

"FY2005 Annual Report on the State of Formation
of a Gender-Equal Society"

and

"Policies to be Implemented in FY2006 to Promote
the Formation of a Gender-Equal Society"

Outline

The Cabinet Office

June 2006

The Cabinet Office has prepared this paper to outline
the "White Paper on Gender Equality."
Please see the White Paper for more detailed information.

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"FY2005 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. Toward a society that would encourage women's renewed challenge: Gender equality and countermeasures on the falling birthrate are closely connected to each other

Japan has been facing a dwindling birthrate and an aging population. In this context, if Japan wants to maintain its societal and economic vitality in the future, the nation needs to provide a better environment so that everyone would be able to actively participate in society. The nation also faces urgently important needs: improving the environment for Japanese women to continue working after marriage or childbirth; and building a better society where women could easily become active again after leaving their jobs for childcare responsibilities.

If Japan successfully provides female workers with a more childcare-friendly environment, and if more and more motivated women have a second chance even after leaving their job for childcare responsibilities, then Japanese women will be able to have and raise their children without fearing for the future. Achieving gender-equal society by providing support for women's renewed challenges would be an effective countermeasure for the declining birthrate because it will lead to a better society where women would feel safe and the joy of having and raising children.

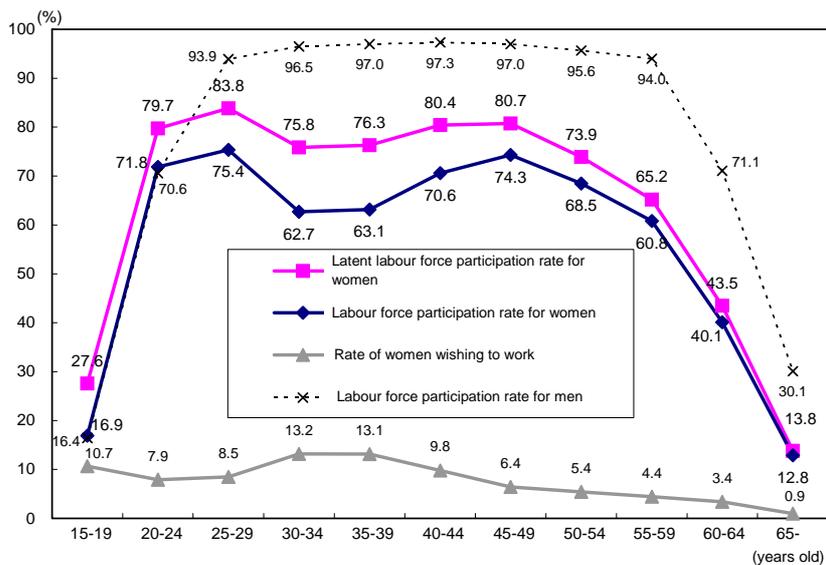
Section 1. Current working patterns for women during their child-rearing years

1. Labour force participation rate for women in their child-rearing years

(Japanese women see a lower labour participation rate during their child-rearing years, but many women in this age have a wish to work)

The labour force participation rate of Japanese women shows an M-shaped curve with labour participation declining in their early 30s due to childcare responsibilities. The latent labour force participation rate, which incorporates the labour force participation rate with the percentage of women not in labour force wishing to work, approximates a trapezoid because latent participation has a less concave portion than the labour force participation rate. Japanese women in their 30s have a relatively stronger wish to work. From ages 25 to 54, 2.45 million women wish to work, out of the total 3.6 million women wishing to work (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Women's latent labour force participation rate by age bracket



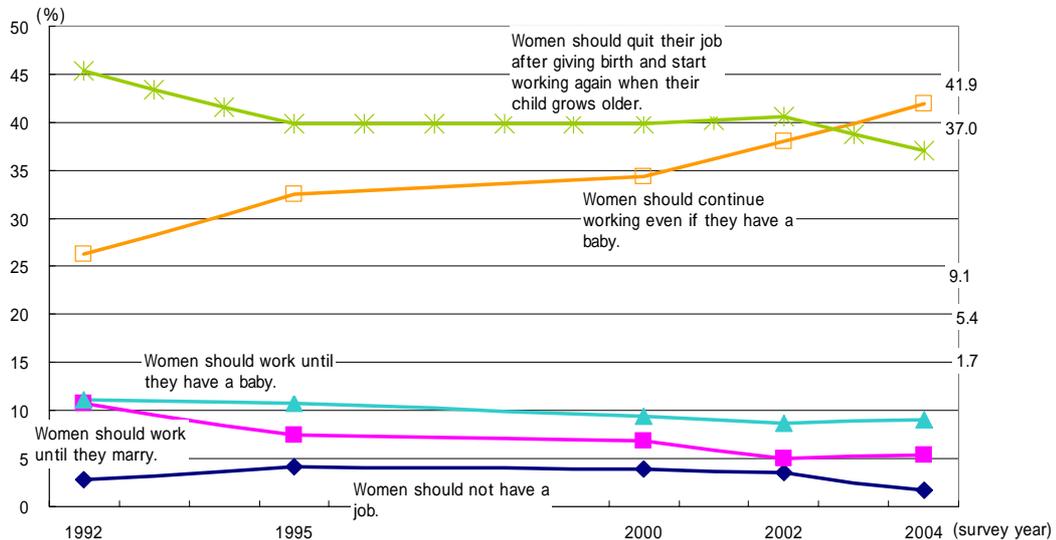
- (Notes) 1. Data from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Labour Force Survey (Detailed Tabulation)" (2005 annual)
 2. Latent labour force participation rate (by age) = (labour force population (by age) + not in labour force wishing to work (by age)) / Population of 15 years old or more (by age)

2. Transitions in men's and women's attitude to working and family life

(Japanese people are supporting women's "uninterrupted working" pattern rather than the "temporarily suspended working and reemployment" pattern.)

Many respondents agree with workingwomen's "uninterrupted working" pattern. Respondents indicate that "women should continue working even if they have a baby," which registers a larger percentage (41.9%) than those who support "temporarily suspended working and reemployment" pattern (37.0%) and choose the answer option: "Women should quit their job after giving birth and start working again when their child grows older" (See Chart 2)

Chart 2. Attitudes to women's working patterns (female respondents)



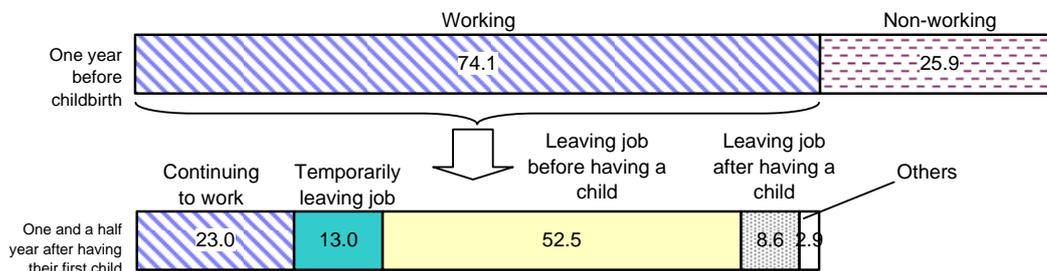
- (Notes) 1. Data from the Cabinet Office, "Opinion Survey on Gender Equality"
 2. The grand total may not be 100% because the questionnaire survey includes other answer options: "I have different views" and "I am not sure."

3. Change in female workers' working behaviors before and after childbirth

(23% of female workers continue working before and after childbirth)

Recently, Japanese women tend to work for more years than in the past, but many female workers quit their job for childbirth. Of workingwomen (i.e., women who had a job one year before childbirth), 23% continue working one and a half years beyond childbirth, while 13% of workingwomen left their job for childbirth and started working again within one and a half years after their childbirth (Chart 3).

Chart 3. Working patterns at one and a half years after having their first child



- (Notes) 1. Data from Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Statistics on Change in Mother's Employment Status before and after Childbirth (Special Report of Vital Statistics)", FY2003
 2. The following terminology is defined below:

Continuing to work: Consistently having a job both in pre- and post-childbirth periods;

Temporarily leaving job: Employed before having a child, but temporarily left the job for childbirth, and started to work again within one and a half years after having a child;

Leaving a job before having a child: Employed before having a child, but left the job at the time of childbirth, and remaining unemployed after having a child; and

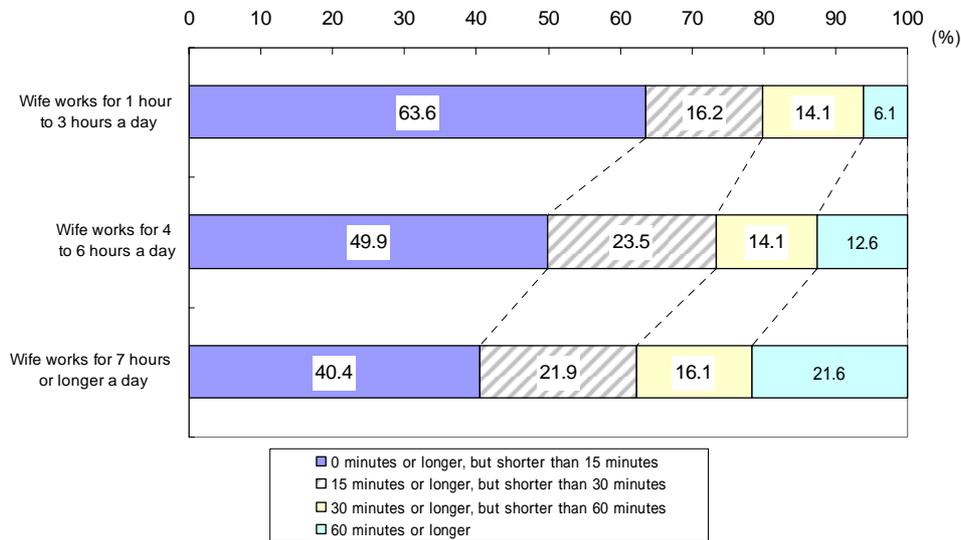
Leaving a job after having a child: Employed before having a child or at the time of childbirth, but left the job after having a child.

4. Men's participation in household chores and childcare responsibilities

(Men's active participation in household chores and childcare responsibilities will support female workers)

When a wife works for seven hours or longer a day, a larger percentage of husbands spend 60 minutes or longer with household chores and childcare responsibilities. This suggests that men's active participation in household chores and childcare responsibilities is important for women to continue working while raising children (Chart 4).

Chart 4. How many minutes a day does a husband spend on household chores and childcare responsibilities if the wife is working?



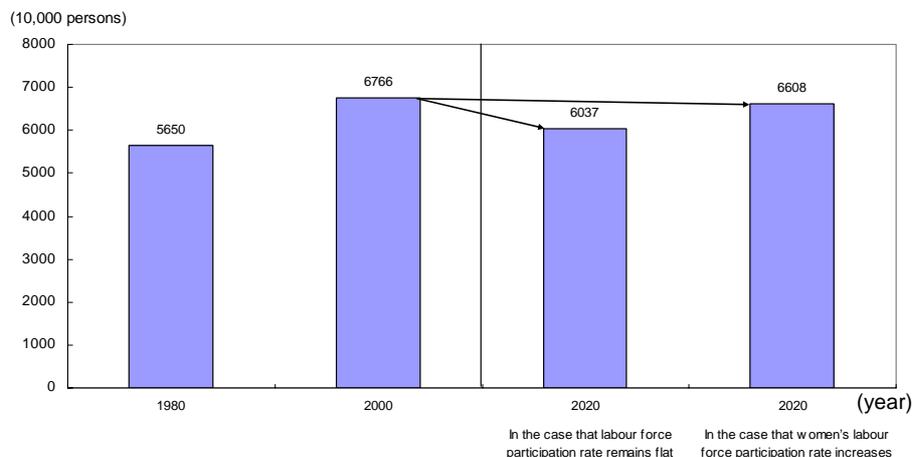
- (Notes) 1. Data from UFJ Institute, Ltd., "Research Report on Constraints in Japan's Labour Market and their Impact on Reemployment" (The research project was sponsored by the Cabinet Office in 2005.)
 2. The research project covers female workers with the youngest child between 4 years of age and elementary school age.

5. Women's active participation in labour force will energize Japanese society

(Women's active participation in labour force will mitigate the negative impact of a declining labour force population)

Women's more active participation in the labour market would significantly mitigate the negative impact of the declining labour force population. In this context, it is desirable that Japanese women would easily be able to find a job if they are wishing to work (Chart 5).

Chart 5. Estimated labour force population



- (Notes) 1. The pre-2000 data come from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Labour Force Survey," while the 2020 data (in the case that labour force participation rate remains flat) was estimated by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in July 2005.
 2. Gender Equality Bureau estimated the 2020 data (in the case that women's labour force participation rate increases), assuming that the gap in labour force participation rate between men and women for each age bracket would halve.

