

# GENDER INTEGRATION IN COOPERATIVES

JAPAN



ROAP

ICA Library  
334:3-055.2 YAM-G  
ICA 00488

684

ICN 00438

**Gender Integration and  
Women in Co-operative Development  
Country Study of Japan**

By  
**Akiko Yamauchi**  
Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union

00438-00002  
Yam-G.



**International Co-operative Alliance**  
**Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific**  
New Delhi 110 065, India

ICA Library



ICN 00438

# International Co-operative Alliance

## Head Office

15 Route des Morillons  
CH-1218 Grand Saconnex  
Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel : (41) 22-7984121  
Fax : (41) 22-7984122  
Tlx : (45) 415620 ICA CH

## Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

'Bonow House'  
43 Friends Colony (East)  
New Delhi 110 065, India  
Tel : (91) 11-6835123  
Fax : (91) 11-6835568  
Tlx : (81) 31-75025 DICA IN

October, 1992 (600)

---

*Edited by W.U. Herath, Adviser, HRD and published by the Human Resource Development Project of the ICA Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific. Typeset by P.Nair at the ICA ROAP and printed at Document Press, H.S.14, Kailash Colony Market, New Delhi 110 048*

## PREFACE

The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (earlier called South-East Asia) launched a special women's programme during the Women's Decade (1975-1985). This programme, headed by a woman specialist, had been able to create an awareness and conditions for enhancing women's participation in co-operatives.

The programme in particular achieved success in the areas of influencing co-operative authorities to provide positive legal environment for women's participation in co-operative leadership and business. Many co-operative movements established women's committees at various levels and also incorporated representatives in their management committees. Many training activities were organised at the national and regional levels by the Women's Section of the ICA ROEC.

However, due to the financial constraints faced by the ICA during mid-eighties, the regional women's programme as well as many other programmes had to be curtailed. After completion of the restructuring process, we are now in a position to look back and start rethinking on the gender issues with a new outlook.

The concept of Women in Development (WID) has undergone substantial changes during the eighties. When the feminist movement was the subject of reassessment, many new WID approaches have emerged. Approach of gender planning has become popular at present with a broader concept of gender. This change is also due to the result of evaluation on the women's position in the society, after the UN Women's Decade. Many have felt that the approaches introduced during this period have become obsolete or have not shown results as expected in the process of global socio-economic changes. Therefore, UN agencies as well

as many international NGOs have revived their WID programmes, keeping gender issues in mind. As for the co-operative movement in the region, the same situation is visible. Many co-operative movements continue to adopt the WID strategies introduced in the seventies. Therefore, it has become vital to assess the current WID situation in co-operatives in terms of concepts, strategies and the cost benefits of the existing programmes. Any future planning of the WID programmes or gender planning mechanisms in co-operatives should be based on such an evaluation.

The Human Resource Development project, established in 1990 by the ICA, incorporated gender issues as a priority. With a view to launch an effective programme in the future, a study has been undertaken covering 14 countries in the Asia and the Pacific, which are representative of developed and developing economies. The studies have been carried out by specialists on gender issues on a common format and guidelines provided by the ICA ROAP. These country studies would provide a macro-level situation analysis in the representative countries.

The country studies will form an important basis for future planning for the ICA ROAP and for the respective countries. I am happy that we are able to share the findings of the country studies with those who are concerned with gender issues in co-operatives. The ultimate hope we have is that the gender integration in co-operatives would bring about more productivity and strength to them by utilizing human resources to the optimum.

I would like to thank the country researchers, co-operative movements and the staff of the HRD project at the ICA ROAP for undertaking the ground work for future gender programmes in co-operatives.

New Delhi  
August 18, 1992

G.K.Sharma  
Regional Director

## INTRODUCTION

This publication series of country studies on Gender Integration and Women in Co-operative Development cover 14 developed and developing countries in Asia and the Pacific. On the other hand, the studies are representative of open, mixed and centrally planned economies.

The country research had the following objectives:

- to assess as to what extent the gender integration has taken place in economic and social development as well as activities of the co-operatives of the given country,
- to assess the level of participation of women on political, social and economic decision making and productivity,
- to assess the level of participation of women in decision making and activities in co-operatives,
- to compare the level of socio-economic developments of a given country with gender situation,
- to identify the socio-cultural and economic factors hindering gender integration in development with special emphasis on co-operatives,
- to identify critical areas for future strategies for promoting gender awareness and gender participation, resulting in gender integration in co-operative development,
- to create awareness among the authorities and all concerned in gender issues on the level of development a given country has shown and the gap which exists in co-operatives.

The ICA ROAP engaged the services of competent and independent researchers through the national co-operative unions and some of them through other sources. A format was designed and used in order to ensure the conformity to the set of objectives laid down and to facilitate the data processing process. The methodology consisted of data from primary sources, authoritative documents and interviews by random samples.

We have tried to analyse the data collected through country reports and identify common features as well as special features in the region in the field of gender integration in co-operatives. We have also attempted to highlight the common and contradictory conclusions made by the researchers. A Regional Overview of gender integration has been published separately embodying these summaries.

Our sincere expectation from the publication of the country studies and the overview is to create an awareness of all co-operative movements and governmental and inter-governmental agencies to assess the present gender strategies in co-operatives and improve upon their planning mechanism for ensuring the equal participation of gender in co-operative development.

I would like to thank all country researchers who undertook the task within a short time and with limited resources and sources of information. National level co-operative organisations and the ILO Co-operative Project in Indonesia supported the project through consultation and their resources. We appreciate their common interest for the cause.

Mr.P.Nair, Desk Top Publisher and Secretary of the HRD Project, did the computer-based DTP work. Mr. S.S.Kukkal, a renowned artist in Delhi prepared the cover page. Document Press made the printing job very attractive. I would like to note our appreciation to them for their devoted work.

New Delhi  
August, 1992

W U Herath  
Advisor-Human Resource Development



**SURVEY REPORT ON GENDER INTEGRATION  
AND WOMEN IN CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**JAPAN**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	iii
Introduction	v
1. General Features of the country	1
2. Population	3
3. Health	5
4. Literacy and Education	6
5. History of Co-operative (Consumer) Movement in Japan	7
5.1 Co-operative Movement before World War II	7
5.2 Reconstruction of Co-operative Movement	7
5.3 Establishment of the Basis for Development	8
5.4 Formulation of Han Organization Policy	9
5.5 Regional Plan and Reconfirmation of Principles	9
5.6 Reorientation in Organizational Policy	10
5.7 Flouring Members' Activities and Enhancing Co-operative Roles	11
6. Women in Japanese Consumer Co-operatives	12
6.1 Introduction	12
6.2 Women as the Core Co-op Members	12
6.3 Women as Co-operative Directors	14
Chart 1 : Change of No. of part-time directors	15
Chart 2 : Change of No. of full-time directors	16
Chart 3 : Change of No. of Employees	16
Chart 4 : Change of Women's Ratio(directors & employees)	17
7. Conclusions	18
Annexe I : Women in Japan Today	19
Annexe II: Japanese Women Today	25



# **Gender Integration and Women in Co-operative Development Country Survey Report Japan**

## **I**

### **General features of the country**

#### **1.1 Physiography**

Japan is an island country stretching along the north-eastern coast of the Asian continent. It consists of four main islands- Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu from north to south and more than 6,800 smaller islands. With a total land area of 377,727 square kilometers, Japan accounts for less than 0.3% of the total land area of the World. Of its entire land area, 73% is mountainous and the remaining 27% is relatively flat. Thus the arable and habitable land is extremely limited.

#### **1.2 Climate**

Since the Japanese islands stretch from north to south, the climatic zones in which Japan lies range from the sub-arctic zone. Distinct changes of climate follow the rotation of the four seasons and this contributes to the wide variety of vegetation. The chain of mountains along the length of Honshu separates the country into two climatic regions, the Japan sea side and the Pacific side. In winter, the Japan sea side, taking the brunt of winds from the continent, has a great deal of snow, while the Pacific side enjoys much milder weather. Also, the annual sunshine hours differ; the Pacific side receives quite a large amount, while the Japan sea side receives comparatively a smaller amount.

Another important characteristic of the climate of Japan is its rainy season, which lasts from July to early November. As the seasons change from summer to autumn, typhoons brewed in the seas south of Japan come ashore at the rate of three or four a year.

## II

### Population

#### 2.1 Total population in 1989

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
00-04			6,735,000
05-14			16,465,000
15-24			18,839,000
25-44			35,471,000
45-59			24,861,000
<del>60-74</del>			<del>15,137,000</del>
75+			5,746,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,581,000</b>	<b>62,673,000</b>	<b>123,255,000</b>

2.2 Population growth rate % : 3.7 (1988/1989)

2.3 Population by age group and residence : not identified

## 2.4 Population by marital status (1985)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Both sex</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Under 10	0	0	0
10-14	0	0	0
15-19	49,035	11,570	37,465
20-45	20,569,124	13,589,277	15,979,847
46-60	20,307,447	10,549,237	9,758,210
61-75	9,329,064	5,095,915	4,233,149
76 and above	1,816,885	1,278,654	538,231

## 2.6 Mean age at marriage by sex (1988)

Male : 28.4

Female : 25.8

2.7 Population by Religion : Not identified

## 2.7 Distribution of disabled persons:

<i>Type</i>	<i>Total</i>
Blind	: 307,000
Crippled	: 1,460,000
Deaf & dumb	: 354,000
Mentally retarded	: -
Others	: 292,000
2.8 Death rate per 1000 (1989)	: Total 6.4
2.9 Birth rate per 1000 (1989)	: Total 10.2

# III

## Health

### 3.1 Life Expectancy (1989)

Male	: 75.91
Female	: 81.77

3.2 Infant and child mortality : 4.5 per 1000

3.3 Persons per hospital bed : 74

3.4 Persons per doctor : 609

### 3.5 Family Planning:

3.5.1 Percentage of use of contraceptives  
among women under 50 years of age : 1.0 % (1990)

3.5.2 Percentage of users of non-clinical  
family planning : Not identified

3.5.3 Sterilization (1989) : Vasectomy : 7.4%  
Tubectomy: 2.4%

3.6 Malnutrition in children (%) : Nil

3.7 Average per capita intake of calories : 2057 (1988)

# IV

## Literacy and Education

**4.1 Adult Literacy** : 99.7% (for both sexes)

**4.2 Primary education:**

*Sex Enrolment in 1986*

Male : 2,400,012  
Female : 2,287,511  
Total : 4,687,523

**4.3 Secondary and higher education:**

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Secondary enrolment in 1986</i>	<i>Higher enrolment in 1986</i>
Male	2,875,400	2,842,622
Female	2,743,897	2,801,754
Total	5,619,297	5,644,376

**4.4 Education as percentage of government  
(national) budget** : N.A.

**4.5 Adult literacy programmes:**

Those who are illiterates and wants to study, can go to public schools after working hours, irrespective of sex.



# V

## History of Co-operative Movement (Consumer) in Japan

### 5.1 Co-operative Movement before World War II (1879-1945)

The origin of the Japanese Movement dates back to 1879 when four (4) co-operative societies including Kyoritsu-Shosha were established as the first consumer co-operatives, following the Rochdale example.

Nada co-operatives and Kobe co-operatives were founded in 1921. These two societies pioneered the Consumer Co-operative Movement and were merged in 1962 into Nada-Kobe Co-operative which is the largest co-operative in Japan, with an 840,000 membership.

A large number of co-operatives were born under the Industrial Co-operative Law during the period 1920-1940, when the women were hampered to be affiliated with the co-operatives, by the social habit and so formed housewives' association to promote patronizing co-operative shops and undertake various cultural activities such as cooking classes. The first housewives association was formed in Kobe co-operative in 1924.

During the World War II, consumer co-operatives were oppressed by the government and their shops and other facilities were air-raided. Thus, the Co-operative Movement was almost suffocated.

### 5.2 Reconstruction of Co-operative Movement (1945-1950)

Under the severe shortage of food, the numerous small-size co-operatives were organized to procure and share the scarce commodities. In 1947, their number culminated at 7000.

In 1945, the Co-operative League of Japan (CLJ) was set up as an apex organisation by the leading co-operators involved in co-operative movement in the pre-war days.

The Consumer Livelihood Co-operative Society Law (hereinafter referred to as Consumer Co-operative Law) was enacted in 1948 by the proposal from the government. The CLJ proposed its own bill but could not succeed to have its view incorporated in the law.

Most of the small co-operatives were bankrupt because of lack of members' active commitment and managerial basis of business.

### **5.3 Establishment of the Basis for Development (1951-1959)**

The Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) was set up in 1951 succeeding the CLJ's function but based on the Consumer Co-operative Law.

In addition the consumer co-operatives operating since pre-war days (Nada Co-operative, Kobe Co-operative, Fukushima co-operative, etc.), the trade unions launched into organizing consumer, insurance and housing co-operatives and labour banks. These co-operatives relied on the trade unions for membership and the initiative. The consumer co-operatives set up in such a way were called workers' consumer co-operatives.

In this period, the membership was generally registered by men's names while their wives were organized in co-operatives' 'women's departments' or 'housewives' associations', although some women activists initiated the campaign to become co-operative members. These women's organisations undertook the various activities such as the study on household economy and the merchandise, the discussion on the dietary life, the cooking courses, the consumer campaign and so on.

It was held that the co-operatives could not develop without women's active involvement and as such the women's organizations should be established by female members within the co-operative's frame work. In 1957, the National Women's Council of JCCU was set up as a forum of women's activities at the national level.

#### **5.4 Formulation of Han Organization Policy (1960-1964)**

Japan launched into the phase of the rapid economic expansion since 1960s. The introduction of the new business methods of self-service and super-market puts the distributive trade into drastic changes described as 'revolutionary'. The population shifted from the rural communities to the large megalopolis generated the serious environmental and urban problems in the cities and the shrinkage of agriculture and living standards in the villages. In this process, the traditional bond among people was lost and a large number of consumer damage prevailed (the controlled price of electric appliances, the calamity caused by contaminated food, environmental pollution caused by synthetic detergents, the price-hike manipulated by oil cartel, etc.).

The workers' consumer co-operatives fell into difficulties mainly due to the lack of their own organisational basis; in most cases, they were set up by the resolutions of the sponsorial trade unions and as such composed of trade union members who have no consciousness as co-operative members. Their failure gave the lessons to the co-operative movement; it should be taken as the trinity for the members to buy co-operative shares, to patronize co-operative shops and to take part in the co-operatives' administration. In other words, it is of crucial importance to run the co-operative on the basis of opinions of those who make the day-to-day shopping or concern themselves with the co-operative.

In searching for the organizational forms centres on the co-operative members, the Tsuruoka Co-operative (today's Kyoritsusha Co-operative) initiated the organization of Han groups in 1956. (Han means a basic unit of organization in Japanese. It is a group of 5-10 members living in the proximity. In 1964, the JCCU Congress formulated Han policy that the Han should be the basic organization of the co-operative movement. Thereafter, han groups were organized in the co-operatives throughout the country.

#### **5.5 Regional Plan and Reconfirmation of Principles (1965-1970)**

The co-operative movement entered the third growth period in the late sixties along with the development of shop network and joint buying

based on Han groups. There were two origins for co-operatives' expansion; the extension of existing co-operatives (mainly institutional co-operatives) into the surrounding areas, and the new establishment of citizen co-operatives with the help of the university co-operatives operating in the major and local cities during the period 1965-1977. As a result, the co-operative movement established bridgeheads for further development in most of the cities. The JCCU promoted such a move through its regional plan.

In 1968, the JCCU's Organization Policy Committee submitted a report on the co-operative's organizational activities. It dealt with the relations between Han groups and the housewives associations in view of developing co-operatives through member participation.

In the course of the implementation of the Regional Plan appeared a trend that the co-operatives hastened to open the large scale retail outlets in search of rapid expansion, without organizing sufficient membership. Such practices resulted in bad economic performance and financial crisis. On reflection of these failures, the JCCU's Congress in 1970 reaffirmed that the co-operative movement should base itself on the members' activities and strengthen the financial and manpower resources in the management. As to the financial matters, the priority was placed on the member's share capital rather than the external borrowed capital.<sup>1</sup>

### **5.6 Reorientation in Organizational Policy (1971-1977)**

In the 1970s, the economic boom came to an end and the oil crisis of 1973 brought about the drastic unrest in supply and price of daily necessities. In order to protect living in such circumstances, a growing number of consumers joined the co-operatives' joint-buying activities. Thus, the total membership of the JCCU member co-operatives grew by half million within a year.

The scope and the content of members' activities extended. The discussion of the Han meeting was enriched. members' own initiatives took root in planning and organizing various activities such as membership recruitment, share capital increase, patronizing co-operative shops, public relations, etc. Members' involvement in the merchandizing also pre-

ailed in such fields as the development of co-operative products and the direct transaction with producers. The JCCU Congress in 1971 stressed the 'administration of members by members and for members' as a principal matter, proposing to hold Han meetings on regular basis and strengthen Han groups in the proximity of shops.

