

### THE CHANGING MINDSET OF HAKKA WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF TAPAH VILLAGE, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA



This is an ethnographic study on Chinese Hakka women residing in Tapah, a closely-knit resettlement village. Tapah was established during the communist upsurge in the 1960s and 97 percent of its population are Hakkas. Hakka women are well known for their perseverance and for being hardworking. However, despite modernisation and rapid increase in educational attainment, Hakka women in Tapah are still in a traditional enclave where marriage, motherhood and domesticity take priority over paid employment outside the home. Although other villages around Tapah are experiencing a high rate of outward migration of their young (both males and females), Tapah is an exception in that young women stay behind in the village. Preliminary findings showed that despite receiving higher education, young women aged 35 years and below put little priority on full-time employment. Instead, many focus on marriage and motherhood. The factors contributing to this situation in Tapah is the impetus for this study. Interviews have been conducted with 121 women in different age groups in order to investigate changes in age at first marriage, age gap between husbands and wives, and their views on marriage. These are correlated with their educational attainment.

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