

White Paper on Gender Equality 2008

Outline

Cabinet Office

June 2008

The Cabinet Office has prepared this paper to outline the
“White Paper on Gender Equality.”

Please see the White Paper for more detailed information.

“FY2007 Annual Report on the State of Formation of a Gender-Equal Society”
and
“Policies to be Implemented in FY2008 to Promote the Formation
of a Gender-Equal Society”

Outline

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FY2007 Annual Report on the State of Formation of a Gender-Equal Society

Part 1: The State of Formation of a Gender-Equal Society

Feature article: Women's remarkable contributions within local communities – gender equality evolved through practical activities

The living environment provided by local communities is as important as the residents' home environment. Women are expressing an increasing willingness to become involved in community activities, and high expectations have been placed on women as prospective participants. In fact, women's remarkable contributions to regional revitalization can be seen throughout the country. On the other hand, there are still few opportunities for women to become community leaders, and they cannot exercise their full abilities under the present circumstances.

Making good use of women's willingness and abilities to promote regional activities is extremely beneficial to local communities facing various issues. It also brings interactive effects, including women's personal growth through practical activities in different fields.

In Part 1, we present an overview of the state of women's activities and participation in local communities from different angles, and analyze the characteristics of regional activities in which women play a central role, citing numerous case examples. We also discuss the increased importance of activities led by women and notable points for the advancement of such activities.

In this text, "local communities" primarily means "living areas near at hand" and is not limited to administrative units, such as local public authorities.

Section 1: Actual state of women's activities and participation in local communities

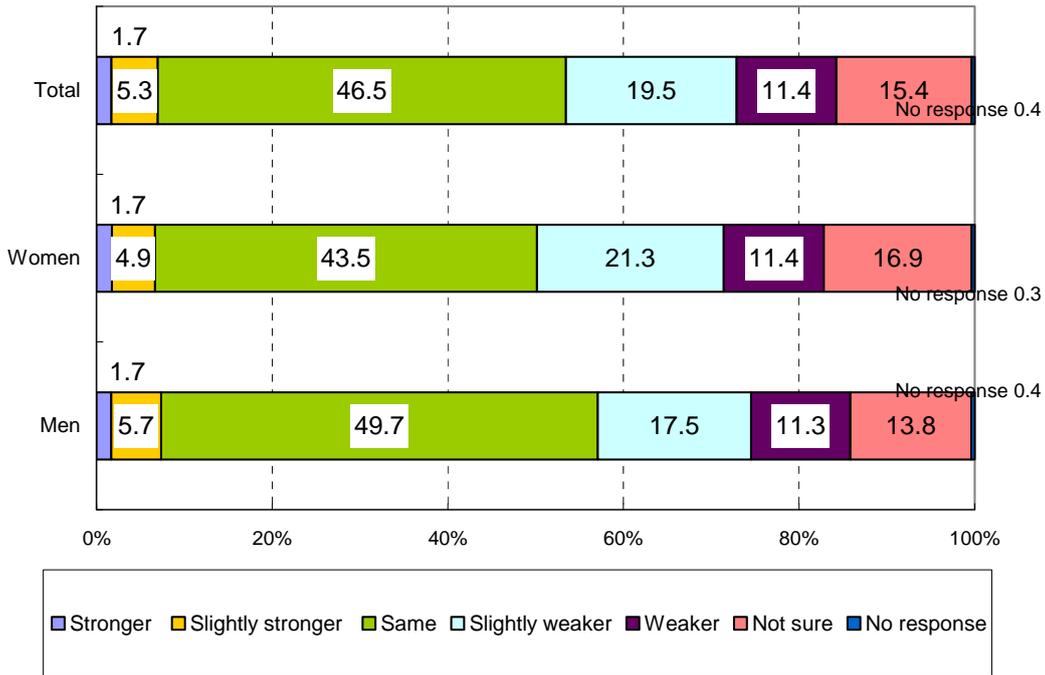
1. Women's consciousness about participation in regional activities and its actual state

(1) Consciousness about participating in regional activities

(Women's awareness of the dilution of community ties)

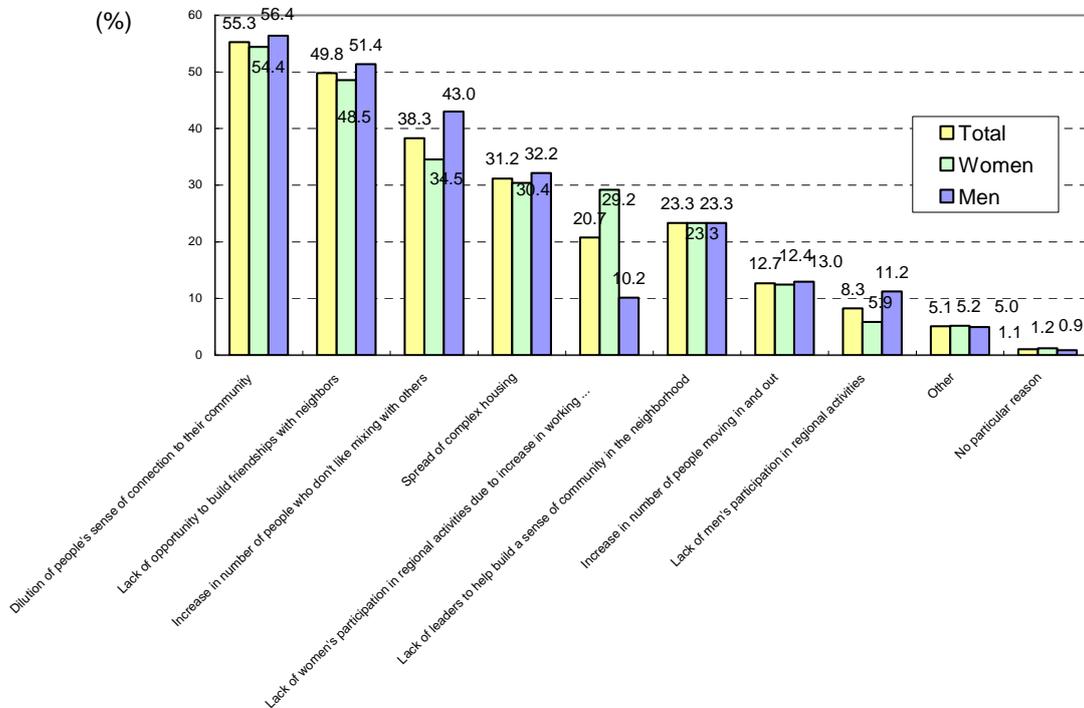
Regional activities are largely concerned with relationships between local residents. Statistics show that community ties have become diluted due to various factors including acceleration of the declining birthrate and aging population, dilution of ties with neighbors, decreased opportunities for exchange between generations, and difficulty in realizing work-life balance. Statistics also show that women feel a stronger sense of crisis about the dilution of ties and a growing involvement in those problems (Charts 1 and 2).

Chart 1: Ties with the local community—in comparison with 10 years ago



(Note) Data from the “National Survey on Lifestyle Preferences” (FY2006) by the Cabinet Office

Chart 2: Reasons why people think local community ties have become diluted

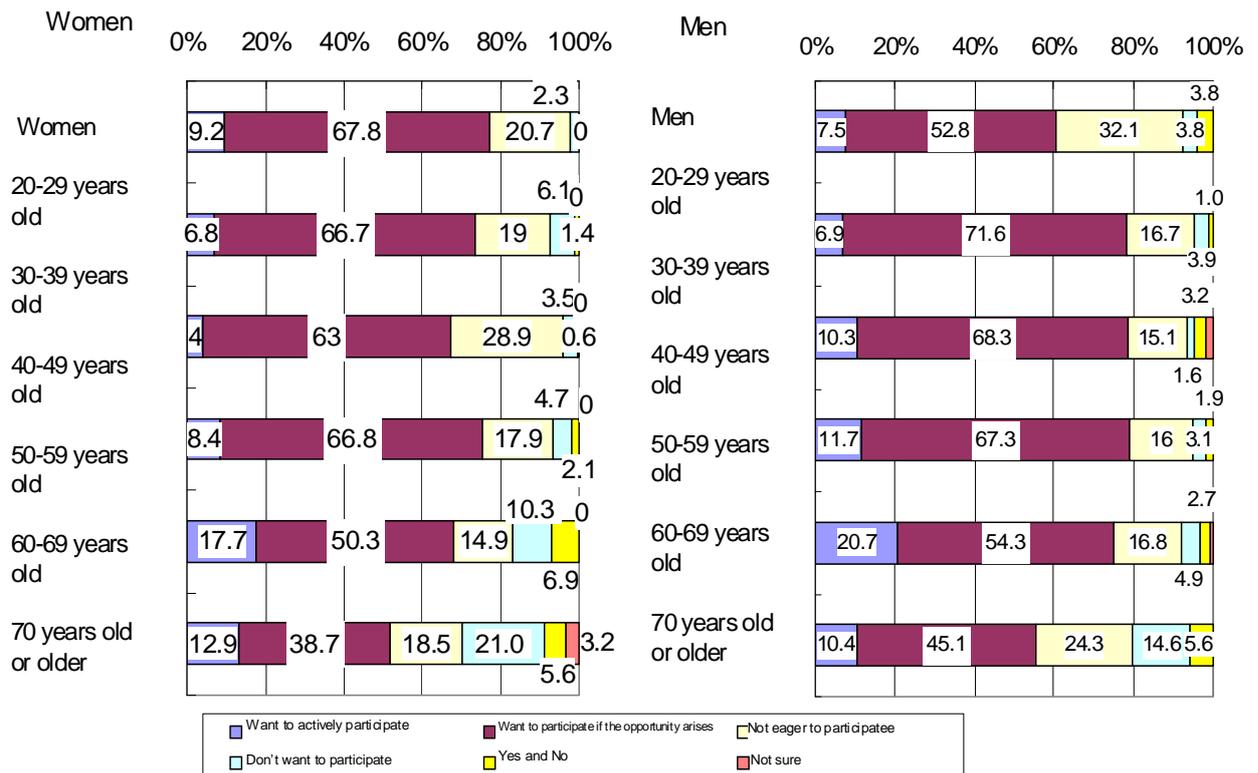


(Note) Data from the “National Survey on Lifestyle Preferences” (FY2006) by the Cabinet Office

(Increased willingness to participate in regional activities)

While community ties have become diluted, the willingness to contribute to society and participate in activities for community revitalization has been increasing. Looking at the breakdown by gender and age, women show a characteristic change in willingness to participate in activities: highest in their 20s but sharply declining in their 30s and 40s during the child-rearing period (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Would you like to participate in activities for revitalizing your local community? (by gender and age)

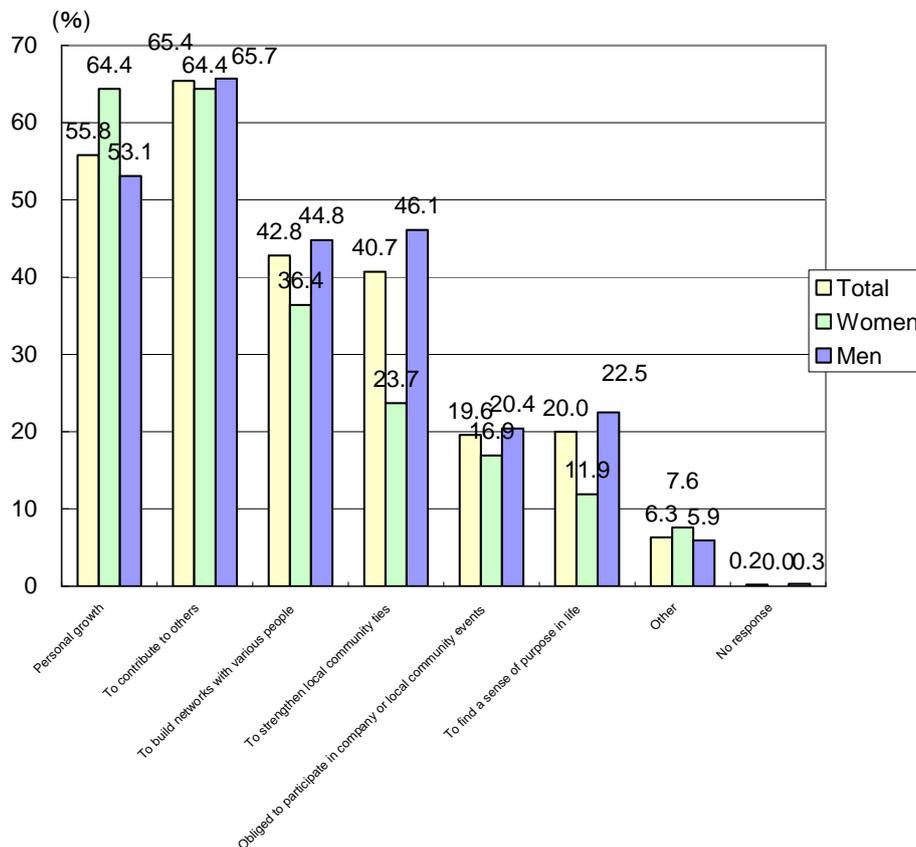


(Note) Data from the “Public Opinion Poll on Regional Revitalization” (2008) by the Cabinet Office

(Women’s reasons for participating include “personal growth” and “to contribute to others”)

Looking at workers’ reasons for participating in voluntary activities, the percentage of women who answered “Personal growth” is significantly higher than that of men, as high as the percentage of women who answered “To contribute to others” (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Reasons for participating in volunteer activities

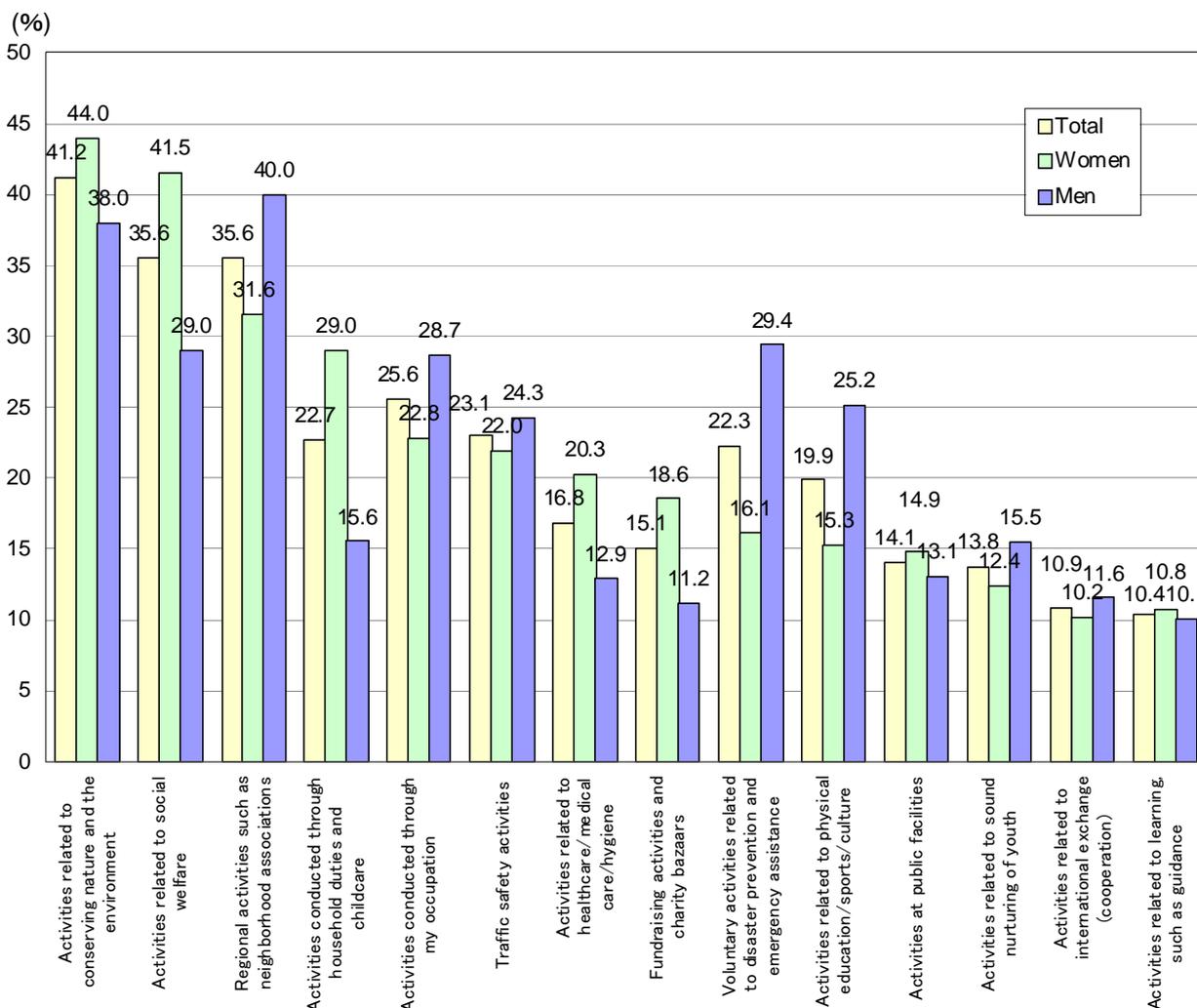


(Note) Data from the “Survey on Workers’ Attitudes toward Volunteer Activities” (Survey commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2002)

(Women wish to contribute in areas of “environmental conservation”, “social welfare”, etc.)

Looking at social contribution activities, a higher percentage of women wish to participate in “Activities related to conserving nature and the environment” and “Activities related to social welfare” (Chart 5). The largest difference between genders can be seen in the answer “Activities conducted through household duties and childcare”, where the percentage of women is much higher than that of men.