In the mid-seventies, most co-operatives established the organizational set up of broad district committees - Han groups. It meant the share increase of the active members who took various parts in such a structure, while the former housewives' associations reduced their importance. In 1977, the National Women's Council was taken over by the newly established National Organization Activities Committee of the JCCU.

### **5.7 Flourishing members' activities and enhancing co-operatives roles (1978-present)**

Members' activities flourished on the basis of their wishes and a large number of members took part spontaneously in the activities such as seeking safer food, reviewing dietary life and merchandise, peace campaigns, voluntary mutual aid, child-related activities, study and survey on living and household economy, fund raising for UNICEF, etc. Members also took an active part in recruiting new membership and concentrating their buying power on the co-operative products. In the late seventies, many co-operatives established the policy to promote members' activities on the district level.

The JCCU established the medium-term plan after 1978 (MTP-I: 1978-1980, MTP-II: 1981-83, MTP-III: 1984-1986, MTP-IV: 1987-1989). Accordingly, the primary co-operatives and their prefectural unions formulated their own medium term plans. Under these plans, the membership has grown by 800,000-900,000 annually these years and the viable primary co-operatives have been set up through mergers and integration. Thus, the co-operatives have become known in the communities and social confidence in the co-operatives has increased, but at the same time the moves for restricting co-operatives also have grown.

# VI

## Women in Japanese Consumer Co-operatives

### 6.1 Introduction

The Consumer Co-operative Movement in Japan attracted approximately 780,000 new individual members during the fiscal year 1987 (April 1987 to March 1988). Accordingly, the total co-operative membership reached nearly 12 million, and the total turnover 2176 billion yen (US\$16.4 billion\*). Consumer co-operatives in Japan are divided into six different types according to the type of membership and operations; namely the 'citizen co-ops', 'institutional co-ops', 'expanded institutional co-ops', 'university co-ops', 'school teachers' co-ops' and 'medical co-ops'. The majority of co-op members belong to the citizen co-ops, and most of the members of the citizen co-ops are women. Accordingly, this report is focused on the current state of the citizen co-ops with respect to women members, directors and employees.

### 6.2 Women as the core co-op members

The status of women in Japan was recognized by law, for the first time, after World War II, providing women with the same basic equal rights as those of men. From the early 1960s, the Japanese economy entered a period of rapid growth, and the division of roles between men and women grew wider during this period, with more and more men working for corporations and more and more women staying home as housewives. The period of a high economic growth generated a large number of problems involving, for example, environmental pollution, hazardous foods and food additives, which threatened the living conditions of people, as a by-product of the rapid economic development. Many

---

\* Based on the rate of 130 yen to the dollar as of June 29, 1988.

housewives felt that they must join together to overcome these problems, and one of the activities they began was the establishment of co-ops as a means of purchasing safe and healthy products through their own activities. The majority of today's citizen co-ops were formed for similar purposes during this period, and consequently include housewives as an overwhelming majority of their members.

Co-op members in Japan are not just passive purchasers of co-op products and services, but actively participate in co-op administration. As a vehicle to ensure the democratic participation of members in co-op administration, co-ops have the basic organizational units called 'Han', each of which is formed by 5 to 10 member households in the same neighbourhood. The Han groups in the same elementary school district form a 'district committee', and in large co-ops the representatives of these district committees form an 'area committee'. Thus the opinions, suggestions and complaints of individual co-op members are relayed from the Han to the district committee, to the area committee, to the board of directors, and to the co-op management. Although the main business operations of Japanese co-operatives are carried out by co-op employees, the majority of which are men, most of the elected leaders are women, including the Han leaders, district committee members and their chairpersons. Overall, women play a key role in the movement, especially with regard to member organization. Further Japanese co-ops are engaged not only in the supply of products and services but also in a wide variety of activities related to household budget planning, health, food and nutrition, products, culture, peace, welfare, UNICEF fund raising, volunteer activities, consumer movements, etc. as the movement of mutual aid of members in every sphere of life, to improve living conditions. These activities are carried out by women co-operators as voluntary activities, and co-op activities in Japan may be described as a continuous attempt by women to create new and better living conditions by organizing, managing and participating in their own movement.

There are, perhaps, two principal factors stimulating Japanese women to become actively involved in the co-op women as a result of an increase in the percentage of women enrolled in high schools, colleges and

universities after World War II. Higher education has made a definite contribution to heightening women's social awareness. The second factor is closely related to the Japanese household budgetary style, whereby the wife usually keeps the household budget and buys most of the necessary items for the family, while the husband hands his salary over to his wife. Thus, Japanese women have a major responsibility for the conditions of home life, and co-ops have served as a most appropriate place for women to discuss and learn ways to improve household conditions.

in the past, Japanese women usually quit work and stayed home after marriage to concentrate on housekeeping and child-rearing, and in these circumstances, it was difficult for housewives to take part in social activities. Co-ops nevertheless were able to attract many women because the co-op movement was rooted in the daily household activity of purchasing products, and as women began to deal with household-related problems through co-ops, they gradually developed their co-ops as a place where they can engage in social activities.

As co-operative members, women learn of and study problems encountered in every day life, and gradually gain a broader awareness as a consumer and as a member of society through discussions among co-op members and participation in co-op administration. This is the reason by the co-op is dubbed as 'school of democracy.' It is remarkable that Japanese women enable themselves to grow as individuals through the movement.

### **6.3 Women as co-operative directors**

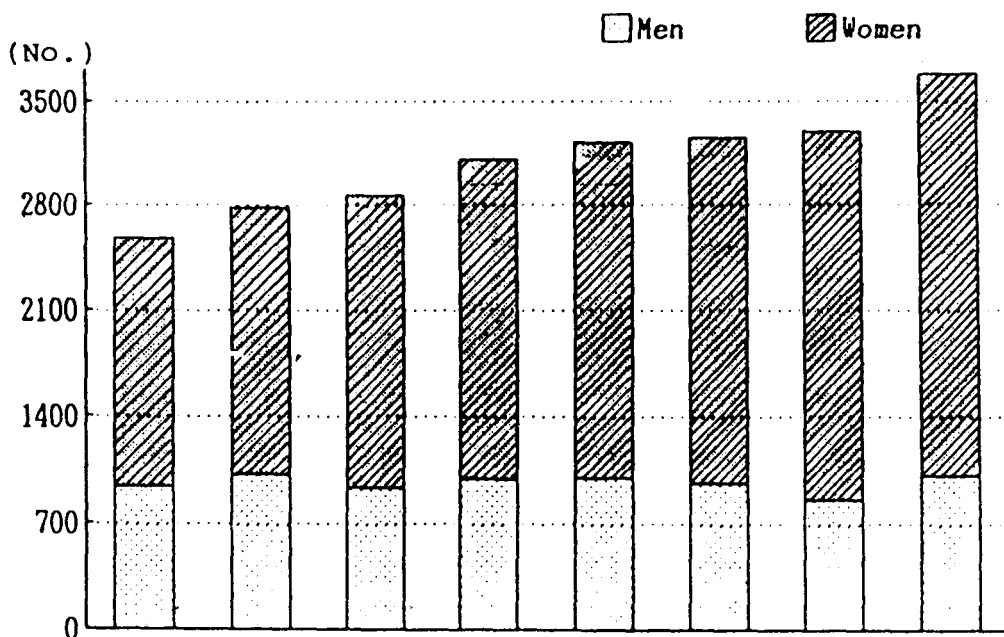
The board of directors of the Japanese co-operative is composed of full-time and part-time directors. Since the directors of co-ops in other countries are mostly part-time directors, full-time directors are a Japanese phenomenon. In Japanese co-operatives, some executive officers are given seats as full-time directors. While both full-time and part-time directors make decisions at the board meetings, only the full-time directors are responsible for the management of daily operations.

In view of this, as shown in Charts 1 and 2, women account for about 70% of the part-time directors and 10% of the full-time directors of Japanese



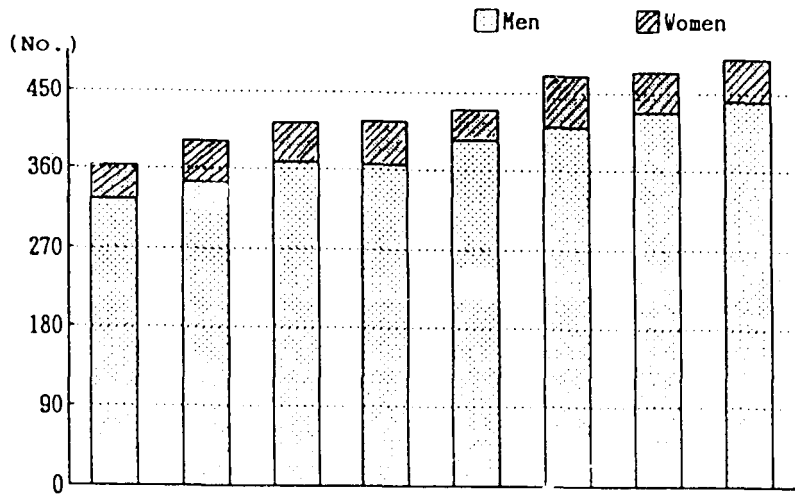
co-operatives. Co-ops usually divide their operations by district and many of their part-time directors are elected as representatives of the members in the districts. These women present members' opinions on co-op administration, products and other issues to the board of directors, and at the same time, serve as advisers to the co-operative top management. Women's role as directors is no doubt a vital ingredient in the making of a dynamic co-op movement.

**Chart 1 : Change of No. of Part-time Directors**



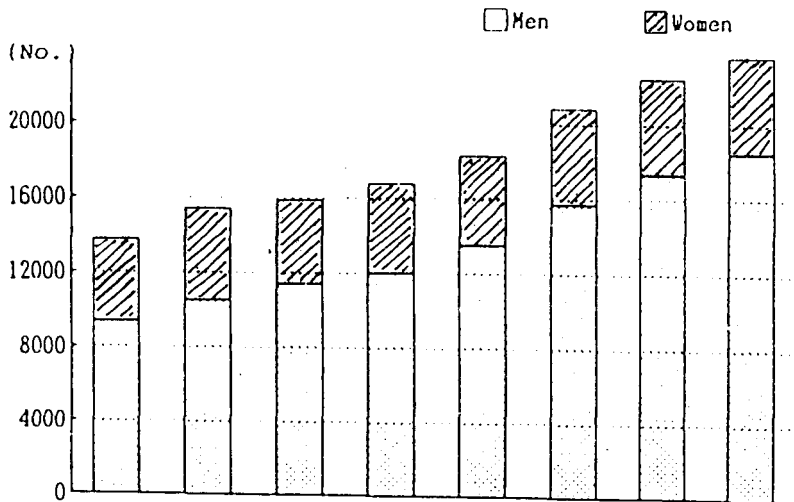
	7 9	8 0	8 1	8 2	8 3	8 4	8 5	8 6
Men	937	1024	929	990	997	966	858	1011
Women	1646	1765	1940	2122	2228	2291	2441	2678

**Chart 2 : Change of No. of full-time Directors**



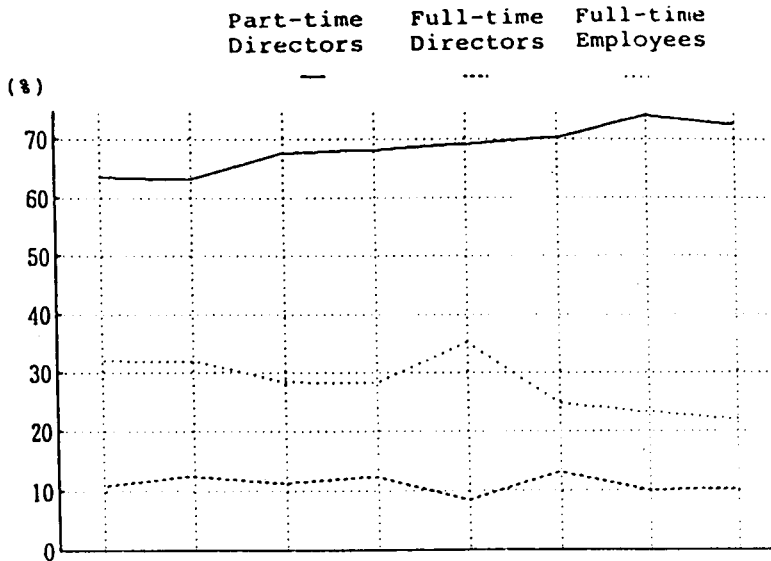
	7 9	8 0	8 1	8 2	8 3	8 4	8 5	8 6
Men	325	344	368	366	395	410	428	441
Women	39	49	47	51	36	61	47	50

**Chart 3 : Change of No. of Employees**



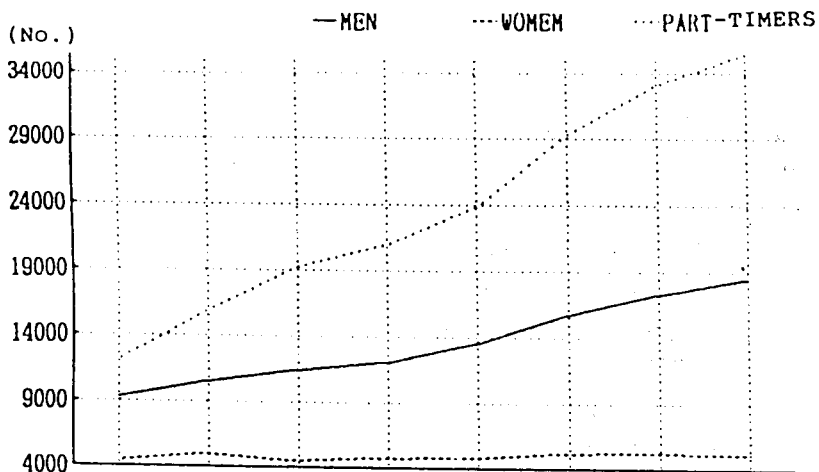
	7 9	8 0	8 1	8 2	8 3	8 4	8 5	8 6
Men	9355	10537	11395	12048	13529	15735	17301	18446
Women	4418	4915	4534	4745	4766	5157	5216	5203

**Chart 4 : Change of Women's Ratio of Directors and Employees**



	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86
time Director	63.7	63.3	67.6	68.2	69.1	70.3	74.0	72.6
time Director	10.7	12.5	11.3	12.2	8.4	13.0	9.9	10.2
time Employee	32.1	31.8	28.5	28.3	35.2	24.7	23.2	22.0

**Chart 5 : Change of No. of Women, Men and Part-time Employees**



	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86
MEN	9355	10537	11395	12048	13529	15735	17301	18446
WOMEN	4418	4915	4534	4745	4766	5157	5216	5203
PART TIMER	12123	15845	19210	20914	23807	29232	33083	35373

# VII

## Conclusions

The current status of women in Japan's citizen co-operatives may be summarized as:

- i. Women, mostly housewives, account for the great majority of the co-op membership, playing a leading role in the diverse voluntary activities. Through these activities, self-realization and growth as members of society are achieved by women co-operators.
- ii. Many women are playing an active role in deciding co-op policies as part-time directors, but only a small number of women serve as full-time directors who oversee daily co-op operations.
- iii. Not enough female full-time employees of co-ops are assigned to positions in which their abilities are fully utilized, and the percentage of female full-time employees is steadily decreasing conversely to the rise of part-time employees.

Women as co-op members are playing an active and lively role in Japan, but as co-op employees, women do not fully realize their abilities in reality, which reflects the Japanese working conditions such as long working hours, insufficient nursing facilities, and other unfavourable social conditions for women workers in Japan as a whole. It is, therefore, necessary for co-ops to expand work opportunities for female employees. To achieve this end, co-ops must increase the employment and promotion of women, and at the same time, strive to build a social system which will enable women workers to fully realize their abilities in the society at large. It will be necessary for the co-op movement to contribute to the construction of a truly affluent society based on the co-operation of people, and the first step towards this goal must be made by promoting the role of women within the co-operative organization.

# **Women in Japan Today**

December 1990

Office for Women's Affairs  
Prime Minister's Office, Japan



## **Activities of the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women**

### **Implementation of New National Plan of Action**

Since the formulation of the New National Plan of Action towards the Year 2000 (hereinafter referred to as "the Plan of Action") in May 1987, the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women (hereinafter referred to as "the Headquarters") has been actively promoting various measures for women based on the Plan of Action. The Plan of Action sets "The Creation of a Society of Joint Participation by Both Men and Women" as its general goal and sets five basic targets and fifteen priority objectives from the standpoint that it is indispensable for the advancement of women (1) to realize equality between men and women not only at the de jure level but also at the de facto level, and (2) to create a new social system which allows women to contribute to society, fully demonstrating their ability on an equal footing with men.

The Headquarters, while maintaining close cooperation among government agencies, is now in the process of formulating the concrete measures in the Plan of Action for the next five years (FY 1991-FY 1995).

### **Replacement of the Vice-President of the Headquarters**

The Kaifu cabinet was reorganized on February 28, 1990, and Mr. Misoji Sakamoto was appointed Chief Cabinet Secretary, and concurrently Vice-President of the Headquarters. He remained in the same post at the second reorganization of the Kaifu Cabinet on December 29, 1990.

