

White Paper on Gender Equality 2009

Outline

Cabinet Office

May 2009

The Cabinet Office has prepared this paper to outline the “White Paper on Gender Equality 2009”.

Please see the White Paper for more detailed information on sources cited.

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Outline

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FY2008 Annual Report on the State of Formation of a Gender-Equal Society

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

Feature article: 10-year history of gender equality promotion and vision for the future --10 years have passed since the enforcement of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society.

This year marks the 10th year since the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society was promulgated and enforced in June 1999. During the last decade, various efforts regarding gender equality have been made and social conditions have significantly changed in the country. This article aims to offer a vision of future efforts to realize a gender-equal society by reviewing and analyzing efforts to promote gender equality by various entities via changes in the promotion system as well as other changes, the present situation and issues in various fields, mainly over the past ten years from enforcement of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society up to the present date.

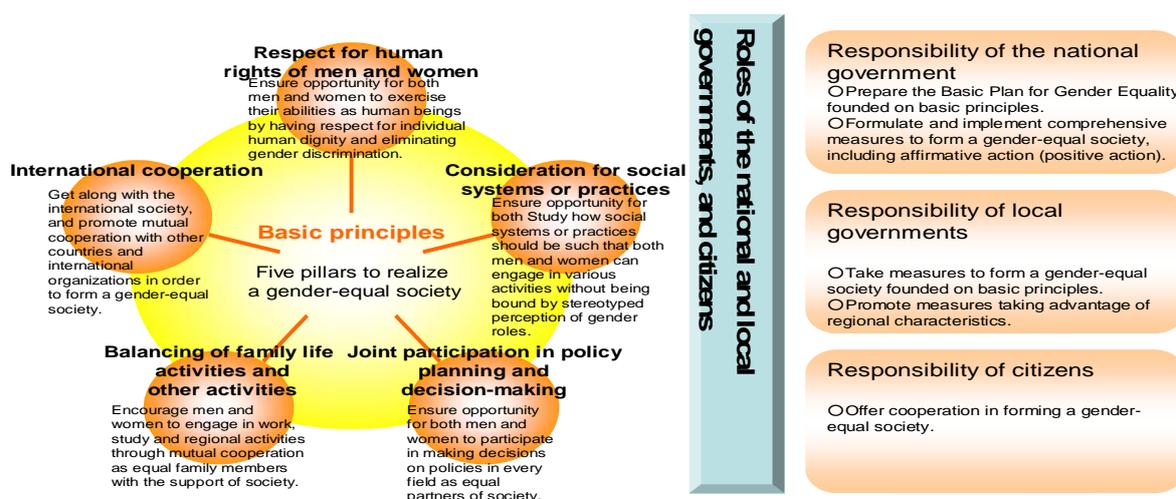
Section 1: Changes in efforts and systems for the promotion of gender equality

1. Outline

Since the enforcement of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society, systems for its promotion have been consolidated by the national and local governments, including establishment of the Council for Gender Equality . The formation of plans as stipulated in the Law has helped to promote comprehensive measures. It also has helped to enhance and deepen various efforts concerning gender equality, including those which have been intensified by developing the framework for the promotion of gender equality and setting of numerical targets, and those which have been fully initiated during the recent decade (Chart 1).

In these days, not only administrative agencies, such as national and local governments, but also diversified entities, such as companies making efforts to utilize female employees as part of the managerial strategy, universities which are making efforts to maintain and strengthen international competitiveness and supporting female researchers in terms of revitalization of research activities, and NPOs for which women are playing a central role in regional activities, have started efforts for gender equality.

Chart 1: Outline of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society



2. Changes in diversified entities engaging in efforts for gender equality during the past decade

(1) Changes in systems for promotion in the national government

(Consolidation of organizational structure to promote gender equality)

In conjunction with reorganization of central government ministries implemented in January 2001, the Office for Gender Equality of the Prime Minister's Office, which was in charge of promoting gender equality, became the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office. In addition, the Council for Gender Equality was established as a new council on key policies placed in the Cabinet Office in order to strengthen the promotional structure.

(Development of the Basic Plan for Gender Equality)

The "Basic Plan for Gender Equality", which is a fundamental plan for promoting the formation of a gender-equal society, was first developed in December 2000. In December 2005, an overall review of the plan was made and the present "Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality" was developed. In March 2008, the Council for Gender Equality drew up a follow-up review on the plan and formulated opinions on matters that need to be addressed in the future. In March 2009, the Prime Minister consulted the Council for Gender Equality about the fundamental concept for review of the plan, and the review is now under consideration.

(2) National government's efforts for the promotion of gender equality

The government has been promoting comprehensive measures by preparing plans as shown in Table 2, as well as improving the framework, deepening efforts, and enlarging/intensifying measures related to gender equality through new efforts (Table 2).

(3) Changes in efforts and systems of local governments

(Formulation of ordinances and plans in municipalities has steadily progressed)

Looking at the progress in formulating ordinances on gender equality, the percentage of prefectures which completed such formulations increased to 97.9% (46 prefectures) in 2008 from 74.5% (35 prefectures) in 2001. As for municipalities, the percentage increased to 21.9% in 2008 from 0.5% in 2001.

With regard to the development of a basic plan, all prefectures developed basic plans after the enforcement of the Basic Law. The percentage of municipalities which developed basic plans increased to 57.1% in 2008, more than tripled from 15.6% in 1999. The breakdown shows that cities and wards accounted for 88.5%, while towns and villages accounted for 31.9% in 2008.

(Increase of facilities such as gender equality centers)

The number of facilities, such as gender equality centers or women's centers, which were established as comprehensive facilities for gender equality and women by local governments, stands at 333 as of April 2008. Looking at the percentage of local governments which have established such facilities, the percentage in all prefectures increased to 95.7% in 2008 from 63.8% in 1999, and the percentage in all municipalities increased to 14.5% in 2008 from 5.6% in 2001.

(4) Changes in efforts and systems of companies, universities, NPOs

(Establishment of systems to support the balance of work and family life, and accelerate women's advancement in companies)

With the enforcement of the Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation in 2003, companies of over a certain size are required to develop an action plan regarding improvement in the employment environment, aimed at assisting employees to balance work and family life, and submit it. As of the end of March 2009, companies which submitted plans accounted for 99.1% of all companies of 301 employees or more, and are required to develop and submit such plans. The number of companies of 300 employees or less that are required to make efforts to submit a plan, stands at 18,137.

Moreover, there is a trend for companies to aggressively utilize women's abilities as a part of the managerial strategy by establishing sections within the organization, such as the office for promoting women's advancement or the office for promoting diversity.

Table 2: Government's efforts for gender equality during the decade after enforcement of the Basic Law

	Actions for general matters regarding gender equality	Actions for accelerating women's advancement	Actions for measures to support balancing work and childcare, and promote work-life balance	Actions for combating violence against women	International actions
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The "Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society" was promulgated and enforced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The "Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas Basic Act" was promulgated and enforced. It stipulated the promotion of women's participation. 			
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Gender Equality Advisory Board submitted a report on the "Fundamental Concept for Formulating the Basic Plan for Gender Equality--Top Priority Issues in the 21st Century". ●The "Basic Plan for Gender Equality" was approved in a Cabinet meeting. The aim was to facilitate comprehensive and systematic promotion of measures for promoting the formation of a gender-equal society based on the Basic Law. ●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality took a decision on establishment of the "Gender Equality Week". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality took a decision on "Recruitment of Female Members in Advisory Boards, etc. of the National Government". The aim was to achieve 30% as soon as possible by the end of FY2005. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Gender Equality Advisory Board submitted a report on "Basic Policies for Violence against Women". ●The "Law on Proscribing Stalking Behavior and Assisting Victims" was promulgated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly "Women 2000 Conference" (New York) Reviews and assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which were adopted in the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995, Beijing) were made, and discussions on future strategies for full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were held.
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Council for Gender Equality and the Gender Equality Bureau were established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality took a decision on the "Enlargement of the Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Public Employees". ●The National Personnel Authority established the "Guidelines concerning the Enlargement of the Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Public Employees". It specified that each ministry should set up a "Plan for the Enlargement of the Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Public Employees". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The "Policy for Measures to Support the Balancing of Work and Childcare" was approved in a Cabinet meeting. It specified that efforts to support the establishment of women's career plans should be made, and summarized support measures to balance work and childcare. ●The "Law for Childcare Leave" was revised. The revision included raising the age of a child subject to the reduction of working hours, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality took a decision on the "Campaign for Eliminating Violence against Women". The campaign period was set for two weeks from November 12 to 25 (United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) every year. ●The "Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims" was promulgated and enforced. 	
2003		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality took a decision on "Promotion of Supportive Measures for Women's Challenges". It specified a goal of "30% by 2020". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The "Basic Law on Measures for Society with Declining Birthrate" was promulgated and enforced. The aim was to clarify basic principles for measures against the declining birthrate and to facilitate comprehensive promotion of those measures. ●The "Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation" was promulgated and enforced. It stipulated that employers hiring 301 workers or more are required to develop and submit a "general business owner action plan". 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The review of 4th and 5th reports of Japan on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women were reviewed by the Committee established under the Convention.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●A report was compiled by the review meeting of forecast for the future gender-equal society. It suggested realizing a society in which people can live together, demonstrating their individual personalities with diversified values, by around 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality took a decision on "Enlargement of the Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Public Employees". ●"Enlargement of the Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Public Employees" (agreed in the meeting of personnel directors from each ministry and agency) It set up a goal of recruiting Female National Public Employees. (30% in National Public Employees recruits who passed the Clerical Work Division of the Level 1 examination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●The "Outline of Measures for Society with Declining Birthrate" was approved in a Cabinet meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Revision of the "Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims", and establishment of basic principles in accordance with the law ●Establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Liaison Committee regarding Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons ●Development of the Action Plan for Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons ●Revision of the "Penal Code" Increase of the statutory penalty limits for crimes, including rape and indecent assault, and establishment of a new penalty for crimes, including gang-rape and trafficking in persons 	

	Actions for general matters regarding gender equality	Actions for accelerating women's advancement	Actions for measures to support balancing work and childcare, and promote work-life balance	Actions for combating violence against women	International actions
2005	<p>●The Council for Gender Equality submitted a report on the "Basic Direction of Measures for Promoting the Formation of a Gender-Equal Society".</p> <p>It suggested the fundamental concept for the revision of the Basic Plan for Gender Equality.</p> <p>●The "Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality" was approved in a Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>It pointed out 12 important fields, and suggested the basic direction of measures based on the forecast for 2020 and beyond, as well as concrete measures to be implemented by the end of 2010 with regard to each field.</p>	<p>●The Committee for Deliberation on Supportive Measures for Women's Renewed Challenges took a decision on the "Plan of Support for Women's Renewed Challenge".</p> <p>The plan stipulated comprehensive supportive plans for re-employment and business start-up of women who suspend work temporarily due to childcare, etc.</p>			<p>●49th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women ("Beijing +10" High-Level Plenary Meeting) (New York)</p> <p>This was held as a ministerial-level meeting in commemoration of the 10th year after the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Conference) held in 1995.</p>
2006		<p>●The "Equal Employment Opportunity Law" was revised.</p> <p>Prohibition of discrimination against both men and women, and prohibition of dismissal or disadvantageous treatment on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth, etc.</p> <p>●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality took a decision on the "Facilitation of Promotion of Female Members in Central Government Advisory Councils, etc.".</p> <p>The goal of the percentage of female members in central government advisory councils, etc. should be at least 33.3% by the end of FY2010, and the percentage of either of male or female members should be kept at 40% or above by 2020. The goal of the percentage of female members in expert committees, etc. should be 20% by the end of FY2010, which was expected to be increased to 30% as soon as possible (by 2020).</p> <p>●The "Third-Stage Basic Plan for Science and Technology" was approved in a Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>A goal was set of achieving 25% of recruited female researchers in the natural science field.</p>		<p>●The "Equal Employment Opportunity Law" was revised.</p> <p>Strengthening of obligation of employers to implement necessary measures to prevent sexual harassment</p>	<p>●The "East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting" was held (Tokyo).</p> <p>This was the first gender equality ministerial meeting held in East Asia. It was attended by 16 countries and 2 international organizations, and adopted a "joint communiqué" was adopted.</p>
2007		<p>●The Council for Gender Equality took a decision on "Opinions about Follow-up of the Numerical Target for Expanding Women's Participation in Policy- and Decision-making Processes (30% in 2020)".</p> <p>The decision included the definition of a "leadership position", and annual follow-up of progress in each area of society.</p> <p>●The "Act on Improvement, etc. of Employment Management for Part-Time Workers" was revised.</p>	<p>●The Council on Measures for Society with Decreasing Birthrate compiled key strategies on "Japan Supporting Children and Families".</p> <p>The aim was to reconstruct and implement effective measures from various aspects, including institutions, policies, and awareness reforms, in the light of the significant decrease in younger population since 2030.</p> <p>●The "Charter for Work-Life Balance" and the "Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance" were formulated.</p> <p>General outlines of national efforts, effective efforts for workers, and measures by national and local governments were determined based on the agreement between the government, workers and employers.</p>	<p>●The "Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims" was revised.</p> <p>Those who were exposed to threats to life and physical security came under the protection of the law. The law required municipalities to try to develop basic plans, and establish Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers.</p>	<p>●The "Second East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting" was held (India).</p>
2008	<p>●The Council for Gender Equality decided the "Opinions about the Follow-up Results of the Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality".</p> <p>Intermediate follow-up of the plan was carried out to respond to actual conditions, and matters that will require efforts in the future.</p>	<p>●The Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality decided the "Program for Accelerating Women's Social Participation".</p> <p>The aim was to improve the infrastructure in every field, pick up three important fields, and promote efforts strategically, for the purpose of accelerating women's participation.</p>	<p>●The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare decided the "New Zero-waiting List for Day Care Centers".</p> <p>●The "Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation" was revised.</p> <p>The size of target companies which are required to prepare and submit general business owner action plans was reduced from 301 employees or more to 101 employees or more.</p>	<p>●The "Basic Policy on Measures for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and Protection of Victims" was revised.</p> <p>●The "National Domestic Violence (DV) Conferences" were held, bringing together responsible persons in the public and private sectors, and intellectuals, etc., who were involved in spousal violence (DV) measures.</p>	<p>●The sixth report on the implementation of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was submitted.</p>
2009	<p>●The Council for Gender Equality was consulted about the "Basic Direction of Measures for Promoting the Formation of a Gender-Equal Society".</p> <p>It was consulted by the Prime Minister in order to revise the Basic Plan for Gender Equality.</p>			<p>●A "DV Consulting Navigation Dial" (0570-0-55210) hotline available from anywhere in Japan was established so that DV victims can access counseling organizations and obtain information on support, etc.</p>	

(Improvement in systems to support female researchers in universities and research institutes)

To support female researchers, the government encourages universities and research institutes to construct a framework to enable female researchers to balance work and life through the Supporting Activities for Female Researchers. In addition, the government supports female researchers so that they can return to research after maternity leave or continue research, and supports female junior/senior high school girls so that they can select science courses. The percentage of national universities, which set the ratio of female teachers and the numerical target for recruitment of female teachers increased to 32.2% in FY2008 from 17.4% in FY 2006.

(Efforts for gender equality by various organizations, including NPOs)

Specified nonprofit organizations, which stipulate “activities to promote the formation of a gender-equal society” as one of the objectives in the articles of incorporation, have been increasing. Various organizations, including NPOs, have been making efforts to promote gender equality, such as setting numerical targets for female officials, supporting their return to work or continued employment, or establishing an internal network of managerial staff.

Section 2: Actual situation and issues of gender equality

This section demonstrates the results of the “Survey on Men’s and Women’s Attitudes toward Lifestyle” conducted by the Cabinet Office to examine the assessment of past efforts, as well as their actual situations and issues, in time for the 10th year after the enforcement of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society. At the same time, it gives an analysis of how the situation has changed in various fields related to gender equality with the progress of efforts by various entities or changes in social conditions, and what issues we are facing in connection with gender equality.

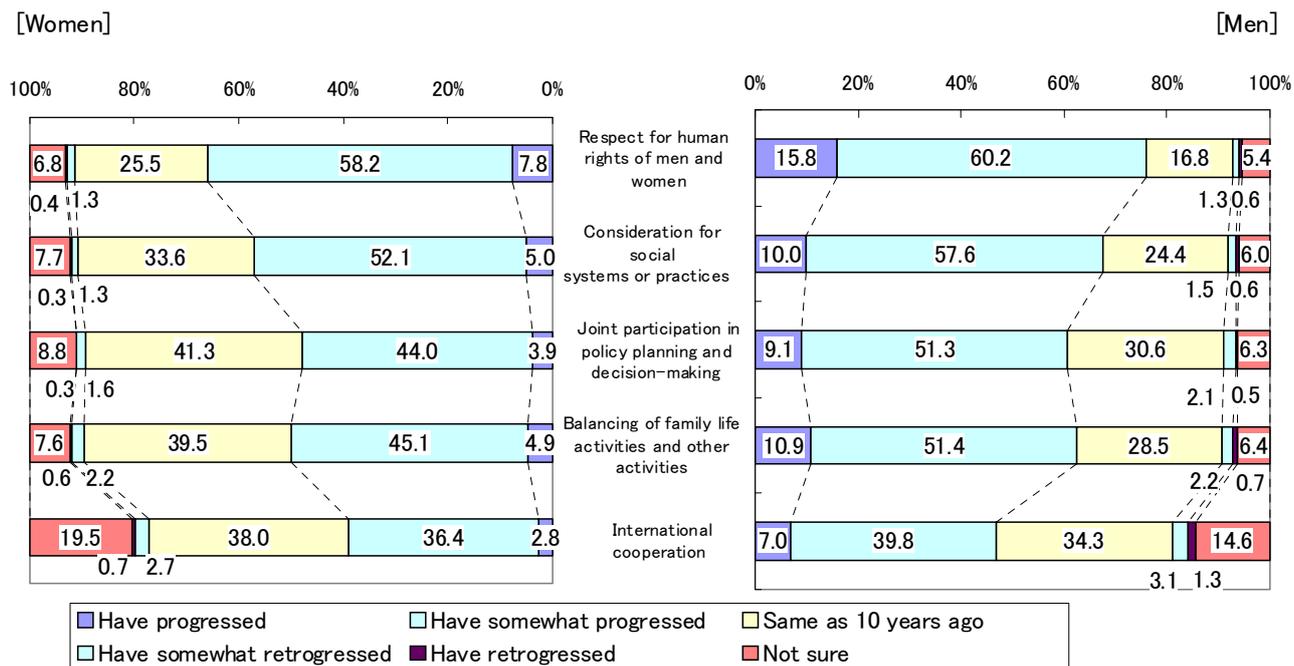
1. Progress in promoting gender equality

(1) Progress in implementing the principles of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society

(Implementation of the basic principles of the Basic Law has made some progress toward achievement)

With regard to progress in implementing five-pillar principles of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society, most people think that all principles “have somewhat progressed” compared to 10 years ago when the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society was introduced. On a gender basis, many more men than women think that all basic principles have made progress. Women think there has been less progress in forming a gender-equal society than men think, and there is a difference in awareness between men and women (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Implementation of the principles of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society (comparison with 10 years ago) (by gender and age)



- (Note) 1. Data from the “Survey on Men’s and Women’s Attitudes toward Lifestyle” (2009) by the Cabinet Office.
2. In the actual survey, the overall question was “what do you think about actual conditions throughout the entire society with regard to basic principles to realize a gender-equal society, compared to 10 years ago?” Questions about each principle were as follows:
- ① Respect for human rights of men and women: Do you think that an equal opportunity is being ensured for both men and women to exercise their abilities as a human being?
 - ② Consideration for social systems or practices: Do you think that social systems or practices enable us to engage in various activities regardless of gender without being bound by stereotyped perception of gender roles?
 - ③ Joint participation in policy planning and decision-making: Do you think that an equal opportunity is being ensured for both men and women to participate in decision-making processes on important policies in every field as equal partners of society?
 - ④ Balancing of family life activities and other activities: Do you think that both men and women can engage in work, study and regional activities while they cooperate with each other as equal members of the family, and play a role as a family member?
 - ⑤ International cooperation: Do you think that the Japanese Government, NPOs have achieved the level of international cooperation with foreign governments, NPOs in order to form a gender-equal society?