Chart 5: Participation in activities contributing to society

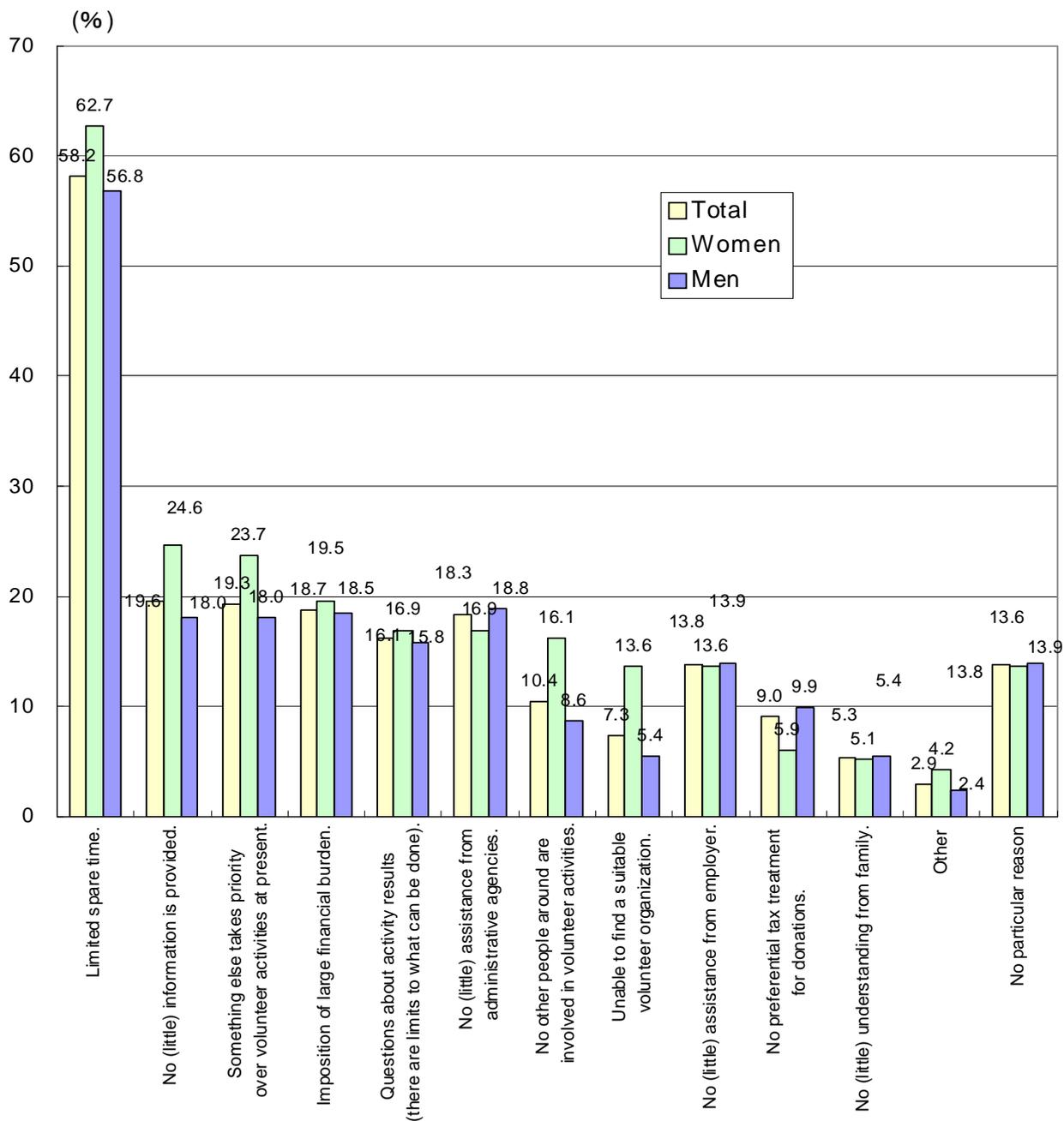


(Note) Data from the “Public Opinion Survey on Social Awareness” (2008) by the Cabinet Office

(The most serious problem facing women involved in activities is lack of “time and information”)

Looking at problems facing individuals participating in volunteer activities, the percentage of those who answered “Limited spare time” is highest among both men and women. Women in particular are unable to secure sufficient time and information (Chart 6).

Chart 6: Problems facing individuals engaged in volunteer activities



(Note) Data from the "Survey on Workers' Attitude toward Volunteer Activities" (Survey commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2002)

(Stereotyped perceptions for gender roles)

Understanding and cooperation from the entire community, including the men, is essential for women to exercise their full abilities in local activities. However, one of the factors preventing women from playing an active part is persistent gender-stereotyped perceptions, such as “the head of a household or organization should be a man”. In order to build a foundation for women’s active participation in local communities, these stereotyped perceptions must be overcome.

(2) Actual conditions of activities in local communities

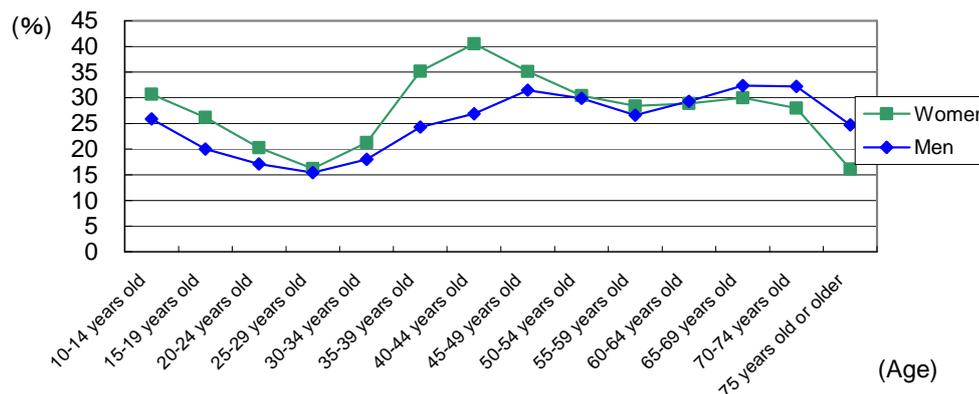
(Generally low rate of participation in regional activities)

The percentage of participation in regional activities is not very high regardless of gender. For example, more than half of all men and women are not involved in neighborhood community associations.

(Dynamic volunteer activities by women in the fields of “child care/nursing care”, “town building”, and “environmental conservation”)

Looking at the percentage of participants in volunteer activities by gender and age, women in almost all age brackets except for the elderly constitute a high percentage compared to men (Chart 7).

Chart 7: Percentage of those involved in volunteer activities, by gender and age

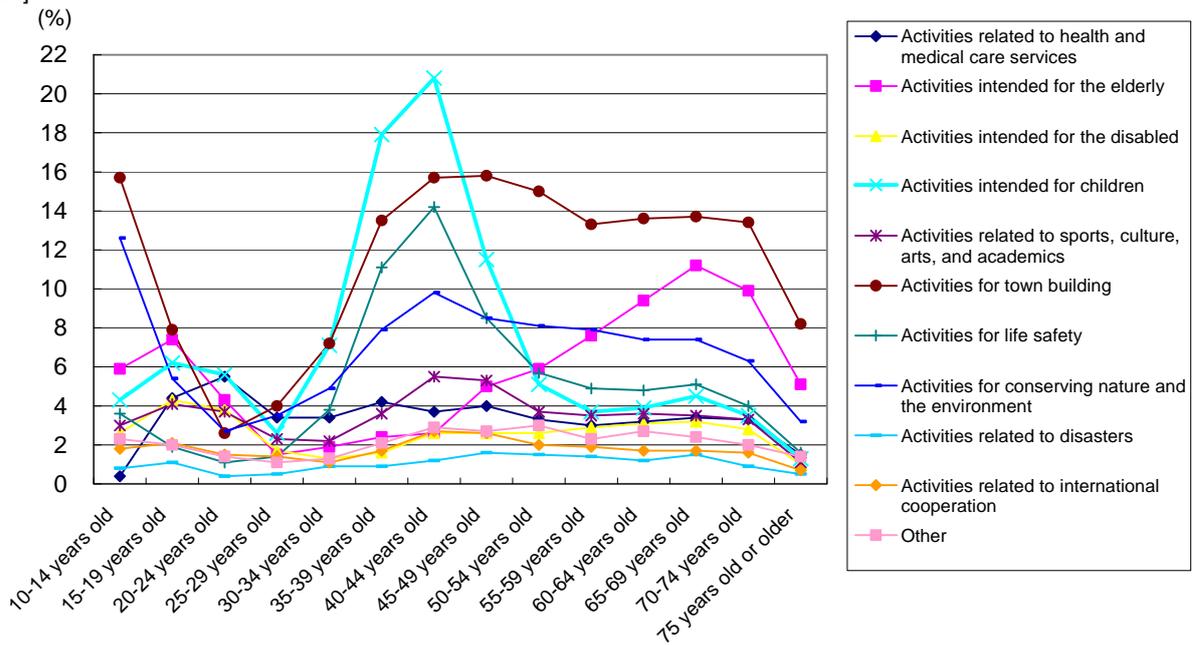


(Note) Data from the "Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities" (2006) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

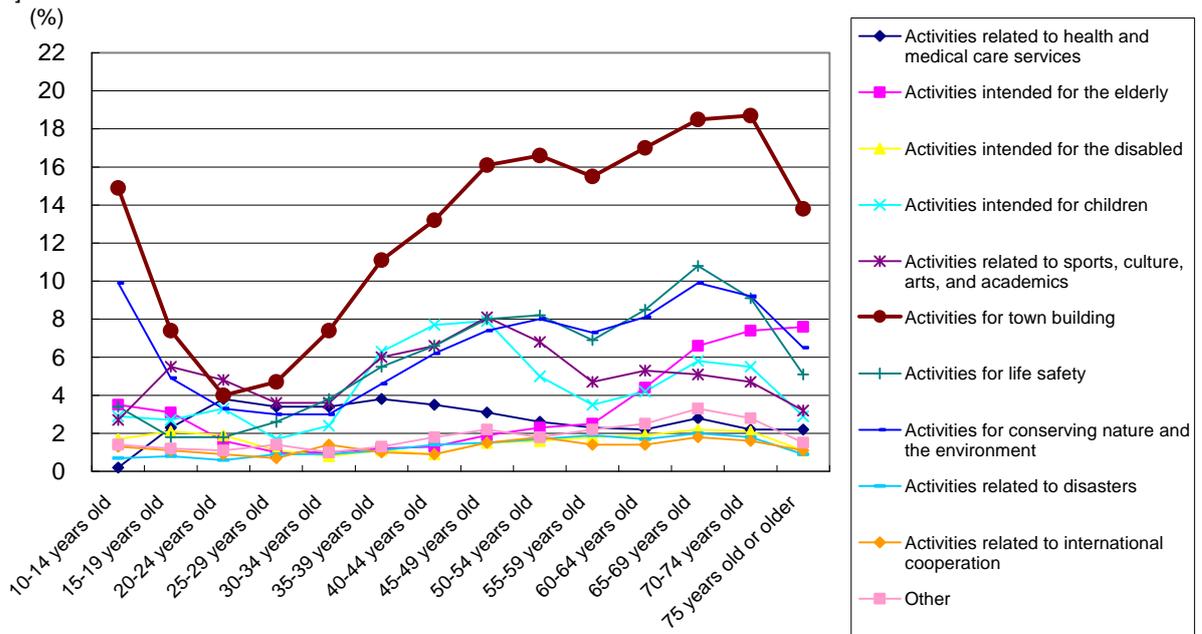
According to gender and age bracket, women in their late 30s and 40s represent a much higher percentage than men and include a high percentage involved in activities targeting children and life safety (Chart 8). Among individuals aged 50 or older, a characteristically high percentage of women are involved in activities targeting the elderly, and a high percentage of men are involved in town building activities.

Chart 8: Percentage of those involved in activities, by gender, age, and activity type

[Women]



[Men]

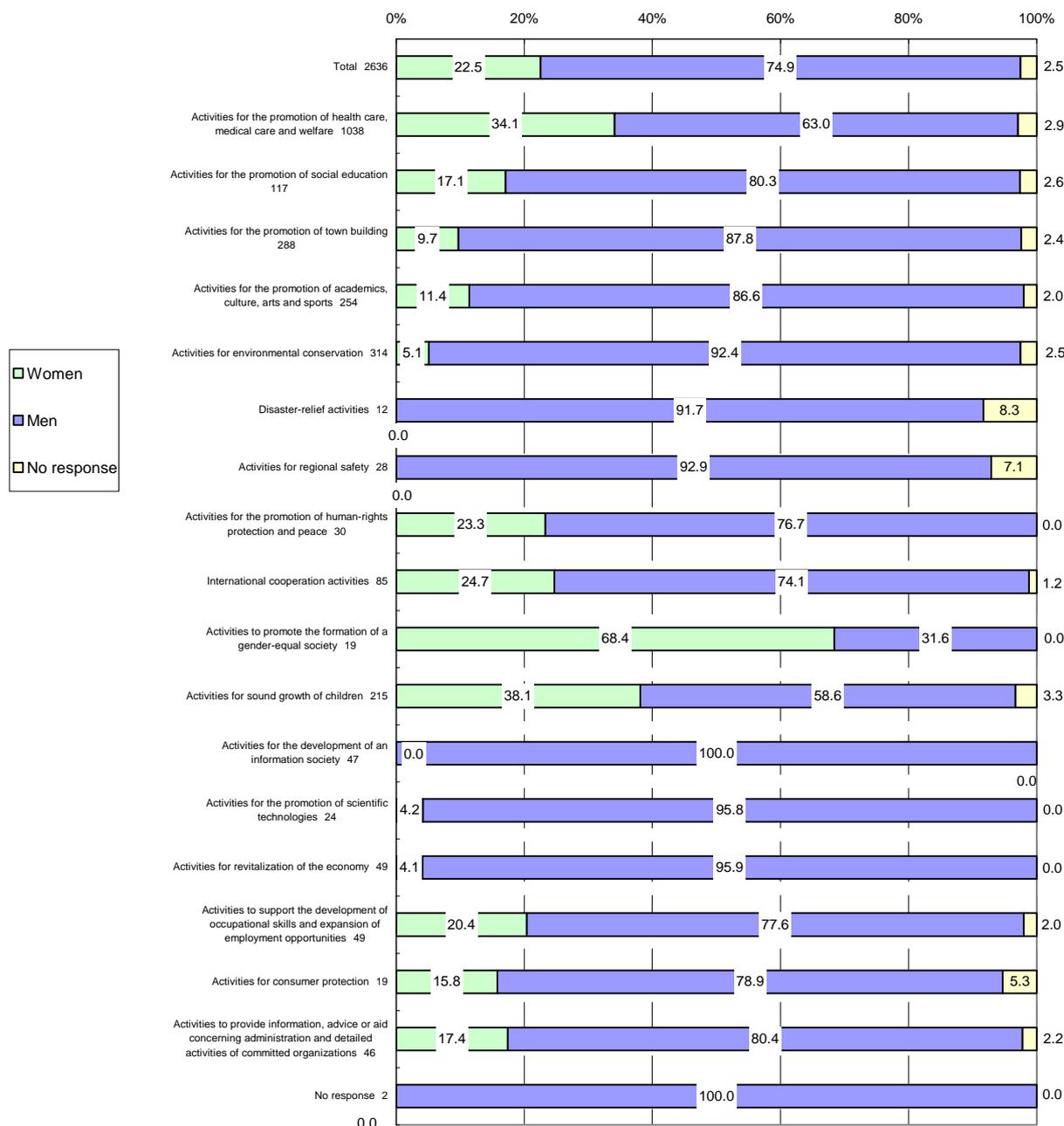


(Note) Data from the "Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities" (2006) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

(Very few female representatives in specified nonprofit corporations)

The percentage of women among total representatives in specified nonprofit corporations is 22.5%. According to activity type, female representatives hold a majority only in “Activities to promote the formation of a gender-equal society”, while male representatives occupy a greater portion in other activities. However, a relatively high percentage of female representatives can be seen in “Activities for the promotion of health care, medical care and welfare” and “Activities for sound growth of children” (Chart 9).

Chart 9: Percentage of women among representatives of specified nonprofit corporations in major fields of activity



(Note) Data from the "FY2006 Report on 'Survey Research on NPOs' Activities (NPO Survey)" (2007) by the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry

2. Actual state of women's participation in various fields in local communities

(1) Actual conditions of women's participation in each field

(Town building and tourism)

With the hollowing out of central urban areas and the slowdown in regional economy, citizen participation in activities related to town building and tourism has taken on an added importance.

The percentage of individuals engaged in volunteer activities for town building has increased. Women are decidedly interested in building an attractive town and they are relatively active in this area.

On the other hand, not many women are involved in decision-making processes. Among the representatives of specified nonprofit corporations related to activities promoting town building, less than 10% are women.

(Childcare/education/nursing care)

With regard to welfare volunteers and child welfare volunteers, women have maintained a majority since 1995, accounting for 58.6% of the total of about 227,000 people as of the end of FY2006.

The percentage of females on municipal Boards of Education is 27.1% nationwide (FY2005), and the percentage of females in the role of Superintendent of Schools is 2.5% (FY2005). The percentage of female members of Boards of Social Education has been on the rise, reaching about 30%. On the other hand, the percentage of female PTA presidents is 10.1% nationwide (FY2007) and varies widely among prefectures (Chart 10).

(Rural areas)

The percentage of women among the rural population engaged in agriculture has reached 50%, and women play an important role in not only agriculture but also regional activities. In addition, the number of income-generating activities by rural women has recently increased in the agriculture-related sector, and the number of start-up activities exceeded 9,000 in FY2005 (Chart 11).

On the other hand, women constitute a low percentage among a member of agricultural committees, certified farmers, and board members of agricultural cooperatives and forest owners' associations and fisheries cooperatives.

