

Women's Active Roles will Revitalize Japan's Regions

From the "White Paper on Gender Equality 2015"

Summary

Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

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The Cabinet annually submits to the Diet a report on the state of formation of a gender-equal society and policies implemented by the government (the White Paper on Gender Equality).

Please see the White Paper (in Japanese) for more detailed information on sources cited.

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Women's Active Roles will Revitalize Japan's Regions

Section 1 Government Policies to achieve a Society where All Women Shine

(The Power of Women: Japan's Largest Potential Power)

The second Abe administration took over governmental duties in December 2012, identifying the power of women as one of Japan's largest potential power. The administration recognized that Japan would not create sustainable economic growth without the power of women, and to this end the cabinet has adopted a number of initiatives, including those discussed below.

- Improve nursery school infrastructure to shorten the number of children on waiting lists, find and educate more nursery teachers, and increase childcare leave benefits, as called for in the Japan Revitalization Strategy (June 2013 Cabinet Decision)
- Create a Comprehensive After-School Childcare Plan, develop child-rearing support professionals, construct new legal frameworks, review the tax and social security systems to realize women's choices of the way to work, etc., as called for in the Japan Revitalization Strategy Revised in 2014 (June 2014 Cabinet Decision)
- Create new movements nationwide, including the Council for Supporting Women to Shine, the World Assembly for Women (WAW!), etc.
- Establish the Headquarters for Creating a Society where All Women Shine and create a policy package for a society where all women shine
- Hold meetings of the Quality of Life Conference

(Construct a New Legal Framework)

The Bill on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace calls for implementing policies to promote women's participation and advancement in the workplace on national and local governments. In addition, this bill offers a framework to encourage public and private entities to undertake initiatives on their own. More specifically, this bill calls for formulation of basic policy plan by national government and implementation plans by local governments. It also provides that national and local government agencies and private-sector corporations must correct and analyze the data on issues of gender and employment, devise and disclose action plans including numerical targets, and announce the data regarding women's participation and advancement¹.

¹ Required for private-sector corporations with more than 300 regular employees. Private-sector corporations with 300 or less regular employees are required to make best efforts, considering the administrative burden.

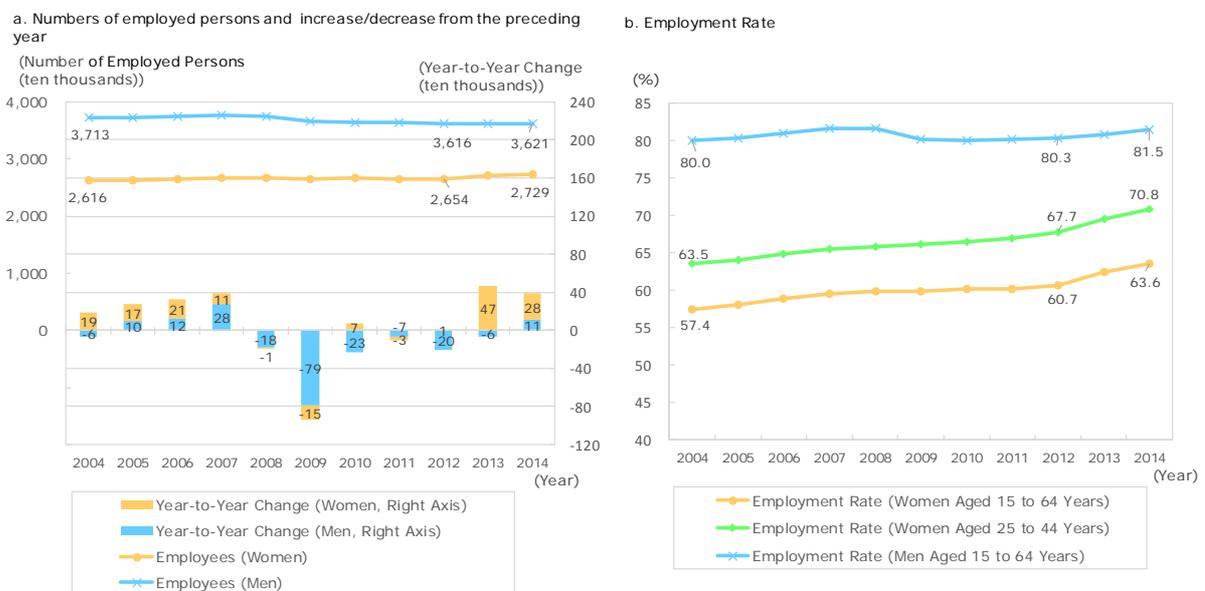
(Importance of Regional Initiatives)

The impact of governmental programs and other factors have led to much higher social mood for the participation and advancement of women. Combined with an uptick in the economy, 750,000 female employed persons increased in Japan between the years 2012 and 2014. Female employment rate of the working age population (persons aged 15 to 64 years) increased by 2.9%-point in the same period (I-Feature-Figure 2).