In November, Ms. Ryoko Akamatsu was elected as the representative of the special advisors to the President of the Headquarters.

### **Ms. Akiko Santo Appointed Cabinet Minister**

The Kaifu Cabinet reorganized again on December 29th, 1990, includes a woman cabinet minister. Ms. Akiko Santo, chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,

House of Councillors, was appointed Director-General of the Science and Technology Agency.

### **Activities of the Advisory Council to the President of the Headquarters**

The 8th general meeting of the Advisory Council to the President of the Headquarters was held in June 1990, and the 9th general meeting was held in November 1990. Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu attended the 8th general meeting.

The Prime Minister's address covered the following points: in order to promote further advancement of women, laws, in which gender equality has almost attained, must be fully executed and we should make every efforts to create favorable conditions which allow women to realize their full potential in all areas on the basis of equality with men.

In particular, in the fiscal 1990, which is the final year of the implementation of the concrete measures stipulated in the Plan of Action, the government will undertake the work to formulate those measures to be implemented during the next five years based on the views of the Advisory Council. As asked, members of the Council expressed their views freely on such matters as participation of more women in decision-making process, promotion of policies and measures for the advancement of women in local governments, the need for improved people's awareness of equality between men and women, and various issues related to measures for helping harmonize work and child rearing.

At the 9th meeting, Ms. Yoko Nuita was elected to succeed late Ms. Nobuko Takahashi as chairperson of the advisory Council.

### **The New National Plan of Action towards the Year 2000**

#### ***I. Improvement of People's Awareness of Equality between Men and Women***

1. Correction of Traditional Stereotyped Sex Role Concepts
2. Upgrading of School Education and the Promotion of Social Education
3. Enhancing of Awareness of the Importance of Maternity and Maternal Protection, etc.

#### ***II. Joint Participation of Men and Women on the Basis of Equality***

4. Expansion of Women's Participation in Policy Decision-making
5. Promotion of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment
6. Promotion of Measures for Women in Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing Villages



7. Expansion of Joint Participation of Men and Women in the Community and in Family Life

### *III. Improvement of Conditions Giving Women Greater Choice*

8. Improvement of Lifelong Learning Opportunities and the Establishment of Systems for Developing Vocational Abilities
9. Improvement of Conditions for the Child-Care Period
10. Improvement of Conditions for Women in Various Types of Employment

### *IV. Assuring of Women's Welfare in Old Age*

11. Enhancing Income Security
12. Improvement of Welfare Services
13. Promotion of Health Care and Participation in Society
14. Independence and Stability for Fatherless Families, etc.

### *V. International Cooperation and Contribution to Peace*

15. Promotion of Women's International Cooperation in Response to Increasing Internationalization and the Contribution to Peace

## **National Conference towards the Year 2000**

In May 1990, the United Nations Economic and Social Council adopted the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, as submitted by the Commission on the Status of Women.

In order to publicize these recommendations and then further promote attainment of such international objectives as mentioned in the Nairobi FLS, the Headquarters held the National Conference in December 1990. The conference featured the speech by the Prime Minister and the keynote speech by Ms. Sellami-Meslem, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations, as well as a symposium led by experts on women's issues and international relations. Approximately 700 people of both sexes interested in women's issues participated in the Conference.

## **National and Regional Meetings of officers in Charge of Administration Regarding Women**

With a view to bringing together officers in charge of women's affairs of national and local governments in order to exchange information and views, and to facilitate

cooperation and coordination among them on promoting policies relating to women, meetings were held in six regions in Japan in 1990. Annual national meeting of officers in charge of women's affairs in local governments was also held in May 1990.

### **Regional Conferences on Women's Issues**

A regional conference on women's issues is held respectively in three regions every year. The purpose of these conferences is to examine specific problems to be coped with, to prepare for further promotion of activities for advancement of women and to contribute to improve the status of women in society. IN 1990, each conference focused on how to implement the Plan of Action, in particular realization of equality of both sexes at de facto level. People involved in activities for the advancement of women attended the conferences.

### **Rural Women's Day**

In accordance with the Plan of Action towards the Year 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries announced in 1988 its decision to observe March 10 as the Rural Women's Day.

The main purpose of the Rural Women's Day is to enhance in society proper recognition to and assessment of the roles played by rural women in the advancement of agriculture, forestry and fisheries as well as the development of rural communities, and thereby promote more effective utilization of rural women's abilities. On the third Rural Women's Day, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries sponsored various events including a symposium held by seven women's organizations concerned, and slogan contests as well as fact-finding surveys conducted by prefectural governments in order to bring about a better understanding of women's issues in these fields.

### **Women's Week**

In 1949, the Women's Week, one week in April (April 10-16), was initiated in Japan to commemorate the granting of suffrage to Japanese women. In 1990 during the 42nd Women's Week, the Ministry of Labour organized a nation-wide campaign to eliminate stereotyped concepts on women's abilities and roles.

The Ministry held a national conference in Tokyo in May 1990. The purpose of this conference was to allow individuals and organizations to exchange information and to share experience and accomplishments of various activities for the advancement of women in order to promote their future activities. Approximately 900 people to both sexes across the country attended it.

## **Law Concerning the Development of Mechanisms and Measures for Promoting Lifelong Learning**

This law, enacted on July 1, 1990, is the first law relating specifically to lifelong learning. It stipulates a variety of measures to be implemented in response to the current demands for the promotion of lifelong learning. The law embodies, largely classified, three major policy measures.

### *[Institutionalization of System in Each Prefecture to Contribute to the Promotion of Lifelong Learning]*

The law stipulates the services which Boards of Education in each of the 47 prefectures should provide in an integrated and effective manner. The minister of Education is to formulate standards for desirable services.

### *[Local Basic Plan for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning]*

The local basic plan for the promotion of lifelong learning is for the benefit of residents living in specific area and in substantively wider spheres surrounding that areas.

The plan emphasizes the provision of opportunities for quality, wide-ranging learning-in education, sports, cultural activities, and so on-and at the same time it aims at making effective use of powers of private businesses.

### *[The Advisory Council for Lifelong Learning]*

At the national level, the Advisory Council for Lifelong Learning is established at the Ministry of Education to investigate and deliberate upon important policy issues relating to the promotion of lifelong learning in school education, social education, and culture. At the prefectural level, the law prescribes that, a prefectural advisory council on lifelong learning may be established. And at the municipal level, the law stipulates that efforts be made toward the establishment of a system of coordination and cooperation between all concerned agencies and organizations.

## **Formulation of the “10-Year Strategies for Promoting Health Care and Welfare of the Aged”**

Today Japan is a country with the population of the world longest life expectancy of 80 years, and is expected to become an extremely “aged society” in which about a quarter of the population is over 65 years of age in the coming 21st century.

In Japan children and aging parents often live together and therefore housewives play a big role in taking care of their aged parents. To take care of aged parents forces housewives to bear a great burden, both physically and mentally, and it has become an issue in the promotion of women’s participation in the society. In order to remove this

burden, there is a growing need to improve domiciliary welfare services such as services provided by home helpers and support systems by institutional welfare services.

Anticipating the coming of extremely "aged society", the Ministry of Health and Welfare formulated the 10-Year Strategies for Promoting Health Care and Welfare of the Aged (the Gold Plan) starting from fiscal 1990. The Strategies have set out goals to be achieved in the last decade of this century, in the fields of health care and welfare of the aged. Based on the Strategies, the Ministry has decided on vigorously promoting a wide range of policy measures including development of the system and infrastructure for public services in this field which ensure the aged and their families peaceful life.

## **Child Care Leave**

The Equal Employment Opportunity Law stipulates that employers should endeavour to introduce child care leave; it also prescribes that the government is expected to give assistance including necessary advice or guidance to employers with a view to promoting implementation of child care leave.

### *1. Prevalance of Child Care Leave*

According to a survey by the Ministry of Labour, child care leave is being introduced by a growing number of businesses. As of fiscal 1988, 19.2% of business with 30 or more employees had implemented a child care leave program and 23.5% of Women employees were covered by such programs.

A big step forward took place in the 1990 spring labour offensive. The Federation of Electrical Workers Unions reached agreement that child care leave was to be introduced in all major electrical companies and in about 50 middle-ranking companies.

### *2. Development of institutionalization of Child Care Leave*

In recent years there have been moves to institutionalize child care leave in order to enable workers to take such leave for a fixed period.

In April 1990, the four opposition parties submitted jointly, for the third time (first, August in 1987), a Child Care Leave Bill to the House of Councillors. The issue of child care leave has also been raised in the ruling Liberal Democratic party, which has proposed in November 1990 that a legal framework for child care leave should be urgently established. A special subcommittee on child care leave of the House of Councillors concluded in November 1990, after yearlong deliberations, that the government should initiate examining and planning of a legislative framework for child care leave. The Ministry of Labour then asked for deliberations on this matter to the Women's and Young Workers Problems Council in December 1990. The Council is expected to express their views to the Ministry early 1991.

## **International Cooperation**

### **International Seminar for Senior Officers of National Machineries for the Advancement of Women**

A seminar was held in Japan for two weeks in December 1990 for senior officers of national machineries for the advancement of women in Asian region.

The seminar was initiated in 1990 by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of governmental overseas technical cooperation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). It aimed at strengthening of the functions of the activities of national machineries for the advancement of women in Asian countries, with a special theme on national reports under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in cooperation with the United Nations. Ms. Sellami-Meslem, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations, and two staff members gave lectures as well as technical comments on national reports of the Convention during the seminar.

Fourteen officers participated from twelve countries: Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cyprus.

The seminar took place mainly in Tokyo, but also in Osaka, Hiroshima, and Kitakyushu.

### **1990 NWECC Training Course for Information Processing on Women's Issues**

The National Women's Education Centre (NWECC) and the Ministry of Education jointly organized, for nine weeks starting in July 1990, a training course in computer-related data processing for women administrators in charge of women's affairs and women specialists on information regarding women's issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The program was initiated in 1989, and four women from Bangladesh, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam participated in this second year's program.

The purpose of the training is not to teach computer engineering, but to develop the basic skills of administrators on computer operation in the execution of their work. Therefore, the training was concrete and practical in content. Beside lectures on women's issues and computers, the program emphasized word-processor operation, the writing of reports, and presentation skills.

In addition to attend training session at the National Women's Education Centre, participants socialized with volunteers in the local community through home stay, and activities such as participation in tea ceremony.

## **Seminar for Farm Household Development**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries initiated a new training course called "Farm Household Development" in 1989 as a part of governmental overseas technical cooperation programs conducted by JICA. The course is intended for government officials engaged in the training and guidance for rural women in developing countries (at the national, state and prefectural levels). It provides them with scientific knowledge and techniques accumulated in Japan in the field of farm household development and regional development by and for rural women, including methods for the efficient use of agricultural products and other local resources, ways to encourage local groups to employ such methods.

In 1990, the second year of the program, 13 participants were accepted from 11 countries: Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

## **Seminar for Public Administration Officers on Women's Affairs**

In order to assist developing countries in enhancing women's status, the Ministry of Labour has held seminars for administrative officers in charge of women's affairs from developing countries since 1969. These seminars are part of governmental overseas technical cooperation programs conducted by JICA. By the end of fiscal 1990, 224 officers from 38 countries have participated in the seminars.

In 1990, 10 participants from 10 countries—from Central Africa, Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Uruguay, and others attended at the seminar. The 48 days of the seminar included a regional training program in rural area, in which participants made study tours of agricultural cooperatives and farms, and enjoyed informal discussions with members of the women's organization of the Agricultural Cooperative Association. In addition, they visited a women's employment assistance center, a vocational training center for women, and a public health center to study how those institutions were managed.

Participants identified many problems common to their own countries and to Japan, which gave rise to lively exchange of views during informal discussions.

## **Women in Development**

The "Study Group on Women in Development" was established in JICA in February 1990. Composed of professors and experts in social science, the group has studied the role of women in development in order to work out policy recommendations on how to promote a full and active participation of women in the development process for the benefit of the whole of society. The report of its study will be submitted to the President of JICA at the beginning of 1991.

## Non-governmental Activities

### 1990 Convention of Nongovernmental Women's Organizations

In November 1990, the International Women's Year Liaison Council, which consists of 50 women's organizations, held its fourth convention. The main themes of the convention were equality, development and peace. A key note report and comments from the floor focused on five major issues: participation of women in decision making process; labour; family and welfare; education and mass media; and peace and international cooperation.

The convention adopted a resolution covering 38 measures to be promoted according to three main themes; equality, development and peace. It also adopted a special resolution urging that cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNFEM) should be further promoted for the advancement of women in developing countries.

## Statistics

### Present Status of Japanese Women

#### 1. *Population*

The female population in Japan numbered 62,670,000 as of October 1, 1989, which is 2,090,000 more than the male population and 50.8% of the total population.

Approximately 60% of all Japanese people over 65 years old were women, the percentage of women rising slightly above 62% for people over 75 years old, and above 68% for people over 85 years old.

The total number of live births in 1989 was 1,246,802, corresponding to a birth rate of 10.2 newborns per 1,000 people. Both the number of newborns and the birth rate in Japan continued to reveal a downward trend, which began in 1974. The total fertility rate (the average number of births per woman in her lifetime) dropped from 2.14 in 1965, to 1.91 in 1975, and to only 1.57 in 1989.

During 1989, 708,316 couples were married, corresponding to 5.8 couples per 1,000 people. The ratio had been dropping since 1972 but has increased slightly since 1987. In 1989, the average age at the time of first marriage was 26.9 for women and 29.8 for men: the trend towards later marriage has continued. Until around 1975, the average age of first marriage was approximately 25.2 for women and 27.8 for men.

A total of 157,811 couples were divorced in Japan in 1989, corresponding to 1.29 couples per 1,000 people. The divorce rate reached a peak of 1.51 per 1,000 in 1983.

However, both the number of divorces and the divorce rate were up in 1989.

The average life expectancy at birth of women rose to 81.77 years in 1989, 4.8 years up from 1975. Women therefore have nearly 5.9 years longer life expectancy than men (75.91 years). In 1988 the life expectancy of women had dropped slightly to 81.30 because of highly increased deaths of people of advanced age due to heart disease, pneumonia and bronchitis.

### *Women in Agriculture*

As both population in farming household and the population engaged in agriculture decline, the importance of women in agricultural labour has risen. In 1990, the number of women engaged in agricultural work stood at 3,404,000, which accounted for 60.3% of the total agricultural labour (5,653,000). Breaking these figures down by age, women account for about 70% of the total at the age of between 25 and 60. This ratio has continued roughly unchanged over the past 20 years. On the other hand, in the under 25 years of age group, the ratio of women to the total has been declining year by year.

According to a survey carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in 1987, 12.7% of married women engaged in agriculture played the central role in management of farm business; and for part-time farming households (which have income from farming and other sources), the ratio is as high as 42.6%. Further, the survey shows that 23.6% of women in agriculture were responsible for management of agricultural income, and 41.7% of the women took their own income from the agricultural income, with 17.2% of these receiving a fixed amount every month.

## 2 *Education*

The Ministry of Education published some of the preliminary results of the School Basic Survey carried out on May 1, 1990. The summary of the results is as follows.

There were 259,180 women elementary school teachers, who accounted for 58.3% of all elementary school teachers and 0.8% increase compared with that of the previous year. The 104,004 women lower secondary school teachers and 58,630 women upper secondary teachers represented 36.4% and 20.5% of total teachers, respectively, and in each case these figures are record highs.

The percentage of girls who advance to upper secondary school after graduating from lower secondary school has exceeded the percentage of boys since 1969, and in March 1990 it reached 96.2% (vis-a-vis 94.04% for boys).

The percentage of girls advancing to junior college or university in the relevant age female population was 37.4% (15.2% to university, 22.2% to junior colleges); this was 0.6% higher than the previous year, and also a record high.



Female university students numbered 584,104, an increase of 38,863 over the previous year, and the female percentage of the total students record high. Breaking down by faculty, the most popular subject was "humanities" (36.0%), followed by "home economics," and education and teacher training. Female junior college students numbered 438,444, an increase of 17,580 (0.4%) over the previous year, and accounted for 91.5% of the total, again a record high. Their most popular subject was "humanities" (27.8%), followed by "home economics," and "education and teacher training".

Among women who newly graduated from universities and junior colleges in 1990, those entering employment accounted for 81.0% (as of May 1990), showing 2.5 point increase from the previous year. This proportion reached for the first time the same level as that of male graduates.

Women teaching staff accounted for record high 9.2% at universities (11,399 women teachers) and 38.2% at junior colleges (7,818( 0.4% down over the previous year.

### 3. *Employment*

The female labour force continued to increase in 1989, reaching 25,330,000, or 40.4% of the total labour force. Increases both in total number of women and their participation rate in labour force exceeded those for the male labour force. The female labour force participation rate increased to 49.5% reflecting especially a trend among women in their early fifties and late twenties. The participation rate of married women also expanded to 52.3%.