(Disaster and crime prevention)

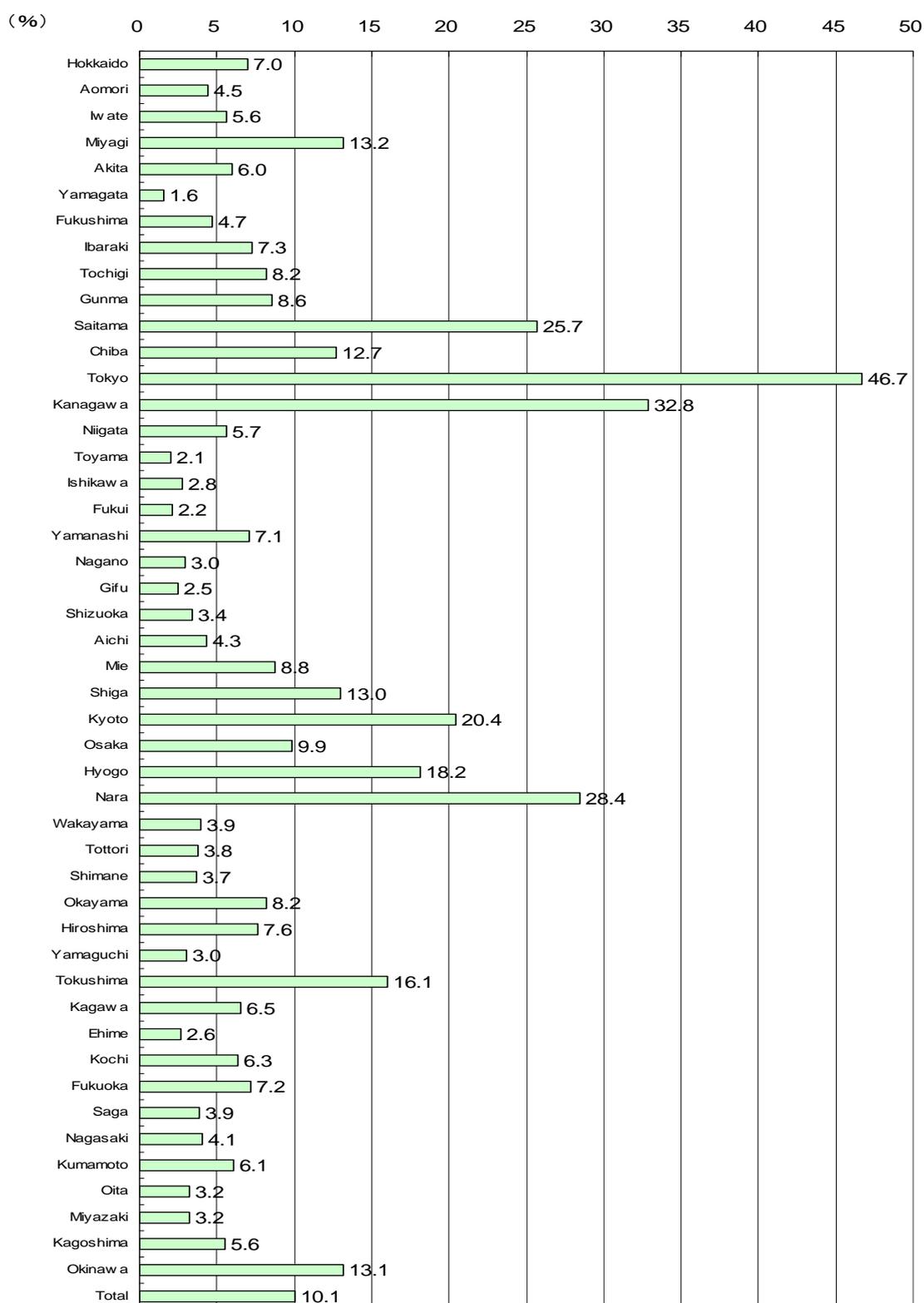
While the total number of fire company members has been decreasing, the number of female members has been increasing. Women account for a small percentage, 1.7% (2007), which has doubled in the past ten years (Chart 12).

On the other hand, the percentage of female members in prefectural disaster prevention councils is still low, only 2.8% nationwide, which means that women's participation in decision-making processes in the disaster prevention sector has not yet progressed.

(Environment)

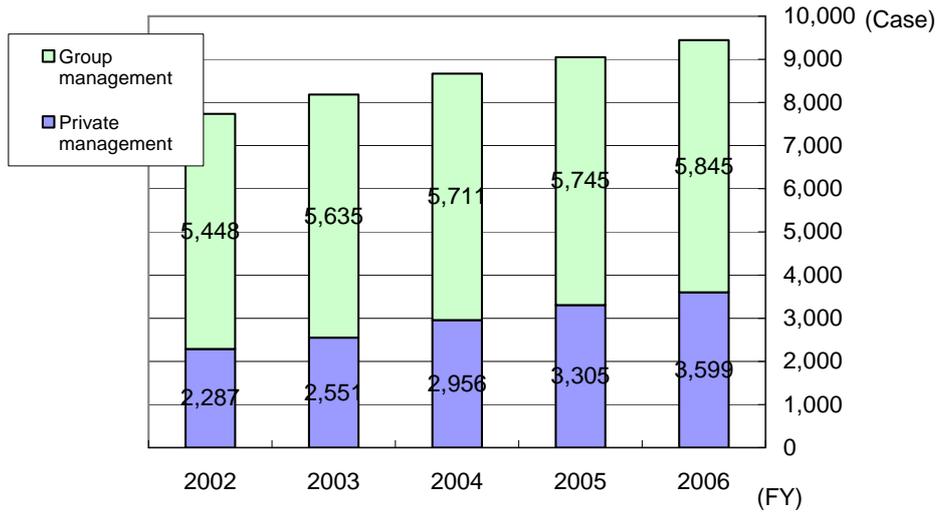
The number of female environmental counselors has been on the rise nationwide, increasing from 8.9% (FY1996) to 13.6% (FY2007). The percentage is not high, but its upward trend shows women's growing concern about the environment (Chart 13).

Chart 10: Percentage of female PTA presidents (elementary and junior high schools) by prefecture



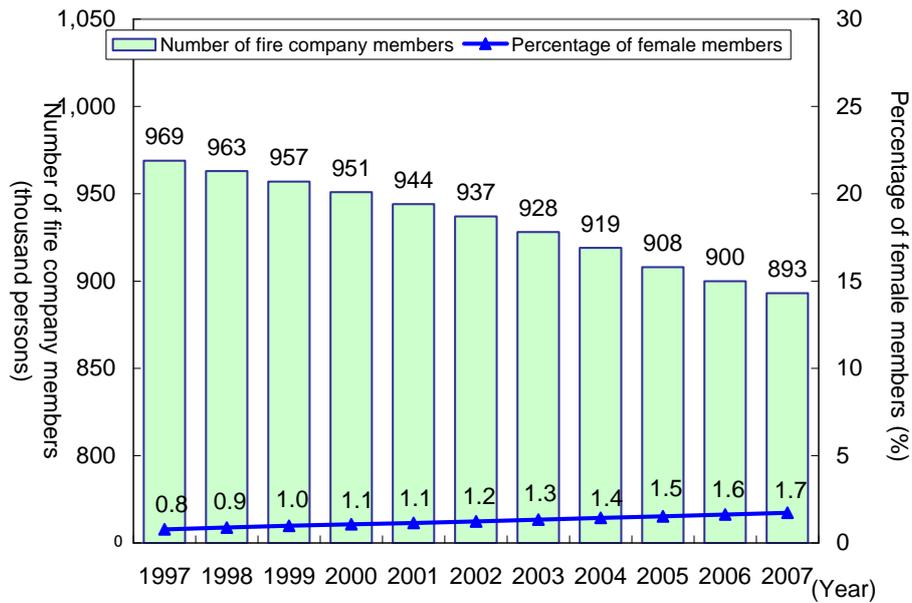
- (Notes) 1. Data from surveys conducted by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers Association of Japan (intended for Congress member PTAs excluding Hokkaido Prefecture and Kanagawa Prefecture)
2. Data on Hokkaido Prefecture and Kanagawa Prefecture (except ordinance-designated cities) is based on surveys conducted by each local authority.
3. The figure for Hokkaido Prefecture (except ordinance-designated cities) is as of March 2007, the figure for Kanagawa Prefecture (except ordinance-designated cities) is as of May 2007, and the figures for the other prefectures are as of February 2008.

Chart 11: Change in the number of income-generating activities by rural women



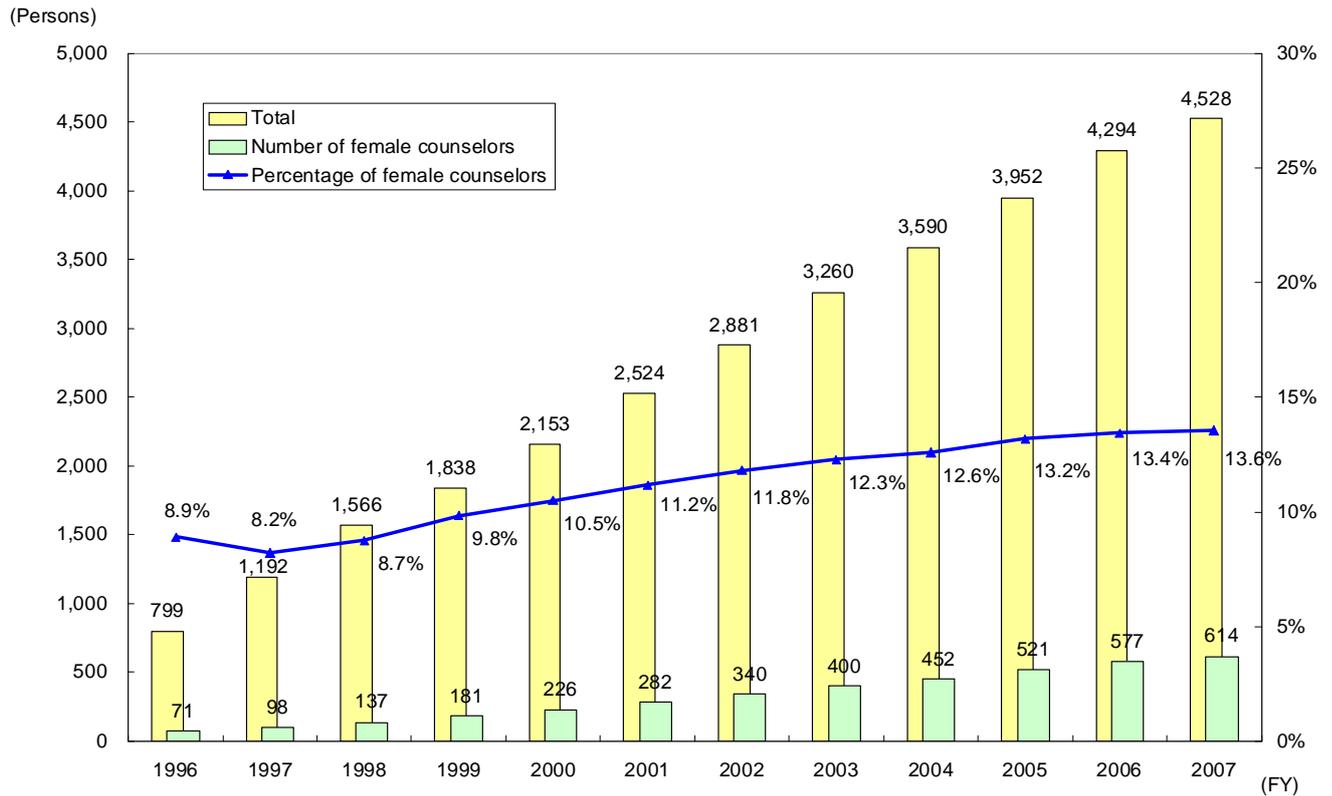
(Note) Data from materials prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Chart 12: Change in the percentage of female members in fire companies



(Note) Data from materials prepared by the Fire and Disaster Management Agency

Chart 13: Change in the percentage of female environmental counselors



(Note) Data from materials prepared by the Ministry of the Environment

(2) Actual conditions of women who play an active cross-sectoral role

Women who play an active role across different sectors lag behind, especially in terms of participating in decision-making processes for policies and administrative measures as regional leaders, etc.

(Leaders in politics and public administration)

A low percentage of women can be seen among heads of municipalities and municipal assembly members, representing 0.9% and 10.5%, respectively, nationwide as of the end of 2007.

(Community-based regional activities)

Looking at community associations as the main body for local activities, female representatives account for only 3.8%. By prefecture, there are some in which women account for more than 10%, while there are several in which women account for less than 1%. There is a discernible gap between regions.

Section 2: Regional potential developed mainly by women – gender-equal society evolved through practical activities

(Activity motivation stems from the wish to protect and nurture what is nearby)

In the majority of cases, the strong wish to take the initiative in supporting, protecting, and nurturing things and people near at hand is what motivates women to participate in regional activities in which they play a central role, as well as the driving force to continue such activities.

[Case examples]

1. (Town building and tourism) Realization of dreams through shared activities for promoting regional life and culture

Specified Nonprofit Corporation Nosen-no-kai (Shimane Prefecture)

The strong wish to convey to local residents and visitors the attractive and affluent life resources of the Iwami region triggered the implementation of a wide range of activities: the women's forum "Hina-no-hinamatsuri", reproduction of an old folk dwelling, development of clothing brands and artifacts based on regional life and culture, and interaction and exchange events with local residents.

2. (Environment) Emphasis and expectations on women making steady efforts for environmental conservation

Approved Specified Nonprofit Corporation Greenery and Water Liaison Council (Shimane Prefecture)

Crisis awareness about the impact of airborne pesticides on the regional environment and local residents' health triggered the implementation of efforts such as cattle grazing to conserve grassland extending to Mt. Sambe, and the provision of on-site environmental education for children through conservation activities.

3. (Child rearing) Region-wide support for raising children

Specified Nonprofit Corporation Wahaha Net (Kagawa Prefecture)

Through her own personal experience, this representative realized the need for region-wide support for raising children, which triggered the implementation of events to increase fathers' involvement in child rearing, and homestay programs in which unmarried young people learn about child care by helping families with small children.

(Activities based on flexible ideas and approaches focused on local communities and daily life)

Many of the regional activities in which women play a central role are based on excellent flexible ideas that help combat stereotypes and change traditional means, involving ordinary citizens and consumers focused on local communities and daily life. Such approaches form the basis for resolving immediate problems in the region and promoting activities suited to community needs.

[Case examples]

4. (Town building and tourism) Establishment of regional brands by independent business-minded women

Tomigusuku City Uji-zome Cooperative Association (Tomigusuku City, Okinawa Prefecture)

Products ranging from clothing materials to works of art are developed by using pigment extracted from the stems, leaves and ears of sugarcane, and are a local specialty as dyestuff (Uji-zome or sugarcane dye).

5. (Rural areas) Revitalization of agricultural villages through exchange of “food” and “agriculture” taking advantage of local products

Karari Farm Stand (Uchiko Town, Ehime Prefecture)

A farm stand (Karari Farm Stand) in “Uchiko Fresh Park Karari” operated by a third-sector company sells agricultural products produced by members. Direct sales of agricultural products as a regional resource to consumers provides a better understanding of their needs, which are then reflected in production. It is beneficial to both producers and consumers.

6. (Support for citizens’ activities) Improvement in local communities by citizen loans for projects to establish vital functions

Tokyo Community Power Bank (Tokyo Prefecture)

Citizens themselves make an investment and provide low-interest unsecured loans for social welfare and environmental conservation projects in their own region. Activities are based on the unique concept of citizens having respect for women’s diversified viewpoints and supporting those engaged in revitalization of local communities, which differs from the concepts employed by general financial institutions.

7. (Education) Establishment of “school” based on new ideas

Specified Nonprofit Corporation Toybox Smile Factory (Osaka Prefecture)

Under the cooperation and collaboration between the specified nonprofit corporation and governmental agencies, a new “school” was established to provide support to children in difficult situations, including truancy, bullying, reclusiveness, and developmental disorders. Urgent counseling is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Activities and attendance days in this school are reflected in the attendance days at the school of original enrollment. This school helps to promote educational activities based on new ideas.

(Promotion of flexible activities by building spontaneous connections, and “cooperation-and-collaboration-based” leadership with regulating ability)

Most regional activities in which women play a central role are promoted by women as a core of the network and are based on cooperation and collaboration with diversified regional entities.

To ensure effective and efficient teamwork for these activities, connections must be built between entities on an equal footing, requiring a unique type of leadership not adopted in general organizations.

Spontaneous connections not only help solve a single problem but can also be applied to various other problems, and then, the range of activities will expand accordingly.

[Case examples]

8. (Town building and tourism) Contribution of women's networks to building a livable environment

Koori Town Women's Organization Liaison Council (Koori Town, Fukushima Prefecture)

Under cooperation and collaboration with the town office, administrative agencies including the prefectural government, chambers of commerce and industry, community associations, etc., the Council organizes a simulated assembly where women act as assembly members and mayor, and also makes efforts towards achieving gender equality and revitalization of the region by holding various events.

9. (Environment) Establishment of a village of broadleaf evergreen forests and organic agriculture

Association for Nature and Culture in Aya / Organic Goda (Aya Town, Miyazaki Prefecture)

The Association's representative plays a core role in activities and operates a restaurant using vegetables produced through organic agriculture. In cooperation and collaboration with administrative agencies, including the town office, the prefectural government, and regional forestry offices, civic groups such as regional nature conservation groups, and local residents, the Association engages in town building activities taking advantage of environmentally sound agriculture, and also conducts activities for preserving broadleaf evergreen forests in the region to be designated as World Heritage sites.

10. (Town building and tourism) Shopping areas revitalized by exchange and cooperation

Yashima Okamisankai (Maizuru City, Kyoto Prefecture)

In cooperation with 28 organizations and many local residents engaged in various fields, this organization is involved in the development of souvenirs taking advantage of local characteristics, and also conducts projects using vacant stores, with the aim of revitalizing the shopping areas.