Meanwhile, the total female non-labor force desiring to work rose to 3.03 million (2014), demonstrating the significant size of Japan's potential power.

In order to provide an environment in which women can fully contribute their talents in the home, in the community, and in the workplace, we believe that initiatives must be taken in regions based on their own circumstances.

I-Feature-Figure 2 Numbers of Employed Persons and Employment Rates by Sex (2004 to 2014)



(Notes)

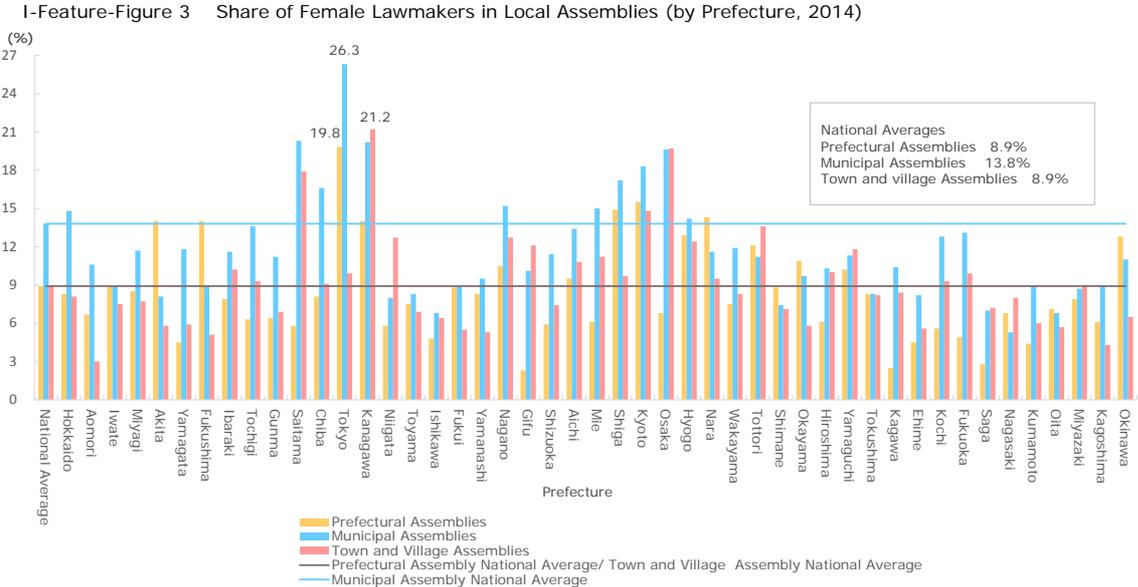
1. Source: "Labour Force Survey (Basic Tabulation)," the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC).
2. The data from 2005 through 2011 are the compatible time-series data (except for ratios).
3. The data of 2011 are supplemental estimates by the MIC.

Section 2 Active Participation of Women in Local Politics, Government, and Economics

1. Active Participation of Women in Local Politics

(Local Assemblies with a High Ratio of Women Members are More Numerous in the Tokyo Area² and Kinki Region)

Looking at the ratios of women lawmakers in (1) prefectural, (2) municipal, (3) town and village assemblies by prefecture as of December 31, 2014 shows that every ratio exceeds the national average, in Tokyo Metropolis, Kanagawa Prefecture, Nagano Prefecture, Shiga Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, and Hyogo Prefecture. In other words, Tokyo Area and Kinki region tend to have local assemblies with higher ratios of women lawmakers (I-Feature-Figure 3).



- (Notes)
- Source: Survey of the Number of Assembly Members and Managers of Local Public Bodies by Party Affiliation by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (as of December 31, 2014).
 - Surveys were current as of December 31, 2014.
 - Municipal Assemblies include ordinance-designated cities.
 - Female share of lawmakers in municipal or town and village assemblies is the ratio of female members to the total number of members in all municipal or town and village assemblies within each prefecture.

(The Ratio of Female Successful Candidates is Increasing in Proportion to the Ratio of Women Candidates)

An examination by prefecture of the ratio of women candidates in local assemblies for nationwide local elections during 2011 reveals that prefectures with a high ratio of women candidates also have proportionally high ratios of women voted in. We also see that prefectures with a high ratio of candidates between the ages of 25 and 44 trend higher in the ratio of women candidates. In combination, these trends suggest that increasing young candidates

