

Survey on Public Attitudes towards Sexual Minorities

PURPOSE

The Home Affairs Bureau plans to conduct a survey on public attitudes towards sexual minorities shortly. This paper briefs members on the survey.

BACKGROUND

2. A telephone survey was conducted in 1995 to gauge public perception of the issue of sexuality, their acceptance of different sexual preferences, the seriousness of the problem of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation in Hong Kong, and what measures the Government should adopt to address the problem. The survey covered a sample size of 1 500. The survey found that public acceptance of homosexuality and bisexuality was on the low side. The public had ambivalent attitudes towards issues such as the impact of homosexual/bisexual behaviour on others, contacts with homosexuals/bisexuals on social occasions, and employment of homosexuals/bisexuals in the teaching profession. A lower level of acceptance was found in areas such as same-sex marriage, adoption of children by homosexual/bisexual couples, use of reproductive technology by homosexuals, and contacts with homosexuals/bisexuals in private settings. Educational tools were considered to be the most effective means in tackling the problem of discrimination.

3. The Government subsequently conducted a public consultation exercise on sexual orientation in 1996. The public generally considered that it would be premature to adopt a legislative approach in the area of sexual orientation. On the other hand, there was general support for non-legislative measures to enhance equal opportunities for persons of different sexual orientation. The Government therefore decided to pursue non-legislative measures to enhance public understanding and acceptance of different forms of sexual orientation.

4. Social values changes as the society develops. It has been ten years since we last conducted a survey on sexual orientation. We consider it high time to conduct another survey on public attitudes towards sexual orientation.

THE SURVEY

5. We plan to conduct a survey on public attitudes towards sexual minorities to :

- (i) assess public awareness of different sexual orientations;
- (ii) assess public acceptance of homosexual/bisexual behaviour;
- (iii) assess public acceptance of homosexuals/bisexuals in different contexts;
- (iv) assess public attitudes towards the rights of homosexuals/bisexuals; and
- (v) find out what can be done to address the problem of discrimination faced by homosexuals/bisexuals.

6. The survey, with a sample size of 2 000, will cover as target population all persons aged 18-64 in Hong Kong. We intend to commission an academic institution or a research firm to conduct the survey. We shall consult the various concern groups on the design of the questionnaire of the survey before finalizing the questionnaire for data collection.

7. We are making the necessary preparations for the survey. Our present plan is to conduct the survey in late 2004, and to announce the survey results in the first quarter of 2005.

ADVICE SOUGHT

8. Members are invited to note paragraphs 5-7 of this paper.

Home Affairs Bureau
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