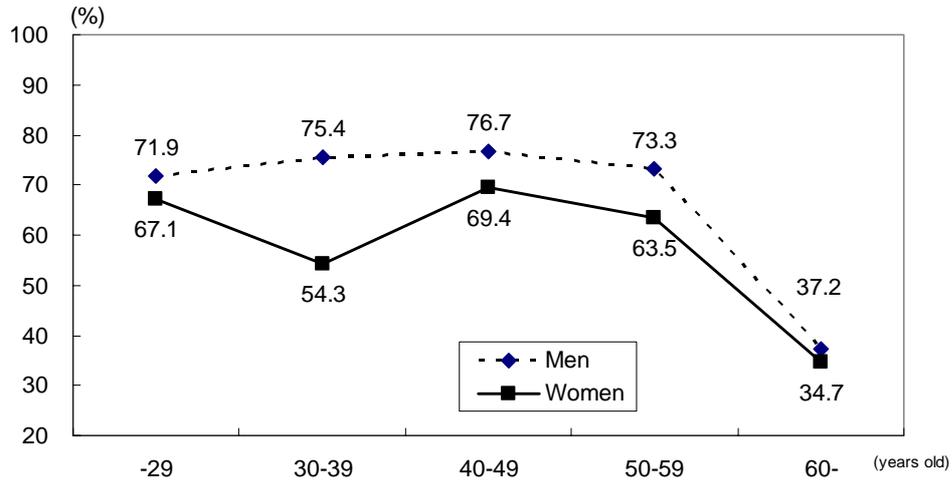
Section 2. Present conditions for women reentering the job market or starting new businesses

1. Reentering the job market

(Reemployment rate is lower for 30s women and highly educated women)

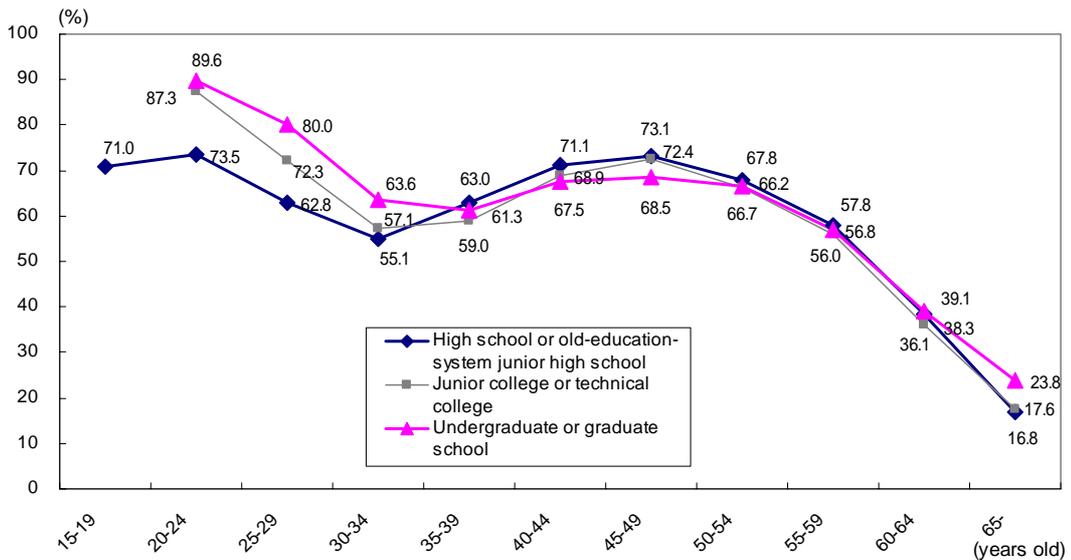
The percentage of women in their 30s wishing to work is relatively larger, but this group of women face a lower reemployment rate (Chart 6). This suggests a significant gap between their desires and reality. In addition, analysis on educational backgrounds reveals that university- or graduate-school-educated persons in their 40's register the lower employment rate (Chart 7).

Chart 6. Men and women's reemployment rate by age bracket



- (Notes)
1. Data from the Japan Institute of Labour, "Survey on Job Seekers (September 1998 to May 1999)"
 2. This is a questionnaire survey that covers job seekers who have visited one of 18 job security offices during the survey period.
 3. Reemployment rate represents job seekers who successfully find a new job as a percentage of the total number of job seekers.

Chart 7. Women's employment rate by educational background and age bracket

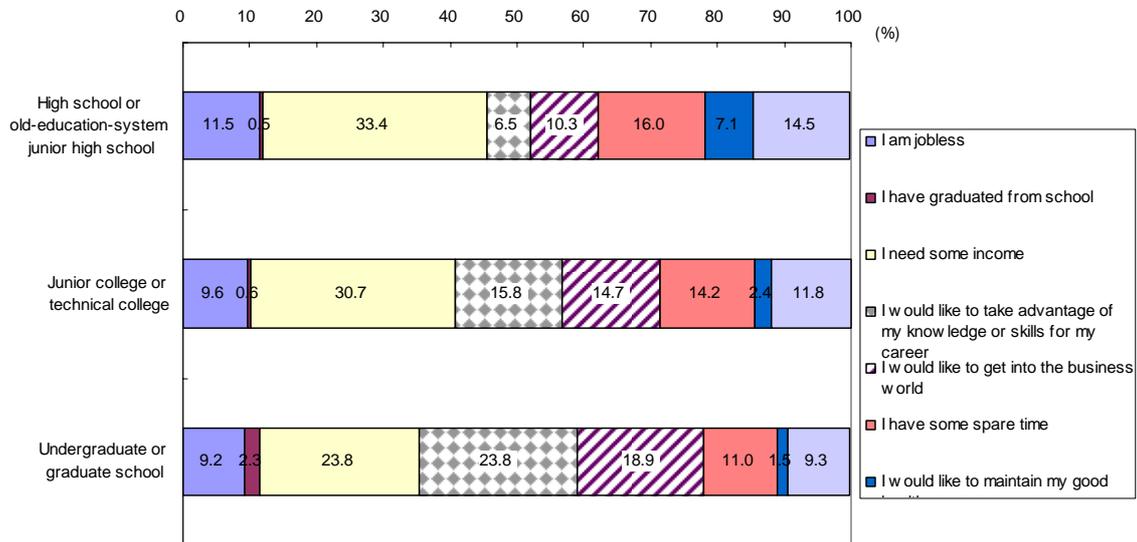


- (Notes)
1. Data from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Employment Status Survey (2002 edition)"
 2. Employment rate: The number of workers as a percentage of the total population age 15 or older, except for "students"

(Highly-educated women are inclined to take advantage of their knowledge or skills for their career)

A large percentage of university-educated women wish to work because they “would like to take advantage of knowledge or skills for career” or “would like to get into the business world.” This suggests that they tend to focus on factors other than personal income. This situation makes it more difficult for highly-educated women to find a new job (Chart 8).

Chart 8. Reasons why female job seekers want to find a new job (by educational background)

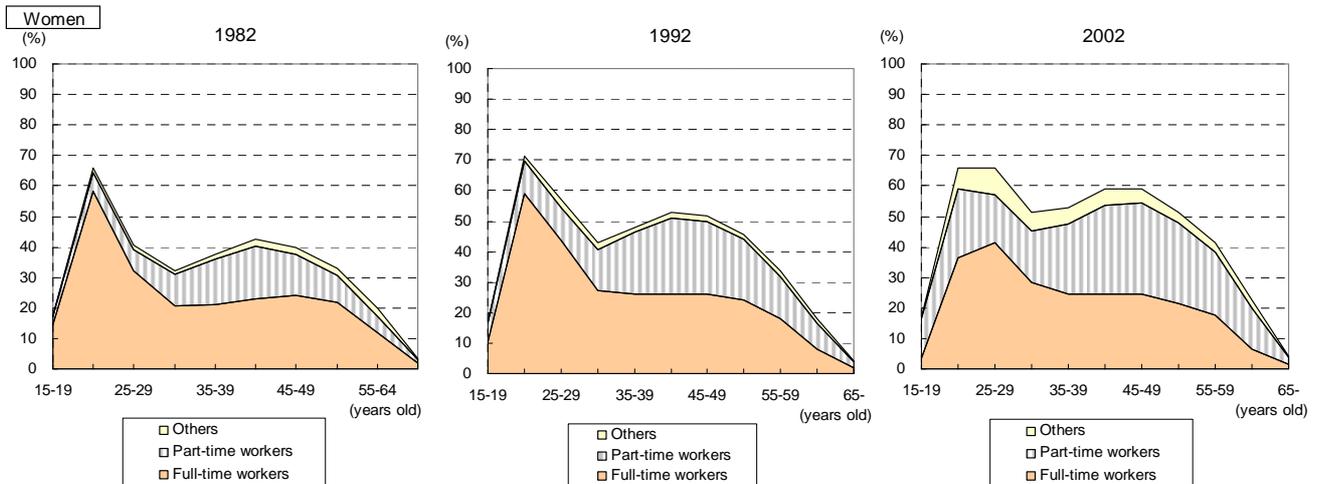


(Note) Data from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, “Employment Status Survey (2002 edition)”

(More and more women are reentering the labour market as part-time workers)

Employment patterns for female workers have become more diversified, and part-time workers account for a larger percentage in all age brackets. In particular, for post child-rearing women, the percentage of full-time workers has remained flat, but part-time workers have been registering a larger percentage. In all age brackets of age 40 or older, part-time workers account for a larger percentage than full-time workers as of 2002 (Chart 9). This suggests that many women are reentering the labour market as part-time workers.

Chart 9. Employment patterns by age bracket

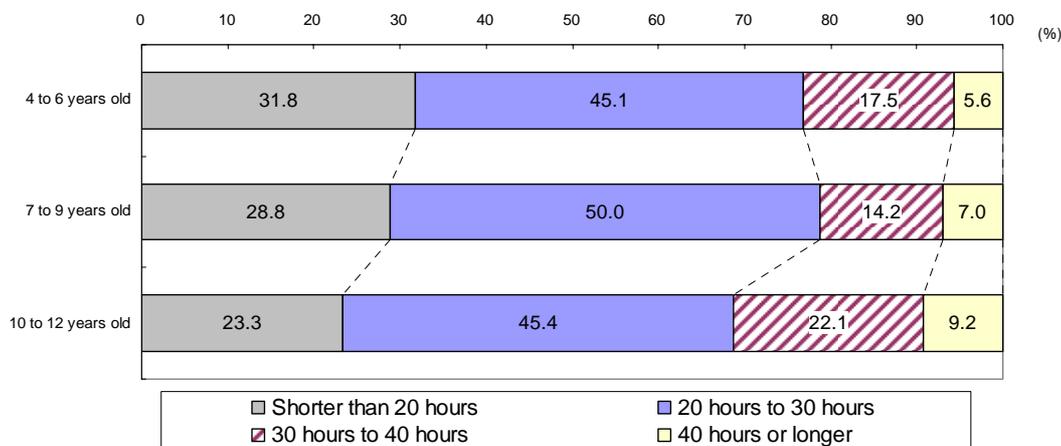


(Note) Data from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, “Employment Status Survey”

(More women wish to work for 30 hours or longer a week (such as full-time) when their children are in a higher-grade at elementary school)

A larger percentage of female job seekers is inclined to work for 30 hours or longer a week (such as full-time) when their youngest child is in a higher-grade at elementary school (Chart 10).

Chart 10. Desired number of weekly working hours (by youngest child's age)



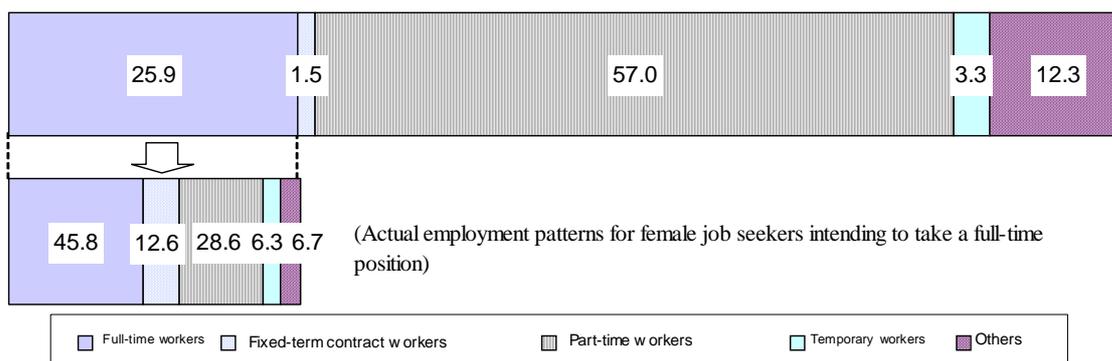
- (Notes)
1. Data from UFJ Institute, Ltd., "Research Report on Constraints in Japan's Labour Market and their Impact on Reemployment" (The research project was sponsored by the Cabinet Office in 2005.)
 2. The data shown above represent figures recalculated by UFJ Institute, Ltd.
 3. The research project covers female job seekers with the youngest child between 4 years of age and elementary school age.

(Difficulty in reentering the labour market as a full-time worker)

Female job seekers wanting a full-time position account for a little less than 30% of the total, while those intending to take a part-time position occupy almost 60%. In contrast, approximately half of female full-time position applicants actually find a full-time position as they want. Almost 30% of these applicants find jobs as part-time workers (Chart 11).

Chart 11. Gap between female job seeker's desires and the reality when reentering the labour market

(Employment patterns desired by female job seekers)



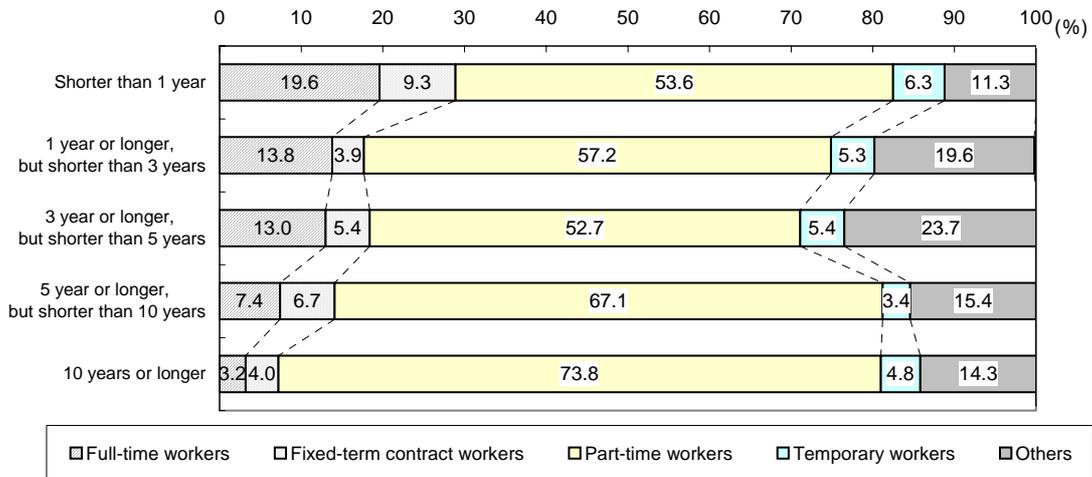
- (Notes)
1. Data from UFJ Institute, Ltd., "Research Report on Constraints in Japan's Labour Market and their Impact on Reemployment" (The research project was sponsored by the Cabinet Office in 2005.)
 2. The research project covers female workers who reentered the labour market and have the youngest child between 4 years of age and elementary school age.