11. (Disaster prevention) Maintenance of no fire occurrence in cooperation with diversified organizations

Otone Town Women's Fire Prevention Club (Otone Town, Saitama Prefecture)

The Club conducts fire drills in addition to detailed activities for fire prevention, including disaster prevention education for children and distribution of a pamphlet on fire prevention to every household. Activities, including house calls, are conducted to assist single elderly persons. Fire prevention activities are evolving into other areas, such as beautification, through intergenerational and interregional exchange between administrative agencies and local residents.

(Activities to nurture awareness and change people's behavior)

Community-based activities in which women take the lead tend to nurture awareness and change people's behavior through the process. Patience and consistency in conducting these activities spreads awareness about gender equality, conservation of regional traditions and environment, and childcare, and subsequently brings about changes in people's behavior throughout the region. In addition, these activities provide an important human resource development function, enabling women to acquire skills through practical activities and promoting their participation in the decision-making processes for policies and administrative measures.

[Case examples]

12. (Agriculture/forestry/fisheries and dietary education) Revamping the image of regional agriculture through women's activities

Women's Agricultural Machinery Operator Group "Greens" (Kanda Town, Fukuoka Prefecture)

Eight female members, who have obtained licenses for large-sized special farm vehicles and are qualified as agricultural machinery mechanics, undertake agricultural work and produce various agricultural products. They have revamped the conventional image of agriculture, "Men operate machinery and women work beside them doing secondary work", and have raised new possibilities for agriculture.

13. (Child rearing and nursing care) Child rearing through picture books and intergeneration exchange

Ehon Community KURABU (Hokkaido Prefecture)

Activities are conducted to promote reading picture books and a study session is organized for volunteers engaged in picture book reading activities. In cooperation with local institutions including nursery schools, health center, elementary schools and nursing homes, these activities help people of all ages to understand the importance of child rearing and cultural activities in the region, and encourage local residents to actively participate.

14. (Environment) Increased residents' awareness about the environment through rental dishes

Specified Nonprofit Corporation Space Fuu (Masuho Town, Yamanashi Prefecture)

This organization is concerned with the problem of mountains of disposable dishes generated from social events, and operates an environmental community business that offers rental dishes (reused dishes) as a substitute for disposable dishes used for food and drink. Its activities contribute to raising local residents' environmental and cultural awareness. In addition, members have gone on to become Chairman of the Town Council and Town Councilor.

(Sustainability and expansibility of activities based on positive evaluation of results and contents)

Activities and their outcome deserve to be recognized and evaluated by everyone around, and should be covered by the media, commended by an administrative agency, etc., and fully supported. Positive evaluation for activities helps to sustain, revitalize, and expand the activities.

[Case examples]

15. (Town building and tourism) Pursuit of traditional beauty by inn proprietresses including one from a foreign country as a leader

Ginzan Hot Springs Inn Proprietress Association (Yamagata Prefecture)

The Association's activities include a beautification campaign at the hot springs resort by picking up trash from around bridges and planting flowers, participation in tourist events, holding of workshops, etc., and participation in town building activities in Ginzan Hot Springs in cooperation with the Hot Spring Union. An increase in the number of tourists resulted from the increase in repeat customers who appreciate Japanese traditional beauty, which led to further media coverage. These favorable effects create a virtuous cycle producing more activities, which will contribute to the area's attraction as a tourist spot.

16. (Disaster and crime prevention) Sharp decline in sneak thieves through community-wide crime prevention activities

Suginami Ward Mabashi District Gokinjozukiai-hirometai (neighborly ties strengthening circle) (Suginami Ward, Tokyo Prefecture)

Activities include a daily "Aisatsu (Greeting) Patrol" through the neighborhood in fluorescent eye-catching uniforms, and an environment beautification campaign including picking up trash. They have contributed to a drastic reduction in community crime such as sneak thieves and purse snatchers, and have drawn the attention of other communities. As a result, the town's image as a "target of sneak thieves" has been eradicated. An award received from the Police Commissioner in 2007 likely encouraged further activities.

Section 3: Importance of regional activities in which women play a central role

(Rapid change in local communities)

Under the influence of the declining population, accelerated demographic aging, shifting industrial structure, and changing lifestyle, communities are changing rapidly. An increasing number face such problems as reduced economic/social vitality and industry strength. Human ties, including neighborly companionship and intergenerational exchange, have become diluted, and communities have lost their power to facilitate mutual aid, maintain safety and security, and nurture its residents, which was previously underpinned by human ties.

(Growing importance of regional activities in which women play a central role)

As the above changes are expected to accelerate in the future, the following three reasons explain the growing importance of regional activities in which women play a central role:

① **Independent efforts suited to actual conditions of the region**

Local issues vary according to region. The development of independent and community-based activities through women's initiative, which respond to the actual conditions and needs of the region, has great significance in solving regional issues.

② **Utilization of various organizations and adoption of new approaches**

Regional activities conducted mainly by women are promoted by building spontaneous connections between diversified community-based entities and by adopting new approaches and ideas, to help uncover the region's appeal and potential. Women's leadership based on excellent communications and coordination abilities will facilitate the maintenance and enhancement of those spontaneous connections.

③ **Wide range of ripple effects**

Accumulation of patient community-based efforts promoted mainly by women nurtures people's awareness, which takes time, and eventually changes their behavior, setting off a wide range of ripple effects that permeate local communities. When human resources fostered by regional activities are able to promote advanced activities and participate in decision-making processes, greater effects can be expected.

(Five points for evolving regional activities in which women play a central role)

① **Ensuring the participation of diversified entities and formation/maintenance of a spontaneous network**

By ensuring the participation of diversified entities, including local groups, NPOs, various organizations and bodies of administration, and individuals of different generations, as well as forming and maintaining a network, each entity's strength is capitalized upon and new approaches and ideas are adopted.

② **New "cooperation-and-collaboration-based" leadership with excellent communication and coordination abilities**

To ensure the participation of diversified entities and form/maintain a spontaneous network, a new-type leadership for building connections between entities on an equal footing is required for women who play a central role in activities.

③ **Changes in awareness and behavior**

Activities help to change people's awareness, such as gender-stereotyped perceptions, and eventually change people's behavior, leading to the development of new activities.

④ **Creation of a virtuous cycle of human resource development**

People develop their abilities through participation in actual activities, and create a virtuous cycle eventually engaging in advanced activities.

⑤ **Positive evaluation for activity results and contents**

Positive evaluation from various quarters for activities producing results encourages those involved to

reconsider the significance of activities, and raises their motivation. Such evaluation will help to continue and revitalize activities, and develop more advanced activities.

(Various support required for administration)

- ① Support for regional activities led by women, which revitalize local communities and help solve regional problems

Activities will be further enhanced by coordinating a network to connect diversified entities, offer opportunities for exchange, and provide information on regional issues and needs of local residents. Practical training and seminars will be conducted to cultivate human resources who will be engaged in those regional activities. Various opportunities will be offered, including participation in the decision-making processes for policies and administrative measures.

Furthermore, it is important that administrative agencies recognize the value of activities and evaluate the results of activities, and offer various opportunities to activity entities.

- ② Creation of an environment to facilitate participation in regional activities

Detailed assistance, including information provision and opportunity creation, should be provided according to the realities in each region. In addition, efforts for realizing work-life balance should be made so that people have time to participate in regional activities. Administrative efforts to actively raise awareness about gender equality will be the basis for regional activities.

(Potential for future regional activities promoted mainly by women)

Regional activities promoted mainly by women based on community-based approaches and flexible ideas bring about various results to local communities, change people's awareness and behavior, help people grow, and generate more advanced activities. Taking advantage of the strength of different entities and making use of new approaches and ideas, which were not previously noticed, activities help to bring out the region's appeal and potential. The progress of such community-based activities contributes to forming an affluent and vigorous gender-equal society, where all people share the joy and responsibility, regardless of gender or generation. In regions that face growing problems, such as decline in vitality and dilution of ties, activities in which women play a central role is a key to revitalizing local communities and solving various regional problems.

Community-based activities led by women as a core of spontaneous connections are filled with potential for the future of local communities.

Chapter 1: Women's participation in policy decision-making processes

(Percentage of female Diet members)

As of April 2008, the percentage of female Diet members accounted for 9.4% (45 members) in the House of Representatives and 18.2% (44 members) in the House of Councilors.

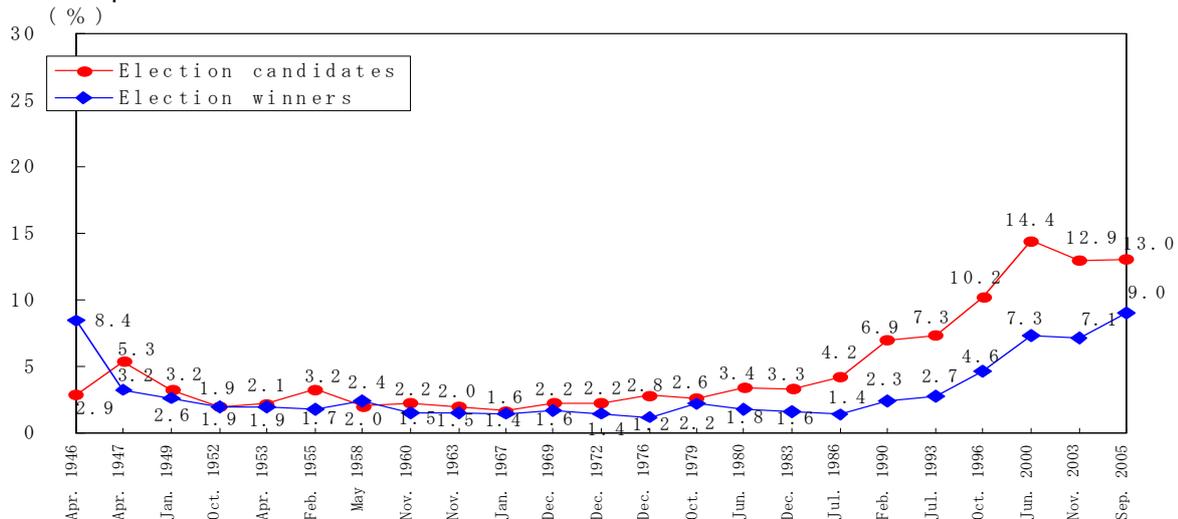
(Percentage of female candidates and election winners)

In the most recent general election of the House of Representatives in September 2005, the percentage of female election candidates slightly increased to 13.0%, while female election winners hit an all-time high of 9.0%. This probably happened because Japanese political parties have taken affirmative action (positive action) to give their female election candidates a high ranking on their proportional representation list (Chart 14).

The percentage of female candidates in the House of Councilors stands at 24.1% as of the most recent election in July 2007, recovering from a sharp drop to 20.6% in the preceding election. Although female election winners have recently been on a downward trend, their percentage among all election winners increased significantly from 12.4% in the preceding election, standing at 21.5% in the July 2007 election (Chart 14).

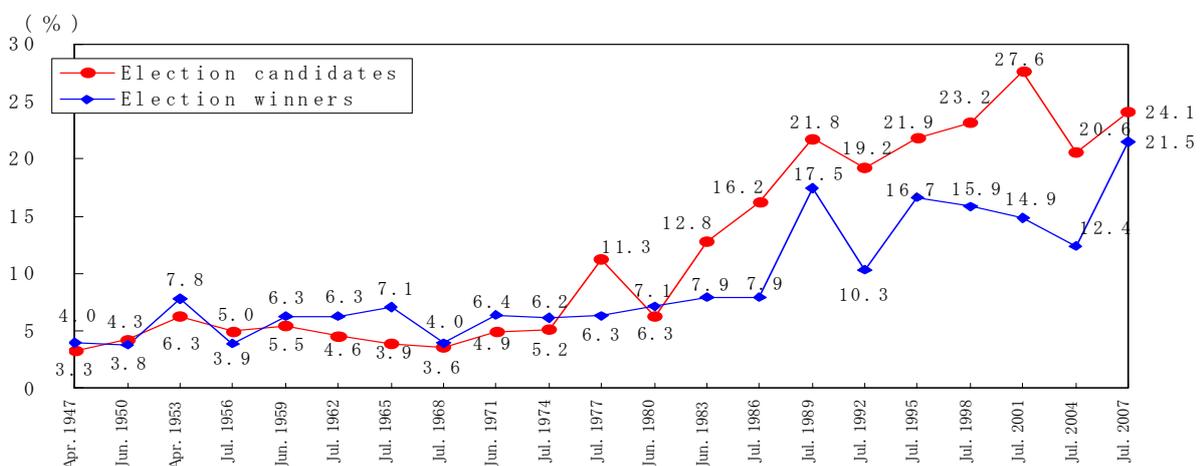
Chart 14: Percentages of female election candidates and female election winners

House of Representatives



(Note) Data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

House of Councilors

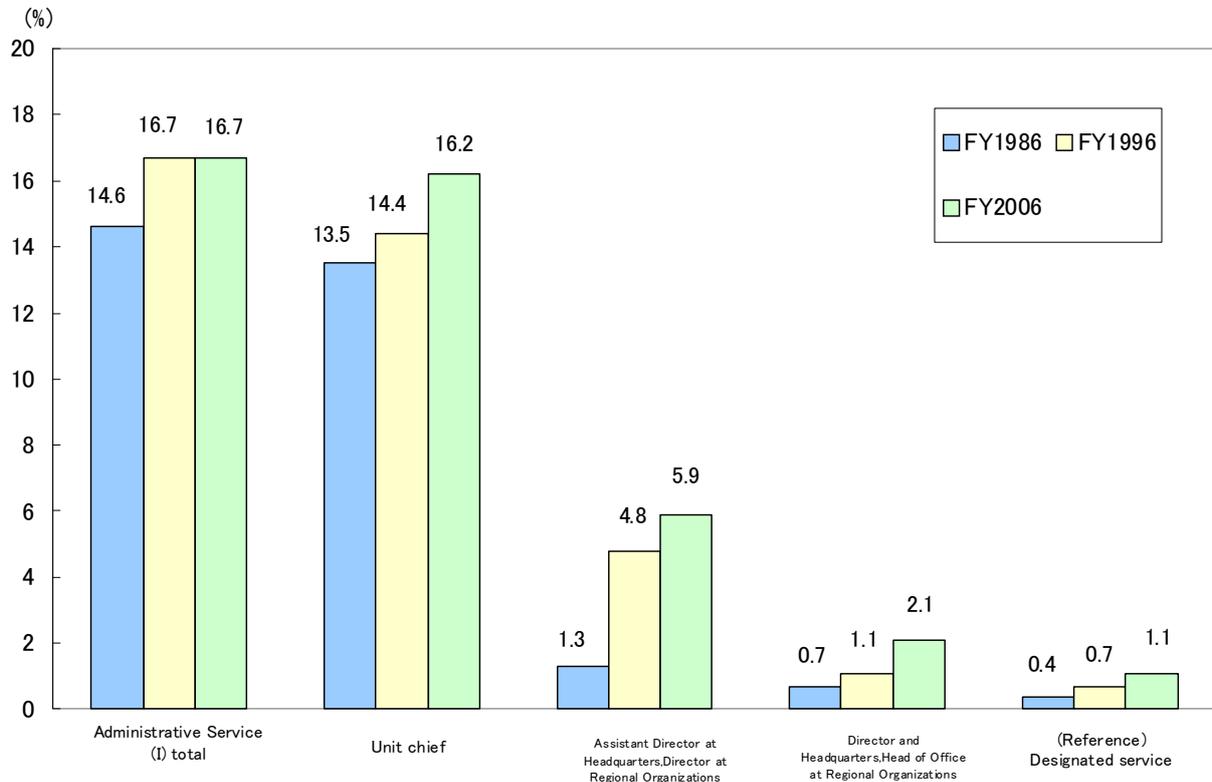


(Note) Data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

(Women occupy a smaller percentage of higher positions at the central government level)

The ratio of female officials among all government employees under the “salary schedule for Administrative Service (I)” by position has been on an upward trend. As of FY2006, women account for 16.2% of all incumbent officials at the subsection chief level, but the rate of females becomes smaller for higher positions (Chart 15).

Chart 15: Ratio of female National Public Employees in the Regular Service, by Positions (Administrative Service (I))



- (Notes)
1. Data from the “The Status Report on Appointments of National Public Employees in the Regular Service” by the National Personnel Authority
 2. Data for FY1986 and FY1996 is as of the end of the fiscal year, and data for FY2006 is as of January 15
 3. Figures show the ratio of female among employees covered by the salary schedule for Administrative Service (I): Unit Chief at 4th to 6th salary grades (3rd and 4th grades for FY2006), Assistant Director at Headquarters, Director at Regional Organizations at 7th and 8th grades (5th and 6th grades for FY2006), and Director and Head of office at Headquarters, Head of Office at Regional Organizations at 9th and 11th grades (7th to 10th grades for FY2006)

(Female members on central government advisory councils occupy a steadily larger percentage)

The Cabinet Office annually conducts a regular survey on female members’ participation in central government advisory councils. According to the survey, the number of female members in central government advisory councils has steadily increased, accounting for 32.3% as of September 30, 2007. On the other hand, female members in expert committees, etc. account for only 13.9%, demonstrating the need to take further measures to achieve the goal.

(Local assemblies in large cities have more female local assembly members.)

Looking at the rate of female assembly members in prefectural and municipal assemblies and other councils as of December 2007, Tokyo Ward Councils represents the highest percentage of women at 24.7%. Women account for 17.2% in cabinet-order-designated city councils, 11.8% in city councils as a whole, 8.0%

in prefecture assemblies, and 7.7% in town/village councils. The percentages of female local assembly members tend to be higher in metropolitan areas, while lower in rural areas.

(Human development indices)

According to the “Human Development Report” published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2007, Japan ranked 8th for HDI (Human Development Index) among 177 countries for which the index could be calculated and 13th for GDI (Gender-related Development Index) among 157 such countries. However, for GEM (Gender Empowerment Measures), Japan ranked 54th among 93 countries.