(2) Participation of events and use of facilities in relation to gender equality

(Participation of events related to gender equality and use of facilities, including gender equality centers)

With regard to events, for the realization of a gender-equal society, which are conducted by the national and local governments, over 60% of both male and female respondents answered “I do not know” about such an event. In particular, the percentage of younger people who ever participated in such events, and recognized them is low.

Similarly, with regard to gender quality centers, which are comprehensive facilities for gender equality and women, about 60% of both male and female respondents answered “I do not know” of their existence. In particular, the percentage of younger persons who ever used such facilities and recognized them is low. The major reason why they have not used those facilities is that they “have no occasion”.

2. Changes in various fields

(1) Changes in decision-making processes for policies and administrative measures

(Gradually increasing percentage of women who participate in decision-making processes for policies and administrative measures)

Comparing the current situation of women's participation to 10 years ago, the participation rate has increased in various fields (Chart 4).

(Women's participation in Japan still remains at a low level by international standards.)

With regard to the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) released by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which shows the degree to which women participate in political and economic activities, Japan has been going down in ranking among countries. While women have greater chances to participate in political/economic activities and decision making processes in Japan, the participation rate is improving at a slower pace than in other countries.

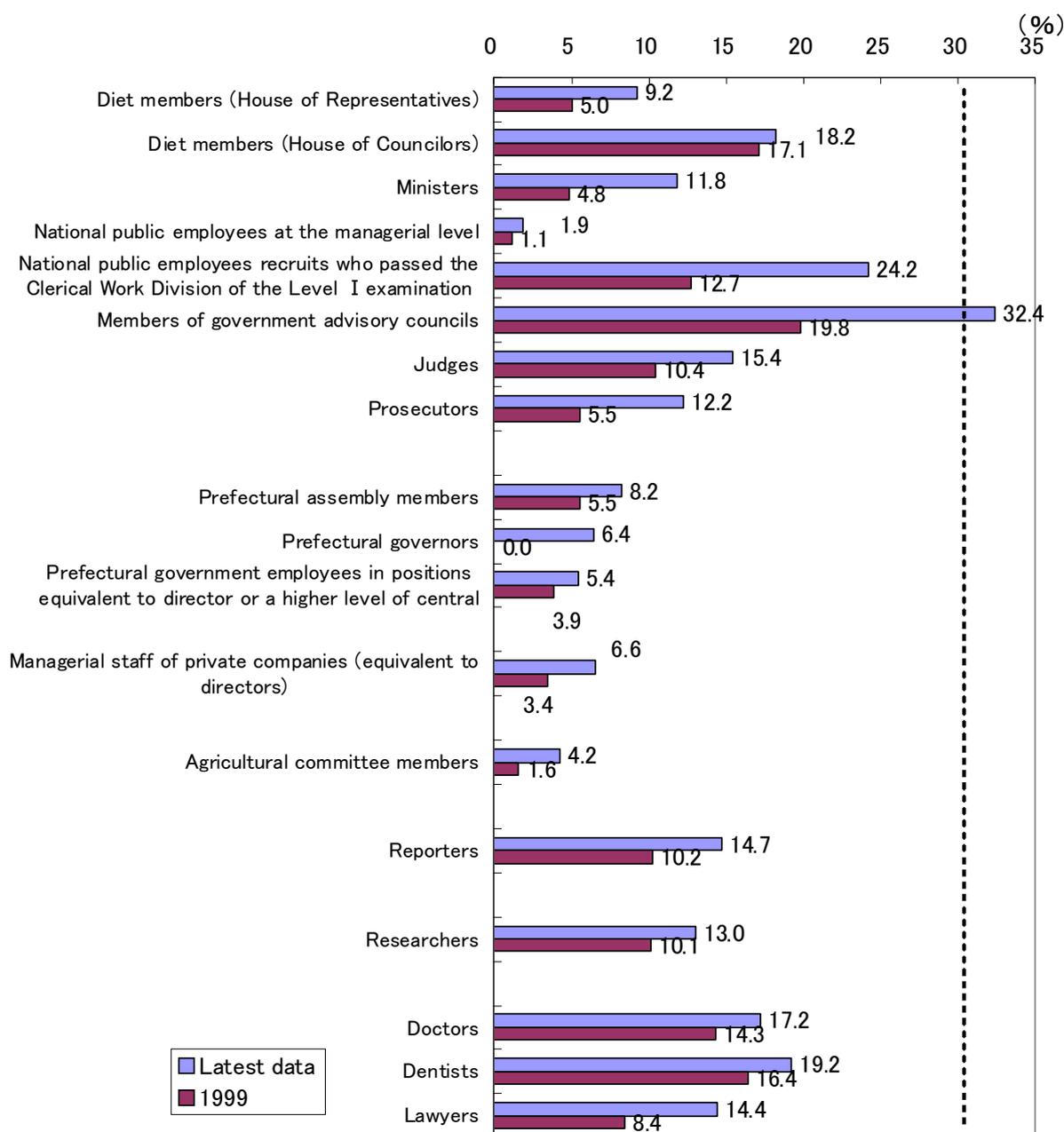
Causes of delay in the broadening of women's participation in Japan include, "there are no, or insufficient, systems to support the balance of work and household activities, such as housekeeping, childcare, and family care", or "even if there is a system, there is no atmosphere to use it". Especially, women feel that broadening of women's participation makes little progress due to a lack of systems to support the balance of work and household activities, such as housekeeping, childcare, and family care.

(Making use of women's abilities in society)

In response to the question concerning awareness about the actual situation, "Do you think that women's abilities are fully utilized in society?", many male respondents answered in the affirmative, such as "I think so," or "I think to some extent". On the other hand, female respondents who answered in the affirmative or negative, or "no opinion", show almost the same percentages.

When asked "what field do you think needs women's participation most in society?" the most common answer of both male and female respondents was politicians, followed by executives of companies and organizations.

Chart 4: Percentage of women in "leadership positions" in various fields (comparison with 10 years ago)



- (Notes)
1. Data from the "Index for Follow-up of the Goal of '30% by 2020'"
 2. Figures of the latest data are basically data for 2008. Data for national public employees at the managerial level, agricultural committee members, doctors and dentists are as of December 2006. Data for Diet members (Representatives/Councilors), ministers, and prefectural governors are as of May 2009.
 3. Data for doctors and dentists in 1999 uses data for 2000.
 4. Figures of National public employees recruits who passed Clerical Work Division of the Level I recruitment examination in 1999 are calculated by deducting the number of those who are employed as Defense Agency officials and National Diet staff from the number of those who are employed after passing the same recruitment exam (including those who are employed by independent administrative institutions).
 5. Data for national public employees at the managerial level in 1999 is the percentage of all employees covered by the salary schedule for the administrative service (I) and the salary schedule for the designated service. The latest data is calculated by adding Defense Ministry officials (covered by the salary schedule for the administrative service (I), the salary schedule for the designated service, and the salary schedule for Defense Counselors.) to all employees shown above.

(2) Changes in employment and women's career development through exercise of abilities and capacity building

(With the increase in double-income households, women who wish to continue working after they have a child are increasing)

With regard to changes in actual employment situation, the number of double-income households consisting of a husband and a wife who are both working has increased year by year, widening the gap in the number of such households and single-income households consisting of an income-earning husband and a non-working wife.

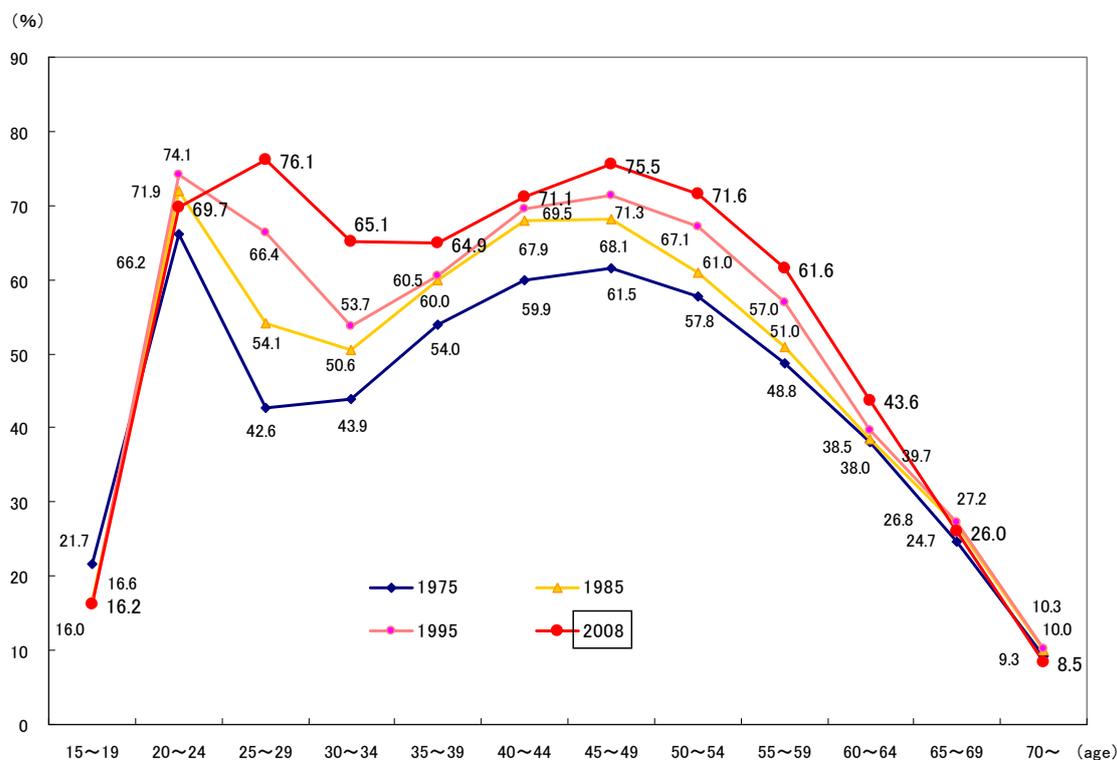
The number of unmarried women aged 18-34 who hope to continue working as an ideal lifestyle has increased, reaching the same level as those who wish to re-enter employment.

In addition, the number of both male and female respondents who answered that "it is preferable that women continue working long after they have a child" has increased. This means that people are more likely to look at women's employment positively.

(The labor force participation rate of women in their late 20s to late 30s is on an upward trend, while it still remains at a low level by international standards)

The labor force participation rate of women by age group still shows an "M-shaped curve", though the curve is much shallower than in the past. The bottom of the M-shaped curve has shifted to the age group from the late 20s to late 30s, compared to 30 years ago (Chart 5). When viewed internationally, many other countries even show a U-shaped curve, while Japan's sharp M-shaped curve shows that quite a few women quit a job due to childcare responsibilities.

Chart 5: Changes in the female labor force participation rate by age group

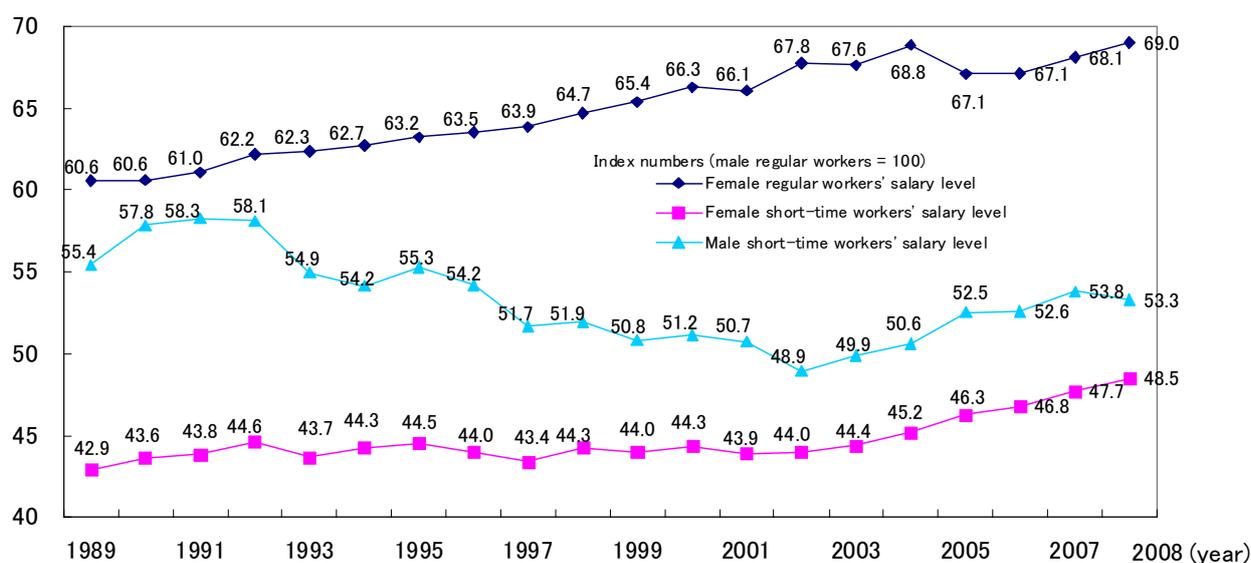


(Notes) Data from the "Labour Force Survey" by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

(The wage gap has been shrinking over the long term, but still remains wide)

When average official hourly wages for male and female full-time workers, including regular employees, are converted to index numbers (male full-time workers' salary level: 100), the female full-time workers' salary level was 69.0 in 2008 while it was 65.4 in 1999. The gap between male workers and female workers has been shrinking over the long term, but it still remains wide. When the salary level of short-time workers is converted to index numbers (male full-time workers' salary level: 100), the salary level of female short-time workers was 48.5 and that of male short-time workers was 53.3 in 2008, while that of female short-time workers was 44.0 and that of male short-time workers was 50.8 in 1999. The gender gap among short-time workers has been shrinking over the long term, but the level still remains low (Chart 6).

Chart 6: Changes in the gap between average official hourly wages for workers (Male full-time workers = 100)

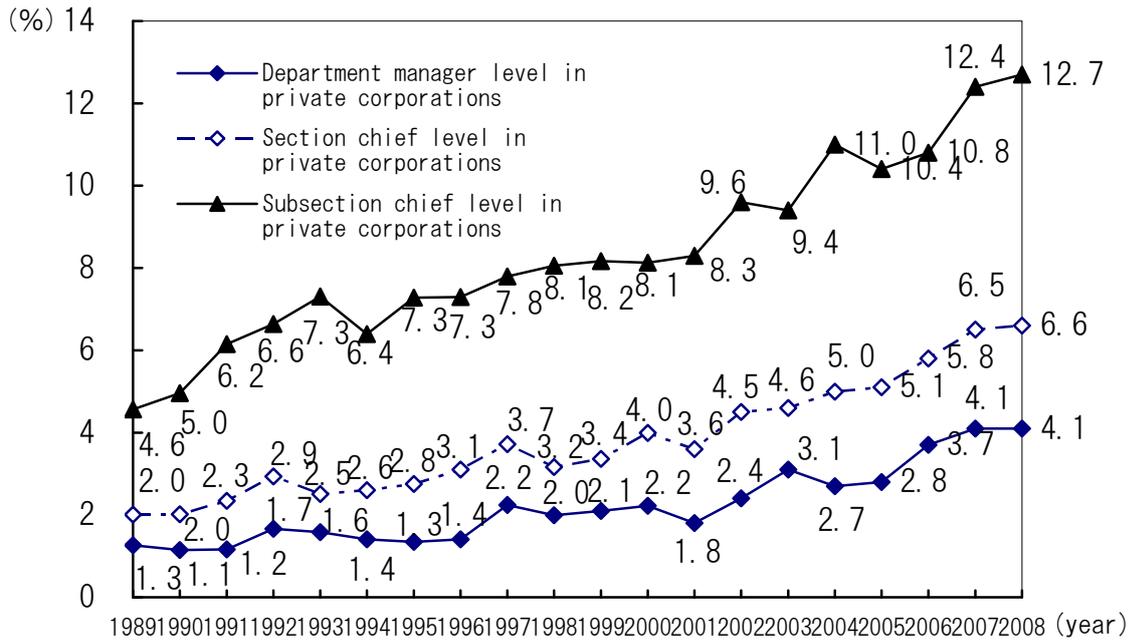


- (Notes)
1. Data from the "Basic Survey on the Wage Structure" by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
 2. Figures represent each category's average official hourly wages as a percentage of male full-time workers' average official hourly wage level.

(The percentage of female managerial staff in private corporations has been increasing gradually, but drops for higher positions)

Looking at changes in the percentage of female workers at the managerial level in private corporations, the percentage of female workers at subsection chief level increased to 12.7% in 2008 from 8.2% in 1999. However, the female rate drops for higher positions. The percentage of female workers at the department manager level was 4.1% in 2008, slightly increased from 2.1% in 1999, though it still remains low (Chart 7).

Chart 7: Changes in the percentage of female managerial staff by position



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

(Increase in the percentage of non-regular employees)

Of all employees engaged in industries other than agriculture and forestry, the number and percentage of both male and female non-regular employees have been increasing year by year. Especially for women, non-regular employees have occupied the majority of all female employees since 2004 (Chart 8). Since the 1990s, female and young non-regular employees have been rapidly increasing.