(Female job seekers see less difficulties in taking a full-time position if they have a shorter interval before reentering the labour market)

If female job seekers have a longer interval since leaving their former job, they face larger difficulties in finding a new job as a full-time worker. This suggests that female job seekers would see less difficulty in taking a

full-time position if they have a shorter interval before reentering the labour market (Chart 12).

Chart 12. Employment patterns for female workers who reentered the labour market (by female worker's nonworking interval period)

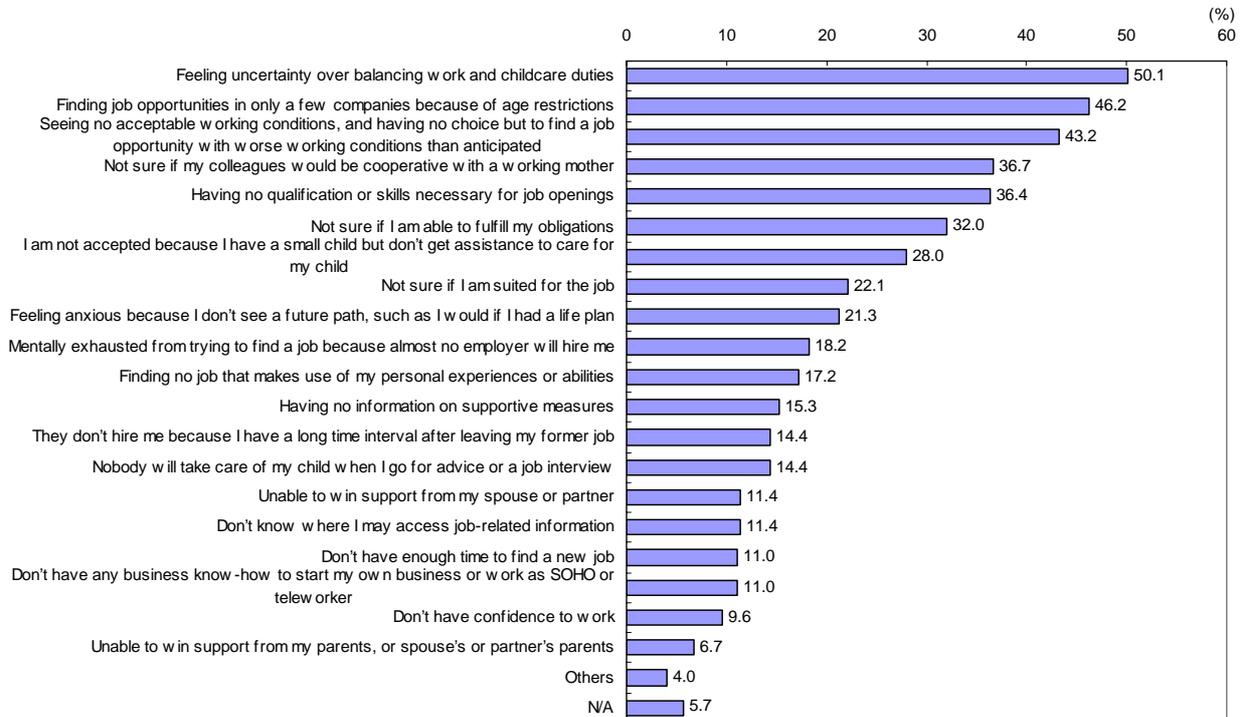


- (Notes) 1. Data from UFJ Institute, Ltd., “Research Report on Constraints in Japan’s Labour Market and their Impact on Reemployment” (The research project was sponsored by the Cabinet Office in 2005.)
2. The research project covers female workers who reentered the labour market and have the youngest child between 4 years of age and elementary school age.

(Problems and uncertainties in finding a new job: Work-and-childcare balance and corporate recruitment practices)

Women are facing difficulties in finding new jobs because they experience many problems, such as “feeling uncertainty over balancing work and childcare duties,” “finding job opportunities in only a few companies because of age restrictions,” and “seeing no acceptable working conditions.” (Chart 13)

Chart 13. Problems and uncertainties in finding a new job



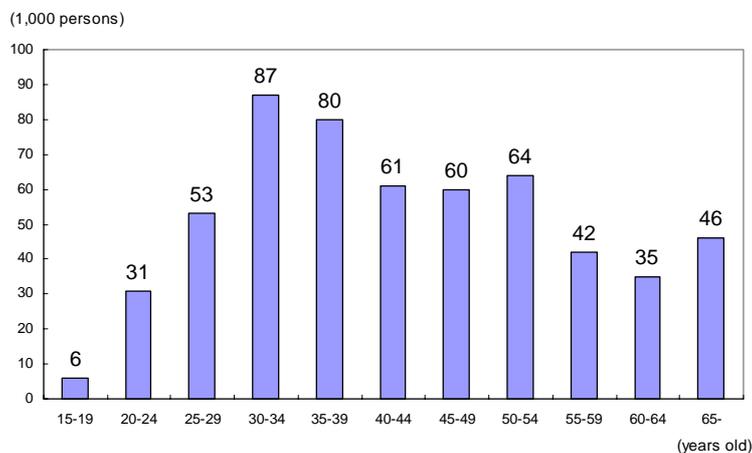
- (Notes) 1. Data from UFJ Institute, Ltd., “Research Report on Constraints in Japan’s Labour Market and their Impact on Reemployment” (The research project was sponsored by the Cabinet Office in 2005.)
2. The research project covers female workers with the youngest child between 4 years of age and elementary school age.

2. Starting a new business

(There are many potential female business owners in their child-rearing years)

Of women intending to start working or change their job, women in their 30s (i.e., in their child-rearing years) have a stronger intention to start their own businesses when compared with others in another age bracket (Chart 14).

Chart 14. Women intending to start their own business (by age bracket)



- (Notes) 1. Data from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, “2002 Employment Status Survey”
2. “Women intending to start their own business”: Percentage of respondents who fall under additional job seekers, career-changers or job seekers, and opt for self-owned business.

3. Civic activities at NPO

(Women will actively participate in NPOs as their renewed challenge)

After their childcare burden peaks, some women find a new job, but some other women start participating in various community activities. Civic groups consisting of “women only or almost all women” register the highest percentage at 38.3%, suggesting that women are actively participating in civic activities.

As stated earlier, if women quit their jobs due to marriage or childbirth and then try to find new jobs after their childcare burden peak passes, they face significant difficulties in finding new jobs. In particular, it is more difficult to find a full-time position as the time interval between the last job and the search for a new job gets longer. Specifically, women should develop their skills and collect sufficient information as soon as possible in order to achieve their renewed challenge.

Corporations are still reluctant to accept mid-career females. In this context, it is desirable that employers abolish their age restrictions for hiring new employees and provide a better environment that would appropriately balance work and childcare responsibilities both for male and female workers (including mid-career females) during their child-rearing years.

A significant number of motivated women are starting new businesses or participating in NPOs. In fact, women have created innovative outcomes in many cases. Women’s active participation is necessary for both a revitalization of Japanese society and for women’s self-fulfillment.

Section 3. Toward a society where everyone is able to reenter the job market or start a new business

1. Desirable future for the Japanese society

(1) A society where everyone may work on their renewed challenge

It is a society where anyone is able to find a job (or start their own business) as many times as they like and to totally fulfill their individuality and abilities by opening up their own life possibilities. It is a society where women leaving their job due to childcare responsibilities would not adversely affect their future career.

(2) A society where people are able to select their own lifestyle

It is a society where every woman is able to win assistance from her family members and the society for appropriately balancing work and childcare responsibilities, to flexibly modify her behavior at her life stage, and to plan her own personal life as she so chooses.

(3) A society where people may raise their children, free from anxiety for the future

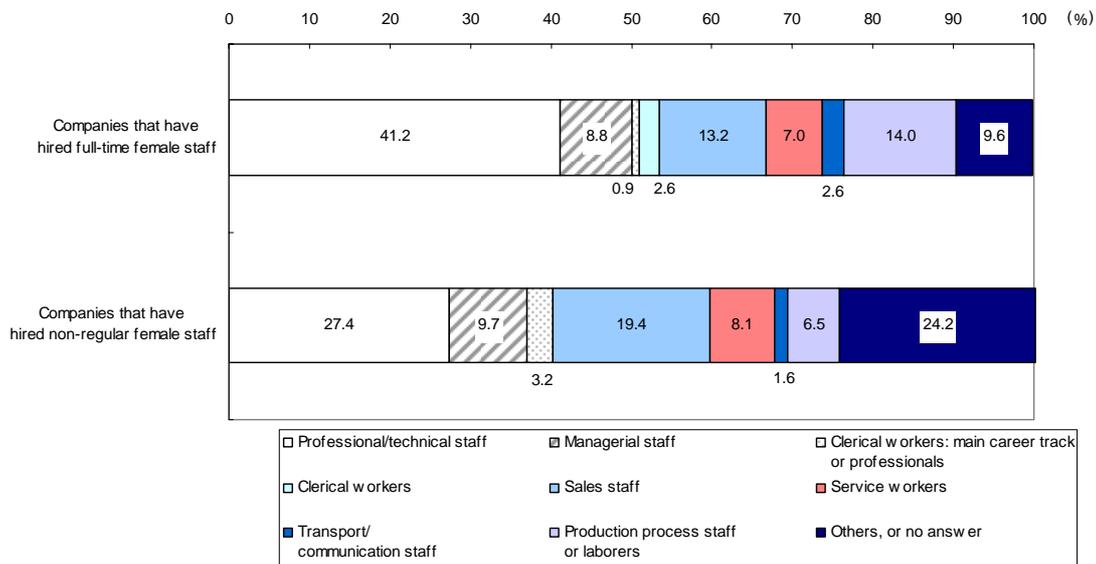
It is a society where people have diverse options or renewed challenges at their life stage and, as a result, may raise their children with mutual cooperation between men and women, free from anxiety for the future.

2. Corporate needs and women's willingness

(Companies want highly professional or technical human resources)

According to a brief survey on corporations that have hired mid-career females as full-time staff, many of these corporations seek highly professional or technical staff. In this sense, highly professional or technical female workers will quite easily find a new job (Chart 15).

Chart 15. What kind of staff do companies feel a lack of?
(The chart covers corporations that have hired mid-career females.)

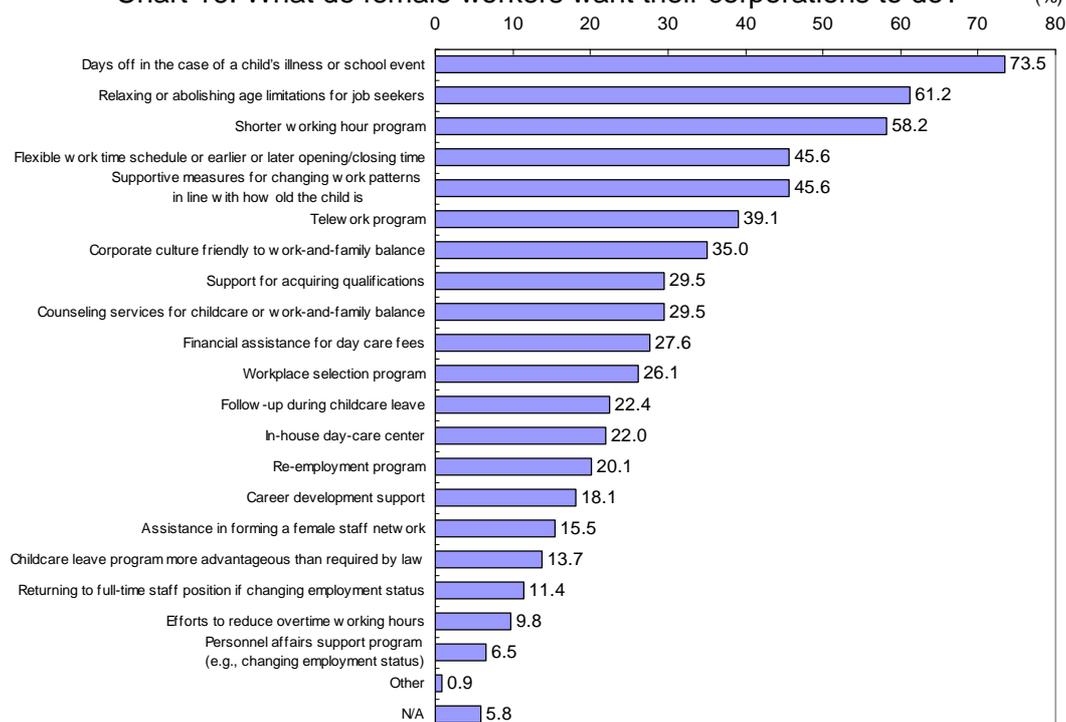


(Notes) Data from UFJ Institute, Ltd., “Research Report on Constraints in Japan’s Labour Market and their Impact on Reemployment”
(The research project was sponsored by the Cabinet Office in 2005.)

3. Assistance from corporations or NPOs (Corporate supportive programs desired)

A lot of female workers would like their corporations to take the following types of supportive actions: Work-and-family balance supportive programs (e.g., “days off in the case of child’s illness or school events” and “shorter working hour program”); and corporate recruitment practices (such as “relaxing or abolishing the age limitation for job seekers”).(Chart 16).

Chart 16. What do female workers want their corporations to do? (%)



- (Notes) 1. Data from UFJ Institute, Ltd., "Research Report on Constraints in Japan's Labour Market and their Impact on Reemployment" (The research project was sponsored by the Cabinet Office in 2005.)
 2. The research project covers nonworking women who have intention to work and with the youngest child between 4 years of age and elementary school age.

4. Supportive measures available from the government (present and future problems)

(Plan of Support for Women's Renewed Challenge)

The government compiled "Plan of Support for Women's Renewed Challenge" in December 2005. In order to comprehensively support women in finding job opportunities or starting new businesses after leaving their job due to childcare responsibilities, the plan has the five pillars described below. The government intends to take concrete action mainly in FY2006.

(1) Establishing local networks to support women's renewed challenges

Setting up local supportive networks and counseling desks so that women raising children will have access to supportive information and counseling services necessary to meet their renewed challenges

(2) Supportive educational and skill development activities

Providing strongly motivated women with more opportunities for educational or skill development activities to encourage employment

(3) Supportive reemployment

Providing supportive measures for smoother reemployment, such as setting up Mother's Hello Work; encouraging the private sector to support for reemployment of women by taking the following approaches: reaching out to the business and labour communities, collecting information on and honoring best practices, easing help-wanted age limitations, and diffusing working-mother-friendly management practices among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and supporting talented female researchers so that they will easily come back to work after temporarily stopping their research activities because of childbirth or childcare responsibilities.