(Note)

HDI (Human Development Index)

It is an index simply measuring achievement in three dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, education, and a decent standard of living. Specifically, it is measured by using data of average life expectancy at birth, educational attainment (adult literacy rate and school enrollment ratio), and adjusted national income per capita.

GDI (Gender-related Development Index)

It is an index measuring achievement in the same dimensions as the HDI, but focusing on inequality in achievement to reflect inequalities between women and men.

The GDI, which is based on the average life expectancy at birth, educational attainment, and national income like the HDI, is calculated by imposing a penalty for gender disparities to the above indications; thus it is characterized as the HDI adjusted for gender inequality.

GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure)

It is an index measuring the extent of women’s participation in political and economic activities and in decision-making. While the HDI focuses on achievements in human development, the GEM focuses on opportunities to utilize capabilities.

Specifically, it is calculated using data on the percentage of female Diet members, the percentage of female professional and technical workers, the percentage of female senior officials and managers, and the ratio of estimated earned income of men and women.

Chapter 2: Gender equality in the workplace

(Changes in women's labor participation rate by age bracket (M-shaped curve))

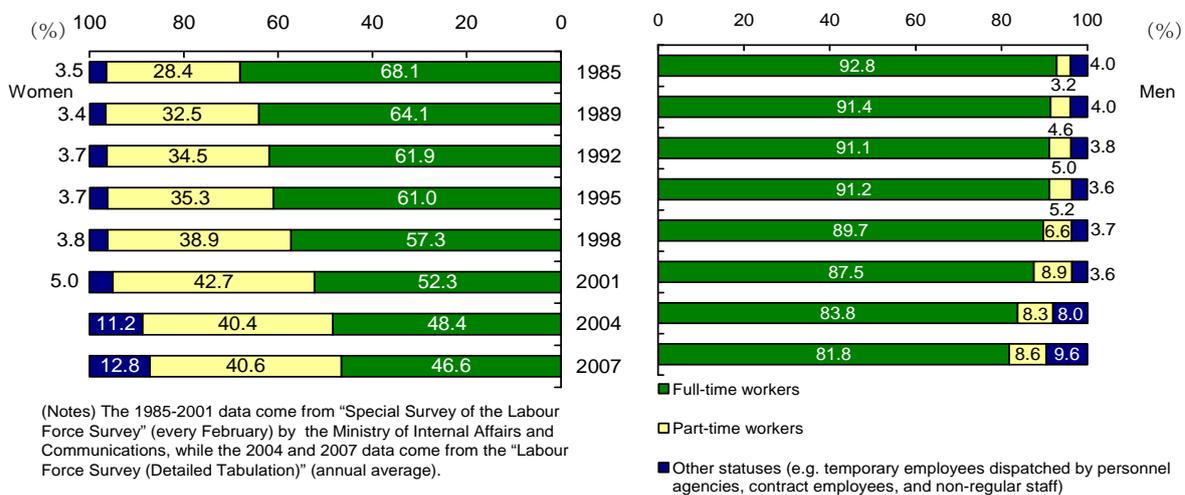
The women's labor participation rate by age bracket still shows an M-shaped curve. However, its curve is shallower than before, and the bottom age bracket has changed. Such changes in an M-shaped curve reflect a rising trend in the age of child raising as a result of women's tendency to delay marriage and child-bearing.

(Increasing non-regular workers)

Women account for about 30% of full-time workers, remaining almost flat since 1985.

On the other hand, part-timers and other non-regular workers make up a larger percentage both of men and women. This trend is particularly obvious for female workers, because the rate of female part-timers has increased from 31.9% in 1985 to 53.4% in 2007, showing they are now the majority of this group (Chart 16).

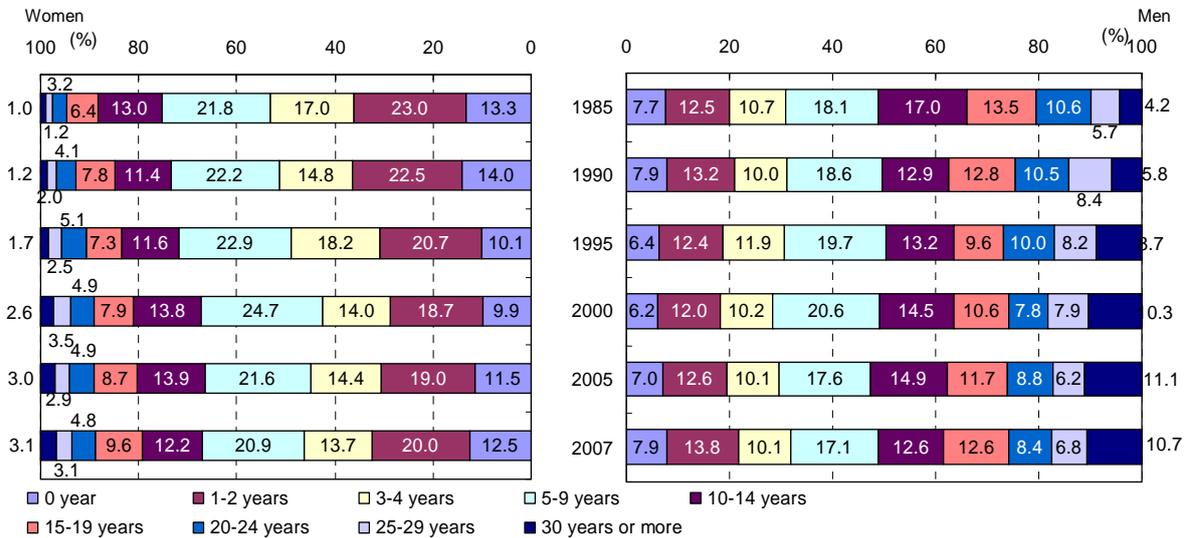
Chart 16: Employee composition ratio by employment status excluding company executives (in all industries excepting agriculture and forestry)



(Prolonged length of women’s continuous employment)

The length of women’s continuous employment tends to be longer. According to women’s continuous employment length groups, the length of continuous employment to which the most women workers belong was 1-2 years in 1985, while it was 5-9 years in 2007. The percentage of workers who have been employed for 10 years or more is tending to rise (Chart 17).

Chart 17: Employee composition ratio by continuous employment length group

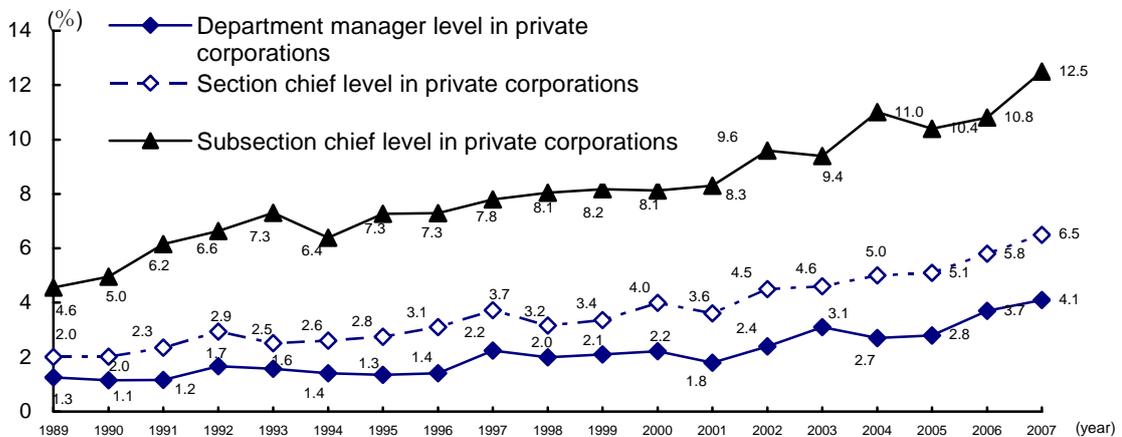


(Note) Data from "Basic Survey of the Wage Structure" by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

(Changes in the percentage of female managerial staff)

According to the positions of female workers at the managerial level shown in the “Basic Survey of the Wage Structure” by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the percentage at the subsection chief level is the highest among all female managerial staff, occupying 12.5% in 2007. But the female rate falls for higher positions. The percentage at the section chief level is 6.5% and the percentage at the department manager level is 4.1%, both of which are very low, but they are tending to rise (Chart 18).

Chart 18: Changes in the percentage of female managerial staff, by position

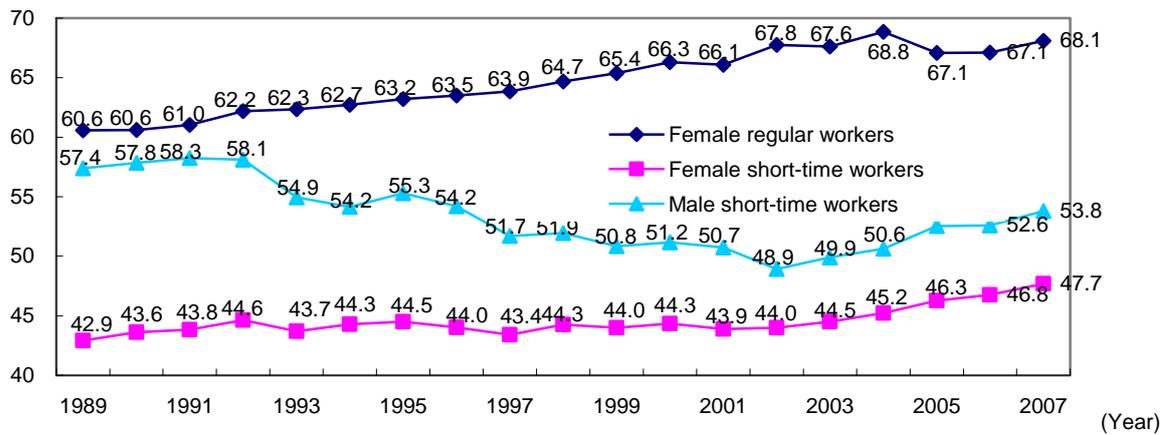


(Note) Data from "Basic Survey on Wage Structure" by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

(The wage gap is shrinking between male and female regular workers over the long term. The wage gap between short-time and regular workers has also fallen slightly.)

In the indexed figure (male regular workers' salary level: 100), female regular workers' salary level stands at 68.1. As for the wage gap between male regular workers and male/female short-time workers, the salary level for male short-time workers is 53.8 as of 2007, while that of female short-time workers remains almost flat at 42 to 47, registering 47.7 as of 2007. Although the wage gap falls by 0.9 points in 2007 on a year-on-year basis, female short-time workers still earn a much lower salary level than male regular workers (Chart 19).

Chart 19: Gap of average official hourly wages for workers (male regular worker = 100)



- (Notes)
1. Data from "Basic Survey of the Wage Structure" by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
 2. The figures represent each category's average official hourly wage as a percentage of the male full-time worker's average official hourly wage level.

(The number of double-income households is increasing.)

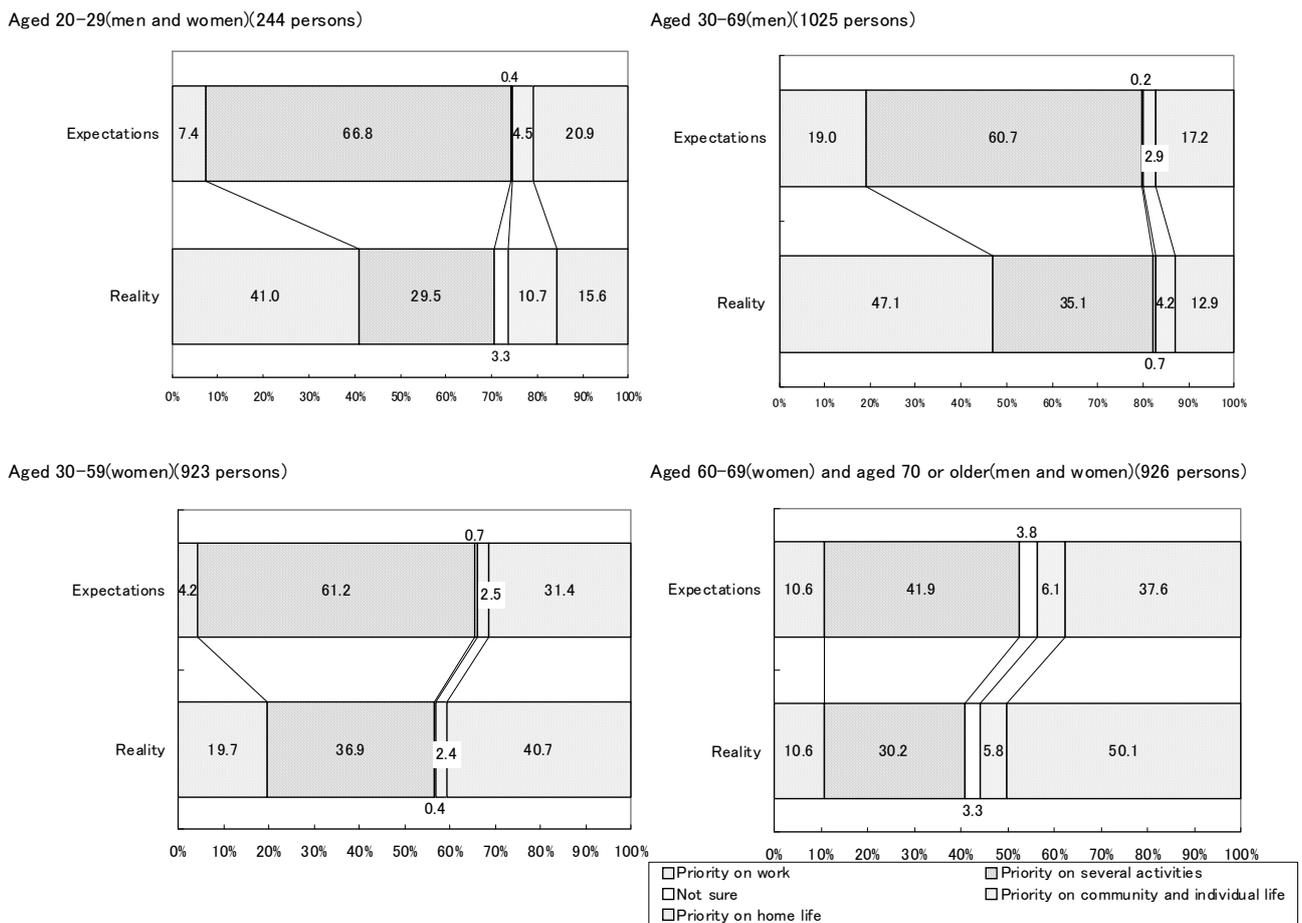
Since 1997, the number of double-income households has exceeded single-income households that consist of an income-earning husband and a non-working wife. This seems to be the result of background factors, including changes in attitudes toward women's social advancement and economic conditions.

Chapter 3: Work-life balance

(Expectations and reality for work-life balance)

According to the “Opinion Survey on Gender equality” (2007) by the Cabinet Office, there is a significant difference between expectations and reality for work-life balance. Those who hope to be engaged in several activities in a balanced manner, for example, by placing “priority on both work and home life” account for the highest percentage, but in reality, those who place priority on a single activity, such as “work” or “home life”, account for the highest percentage. This difference between expectations and reality can be seen not only in generations engaged in work or child rearing, but in all age brackets. Elderly people have the highest percentage of individuals that place priority on home life, but also have a high percentage of those who hope to be engaged in other activities (Chart 20).

Chart 20: Expectations vs. reality for work-life balance, by gender



(Notes) 1. Data from the “Opinion Survey on Gender Equality” (2007) by the Cabinet Office
 2. Survey target: 5,000 persons aged 20 or older living in the country (number of valid answers: 3,118; response rate: 62.4%)

(Burden on women for housekeeping, childcare, and nursing care)

According to the daily living hours of married couples by labor-force participation of wives shown by the “Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities” (2006) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, husbands in double income households spend 30 minutes on housekeeping, childcare, and nursing care, while wives spend 4 hours 15 minutes. In households where husbands hold a job and wives do not hold a job, husbands spend 39 minutes, while wives spend 6 hours 21 minutes. The time spent on housekeeping, childcare, and nursing care by husbands is far shorter than that of wives, regardless of whether wives hold a job or not. For men there is little difference in living conditions between single income households and double income households. However, women in double income households shoulder the burden of

housekeeping, childcare, and nursing care while working and they have less time for leisure.

(Still severe circumstances surrounding women’s continuation of work)

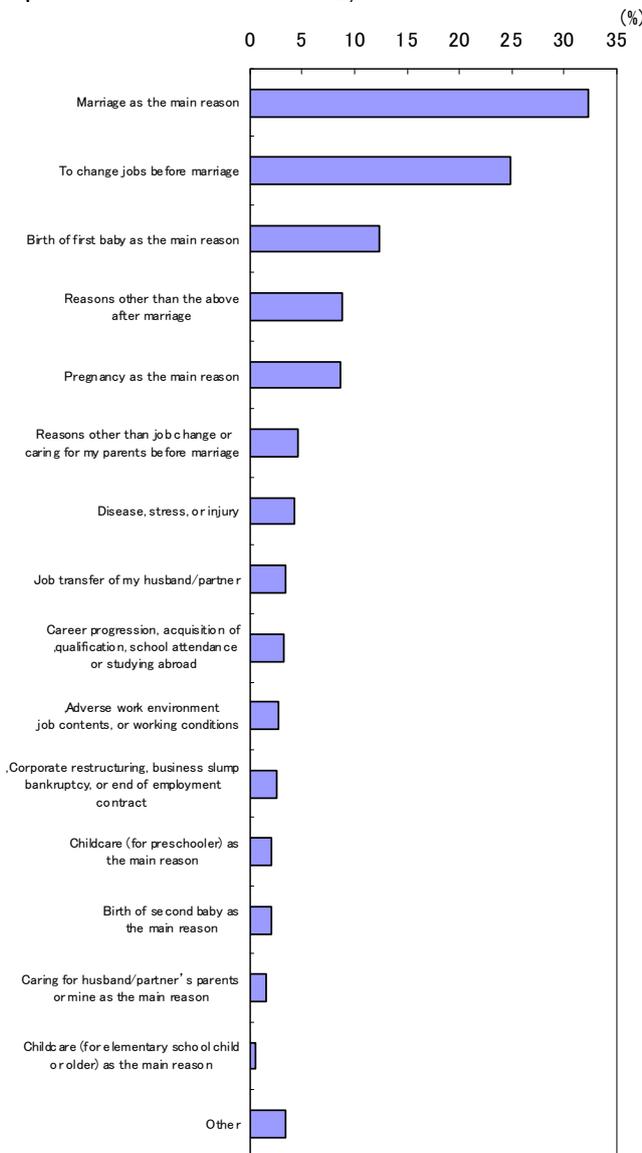
The most common reason for those who had ever quit their job is “Marriage as the main reason”, and the most common detailed reason is “The work was physically difficult and I needed more spare time” (Chart 21).