Chart 8: Employee composition ratio by employment status and gender excluding company executives (in all industries other than agriculture and forestry)



(Note) Data for 1985-2001 comes from the "Special Survey of the Labour Force Survey" (every February) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Data for 2004 or later comes from the "Labour Force Survey (Detailed Tabulation)" (annual average).

(Continued employment)

The percentage of women who continue working without using the childcare leave system has decreased, and the percentage of those who take a childcare leave has increased. However, the percentage of those who continue working just before and after childbirth has not increased.

As for the percentage of wives who continue working at the same workplace even after childbirth, 67.3% of female regular employees continue working, while only 22.9% of female non-regular employees continue working. There is a significant difference in the percentage of those who continue working after childbirth between regular employees and non-regular employees.

(Women's business start-up)

Looking at the age breakdown of entrepreneurs according to a survey targeted at business managers and owners of corporations with 10 employees or less and one-man offices, which were established in the last 5 years, women tend to start up business at a younger age than men. As for business fields, almost half of female entrepreneurs start up business in the service sector.

(Awareness that women have less opportunity to improve their skills)

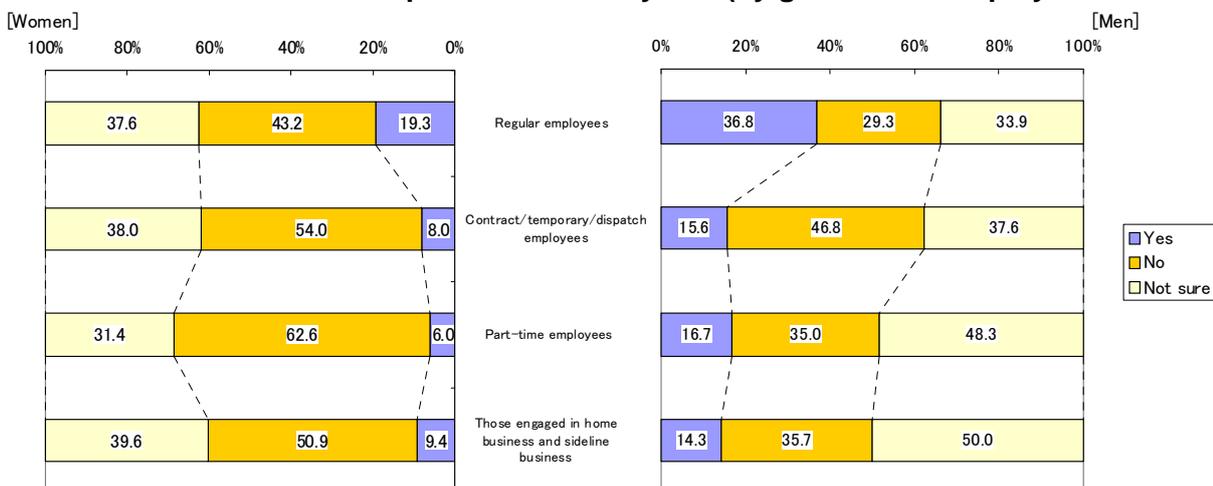
About 60% of both men and women feel that women have less opportunity to improve their skills than men. As for the reason for this, about 60% answered "there is an organizational climate to tolerate gender inequality", or "efforts to give women an opportunity to assume a responsible position or receive training are likely to be useless because many women leave their job in mid-career."

(Possibility to hold a position of higher responsibility in 10 years)

About half the women think it is difficult for average women to become managerial employees thus they assume female workers at the managerial level as special persons. In response to the question, "Do you think that in 10 years you will hold a position of higher responsibility or take on a more difficult task than at present?", more than half the women who now have a job answered "no". Looking at respondents by employment status, male regular employees had the largest percentage of those who answered "yes", while only 20% of female regular employees answered "yes" and more than 40% of them answered "no". That shows there is a gender gap even among regular employees. As for non-regular employees, it is clear that it is difficult for both men and women to forecast career improvement (Chart 9).

Women in particular have recently shown a higher percentage of non-regular employees than men, and many of them are in a position that does not allow them to expect career improvement. Even in the case of regular employees, a larger percentage of women answered "no" than men. For the reasons stated above, many women cannot expect career improvement.

Chart 9: Forecast of career improvement in 10 years (by gender and employment status)



(Note) Data from the "Survey on Men's and Women's Attitudes toward Lifestyle" (2009) by the Cabinet Office

The most common reason mentioned by men who think in 10 years they will hold a position of higher responsibility than at present is that future career paths can be predicted at the workplace, and the most common reason mentioned by women is that they are ready to develop their abilities by themselves in the future.

On the other hand, the most common reason mentioned by those who don't think they will hold a position of higher responsibility than at present is that they have no chance to be promoted in their present job. Women's common reasons include that clear future career paths cannot be predicted, and that they might quit a job due to housekeeping, childcare, and family care, or from stress.

(There is a demand for an environment that allows women to balance work and household activities, such as housekeeping, childcare and family care, and to predict career paths)

In order to create a society in which women can freely develop and exercise their abilities, the government is expected to make efforts for the "creation of an environment that is conducive to work-life balance" and "more support for women who left their job for reasons, such as childcare", in particular, to create an environment that allows women to balance work and household activities, such as housekeeping, childcare and family care. What many women consider to be useful in encouraging women who raise their children to go to work include a "personnel system in which female workers can return to work in the front lines when their children reach a certain age", and "flexible working styles, including homeworkers and teleworkers". It is expected to promote support for balancing work and household activities, including housekeeping, childcare and family care, by introducing such flexible working styles, and to establish a system to present career paths, which allows women to continue working and forecast their future career improvement.

(3) Situation of family life

(Greater burden of household chores on wives)

With regard to sharing of household chores between husband and wife, the percentage of married couples who answered "wife takes charge of household chores" and "wife mainly does household chores and husband assists her" stands at about 90%, while that of married couples who answered "husband and wife share the household chores fifty-fifty" stands at only about 7%. Of all married couples where both husband and wife are full-time workers, the percentage of couples who answered "wife takes charge of household chores" and "wife mainly does household chores and husband assists her" stands at about 75%, while that of couples who answered "husband and wife share the household chores fifty-fifty" stands at only about 20%.

(Men tend to spend too much time at work)

In response to the question, "Do you think you have been able to spend your time as you wish?" those who answered "I haven't" and "I haven't completely" accounted for 36.8%. With regard to activities in which such respondents think they spend too much time, the largest percentage of male respondents answered "work", while the largest percentage of female respondents answered "housekeeping, childcare and family care", followed by "work".

The percentage of men who are full-time employees in their 30s and 40s working 60 hours or more a week remains at almost the same level. The tendency that many men spend much time working contributes to a greater burden of household chores on wives.

Those who answered that they had spent too much time working think that they could share their time as they wish by changing the way they work, by becoming more efficient or reducing their workloads.

(The longer the time spent by husbands in doing household chores and childcare on weekdays after childbirth, the higher the percentage of wives who continue working at the same workplace after childbirth)

With regard to married couples who have a child within five years and whose wives had a job before childbirth, looking at the percentage of wives who “continue working at the same workplace” after childbirth according to the time spent by husbands in doing household chores and childcare on weekdays after childbirth, those whose husbands spend “no time” in doing household chores and childcare accounted for 39.1%, while those whose husbands spend “four hours or more” in doing household chores and childcare accounted for 66.7%. This means that households in which husbands participate in household chores and childcare on weekdays have a very high percentage of wives who continue working at the same workplace (Chart 10).

As shown above, in order for women to achieve a good balance between work and household activities, such as housekeeping, childcare and family care, it is a very important factor that men participate in household activities.

Chart 10: Wives who continue working (as percentage of time spent by husbands in doing household chores and childcare on weekdays)



(Notes) Data from the "6th Longitudinal Survey on Adults in the 21st Century" (2007) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

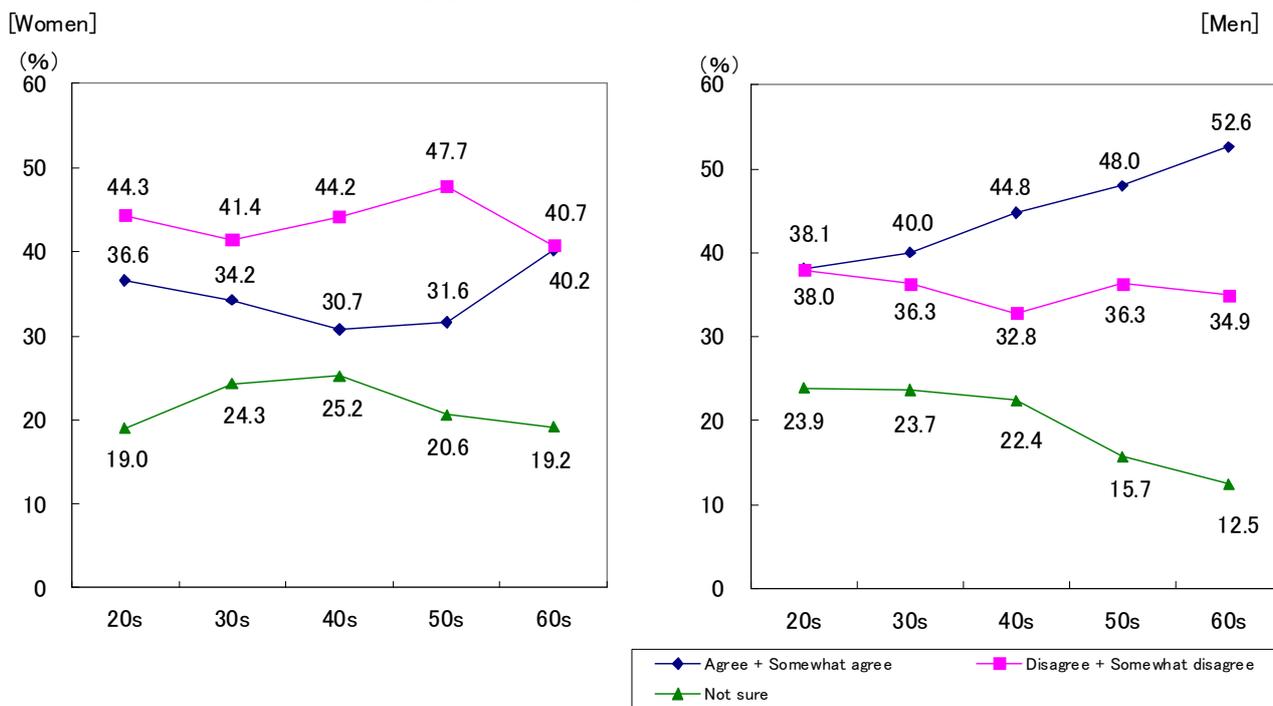
(Fifty-fifty ratio of proponents and opponents of the idea that “a husband should go to work, a wife should stay home and take care of the family”)

Looking at the answer to the question, “What do you think about the stereotyped perception of gender roles that a husband should go to work, a wife should stay home and take care of the family?” in chronological order, the percentage of those who hold an opposing view has been increasing over the last 10 years, and public awareness of gender equality has increased to a certain degree. On the other hand, looking at the answer by gender, the rate of female respondents who hold an opposing view exceeds that of those who agree with the perception, while the male respondents who agree with the perception exceeds that of those who hold an opposing view. This means that the perception still remains rooted in society.

According to a survey recently conducted by the Cabinet Office, the ratio between opponents and proponents of the idea that a husband should go to work, a wife should stay home and take care of the family is fifty-fifty. Common reasons why proponents agree with the idea are, “because they think that such role sharing is good for child-raising” and “because they think that it is more efficient to share roles in such a way.” The most common reasons why opponents oppose the idea is, “because they think that involvement of

both men and women in work and family life can make a more positive impact on each individual and the whole family.” Looking at breakdown by gender, male respondents still have a higher percentage of proponents, but the ratio between opponents and proponents is almost fifty-fifty among the younger generation. On the other hand, female respondents show a different trend from male respondents. Female respondents in the younger generation, including those in their 20s, have a higher percentage of proponents than those in their 40s and 50s (Chart 11).

Chart 11: Opinions about the idea "a husband should go to work, a wife should stay home and take care of the family" (by gender and age)



(Note) Data from the "Survey on Men's and Women's Attitudes toward Lifestyle" (2009) by the Cabinet Office

(Men with small children think it necessary to participate in housekeeping, childcare and family care.)

With regard to participation in housekeeping, childcare, and family care, about 80% of men in their 20s-40s with children are involved in housekeeping, childcare and family care in some way, and their participation rate is higher than the approx. 40% of men of the same generation without children and 55% of all men including other generations.

Men who “wish to use” the childcare leave system accounted for 31.8%, and those who “wish to use” the shorter working hour system for childcare accounted for 34.6%. Although both percentages exceeded 30%, the utilization rate is extremely low. It shows the current situation where quite a few men who wish to use those systems do not actually use them.

The most common reason why they wish to use the childcare leave system is “because it takes a longer time to be involved in childcare when children are small.” Common reasons why they wish to use the shorter working hour system include “the shorter their working hours become, the longer they can spend with their children,” and “they have limited time to place their children under the care of day-care centers, after-school clubs, their grandparents.”

As stated above, under the present circumstances, although many men, as well as their spouses, wish to participate in family activities through childcare, they are forced to focus on their work. This is because men, especially those in their 30s with children, have a high percentage of those who work long hours and tend to get home late at night.

(4) Changes in local communities

(Low rate of participation in regional activities)

The rate of participation in regional activities is not very high, regardless of gender, and the fields of activities they participate vary among men and women.

(Low percentage of female representatives in regional activities)

Looking at the percentage of female representatives in regional activities, men occupy the overwhelming majority of representatives of community associations, NPOs, and societies of commerce and industry. This shows that there are not enough opportunities for women to participate in various decision-making processes in local communities.

(Increased willingness to participate in regional activities)

Willingness to contribute to society and to participate in regional activities has been increasing. Looking at the breakdown by gender and age, women show a characteristic tendency in willingness: highest for those in their 20s, but sharply declining in their 30s and 40s during the child-rearing period.

(What is needed for women to play an active role in local communities)

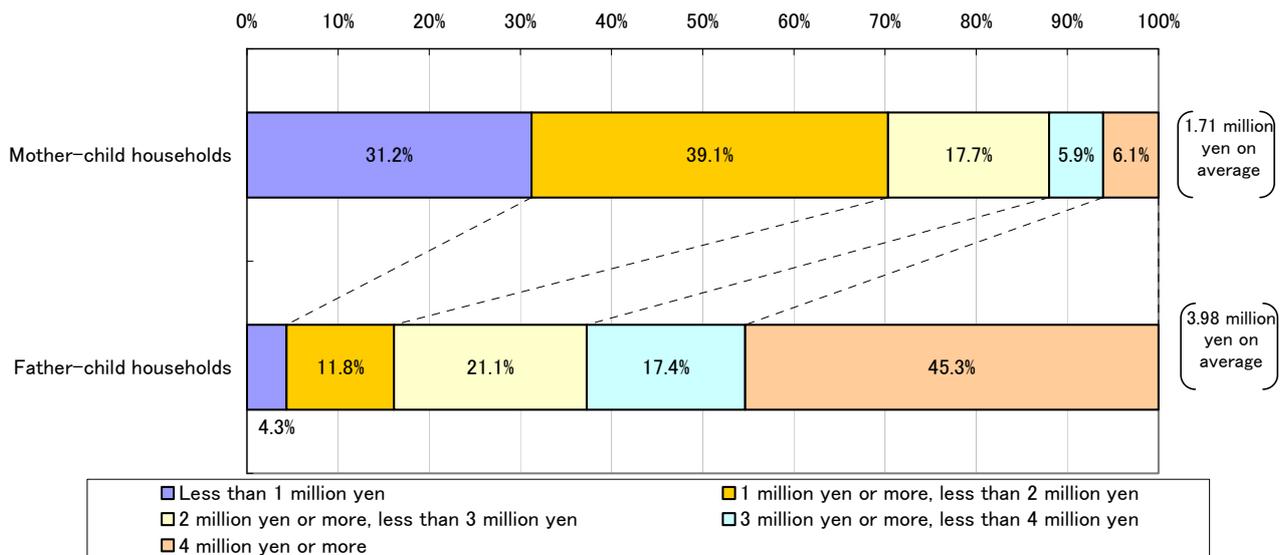
As for what is needed for women to play an active role in local communities, most people point out their family's understanding. Understanding and cooperation from the whole community, including men, is essential for women to exercise their full abilities in local communities. However, it is believed that one of the factors that prevent them from playing an active role in local communities is the existence of a persistent stereotyped perception of gender roles, such as "the head of a household or organization should be a man."

3. Increase in those who face livelihood difficulties according to changes in social conditions

(Changes in the family structure, including an increase of single-person and single-parent households)

In line with the increase of unmarried and divorced people as well as the further aging of the population, the number of single-person and single-parent households has increased. In particular, it is expected that the number of single-person households will continue to increase rapidly. The percentage of female single-person households of all households increased to 13.2% in 2006 from 11.3% in 1996. The number of mother-child households was about 750,000 households in 2005. Although the employment rate of mother-child households in Japan is high, exceeding 80%, their annual earned income remains at low levels. For example, households with an annual income of less than one million yen accounted for about 30%, and those with an annual income of one million yen or more but less than two million yen accounted for about 40% (Chart 12). Moreover, the percentage of workers' households consisting of two or more family members, whose heads are women, increased to 8.0% in 2004 from 4.8% in 1994. This means that the percentage of women who are primary wage earners has increased. While women who need to make their own living have been increasing, women who face economic difficulties and have a lot of trouble derived from such difficulties have been increasing.

Chart 12: Composition ratio of annual earned income of mother-child and father-child households (2005)



- (Notes)
1. Data from the "National Survey on Mother-Child and Other Households" (2006) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
 2. "Average annual earned income" means the average of annual earned income of mothers or fathers in 2005.
 3. The total excludes the number of households that responded "no answer".
 4. "Annual average income" means all income of mother-child (father-child) households including income of family members other than mothers (fathers).
 5. Figures for annual average income of all households show average income based on the National Livelihood Survey.

(Changes in employment, such as an increase of non-regular employees)

The number of non-regular employees has been rapidly increasing, and this trend is particularly obvious for women and young people. Unstable employment that forces those who have to make their living to work as non-regular employees increases the risk of facing livelihood difficulties.

(Globalization, such as increase of foreign settlers)

The number of foreign visitors to Japan is rapidly increasing, and there are some changes in circumstances, including diversified purposes of their visit to Japan, an increase of permanent residence, and widening of their settled areas. Since the mid- 1980s, the number of international marriages has been significantly increasing, and about 80% of international marriage couples consist of a Japanese husband and a foreign wife. One out of about 30 children born in Japan in 2006 has "parents, at least either of whom is a foreign national". Due to these changes in circumstances, new problems arise, including foreign wives and their children who have trouble in adapting to Japanese society.

