

5. The Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace (Partial enforcement on 4 September, 2015 / Fully enforcement on 1 April, 2016)(The section of the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation concerning the formulation of action plans for business owners entered into force on April 1, 2016.)

It is increasingly important that women can pursue a work life of their own volition, and that women who do so can sufficiently display their originalities and abilities. Thus, under the following basic principles, a rich and vibrant society must be achieved by promoting the women's participation and advancement in the workplace.

- ◇ Proactively providing women with opportunities for employment and promotion and giving full consideration to the impact of traditional practices in the workplace such as the stereotyped perception for gender roles.
- ◇ Providing an environment that allows a work-life balance, making it possible for people to smoothly balance work life and family life on an ongoing basis.
- ◇ When it comes to balancing work life and family life for women, the will of the individual must be respected.

■ Formulating of Basic Policy

- ▶ National government formulated the Basic Policies on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace (approved by the Cabinet).
- ▶ Local governments (prefectures and municipalities) will make use of the above basic policy in formulating plans for promoting women's participation and advancement in the workplace within their respective districts (obligation to make effort).

■ Formulation of action plans for business owners

- ▶ National government formulated the guidelines regarding the formulation of action plans for business owners under the Act.
- ▶ Government agencies, local government and private-sector corporations with more than 300 employees must provide the following under the guidelines of the national government.

- ◇ Collect and analyze the data on issues of gender and employment.
[examples] ① rates of newly hired female employees
① gender gap in years of continuous employment
① working hours ① rates of female managers
- ◇ Formulate and announce the "action plan by business owner" providing quantitative targets and initiatives, based on the understanding and analysis of the above data.
(Obligation to make effort towards implementing initiatives and achieving targets.)
- ◇ Announce the data regarding women's participation and advancement.
(Business owners select and announce from among items established by ministerial ordinance)

- ▶ The national government will certify the private sector companies that excel in the above areas.

■ Support measures for promoting women's participation and advancement in the workplace

- ▶ National government shall provide occupational training/employment referral and educational activities, and gather and provide information. Local governments shall work to provide consultation and advice.
- ▶ In local communities, it shall be permissible to form "councils" that discuss initiatives on the promotion of women's participation and advancement (discretionally).

■ Others

- ▶ This Act will be enacted as temporary legislation with a ten-year term limit.

■ Enforcement Status

- ▶ 99.8% of private-sector corporations with more than 300 employees formulated action plans for general business owners (as of end of December 2016). 100% of the national, prefectural, and municipal governments formulated action plans for specified business operators.
- ▶ 59.6% of prefectures formulated plans on measures for promoting women's active participation (June 2016). This percentage is projected to reach 100% in FY2017.
- ▶ 145 companies are Level 3 "Eruboshi" certified; 70 companies are Level 2 "Eruboshi" certified (as of end of December 2016).
- ▶ Efforts are under way to make the status of women's participation visible, with a focus on information disclosure in accordance with the law (A "visualization" website on specified business operators was established [September 2016, Cabinet Office]. With regard to private-sector corporations, a Database on Companies Promoting Women's Active Participation was established [February 2016, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare]).
- ▶ In government procurements (e.g., overall-greatest-value evaluation method), additional evaluation points are awarded to companies promoting work-life balance, which forms the basis of women's active participation (e.g., "Eruboshi" certified companies) (FY2016–).
- ▶ The Cabinet Office supported local government initiatives based on prefectural plans by way of the grants for the promotion of active participation by women in regions and other measures (FY2016).