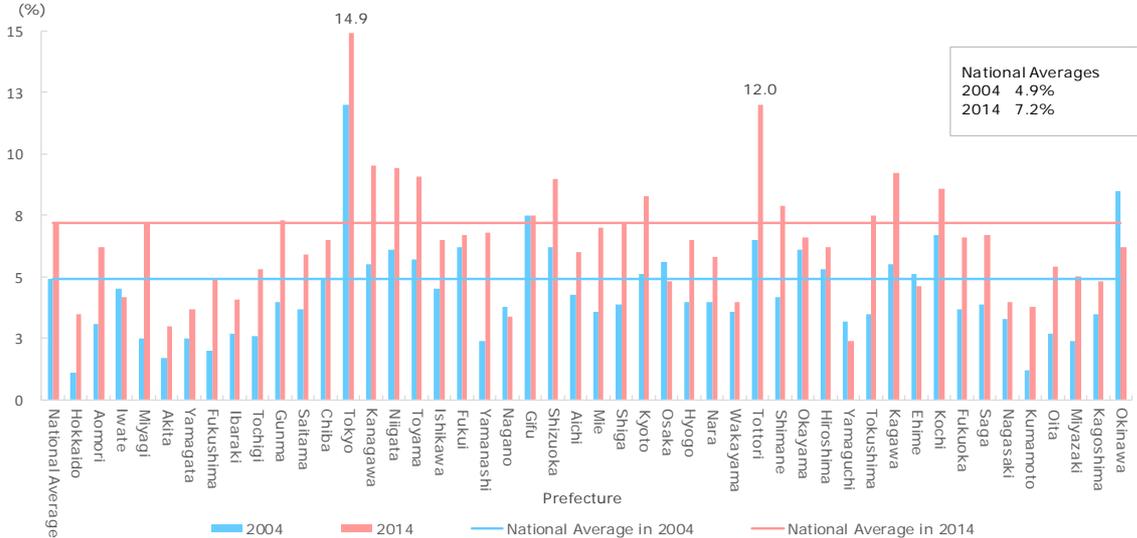
²Tokyo Area: Tokyo Metropolis, Saitama Prefecture, Chiba prefecture and Kanagawa prefecture

regardless of gender and activating local politics through the involvement of younger generations are ultimately likely to result in higher ratios of women lawmakers.

2. Active Participation of Women in Local Government
(Variances among Prefectural Governments in Ratio of Women in Managerial Positions)

Looking at the ratio of women in managerial positions by prefectural governments as of April 1, 2014 reveals a wide variance among prefectures. While Tokyo Metropolis and Tottori Prefecture report ratios of 14.9% and 12.0%, other several prefectural governments are below the 5% mark (I-Feature-Figure 6).

I-Feature-Figure 6 Female Share of Managerial Positions in Prefectural Government (by Prefecture, 2004 and 2014)



- (Notes)
- Source: Survey of the Number of Assembly Members and Managers of Local Public Bodies by Party Affiliation by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (as of December 31, 2014).
 - Surveys were current as of December 31, 2014.
 - Municipal Assemblies include ordinance-designated cities.
 - Female share of lawmakers in municipal or town and village assemblies is the ratio of female members to the total number of members in all municipal or town and village assemblies within each prefecture.

(Significant Variance among Municipal, Town and Village Governments)

As of April 1, 2014, there were 61 local bodies (3.5% of total municipal, town and village governments) in 28 prefectures with a ratio of women managers in excess of 30%. Itanocho in Tokushima Prefecture had the highest ratio of women in managerial positions at 54.1%. Meanwhile, a total of 307 bodies (17.6% of total municipal, town and village governments) in 42 prefectures have no women in managerial positions.

(Hiring of Women for Prefectural Senior Positions Exceeds 20%)