(Women's expressed risk of facing livelihood difficulties, and diversification and generalization of those who face livelihood difficulties)

Those who face livelihood difficulties, including single-parent households, unstable employees, foreign residents and the disabled, tend to be put in diversified and serious circumstances. Although women's livelihood difficulties in making a living previously existed in female single households and mother-child households, those problems were hidden by the standard model of households in which women were dependent on their spouses. However, according to the changes in social conditions, such problems have come up to the surface, and those who face livelihood difficulties are becoming more diversified and generalized.

(Women are more vulnerable to livelihood difficulties)

In Japan, women are more vulnerable to livelihood difficulties, and there are four factors involved in this. First, women tend to cease employment due to life events, including pregnancy, childbirth and childcare, and have limited career choices that enable them to balance work with childcare. Secondly, women's employment is centered on non-regular employment under present circumstances, and the employment structure causes women to take up relatively low-wage and unstable employment. Thirdly, women are subjected to violence, etc. Victims of violence require a certain period of time until they recover from various types of physical or mental disorders, during which it is difficult for them to get a job or participate in society. In addition, these victims have various problems, including trial or mediation related to divorce with their husbands, securement of housing, securement of opportunities to get a job, and issues concerning child-raising. Consequently, they are forced to take up unstable and low-wage employment, and to support their livelihood by doing several jobs in the face of serious difficulties. As for children, if there is any problem in their domestic environment, they tend to be deprived of opportunities for education and learning. As a result, they may find themselves having difficulties in making a living as their mothers did. Finally, deep-rooted stereotyped perception of gender roles hinders the advancement of gender equality in homes, local communities and workplaces.

(Circumstances surrounding men)

In addition to changes in social conditions, the employment situation is worsening, and an increasing number of men take up unstable employment and become exposed to the risk of facing livelihood difficulties. There are male-specific problems, such as a tendency that men in father-child households and aged single households have no one to go to for advice and are isolated, and the pressure to play a role as men that makes it difficult for those in father-child households to gain the understanding of everyone around to reduce workloads and balance work with childcare .

As stated above, it is necessary to eliminate the factors that cause men and women to face livelihood difficulties by promoting measures from a viewpoint of gender equality.

Section 3: Towards the realization of a gender-equal society

1. Future policy directions toward the realization of a gender-equal society

(1) Integrated efforts for “work-life balance”, “support for women’s career development”, and “awareness raising”

One of the reasons why efforts for gender equality have not shown much progress is that there has not been substantial progress in achieving a work-life balance, support for women's career development, and awareness raising. These three directions are inextricably linked to each other, and need to be organically promoted in an integrated manner.

① Achievement of work-life balance

Toward the achievement of a work-life balance, wide-ranging efforts by both the public and private sectors are just getting under way in accordance with the Charter for Work-Life Balance and Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance. However, some problems have been pointed out: insufficient improvement of systems and services to support the balancing of work and household activities, including childcare and family care; and insufficient management reforms that allow fostering of an organizational climate, in which both men and women can use such systems and services and reconsidering working styles. Thus, the national and local governments must accelerate improvements in social infrastructure that support work-life balance and environmental improvement, including reforms in the social climate and management in corporations.

To achieve work-life balance, the scope of the intended recipients of support for “balancing work and

family life”, who once were mainly women at the childbearing and childrearing age, has been extended to those in every generation and field, regardless of gender. A major turnaround in ideas for various activities and aspects of life, including work, family life, regional activities, self-enlightenment and recreation, has been made. From the viewpoint of gender equality that both men and women should play an equal part in the home and society demonstrating their own ability and individuality, it is important to promote the work-life balance based on such ideas, and such a balance is essential to the realization of a vigorous and sustainable society. It is thus necessary to raise society-wide awareness of and concern for the need to promote the work-life balance, and to facilitate efforts by diversified entities, including corporations.

②Support for women’s career development

Because clear career paths cannot be predicted and there are some concerns about balancing work and household activities, such as housekeeping, childcare and family care, many women feel anxious about their career development. It is a problem that women have few opportunities to receive support for career development.

In corporations, there are few female personnel who can be a role model near at hand, and few opportunities to play an active role by utilizing the abilities acquired. Therefore, it is necessary for corporations to promote positive action (voluntary and proactive efforts to eliminate the gender gap that actually exists among employees), and to provide positive support to women so that they can continue working aspiringly, through support for fostering mentors and support for establishing networks, including networks beyond the corporation. It is also necessary to provide support to women depending on their life plan by promoting career education so that women can develop their own career plans before they get a job, and by improving a system that offers women counseling in view of their life plan.

③Awareness raising

The stereotyped perception of gender roles, “a husband should go to work, a wife should stay home and take care of the family,” has been changing but still remains deep-rooted, and awareness about gender equality significantly varies according to gender and age.

When promoting educational activities for raising awareness, such a difference in awareness by gender and age should be taken into account. In particular, it is necessary to promote efforts focused on the fields of great concern to the young generation and to men. It is also necessary to contrive ways to promote awareness-raising activities, not only through seminars but also practical activities, which enable participants to generate fresh ideas, realize advantages of gender equality that provide diverse people with opportunities to play an active role, recognize their effect, and change their awareness.

(2) Response to an increasing number of people who face livelihood difficulties with the changes in social conditions

With the changes in social conditions, people who face livelihood difficulties have been increasing, and these newly-emerging issues should be also addressed. In order to address such issues, it is necessary to examine various related systems from the viewpoint of gender equality, and if there is any problem, reforms of the entire social system should be proposed.

To respond to those who face livelihood difficulties, it is important to focus on problems related to gender equality behind an increase of such people, and it is essential to enhance efforts to promote measures for gender equality, including the realization of a better working environment for women and measures to prevent violence against women, in order to prevent people from falling into livelihood difficulties.

To promote support for those who face livelihood difficulties, it is necessary to establish a framework that provides consistent and comprehensive support to individuals from a perspective of empowerment according to a women’s life plan, and to enhance support for households that face livelihood difficulties and children so as to prevent such difficulties from being handed down to the next generation.

(3) Collaboration and cooperation through networks of diversified entities in local communities

To promote efforts to realize a gender-equal society, it is important to create a major trend for the solution of problems by deepening collaboration and cooperation through the establishment of a network of diversified entities in various fields. What is called for is to promote gender equality, especially in local communities which are the living space nearest at hand for people.

In local communities, various efforts to promote gender equality have already been made. However, local communities have some problems, including the stereotyped perception of gender roles which still remains deep-rooted, and the gender and age gap in the participation of activities. As a result, not all efforts for gender equality made in local communities are going well. In order to overcome the current situation, it is necessary to shift from existing efforts focused on knowledge acquisition and awareness raising to efforts to promote gender equality, by providing practical activities to solve a variety of specific immediate problems. By solving issues such as regional development, childcare and spousal violence through collaboration and cooperation based on a perspective of gender equality among diversified groups and organizations in local communities including local authorities, such as gender equality centers, NPOs, corporations and universities, it is expected that organizations, which have little interest in gender equality will now be able to understand the importance of gender equality.

Local governments have shown a certain progress in consolidating systems and efforts for promotion of gender equality, while they have some problems in fulfilling their full function, such as reduction of budget and personnel. In order to promote gender equality in local communities, it is necessary to establish and upgrade promotional systems for local governments and to steadily promote related measures, as well as to further strengthen collaboration between the national and local governments.

(4) Collaboration and cooperation within the international framework

Japan has been making efforts to form a gender-equal society in collaboration and cooperation with international organizations including the United Nations, and other countries, within the international framework. With the rapid progress of globalization, extension of such collaboration and cooperation within the international framework is becoming more important. In order to change the situation in Japan, where the advancement of gender equality still remains at an internationally low level, it is necessary to strengthen international collaboration and cooperation, and to learn from the results and experience of international efforts which are expected to stimulate domestic efforts.

This is the 30th year since the UN's adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and it is scheduled to review the sixth report on the Convention. In 2010, Japan will chair the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Women Leaders' Network Conference. In this conference, attendees are expected to exchange views on women in various fields, such as small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurs, rural villages, trade industry, and IT industry, in countries and regions within the Asia-Pacific region. Since it is the 15th year since the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women will have a session commemorating the year.

Japan should make use of the opportunity to participate in the above international conferences and try to promote international collaboration and cooperation, mutual dialogue, and transmission of information. At the same time, Japan should promote domestic efforts for gender equality, and make a positive contribution to the improvement of women's position in the world, as well as "equality, development and peace" in the global society.

2. Moving to the next stage for the promotion of gender equality

The significance of realization of a gender-equal society should be reaffirmed this year, now that 10 years have passed after the enforcement of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society proposing the realization of a gender-equal society as the top priority issue in the 21st century. Amidst a process of drastic social change, there have been some situations in various fields, in which existing approaches and frameworks cannot adequately respond to new problems. In these types of situations, efforts to realize a gender-equal society that allow individual citizens to fully demonstrate their individuality and ability are expected to pave the way to solving diversified specific issues arising in society. Those efforts are also expected to enable individual citizens to enrich their lives and revitalize their organizations, and as a result, to serve as a major driving force for the creation of a vigorous, sustainable society.

With the aim of realizing a gender-equal society, various efforts should be made. In this regard, it is important to initiate a major trend to promote practical efforts that meet social needs for the solution of specific issues with collaboration and cooperation, through the establishment of a network of diversified entities. Practical efforts, with collaboration and cooperation among diversified entities, will bring people higher awareness and further empowerment. Hence, efforts to realize a gender-equal society should now move on to the next stage.

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

(Percentage of female Diet members)

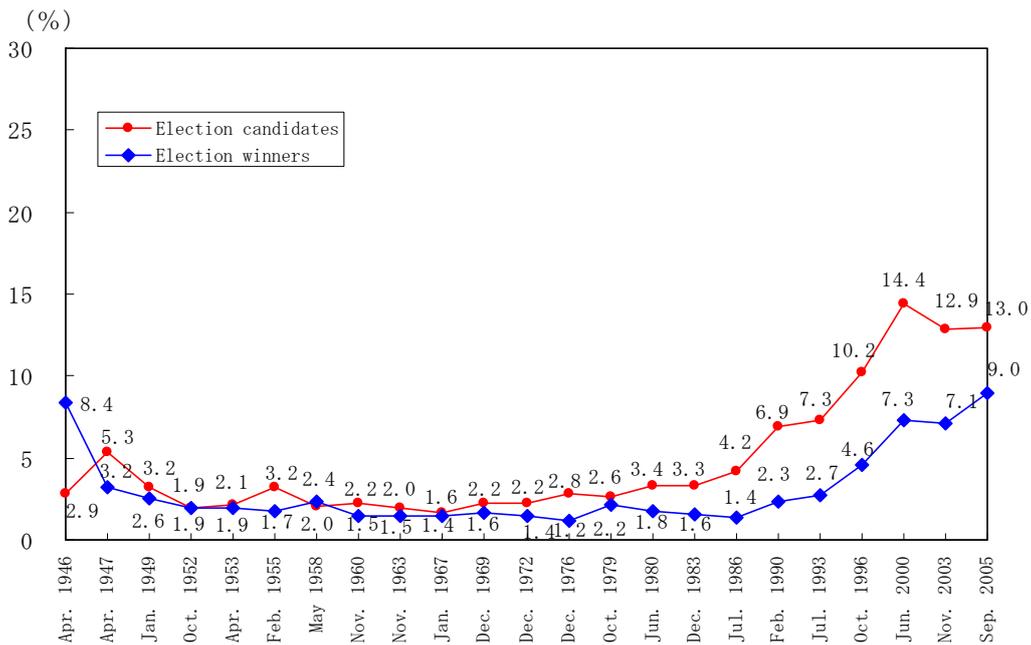
As of May 2009, the percentage of female Diet members accounted for 9.2% (44 members) in the House of Representatives and 18.2% (44 members) in the House of Councilors.

(Percentage of female candidates and election winners)

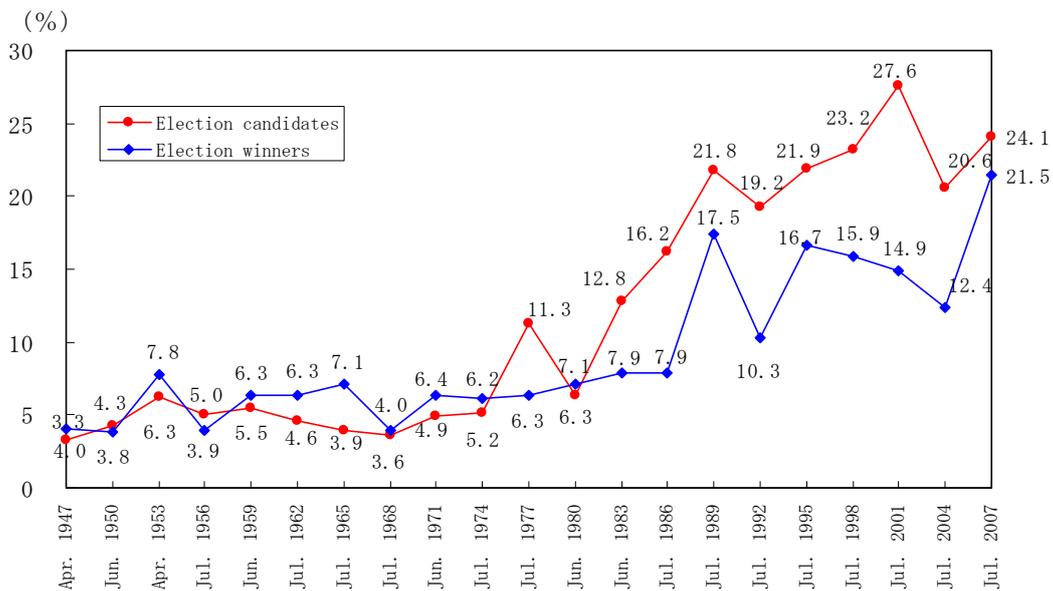
Looking at the percentage of female candidates and election winners in national elections, in the most recent general election of the House of Representatives in September 2005, the percentage of female election candidates slightly increased to 13.0%, while female election winners hit an all-time high of 9.0%. This probably happened because some Japanese political parties have taken affirmative action (positive action) to give their female election candidates a high ranking on their proportional representation list (Chart 13).

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 13).

Chart 13: Percentages of female election candidates and female election winners
House of Representatives



House of Councilors

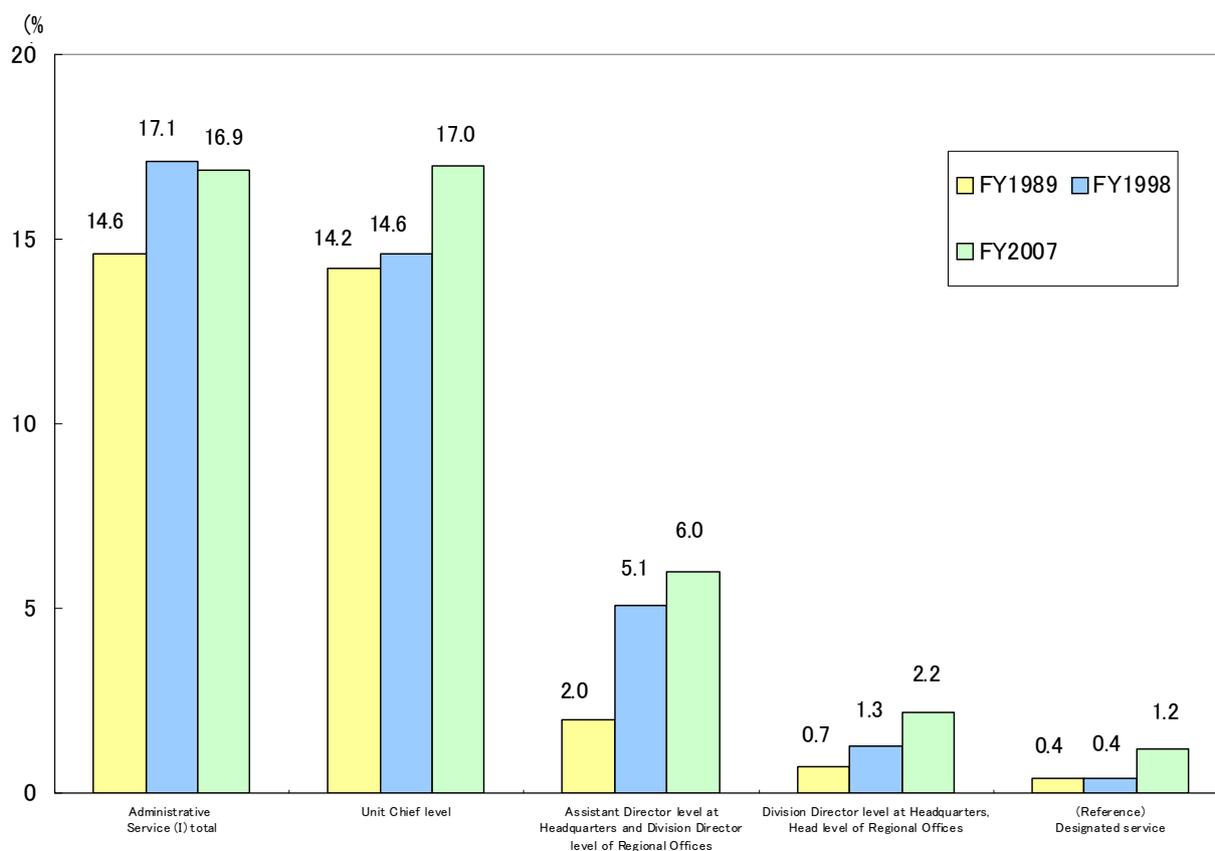


(Note) Data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

(Women occupy a smaller percentage of higher positions at national public service)

The ratio of female officials among all national public employees under the “salary schedule for Administrative Service (I)” by position has been on an upward trend. As of FY2007, women account for 17.0% of all incumbent officials at the Unit Chief level, but the rate of females becomes smaller for higher positions (Chart 14).

Chart 14: Ratio of Female National Public Employees in the Regular Service, by Positions (Administrative Service (I))



- (Notes)
1. Data from the “Status Report on Appointments of National Public Employees in the Regular Service” by the National Personnel Authority
 2. Data for FY1989 and FY1998 is as of the end of the fiscal year, and data for FY2007 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 level at 3rd and 4th grades (former 4th to 6th grades for FY1989 and FY1998), Assistant Director level at Headquarters and Division Director level of Regional Offices at 5th and 6th grades (former 7th and 8th grades for FY1989 and FY1998), Division Director level at Headquarters and Head level of Regional Offices at 7th to 10th grades (9th to 11th grades for FY1989 and FY1998)

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

The Cabinet Office annually conducts a regular survey on female members’ participation in government advisory councils. According to the survey, the number of female members in government advisory councils has steadily increased, accounting for 32.4% as of September 30, 2008. On the other hand, female members in expert committees, etc. account for only 15.1%, 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 assemblies, city assemblies, town/village assemblies, and Special Ward Assemblies as of December 2008, the Special Ward Assembly represents the highest percentage of women at 24.9%. Women account for 17.3% in cabinet-order-designated city councils, 12.1% in city assemblies as a whole, 8.2% in prefecture assemblies, and 7.8% in town/village assemblies. The percentages of female local assembly members tend to be higher in metropolitan areas, while lower in rural areas.