(4) Supporting entrepreneurial endeavors

Providing support on knowledge and know-how or loans necessary for business operations

(5) Information services and research activities at the central government level

Efficiently providing on-line information for job seekers or entrepreneurs on the Internet; and providing comprehensive life-planning support program for women around the time of childbirth

(Regional women's renewed challenge support programs)

Regional gender equality centers have been taking innovative actions, which include the following measures to support women's renewed challenges:

(Tokyo Women's Plaza)

In FY2003, Tokyo Women's Plaza held the training session, "Practical Program for Women: Do you want to work again? Join us if you want to work again!" This training session provides lectures on highly practical job-hunting know-how, such as how to easily balance work and household and childcare responsibilities. This two-day-long training session was attended by 75 participants.

(Gender Equality Centers: Yokohama, Yokohama Minami, and Yokohama Kita)

Since 1988, these centers have been holding women's career planning program, "Reemployment Preparation Course Rutoravaie." According to the September 2003 follow-up survey on women who have completed this course, 75% of respondents have successfully become employed. If including women who are currently unemployed but have worked in the past, 87% of the respondents have worked since they completed the course. The program has yielded significant results.

(Kyoto Women's Center)

Kyoto Women's Center plays an important role in supporting women's renewed challenges in Kyoto because the center provides the following services: career counselor's advice services to support women's renewed challenges; reemployment preparatory seminars on practicable know-how or skills; seminars for female entrepreneurs; and female entrepreneurs' club "Co-Co." Six companies have their offices at "Women Challenge Office," which is the nation's first female entrepreneur incubator. They provide childcare support services as well as other services that make women's lives happier and more meaningful.

(Kumamoto Gender Equality Center)

As Kumamoto Prefecture's Community Center "Parea" is a multi-purpose facility (i.e., gender equality center, NPO/volunteer cooperation center, lifelong learning support center, job-hunting counseling/support center), the Center provides career counselor job-hunting advice services, fosters career advisors, and holds lectures for women who intend to start their own businesses. It also prepared a "Case Book on Women's Renewed Challenges in Kumamoto," which provides specific information on women's activities.

(Necessary actions for the future)

It is necessary to take the following future actions so that female workers will be able to easily pursue their careers free from anxiety while raising children.

(1) Providing supportive measures with due consideration to female workers during their child-rearing years

Working mothers do not have enough time to obtain necessary information or services. In this context, it is necessary to provide web-based information, support their skill development, and expand counseling services for working mothers. It would be also desirable if they had easy access to childcare or job hunting support information in their neighborhood, or if they were able to use various facilities when they go out with their child.

It is also necessary to form support facility networks and increase the number of local counseling desks, in particular, at gender equality centers, so that women will have easy access to one-stop information or services that meet their needs.

(2) Expanding necessary childcare support services for women's renewed challenge

It is also necessary to take policy initiatives so that women can easily use the work-and-childcare balance supportive services (such as childcare services) when they collect information, attend seminars or lectures, or prepare for job hunting.

(3) Encouraging corporations to take actions friendly to working mothers

It is necessary to encourage corporations to take the following actions: adopting reemployment programs; providing more job opportunities (such as full-time positions) for women who have quit their job due to childcare responsibilities; and easing age restrictions for hiring new employees. It is also necessary to provide supportive measures so that more corporations would adopt shorter office hours, provide various working patterns, such as teleworkers, adopt more flexible personal management practices (such as promoting part-time workers to full-time staff), and treat part-time workers and full-time staff equitably.

In addition to making the efforts stated above, it is also important to continue providing appropriate support so that both male and female workers will be able to better balance their career, family, and community life and modify their way of working.

Chapter 1. Women's participation in decision-making processes (Percentage of female parliamentary members)

As of April 2006, the percentage of female Diet members hit a new record high in the House of Representatives, occupying 9.4% of all seats (45 members), while female members account for 14.0% (34 members) in the House of Councilors.

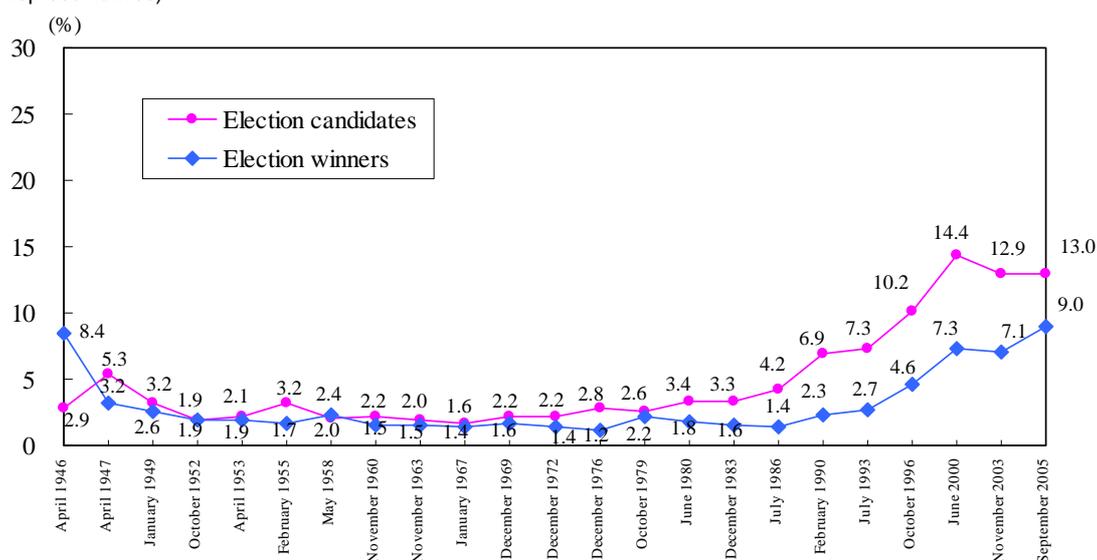
(Percentage of female candidates and election winners)

In the most recent general election of the House of Representatives in September 2005, women accounted for a slightly higher percentage (13.0%) of all election candidates, while female election winners hit an all-time high of 9.0%. This is probably 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 17).

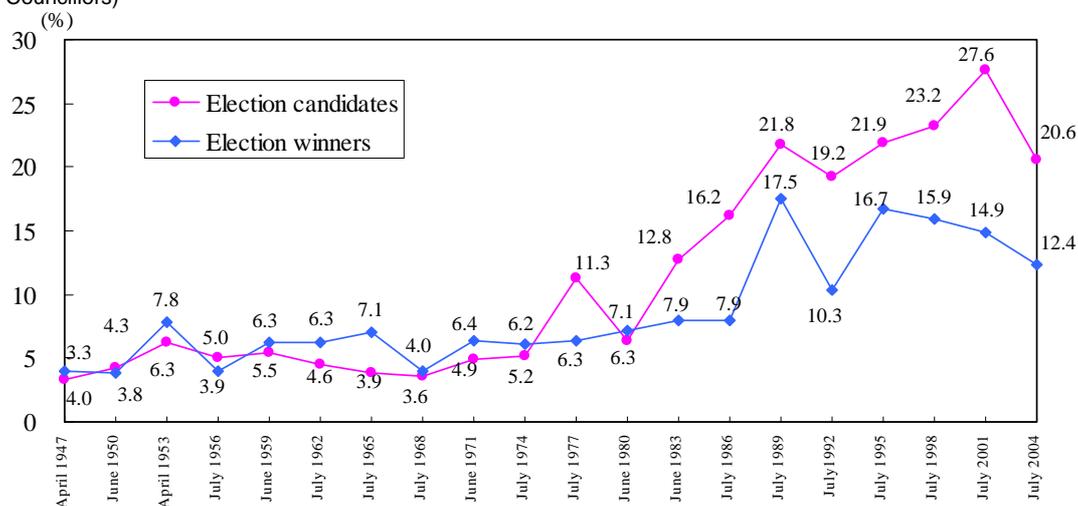
In the House of Councilors, the percentage of female candidates stands at 20.6% as of the most recent July 2004 election, falling sharply from 27.6% in the preceding election. Female election winners have been taking a downward trend recently, accounting for 12.4% of all election winners in the July 2004 election.(Chart 17).

Chart 17. Percentages of female election candidates and female election winners

(House of Representatives)



(House of Councilors)

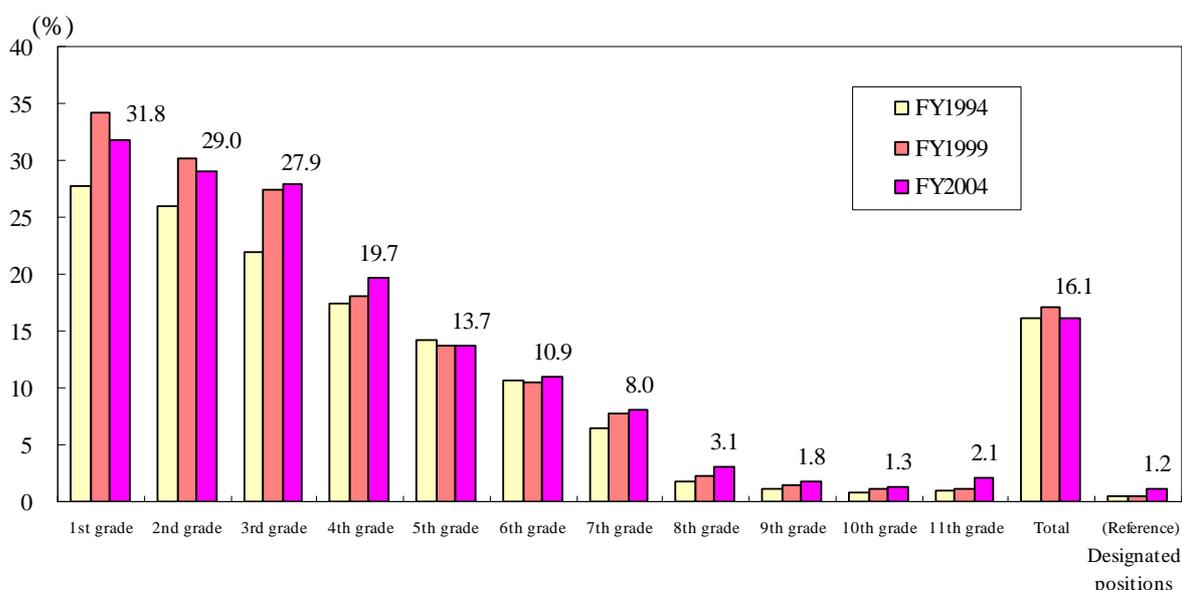


(Note) Data from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

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

Female officers have been generally increasing as a percentage of all government employees covered with the "salary schedule for administrative services (I)," but the percentage of female officials remains flat for higher positions. As of FY2004, women account for 31.8% of 1st-grade public employees who are in charge of routine work, but the female rate gets smaller for higher positions. Female public employees account for only 1.7% in the 9th grade or higher (directors in ministry headquarters or chiefs of government organization in local areas). Effective policy initiative is necessary to appoint female public employees to higher positions (Chart 18).

Chart 18. Percentage of female national government public employees by salary grade (Salary schedule for administrative services (I))



(Note) Data collected from National Personnel Authority, "Survey Report on Recruitment of National Government Regular Service Public Employees"

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

With regard to the percentage of female members at the national advisory council level, the government so far has been making efforts to achieve the goal of 30% participation rate as early as possible before the end of FY2005. As of September 30, 2005, female members have successfully accounted for 30.9% of the seats at the central government's advisory councils, achieving the numerical target six months earlier than the initial schedule.

With such achievement, HPGE (the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality) set the new target in April 2006 to prevent either male or female members from falling short of 40% of all members at national advisory councils until the year 2020.

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

As of December 2004, the rate of female assembly members stands at 21.5% in Tokyo ward councils, which represents the highest percentage. Women account for 16.3% in cabinet-order-designated city councils, 11.5% in city councils as a whole, 6.9% in prefecture assemblies, and 5.8% in town/village councils. Female local assembly members tend to register a higher percentage in metropolitan areas, while hitting a lower percentage in rural areas.

(Human development indices)

According to the "Human Development Report" published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2005, Japan ranked 11th for HDI (Human Development Index) among 177 nations and 14th for GDI (Gender Development Index) among 144 measurable nations. In contrast, for GEM (Gender Empowerment Measures), Japan stood 43rd among 80 measurable nations.

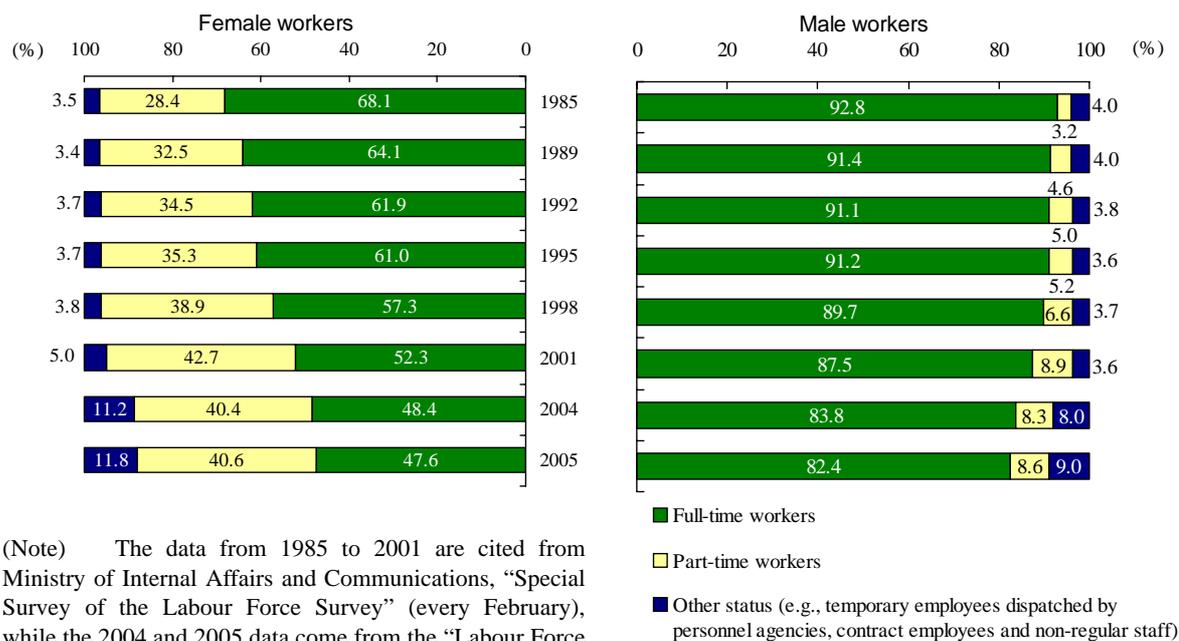
Chapter 2. Gender equality in the workplace

(Full-time workers register a smaller percentage, while dispatched workers show a rapid increase)

Women occupy 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 for 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 52.4% in 2005. Workers, especially female workers, are suffering much more difficulties in finding full-time positions (Chart 19).