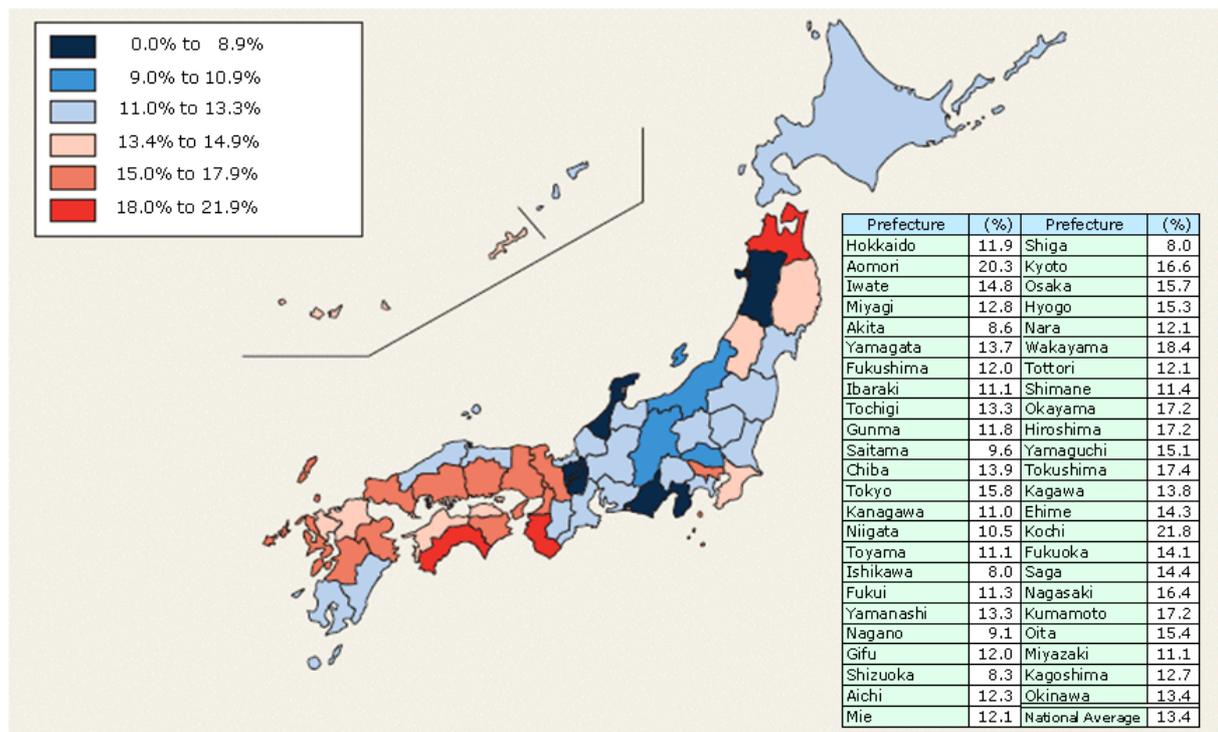
The national average ratio of women making up prefectural senior positions between FY2004 and FY2013 is 21.2%. Among those prefectures that reported a higher ratio of women hired in senior positions, not all have high ratios of women in managerial positions at this point in time; however, we expect the number of women working in managerial positions to grow in the future.

3. Active Participation of Women in Local Economies

(The Ratio of Female Administrative and Managerial Workers Tends to be Higher toward Japan's Kinki Region and Westward)

Looking at the ratio of female administrative and managerial workers by prefecture reveals that Japan's Kinki region and westward have many prefectures reporting higher than the national average of 13.4% (I-Feature-Figure 10).

I-Feature-Figure 10 Female Share of Administrative and Managerial Workers (by Prefecture, 2012)



(Notes)

1. Source: "Employment Status Survey (2012)," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
2. Administrative and managerial worker is defined as a person engaged in management or administration of overall or a part of business entity (a section or greater), such as making operational management policies, creating action plans based on management policy, supervising or managing workers. Includes government employees.
3. Some small islands may not be displayed on the map.

(Women's Interest in Receiving Promotions is Likely Stronger Depending on Systems and Conditions)

Examining the interest of working men and women in receiving a promotion at work (2015) reveals that the ratio of both permanent employees and non-permanent employees who are interested in a promotion is higher for men than for women. However, more women than men responded that their place of employment had no system for or available opportunity to be promoted. Considering this fact, we can conclude that given proper systems and conditions for promotion, the number of women who desire a promotion would increase.

(Japan's Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu Regions Report Higher Rates of Female Entrepreneurs)

Looking at the ratio of entrepreneurs to employed females (2012) reveals that Japan's Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu regions have prefectures that report higher figures than the national average.

According to a survey of companies that received financing from Japan Finance Corporation, nearly 30% of females responding indicated that their occupation immediately preceding their entrepreneurial venture was either as a non-permanent employee or as a housewife, likely having little or no business management experience. Further, looking at the motivation behind starting a business shows that female entrepreneurs responded more frequently than male entrepreneurs that they wanted to have a job where age and gender didn't matter or that they wanted to do more with their hobby or talent. Women's entrepreneurialism may not only activate regional economies, but also provides an important platform to expand their abilities and satisfy their need for self-actualization.