While the number of women taking maternal leave has increased, the percentage of women who stay in the job before and after childbirth has not increased, and there are still many women who leave work due to childbirth (Chart 22).

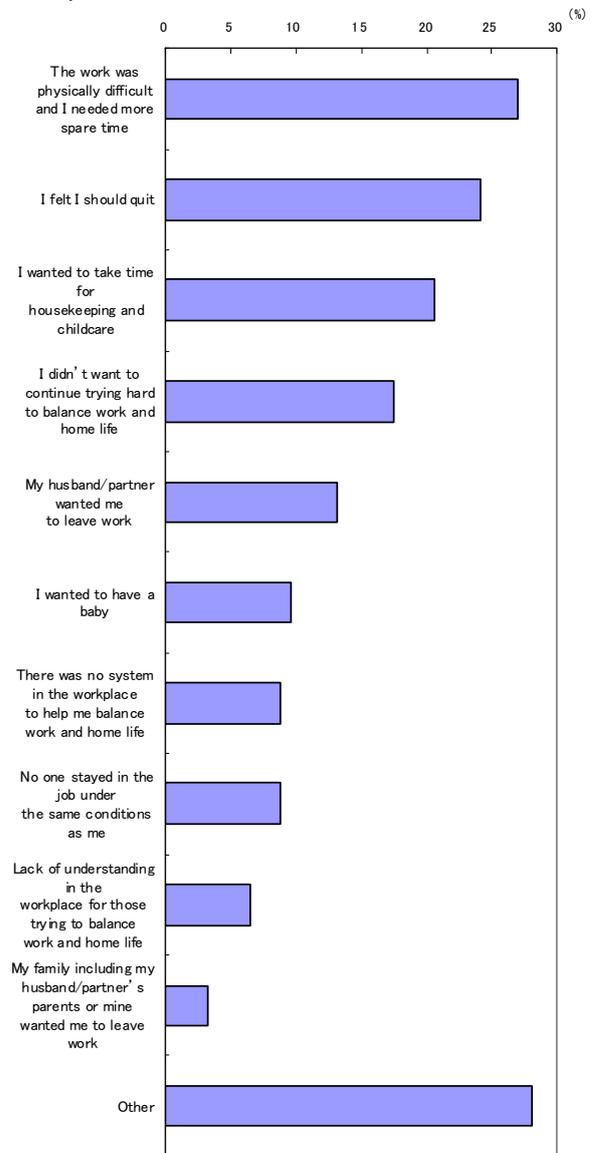
Quite a few women are willing to leave work when they get married or give birth, but there seems to be some problems regarding working style, including overtime work, as a background reason for leaving work.

Chart 21: Reasons for quitting a job and reasons for leaving work after marriage

Reasons for quitting a job;
multiple answers allowed: n = 2,613

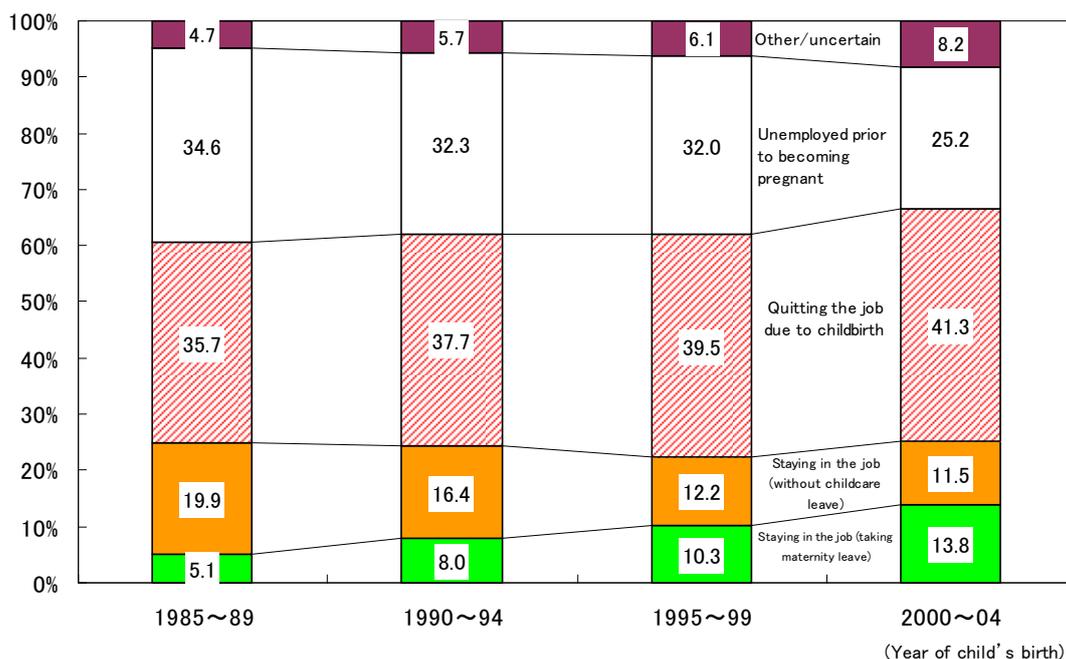


Reasons for leaving work after marriage;
multiple answers allowed: n = 908



(Notes) 1. Data from the “Survey on Support for Women’s Life Planning” (2007) by the Cabinet Office.
2. Survey target: Women aged 30 to 40.

Chart 22: Working experience of wives before and after the birth of their first child, by year of child's birth



- (Notes)
1. Data from the “13th Basic Survey on Childbirth Trends (for married couples)” by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research
 2. Survey target: Married couples with a child aged 1 or older, first marriage for both the husband and wife
 3. Working experience before and after childbirth
 - Staying in the job (taking maternity leave): Employed prior to becoming pregnant with the first child—taking maternity leave—employed when the first child is 1 year old
 - Staying in the job (without childcare leave): Employed prior to becoming pregnant with the first child—without taking maternity leave—employed when the first child is 1 year old
 - Quitting job due to childbirth: Employed prior to becoming pregnant with the first child—Unemployed when the first child is 1 year old
 - Unemployed prior to becoming pregnant: Unemployed prior to becoming pregnant with the first child—Unemployed when the first child is 1 year old

(Advantages of corporations engaged in efforts for work-life balance)

The “Specialist Committee on Work-Life Balance” of the Council for Gender Equality conducted interviews with corporations and published a report on the “Advantages of Corporations Engaged in Efforts for Work-Life Balance” in April 2008.

The results of the interviews show that efforts to support the balancing of work and life and to promote flexible working styles through the introduction of a childcare leave system, telecommuting, etc. have brought various advantages: stabilization of employees (decline in turnover), securement of excellent human resources, securement and stabilization of diversified employees, increase in employees’ satisfaction and work motivation, maintenance and improvement of employees’ physical and mental health, and enhancement of corporate image and evaluation.

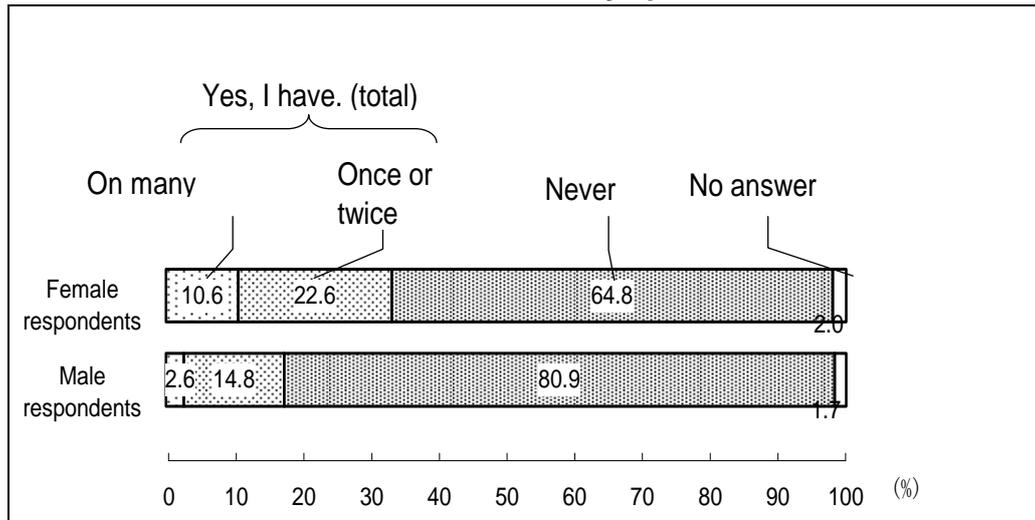
In addition, the Committee provides information on quantitative cost estimation through assumptions based on existing statistics and survey results. For example, when comparing a case of recruiting new personnel when an employee leaves work due to childbirth, with a case of allowing the same employee to continue working using the system for childcare leave and shorter working hours, the latter case is found to be more cost effective. Moreover, the company can avoid losing the knowledge and skills accumulated by the employee.

Chapter 4: Violence against women

(Potential Violence)

According to the “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2005)” by the Cabinet Office, 10.6% of female respondents and 2.6% of male respondents (out of 2,328 respondents who are married so far) have “on many occasions” experienced either “physical assault,” mental harassment or frightening threats,” or “sexual coercion” by their spouse (“spouse” in this context also includes: common-law husband and wife; spouse living separately; and ex-spouse). And 22.6% of female respondents and 14.8% of male respondents have seen one of these experiences “once or twice”, while 33.2% of female respondents and 17.4% of male respondents have had such experiences “at least once” (Chart 23).

Chart 23: Violence by spouse

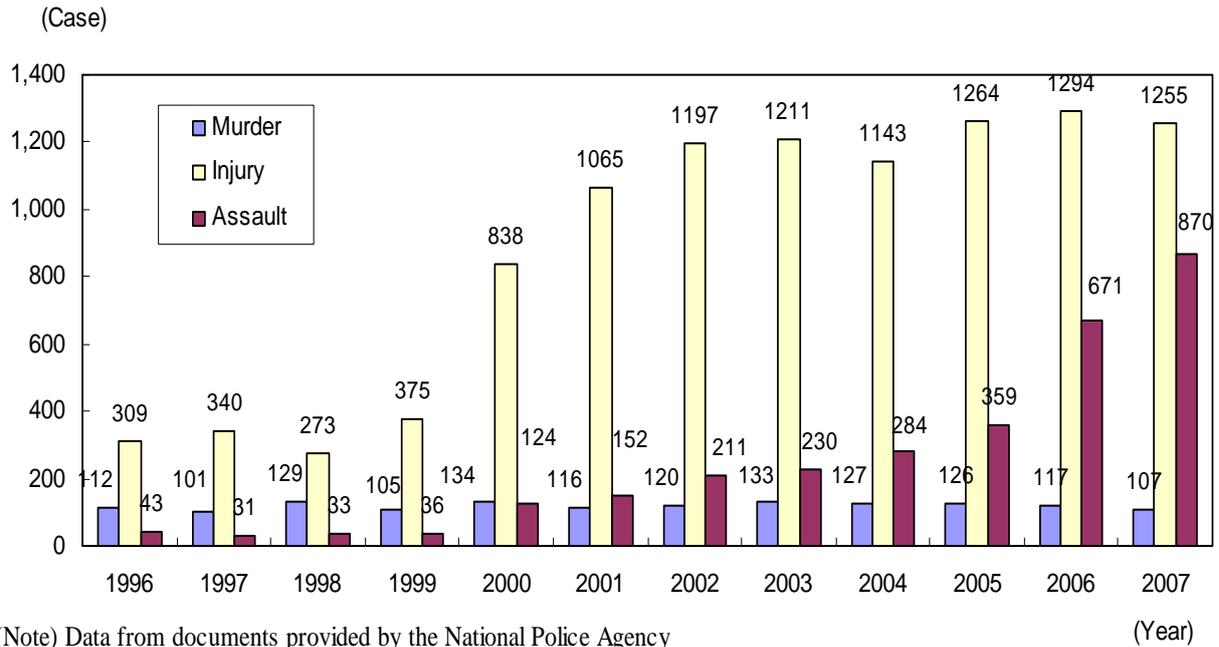


- (Notes)
1. Data from the “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2005)” by the Cabinet Office
 2. Physical assault: Bodily assault, such as punching, kicking, pelting, and knocking over
 3. Mental assault: Mental harassment, such as using verbal abuse that would deny personal integrity or closely checking up on personal contacts; or frightening threats that would harm the respondents or any of their family members
 4. Sexual coercion: Coerced sexual affairs against the respondent's will

(Increasing number of arrests for violence inflicted on wives by their husbands)

Looking at the changes in the number of arrests for crimes against partners in the case of female victims by crime, an upward trend is seen for both assault and injury since 2000. In 2007, assault increased by 199 cases (29.7%) to 870 cases, while injury decreased by 39 cases (3.0%) to 1,255 cases on a year-on-year basis (Chart 24).

Chart 24: Arrests for crimes against wife by husband



(Sex-related crimes)

According to the National Police Agency’s statistics, the number of recorded rape cases has continued to exceed 2,000 cases for 6 consecutive years since 2000. But it started to fall in 2004 and stood at 1,766 cases in 2007, a decrease by 182 cases (9.3%) on the year-on-year basis.

The number of recorded indecent assaults that tended to rise from 1999 to 2003, started to fall in 2004 and stood at 7,664 cases in 2007, a decrease of 662 cases (8.0%) on the year-on-year basis.

(Prostitution)

The number of prostitution-related criminal offenses stood at 2,490 in 2007, decreasing from the 2006 level. Of the total of 3,247 women in need of protection that increased from the 2006 level, minors accounted for 18.3%, decreasing by 24.5 points.

(Human trafficking)

According to the National Police Agency’s statistics for 2007, the number of arrests for crimes related to human trafficking stands at 40 cases, and the number of criminals arrested stands at 41 persons, 11 of which were brokers. The total number of human trafficking victims stands at 43, a decrease of 15 persons (25.9%) from the 2006 level.

(Sexual harassment)

In FY2006, gender-equality offices at the prefectural labour bureau handled 11,102 counseling cases of sexual harassment. The number of counseling cases increased by 3,208 (40.6%) from the previous year. Of this total, 7,790 cases (70.2%) were brought by female workers, an increase of 1,285 cases (19.8%) from the previous year.

(Stalking behavior)

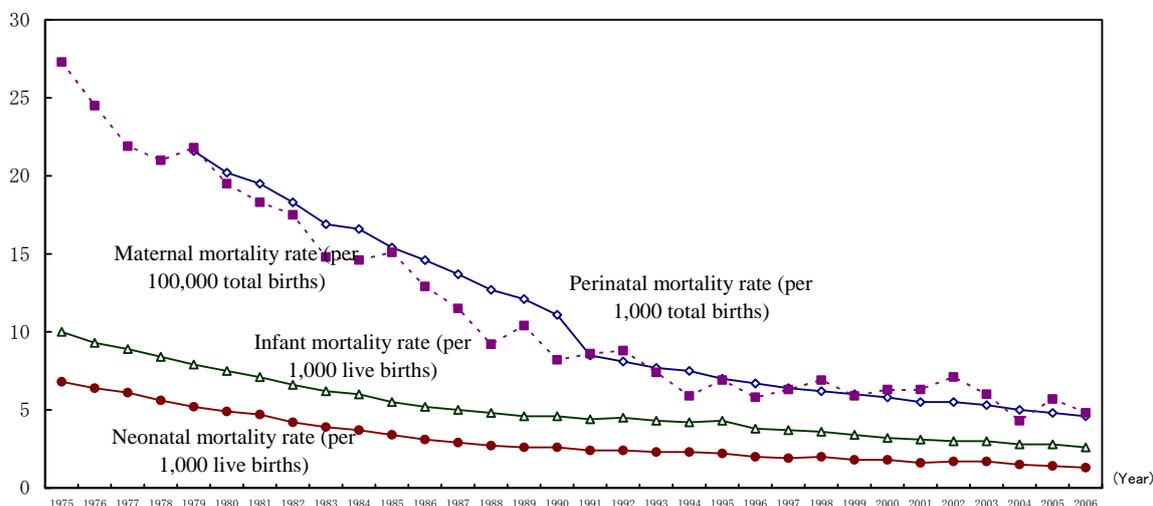
The number of stalking behavior cases reported to the National Police Agency stood at 13,463 during 2007, an increase of 962 cases (7.7%) from the 2006 level. Women account for 89.8% of stalking victims, while men account for 89.8% of all assailants.

Chapter 5: Support lifelong health for women

(The indexes for maternal and child health have tended to fall.)

The major indexes for maternal and child health conditions have generally tended to fall (Chart 25).

Chart 25: Indexes for maternal and child health conditions



- (Notes)
1. Data from "Vital Statistics of Japan" by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
 2. "Total births" in "Maternal mortality rate" include live births and foetal deaths (at 12 completed weeks and over of gestation).
 3. "Total births" in "Perinatal mortality rate" include live births and foetal deaths (at 22 completed weeks and over of gestation).