Chart 19. Employment status of workers (excluding executives of company or corporation) in industries except for agriculture and forestry



In addition to non-regular workers such as part-timers, the number of dispatched workers is also recently increasing sharply. According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's "Manpower Dispatching Business Report," the number of dispatched workers stands at approximately 2.27 million as of 2004, decreasing 4.1% on a year-on-year basis. This is probably because registered temporary workers have been decreasing due to a decrease in redundant registrants and longer contract periods for temporary workers. As temporary workers have been increasing in real terms (if the annual total working hours of workers not regularly employed is divided by annual total labour hours for a regularly employed worker), they play more important roles in the labour force.

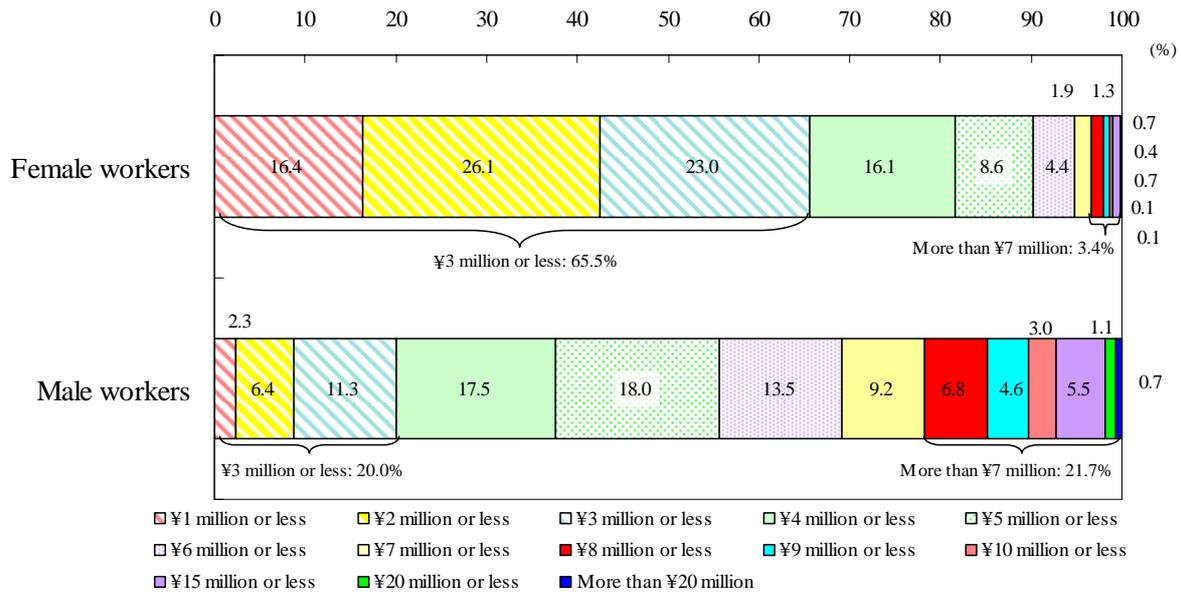
(Percentage of female managerial-level staff)

According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's "Basic Survey on Wage Structure," subsection chiefs registered the largest percentage (10.4%) of female managerial-level staff in 2005. However, women still occupy a very low percentage of higher positions, standing at 5.1% at the section chief level and 2.8% at the director level.

(More than 60% of female workers earn ¥3 million or less)

According to the National Tax Agency's "Statistical Survey on Salary in the Private Sector," (FY2004) 20.0% of male workers earn ¥3 million or less a year, while 65.5% of female workers are in the same income bracket (Chart 20).

Chart 20. Composition of salaried workers by income bracket

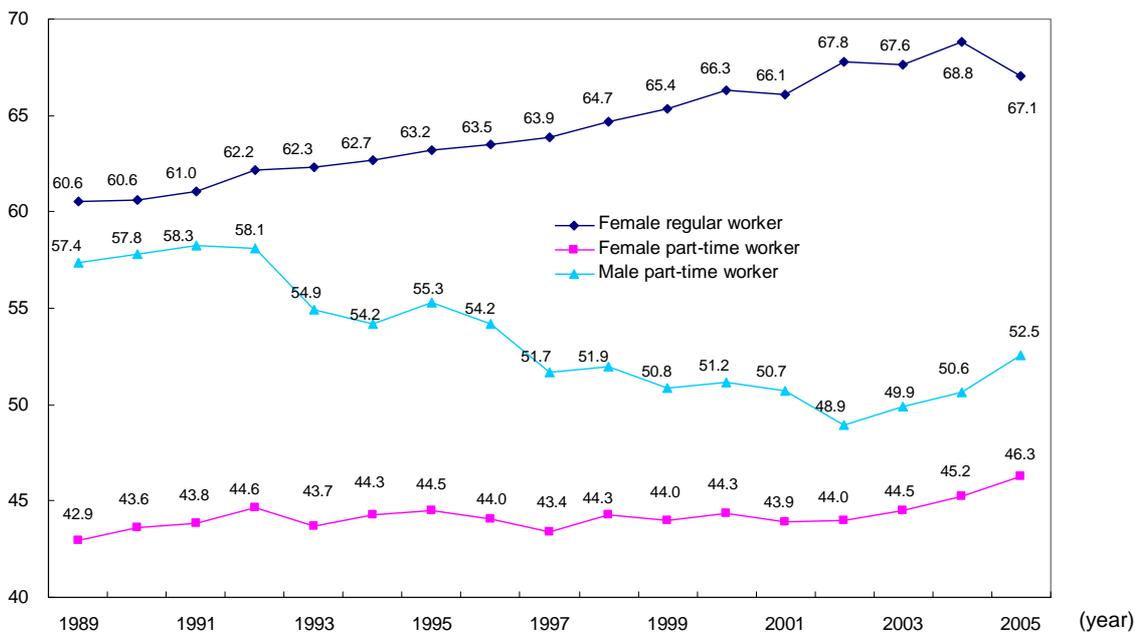


(Note) Data collected from the National Tax Agency's "Statistical Survey on Salary in the Private Sector" (FY2004)

(The wage gap is shrinking between male and female regular workers in the long term. The wage gap was also slightly reduced between part-time and regular workers.)

In the indexed figure (male regular workers' salary level: 100), female regular workers' salary level stands at 67.1. As for the wage gap between male regular workers and male/female part-time workers, the salary level for male part-time workers is 52.5 as of 2005, while that of female part-time workers remains almost flat at 42 to 46, registering 46.3 as of 2005. Although the wage gap becomes smaller by 1.1 points in 2005 on the year-on-year basis, female part-time workers still earn a much lower salary level than male regular workers (Chart 21).

Chart 21. Average hourly wages for workers (male regular worker = 100)

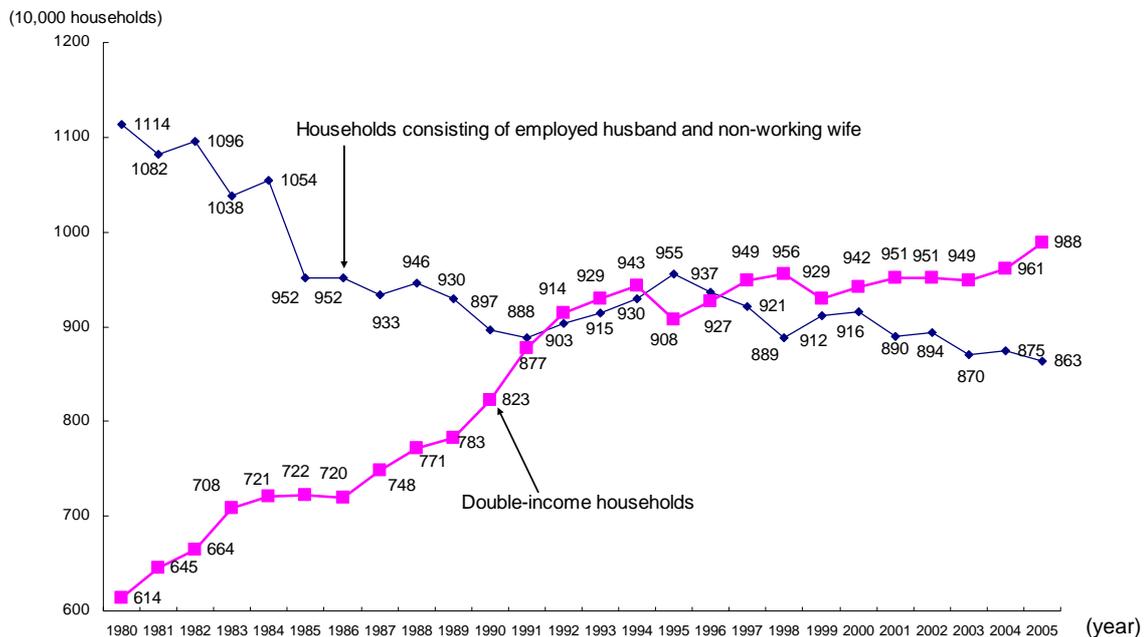


- (Notes) 1. The data were collected from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's "Basic Survey on Wage Structure"
- 2. The figures represent each category's average hourly salary as a percentage of a male full-time worker's average hourly salary level.

(The number of double-income households is increasing)

Since 1997, the number of double-income households has been exceeding that of single-income households that consist of an income-earning husband and a non-working wife (Chart 22).

Chart 22. Number of double-income households



- (Notes)
1. The data from 1980 to 2001 were cited from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' "Special Survey of the Labour Force Survey" (every February), while the 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 data were collected from the "Labour Force Survey (Detailed Tabulation)" (annual average).
 2. "Household consisting of employed husband and non-working wife" has a working husband (in industries other than agriculture and forestry) and a non-working wife (i.e., wife not in labour force or unemployed).
 3. "Double-income household" has a husband and wife who are both employed in industries other than agriculture and forestry.

Chapter 3. Balancing work and childcare

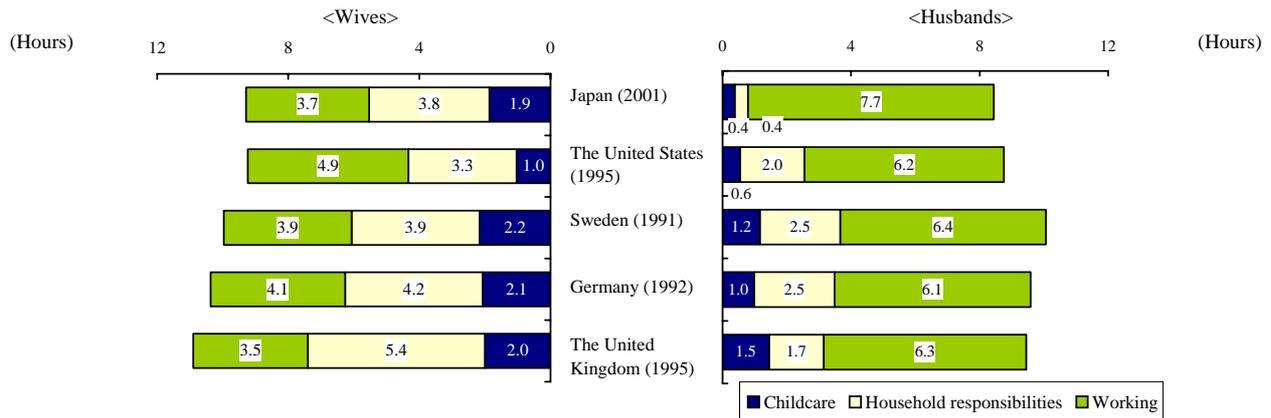
(Childbirth and childcare responsibilities pose much more significant impact on female workers than on male workers.)

According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "FY2004 Basic Survey on Employment Management Practice on Female Workers," 70.6% of female workers take childcare leave for childbirth, but only 0.56% of male workers take childcare leave for their wife's childbirth. Female workers account for 96.1% of the workers actually taking childcare leave, but male workers only occupy 3.9%. This suggests that female workers account for a disproportionately larger percentage of all workers actually taking childcare leave for childbirth.

(Mothers are assuming disproportionately heavier childcare duties)

Analysis on how husband and wife spend their time in their daily life has revealed that the husband spends much less time on household chores or childcare responsibilities than the wife regardless of whether or not the wife has a job. In the case of a double-income household, because wives have a job and also take on household chores and childcare responsibilities at the same time, they only have minimal spare time. In addition, Japanese husbands during the child-rearing years spend less time on childcare responsibilities and household duties than husbands in major foreign nations.(Chart 23).