(Women's participation rate in Japan remains at an internationally low level)

According to the “Human Development indices: A statistical update 2008” published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2008, Japan ranked 8th for HDI (Human Development Index) among 179 countries for which the index could be calculated, but 58th for GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure) among 108 such countries. For GGI (Gender Gap Index), which was published by the World Economic Forum in 2008, Japan ranked 98th among 130 countries for which the index could be calculated.

(Note)

HDI (Human Development Index)

An index developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 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.

GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure)

An index developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 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.

GGI (Gender Gap Index)

A ranking made by the World Economic Forum to quantify the gender gap between countries. It is calculated using data from the fields of economy, education, politics and health. “0” represents entirely unequal, and “1” represents entirely equal. While the GEM, which is affected by the country's developmental level, cannot always show the gender gap, the GGI can clarify the gender gap.

Chapter 2: Gender equality in the workplace

(Changes in labor force)

According to the “Labour Force Survey (2008)” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the annual average labor force is 66.5 million people, showing a decrease of 190,000 on a year-on-year basis for the first time in four years. On a gender basis, the male labor force is 38.88 million people (a decrease of 180,000 on a year-on-year basis), showing a decrease for the first time in two years, while the female labor force is 27.62 million people (a decrease of 10,000 on a year-on-year basis), showing a decrease for the first time in five years. Looking at the changes since 1975, the percentage of women in the labor force, which exceeded 40% in 1988, increased to 41.5% in 2008.

The labor force population ratio (a percentage of the labor force in the population over 15 years of age, hereinafter referred to as “labor force participation rate”) was 60.2% on average in 2008, a decrease of 0.2% on a year-on-year basis. With regard to the labor force participation rate by gender, women account for 48.4%, a decrease of 0.1% on a year-on-year basis, and men account for 72.8%, a decrease of 0.3 on year-on-year basis.

(Increasing dispatched workers)

In recent years, in addition to non-regular types of employment, such as part-time workers, dispatch workers have been increasing in number, the percentage of which is not yet so high among all non-regular employees. According to the “Labor Force Survey (2008)” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, employee dispatch companies had 1.4 million dispatch employees in 2008, an increase of 70,000 from the previous year.

(Low labor force participation rate of married women)

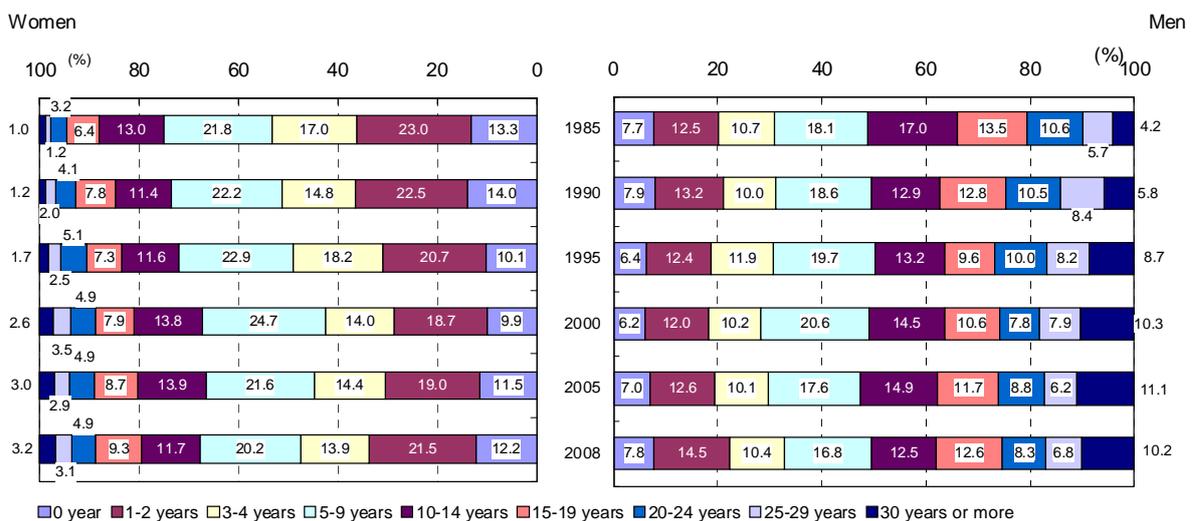
Looking at the labor force participation rate of women by age bracket, which is further broken down into “married” and “unmarried”, the rate of married women in their 20s to 40s is much lower than that of unmarried women.

Looking at the labor force participation rate of married women by age bracket, the rate of those in their late 20s has become much higher than in the past, while the rate of those in their late 30s has decreased. This may be partly because women leave the labor market in the higher age bracket as they are involved in child-rearing later in life.

(Prolonged length of women’s continuous employment)

The length of women’s continuous employment tends to be longer. According to the “Basic Survey on the Wage Structure (2008)” by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, with regard to female employees in 2008, the average age is 39.1 years old and the average continuous employment length is 8.6 years. With regard to male employees, the average age is 41.7 years old and the average continuous employment length is 13.1 years. Looking at female employee composition ratio by continuous employment length group, the percentage of those who have been employed for 10 years or more is tending to rise (Chart 15).

Chart 15: Employee composition ratio by continuous employment length group



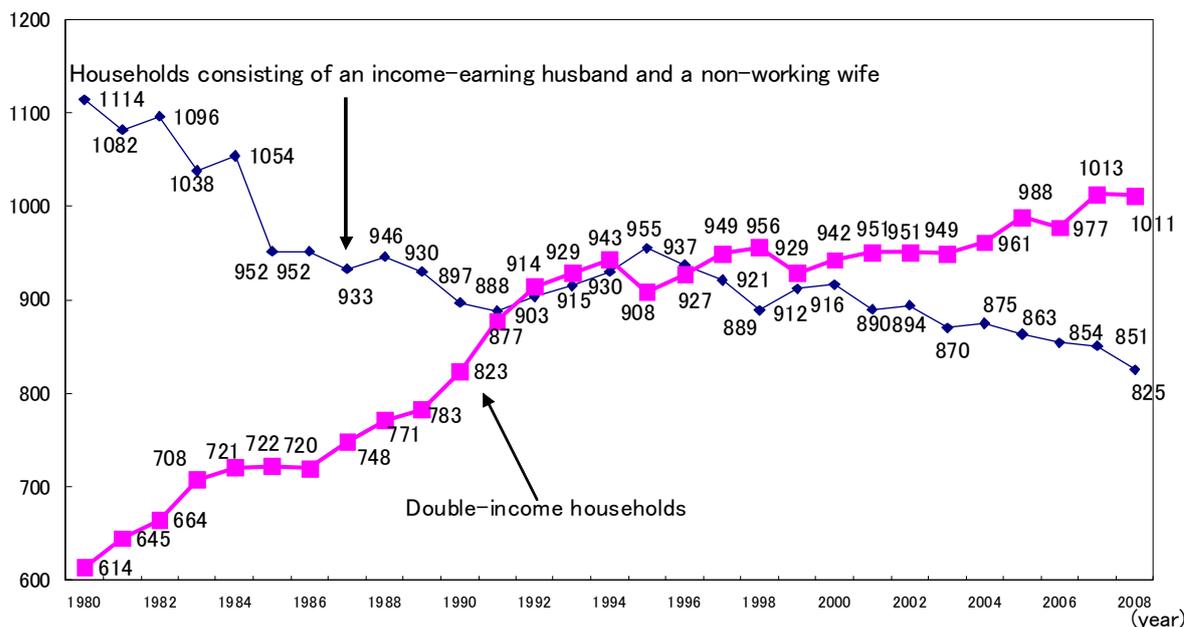
(Note) Data from "Basic Survey on the Wage Structure" by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

(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 (Chart 16).

Chart 16: Changes in the number of households including double income households

(10 thousand households)



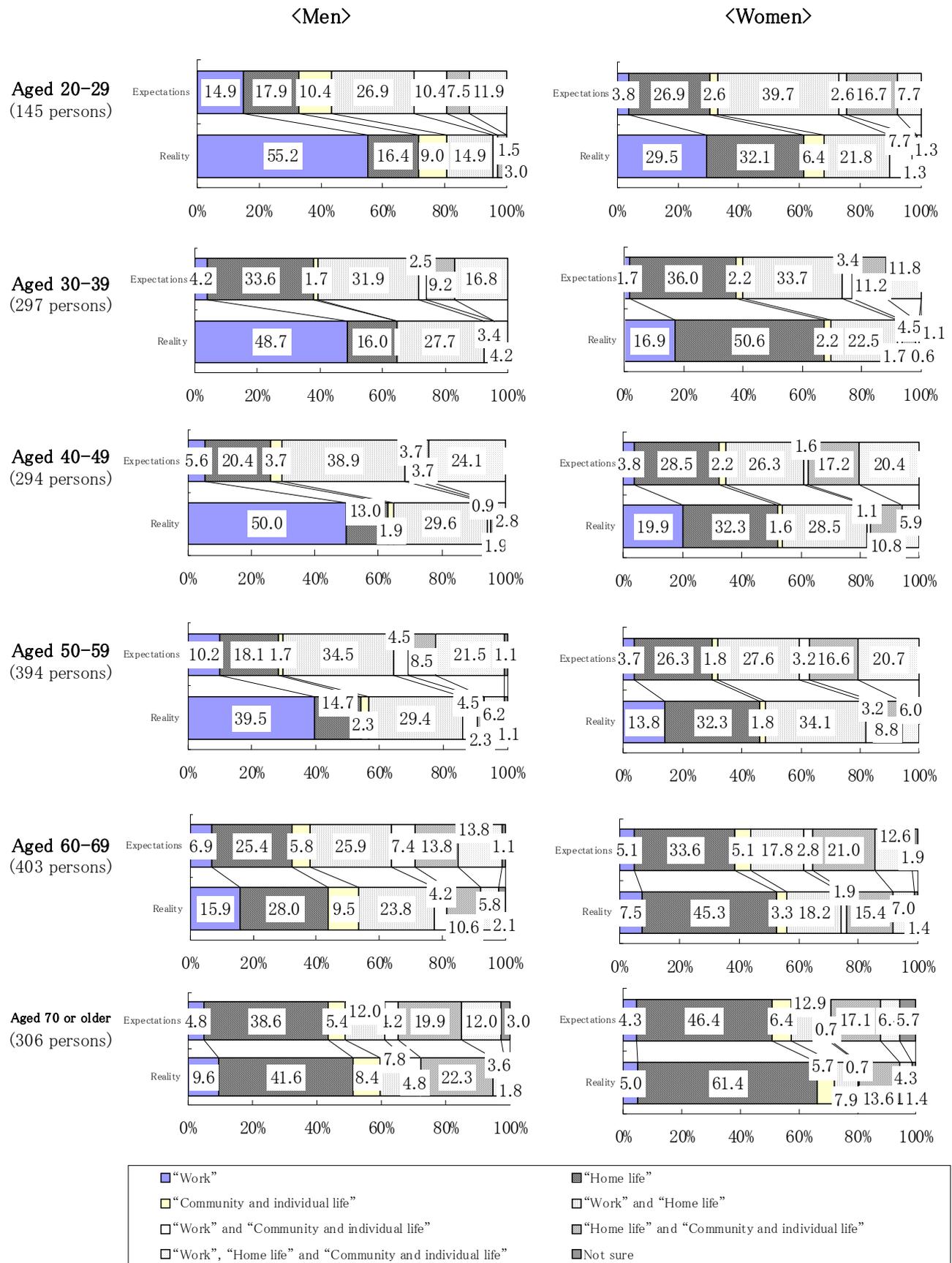
- (Notes)
1. Data for 1980-2001 comes from the “Special Survey on the Labour Force Survey” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (as of February in each year, except that data for 1980-1982 is as of March). Data for 2002 or later is based on the “Labour Force Survey (Detailed Tabulation)” (annual average).
 2. A “household consisting of an income-earning husband and a non-working wife” means a household consisting of a husband who is an employee engaged in business other than agriculture and forestry, and a wife who is not employed (not-in-labor force population and the unemployed).
 3. A “double-income household” means a household consisting of a husband and a wife who are both employees engaged in business other than agriculture and forestry.

Chapter 3: Work-life balance

(Expectations and reality for work-life balance)

According to a questionnaire asking those aged 20 or older across the nation how they put priority on “work”, “home life”, and “community and individual life”, 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. In particular, men in their 20s to 40s have a high percentage of those who in fact put priority on work, accounting for about 50%. Those who in fact put priority on home life account for almost half of all women in their 30s. People in their 60s have a high percentage of those who wish to put priority on “home life”, but in reality the percentage of those who put priority on “home life” is much higher than that of those who wish to do so. The difference between expectations and reality can be seen. (Chart 17).

Chart 17: Expectations and reality for work-life balance, by gender

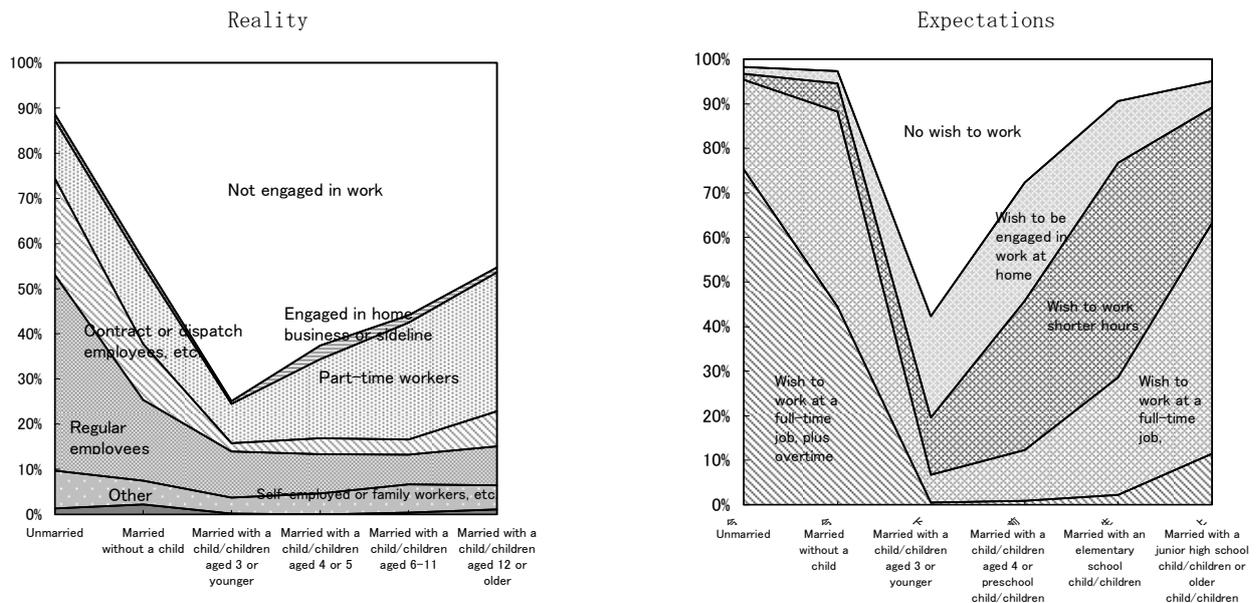


(Notes) 1. Data from the “Special Public Opinion Survey on Work-life Balance (conducted in June 2008)” by the Cabinet Office
 2. Answer to the question, “With regard to the priority on ‘Work’, ‘Home life’ and ‘Community and individual life’, first choose one that is closest to your expectations. Then, also choose one that is closest to your reality (actual situation).”

(Expectations and reality for working styles responding to women’s life stages)

Women’s expectations for working styles vary according to their marriage or child-rearing age and the age of their children. Some don’t wish to work while their children are small, but more than 90% of those who have junior high school children or older wish to work. Working styles that they expect also vary according to their circumstances. For example, the number of those who wish to work at a full-time job increases as their children become older. On the other hand, in reality, many women wish to work but have no job, and most of those who have a job are working as part-time workers. Thus, there is a gap between expectations and reality for working styles (Chart 18).

Chart 18: Expectations and reality for working styles responding to women’s life stages



- (Notes) 1. Data from the “Survey on Support for Women’s Life Planning” (2007) by the Cabinet Office
2. “Self-employed or family workers, etc.” include “entrepreneurs and self-employed business operators” and “family workers of self-employed business”, and “contract or dispatch employees, etc.” include “fixed-term contract workers or commissioned employees”.
3. Survey target: Women aged 30s to 40s

(Expectations and reality for men’s participation in child-rearing)

According to the “Survey Results on Future Support for the Balancing of Work and Family”(2008) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the percentage of men who “wish to use the child care leave system” stands at 31.8%, and the percentage of men who wish to use the shorter working hour system to engaged in child-rearing stands at 34.6%. However, the percentage of men who take child care leave is low, standing at 1.56% in 2007. This shows that there are quite a few men who wish to use the system but have not used it in reality.

(Prolonged work and mental/physical health)

The present situation seems to be that men aged 20s to 40s have to put priority on work against their will. Looking at actual working hours based on the “Labour Force Survey” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the percentage of those who work for 60 hours or more a week among those who work for 35 hours or more a week, is the highest in those in their 30s and 40s. This means that 20% of all those workers work for 60 hours or more a week.