The female labour force participation rate by age group climbed until it reached a peak of 74.3% in the 20-24 age group, then gradually declined for women over 25 years of age. It continued to decline until it reached a low of 51.1% in the 30-34 age group. It then began to increase again and reached a second peak of 70.7% in the 45-49 age group, charting an M-shaped curve.

By employment status, 70.7% (or 17,490,000) of female workers were employees. The number of female employees has been increasing year by year. The total of 17,490,000 in 1989 represented an increase of 790,000 over the previous year. The rate of increase exceeded that of male workers. The number of female employees as a percentage of total employees has also increased year by year, climbing from 32.0% in 1975 to 37.4% in 1989.

By industry, 82.9% of female employees were concentrated in service, wholesale and retail trade, restaurant business and manufacturing industries. The proportion of women in all industries except the government has been increasing for the last ten years. The growth of the number of women has been substantially remarkable, in particular, in services, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, restaurant business. Women account for approximately half of employees in the service, finance, insurance and real

estate, wholesale and retail trade, and restaurant business.

By occupation, the largest number of female employees were clerical and related work followed by craftsmen and production process workers, professional and technical workers, and sales workers. Job areas which have seen the largest growth since 1975 are clerical and related work, professional and technical work, and sales work. The growth of women in professional and technical occupations has been substantially remarkable. The increase in female managers has also been quite significant: the number of female managers has risen 150%, while the number of men has remained almost constant.

In the past, the majority of female employees in Japan were unmarried. In 1962, for example, 55.2% of female employees were never married. As more and more married women found employment, however, they became the majority, and, in 1989, 58.5% of female employees were married. In case that divorced or widowed women were included in the "married" category, married women represented 67.5% of total female employees, and never married women a mere 32.5%.

The average age and average length of service of female employees have also been expanding every year, the average age reaching 35.7 years (compared with 39.3 years for male employees) and the average length of service reaching 7.2 years (compared with 12.4 years for male employees).

While the number of full-time female employees has been increasing, part-time employment has also gained substantial popularity, especially among housewives-the shorter working hours enable them to balance part-time job and home responsibilities. The number of female part-time employees, defined as female employees with less than 35 working hours per week (but excluding those engaged in agriculture and forestry), has doubled since 1975. The figure reached 4,320,000 in 1989 and accounted for 25.2% of total female employees. The number of part-time employees will probably continue to increase since such working arrangements suit both the supply and the demand requirements of labour.

In March 1990, the Prime Minister's Office published the results of the Opinion Survey on Women's Employment. According to the survey the 60.4% of women surveyed were at work. As for the pattern of employment, majority of the women surveyed (50.1%) had reemployed after a certain period of interruption. 36.7% of the women had remained continuously in employment while only 9.8% of the women employed had no work experience before marriage.

As for women's assessment of the work situation, about 60% of the women surveyed considered themselves in a situation easy to work. However, they cited a number of factors making it difficult to continue work for a long time. These factors include child rearing, care for the aged and sick as well as housework. It revealed that the women surveyed considered compatibility between home responsibilities and work as the major factor affecting women's employment in a long period of time.

As regards sharing of housework and child rearing where wife and husband are in employment, very few women (4.2%) thought that men need not to share any domestic chore or child care at home. The great majority of women surveyed thought that men should share in these things with women. It was noticeable that since the previous survey conducted in October 1983, the proportion of people who felt that women were mainly responsible for housework and child rearing, (and that men played only a secondary role as helper) decreased from 45.5% to 38.7%).

## **Women's Participation in Policy Decision-Making**

### *1. Women's Participation in Politics Female Members of the Diet*

Since 1975 there have been six elections for the House of Representatives and five elections for the House of Councillors. The voting turnout of women has exceeded that of men in all elections held since 1968.

In 1975 there was a total of 25 female members of the Diet, with 7 women in the House of Representatives and 18 women in the House of Councillors. By 1990, additional 21 women members increased the total up to 46, with 12 women in the House of Representatives and 34 women in the House of Councillors. The proportion of the women in the total number of the Diet seats has increased significantly, from 1.5% to 2.3% in the House of Representatives, and from 7.2% to 13.5% in the House of Councillors. And as a result, the overall proportion of female Diet members has reached 6.0% for the first time in 1990, rising from 3.4% in 1975.

### *Female Members of Local Assemblies*

The proportion of female members among the total membership of local assemblies of all prefectures, cities, towns, villages, and special wards increased from 1.0% in 1976 to 2.2% in 1988.

### *2. Female Members of Advisory Councils*

Advisory councils including at least one female member accounted for only 30.8% of all government advisory councils in 1975. By 1985, the final year of the United Nations Decade for Women, this proportion had risen above the 50% level, and in March 1990 reached approximately 70%. The overall proportion of female members to the total has also risen from 2.4% in 1975 to 7.9% in 1990 - a more than threefold increase. Thus, participation of women in advisory councils has continued to increase both in number and in ratio.

Prefectural advisory councils instituted by law had 4,155 female members account-

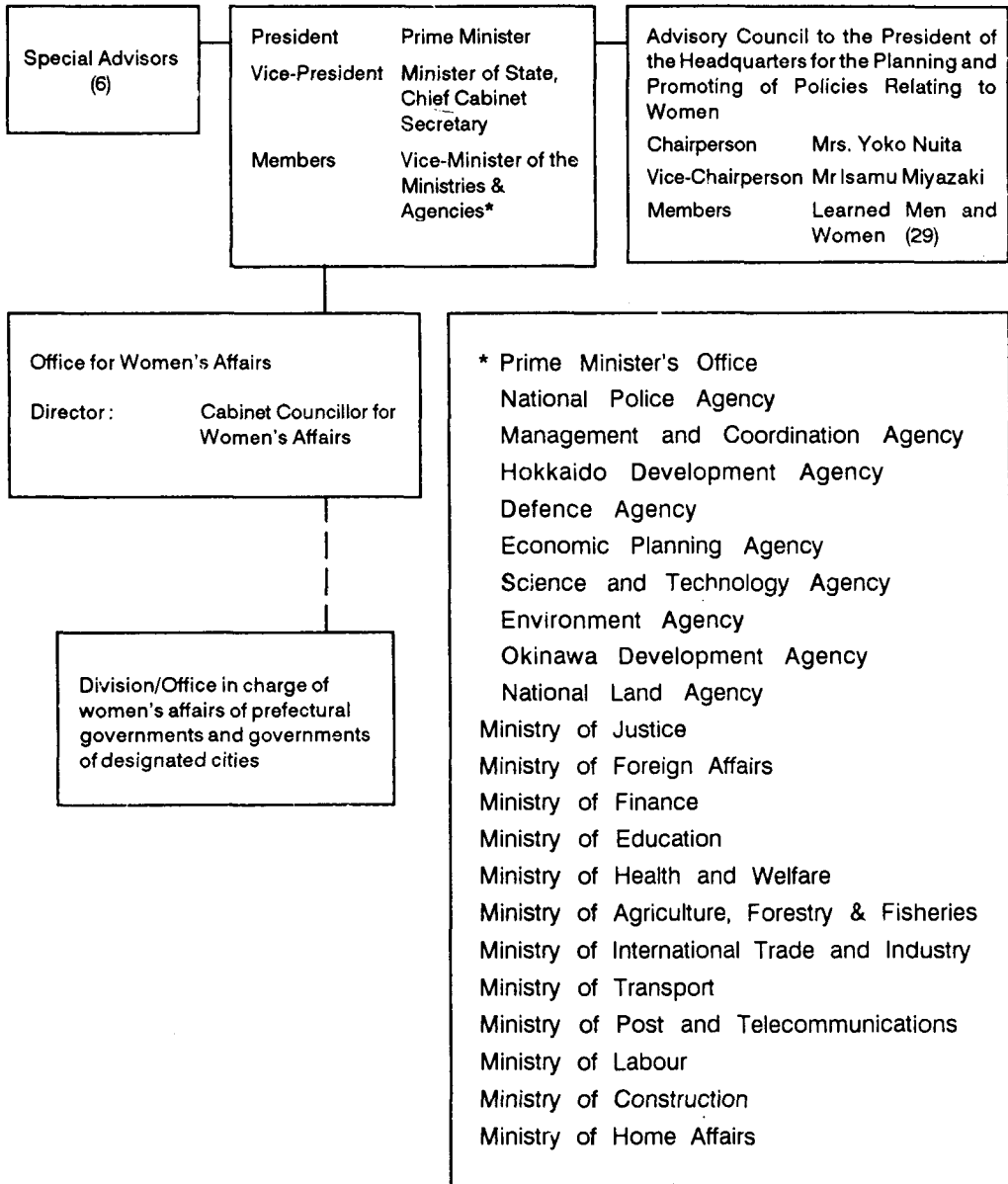
ing for 8.3% of the total membership (50,333) in 1989. Advisory councils established in designated cities had 520 female members accounting for 8.8% of the total membership (5,880).

**The Number of Female Members of the Diet**

	Diet members			House of Representatives			House of Councillors		
	Total	Female	%age	Total	Female	%age	Total	Female	%age
July '80	762	26	3.4	511	9	1.8	251	17	6.8
January '86	750	27	3.6	502	8	1.6	248	19	7.7
March '87	760	29	3.8	609	7	1.4	251	22	8.8
July '89	749	40	5.3	497	7	1.4	252	33	13.1
June '90	763	46	6.0	512	12	2.3	251	34	13.5

## Administrative Organization for Women's Affairs

Headquarters for Planning and Promoting  
of Policies Relating to Women





# **Japanese Women Today**

1990

Prime Minister's Office, Japan





## CHAPTER I

### The Current Status of Women

#### 1. Japanese Women: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

The New Constitution instituted in post-war Japan guarantees respect for the individual and equality between men and women as fundamental principles under the initiative of democratic legislative measures. Based on these principles, various legislative reforms were implemented that resulted in fundamental changes and improvements in the legal status of Japanese women, including the enactment of women's suffrage. This era of democratic legislative reforms stands out as the initial period of dramatic improvement in the status of Japanese women.

These reforms became firmly rooted in society as Japan went through a period of rapid economic growth. Women's status and welfare continued to advance in parallel with improvements in the standard of living. Other outstanding developments concerning women during this period included an extended average life expectancy, a decline in the birth rate, an improved standard of education, changes in household activities, and expanded leisure hours. These notable demographic and social changes produced an outlook for women's lives totally different from that of the past. A growing number of Japanese women began to participate actively in or seek participation in a variety of social activities, including work.

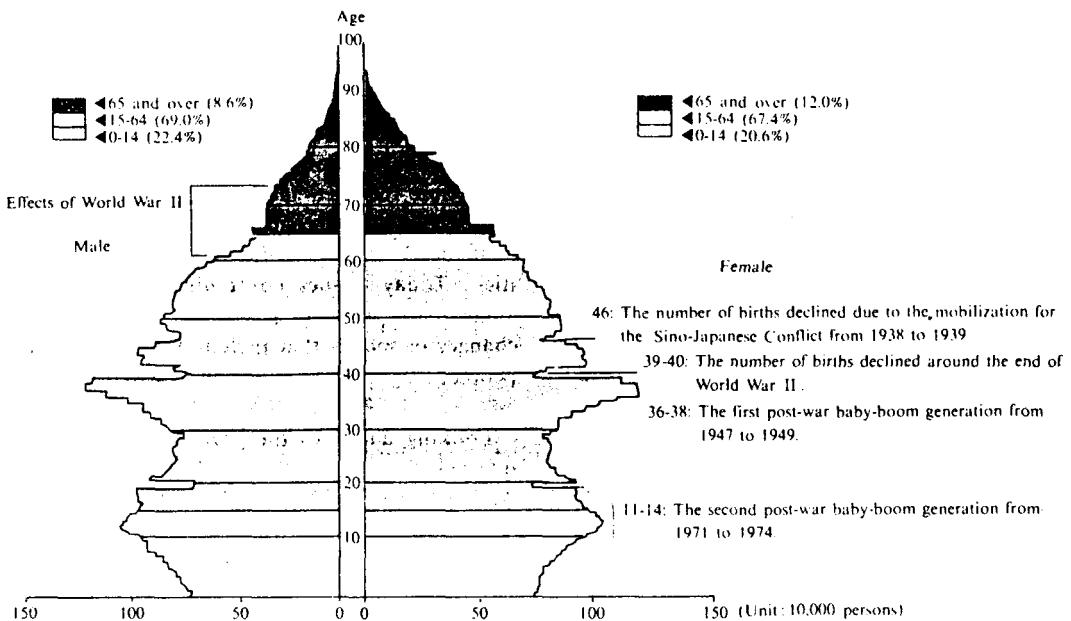
The "International Women's Year" sponsored by the United Nations and the subsequent "United Nations Decade for Women" brought about a significant advancement in the status of Japanese women. This marked the second period of dramatic improvement.

In 1975 the Japanese government established the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women (hereinafter referred to as "the Headquarters") with the Prime Minister as President. The Headquarters formulated a National Plan of Action in 1977 as a means of incorporating the World Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference of the International Women's Year into Japan's policies. The government's positive promotion of this plan of action led to a considerable improvement in the legal system. This was effected through many amendments in the Civil Code,

the Law for Determination of Family Affairs, the Nationality Law, and the National Pension Law, in addition to the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law and ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In this way, the fundamental framework of legislative measures to ensure equality of the sexes was considerably strengthened.

The “United Nations Decade for Women” was also a period of wide-ranging changes in Japan’s economic and social environments. Women’s participation in society was further vitalized as a result, particularly in the area of independent activities, including entry into the labour market and increased community involvement. This period was characterized by a renewed recognition of the contribution women made to society and an enhancement of this contribution. At the same time, the need increased for a new social system that would enable women to harmonize their social activities with household responsibilities. Today, issues concerning the status of women are entering

Fig. 1 Population Pyramid (As of October 1, 1985)



Source: "Population Census" Management and Coordination Agency

a new stage along with changes in society that include the aging of the people.

Looking ahead to the year 2000, the Headquarters formulated a New National Plan of Action that specified a fundamental long-range direction for measures related to women, incorporating the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women into Japan's policy measures. Working in close cooperation with the administrative organs concerned, the Headquarters is promoting comprehensive measures to achieve its goals. It is also cooperating with regional administrative organs, holding a wide range of meetings to promote the further advancement of women.

To keep in step with these changes in the socio-economic environments, Japan must work to develop conditions in which women can improve their status, not only at the de jure level but also at the de facto level, fully demonstrating their capabilities and contributing to society on an equal footing with men. Specifically, Japan must eliminate persistent, stereotyped concepts based on traditional sex roles and provide a climate conducive to women's full participation in society. Once these issues are solved, promoting both women's participation in society and men's participation in community and family life can lead to developing a society that is mutually supported by men and women in a balanced manner. In this regard, the history of Japanese women can be said to have entered a third stage toward the year 2000.

## **2. Women's Life Cycles, Family Life and Awareness**

### *(1) Population and Life Cycle*

In 1985, Japan's female population totalled 61,550,000-2,050,000 more than the male population of 59,500,000. Thus, women accounted for 50.8 percent of the total population.

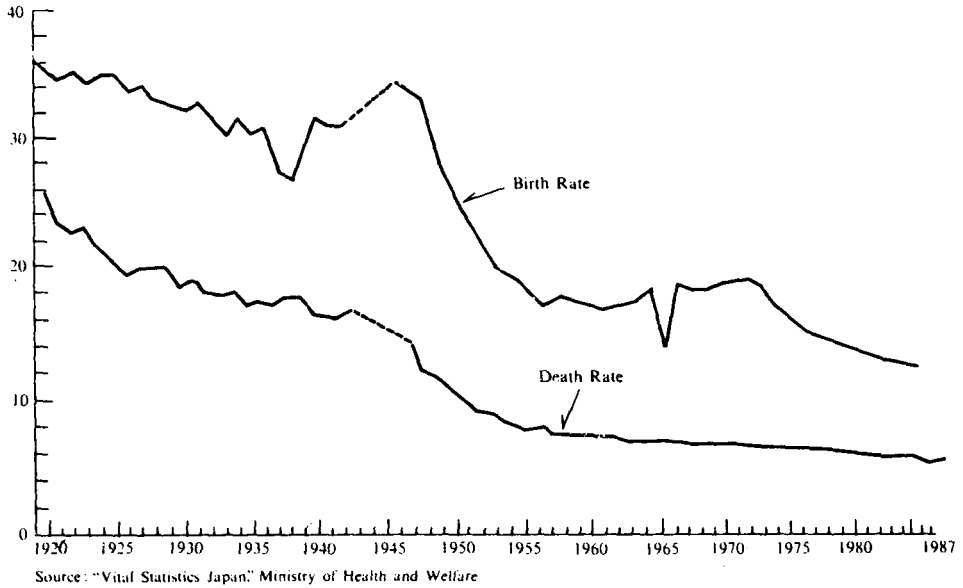
Breaking the female population down by age, the 0-14 age group accounted for 20.6 percent, the 15-64 age group for 67.4 percent and the 65-and-over age group for 12.0 percent. Compared to past statistics, the 65-and-over age group showed a significant increase in percentage. Thus, the aging of Japanese society is advancing at an unprecedented pace. (Fig. 1)

In 1987, the number of births was registered at 1,346,658. The birth rate stood at 11.1 per 1,000 of population. Both the number of births and the birth rate have declined since 1974.