Chart 23. International comparison of how many hours husband and wife spend on childcare, household duties and working when they have a small child

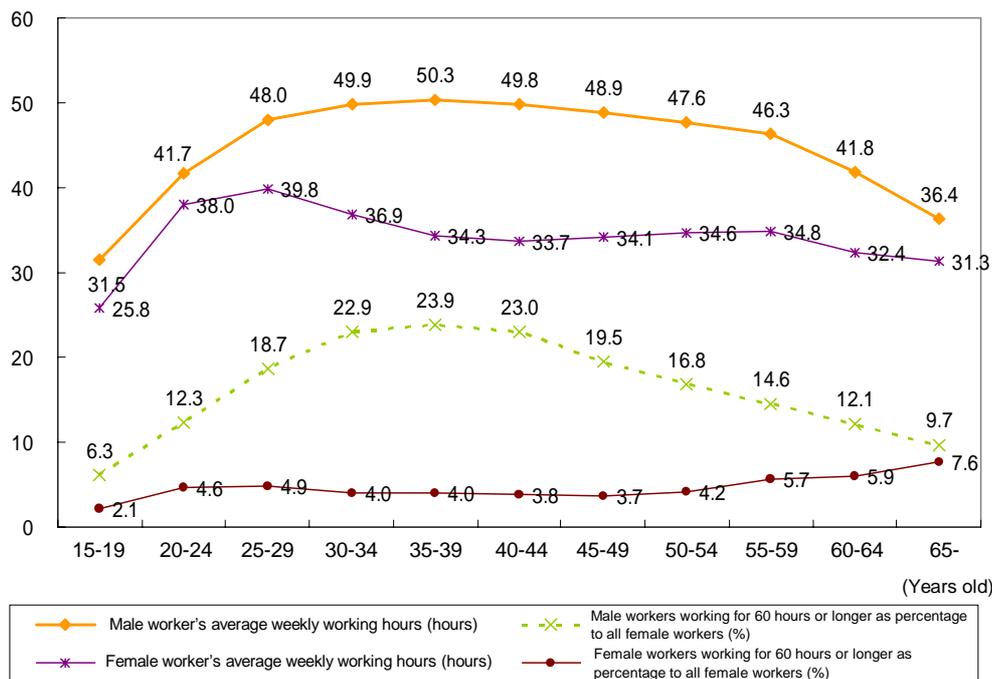


- (Notes)
1. Data The data from OECD, "Employment Outlook 2001" and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, "2001 Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities"
 2. In this chart, the model couple is assumed to have a child younger than 5 years old (or, younger than 6 years old in the case of Japan).
 3. The wife is assumed to be a full-time worker (or, a wife with occupation a job in the case of Japan). The figures for the husband are the average for all husbands.
 4. In terms of other nations than Japan, "household duties" means "other charge-free labours" in "Employment Outlook 2001."
 5. The figures for "household duties" in Japan represent the total hours spent on for "household duties," "Working" in the other nations means "paid labour" as mentioned in "Employment Outlook 2001."

(During the child-raising period, working husbands tend to spend longer hours in the workplace, but they only spend a short time on childcare)

Husbands spend very little time on childcare responsibilities because they work long hours during the child-rearing period. In terms of weekly average working hours, female workers at the age of 35-49 have relatively shorter working hours, but male workers in their 30s have very long working hours. Looking at the percentage of employees working for 60 hours or more a week, male workers in their 30s register the highest percentage of all age brackets (Chart 24).

Chart 24. Average weekly working hours for male and female workers by age bracket (except for agriculture and forestry)

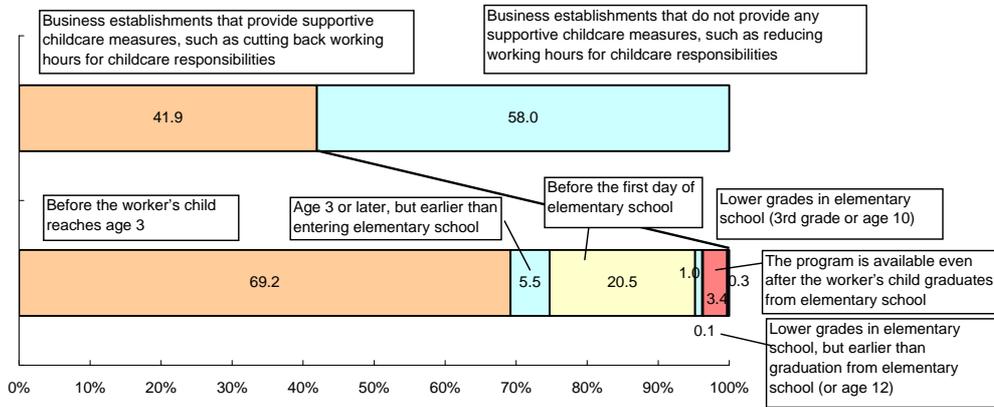


(Note) Data collected from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Labour Force Survey (2005)"

(Corporate support measures to properly balance work and childcare responsibilities)

According to "FY2004 Basic Survey on Employment Management Practice on Female Workers," 41.9% of business establishments have supportive childcare programs, such as cutting back working hours (Chart 25). These actions include: shorter working hours, flexible working hour programs, earlier or later opening/closing time, exemption of overtime working hours, in-house day-care center or other similar supportive measures, and corporate programs similar to childcare leave.

Chart 25. What percentage of business establishments provide supportive childcare programs, such as cutting back working hours for childcare responsibilities? At the maximum period of time, how long are workers eligible for these programs?

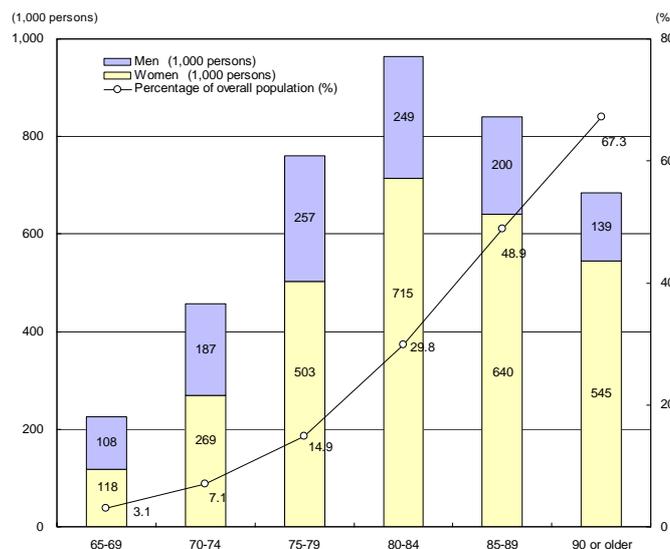


- (Notes)
1. Data from Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "FY2004 Basic Survey on Employment Management Practice on Female Workers"
 2. Childcare supportive program in this context means: (1) shorter working hours, (2) flexible working hour programs, (3) earlier or later opening/closing time, (4) exemption from overtime working hours, (5) in-house day-care center or other similar supportive measures, and (6) corporate program similar to childcare leave.

Chapter 4. Living of senior citizens
(Nursing-care burdens)

Nursing-care duties are closely related to the aging population problem. The number of elderly people (aged 65 or older) requiring nursing care stands at some 3.61 million, accounting for 16% of all elderly people aged 65 or older. People requiring nursing care only occupy for less than 5% of early-stage elderly people (aged 65 to 74), but this percentage gets higher as they become older, standing at 29.8% for those aged 80 to 84, and increasing substantially to 67.3% for those aged 90 or older. In addition, women account for more than 70% of all elderly people requiring nursing care (Chart 26).

Chart 26. Number of elderly people requiring nursing care by age bracket



- (Notes)
1. The data were collected from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Population Estimates" (as of October 1, 2004) as well as documents of the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry.
 2. The figures represent the number of elderly people who require nursing care and are listed on the beneficiary roster as of October 2004.

Chapter 5. Violence against women
(Potential Violence)

According to the Cabinet Office, “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2005),” 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 of “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). Of female respondents, 22.6%, and of male respondents, 14.8% have seen “once or twice” one of these experiences, while 33.2% of female respondents and 17.4% of male respondents have had such experiences “at least once.” (Chart 27)

Chart 27. Violence by spouse

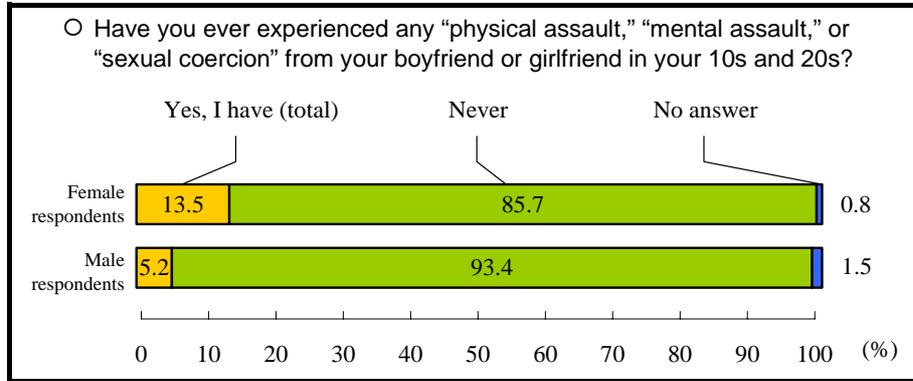


- (Notes)
1. Data from the Cabinet Office, “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2005)”
 2. Physical assault: Bodily assault, such as punching, kicking, pelting, and knocking over.
 3. Mental assault: Mental harassment, such as using verbal abuse that would deny personal integrity or closely checking 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.

(Violence by boyfriend or girlfriend)

According to the Cabinet Office, “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2005),” 13.5% of female respondents and 5.2% of male respondents (out of 1,550 respondents who have had any boyfriend or girlfriend in their 10s and 20s before marriage but have not married the boyfriend or girlfriend at a later date) have experienced either “physical assault,” “mental harassment or frightening threats,” or “sexual coercion” from their boyfriend or girlfriend. (Chart 28)

Chart 28. Violence by boyfriend or girlfriend



- (Notes)
1. Data from the Cabinet Office, “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2005)”
 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.

(Sex-related crimes)

According to the National Police Agency statistics, the number of recorded rape cases stands at 2,076 in 2005, exceeding 2,000 cases for 6 consecutive years, but recorded rape cases decreased by 100 cases (4.6%) on the year-on-year basis.

The number of recorded indecent assaults which had taken an upward trend from 1999 to 2003, switched downward in 2004 and stands at 8,751 cases in 2005, decreasing by 433 cases (4.7%) from the 2004 level. Police authorities make efforts to provide better conditions for sex-related crime victims through female officers' interviews and establishing some call centers.

(Prostitution)

The number of prostitution-related criminal offenses stands at 2,866 in 2005, increasing from the 2004 level. Out of the total 2,424 women in need of protection, minors account for 28.9%, decreasing 7.2 points from the 2004 level.

(Trafficking in persons)

According to the NPA statistics, the police authority arrested 83 criminals for trafficking in persons in 2005. The number of human trafficking victims stands at 117, increasing by 40 persons (51.9%) from the 2004 level.

(Sexual harassment)

In FY2004, gender-equality offices at prefectural labour bureau level received 7,706 counseling cases for sexual harassment. The number of counseling cases has increased by 303 (4.0%) from last year. Out of this total, 6,291 (81.6%) female workers asked for advice on sexual harassment at their workplace, increasing 367 cases from the FY2004 level.

(Stalking behavior)

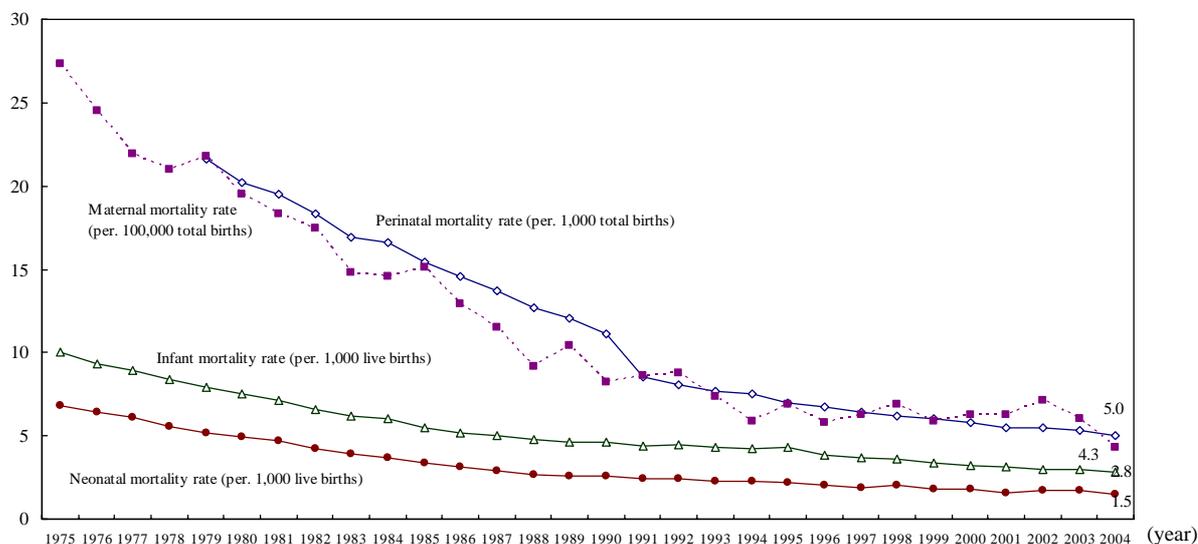
The number of stalking behavior cases reported to NPA stands at 12,220 in 2005, decreasing by 1,183 cases (8.8%) from the 2004 level. Women make up 88.7% of stalking victims, while men account for 89.7% of all assailants.

Chapter 6. Support lifelong health for women

(The indexes for maternal and child health have taken a downward trend)

The major indexes for maternal and child health conditions have been generally falling (Chart 29).

Chart 29. Indexes for maternal and child health conditions



- (Notes)
1. The data come from Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, “Vital Statistics of Japan”
 2. “Total births for maternal mortality rate” includes live births and foetal deaths (at 12 completed weeks and over of gestation).
 3. “Total births” for perinatal mortality rate includes live births and foetal deaths at 22 completed weeks and over of gestation.