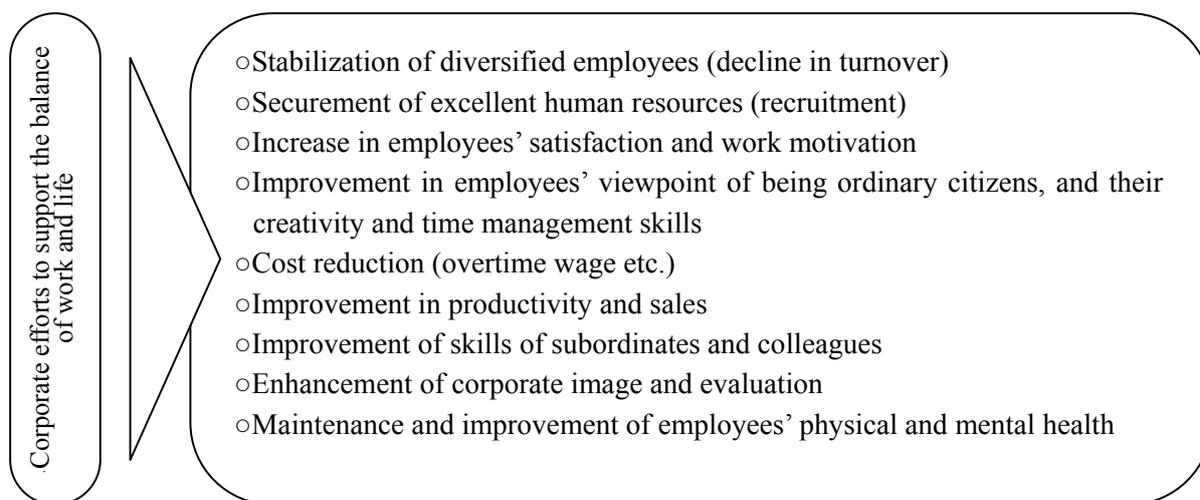
Such prolonged work affects workers’ mental and physical health. According to a survey on the attitudes of workers (from the “Actual Conditions of Prolonged or Unpaid Working Hours and Positive Analysis” by the

Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training), the percentage of those who “always or frequently become exhausted from working throughout the day and do not feel like doing anything after leaving the office”, stands at about 60-70% of those whose overtime per month exceeds 50 hours. This shows that workers who have more overtime work, have a higher percentage of those who become exhausted from working throughout the day and do not feel like doing anything after leaving the office.

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

A report on the “Advantages of Corporations Engaged in Efforts for Work-Life Balance” (2008) published by the Specialist Committee on Work-Life Balance of the Council for Gender Equality shows that corporate efforts to support the balancing of work and life have brought various advantages as follows (Chart 19).

Chart 19: Advantages of corporations engaged in efforts for work-life balance



(Note) Based on the “Advantages of Corporations Engaged in Efforts for Work-Life Balance” (April 2008), published by the Specialist Committee on Work-Life Balance of the Council for Gender Equality

Chapter 4: Circumstances surrounding the elderly

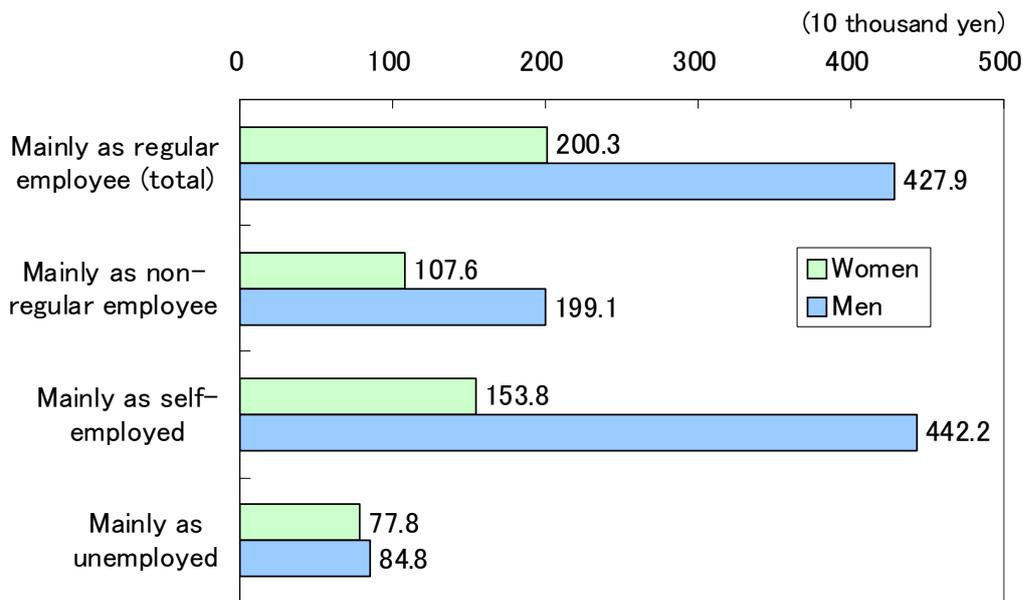
(Elderly women have difficulty achieving economic independence)

The “Population Census” (2005) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications shows that one out of five citizens is an elderly person aged 65 or older and about 60% of those elderly people are women. In particular, women account for 70% or more of the elderly aged 85 or older.

With regard to women’s working styles, non-regular employees hold a majority because of marriage, childbirth, child-rearing, etc. and their employment period tends to be short. As a result, they tend to have less income from annual pensions, etc., later in life. Looking at the present annual income of men and women aged 55-74 by their own working pattern, women have far less income than men, due not only to the income gap between regular employees and non-regular employees, but also to the gender gap in regular employees (Chart 20).

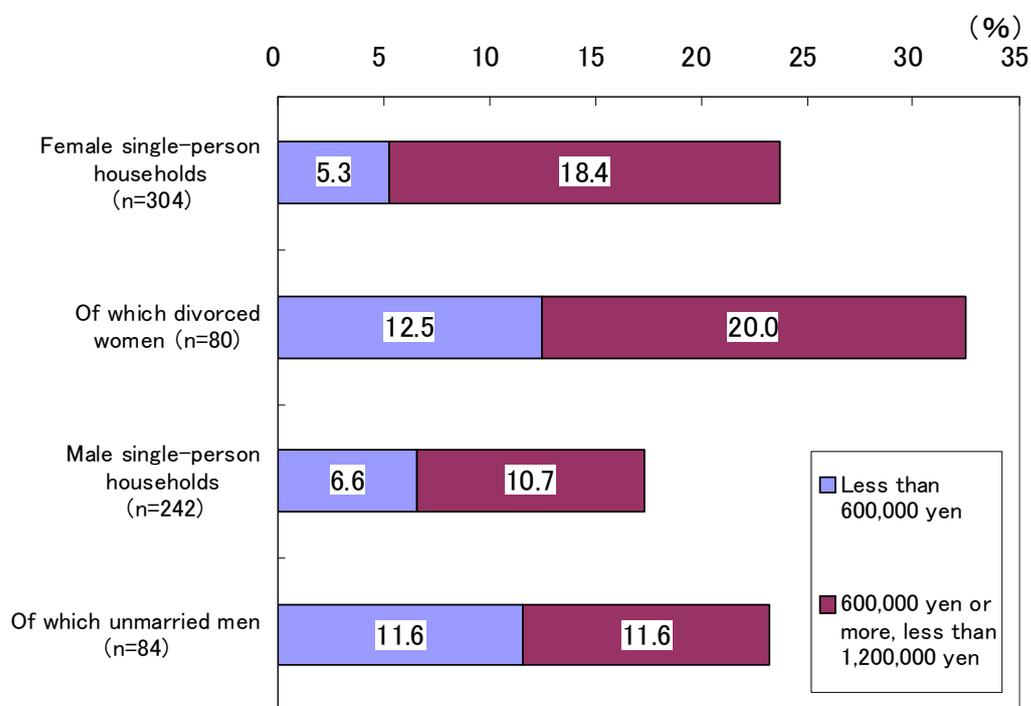
Above all, divorced women are put in severer conditions. Quite a lot of them cannot depend on their husband’s income or survivor’s pension and have trouble finding a new steady job. One out of three divorced women has an annual income of 1.2 million yen or less (Chart 21). This seems to be due to the influence of their working careers, for example, about 40% of them mainly work as non-regular employees (“Survey on Independent Life of the Elderly” (2008) by the Cabinet Office).

Chart 20: Annual income of the elderly, etc. (aged 55-74) by their own working pattern (average)



- (Notes) 1. Data from the “Survey on Independent Life of the Elderly” (2008) by the Cabinet Office
 2. “Income” is inclusive of tax, and includes employment income, annual pension income, and income from withdrawal of deposits and savings, house rent, and interest.

Chart 21: Percentage of low income population in elderly single-person households (aged 55-74) (annual income)



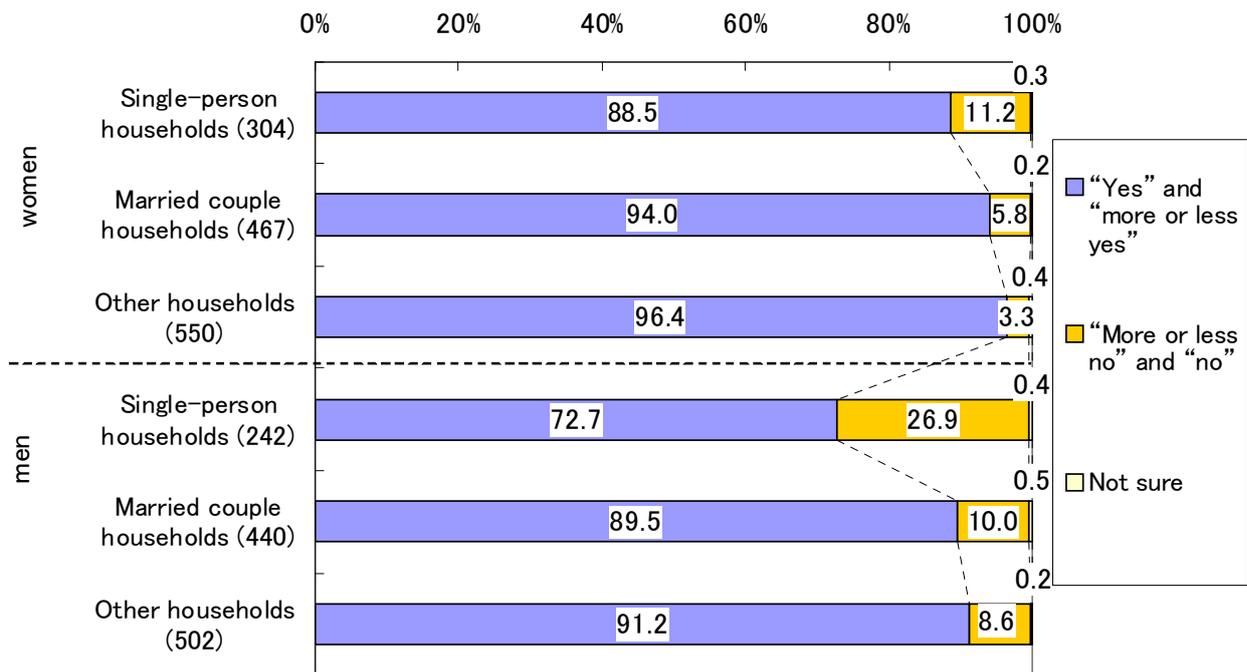
- (Notes) 1. Data from the “Survey on Independent Life of the Elderly” (2008) by the Cabinet Office
 2. “Income” is inclusive of tax, and includes employment income, annual pension income, and income from withdrawal of deposits and savings, house rent, and interest.

(Issues regarding single men)

With regard to men, isolation of single men from the community is growing into a serious problem. According to the “Survey on Independent Life of Elderly Men and Women” (2008) by the Cabinet Office, one out of four single men aged 55-74 answers that they “have no one to talk to or go to for advice” (Chart 22). It seems that most single men are not likely to ask for support from their family because almost half of them have no children.

In addition, the above survey shows that some unmarried single men, about 10% of whom have an annual income of less than 600,000 yen, have serious financial problems (Chart 21 shown above). Previously, it was considered that needy persons in the elderly age group were single women. However, it may also be necessary to address support for single men as an issue for the future.

Chart 22: Percentage of those who have one to talk to or go to for advice (aged 55-74)



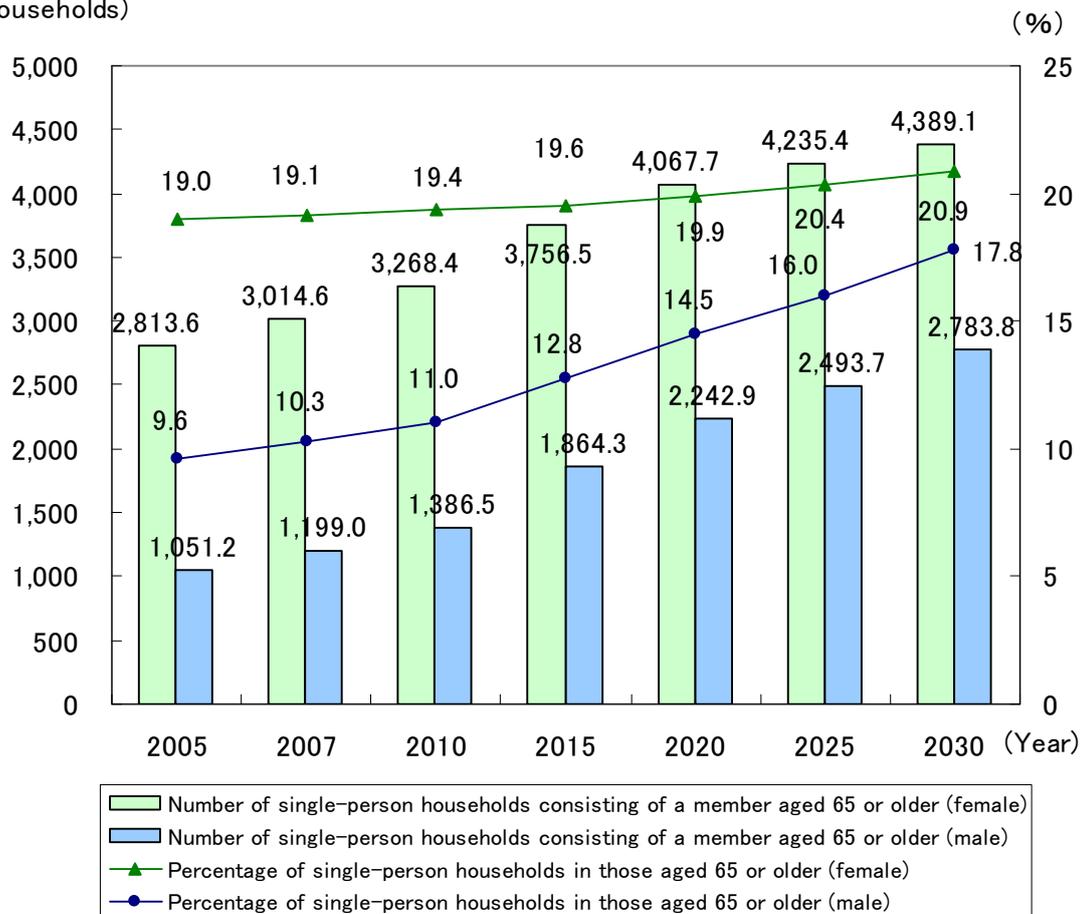
(Note) Data from the “Survey on Independent Life of the Elderly” (2008) by the Cabinet Office

(Increasing elderly single-person households)

It is considered that the number of elderly single-person households, which tend to have problems, such as isolation and economic poverty, will be increasing rapidly, as unmarried or divorced people increase. Especially, the number of male single-person households is significantly increasing. It is predicted that about 20% of both men and women will live alone 20 years later in 2030 (Chart 23).

Chart 23: Estimated number of single-person households consisting of a member aged 65 or older

(1,000 households)



- (Notes) 1. Data from the “Overview of Households Projections for Japan (national estimate)” (March 2008) by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research
2. Data of the number and percentage of single-person households is based on the assumption for the medium variant of fertility and mortality in the “Population Projections for Japan” (December 2006) by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

(Diversified working styles—impact of an increase in non-regular employees on later stages of their lives)

With the changes in circumstances surrounding employment, the number of non-regular employees, including young people, is increasing. This trend is particularly obvious for women. The percentage of female regular employees in 2008 was only 46.5%, and the remaining 53.5 % were non-regular employees. The percentage of male non-regular employees was also becoming higher, an increase to 19.1% in 2008 (Chart 8 shown above).

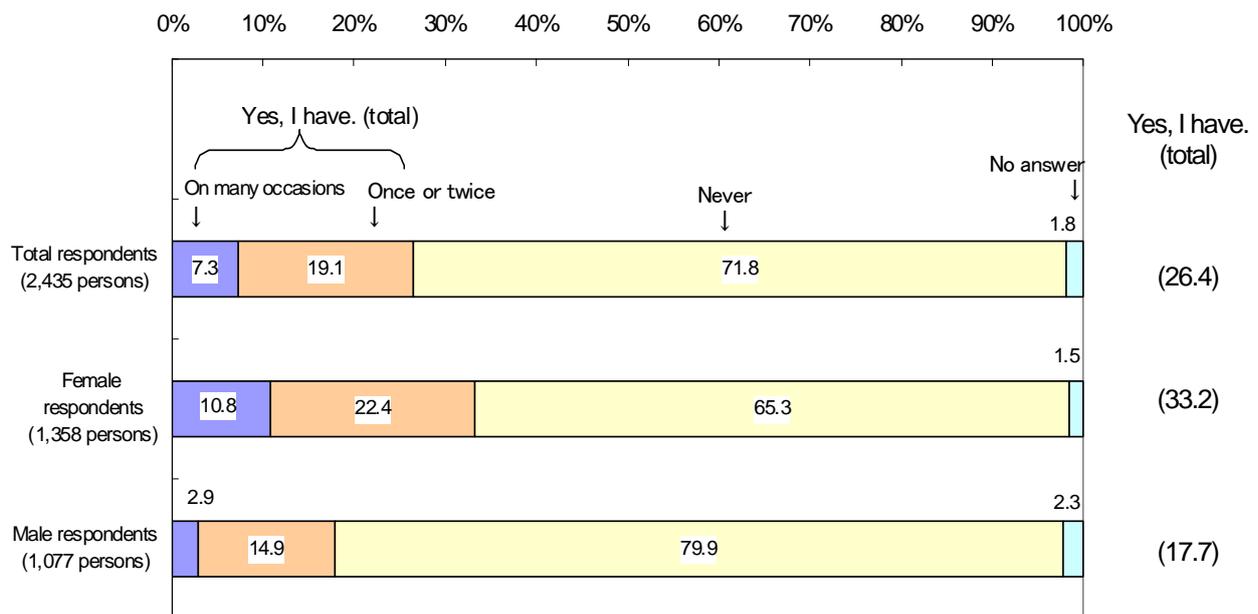
In the present situation non-regular employees are likely to be exempted from coverage of employee’s insurances, including welfare pension, and an increase of such employees may result in an increase of those who have difficulty making plan for their old age.

Chapter 5: Violence against women

(Potential Violence)

According to the “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2008)” by the Cabinet Office, 10.8% of female respondents and 2.9% of male respondents (out of 2,435 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 22.4% of female respondents and 14.9% of male respondents have seen one of these experiences “once or twice”, while 33.2% of female respondents and 17.7% of male respondents have had such experiences “at least once” (Chart 24).