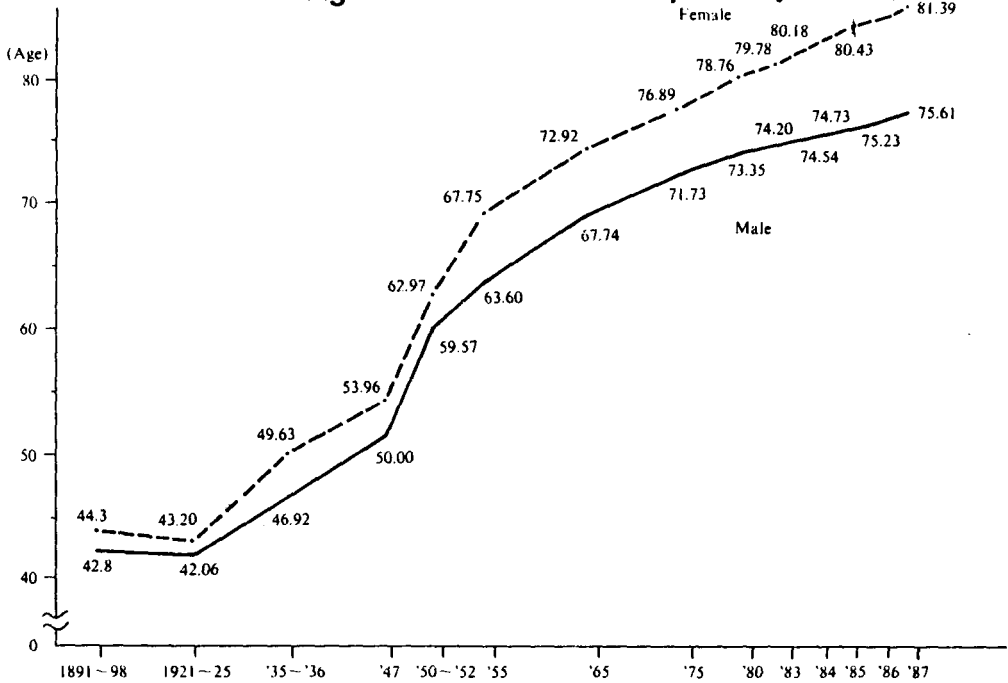
Furthermore, with the declining death rate resulting from improved sanitary standards and advanced medical technologies, as well as from economic growth, the average life expectancy has been increasing, reaching 75.61 years of age for males and 81.39 years for females in 1987. (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3)

**Fig. 2 Trends of Birth and Death Rates (1920-1987)**

Per 1,000 of Population



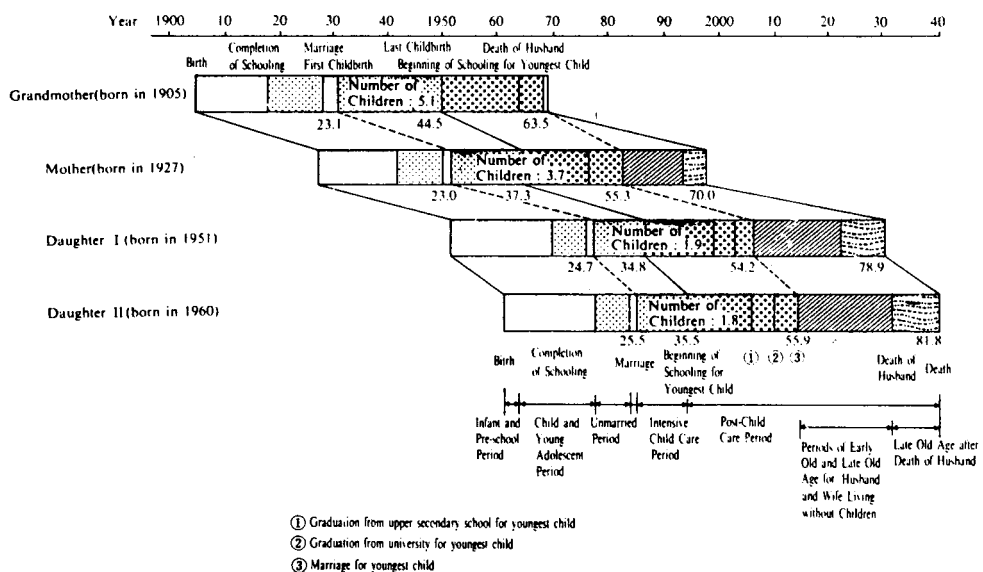
**Fig. 3 Trends of Life Expectancy**



Reflecting a longer life expectancy and a decrease in the number of births, Japanese women's life cycles have shown a drastic change over the long term. Fig. 4 below compares life cycle models for three generation models (daughter, mother and grandmother) calculating the average marriage age for each generation.

Since the daughter generation has less than two children, the birth-giving period is found to last just two to three years. Once their youngest child enters elementary school, the mother period of intensive child care can be supposed to be over. They typically have 45 years of life remaining, a figure representing the major portion of their lives. Furthermore, when their youngest child gets married, they will be in their middle to late fifties. They can then expect to spend almost 20 more years with their husbands and survive them about eight years. The periods after intensive child care and their children's marriages are becoming longer and these circumstances bring about changes in women's awareness and behavior. These life cycle models are expected to remain valid in the future as well. (Fig. 4)

Fig. 4. Life Cycle Models for Three Generations



- Notes: 1 Years of birth in the models are calculated backwards from the average ages of the women at the time of their first marriages in 1928, 1950, 1975 and 1985. Each stage of their life cycles is formulated on the basis of the average age at the time of marriage (age of graduation from schools, however, are calculated according to the nationwide ratios of women's attendance at schools, in the years corresponding to each model).
2. The total fertility rate is defined as the number of children per women is estimated to have had during her reproductive period (15-49 years of age). The total fertility rate for the grandmothers' generation is based on statistical data for 1930.

Source: "Vital Statistics Japan," "Abridged Life Tables," and "Fertility Survey," Ministry of Health and Welfare; and "School Basic Survey," Ministry of Education.

## (2) Family Life

The Japanese Constitution stipulates that a marriage “shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes. “With this principle as a basis, the requirements of marriage prescribed by the Civil Code include 1) marriage with free will of both sexes, 2) minimum ages for marriage (18 for men and 16 for women), 3) a ban on bigamy and on intermarriage, and 4) parental approval when either the bride or groom is underage. A divorce is effective when a notice is submitted with the mutual consent of the two parties involved. When one of the spouses wishes to divorce without consent of the other spouse, the former must seek a divorce decree of a court or a divorce through court mediation. A divorce may be granted upon various grounds including 1) marital infidelity, 2) mala fide abandonment, and 3) the absence of a spouse for a period for more than three years.

In 1987, there were 696,173 marriages recorded, and the average age for first marriages was 25.7 for women and 28.4 for men, with an age difference of 2.7 years. The average age for first marriages remained at about 24.5 for women and 27.0 for men until around 1975. Since then, however, a trend toward later marriages has become more noticeable among both women and men. (Table 1)

**Table 1. Trends of Marriages**

Year/Marriage	Number of Marriages	Marriage Rates (per 1,000 persons)
1965	954,852	9.7
1970	1,029,405	10.0
1975	941,628	8.5
1980	774,702	6.7
1985	735,850	6.1
1986	710,962	5.9
1987	696,173	5.7

Source: “Vital Statistics Japan.” Ministry of Health and Welfare

*Note: Marriage rate = (Number of marriage applications for the year/Total population of Japan as of October 1) x 1,000*

The number of divorces in 1987 was 158,227, a figure representing a divorce rate of 1.30. This rate has declined since 1984. (Table 2)

**Table 2. Trends of Divorces**

Year/Divorces	Number of Divorces	Divorce Rates (per 1,000 persons)
1965	77,195	0.79
1970	95,937	0.93
1975	119,135	1.07
1980	141,689	1.22
1985	166,640	1.39
1986	166,054	1.37
1987	158,227	1.30

Source: "Vital Statistics Japan," Ministry of Health and Welfare

*Note: Divorce rate = (Number of divorce applications for the year/Total population of Japan as of October 1)x1,000*

The total number of households in Japan has been increasing since 1955 as a result of a trend toward nuclear families and a growth in the number of single person households. In 1985 the number of households reached 37,980,000, an increase of 2,160,000, or 6.0 percent over 1980. Although the rate of increase has slowed down slightly, it is nevertheless growing at a much higher rate than the growth rate of 3.4 percent registered for the total population. (Table 3)

Table 3. Number of Households by Type in Japan: 1975-1985

Types of Households	Number of Households (1,000)			Percentage by Type (%)			Increase/Decrease (Δ)(%)	
	1975	1980	1985	1975	1980	1985	1975 ~1980	1980 ~1985
Total	33,596	35,824	37,980	100.0	100.0	100.0	6.6	6.0
A. Relatives households	26,968	28,657	30,013	80.3	80.0	79.0	6.3	4.7
I. Family nuclei	19,980	21,594	22,804	59.5	60.3	60.0	8.1	5.6
(1) A married couple only	3,880	4,460	5,211	11.6	12.5	13.7	14.9	16.8
(2) A married couple with their child(ren)	14,290	15,081	15,189	42.5	42.1	40.0	5.5	0.7
(3) Father with his child(ren)	257	297	356	0.8	0.8	0.9	15.6	19.6
(4) Mother with her child(ren)	1,553	1,756	2,047	4.6	4.9	5.4	13.1	16.6
II. Other households	6,988	7,063	7,209	20.8	19.7	19.0	1.1	2.1
(5) A couple with their parents	165	193	205	0.5	0.5	0.5	16.6	6.0
(6) A couple with their parent	335	415	478	1.0	1.2	1.3	23.8	15.0
(7) A couple with their child(ren) and parents	1,468	1,732	1,888	4.4	4.8	5.0	18.0	9.0
(8) A couple with their child(ren) and parent	2,514	2,638	2,618	7.5	7.4	6.9	4.9	Δ 0.8
(9) A couple with relative(s) excluding parent(s) and child(ren)	133	114	117	0.4	0.3	0.3	Δ14.7	2.6
(10) A couple with their child(ren) and relatives excluding parent(s)	521	341	350	1.6	1.0	0.9	Δ34.6	2.8
(11) A couple with their parent(s) and relatives excluding child(ren)	217	161	154	0.6	0.4	0.4	Δ26.0	Δ 4.4
(12) A couple with their child(ren), parent(s) and other relative(s)	980	854	755	2.9	2.4	2.0	Δ12.9	Δ11.6
(13) Brothers/sisters only	653	208	208	1.9	0.6	0.5	Δ 5.8	Δ 0.4
(14) Others	67	407	438	0.2	1.1	1.2	Δ 7.5	8.0
B. Non-relatives households	67	62	73	0.2	0.2	0.2	Δ 7.5	8.0
C. Single households	6,561	7,105	7,895	19.5	19.8	20.8	8.3	11.1

Source: "Population Census," Management and Coordination Agency

The scale of household establishment is characterized by a further trend toward nuclear families as well as by a growing percentage of single and two person households. Coupled with these trends, and as a result of a decline in the average number of birth per woman, the average number of members in households recorded an overall decline from 3.28 persons in 1975 and 3.22 in 1980 to 3.14 in 1985.

### (3) Women's Attitudes and Daily Activities

Women's daily activities can be classified into three categories:

- 1) primary activities comprising physiologically necessary behavior such as sleeping and eating.
- 2) secondary activities comprising duties such as work and house keeping, and
- 3) tertiary activities including free-time activities such as sports. The average amount of time spent in primary activities was found to be 10 hours and 30 minutes in 1986, which is 14 minutes less than in 1981. In the secondary activity category, the average amount of time spent in work was 3 hours and 2 minutes in 1986, which is 9 minutes less than in 1981 and 19 minutes less than in 1976; and the average amount of time spent in house keeping and child care was 3 hours and 28 minutes in 1986, which is 5 minutes more than in 1981 and 10 minutes more than in 1976. With respect to tertiary activities, the largest amount of time was spent watching TV, listening to the radio, and reading.



newspapers or magazines. These activities were allotted an average of 2 hours and 14 minutes in 1986, slightly more than in 1981 but 8 minutes less than in 1976. However, an average of 1 hour and 23 minutes were spent for rest and relaxation in 1986, 3 minutes more than in 1981 and 25 minutes more than in 1976.

Men, on the other hand, spent an average of 5 hours and 58 minutes in work in 1986, 6 minutes less than in 1981. They spent an average of 11 minutes engaged in house keeping and child care in 1986, 3 minutes more than in 1981.

A comparison of the daily activities of working and non-working women for 1986 shows that the average amount of time devoted by working women to primary activities was 35 minutes less than that spent by non-working women. Notably, working women slept 26 minutes less on average than non-working women. Working women spent an average of 3 hours and 13 minutes more on secondary activities than their non-working counterparts. Working women devoted an average of 4 hours and 21 minutes to tertiary activities as compared to 6 hours and 59 minutes spent by non-working women. (Table 4)

**Table 4. Average Time Spent by Women and Men in Various Types of Activities (Weekly Average) (Unit: hour)**

Activities	Women			Men		
	1976	1981	1986	1976	1981	1986
1 Primary Activities	10.42	10.44	10.30	10.41	10.44	10.20
Sleeping	7.56	7.48	7.39	8.15	8.06	7.56
Eating	1.40	1.52	1.41	1.34	1.43	1.34
2 Secondary Activities	8.04	8.01	7.54	7.38	7.43	7.41
Work	3.21	3.11	3.02	6.03	6.04	5.58
House keeping and child care	3.18	3.23	3.28	0.08	0.08	0.11
3 Tertiary Activities	5.14	5.15	5.36	5.41	5.33	5.59
TV, radio, newspapers or magazines	2.22	2.12	2.14	2.26	2.14	2.22
Rest and relaxation	0.58	1.20	1.23	0.56	1.17	1.20
Study and research (excluding school work)	0.08	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.13
Hobbies and amusements	0.25	0.30	0.28	0.35	0.36	0.34
Sports	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.12	0.14	0.14
Voluntary social activities	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.02
Socializing	0.27	0.22	0.26	0.29	0.26	0.31

Source: "Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities," Management and Coordination Agency

Since the "Public Opinion Survey on Women" was conducted by the Prime Minister's Office in 1972, a succession of similar surveys has been carried out. According to their findings, a number of changes have occurred in Japanese women's attitude as well as that of men concerning women's issues since the "United Nations Decade for Women."

#### <The Status of Men and Women>

In 1987 the number of women who did not believe that the two sexes became equal in every aspect outnumbered those who believed they became equal. Over 60 percent of the women surveyed responded that inequality was particularly evident "at the workplace" as well as "in general ideas and social climate." Roughly the same percentage of the men surveyed responded similarly to questions in these two areas. In respect to the "legal and institutional status of the sexes," some 30 percent of the women responded that the sexes were equal, about the same percentage as that recorded for respondents who found women to be equal in terms of "their status in the family." Relatively more women believed that the sexes were equal in these areas than in other areas, while more than half of the men gave this response. Compared to the 1975 survey findings, the 1987 survey found a decreased percentage among both men and women believed that the sexes were unequal in the areas of "general ideas and social climate." It also showed an increased percentage of respondents who answered that they could not say either way. As concerns the "workplace," there was a decline in the number of both men and women who believed that the sexes were equal, partly as a result of increased awareness concerning the question of equality between the sexes. In line with this, the number of those who responded that they could not say either way or who believed the sexes were unequal increased, demonstrating a reduction in the difference between the awareness of women and men. (Table 5)

**Table 5. Do Women and Men Have Equal Status?**

Areas	Date of Survey	Sex	Number of Respondents	Equal	Not Equal	Cannot Say Either Way (Note 2)	Others	Do Not Know
				%	%	%	%	%
In the family	July 1975	Women	2,380	29.5	49.4	15.6	*	5.6
		Men	1,772	42.6	37.1	16.6	*	3.6
	March 1987	Women	2,148	29.5	45.9	22.6	0.1	1.9
		Men	1,635	38.1	37.4	22.7	0.1	1.7
At the workplace	July 1975	Women	2,380	12.8	59.2	10.0	*	18.0
		Men	1,772	21.0	56.9	13.4	*	8.7
	March 1987	Women	2,148	8.1	63.1	19.8	0.0	9.0
		Men	1,635	14.3	60.9	19.9	0.1	4.8
In terms of general ideas and social climate (Note 3)	July 1975	Women	2,380	10.0	70.4	11.0	*	8.6
		Men	1,772	16.4	64.0	14.1	*	5.5
	March 1987	Women	2,148	10.4	62.2	20.3	—	7.1
		Men	1,635	19.3	57.0	19.8	0.1	3.7
In terms of legal and institutional status	March 1987	Women	2,148	31.4	37.4	20.7	—	10.8
		Men	1,635	49.5	28.9	16.1	0.2	5.2

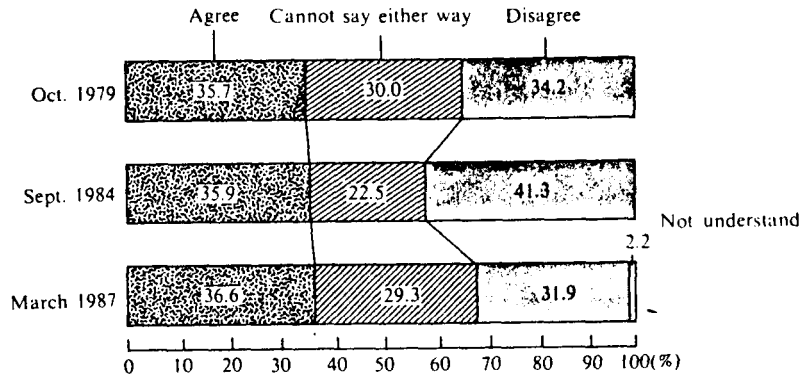
*Source: "Public Opinion Survey on Equality of the Sexes," Prime Minister's Office, 1975, and "Public Opinion Survey on Women," Prime Minister's Office, 1987*

- Notes: 1. Population surveyed: Men and women 20 years of age or above, nationwide.  
 2. This category was phrased "Cannot Give a General Answer" in the 1975 survey.  
 3. This category was phrased "General Ideas and Customs" in the 1975 survey.