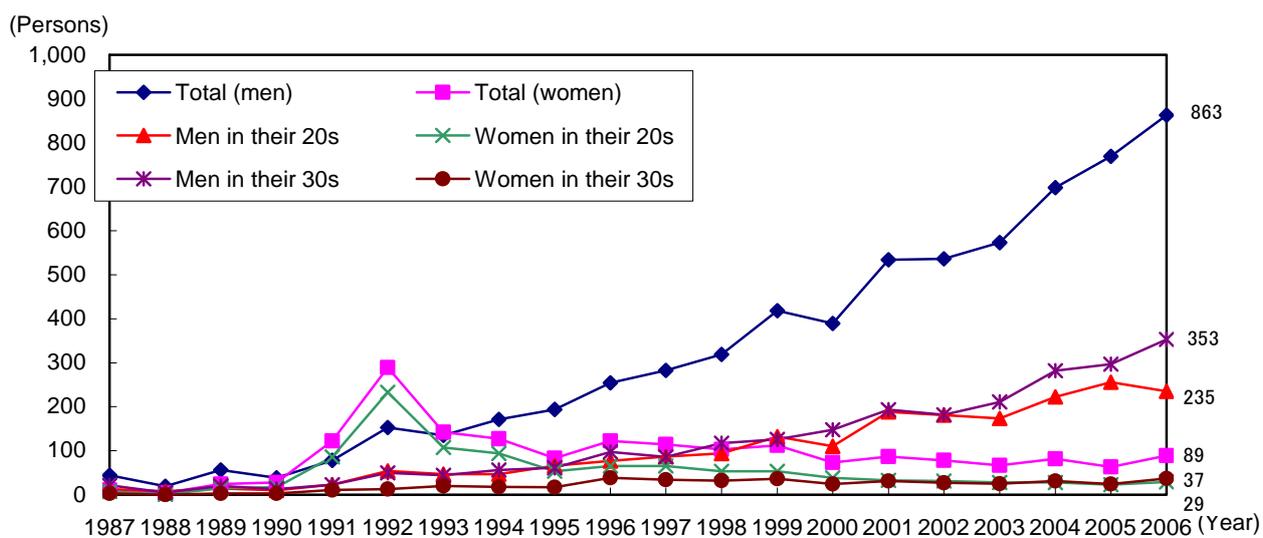
(The number of abortions is generally decreasing)

In general, the number and rate of induced abortions (the proportion of induced abortions to 1,000 women aged 15 to 50) decreased from 1975 to 2006. While the number of abortions for women younger than 20 years old accounted for only 1.8% of that for women across all age groups in 1975, it increased to 9.9% in 2006 and the younger generation now accounts for a larger percentage than before. However, the total number of abortions has steadily decreased, achieving a 40% decrease since 2002.

(Younger people are more vulnerable to HIV than other generations.)

In 2006, there were 952 new HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) carriers and 406 new AIDS patients (those who suffer from opportunistic infection disease, such as carinii pneumonia, or a malignant tumor), and the number of HIV carriers hit new high records (Chart 26). It is estimated that 87.0% of the total of HIV carriers were infected within Japan. Looking at the age when first reported, 37.1% of the total number of HIV carriers were infected in their 20s, which represents a high infection rate among young people. On the other hand, looking at HIV carriers first reported in 2006 by age, those in their 20s account for 27.7% while those in their 30s account for 41.0%. This shows the recent trend in which the infection rate is not necessarily high among young people.

Chart 26: Number of HIV-infected men and women, by age bracket



- (Notes) 1. Data from the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry's documents
 2. The figures represent newly reported HIV-infected people for the year.

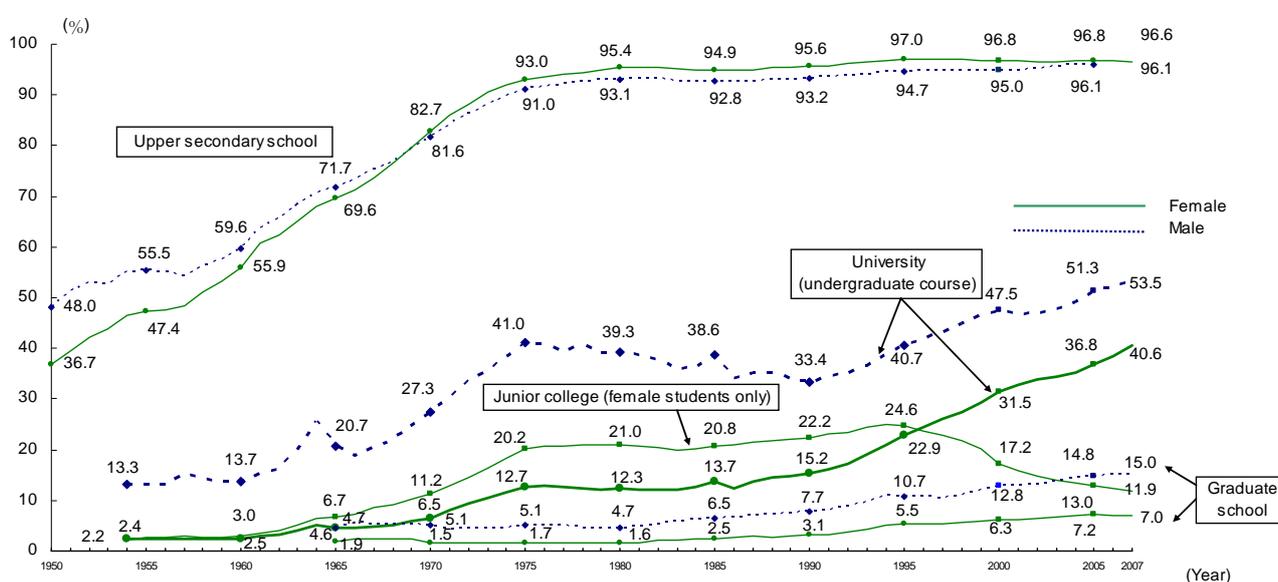
Chapter 6: Gender equality in the education and research fields

(A larger percentage of Japanese women are entering university and college.)

In FY2007, the high school advancement rate stood at 96.6% for women and 96.1% for men, which suggests that a few more female students enter high school than male students. The university (undergraduate course) advancement rate stands at 53.5% for men and 40.6% for women, indicating that the rate for male students is 10 points higher than that for female students. Since 11.9% of female students enter junior colleges, the women's total advancement rate for higher education is 52.5%. The women's university advancement rate has been rising recently, while the advancement rate for junior colleges has been falling sharply for a few years after hitting a peak at 24.9% in 1994.

Looking at the percentage of students entering graduate school immediately after completing their undergraduate studies, male students account for 15.0% and female students account for 7.0% (Chart 27).

Chart 27: Advancement rate, by school category



- (Notes)
1. Data from "School Basic Survey" by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
 2. "Upper secondary education": Percentage of graduates of lower secondary school and secondary school (lower division) who enter upper secondary school and college of technology (except for upper secondary school-level correspondence courses).
 3. "University" (undergraduate course) and "Junior college": Total university or junior college enrollments (including students who had failed the entrance exam but were accepted at a university of their choice in the following year) divided by lower secondary school graduates of three years before. The figure excludes students on university-level or junior college-level correspondence courses.
 4. "Graduate school": Students who enter graduate school immediately after completing their undergraduate course as a percentage of all students completing undergraduate courses. (It also includes new Ph.D. course advancement in the case of medical and dental schools.) The figure excludes graduate-level correspondence courses.

(Gap in students' major fields)

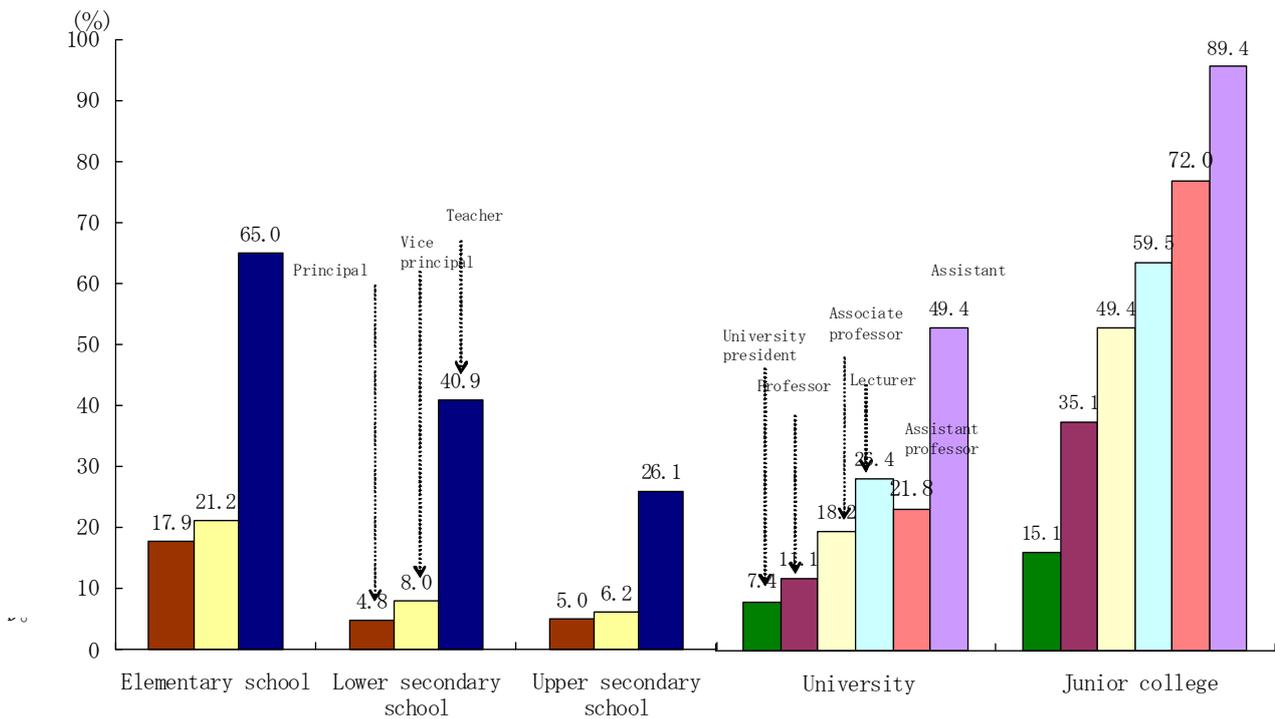
At the undergraduate level, female students majoring in the social sciences make up the largest percentage. In 2007, 28.1% of female students majored in social sciences, and female students account for approximately 30% of all students majoring in the social sciences. Female students majoring in engineering account for 10.5% of all students majoring in engineering, while those majoring in humanities account for 66.3% of all students majoring in humanities, suggesting a gender gap in students' major fields.

(Female teachers and faculty members account for a smaller percentage of higher positions.)

Female teachers occupy more than 60% of all teaching jobs at elementary schools, but the percentage of female teachers is lower at lower secondary school and upper secondary school. The percentage of female principals and vice principals is rising in the long term, from 4.1% in 1990 to 17.9% in 2007. However, female principals and vice principals are still a smaller percentage than female teachers.

Women account for more than 50% of faculty members at junior colleges, but they account for 10% to 20% at universities. In particular, women still make up only a small percentage of professors or university presidents (Chart 28).

Chart 28: Percentage of full-time female teachers (at elementary, secondary and higher education levels)

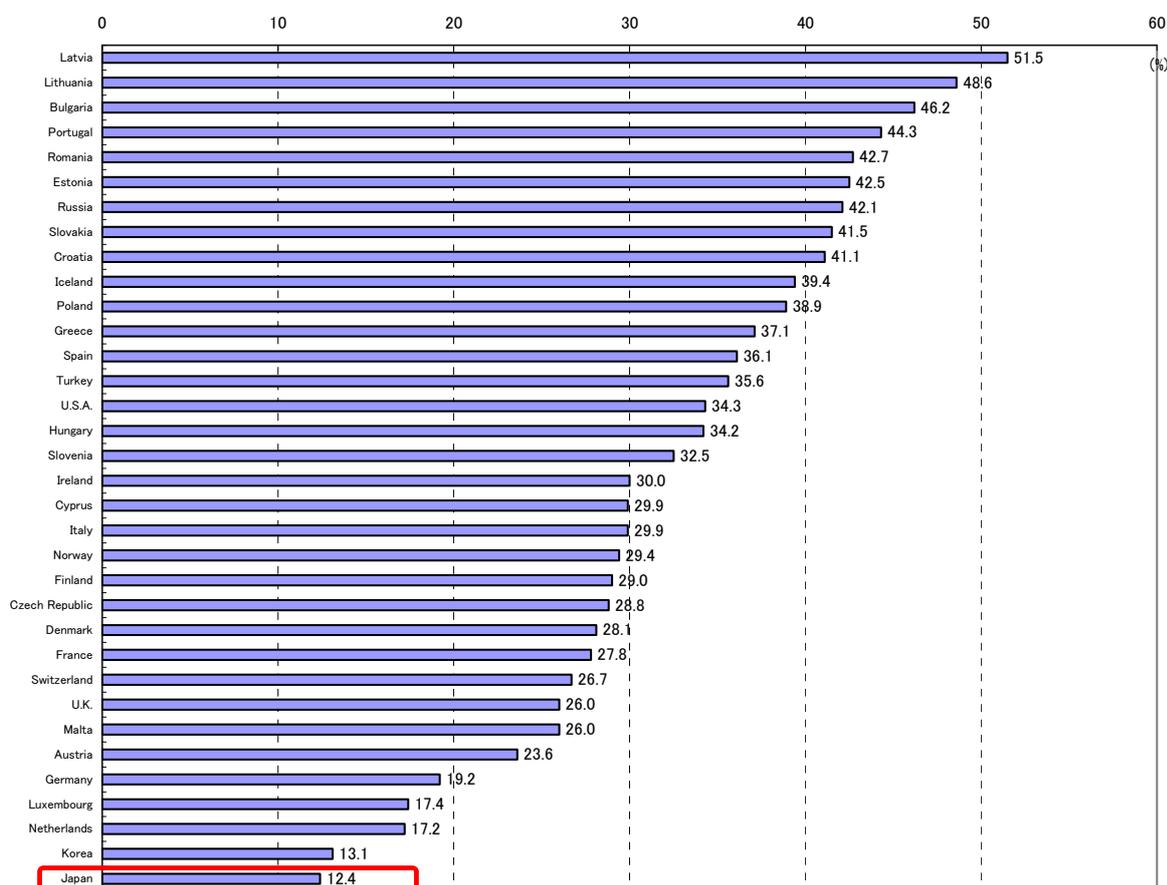


(Note) Data from "School Basic Survey (FY 2005)" by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

(Percentage of female researchers)

The percentage of women among all researchers in Japan has been gradually increasing, but still stands at 12.4% as of 2007, much lower than that in Europe and the United States (Chart 29). Female researchers at higher education levels account for 40.7% in undergraduate courses of universities, 30.5% in graduate schools (master's courses) and 30.7% in graduate schools (doctor's courses), suggesting that the percentage of female researchers should be higher.

Chart 29: International comparison of the percentage of female researchers



- (Notes)
1. Figures for EU countries, except the U.K., are based on “Eurostat 2007/01”. They include estimates and provisional values. Data for Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Malta is as of 2005. Data for Portugal, Iceland, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands is as of 2003. Data for Turkey is as of 2002. Data for other countries is as of 2004. The figure for the U.K. is based on “Key Figures 2002” by the European Commission (as of 2000).
 2. Figures for Korea and Russia are based on the “Main Science and Technology Indicators 2007/2” by the OECD (as of 2006).
 3. The figure for Japan is based on the “Results of the Survey of Research and Development” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (as of March 2007).
 4. The figure for the U.S.A. is the percentage of female scientists (including social science and part of the humanities) as of 2003, based on the “Science and Engineering Indicators 2006” by the NSF. If engineers are included, the percentage of female scientists and engineers is 27.0%.

(Affiliation and major fields of female researchers)

According to the “Results of the Survey of Research and Development (FY2007)” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 60% of male researchers belong to companies and 30% belong to universities, while 60% of female researchers belong to universities and 30% belong to companies.

Looking at major fields of female researchers, most of whom belongs to universities, in 2007 women accounted for about half of all researchers majoring in health science, such as nutritional science, excluding

medical science and dentistry. On the other hand, women accounted for only 7.0% of all researchers majoring in engineering and 10% in science and agriculture. Even in major fields that have higher percentages of female researchers, the higher the position, the lower the female rate from lecturers to associate professors and professors.

Part 2: Policies Implemented in FY2007 to Promote Formation of a Gender-Equal Society

Chapter 1: Comprehensive promotion of policies towards a gender-equal society

- The Council for Gender Equality has been promoting the investigation and discussion of basic principles for formation of a gender-equal society, basic policies and important matters under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Chief Cabinet Secretary who chairs the Council, and the Minister of State for Gender Equality.

Table 30: Activities of the Council for Gender Equality

Resolutions in the Council for Gender Equality	Specialist committee	Time
Report on the State of Implementation of Policies for Promoting the Formation of a Gender-Equal Society by the National Government, and Opinions for Future Efforts (Measures for capacity building and lifelong learning that offer diversified options)	Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Impact Assessment	May 2007
Opinions on follow-up results on the (Second) Basic Plan for Gender Equality	Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Impact Assessment	March 2008

Reports by specialist committees	Specialist committee	Time
Basic policy for promotion of “work-life balance”	Specialist Committee on Work-Life Balance	July 2007
Index for feasibility of “work-life balance”	Specialist Committee on Work-Life Balance	March 2008

- In order to ensure effective implementation of the “Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality”, the Council for Gender Equality monitors the implementation of government measures to promote the formation of a gender-equal society, making use of the knowledge of experts in each field. The Council followed up on the “Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality” and formed its opinions at a meeting held in March 2008.

