violence they had experienced. Reviews of the current system and recent sexual assaults court cases for case studies allow the research to address the issues of victims' experience including (a) their reactions to incidents; (b) issues they have in trials; (c) psychological impacts of the incidents; and (d) their understandings of gender equality before and after incidents. The study is significant because it criticises the current legal system in Hong Kong and provides insights to the public by explaining the dynamics between the problem, the legal system and the society. Also, it contributes to the ongoing research about the psychological impacts to victims in Hong Kong, especially how they are placed in a disadvantaged position in the legal system and society and even for their recovery. It contributes to the findings of how family structures, parental responsibilities and gender studies influence a child's perception of gender equality in Hong Kong and hence their immediate reactions to incidents. To fully address the needs of victims, especially our younger generation, as well as to prevent future harm and to raise awareness, an inclusive framework which recognizes the needs of protecting and safeguarding women and children in the private sphere and a proper education for gender equality are needed.

Keywords : child abuse, children's rights, domestic violence, gender equality, Hong Kong, Me too, sexual violence, women's rights

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