<Sex Roles>

Concerning the idea that "men should go to work and women stay home," the 1987 survey found 36.6 percent of female respondents answered, "Agree," 31.9 percent, "Disagree," and 29.3 percent, "Cannot say either way," On the other hand, 51.7 percent of male respondents, a significantly higher percentage than that recorded by women, answered "Agree."

**Fig. 5. Concerning the Idea that “Men Should Go to Work and Women Stay Home” (Women)**



Source: “Public Opinion Survey Concerning Women,” Prime Minister’s Office, 1979, 1984, and 1987.

### 3. Education

#### (1) School Education

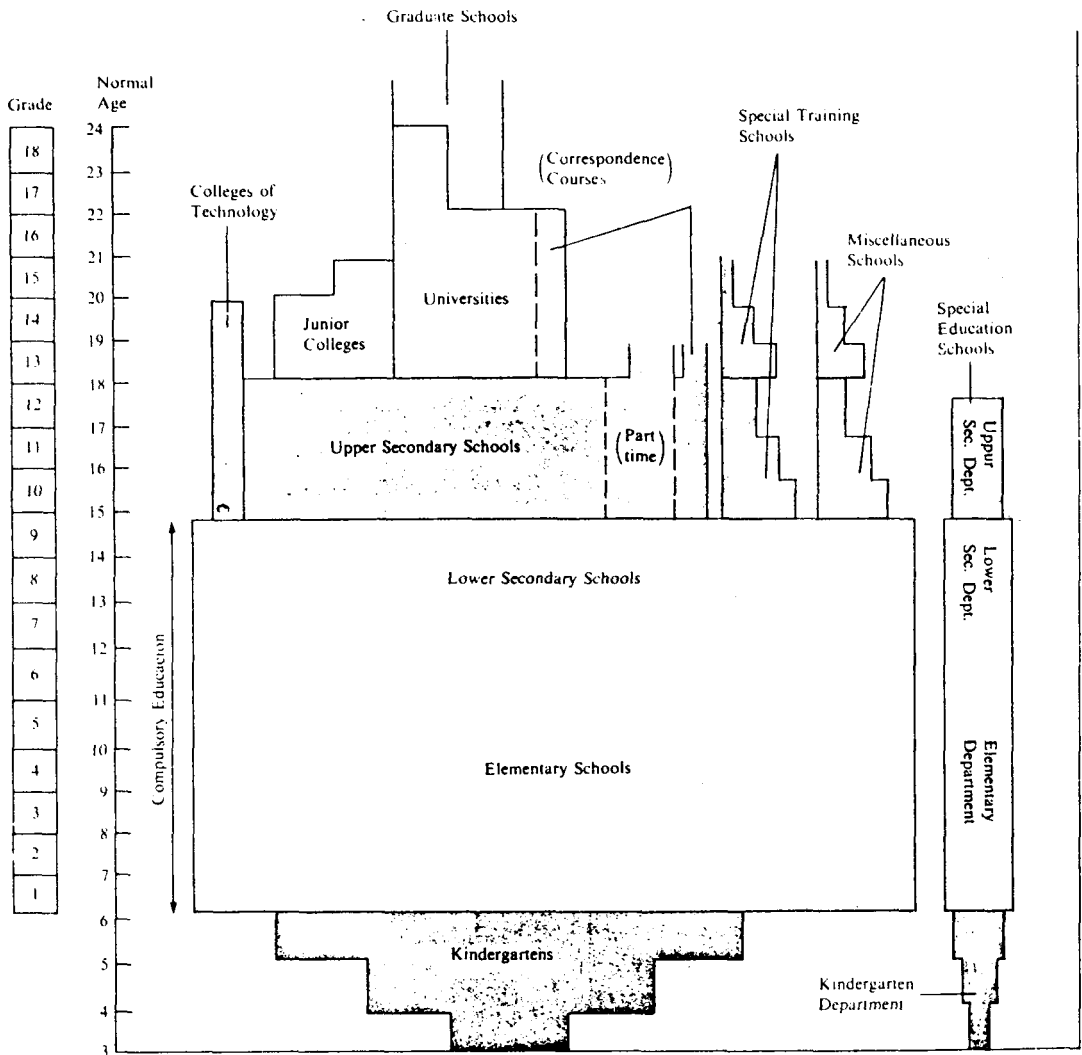
The Japanese Constitution promulgated in 1946 guarantees the right (and duty) to an education as one of the fundamental human rights of every person in the nation. The Fundamental Law of Education enacted in 1947 guarantees every person an equal opportunity to receive education according to his/her ability and stipulates that no one should suffer from discrimination by sex in education. This law established equal opportunity in education. In the years following its introduction, the educational level of Japanese women improved rapidly as the ratio of female students going on to upper secondary school increased at a fast pace against a background of rapid economic growth.

Japan’s school system is shown in Fig. 6. Pre-school education at kindergartens begins at age three. The six-year elementary school and three-year lower secondary (middle or junior high) school are compulsory, with the former beginning at age six and the latter at age twelve. Although the upper secondary (senior high) school is not compulsory, the ratio of students going on to this level has reached about 95 percent. Higher educational institutions consist of universities and colleges (four-or-six-year programs), junior colleges (two-or three-year programs), and colleges of technology (five-or five-and-a-half-year programs). Moreover, a number of universities set up graduate schools (Master’s and Doctor’s programs) for advanced, specialized education and research. To these schools are added special training. To these schools are added

special training schools, which provide vocational and other specialized training, and miscellaneous schools, which provide various training similar to school education.

The number of students currently enrolled in elementary and lower secondary schools nation-wide is 15,230,000 (7,790,000 males and 7,440,000 females in 1989, a figure representing 99.99 percent of all the eligible population of the corresponding ages. (Fig. 6)

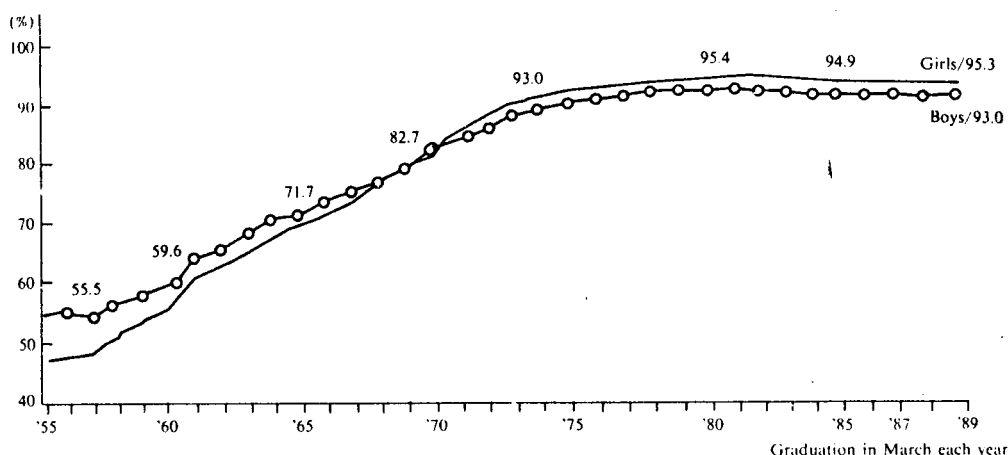
Fig. 6. School System



In 1950, 36.7 percent of all female graduates of lower secondary schools entered upper secondary schools, as compared with 48.0 percent of male graduates. The overall percentage of lower secondary school graduates entering upper secondary schools has advanced significantly in the years since, however, due largely to Japan's economic growth and expanded demand for education. Since 1969, in particular, the percentage of girls entering upper secondary schools has surpassed that of boys. In 1989, 95.3 percent of girls and 93.0 percent of boys advanced to this level.

In addition to the general program, upper secondary schools offer a variety of specialized programs concerned with such subjects as agriculture, industry, business, fishery, home economics, and nursing. The greatest number of both male and female students are enrolled in the general program. As for other vocational courses, the largest number of male students are enrolled in industry-oriented programs, while the percentage of female students enrolled in business-related programs stressing is growing. (Fig 7)

**Fig. 7. Trends of Percentage of Lower Secondary School Graduates Entering Upper Secondary Schools, Colleges of Technology & other Schools**



*Source: "Provisional Report on School Basic Survey 1989," Report on School Basic Survey 1989," Ministry of Education*

### Entering Upper Secondary Schools, Collage of Technology and Other Schools

Teachers at elementary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools are required to have a teaching certificate as a qualification. In 1989 the percentages of female teachers in elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools were 57.5 percent, 35.7 percent and 20.1 percent respectively, highest figures as ever. With respect to

elementary school teachers, the percentage of females has surpassed that of males consistently since 1983.

Under the educational system in pre-World War II Japan, opportunities for girls to receive a higher education were rather limited. A part of the post-war educational reform, however, equal opportunity for higher education was provided to girls. This has led, in conjunction with Japan's high economic growth, to a rapid increase in the number of girls who have received higher education at special training colleges, junior colleges, and universities.

In 1989 the percentage of female upper secondary school graduates matriculating in junior colleges and universities reached 36.8 percent, surpassing for the first time the percentage of male graduates at 35.8 percent. In terms of the percentages entering universities, however, males continued to surpass females by a large margin, 34.1 percent vs. 14.7 percent. These figures demonstrate a strong orientation toward junior colleges among female students. As for the numbers enrolled, there were 2,070,000 university students in total, with female students accounting for 550,000. Junior college students totalled 460,000, of which female students accounted for 420,000. (Table 6)

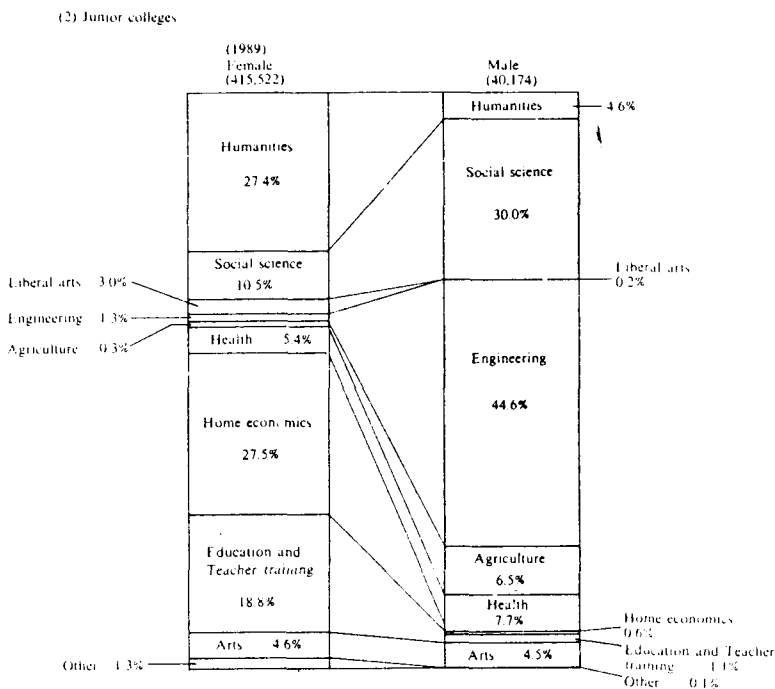
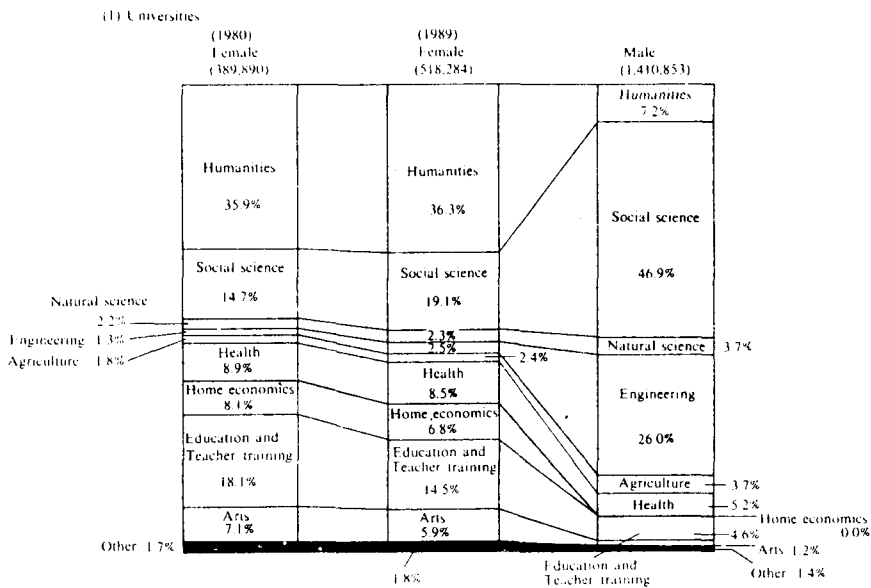
**Table 6. School Advancement Rate**

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1989
<b>Junior colleges</b>							
Male	1.2	1.7	2.0	2.6	2.0	2.0	1.7
Female	3.0	6.7	11.2	19.9	21.0	20.8	22.1
<b>Universities</b>							
Male	13.7	20.7	27.3	40.4	39.3	38.6	34.1
Female	2.5	4.6	6.5	12.5	12.3	13.7	14.7

Source: "Provisional Report on School Basic Survey 1989," Ministry of Education

A large number of female students major in humanities, social science, or education and teacher training at universities, whereas in junior colleges they major in home economics, humanities or education and teacher training. A large number of male students major in social science or engineering at both universities and junior colleges. However, in such fields as technology and merchantile marine studies, information management and chemistry, female enrollment has surged 107 times to 3,753 since the establishment 27 years ago of five-year colleges of technology that train advanced and highly skilled technicians. (Fig. 8)

**Fig. 8. Students of Universities and Junior Colleges by Field of Study**



Source: "Provisional Report on School Basic Survey 1989," Ministry of Education



The University of the Air was established in 1983 as a timely response to the age of lifelong learning. Effectively utilizing such media as television and radio, this educational facility is attracting students from a wider range of age and occupational groups than conventional universities and colleges.

Miscellaneous schools have conventionally played an important role in providing the knowledge and skills necessary for work and daily activities. The Special Training School System was established in 1976. After that, miscellaneous schools fulfilling specific requirement of either occupational training or practical education for daily life activities or individual intellectual improvement have been authorized as special training schools. The Japanese government is striving to further promote vocational and specialized technical education.

In 1989 the total number of students enrolled in special training schools reached 740,000 of which female students accounted for 390,000. A breakdown of the fields of study chosen by female students shows that para-medical fields represented 30.9 percent, followed by home economics courses with 19.9 percent and business-related courses with 16.5 percent. A large number of male students, on the other hand, enrolled in industry-oriented courses.

The total number of students enrolled in miscellaneous schools was 440,000, of which 220,000 were female.

## (2) *Social Education*

Women are expected to demonstrate their potentialities and abilities fully, and it is critically important to provide them with learning opportunities, meeting their diverse needs throughout every stage of their lives. Along with improvement of educational standards for women, change in their life cycles and increase of their free time, in particular, the role of social education is continuously expanding.

Opportunities for social education are provided by prefectural and municipal boards of education as well as by women's groups. These include women's classes specifically designed for women, parent education classes, and general adult education classes. They are held at women's education centers, public halls, libraries, museums, and other facilities. A great number of women are taking advantage of these opportunities.