Chart 24: Violence by spouse

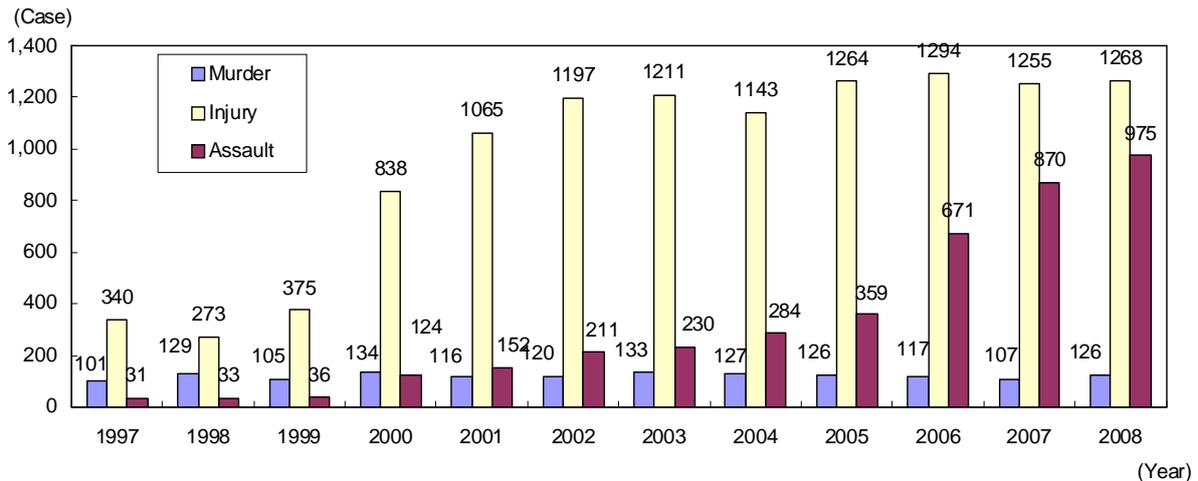


- (Notes)
1. Data from the “Survey on Violence between Men and Women (2008)” by the Cabinet Office
 2. Physical assault: Bodily assault, such as punching, kicking, pelting, and knocking over
 3. Mental assault: Mental harassment, such as using verbal abuse that would deny personal integrity or closely 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 2008, assault increased by 105 cases (12.1%) to 975 cases, while injury increased by 13 cases (1.0%) to 1,268 cases on a year-on-year basis (Chart 25).

Chart 25: Arrests for crimes against wife by husband



(Note) Data from documents provided by the National Police Agency

(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 1,582 cases in 2008, a decrease by 184 cases (10.4%) 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 7,111 cases in 2008, a decrease of 553 cases (7.2%) on the year-on-year basis.

(Prostitution)

The number of prostitution-related criminal offenses stood at 2,396 in 2008, decreasing from the 2007 level. Of the total of 1,794 women in need of protection that decreased from the 2007 level, minors accounted for 24.1%, increasing by 5.8 points.

(Human trafficking)

According to the National Police Agency’s statistics for 2008, the number of arrests for crimes related to human trafficking stands at 36 cases, and the number of criminals arrested stands at 33 persons, 7 of which were brokers. The total number of human trafficking victims stands at 36, a decrease of 7 persons (16.3%) from the 2007 level.

(Sexual harassment in the workplace)

In FY2007, equal employment offices at the prefectural labour bureau handled 15,799 counseling cases of sexual harassment. The number of counseling cases increased by 4,697 (42.3%) from the previous year. Of this total, 8,169 cases (51.7%) were brought by female workers.

(Stalking behavior)

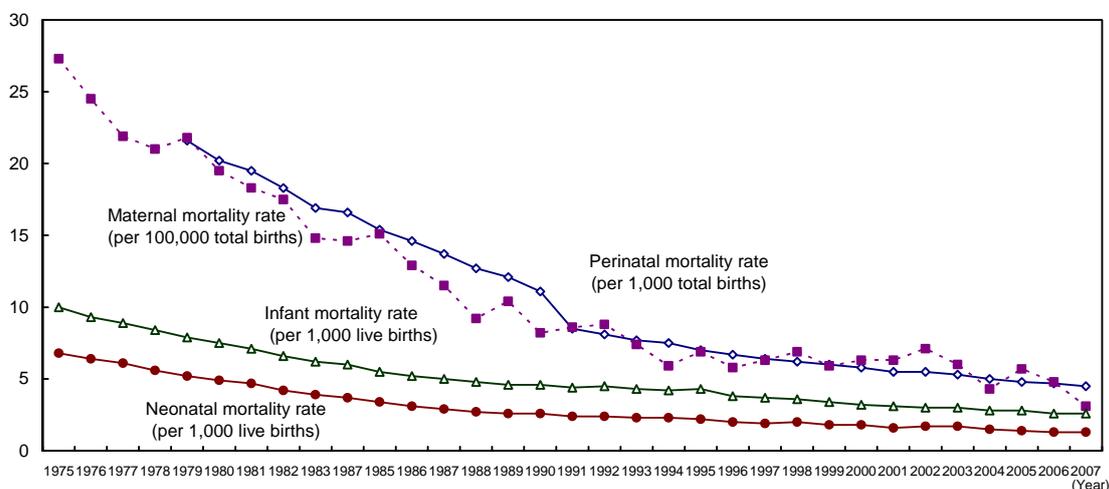
The number of stalking behavior cases reported to the National Police Agency stood at 14,657 during 2008, an increase of 1,194 cases (8.9%) from the 2007 level. Women account for 90.3% of stalking victims, while men account for 90.1% of all assailants.

Chapter 6: 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 26).

Chart 26: 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)

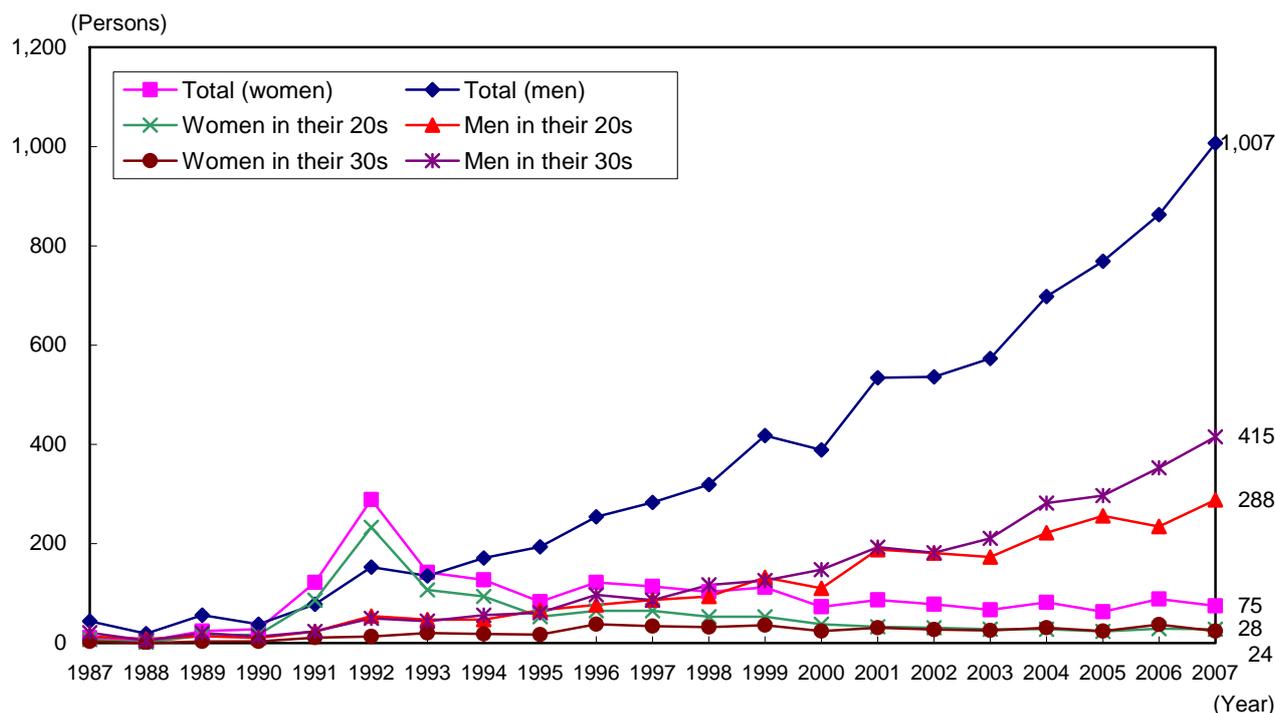
In general, the number and rate of induced abortions (the proportion of induced abortions to 1,000 women aged 15 to 50) decreased from 1975 to 2007. While the number of abortions for women younger than 20 years old accounted for only 1.8% of that for women across all age groups in 1975, it increased to 9.3% in 2007 and the younger generation now accounts for a larger percentage than before. However, the total number of abortions has steadily decreased, achieving a decrease by almost half since 2002.

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

In 2007, there were 1,082 new HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) carriers and 418 new AIDS patients (those who acquire immune deficiency by HIV infection and suffer from opportunistic infection disease, such as pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, or a malignant tumor), and the number of HIV carriers hit new high records (Chart 27). It is estimated that 87.7% of the total of HIV carriers were infected within Japan.

Looking at the percentage of HIV carriers at an age when infection is first reported by age bracket, 29.2% were in their 20s, while 40.6% were in their 30s. This shows the recent trend in which the infection rate is high among those in their 30s.

Chart 27: 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 7: Gender equality in the education and research fields

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

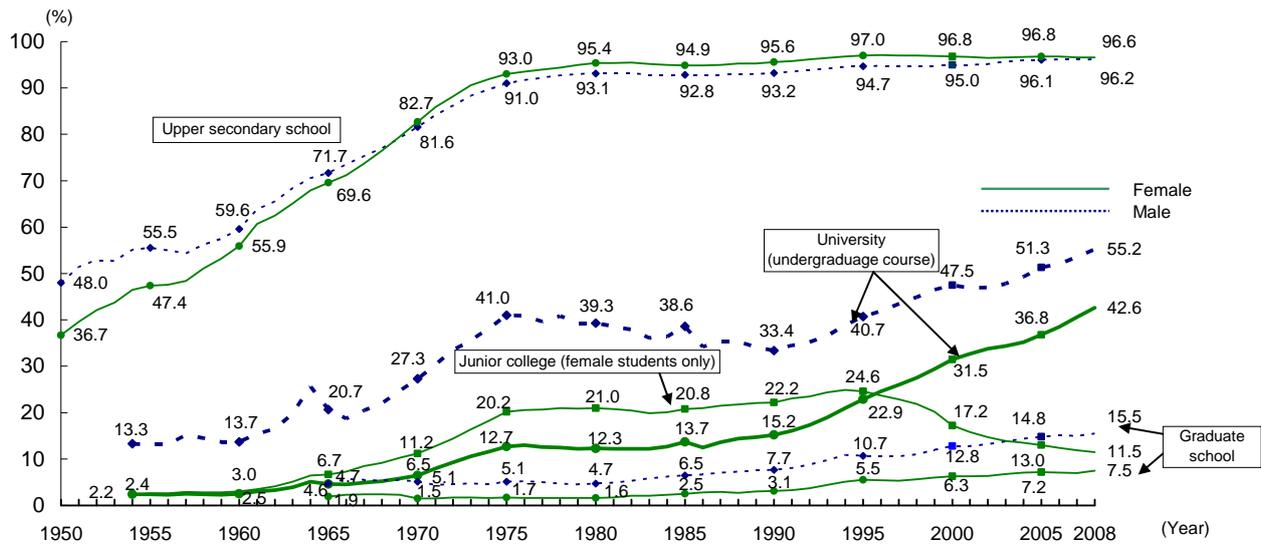
In FY2008, the high school advancement rate stood at 96.6% for women and 96.2% for men, which suggests that a few more female students enter high school than male students. The university (undergraduate course) advancement rate stands at 55.2% for men and 42.6% for women, indicating that the rate for male students is 10 points higher than that for female students. Since 11.5% of female students enter junior colleges, the women's total advancement rate for higher education is 54.1%. 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 15.5% and female students account for 7.5% in FY2008 (Chart 28).

(Gap in students' major fields)

At the undergraduate level, female students majoring in the social sciences made up the largest percentage. In 2008, 27.6% of female students majored in social sciences, and female students accounted for approximately 30% of all students majoring in the social sciences. In FY 2008, female students majoring in engineering accounted for 10.5% of all students majoring in engineering, while those majoring in humanities accounted for 66.4% of all students majoring in humanities, suggesting a gender gap in students' major fields.

Chart 28: Advancement rate, by school category



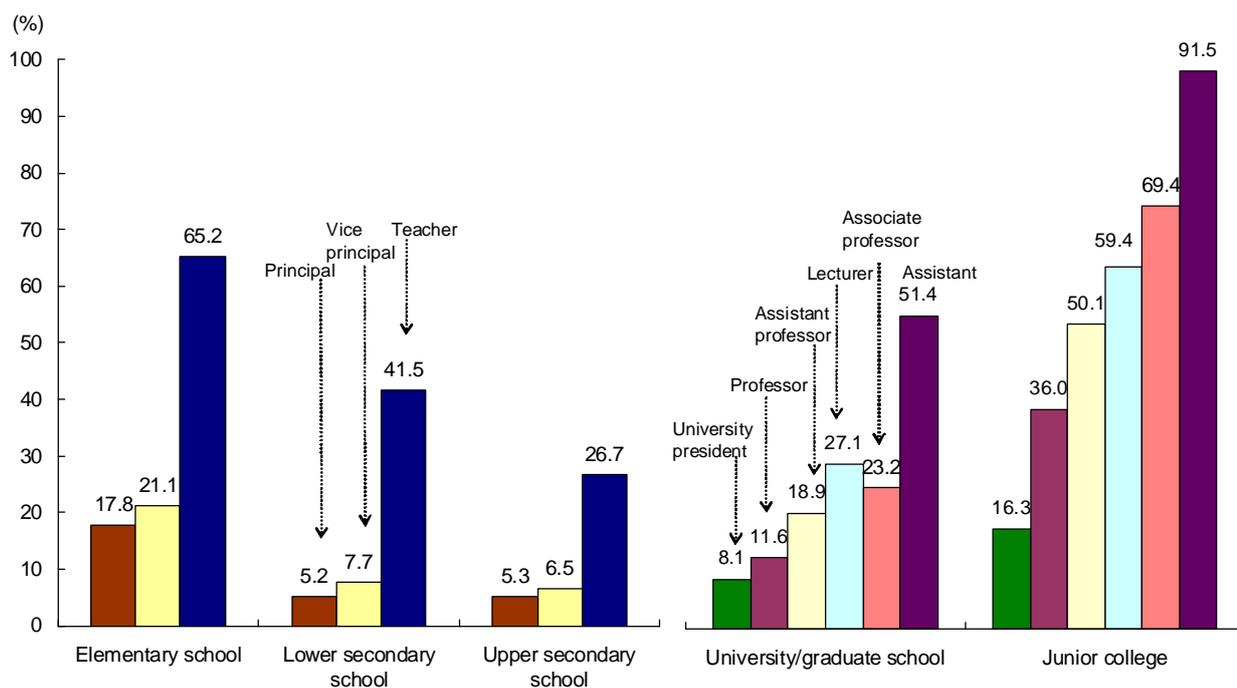
- (Notes)
1. Data from "School Basic Survey" by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
 2. "Upper secondary school": Percentage of graduates of lower secondary school and secondary school (lower division) who enter upper secondary school and college of technology (except for 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.

(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 17.8% in 2008. However, female principals and vice principals are still a smaller percentage than female teachers.

Women account for about 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 29).

Chart 29: Percentage of full-time female teachers (at elementary, secondary and higher education levels)

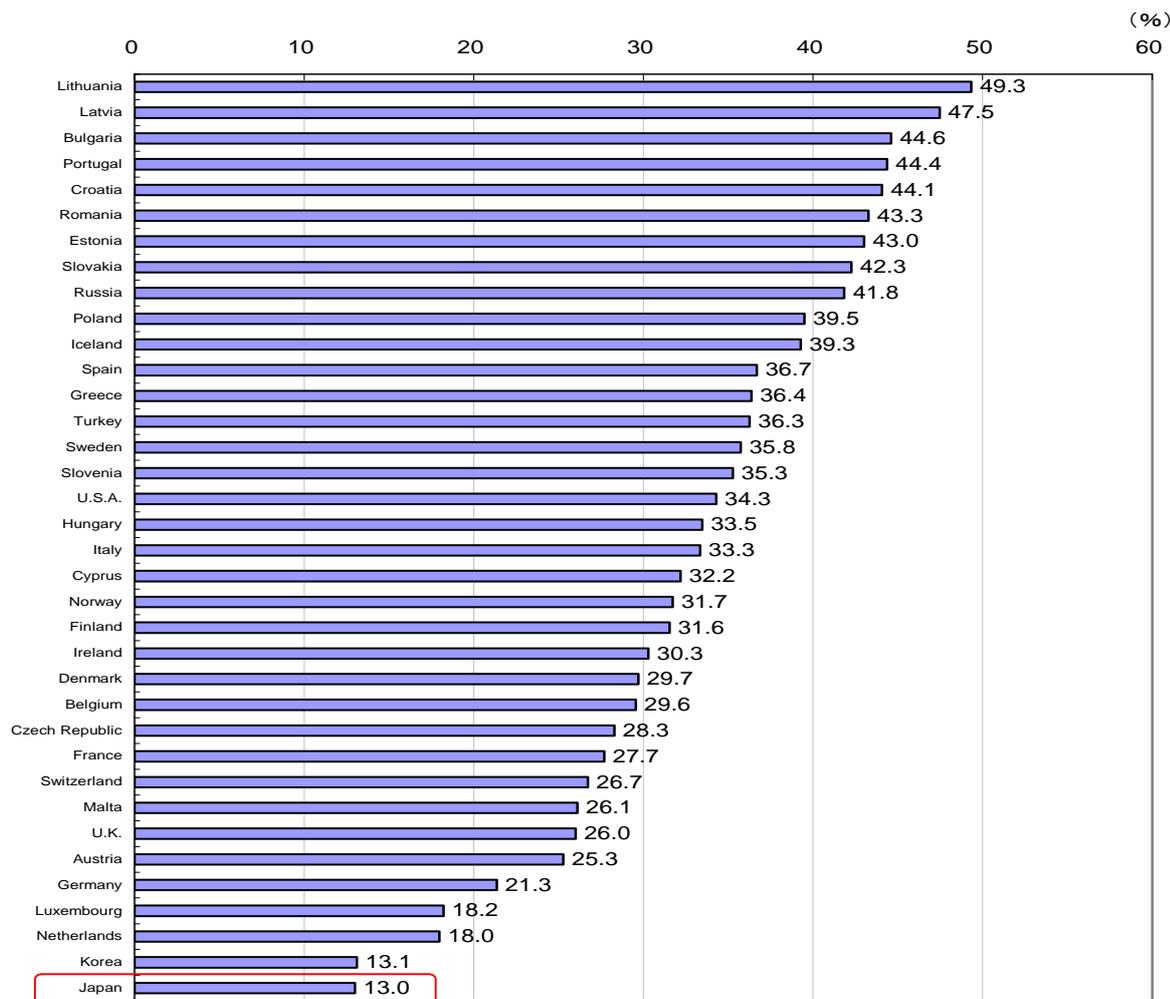


(Note) Data from "School Basic Survey (FY 2008)" by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

(Percentage of female researchers)

The percentage of women among all researchers in Japan has been gradually increasing, but still stands at 13.0% as of FY2008, much lower than that in other countries (Chart 30). Female researchers at higher education levels account for 41.1% in undergraduate courses of universities, 30.5% in graduate schools (master's courses) and 31.1% in graduate schools (doctor's courses), suggesting that the percentage of female researchers should be higher.

