

Beijing Forum 2019

Women's Initiative and Development over the Course of Civilization (III)

On the morning of 3rd November, Session 5 with topic of *Health, Care work and Women's development* offered cross-cultural and gender-focused insights into care industry, moderated by Professor Pang Lihua from Peking University with the participation of speakers from four different countries: People Republic of China, Bangladesh, Zambia and France.

First, Professor Zhang Xiaoying made an in-depth analysis of opportunities and challenges facing Chinese women in health development. The presentation sets great store by the development of health for Chinese women as central to the China's healthy development as a whole. Professor Zhang also placed emphasis on closing the regional gaps and advocated for intersectional investigations into health development strategies.

Professor Mohammad Mainul Islam from University of Dhaka, Bangladesh offered illuminating insight into combating child marriage as part of a broad SDG agenda. Based on his quantitative research, Professor Mainul Islam imputed child marriage phenomenon to lingering social norms, sense of insecurity among girls, economic equalities and others as well as pinpointed its adverse multifaceted consequences. Proposals to address child marriage and to attain SDGs should encompass: fostering female education and employment opportunities as well as dispelling gender-related misconceptions.

Tina Nayangwe, PhD candidate from the Population Research Institute of Peking University adopted a mix-method survey to measure and assess motivations of volunteers in HIV care services in sub-Saharan countries. Nayangwe concludes that long-term volunteering service in childcare services does not stem totally from unobligated free choice, but indicate implicit and individual endeavours to live up to social aspirations and accommodate certain social needs. Understanding individuals' motivations for entering and remaining in volunteer service is therefore critical for programme planners and policy makers.

Associate Professor Pang Lihua at Peking University starting with a micro-demographic perspective, threw light upon demands for childcare upon the implementation of two-child policy,

which did not seem to alter the current low fertility in China. Professor Pang highlighted the opportunity cost of child upbringing for women and the need for a safe, high quality and affordable public childcare sector in order to facilitate women in their domestic and professional obligations.

Professor Zhao Yaohui from Peking University examined the intersectional differences in providing care for different family members, namely children and biological/in-law parents. By elaborating on patterns of care provision by age, gender, Professor Zhao elucidated the impact of care provision on the caregivers. Professor Zhao concludes that the care-giving responsibilities, to the young and the elderly combined, are mostly borne by middle-aged people.

Professor Dong Xiaoyuan at the University of Winnipeg, Canada, by means of regression models, called attention to the shifting asymmetry of male and female contribution to unpaid care work among dual-earner couples in China. In general, men's participation in the care work has been on the increase, which is in line with the global trends. Variation varies from the earning capacity of breadwinners, geographic location. Professor Dong attached huge significance to promoting gender equity in the workplace.

Professor Jacques Charmes from French Scientific Research Institute for Development justified his research topic by drawing attention to the Beijing conference on women in 1995, which brought to light the feminization of poverty. Gleaning data from housework-focused diaries and time-use surveys conducted at national level to dissect across three categories of time use (necessary, work-related and free), Professor Charmes asserted that the distribution of unpaid care work varies tremendously from country to country and hinges heavily on the level of development, particularly on the gender gap of each country. In general, women's contribution to the total burden of work still outnumbered that of men.

Professor Du Fengjian from Inner Mongolia University highlighted prevalent predisposition to return to domestic sphere by Chinese women, who are under dual pressure as a worker and a family-caregiver by dissecting women's time allocation. Professor Du ascribes marriage to the increase in women's participation in unpaid care work. The division of carework Children or not, Income or not? Unpaid work speaks volumes about gender awareness and social equality in general. Professor Du called for a more gender-aware policy-making.

Finally, Professor Tong Xin, drawing on a qualitative analysis on the working mother's

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unwillingness to give second birth upon the introduction of two-child policy, shed light upon the role of nursery schools' changing roles, from aiding mothers to assisting the education of children as well as post-reform privatization of child care institutions. Professor Tong gave prominence to ethics about parenting and recommended that the state be more actively involved in supporting public kindergartens as a means to boost gender equality.