Section 3 Men's and Women's Work and Lifestyle in Japan's Regions

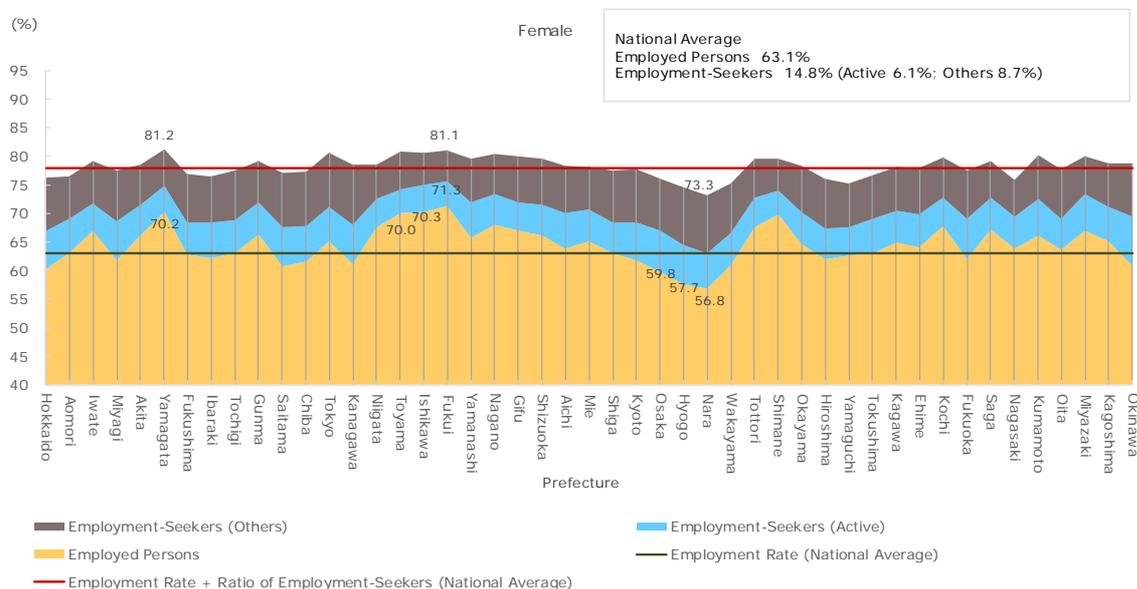
1. Employment and Work Hours

(Smaller Regional Variances in the Ratio of Women Wanting to Work Compared to Actual Employment Rates for Women)

Looking at the ratio ("employment rate") of employed females to the number of females in working age (15 to 64 years of age) by prefecture reveals an approximate 15%-point difference between the highest (Fukui Prefecture at 71.3%) and lowest (Nara Prefecture at 56.8%). The variances of employment rate of women by prefecture are larger than those of men.

The ratio of employed persons combined with persons unemployed but wanting to work to the working age population by prefecture reveals that the near 15%-point variation seen above now contracts to about 8%-points (I-Feature-Figure 16). There is a smaller regional variance in the rate of women who want to work compared to the actual employment rate of women. We can say that regions with low employment rates for women are more likely to be areas that haven't yet tapped into the power of women.

I-Feature-Figure 16 Proportion of Employed Persons and Employment-Seekers to Working Age Population (Aged 15 to 64 Years) by Prefecture (by Sex, 2012)



(Notes)

- Source: "Employment Status Survey (2012)," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
- Employed person is defined as a person who is engaged in work to receive a regular income and intends to remain employed subsequent to the date of the survey (October 1, 2012), or a person who has a job, but is currently on leave from work. Includes those who work for family owned businesses (family owned stores, factories, farms, etc.), even if they are not paid personally. A person who works at least 30 days during a year's time is categorized as Employee.
- Employment-seeker is defined as a person who is not employed (not working at all or working temporarily) but wants to work. Persons actually searching for employment are categorized as "active," while those not searching for employment are categorized as "other."
- Employment Rate and ratio of employment-seekers are the ratios to persons aged 15 to 64.

(Regions with Higher Female Employment Rate also Report More Regular Employment)

Examining the relationship between regular employment and employment rates for female employed persons aged 15 to 64 years reveals that the prefectures with higher ratios of regular employment also tend to report higher employment rates. This trend holds, even when looking more narrowly at females aged 25 to 44 rearing pre-school children.

This suggests that where the employment rate for women is high, regular employment provides continued stable employment for women, even during child-rearing years.

(Regional Differences in Working Styles May be Attributed to Attitudes toward Gender Roles)

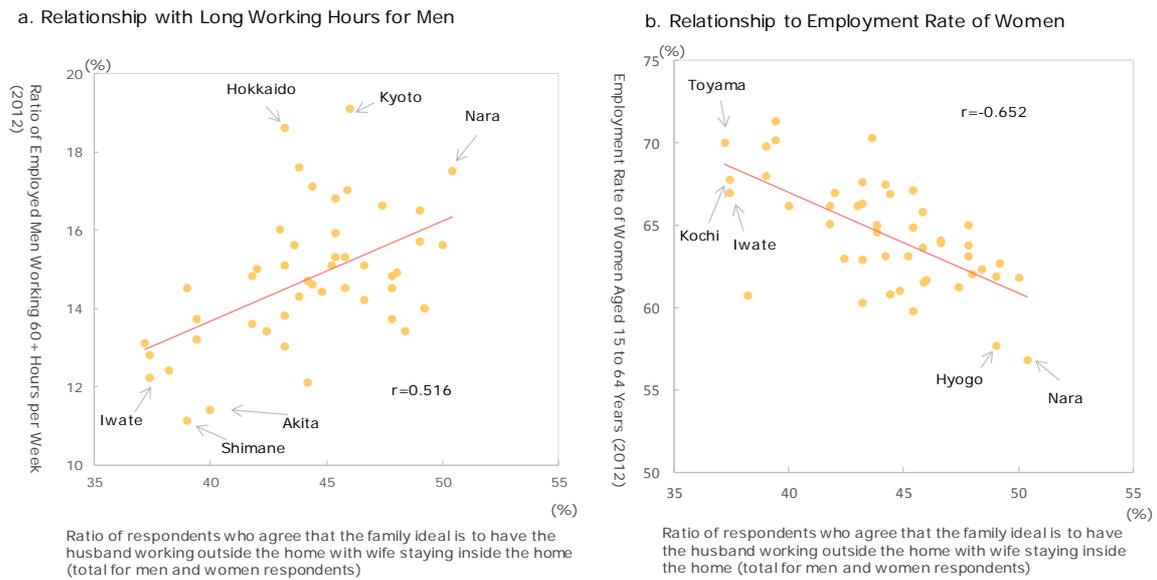
Looking at the results by prefecture of the ratio of employed persons who work 60-plus hours per week to those who work 200 days or more per year reveals a significant regional variance for males (from 19.1% in Kyoto Prefecture to 11.1% in Shimane Prefecture).