Chart 30: International comparison of the percentage of female researchers



- (Notes)
1. Figures for EU countries, except the U.K., are based on “Eurostat”. They include estimates and provisional values. Data for Estonia, Slovakia, Russia, and the Czech Republic is as of 2007. Data for Portugal, Iceland, Greece, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands is as of 2005. Data for Switzerland is as of 2004. Data for other countries is as of 2006. The figure for the U.K. is based on “Key Figures 2002” by the European Commission (as of 2000).
 2. The figure for Korea is based on the “Main Science and Technology Indicators 2008/2” by the OECD (as of 2006).
 3. The figure for Japan is based on the “2008 Results of the Survey on Research and Development” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (as of March 2008).
 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 on Research and Development (FY2008)” 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 2008 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 7.3% 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 FY2008 to Promote Formation of a Gender-Equal Society

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

- The Council for Gender Equality, which was established in the Cabinet Office as one of councils dealing with key policies, 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.

Table31: 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 (Support for independent life of the elderly)	Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Impact Assessment	June 2008

Reports by specialist committees	Specialist committee	Time
Benefits from corporations' efforts for work-life balance	Specialist Committee on Work-Life Balance	April 2008
Ideal form of future approach for promotion of gender equality in local communities	Specialist Committee on Basic Problems	October 2008

- It is scheduled to make an overall review of the “Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality” in 2010. Prior to that, the Prime Minister consulted the Council for Gender Equality about the basic idea for the formulation of a plan for the next term on March 26, 2009. In the light of such consultation, the Council for Gender Equality is now conducting research on the formulation of a plan for the next term.

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

- The “Program for Accelerating Women's Social Participation” determined by the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality in April 2008 focuses on public service as one of three priority areas in which women are expected to play an active role, but in which the participation rate is low. It sets a target of about 5% for female participation in national public service at the level of directors and general managers in central government ministries or higher, which is to be increased by the end of 2010. Based on the above program, each office and Ministry is improving and reviewing each “Plan for the Enlargement of Recruitment and Promotion of Female Employees” by setting a numerical target to increase 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, with the aim of making this a detailed and concrete action plan. In addition, they are actively involved in various other efforts, including promotion of flexible working patterns, review of working styles, and support for career development based on job experience.
- For expansion of women's participation, it's important to promote support for balancing work with Child Care and Nursing Care. Therefore, the National Personnel Authority reported on future efforts to advertise systems, such as the Child Care Leave System, the Short-time Working System for Child Care, and the Nursing Leave System, to present utilization models, and to inform male employees about those

systems, in order for the systems to be used in a way that meets employees' needs, when it announced the 2008 National Personnel Authority's Recommendation. In view of the report, the National Personnel Authority revised the "Guidelines Concerning the Utilization of the System to Support Employees to Balance Work and Child Care" in March 2009. In addition, it created a new leaflet entitled "Fathers' Guide to Child Care" for the purpose of familiarizing male employees with systems to support employees to balance work and Child Care, and established the "Liaison Council of Support for Balancing Work with Child Care and Nursing Care".

In the above recommendation, the National Personnel Authority mentioned that a reduction in overtime work was a pressing issue to be addressed from a perspective of balance between work and family life, and the government as a whole should try to reduce working hours systematically.

- For the purpose of ensuring equal employment opportunity for men and women, 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 "Monitoring the State of Implementation of Gender-Equal Society Promotion Measures Developed by the Government (Support for Independent Life of the Elderly)" in June 2008.
- 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

- From a perspective of practically ensuring equal employment opportunity for men and women, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is promoting not only smooth implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law but also positive action, and is facilitating an environment that enables those who wish to continue working to develop and exercise their abilities without demotivating them.
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare established "Mothers' Hello Work" offices at 12 locations in FY2006, and "Mothers' Salons" in major Hello Work offices with no Mothers' Hello Work offices (one salon in 36 prefectures) in FY2007, for the purpose of providing finely-tuned employment support to those who wish to get a job while raising their children. In FY2008, "Mothers' Corners" were established in Hello Work offices in regional core cities (60 sites in the nation) to provide the same service.
- From a viewpoint of consolidating the framework to protect labor, in November 2008, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare submitted to the Diet a draft revision of the Worker Dispatch Law, which contains rules that in principle prohibit daily dispatch, and improvements in dispatch employees' working conditions.

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 promoted 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 has implemented promotional and enlightenment activities for achievement of goals. In addition, it provided training programs and information to improve managerial capabilities 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

- In April 2008, with the aim of reviewing and assessing implementation of the "Charter for Work-Life Balance" and the "Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance", as well as promoting collaboration in realizing work-life balance in accordance with the above charter and action guidelines, a meeting of the "Work-Life Balance Collaborative Promotion and Evaluation Committee", consisting of representatives from related ministries, economic circles, labor circles, and local authorities, was held under the "Public and Private High-Level Conference on the Promotion of Work-Life Balance".
- In July 2008, the Work-Life Balance Collaborative Promotion and Evaluation Committee summarized "matters to be addressed for the time being for the realization of work-life balance" with a view to effective promotion of efforts for FY2008 and a new dimension to those efforts for FY2009, and has been promoting joint efforts of the public and private sectors.
- On December 3, 2008, the Law Concerning Partial Amendment to the Child Welfare Law (2008 Law No. 85) was enacted with the aim of promoting comprehensive measures to support the development of the next generation in local communities and the workplace, in view of current conditions in Japan including the rapid decline of the birthrate. In accordance with this law, a part of the Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation was revised.
- In February 2008, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare decided to implement the "New Zero-waiting List for Day Care Centers" to promote improved and upgraded measures for child-care services and after-school care both in quality and quantity, and to make efforts to promote them for three years from FY2008 as the priority period. Accordingly, the Ministry responded to the new demand for child-care facilities, such as Centre for Early Childhood Education and Care, by improving day-care centers based on the "New Zero-waiting List for Day Care Centers", and provided training programs to enhance the quality of child-care services. It also established the "fund for child-rearing" for each prefecture to improve systems so that people can raise children without anxiety.

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

- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare enforced a division system of employees' pension benefits for the period of a third insured person in FY2008 from the viewpoint of improving the system corresponding to various living and working styles.
- With regard to the corporate pension system to ensure income in old age in addition to public pension, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare incorporated the following into the outline of the tax system revision for FY 2009: to make all of the pension premiums related to the introduction of individual

contributions (matching contributions) based on corporate-type defined contribution pension plans deductible from income taxes, and to raise the contribution limit of defined contribution pension plans. The Ministry submitted to the 171st session of the Diet a draft law concerning partial amendment to the Defined Contribution Pension Act to promote improvement in the corporate-type defined contribution pension plans system.

Chapter 8: Eliminate all forms of violence against women

- To support victims of spousal violence who are not sure whom to consult, the Cabinet Office established the “DV Counseling Navigation” dial hotline to introduce the nearest counseling counters, such as Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers, through an automated voice guidance system in January 2009.
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare itself provides temporary protection to victims and their accompanying family members by taking them into protective custody through women’s consulting offices, and also entrusts privately-run shelters that meet the standards stipulated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare to provide temporary protection to such people. In FY2008, with the aim of further enhancing protection and self-reliance support for victims, the Ministry increased the amount of expenses for temporary protection implement to victims in women’s consulting offices, and improved support for those leaving women’s protection facilities.

Chapter 9: Support lifelong health for women

- With regard to breast cancer, which is the most prevalent form of cancer among women and has been increasing year by year, and uterine cancer, which is occurring among increasingly younger people, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is making efforts for improvement in early detection and reduction in mortality through the promotion of evidence-based cancer screening. Specifically, the Ministry is striving to improve the accuracy of cancer screening tests by implementing training programs for those involved in screening tests and by upgrading precision testing equipment. Moreover, it began to hold meetings of the Advisory Council on Dissemination of Knowledge about Cancer in October 2008, for the purpose of conducting effective and proper dissemination and enlightenment projects concerning cancer. The aim of the meeting is to collect data on pioneering case examples for stressing the importance of cancer screening tests and correct knowledge about cancer to be acquired in school education, and to absorb views.
- 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.
- In consideration of the severe drug abuse situation that still prevails, the government seeks to further promote efforts to eliminate the abuse of drugs by formulating the “Third Five-Year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy” (decided by the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse in August 2008), and facilitating close cooperation between ministries concerned.

Chapter 10: Promote gender equality in the media

- The police department is making efforts to effectively administer the Act on Regulating Enticement of Children through Websites for Social Networking of Opposite Sexes (2003 Law No.83), which was revised in

June 2008 to strengthen regulations on online dating service providers, and to enhance protection of children from child prostitution and other crimes deriving from the use of internet dating services.

- The IT Reassured Conference established the “Portal Site to Fight against Illegal/Harmful Information on the Internet” in October 2008, which comprehensively introduces efforts made by related organizations in connection with measures against illegal and harmful information. The site aims to provide easy-to-understand and useful information on concrete measures against illegal and harmful information, and efforts by related ministries/agencies and other organizations.

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

- Efforts to raise the awareness of those involved in school education have been promoted through training programs, which are conducted in prefectures, etc., and cover topics concerning gender equality, including training for beginning teachers and teachers with 10 years of experience. In addition, those relating to social education are encouraged to make efforts from a standpoint of gender equality. Provision of information on home education is also promoted in order to develop a willingness to promote gender equality, and to establish a value system based on gender equality.
- The National Women’s Education Center established the Women’s Archives Center in June 2008 in order to collect, organize, preserve, and provide historical materials on women who achieved remarkable results in the fields of promoting women’s education and gender equality, as well as on administrative policies for women’s education and gender equality. In October, the center constructed the Women’s Digital Archive System (<http://w-archive.nwec.jp/>), which contains catalogue of materials collected by the Women’s Archive Center and images of some materials.

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

- With the aim of realizing a gender-equal society in Japan, the government has made efforts to incorporate into national policies international norms/standards and guidelines for advancement of women, including various conventions related to gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, outcome documents, and statements made at international meetings. In April 2008, the government submitted the sixth report on the state of implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the United Nations.
- In Japan, the number of female members of government delegates who participate in international meetings has gradually increased in recent years. For instance, a female private citizen was dispatched once again to the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly held in autumn 2008 as a member of the government delegation. A Japanese national also serves as a member of the Committee established under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Chapter 13: Promote gender equality in fields requiring new initiatives

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has been implementing the Supporting Activities for Female Researchers, since FY2006 in line with the policies of the Council for Science and Technology Policy. The Ministry has adopted 13 new projects in FY2008, following 10 projects in FY2006 and FY2007, respectively, and has been supporting efforts by universities and research institutes to help female researchers balance research with childbirth and 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). The report proposes institutional reform, such as “relaxation of the requirement for fixed-term employees to apply for childcare leave”, and “improvement of measures, including shorter working hours during the child-rearing period (addition of telecommuting option)”, so as 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 for each item were conducted in FY2008.

- In order to improve the present situation wherein many women are interested in regional development activities but hesitate to participate, and to encourage women to play an active role in the field of regional development, the Cabinet Office held experience exchange meetings, and widely disseminated the results by dispatching women who are actually involved in regional development activities as advisors to 12 locations throughout the country where such involvement is encouraged.

Policies to be Implemented in FY2009 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 consideration of the formulation of a plan for the next term, for which the Prime Minister consulted the Council for Gender Equality, research will be carried out on a review of the “Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality” (approved in the Cabinet meeting in December 2005).

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

- In April 2008, the “Program for Accelerating Women’s Social Participation” was devised (as decided by the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality in April 2008). This program focuses on public service as one of three priority areas. Each Office and Ministry will make special efforts, including promotion of flexible working patterns, review of working styles, and support for active career development based on job experience.
- In order to enhance the recruitment and promotion of female national public employees, each Office and Ministry will continue to promote efforts to achieve the goals of its own “Plan for the Enlargement of Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Employees” based on the “Guidelines concerning the Enlargement of Recruitment and Promotion of Female National Public Employees” formulated by the National Personnel Authority (revised in 2005).
- 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

- Since June 2008, the Council for Gender Equality has engaged in research on the “actual situation of men and women facing financial difficulties in the context of new trends in the economic society”, in the Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Impact Assessment. In FY2009, the Council will continue focusing on those who face financial difficulties due to economic and social changes from two perspectives: “the increasingly obvious women’s risk of facing financial difficulties”, and the “diversification and generalization of those who face financial difficulties, together with underlying problems of gender equality”. In addition, it will move forward by considering the ideal gender quality measures to prevent people from facing financial difficulties.
- 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 “social 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 actively promote measures to encourage women to make appropriate occupational choices, including raising of awareness, provision of information, and building of capacity. In particular, for women raising children who wish to get a job again, the Ministry will implement the “Renewed Challenge Support Program” based on the “Plan of Support for Women’s Renewed Challenge”. After FY2008, it will continue giving consistent employment support provided by the same staff at Mothers’ Hello Work, etc.
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will continue implementing the project to introduce mentors to female entrepreneurs who have just started up their own business, and in FY2009 will initiate a female entrepreneur fostering and support project to offer services that allow participants to effectively gain the knowledge and knowhow necessary for starting a business, such as e-learning courses. It will also hold entrepreneur support seminars and exchange meetings in the Center for the Advancement of Working 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” and the “Work-Life Balance Collaborative Promotion and Evaluation Committee”. Its detailed duties will include cooperation and coordination with related organizations, such as ministries/agencies, labor-management committees and local authorities, planning, implementation, and coordination of promotional campaigns conducted by the entire government, information gathering and organizing, and research study.
- With the enforcement of the revised Law for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation, companies which are required to develop and submit a general business owner action plan will, starting from April 1, 2009, be required to publicize their plans, and disseminate them to their employees. Consequently, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will try to ensure the implementation of the above law, and will enhance support for formulation of plans especially to small and medium business owners, as the scope of target companies which are required to develop and submit an action plan will be extended to those with 101 employees or more after April 1, 2011.

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

- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will steadily implement the Long-term Care Insurance Law (1997 Law No. 123), so that the long-term care insurance system can continue giving people peace of mind for many years to come in Japan where the society is continually aging.
- In accordance with the Law to Amend Part of the National Pension Law enacted in 2004 (2004 Law No. 104), reform of the pension system has just been completed, including the division of employees' pension benefits for the period of a third insured person (enforced in April 2008) from the viewpoint of improving the system corresponding to various living and working styles. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will continue to take necessary measures to ensure smooth implementation of the revised system. With the aim of stabilizing and improving the corporate pension system, the Ministry will also make further efforts for early adoption of the law concerning partial amendment to the Defined Contribution Pension Act, so as to promote improvement in the corporate-type defined contribution pension plans system, etc.

Chapter 8: Eliminate all forms of violence against women

- The Cabinet Office will take appropriate measures to eliminate violence against women, and will conduct surveys especially on young victims and the actual support situation in order to raise social awareness of such issues.
- In FY2009, with the aim of further enhancing protection and self-reliance support for victims, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will improve care services by newly setting unit prices for infants in the expenses for temporary protection to victims provided by women's consulting offices, and will deploy counselors who help to improve care services for accompanying children in women's protection facilities. The Ministry will also provide special interpreter training programs as part of support for foreign victims.

Chapter 9: Support lifelong health for women

- The Government will provide health education programs and establish a counseling system, so that both men and women can properly take care of their own health. It will also promote maintenance and improvement of women's lifelong health by establishing a proper system to address issues at each stage in a woman's life, such as adolescence, pregnancy/childbirth, menopause, and elderly years.
- The "Women's Participation Acceleration Program" formulated in April 2008 (determined by the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality in April 2008) focuses on doctors, and specifies efforts to provide support for medical experts. 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 Law Prohibiting the Act of Inducing Children through Internet Dating Services (enacted on April 1, 2009), approved in the 169th session of the Diet, stipulates the following: ① establishment of a conference, consisting of the Prime Minister and related ministers, which formulates and implements a basic plan for measures that enable minors to use the Internet safely and securely; ② promotion of

education and enlightenment activities for proper use of the Internet through school, social and home education; and ③ support provided to private organizations involved in activities related to proper use of the Internet by the national and local governments. After enforcement of the above act, the Council for Measures against Information Harmful to Youth on the Internet and Promotion of Environmental Improvement established in the Cabinet Office, will formulate a basic plan and implement measures in cooperation with related ministries/agencies.

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

- The government will make further efforts for improvement in education and learning that foster awareness of independence and promote the principle of gender equality through school and social education.
- For the purpose of responding to unstable recruitment of graduates in universities, junior colleges and technical colleges, including withdrawal of an employment offer, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will promote efforts for comprehensive student support, such as strengthening each university's employment support for students, by making use of the "University Education and Student Support Promotion Project".

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

- The government will strive to adopt international norms/standards and guidelines for the empowerment of women, including various conventions closely related to gender equality, such as the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", and arguments in international meetings, such as the "United Nations Commission on the Status of Women".
- The Cabinet Office will promote the establishment of a domestic network that can serve as a basis for international networks, in collaboration with various fields, in preparation for the Women Leaders' Network (WLN) Conference for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which is scheduled to be held in Japan in 2010.

Chapter 13: Promote gender equality in fields requiring new initiatives

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will improve fellowship established under the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science so that excellent researchers can smoothly return to work after maternity leave. The Ministry will also improve the Supporting Activities for Female Researchers, which aims to support organizations making good efforts to support the balancing of research activities with childbirth and childcare. In addition, it will launch the Supporting Positive Activities for Female Researchers, which aims to support universities and research institutes to proactively hire female researchers in the fields of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture in which the proportion of the employment of female researchers is particularly low.
- In order to provide support that enables diversified entities to adopt the viewpoint of gender equality and conduct practical activities to solve various regional issues, including regional development, within a framework of mutual collaboration and cooperation, the Cabinet Office will initiate particular efforts in FY2009, including research and study of advanced case examples, provision of information, development and offer of human resource development programs, and dispatch of advisors, etc., who can respond to

the issues in each region.