Chapter 2: Expand women’s participation in policy decision-making processes

- In the Report on Public Employee Personnel Management at the 2007 Recommendation of the National Personnel Authority (NPA), the reduction of overtime work is stipulated as an urgent and important issue from the viewpoint of work-life balance, requiring systematic and government-wide efforts.
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare set up the “Positive Action Backup Site” on the Internet to introduce the progress of efforts reported by individual companies. The Ministry also provides information through e-mail newsletters to personnel in charge of promoting equal opportunities, in order to facilitate their activities.

Chapter 3: Review social systems and practices and raise awareness from a gender-equal perspective

- The Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Impact Assessment of the Council for Gender Equality formed its opinions on the “Opinions on the State of Implementation of Gender-Equal Society Promotion Measures Developed by the Government and Future Efforts (Measures for Capacity Building and Lifelong Learning that Offer Diversified Options)” in May 2007.
- From the standpoint of improving pension security for employees, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare submitted to the 166th Diet session a “bill to amend part of the Employees’ Pension Law, etc. to promote the unification of pension systems for employees”, aiming at expanding the scope of social insurance to part-time workers who are “nearly regular employees”, and the bill was carried over to the next session.

Chapter 4: Secure equal opportunities and treatment between men and women in the field of employment

- In November 2007, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare formulated a “Basic Policy on Measures for Equal Employment Opportunities for Men and Women” in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 in the amended “Equal Employment Opportunity Law between Men and Women”. Based on this policy, the Ministry aims to secure substantive equal employment opportunities and promote further positive action.
- For improvement of the employment environment so that part-time workers can exercise their abilities more effectively, a law to amend part of the laws on improvement in employment management of short-time workers (2007 Law No. 72) was promulgated in June 2007. Specifically, the law aims to secure working conditions for part-time workers balanced with regular workers according to the reality of working styles and promote their shift to regular workers. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare makes efforts to keep the public informed to ensure smooth enforcement of the amended law.

Chapter 5: Establish gender equality to realizing dynamic rural areas

- In order to properly assess women’s roles in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and local communities and promote women’s participation in society and management, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries facilitated goal setting for women’s participation at the local level and followed up on the results for achievement of the goals. Efforts were made to promote positive action by conducting awareness-raising activities for the promotion of women’s participation in agricultural cooperatives, etc. Efforts were also made to expand the opportunities for women to exercise their abilities by providing support for improving abilities, fostering female leaders in local communities, and promoting women’s participation in group farming.

Chapter 6: Support the efforts of men and women to harmonize work with their family and community life

- In December 2007, the “Public and Private High-Level Conference on the Promotion of Work-Life Balance”, consisting of representatives from related ministries, economic circles, labor circles, and local authorities reached an agreement on the “Work-Life Balance Charter” of fundamental policies on work-life balance and the “Action Guidelines for the Promotion of Work-Life Balance”, covering the detailed efforts and policy guidelines of the national government, local authorities, and corporations. As part of the measures, the “Office for the Promotion of Work-Life Balance” was established within the Cabinet Office in January 2008.

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare worked together to prepare the “After-School Plan for Children” to ensure safe places in local communities for children’s after-school activities as one of the comprehensive after-school childcare measures in FY2007. Efforts are being made to promote the plan aiming for its dissemination in all elementary schools in Japan and to provide financial assistance for necessary expenses.
- In line with key strategies including “Japan’s Strategy to Support Children and Family” compiled in December 2007, a bill to amend part of the Child Welfare Act, the Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation was submitted to the Diet in March 2008. The bill aims to promote measures supporting the development of the next generation in local communities and the workplace, including the creation of new child-rearing support services through home childcare projects, improved care in a homey environment for child abuse victims, and encouragement of general business owners’ preparation for action plans to support the balancing of work and family.
- In May 2007, a law to amend part of the Act Concerning Prevention of Child Abuse and the Child Welfare Act (2007 Law No. 73) was enacted (enforced in April 2008). Accordingly, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare revised the operational guidelines for child consultation centers.

Chapter 7: Develop conditions that allow the elderly to live with peace of mind

- The government held a session of the “Review Meeting on Future Measures for the Aged Society” discussing mid- and long-term issues on future measures for the aged society and direction for the measures, and compiled a report in December 2007.
- In December 2007, in order to realize a “cohesive society” in which all persons with or without disabilities can mutually respect their personalities and individualities, the government decided at the meeting of the Headquarters for Promoting the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities on a new “Five-Year Plan for Implementation of Priority Measures” effective from FY2008 and based on the “Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities ” (approved at the Cabinet meeting in December 2002). In September 2007, the government signed the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (adopted at the United Nations General Conference in December 2006), which was a comprehensive and integrated international convention to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. In addition, related administrative agencies worked together on the promotion of various wide-ranging measures, such as livelihood support, living environments, education and training, and employment and work.

Chapter 8: Eliminate all forms of violence against women

- Following the enforcement of the amended Law on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims stipulating reinforcement of the protection order system, as well as establishment of Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers and requirement to make efforts for formulation of basic plans by municipalities, related ministries conducted an overall review on the “Basic Guidelines on Measures for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims” (2004 Public Notice No. 1 of the Cabinet Office, the National Public Safety Commission, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) in accordance with the above law.
- The “Law to Amend Part of the Code of Criminal Procedures and Other Related Acts to Protect the

Rights and Benefits of Crime Victims and their families”(2007 Law No. 95) enforced in December 2007 allows the court to decide that the name and other information about a victim of a specific crime such as a sexual crime should not be disclosed at a public trial when deemed appropriate. In such a case, judicial proceedings can be taken without disclosing personal information about the victim. Moreover, the law allows the prosecutor to request that the defense attorney take steps to prevent others from learning the name and other information about a victim when it is deemed that the victims’ reputation or peace of life in society could be damaged by revealing the formation at discovery. The law has contributed to the protection of information on victims in criminal procedures.

Chapter 9: Support lifelong health for women

- In December 2007, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare organized the “Women’s Health Promotion Advisory Panel” to discuss women’s health issues. The Ministry designated the days of March 1st to 8th as “Women’s Health Week” and various enlightenment programs have been implemented.
- Breast cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer among women, and it has been increasing year by year. Uterine cancer is occurring among increasingly younger people and has been pointed out that it is correlated with sexually transmitted diseases. In order to promote early detection of such cancers and reduce the death rate, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare revised guidelines to review the implementation methods and target ages for screening for breast cancer and uterine cancer, which were implemented by municipalities, in April, 2004.
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is making efforts for further promotion of measures to enable women to receive medical care services, including health checkups, health guidance/counseling, and medical aid, on a consistent basis from pregnancy to delivery, within their daily living area.

Chapter 10: Promote gender equality in the media

- In light of the current situation, the “Review Meeting for the Protection of Children from Harmful Information” (agreed on by related ministries in July 2007) conducted a wide range of discussions on the type of additional measures that could be taken by the government. Based on the discussion results, related ministries are now working together to promote efforts starting with feasible measures, such as “promotion of filtering services for mobile phones” and “enhancement of enlightenment activities”.
- In October 2007, the Meeting on IT Security (Liaison Conference for Ministries and Agencies Concerning Illegal and Harmful Information on the Internet) put forth intensive measures to significantly reduce child victims damaged by illegal and harmful information on the Internet, by 2010.

Chapter 11: Enrich education and learning that promote gender equality and facilitate diversity of choice

- In order to promote gender equality, efforts for improvement in learning have been made through school and social education. Schools are encouraged to provide guidance on mutual understanding and cooperation between men and women, through a special activities class in junior high schools and civics or domestic science class in high schools. Higher education institutions are encouraged to conduct educational and research activities based on the principles of gender-equal participation.
- Universities’ function to provide lifelong learning has been enhanced through adoption of the special

admissions quota system for adult students, establishment of evening graduate schools, and improvement in The Open University of Japan. In addition, it is now possible for universities to grant a certificate in accordance with the School Education Law to adult students who complete certain learning programs (June 2007). Efforts to promote the opening of school facilities to the public and “Project for encouraging people to utilize their knowledge and experience and strengthening the community bond” have been made to expand opportunities for learning and exchange in local communities, and the “National Lifelong Learning Festival” was held. Women’s education and learning activities have been enhanced by providing more learning opportunities to women who hope to achieve renewed challenges and helping the National Women’s Education Center to improve their projects. Efforts have also been made to improve career guidance in junior high and high schools and universities and to promote career education.

Chapter 12: Contribute to the “Equality, Development and Peace” of the global community

- Discussions on the “improvement of the status of women” were conducted at the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly held in autumn 2007, at which Japanese participants including an NGO representative were present.
- In Australia (Cairns) in June 2007, the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) held the fifth meeting for the Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN), which was established by the agreement of the 2nd APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women held in 2002. At this meeting, a workshop on the utilization and promotion of gender analysis was organized.

Chapter 13: Promote gender equality in fields requiring new initiatives

- In response to the “the Third Science and Technology Basic Plan” approved at the Cabinet meeting in March 2006, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology launched a new program for the Special Coordination Fund for Promoting Science and Technology, “Supporting Activities for Female Researchers” in FY2006 in line with the Council for Science and Technology Policy. The Ministry promoted efforts by adopting 10 new projects in FY2007, following 10 projects in FY2006, in support of efforts by universities to help female researchers balance research study and childbirth/childcare and to continue their research activities. The Council completed the “Report on Institutional Reform toward the Development of Scientific Technology and the Return of Research Results to Society” (decided by the Council for Science and Technology Policy in December 2006 and submitted to related ministries as an opinion). In addition, the report proposes institutional reform, such as “relaxation of the requirement for fixed-term employees to apply for taking childcare leave” and “improvement of measures, including shorter working hours during child-rearing period (addition of telecommuting option)”, to help women fully engage in research activities during child-rearing years and avoid suffering any disadvantage due to a pause in research activities. Follow-up activities on each item were initiated in FY2007.
- The Central Disaster Prevention Council determined items for consideration from the viewpoints of both men and women, such as gender difference in needs, when it revised the Basic Plan for Disaster Prevention in July 2005. The Council is making efforts to disseminate the items by encouraging local authorities to incorporate them in regional disaster prevention plans.
- In February 2008, the above basic plan was revised with additional descriptions on “the necessity to establish a disaster prevention system reflecting a perspective from gender-equal participation”.

Policies to be Implemented in FY2008 to Promote the Formation of a Gender-Equal Society

Chapter 1: Comprehensive promotion of policies towards a gender-equal society

- By making appropriate use of its subordinated specialist committees, the Council for Gender Equality will make as great efforts as possible to coordinate gender equality policy measures.
- In order to assess the impact of monitoring and government measures on the formation of a gender-equal society, each ministry and agency will conduct surveys and reviews on the steady implementation of the “Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality” and will continue to conduct surveys and reviews on the impact that government measures, etc. have on the formation of a gender-equal society.

Chapter 2: Expand women’s participation in policy decision-making processes

- Based on the “Women’s Participation Acceleration Program” formulated in April 2008 (determined by the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality in April 2008), ministries and agencies work in cooperation with each other to promote strategic efforts.
- In order to enhance the recruitment and promotion of female national public officers, each ministry and agency will continue to promote efforts to achieve the goals of its own “Plan for the Enlargement of Recruitment and Promotion of Female Officials” based on the “Guidelines concerning the Enlargement of Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Public Officers” formulated by the National Personnel Authority (revised in 2005).
- Based on the “Women’s Participation Acceleration Program”, each ministry and agency will set a numerical target in its plan, with the aim of increasing the percentage of women at the level of director or director general of central ministries/agencies or higher to at least 3% as a standard, and will improve and review the plan so as to serve as a detailed and concrete action plan. In addition, the entire government will actively encourage the promotion of female officials with the aim of increasing the percentage of women at the level of director or director general of central ministries/agencies or higher to at least 5% by the end of 2010.
- Based on the “Opinions on the Follow-up of the Numerical Target (30% by 2020) concerning Women’s Participation in Policy Decision-Making Processes” determined by the Council for Gender Equality in February 2007, the current state including the percentage of women in commanding positions in each field of society will be surveyed and announced.

Chapter 3: Review social systems and practices and raise awareness from a gender-equal perspective

- In June 2008, the Council for Gender Equality will form its opinion on “Support for Independent Life of the Elderly”, which had been surveyed and discussed in the Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Impact Assessment since June 2007, and will offer the opinion to the Prime Minister and related ministries. In the process of forming the above opinion, the Council will analyze the current situation and issues concerning support for independence of the elderly in light of gender difference and relation to lifestyle before retirement. The Council will then propose effective efforts for gender-equal participation and will encourage each ministry and agency to promote such efforts.

- The Cabinet Office will work on easily understandable PR campaigns in order to encourage correct understanding of the basic philosophy of gender equality as well as the definition of “gender” perspectives.

Chapter 4: Secure equal opportunities and treatment between men and women in the field of employment

- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will provide guidance to thoroughly implement equal treatment in accordance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Law.
- In order to improve the labor dispatch system, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will make efforts to disseminate the Guidelines for Measures to be Taken by Dispatching Companies and Receiving Companies to Ensure Stable Employment of Dispatched Daily Workers (2008 Announcement of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare No. 36). The Ministry will establish a study group to discuss issues related to the basics of the system, such as the future of the registered dispatch system, to advance consideration from the perspective that workers should be valued equally.
- The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will establish a loan system to provide funding at a good rate, for women, young and senior (female, young/senior entrepreneur support fund), and a new start-up loan system to provide funding without security or guarantors, aimed at supporting inauguration. The Ministry will also hold seminars targeting those intending to take concrete action for foundation, allowing them to acquire the necessary practical skills. Such seminars will include ones intended specifically for women.

Chapter 5: Establish gender equality to realizing dynamic rural areas

- In order to promote women’s participation in local communities and management of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will encourage the establishment of concrete goals for the number of female directors of agricultural, forestry and fisheries cooperatives, female members of agricultural committees, and female certified farmers at each municipal and regional level, and will implement promotional and enlightenment activities for achievement of goals. In addition, training will be conducted to improve managerial capabilities and provide information for the purpose of fostering regional female leaders.

Chapter 6: Support the efforts of men and women to harmonize work with their family and community life

- The “Office for the Promotion of Work-Life Balance” established within the Cabinet Office in December 2007 will play a central role in supporting collaborative networks between entities toward realization of work-life balance and will serve as the secretariat of the “Public and Private High-Level Conference on the Promotion of Work-Life Balance”. Its detailed duties will include cooperation and coordination with related organizations, such as ministries/agencies, labor-management committees and local authorities, planning and coordination of promotional campaigns conducted by the entire government, information gathering and organizing, and research study.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will work together to disseminate and promote the “Centre for early childhood education and care” system established in 2006. They will strive to ensure steady implementation of the “After-School

Plan for Children” established in FY2007, with the aim of reaching all elementary school zones, in principle.

Chapter 7: Develop conditions that allow the elderly to live with peace of mind

- In accordance with the Law to Amend Part of the National Pension Law enacted in 2004 (2004 Law No. 104), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has just completed its reform of the pension system, including the division of employees’ pension benefits for the period of a third insured person (enforced in April 2008) from the viewpoint of system improvement corresponding to the various living and working styles. The Ministry will continue to take necessary measures to ensure smooth implementation of the reformed system. It will also make further efforts to stabilize and improve the corporate pension system.
- In order to realize a “cohesive society” in which all persons with or without disabilities can mutually respect their personalities and individualities , the government will strive to promote comprehensive and integrated measures for persons with disabilities , based on the “Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities ” (approved at the Cabinet meeting in December 2002) and the new “Five-Year Plan for Implementation of Priority Measures” (decided by the Headquarters for Promoting the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities in December 2007). In response to the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” signed in September 2007, it will promote improvement in domestic laws and ordinances, aiming at ensuring the conclusion of the convention as soon as possible.

Chapter 8: Eliminate all forms of violence against women

- In FY2008, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will further enhance protection and support to foster self-reliance in victims by increasing the amount of expenses for the commissioned shelters offered to victims who need temporary protection and by improving support for those leaving women’s protection facilities.

Chapter 9: Support lifelong health for women

- Based on the “Women’s Participation Acceleration Program” formulated in April 2008 (determined by the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality in April 2008), support will be provided for medical experts, focusing on doctors. In particular, in the department of obstetrics, collaboration between doctors and midwives will be promoted to improve the medical care system that enables women to give birth safely and securely. In addition, efforts to raise public awareness about the importance of women’s health problems including pregnancy and childbirth will be made in collaboration with local authorities, etc.

Chapter 10: Promote gender equality in the media

- The government will pursue activities to disseminate and promote filtering in collaboration with related industries and organizations.

Chapter 11: Enrich education and learning that promote gender equality and facilitate diversity of choice

- In order to promote the principles of gender equality, further efforts for improvement in learning will be made through school and social education.

- Relearning opportunities for women aiming to achieve renewed challenges will be increased by providing support seminars in their own backyard, and at the same time, efforts will be further promoted to allow universities to grant certificates. In addition, facilities used for opening schools to the public will be improved. Efforts will also be made to promote career education for students.

Chapter 12: Contribute to the “Equality, Development and Peace” of the global community

- The government will actively cooperate in various worldwide activities for women’s empowerment promoted under the initiative of the UN, and encourage women to actively participate in peace-keeping, peace-building, and reconstruction and development efforts in post-conflict areas, and promote international exchange.

Chapter 13: Promote gender equality in fields requiring new initiatives

- In cooperation with related ministries/agencies, the Council for Science and Technology Policy will report the results of follow-ups on the status of implementation of measures presented in the “Third-Term Basic Program for Science and Technology” (approved at the Cabinet meeting in March 2006) and the “Institutional Reform toward the Development of Scientific Technology and the Return of Research Results to Society” (decided by the Council for Science and Technology Policy in December 2006 and submitted to related ministries as an opinion).
- The Cabinet Office will introduce women who are interested in regional development activities to active female advisors and will hold small-scale experience exchange meetings across the country. The outcome of these meetings will be widely disseminated. In addition, surveys will be conducted on case examples of women who play an active role in regional development activities.