Prefectures with higher rates of men working long hours tend to also report low employment rates for women.

Examining the relationship between the rate of men who work long hours or the employment rate for women and attitudes towards gender roles informs us that prefectures with higher ratio of respondents who agree to the opinion that the ideal family structure is one in which the husband works outside the home with the wife staying inside the home tend to report higher rates of men who work long hours. These same prefectures also tend to report lower employment rates for women (I-Feature-Figure 20).

We must find a way to make men more willing to participate in housework and child rearing if we expect more women engaged in work when they want to. At the same time, we need to address the issue of long working hours among men.

I-Feature-Figure 20 Relationships of Attitudes toward Gender Roles with Long Working Hours for Men, and with Employment Rate among Women Aged 15 to 64 Years



(Notes)

1. Source: "Report of Consciousness Survey on Active Regional Participation among Women (2015)," Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, "Employment Status Survey (2012)," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
2. The ratio of men working 60+ hours per week represents the ratio to employees (including company directors) working at least 200 days per year.
3. Ratios reflect the total number of respondents who answered "agree" or "somewhat agree" to the statement that the family ideal is to have the husband working outside the home with wife staying inside the home.

2. Child Rearing and Regional Activities

(The Total Fertility Rate is Lower in Tokyo and Osaka Area etc.)

Looking at total fertility rate by prefecture (2013) shows the lower rates in Tokyo Area, Osaka Area³, and Hokkaido Prefecture. These regions tend to report higher rates of men who work long hours and lower employment rates for women.

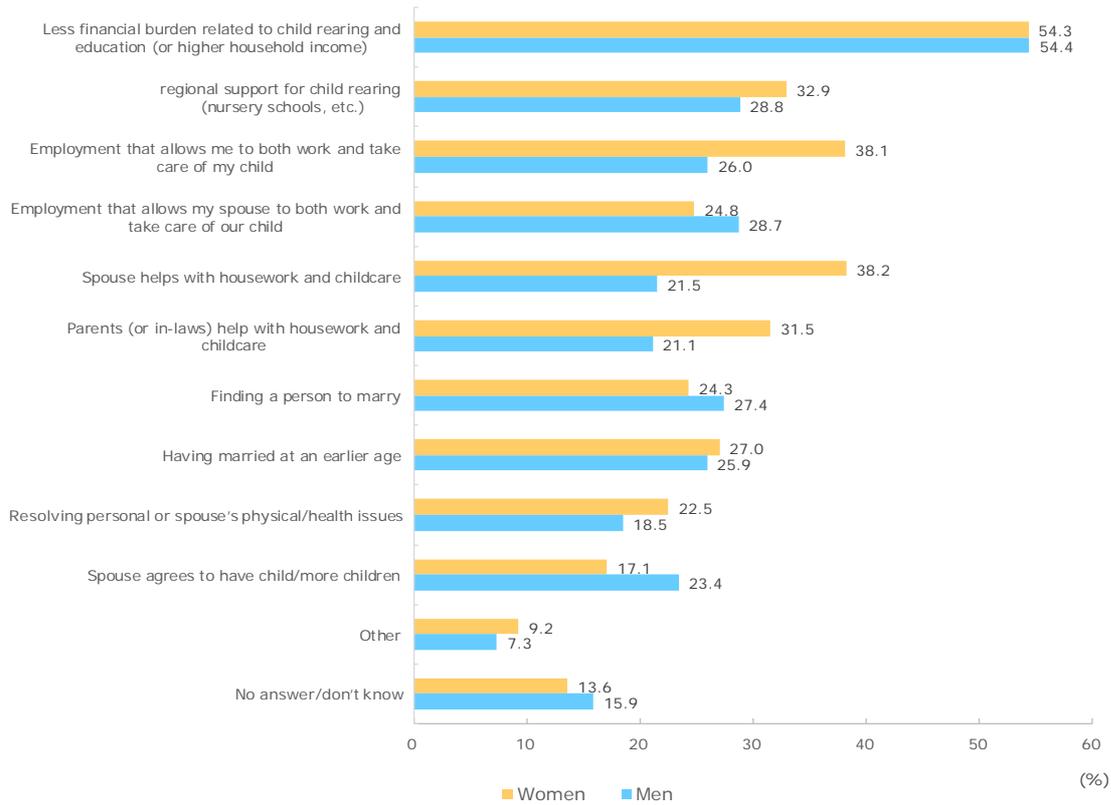
(Shared Family Responsibility is Key to Achieving the Ideal Number of Children)