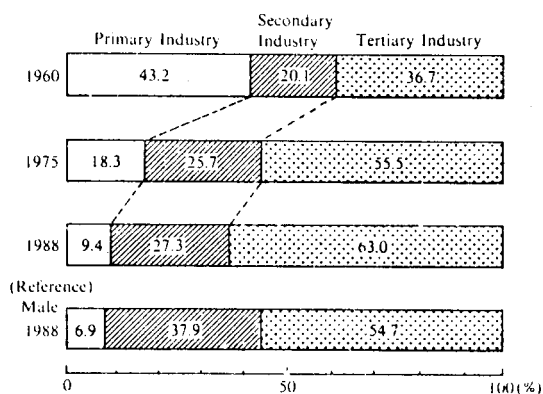
At the same time, a number of women's groups have initiated independent study activities. According to estimates by boards of education nationwide, there are currently 37,000 such groups with a total membership of 8,840,000.

As for the number of educational facilities for women in Japan, there are approximately 200 education centers, both public and private, in addition to the National Women's Education Centre. Activities at these centers include the training of leaders engaged in women's and parent education, personal exchange programs among women and their organizations, and dissemination of information on education.

#### 4. Employment

In response to changes in Japan's postwar economy, the employment structure has also changed significantly, as represented by a decline in the share of the labour force employed in primary industry and an expansion of the secondary and tertiary industries. This development gained full momentum during the period of rapid economic expansion that began in the late 1960s. Supported by a growing service-oriented economy, the internationalization of the Japanese economy, and advancement of technological innovation, moreover, Japanese women are finding a wider range of employment opportunities. (Fig. 9)

Fig. 9. Distribution of Female Workers by Industry



Source: "Population Census" and "Labour Force Survey," Management and Coordination Agency

##### (1) The Current Situation of Female Workers

The number of Japanese women in the labour force reached 24,730,000 in 1988, accounting for 40.1 percent of Japan's total labour force. Compared to 1975, these 1988 figures represent increases of 4,860,000 women in the labour force and 2.8 percentage points.

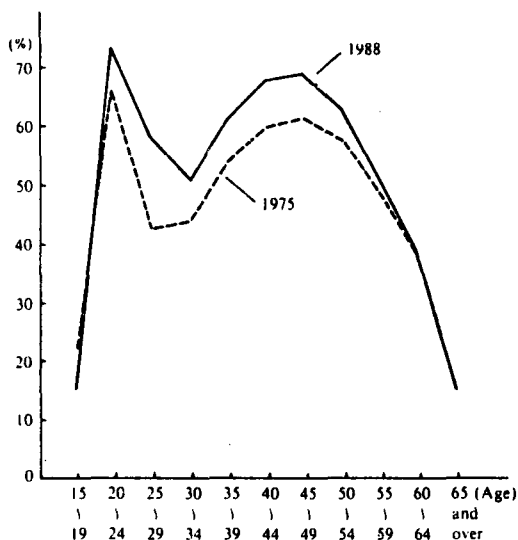
The female labour force participation ratio (ratio of the labour force to the population of people of 15 years of age and over) was 48.9 percent as of 1988. In terms of chronological change, it had declined until 1975, a situation reflecting a decline in the number of female workers engaged in agriculture. After bottoming out at 45.7 percent in 1975, however, the ratio turned upward and climbed to 49.0 percent in 1983. While it showed some signs of declining from 1984 to 1987, affected in part by the aging of the population, the ratio picked up its growth momentum again in 1988.

In 1988 there were 24,080,000 female workers and 640,000 female totally unem-

ployed, with an unemployment rate of 2.6 percent. From 1967 to 1988, the number of female workers increased by 4,550,000 after bottoming out at 19,530,000 in 1975.

A comparison of female labour force participation ratios by age group in 1988 showed a low figure for the 15-19 age group, a reflection of the high percentage of girls entering upper secondary schools. After climbing to a peak of 73.7 percent for the 20-24 age group and 50.9 percent for the 30-34 age group, then gradually increasing after the age of 35. This M-shaped curve clearly shows that a large number of women discontinued their participation in the labour force during the child care period, then returned to work afterwards. Taken as a whole, however, except for the 15-19 and 60-and-over categories, the age groups showed an increase in female labour force participation ratios. (Fig. 10)

**Fig. 10. Female Labour Force Participation Ratios by Age Group**



Source: "Labour Force Survey," Management and Coordination Agency.

In 1988 the 24,080,000 female workers included 16,700,000 (69.4 percent) employees, 2,840,000 (11.8 percent) self-employed women, and 4,480,000 (18.6 percent) unpaid family workers. The number of female employees had increased by 5,030,000 since 1975, when there were 11,670,000 (59.8 percent). While the number of self-employed women showed a slight increase of 30,000 during the same period, the number of unpaid family workers declined by 540,000. Thus, the percentage of female employees in the total female workers grew 9.6 percentage points between 1975 and 1988.

Broken down by industry, the number of female workers engaged in non-agricultural industries increased 5,630,000 from 1975 to 1988, while the number of female workers engaged in agricultural industry decreased 1,070,000 during the same period. As a result, the ratio of female workers in non-agricultural industries has reached 90 percent of the total female workers. Among non-agricultural industries, outstanding growth in the number of female workers has been observed in tertiary industries, including the service, wholesale and retail trade, and eating and drinking place. In 1988 these female workers represented 63.0 percent of the total female workers, an increase of 7.3 percent from 1975.

## *(2) The Current Situation of Female Employees*

Expect for temporary declines in 1974 and 1975 following the oil crises, the growth rate in the number of female employees has consistently surpassed that of their male counterparts. As mentioned above, the total number of female employees registered 16,700,000 in 1988, an increase of 5,030,000 from 1975. At the same time, female employees represented 36.8 percent of Japan's total employees, with an increase of 4.8 percentage points from 1975.

An industry breakdown reveals that the numbers of female employees increased in most industries between 1975 and 1988. Growth in the number of female employees has been especially significant in the service, wholesale, and retail trade, eating and drinking place. As for the types of occupations in which women were engaged in 1988, clerical work accounted for 5,560,000 (33.3 percent) and skilled and production process work for 3,550,000 (21.3 percent). Taken together, these two occupations represented over half the total female employees. They were followed by professional and technical work with 2,350,000 (14.1 percent), sales with 2,120,000 (12.7 percent), and protective and general services with 1,820,000 (10.9 percent).

A comparison with 1975 shows that the percentage of professional, technical, and sales employees had expanded by 1988. (Tables 7 & 8)

**Table 7. Female Employees by Industry**

(Unit : 10,000 persons)

Industries	1975		1988	
		%		%
Total	1,167	100.0	1,670	100.0
Agriculture and Forestry	8	0.7	11	0.7
Fishery	1	0.1	2	0.1
Mining	1	0.1	1	0.1
Construction	49	4.2	62	3.7
Manufacturing	361	30.9	440	26.3
Electricity, Gas, Heat and Water Supply	4	0.3	4	0.2
Transport and Communication	38	3.3	44	2.6
Wholesale and Retail Trade, and Eating and Drinking Place	290	24.9	453	27.1
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate Services	71	6.1	106	6.3
Government	31	2.7	33	2.0

Source: "Labour Force Survey," Management and Coordination Agency

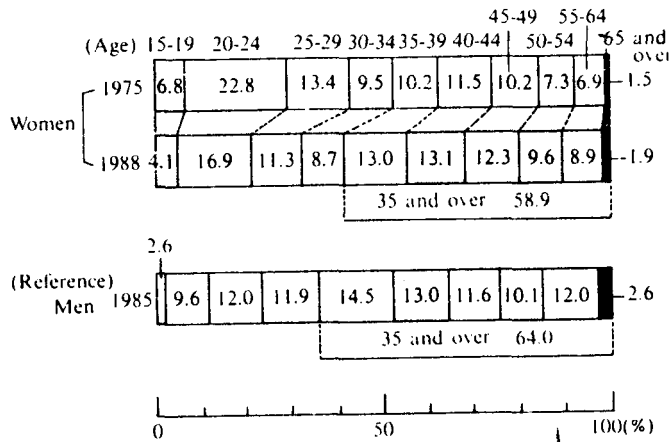
**Table 8. Female Employees by Occupation**

Occupation	1975				1988			
	Persons		%		Persons		%	
Total	1,167	100.0	1,670	100.0				
Professional and Technical	135	11.6	235	14.1				
Managerial	11	0.9	16	1.0				
Clerical	376	32.2	556	33.3				
Sales	129	11.1	212	12.7				
Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery	9	0.8	10	0.6				
Mining	0	0.0	0	0.0				
Transport and Communication	17	1.5	10	0.6				
Skilled and Production Process	287	24.6	355	21.3				
Manual Labour	43	3.7	91	5.4				
Protective and General Services	160	13.7	182	10.9				

Source: "Labour Force Survey," Management and Coordination Agency

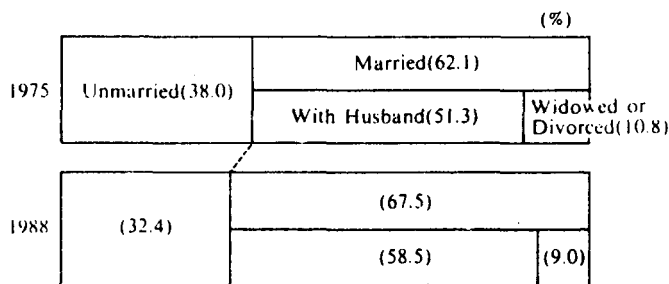
A breakdown of the 1988 female employees by age group reveals that the 20-24 age group had the largest share of female employees with 16.9 percent, followed by the 40-44 age group with 13.1 percent. The 24-and-younger age groups accounted for a share of 29.6 percent in 1975, but this had declined to 21.0 percent in 1988. On the other hand, the 35-and-older age groups expanded their share from 47.6 percent in 1975 to 58.9 percent in 1988. The average age of female employees was 35.5 years and the average length of employment was 7.1 years in 1988. Compared to 1975, the average age had risen and the average length of employment had increased. (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12)

**Fig. 11. Share of Age Groups in Female Employees**



Source: "Labour Force Survey," Management and Coordination Agency.

**Fig. 12. Marital Status of Female Employees**



Source: "Labour Force Survey," Management and Coordination Agency.

### (3) *Employment Conditions*

The average monthly wages for female employees amounted to Y207,979 in 1988. If we apply an index of 100 to the average monthly wages for female employees in 1975, the 1988 wage reached 182.

In 1988 average actual working hours per month of female employees were 161.1. These actual working hours have shown a tendency to decline in recent years. At the same time, the number of Japanese enterprises adopting a system of five working days per week has grown steadily. While such enterprises represented 43.4 percent of all enterprises in 1975, this percentage had increased to 50.3 percent in 1987 and 77.6 percent of employees enjoyed this system.

### (4) *Personnel Management*

Since the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986, improvements in personnel management have progressed at all levels, from recruitment to retirement, in Japanese enterprises.

#### a) *Recruitment*

Many enterprises have improved their personnel management systems to provide equal opportunities for female employees. An outstanding improvement has been seen in the recruitment of new graduates. In March 1986, prior to the enactment of the law, only 32.4 percent of enterprises did not specify sex in recruiting employees, whereas by March 1987, after the enactment of the law, this figure had climbed to 72.0 percent.

#### b) *Assignment and Promotion*

According to a survey on changes implemented by enterprises in their assignment of work to employees since the enactment of the law, more than half of the enterprises surveyed responded that it was unnecessary to change because they had already assigned female employees to all jobs. Among enterprises responding that they had made some changes, most cases involved assignment of responsibilities to female that had previously been assigned only to male employees.

#### c) *Vocational Training*

General improvements have been made in terms of equal treatment of the sexes with regard to a specific range of vocational training practices stipulated as illegal in the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. Notably, more than a half of enterprises surveyed responded that they had no need to introduce their new vocational training system because they already treated both sexes equally.

#### d) *Compulsory Retirement*

Progress had already been made toward achieving equality of the sexes concerning

the compulsory retirement prior to the enactment of the law. Nevertheless, the law has affected a considerable number of enterprises, which have changed their compulsory retirement to 60 for both sexes since its enactment.

*(5) Current Status for Part-time Employees*

Dramatic growth has been in the number of part-time employees in recent years, particularly among housewives. If, for convenience of calculation, short-time employees in non-agricultural and non-forestry industries with fewer than 35 working hours per week are considered as part-time employees, their number can be seen to have increased consistently over the past few years (excluding 1976). They totalled 5,330,000 including 3,860,000 female employees in 1988, 1.6 times as many as the total of previous 10 years. Moreover, this population of part-time employees accounted for 23.6 percent of the total female employees, excluding those engaged in agriculture and forestry. This growth in the part-time employees appears to have resulted from a well-matched supply and demand situation in the labour market. Employers have pointed out that demand for part-time employees has increased because they are sufficiently qualified for the types of work needed and because they provide cost advantages over full-time employees. From the supply side perspective, the number of housewives desiring part-time employment has grown because this form of employment provides better opportunities for them to work while fulfilling household responsibilities such as child care. (Table 9)

**Table 9. The Number of Short-time Employees in Non-Agricultural and Non-Forestry Industries** (Unit: 10,000 persons)

Year	TOTAL			FEMALE			% of female in total short-time employees
	No. of Employees	No. of Short-time Employees	% of Short-time Employees in total	No. of Employees	No. of Short-time Employees	% of Short-time Employees in total	
1970	3,222	216	6.7	1,068	130	12.2	60.2
1975	3,556	353	9.9	1,137	198	17.4	56.1
1980	3,886	390	10.0	1,323	256	19.3	65.6
1985	4,231	471	11.1	1,516	333	22.0	70.7
1986	4,296	503	11.7	1,550	352	22.7	70.0
1987	4,345	506	11.6	1,531	365	23.1	72.1
1988	4,454	533	12.0	1,635	386	23.6	72.4

Source: "Labour Force Survey," Management and Coordination Agency

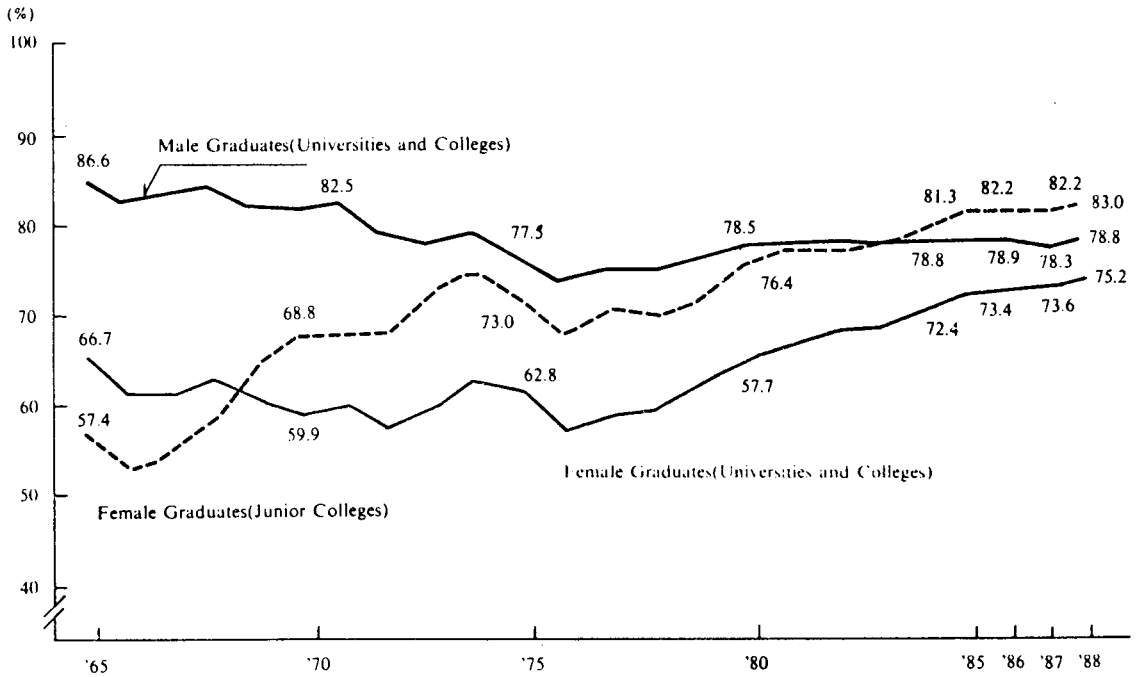
- Notes: 1 The term "short-time employees" refers to those who work fewer than 35 hours a week (those working on a seasonal and irregular basis are included).  
 2. Employees not at work are excluded.



(6) *The Current Employment Situation for New Graduates*

Employment statistics for new graduates from institutions of higher education in 1988 show that 83.0 percent of women graduating from junior colleges and 75.2 percent of those graduating from four-year universities and colleges found employment. With a growing percentage of students entering upper secondary schools and institutions of higher education, employment of new graduates from lower and upper secondary schools is declining, while that of new graduates from institutions of higher education is increasing. The rate of growth for women graduating from four-year universities and colleges is rising especially sharply, and is approaching the employment rate for their male counterparts. (Fig. 13)

**Fig. 13 Rates of Employment for New Graduates  
(Universities, Colleges and Junior Colleges)**



Source: "Provisional Report on School Basic Survey 1989," Ministry of Education.