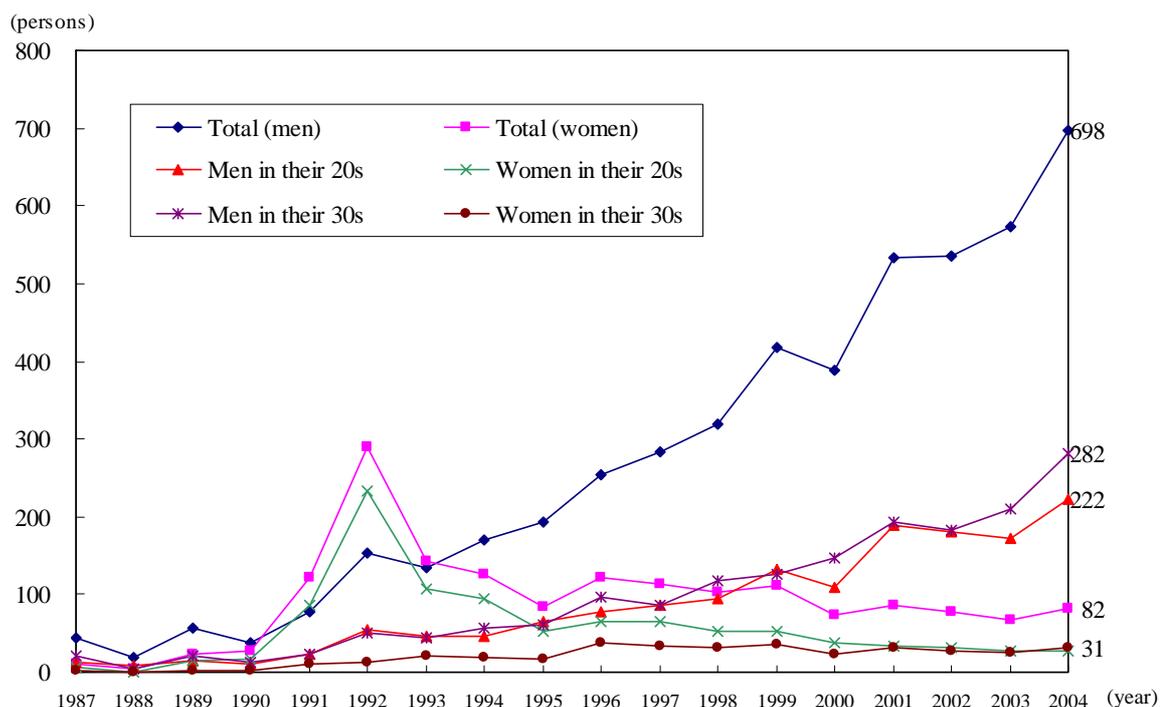
(The number of abortions is generally decreasing but is increasing in the younger generation)

In general, the number and rate of induced abortions (the proportion of induced abortions to 1,000 women aged 15 to 50) had decreased from 1975 to 2003 but has remained flat during these few years. However, the number of abortions has increased approximately 80% since 1980 among women younger than 20 years old. The younger generation accounts for a larger percentage of the total number of abortions. A total of 12,900 women have an abortion at the age of 19, suggesting one out of 55 women (18.4%) terminates a pregnancy when they are 19 years old.

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

In 2004, there were 780 new HIV carriers and 385 new AIDS patients, both hitting new high records (Chart 30). A total of 82.4% of HIV carriers were infected within Japan. From the viewpoint of age first reported, 38.9% of HIV carriers were infected with HIV in their 20s, which represents a high infection rate among young people.

Chart 30. Number of HIV-infected men and women by age bracket



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

Chapter 7. Gender equality in the media (Efforts in the media)

Mass media has significant impact on Japanese citizens because Japanese people tend to access mass media for long hours a day. In this context, Japan's mass media have prepared their own guidelines on news reports and public relations. Broadcasting media firms also have an independent agency that would contribute to correct broadcasting as well as broadcasting ethics and would quickly and properly address complaints, in particular, human rights matters and juvenile affairs.

These guidelines include the Press Ethic Code (The Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association), NHK Program Standard (for domestic programs), NAB Broadcasting Criteria (applicable to radio and TV programs).

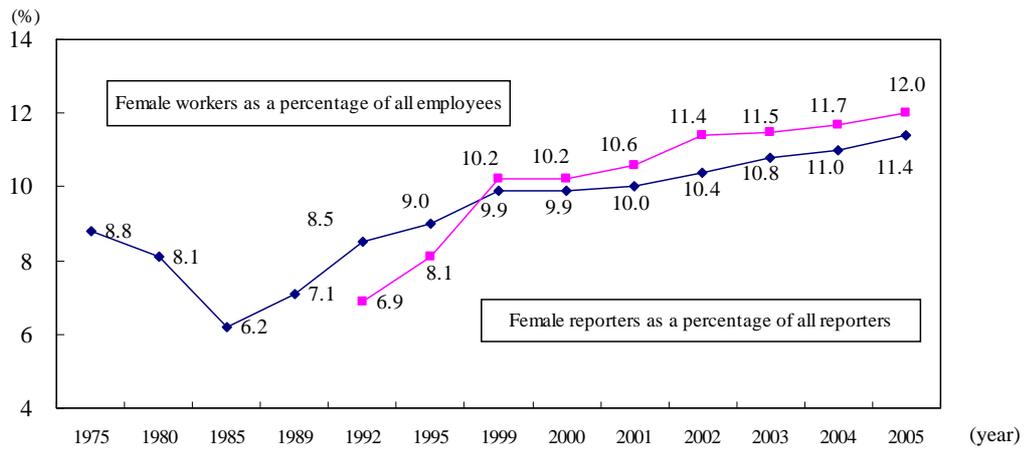
To improve ethics and program quality, Japan Broadcasting Corporation and National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan jointly established the "Broadcasting Ethics & Program Improvement Organization (BPO)."

(Women's steadily increased participation in the media)

Women's active participation in the media will play an important role in preventing biased broadcasting programs, regulating sexual/violent expressions, and spontaneously paying due attention to women's rights. Women have been gradually accounting for a higher percentage of all employees, all reporters and all managerial officials at newspaper firms, private TV/radio stations and the Japan Broadcasting Corporation(Chart 31).

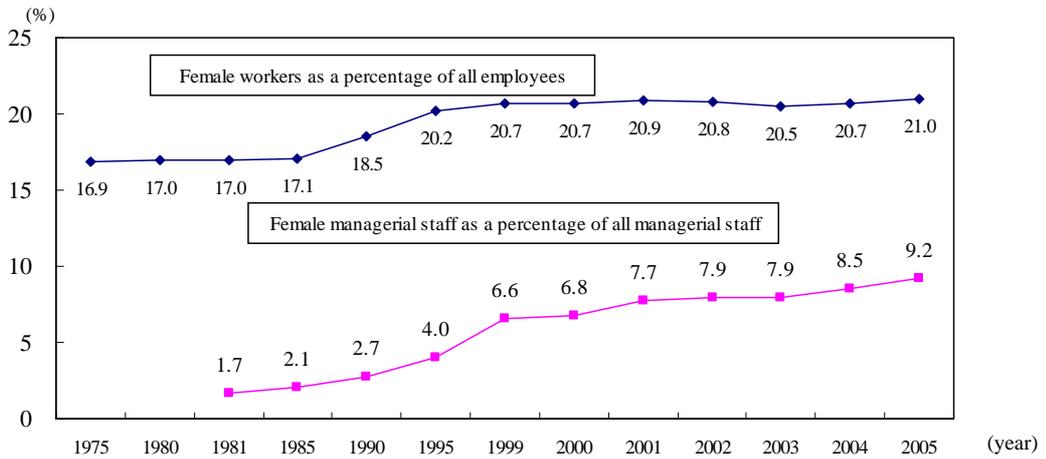
Chart 31. Percentage of female staff in media

Newspapers



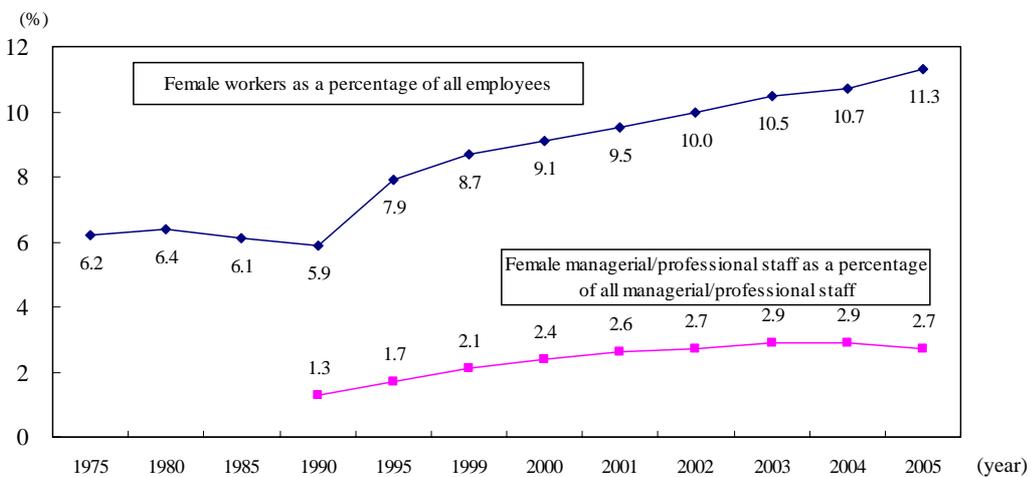
(Note) The data were collected from documents of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association.

Commercial broadcasting stations



(Note) The data were collected from documents of the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan.

Japan Broadcasting Corporation



(Note) The data were collected from documents of Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

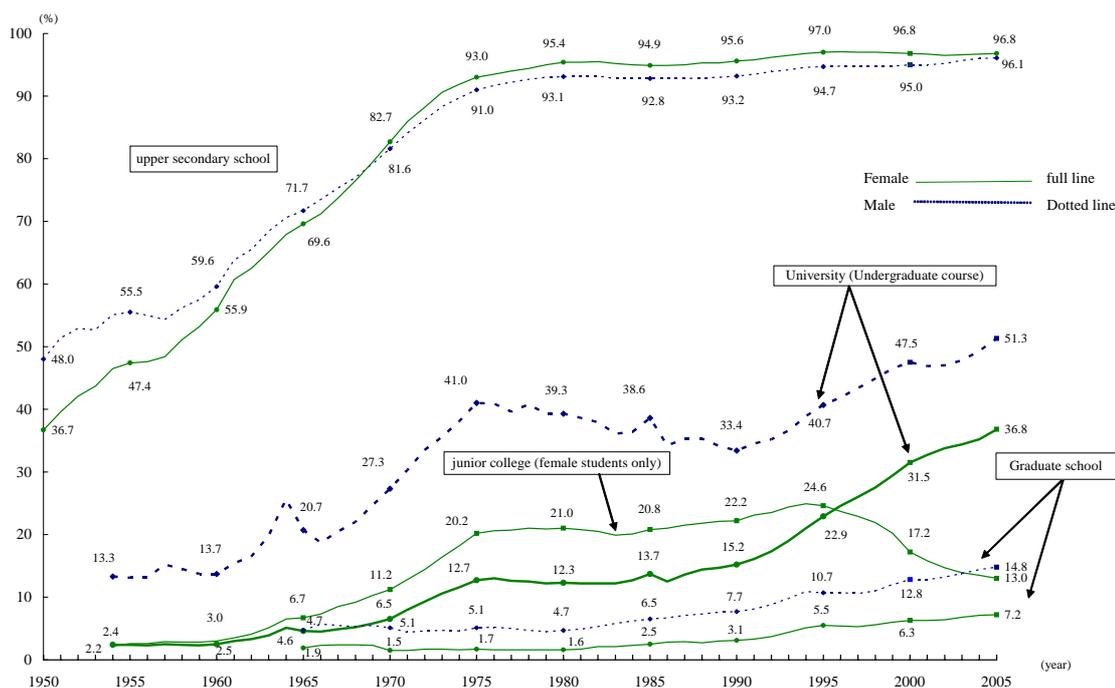
Chapter 8. Gender equality in education

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

In FY2005, advancement rate was 96.8% for women and 96.1% for men, which suggests a few more female students enter high school than male students. The university (undergraduate course) advancement rate stands at 51.3% for men and 36.8% for women in FY2005, indicating that male students see the rate 15 points higher than female students. Since 13.0% of female students enter junior colleges, the women's total advancement rate for higher education is 49.8%. While the women's university advancement rate has been rising recently, the advancement rate for junior colleges is falling sharply over these few years after hitting a peak at 24.9% in 1994.

An increasing number of male and female students are entering graduate schools immediately after completing their undergraduate studies. The graduate school advancement rate stands at 14.8% for male students and 7.2% for female students as of FY 2005 (Chart 32).

Chart 32. Advancement rate for each school category



- (Notes)
1. The data were collected from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's "School Basic Survey."
 2. "Upper secondary education" represents the 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" represent 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" represents the 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.

(The gap in students' major fields)

At the undergraduate course, female students majoring in the social sciences make up the largest percentage for these years. In 2005, female students accounted for approximately 30% of all students majoring in the social sciences, while the percentage of female students majoring in engineering stands at 10.5%, suggesting a gender gap in students' major fields.