Of those who responded that their ideal number of children was one or more, an average of 62.3% across all prefectures (2015) responded that their actual number of children was less than their ideal. When asked how to achieve this ideal number of children, the number one response among both males and females was reducing the financial burden. The other common response among females was having a more cooperative husband and parents, being engaged in a job that allowed for work and child care and living in a region offering a good support for child rearing (nursery schools, etc.) (I-Feature-Figure 22).

This suggests that a system that relieves women from the sole burden of child rearing and offers family, workplace, and social support would lead to achievement of the ideal number of children.

³ Osaka Area: Osaka Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture and Nara Prefecture

I-Feature-Figure 22 What is required to achieve an ideal number of children? (by sex)



(Notes)

1. Source: "Report of Consciousness Survey on Active Regional Participation among Women (2015)," Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office.
2. The survey was conducted to men and women aged 20 to 69 years (500 respondents from each prefecture; regardless of marriage status).
3. Results use an index of 100 to represent the number of respondents (6,640 women, 6,562 men) who responded that their actual number of children is less than their ideal number of children.
4. Multiple answers allowed (except for No answer/don't know).

(More Women than Men Participates in Regional Activities)

More women than men reported involvement in volunteer activities between October 2010 and October 2011. More than half of female volunteers also indicate that they have the main responsibility for housework.

By prefecture, we see that those with higher rates of male volunteerism also report lower rate of men working long hours than the national average. Addressing the issue of long working hours among men may lead to more active community involvement.

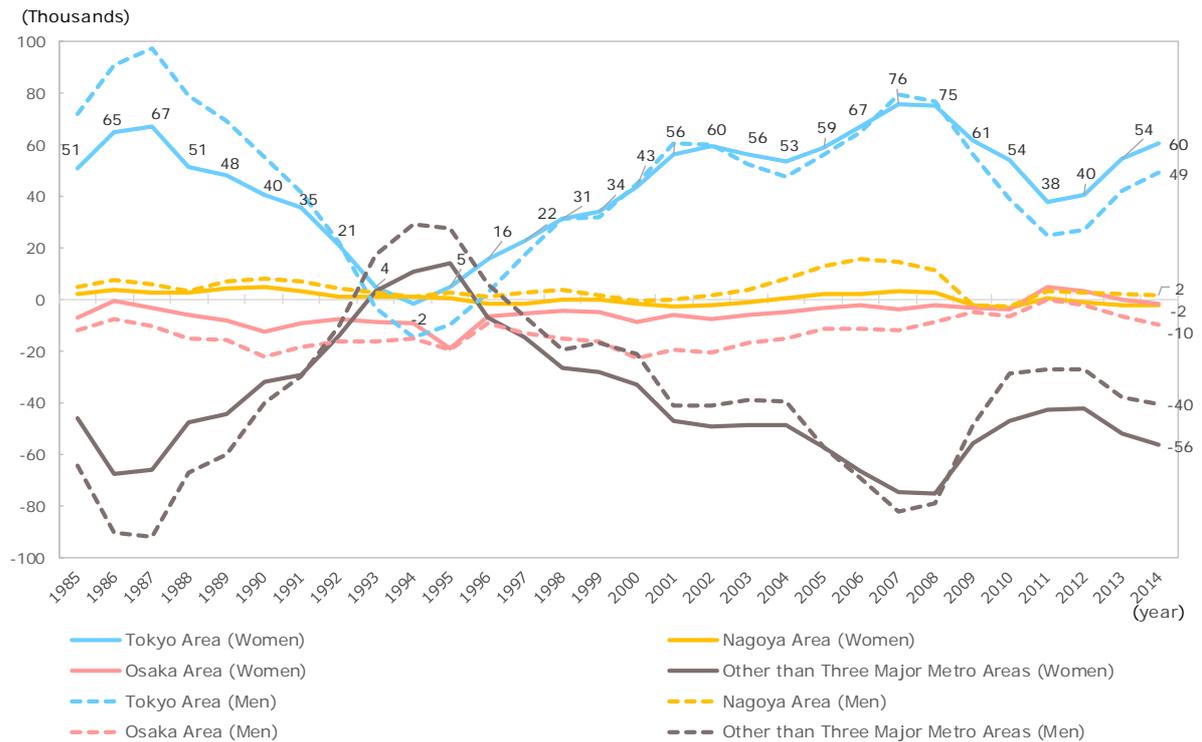
3. Population Migration Trends

(More Women than Men Flow to Tokyo Area)

The population flow to Tokyo Area has seen women outnumber men since 2009 (I-Feature-Figure 26).