### *(7) Structural Changes in the Female Employees Profile*

Against the background of growth in the number of female employees, the following structural changes can be observed from a long-term perspective.

#### a) Growing Number of Middle-aged Female Employees

A breakdown of the female employees by age group shows a steady decline in the share occupied by the younger age groups comprising women 24 years old or younger, while that occupied by the older age groups made up of women 35 years of age or older has grown. In a pattern reflecting the reduced child care responsibilities of the latter groups, their share expanded from 47.6 percent in 1975 to 58.9 percent in 1988.

#### b) The Growing Number of Female Employees with Husbands in Non-Agricultural and Non-Forestry Industries

Accompanying the growth in the number of middle-aged female employees, the share occupied by women with husbands has also grown steadily, charting a 7.2 points increase from 51.3 percent in 1975 to 58.5 percent in 1988.

#### c) The Higher Educational Background of Female Employees

With a growing number of female students entering upper secondary schools and institutions of higher education, the number of female employees with more advanced educational backgrounds has begun to increase. Considered in terms of educational background, those with only a compulsory education accounted for 24.4 percent in 1987 as compared to 38.3 percent in 1977; those with an upper secondary education accounted for 53.6 percent (48.5 percent in 1977); and those with a higher education accounted for 22.0 percent (13.1 percent in 1977).

### *(8) Female Workers in Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery*

After World War II, the Japanese government implemented a variety of reforms, including agrarian reform, reorganization of agricultural bodies, and establishment of Agricultural Cooperative Associations. With a view to increasing landed farmers, these measures have contributed significantly to the democratization and modernization of agricultural, forestry, and fishing communities. Home Living Improvement Extension Service is also being carried out to disseminate useful and practical technique and knowledge related to agriculture and farm life. These have improved the welfare of Japan's farming communities and the status of women, who play an important role in the labour force concerned with agricultural production.

In addition, a number of measures have been taken on the basis of the Agricultural Basic Law enacted in 1961 to improve transportation, sanitation, and lifestyles in farming communities as well as to enhance the welfare and productivity of female workers engaged in agriculture. A need remains, however, to further strengthen those measures

that are specifically designed to improve the welfare of female farmers.

In 1988 there were 4,240,000 farm households in Japan. The steady decline in the number of these households has been accompanied by a similar reduction in the farm households population. There were 23,200,000 persons in farm household population in 1975, but this number had declined to 19,240,000 by 1988. The percentage of these people among Japan's total population fell from 21 percent in 1975 to 16 percent in 1988. Furthermore, of the 6,090,000 people mainly engaged in their own farming in 1988, only 3,350,000 were core persons mainly engaged in their own farming. As a result of the steady decline in the number of farm households and population, mainly engaged in their own farming, women in farming communities have become an important agricultural labour force. The ratios of female population to population mainly engaged in their own farming and core persons mainly engaged in their own farming were 60.3 percent and 50.5 percent, respectively, in 1988. A breakdown by age reveals a higher ratio among women of 60 years of age and over, suggesting a clear trend toward the aging of the farming population. In conjunction with this aging trend, women have come to account for almost 70 percent of those mainly engaged in their own farming in the age groups comprising farmers in their 30s to 50s. Female workers also represent from 50 percent to 60 percent of core persons mainly engaged in their own farming. Along with this growing dependence on the agricultural labour force, women continue to have important roles to fulfill at home as well, including child care. In this regard, it is becoming important to promote an appropriate division of labour in farming households through such measures as a rationalization of labour for women and sharing of household responsibilities by men. (Tables 10 and 11)

**Table 10. The Number of Farm Households, Farm Household Population and Number of Core Persons Mainly Engaged in Their Own Farming (Unit: 10,000 households, 10,000 persons, percent)**

	1975	1980	1985	1987	1988
<b>Farm Households</b>					
Total	495(100.0)	466(100.0)	438(100.0)	428(100.0)	424(100.0)
Full-Time	61(12.4)	62(13.4)	63(14.3)	63(14.7)	61(14.4)
Part-Time	434(87.6)	404(86.6)	375(85.7)	365(85.3)	363(85.6)
<b>Farm Household Population</b>					
Total	2,320(100.0)	2,137(100.0)	1,984(100.0)	1,948(100.0)	1,924(100.0)
Female	1,196(51.6)	1,097(51.3)	1,018(51.3)	999(51.3)	988(51.4)
Male	1,124(48.4)	1,040(48.7)	966(48.7)	949(48.7)	936(48.6)
<b>Population Mainly Engaged in Their Own Farming</b>					
Total	791(100.0)	697(100.0)	636(100.0)	617(100.0)	609(100.0)
Female	493(62.4)	430(61.7)	388(61.0)	372(60.2)	367(60.3)
Male	298(37.6)	267(38.3)	248(39.0)	245(39.8)	242(39.7)
<b>Core Persons Mainly engaged in Their Own Farming</b>					
Total	489(100.0)	413(100.0)	370(100.0)	349(100.0)	335(100.0)
Female	259(53.0)	209(50.7)	183(49.4)	178(50.9)	169(50.4)
Male	230(47.0)	204(49.3)	187(50.6)	171(49.1)	166(49.6)

*Source: "Census of Agriculture and Forestry, 1975, 1980 and 1985," Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries*

*"Annual Sample Survey of Agriculture, 1987 and 1988," Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.*

**Notes:** 1. The term "population mainly engaged in their own farming" refers to household members of 16 years of age and over who are engaged in their own farming as well as to those who are mainly engaged in their own farming besides other jobs.

2. The term "core persons mainly engaged in their own farming" refers to people whose regular work is farming geared primarily to independent farming activities.

**Table 11. The Agricultural Labour Force by Age (January 1988)**

(Unit: 1,000 persons, percent)

Household Members		Total	16~29	30~39	40~49	50~59	60 and over	65 and over
Total (Female and Male)	Engaged in their Farming	11,242	1,011	1,955	1,874	2,808	3,593	2,192
	Population Mainly Engaged in Their Own Farming	6,086	315	597	658	1,496	3,020	1,975
	Core Persons Mainly Engaged in Their Own Farming	3,355	108	376	510	1,063	1,297	629
Percentage of Female	Engaged in their Farming	47.7	31.9	43.1	50.2	51.4	50.6	50.0
	Population Mainly Engaged in Their Own Farming	60.3	49.2	68.3	69.0	66.2	54.9	52.6
	Core Persons Mainly Engaged in Their Own Farming	50.5	32.4	52.4	61.8	56.8	41.8	40.9

Source: "Annual Sample Survey of Agriculture," Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries.

Note: The term "Household Members Engaged in Their Own Farming" refers to those members of farming households of 16 years of age and over who work for a day or more per year in their own farming.

## 5. Elderly People

In 1987 Japan's total population was 122,260,000. While persons aged 65 and over accounted for 7.9 percent of the total population in 1975, this ratio had increased to 10.9 percent, or 13,320,000 people, 1987. Projected increases in both the absolute number and percentage of people in this age group in the future give a clear indication that the aging of the Japanese population is progressing. More specifically, projections suggest that the ratio of the elderly population (people aged 65 and over) to Japan's total population will reach 16.3 percent in the year 2000 and 23.6 percent in 2020. Based on these projections, Japan is expected to become one of a few nations in the world with a high ratio of elderly people. (Table 12)

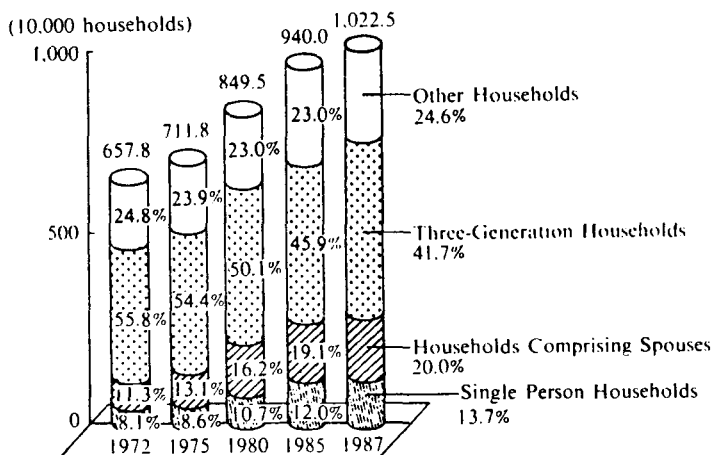
**Table 12. Past Trends and Future Projections for the Elderly Population**

	Total Population (1,000 persons)	Population Aged 60 and Over		Population Aged 65 and Over	
		Absolute Number (1,000 persons)	Percentage of Total Population (%)	Absolute Number (1,000 persons)	Percentage of Total Population (%)
1935	69,254	5,156	7.4	3,225	4.7
1950	84,115	6,485	7.7	4,155	4.9
1960	94,302	8,351	8.9	5,398	5.7
1970	104,665	11,145	10.6	7,393	7.1
1975	111,940	13,149	11.7	8,865	7.9
1980	117,060	15,113	12.9	10,647	9.1
1985	121,049	17,874	14.8	12,468	10.3
1987	122,264	19,359	15.8	13,322	10.9
1990	124,225	21,559	17.4	14,819	11.9
2000	131,192	28,975	22.1	21,338	16.3
2010	135,823	36,977	27.2	27,338	16.3
2020	135,304	39,043	28.9	31,880	23.6
2035	133,133	40,088	30.1	30,941	23.2
2065	126,215	36,145	28.6	28,199	22.3
2085	124,066	34,317	27.7	27,316	22.0

Source: 1935-1985--"Population Census," Management and Coordination Agency  
 1987--"Estimated Population," Management and Coordination Agency  
 1990-2085--"Population Projections for Japan (1985-2085)," Ministry of Health and Welfare.

The number of households with one or more members aged 65 and over is increasing as Japan's population ages. In 1988 the number of such households reached 10,225,000, representing 26.2 percent of all households (in 1975 the figures stood at 7,120,000 and 21.7 percent, respectively). As concerns family members, three-generation households accounted for 41.7 percent of all households with elderly members. However, this percentage has been gradually decreasing. On the other hand, the absolute number and percentage of households consisting of only elderly couples have been increasing. Furthermore, households comprising only one elderly person totalled 1,405,000 in 1988. Of these, households consisting of one elderly women accounted for about 80 percent. (Fig. 14)

**Fig. 14 Trends of Types of Households Including Members Aged 65 and Over**



Source: "Basic Survey on Health and Welfare Administration," 1972-1985, Ministry of Health and Welfare; and "The Comprehensive Survey of the People on Health and Welfare 1988 Living Condition" Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Note: "Other households" consist of households with spouses and their unmarried child(ren), those with a single parent and his/her unmarried child(ren) and others.

As for the economic conditions of households that include at least one person aged 65 and over, 96.3 percent received public pensions. Among those with two spouses aged 65 and over, 88.1 percent received pensions. Furthermore, about 50 percent of the households with elderly members depended on pensions for over 80 percent of their total income in 1988. This demonstrates that pensions have become an important means of financial support for retired people.

The following health problems are developing as the population ages: 1) Chronic diseases, especially diseases of the circulatory system, are becoming more common; 2) instances of one person suffering from a multitude of sicknesses (e.g. hypertension and heart diseases are increasing); and 3) more cases of functional disorders coupled with physiological aging are occurring.

Statistics for 1975 show that 193.8 out of every 1,000 women aged 70 and over were receiving medical treatment. That was 2.6 times higher than the average of 75.0 for all age groups. By 1987 this ratio had increased to 205.3 for every 1,000 in this age group, a figure 2.9 times higher than the average of 71.5 for all age groups. In addition to this increase in cases of chronic diseases related to physiological aging has become greater.

Moreover, recovery from sickness for the elderly requires considerable time, and recovery is often incomplete, causing them to become bedridden. The number of bedridden senior citizens is currently estimated at 600,000, and the number of elderly persons suffering from dementia (on an out-patients basis) at 590,000. Larger number of elderly people can be expected to require related care as the aging of Japanese society continues. Projections suggest that the numbers of bedridden elderly people and those suffering from dementia will reach 1,000,000 and 1,120,000, respectively, by the year 2000. Of the bedridden elderly people, 93.3 percent are currently taken care of by family members in the same household. Specifically, 31.8 percent of such care is provided by daughters-in-law, followed by 24.5 percent by wives and 18.4 percent by daughters-figures indicating that women take on a heavy share of the burden.

## **6. Participation in Public Activities**

Japan's Constitution and laws guarantee both sexes equality applicable to elections for all public offices, whether for Diet members, local assembly members, or mayors or governors of municipal governments.

Since 1975 five elections have been held for the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors respectively. Female voting ratio has consistently exceeded that of their male counterparts in all these elections.

Female Diet members totalled seven in the House of Representatives and 33 in the House of Councillors in 1989. A comparison with the figures of 1975 shows no change in the number of the former, but it reveals a substantial increase in female members of the House of Councillors, which had 18 female members in 1975. Of particular note, a total of 22 women ran successfully in the 15th general election of the House of Councillors held in July 1989. With these successful candidates joining the 11 female members whose seats were not involved in the election, the total number of female members increased to 33, giving women a 13.1 percent share of the membership of the House of Councillors.

Women's participation in politics has gained more momentum in recent years. In 1986, Japan's largest opposition party elected a woman to the position of chairperson. The Cabinet formed in 1989 brought the appointment of women to two posts, including that of Chief Cabinet Secretary.

A total of four nationwide local elections have been held since 1975. As in the Diet elections, female voting ratio has surpassed that of men. The number of female members of local assemblies rose to 1,447 in 1987 from 681 in 1975, with an increase that was especially significant in local assemblies in 1987. The percentage of female representation in all local assemblies advanced from 0.9 percent in 1975 to 2.2 percent in 1987. Among these, the most outstanding growth in female representation in terms of both



absolute numbers and percentages has been accomplished in city assemblies, as is apparent from the change from 360 persons, or 1.8 percent, in 1975 to 768, or 4.0 percent, in 1987 (Tables 13 and 14).

**Table 13. Number of Eligible Voters, Actual Voters and Voting Ratio of Elections for the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors**

(Unit: 1,000 persons)

Election Dates	Eligible Voters		Actual Voters		Voting Ratio(%)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>House of Representatives</b>						
Dec. 1976	40,203	37,724	29,769	27,468	74.0	72.8
Oct. 1979	41,368	38,802	28,363	21,159	68.6	67.4
June 1980	41,754	39,171	31,465	28,878	75.4	73.7
Dec. 1983	43,448	40,804	29,674	27,567	68.3	67.6
July 1986	44,585	41,842	32,331	29,377	72.5	70.2
<b>House of Councillors</b>						
July 1977	40,410	37,911	27,987	25,648	69.3	67.7
June 1980	41,754	39,171	31,441	28,858	75.3	73.7
June 1983	43,162	40,520	24,647	23,050	57.1	56.9
July 1986	44,585	41,842	32,296	29,347	72.4	70.1
July 1989	46,334	43,557	30,405	28,029	65.6	64.4

*Source: "Survey on Elections for the House of Representatives, National Review of Supreme Court Judges and Survey on Elections for the House of Councillors," Ministry of Home Affairs.*

**Note:** Figures for the House of Councillors for 1977 and 1980 represent votes cast by the national constituency only. Those for 1983 and 1986 represent votes cast in proportional representation system.

**Table 14. Number of Female Diet Members**

Dates	Diet Members			Members of the House of Representatives			Members of the House of Councillors		
	Total Persons	Female Persons	%	Total Persons	Female Persons	%	Total Persons	Female Persons	%
Oct. 1975	726	25	3.4	475	7	1.5	251	18	7.2
July 1980	762	26	3.4	511	9	1.8	251	17	6.8
Jan. 1986	750	27	3.6	502	8	1.6	248	19	7.7
Mar. 1987	760	29	3.8	509	7	1.4	251	22	8.8
Mar. 1988	757	29	3.8	506	7	1.4	251	22	8.8
July 1989	749	40	5.3	497	7	1.4	252	33	13.1

*Source: Secretariats of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors.*

*Other Books in these Country Study Series . . .*

- |                                                                                          |                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Afghanistan                                                                           | Fahima Azizy             |
| 2. Bangladesh                                                                            | Fatema Kabir             |
| 3. Fiji                                                                                  | M. Vuluvano              |
| 4. India                                                                                 | Gurveen Rikhy            |
| 5. Indonesia                                                                             | Jutta Berninghausen      |
| 6. Iran                                                                                  | Maryam K. Saleh          |
| 7. Japan                                                                                 | Akiko Yamauchi           |
| 8. Korea, DPR                                                                            | Gang Jung OK             |
| 9. Malaysia                                                                              | Rahaiah bte Baهران       |
| 10. Pakistan                                                                             | Shahnaz Kazi             |
| 11. Philippines                                                                          | Teresita P. Jamias       |
| 12. Sri Lanka                                                                            | Chandra Rupasinghe       |
| 13. Thailand                                                                             | Pailin Supakitvilekagarn |
| <i>and</i>                                                                               |                          |
| 14. Overview of Gender Integration in Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific by W.U.Herath |                          |

ICA Library



ICA 00488