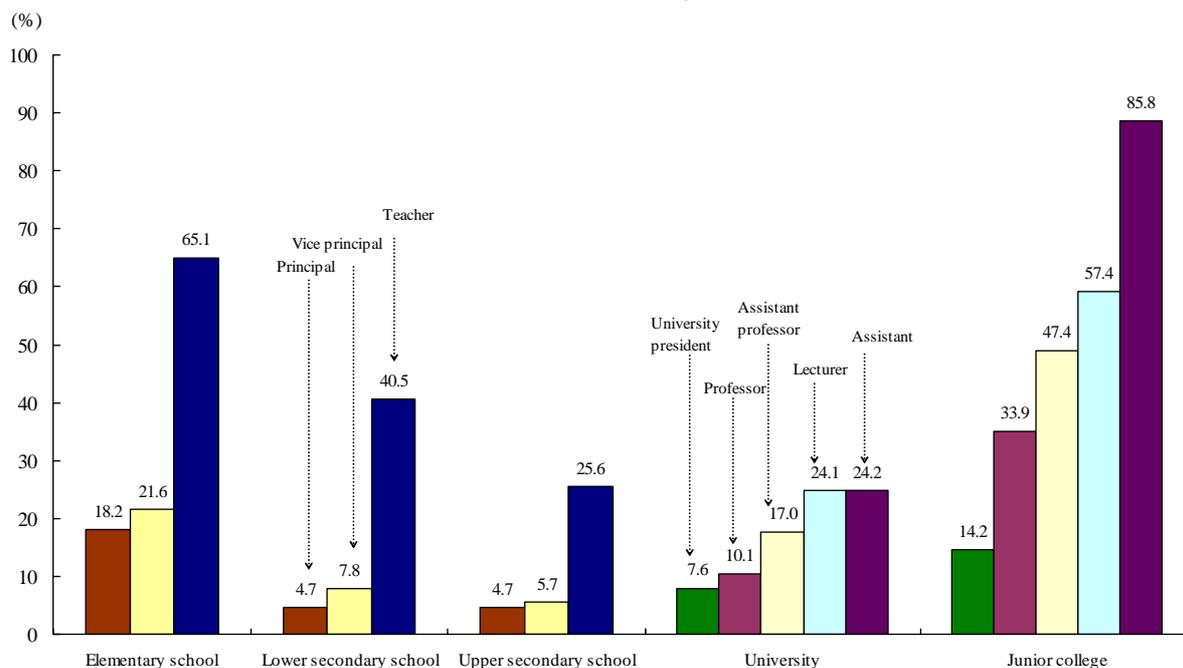
At the graduate school, the number of female students majoring in humanities or the social sciences makes up the largest percentage for master's courses, followed by engineering and education. The number of female students is significantly increasing in major fields such as the social sciences, engineering, health, and humanities. Women also occupy 45.2% of all students entering graduate school from the workforce in 2005. In doctoral courses, many students major in health and humanities. At new graduate law schools established since April 2004, female students account for 30.2% of all students.

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

Female teachers occupy 60% of all teaching jobs at elementary school, but the percentage of female teachers becomes lower at lower secondary school and upper secondary school. The percentage of female principals and vice principals is upwardly increasing in the long term, from 4.1% in 1990 to 18.2% in 2005. However, female principals and vice principals still register a lower percentage than female teachers.

Women account for more than 40% 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 33).

Chart 33. Percentage of full-time female teachers
(at elementary, secondary and higher education levels)



(Note) The data were cited from Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "School Basic Survey (FY2005)"

Part 2: Policies Implemented in FY 2005 to Promote Formation of a Gender-Equal Society

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

- After the Prime Minister asked CGE (Council for Gender Equality) for the basic philosophy of “Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality” in July 2004, Specialist Committees on Gender Equality Basic Plan and Specialist Committee on Violence against Women were surveyed and examined as to how to prepare the Basic Plan. On July 25, 2005, these two specialist committees reported their ideas to CGE. In turn, CGE submitted its report to the Prime Minister the same day. After the government prepared the Basic Plan draft and submitted it to CGE for consideration, the Cabinet approved the Basic Plan on December 27, 2005.
- By analyzing statistical data, the Specialist Committee on Declining Birthrate and Gender Equality surveyed and examined a possible relationship between the falling birthrate and gender equality. In September 2005, the Specialist Committee compiled its report “International Comparison of the Social Environments regarding Declining Birthrates and Gender Equality.”
- In July 2005, HPGE (Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality) established the “Committee for deliberation on support measures for women’s renewed challenge,” which consists of concerned ministers and is chaired by Chief Cabinet Secretary. After examining comprehensive measures that will encourage women to find new jobs or start their own businesses after leaving their former jobs for childcare responsibilities or other reasons, the Review Meeting compiled “Women’s Renewed challenge Support Plan” in December 2005.

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

- In order to increase the number of female members at the national advisory council level, the government has been making systematic efforts to achieve the goal of 30% participation rate as early as possible before the end of FY2005. As of September 30, 2005, female members have successfully accounted for 30.9% of the seats at the central government advisory councils, achieving the numerical target six months earlier than the initial schedule. In addition, HPGE set a new target in April 2006 to prevent either male or female members from falling short of 40% of all members at national advisory councils until the year 2020.

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

- To eliminate misunderstanding or confusion on “gender”, the Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality clearly defines “gender” perspectives and describes undesirable social practices. In January 2006, the Cabinet Office indicated that it was appropriate not to use the term “gender-free” in local governments in the future. The Minister for Gender Equality travels all over the nation to hold “Minister’s Gender Equality Workshops” for government officials and local assemblypersons so that they will deepen an appropriate 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

- Since September 2004, Labour Policy Council’s panel on Employment Opportunity Policies has been discussing possible policy initiatives to further push ahead with more equal employment opportunities for men and women. In December 2005, the Council submitted its opinion paper that describes future policy initiatives on equal employment opportunities for men and women. The opinion paper calls for policy actions: expanding the prohibited sexual discrimination, such as prohibiting indirect discrimination; beefing up restrictions on disadvantageous employment practices for women due to their pregnancy or childbirth; and enhancing employer’s managerial responsibilities related to sexual harassment. In accordance with this opinion paper, the MHLW (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) submitted a draft of an amended Equal Employment Opportunity Law to the 164th Diet session.

Chapter 5. Establish gender equality in rural areas

- Clearly recognizing women as important players in the agro-forestry business, MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) provided support to increase the number of accredited female farmers so that women will more actively participate in farm management.
To encourage the revitalization of local communities and improvement in women's economic and societal status, MAFF provides supportive measures, such as holding entrepreneurial national meetings and training sessions for female farmers, and setting up preferential quota for female entrepreneurs in Agricultural Improvement Loans.

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

- As the "Next Generation Development Support Measures Law" became effective in April 2005, local governments have prepared their local action plans to support childcare in local communities and maintain/improve motherhood and infant health conditions, while employers have also developed their action plans that describe better working environments for work-and-childcare balance and provide working conditions that encourage workers to review their working practices. Employers are making efforts in accordance with their action plans.
- The government now examines how to appropriately launch "Comprehensive facilities coherently providing preschool education and childcare services," which will comprehensively provide early childhood education/daycare services as well as childcare assistance in the local community. In FY2005, the government conducted the Comprehensive Facility Model Program at 35 locations nationwide in order to further examine how to appropriately provide education/daycare services, assign personnel and establish better facilities. In preparation for starting full-scale operations in FY2006, and paying attention to these outcomes, the government submitted to the 164th Diet session the "Bill on Pushing ahead with Providing Comprehensive Education/Daycare Services for Preschool Children."
- To satisfy the urgent needs of childcare workers, such as taking care of children who unexpectedly become ill, or take-care services in the cases of sudden overtime work or business trips, MHLW set up a new emergency support network that registers and sends qualified persons (e.g., nurses and child minders) or any other emergency response staff.

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

- The Nursing Care Insurance Program has been steadily taking root as a supportive plan for elderly people. However, costs have been sharply increasing, which poses questions on the sustainability of the program. In this context, lawmakers revised applicable legislation in June 2005 to generally improve the Nursing Care Insurance Program.

Chapter 8. Eliminate all forms of violence against women

- In accordance with the "Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims" as well as the "Basic Policy Concerning Measures for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and Protection of Victims," the concerned ministries, closely cooperating each other, have actively pushed ahead with policy measures to prevent spousal violence and protect victims.
- In order to provide more effective treatment for sex offenders, the Ministry of Justice has developed standard treatment programs for sex offenders which are conducted through cooperation between institutional and community based treatment providers.
- Recognizing that trafficking in persons is a serious international organized crime as well as a grave violation of human rights, the Japanese Diet approved to conclude the "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime" in June 2005. In addition, the Penal Code to impose criminal penalties on human trafficking was amended, aiming at providing a legal framework that would appropriately deal with human trafficking as well as infringements of personal liberty.

Chapter 9. Support lifelong health for women

- The government systematically pushes ahead with the “Healthy Parent-Child 21” plan, which is a national movement plan in the 21st Century, intending to provide better maternal and child healthcare services.

Chapter 10. Respect women's human rights in the media

- Since August 2005, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has been holding “Research Meeting on Illegal and Harmful Cyber Contents,” which consists of academic experts and Internet service providers. After examining provider voluntary actions on illegal and harmful cyber contents as well as possible supportive measures, the research meeting released its interim report in January 2006.

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

- By pushing ahead with practical training sessions that will improve women’s abilities and skills to participate in the decision-making process at the local community, MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) provides support to learning activities for women to participate in every field of endeavor in society.

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

- The 50th session of CSW (United Nations Commission on the Status of Women) was held from February to March 2006. Japan also attended the session to discuss the two annual themes, “Enhanced participation of women in development” and “Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels.”
- Since FY2005, the government has collected information on good practices and lessons from practices that incorporate a gender perspective by making use of ODA-gender officials assigned to 87 embassies in ODA recipient countries. By sharing such information, the government will enhance gender mainstreaming efforts.

Chapter 13. Promote gender equality in fields requiring new Initiatives

- On March 28, 2006, the Cabinet decided on “Third S&T Basic Plan.” The Plan referred to “Promoting the activities of female researchers” calls for strengthening policy actions that promote an appropriate balance between research activities and childbirth and childcare, and establishes a numerical target for recruiting female researchers.

Policies to be Implemented in FY 2006 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, CGE (Council for Gender Equality) as much as possible will make efforts to coordinate gender equality policy measures.
- The Cabinet Office will improve the website "Challenge Site" so that motivated women will have access to information on challenge-support measures in an efficient manner.
In accordance with "Plan of Support for Women's Renewed Challenge" prepared in December 2005, the government will conduct Women's "Renewed challenge Support Region Model Project" in order to establish an appropriate framework that comprehensively provides women raising children with support-related information services necessary for their renewed challenge.

Chapter 2. Expand women's participation in decision-making processes

- In terms of actively employing and promoting female national public officers, each ministry and agency will make further efforts to achieve their goals in accordance with their "female officers recruitment/promotion expansion plan" based on the National Personnel Authority's applicable guidelines revised in December 2005.
- The NPA (National Personnel Authority) will continue to examine how to improve supportive family-and-work balance measures. In addition, the NPA will make use of regular meetings of the "Liaison Council on Balancing Work and Child Care/Nursing Care" to follow up and to encourage supportive work-and-family balance measures, such as providing sufficient information and an appropriate environment at each ministry.
- As for expanding women's participation in national advisory councils, the government will take active measures to achieve the new goal established by HPGE (Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality) in April 2006.

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

- The government will examine the impact of governmental policy measures on gender equality.
If deemed necessary, the government will also review Japan's social systems and practices so that the social systems and practices will not have an adverse impact on people's lifestyles.
- The Cabinet Office will continue to work on easily understandable PR campaigns via the "Minister's Gender Equality Workshops" 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

- MHLW (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) will establish Mother's Hello Work in FY2006 so that Employment Security Bureau staff in charge will provide coherent job-hunting support services for child-raising mothers seeking employment.
- MHLW will provide support for potential female entrepreneurs by providing information services via dedicated website, setting up new subsidy programs or introducing mentors who would give advice on management know-how.

Chapter 5. Establish gender equality for realizing dynamic rural areas

- To encourage rural women's active participation in social activities or corporate management, MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries) will urge municipalities to develop targets for women's participation, and will also follow up the approach to taking action to achieve such targets. To provide more opportunities for women to fully demonstrate their potential, MAFF will also provide support for improving women's skills, fostering local female leaders, and encouraging women's participation in rural farm management

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

- In accordance with the “Next Generation Nurturing Support Measures Promotion Law,” MHLW will conduct PR activities and give instructions particularly for SMEs so that they will develop and submit their “General Employer Action Plan,” which is intended to provide a necessary working environment for appropriate work-and-childcare balance. MHLW will also provide support for voluntary efforts in corporations.
- METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) will survey on SME’s specific actions against the falling birthrate. METI will also conduct surveys on costs, benefits or programs related to corporate action against the falling birthrate and will disseminate survey results, aiming at stimulating corporate programs against the falling birthrate.
- In FY2006, MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture Sports, Science and Technology) will launch “Early Childhood Education Comprehensive Capabilities Development Program.” Some kindergartens use their early childhood education know-how and work with NPOs, households and local communities to provide comprehensive early childhood education. The program will provide support to these kindergartens and disseminate the outcome nationwide.

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

- MHLW will make efforts to sustain and stabilize public pension plans so that the elderly will live their lives, free of anxiety.
As the Diet amended the National Pension Law and other related legislation in 2004, which will divide employees’ pension benefits at time of divorce (effective in April 2007) and grant a portion of employees’ pension benefits to workers’ spouses who were covered as a category-3 insured person (effective in April 2008). The government will take necessary actions for smoothly enforcing these new plans.

Chapter 8. Eliminate all forms of violence against women

- The government will further push ahead with PR campaigns and actively provide related information in order to eradicate violence against women.
The government will provide victims of violence with easier access to counselors and will also arrange an appropriate environment for victims by precisely applying applicable penal laws and strengthening cooperation among related organizations.
In addition, the government will provide safer environments by strengthening anti-crime measures and encouraging security activities at the regional level, and will try to comprehend the current situation in order to implement proper measures.
- The government will conduct surveys on how the “Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims” has been enforced and on the programs for supporting self-reliance of the victims.

Chapter 9. Support lifelong health for women

- The government will establish appropriate health education and counseling programs so that both men and women will be able to wisely manage their own health conditions.

Chapter 10. Promote gender equality in the media

- MIC (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) will further examine an appropriate future approach at “Research Meeting on Illegal and Harmful Cyber Contents” of academic experts and Internet service providers. Then, MIC will release its final report on this topic in July 2006.

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

- At specialized training colleges, MEXT will provide learning/skill redevelopment training course (Women's Renewed challenge Course) for women who have quit their jobs due to childcare responsibilities so that women who quit their job due to marriage or childbirth will be provided with employment opportunities again. Then, the ministry will compile a report describing its outcomes and will disseminate information about these efforts nationwide.

Chapter 12. Contribute to the "Equality, Development and Peace" of the global community

- The Cabinet Office will invite Gender Equality Ministers of East Asian nations to Tokyo and hold "East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting" to discuss the topic further promote gender equality in East Asia.

Chapter 13. Promote gender equality in fields requiring new Initiatives

- The government will provide job opportunities for female researchers and make efforts to improve their research environments. In addition, the government will strive to achieve women's more active participation in decision-policy making processes relating to science and technology.
- The government will provide information on best practices of women's active participation in regional development.
- The government will push ahead with gender equality in the environmental field in order to effectively utilize women's high level of interests, knowledge and experiences in environmental protection.