A breakdown of the population flow to Tokyo Area by age group reveals that both men and women aged 15 to 34 make up the majority. This indicates that the largest population flow to Tokyo Area consists of younger people.

I-Feature-Figure 26 Population Transfer by Region (by sex; 1985 to 2014)



(Notes)

- Source: "Annual Report on the Internal Migration in Japan Derived from Basic Resident Registration," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
- Number of Japanese individuals relocating to different areas.
- Regions categorized as follows:
 Tokyo Area: Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, Tokyo Metropolis, Kanagawa Prefecture
 Nagoya Area: Gifu Prefecture, Aichi Prefecture, Mie Prefecture
 Osaka Area: Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, Nara Prefecture
 Other than Three Major Metro Areas: Prefectures other than Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka Areas

(Female Workers in working age has increased in Tokyo Area)

Between 2004 and 2014, the number of employed women aged 15 to 64 increased by 620,000 in Tokyo Area. On the other hand, it decreased by 330,000 outside Tokyo Area. It shows that the focus of employment for women in working age has been concentrated in Tokyo Area.

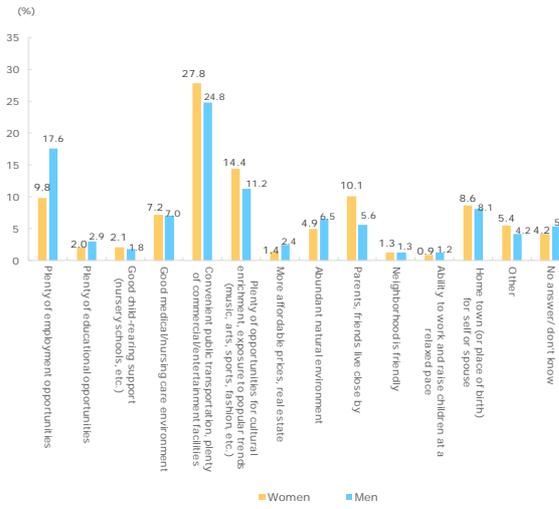
(Ties to the Region Impact Women's Domicile Selection)

Comparing responses by men and women regarding why an urban or a suburban environment was most preferred, more women than men answered that proximity to family and friends was the number one deciding factor (I-Feature-Figure 30).

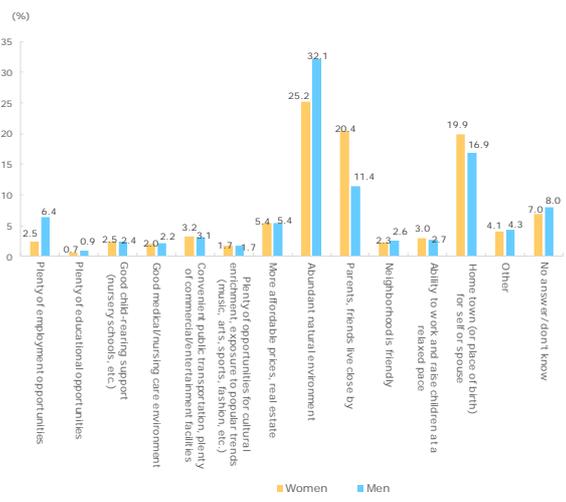
It suggests that regional areas would become much more attractive to women if they provided more opportunities for women to work while making the most of their local ties.

I-Feature-Figure 30 Reasons behind Ideal Domicile Selection (by sex, by selected region)

a. Urban domicile selected as ideal



b. Suburban/regional domicile selected as ideal



(Notes)

1. Source: "Report of Consciousness Survey on Active Regional Participation among Women (2015)." Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office.
2. Reason for selecting urban domicile represents the ratio to women (4,387) and men (3,775) who responded that an urban domicile was "somewhat ideal."
3. Reason for selecting suburban domicile represents the ratio to women (5,957) and men (6,336) who responded that a suburban domicile was "somewhat ideal."
4. Respondents asked to select one best choice.

Section 4 Summary and Future Outlook

Women's participation, employment, and lifestyles are not homogenous across every region in Japan. This is why initiatives must be taken in regions reflecting local strengths and characteristics.

- We expect more women candidates for local assemblies by activating local politics itself.
- Local governments and business owners are expected create programs to hire/appoint more women.
- We must find a way to make men more willing to participate in housework and child rearing if we expect more women engaged in work when they want to. At the same time, we need to address the issue of long working hours among men.
- We believe that Japanese families can achieve their ideal number of children if there are systems that relieve women from the sole burden of child rearing and offer family, workplace, and social support.
- If regional areas provided more opportunities for women to work while making the most of their local ties, then they would become much more attractive to women.