

主旨:

Give Views

Comments:

I am 32 years old, married for 2 years but still planning whether to have a child. Both my husband and myself are working full-time with long working hours, my main concern of having a child would be who can take care of the child after it is born. As I observe, many of my friends at my age, who have a baby usually seek for help from parents to help taking care of it. As my parents, who are over 60 years old but still working full-time, as they are still strong and capable to make contribution to the society, they are not able to spare time to take care of a child like my friends' parents do. We support the idea of Active Ageing. And my husband's parents are living in overseas.

At my age, many of my friends got married and some have children. So far as I know, some female friends quitted their jobs in order to take care of their children. They are all degree holders, some are with masters degree and some are professionals. I feel it is a pity and is it a waste of resources in education. The ladies are well-educated, some with professional qualifications, before they are married, they work hard and have career goals. But after they are married and have a child, they have to give up their career as their jobs do not allow them to have the time and energy to take care of their children. I see many young female talents and professionals quit the workforce around my age. The government is trying to enhance the quality of population in Hong Kong, retain talents and professionals in Hong Kong but does the government realise the lack of supportive environment in raising children in fact indirectly cause many local talents and professionals to drop out from! the workforce?

Due to financial concern and career aspirations, both my husband and myself do not want to quit our jobs if we have a child in future. It seems the only choice would be hiring a Pilipino/Indonesian maid but it is worrying to let a maid to take care a baby alone. Is there any way to able to keep my job while having some time to take care of the child?

Among the areas which the consultation paper suggested, I think family benefits and services and family-friendly workplace would be most helpful for my scenario.

I briefly search on Wikipedia and am surprised to find that Hong Kong seems one of the developed cities/countries with among the fewest number of days for parental/maternity leave.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parental_leave) I am not sure if such data is accurate but personally I feel the

10 weeks paid maternity leave is not enough, not enough rest for the mother and also there is a big concern on who to take care of the vulnerable 2 month old baby when the mother gets back to work. I guess the 10 weeks paid maternity leave was the law written quite long time ago? I think the government should explore whether it is time to review the law on length of the maternity leave and the possibility of paid parental leave. There are many developed countries to can taken as reference on this aspect.

Further, I hope the government could help promoting and find ways to realistically let working mum to combine her career and family. Nowadays, many employers expect employees to come to work on time and work overtime, apart from flexible working hours and home office as suggested in the consultation paper which are very helpful for combining work and family life, perhaps imposing 'standard work hours' may also help Hong Kong people to have a more work-life balance life? Five-day work per week should be further encouraged and the government may help raising the public awareness on the importance of spending time with family. The availability of subsidized childcare service and after school care services are very important to let woman to stay in workforce while able to have someone to take care of the child, the government should consider to provide subsidy in pre-nursery childcare service.

Although the pressing issue for Hong Kong is the aging population, one of the root causes of the aging problem is low fertility rate, I think the government should not only focus on putting more and more resources to the ageing population, rather it should focus on solving the problems from the root, the current policy and law in place is obviously not able to solve the ageing problem.