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# THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN JAPAN

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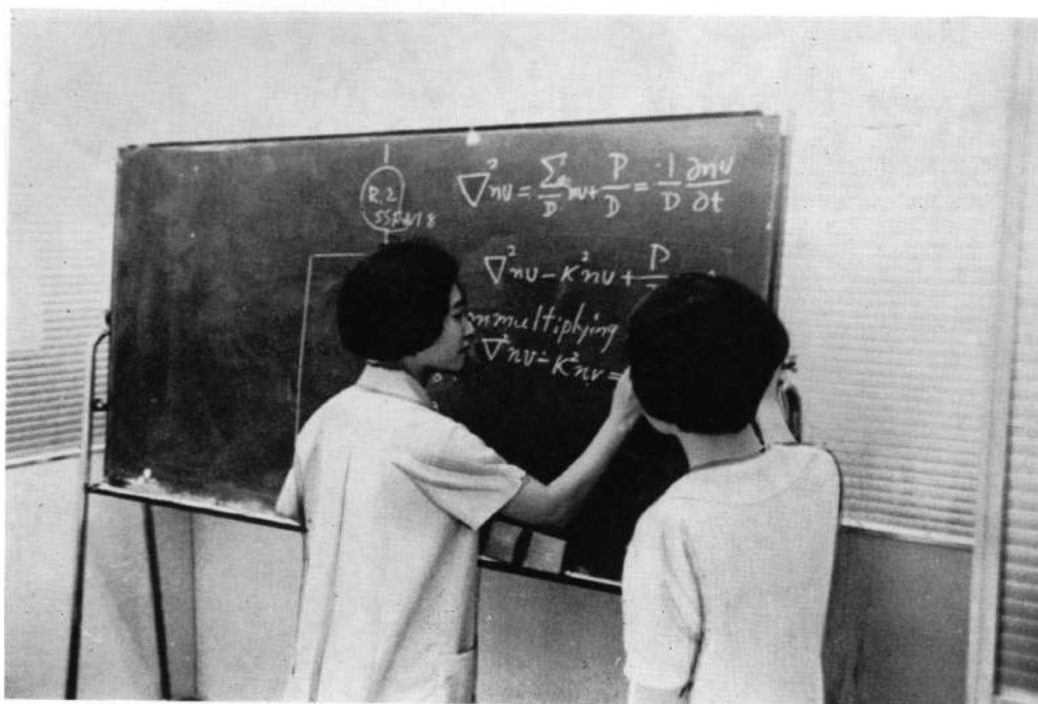


WOMEN'S AND MINORS' BUREAU  
MINISTRY OF LABOR  
JAPAN  
1968





Key-punchers



Programming of electronic computer



A woman worker in  
a spinning factory



Factory girls playing  
volley-ball after work



Community welfare center for women



Flower arrangement course and nursing room in the center



**Farm women picking the products in a green-house**



**Leaders of women's organizations making appeal to the Director General of Economic Planning Agency for stabilization of the commodity prices.**





Opening Ceremony of the National Women's Conference, held during the Women's Week in 1967





## PREFACE

The Women's and Minors' Bureau in the Ministry of Labor of the Japanese Government herewith presents the "Status of Women in Japan, 1968".

This is a report on the status and activities of Japanese women who are playing ever greater role in the rapidly changing society—in the home, in the community and on the job.

It is hoped that this report will be of some use to those who are interested in the around-the-world progress of women as citizens.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the years after the World War II the Japanese society experienced drastic changes in many fields and one of these changes was the freedom attained by women.

In prewar days women's position was kept decisively lower than men's both in family life and in society. But the war years more or less undermined the old order and paved the way for the emancipation of women. The shortage of manpower during the period made it imperative for women to take over the jobs hitherto performed by men and they carried out the task quite adequately, proving that there should be no discrimination in whatever form on grounds of sex.

After the war the emancipation of women has been taken up as a national responsibility. The Constitution of Japan promulgated on November 3, 1946 says in Article 14:

"All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin."

Accordingly various legislative measures were enacted to place women legally on the same level as men, and several governmental bodies were established for the improvement of the actual status of women, including Women's and Minors' Bureau in the Ministry of Labor. Realizing the national expectation thus evinced, women have endeavored on their part, to improve their life and contribute to the national good through individual or organized efforts. In fact with many-sided abilities disclosed they have done a good deal in these years.

Furthermore, under the influence of the rapid growth of the nation's economy, women's life is now going through far-reaching changes, which would lead to the further improvement of their status.

On the other hand, however, there are not a few unsettled problems left for women. It is impossible to remove overnight the age-old social customs and prejudices, and we have had yet only a short time for women to get over them and for men to admit women fully into the fields where they monopolized the privileges. The manifold problems confronting women will be solved only step by step, and to this end women of Japan are making ever persistent efforts.

## I. WOMEN AND POLITICS

### Elections

The Election Law was revised in December 1945, and one of the major objectives of the action was the establishment of equal rights of men and women in the political field. Accordingly the right to vote in national election was first granted to women of 20 years of age and above, thus realizing the aim of the woman suffrage movement continued for the past seventy years. The women of Japan exercised their newly acquired right to vote for the first time on April 10, 1946, in the general election for the House of Representatives.

Since the first election of 1946, women have taken part in 10 elections for the House of Representatives and 8 for the House of Councillors (the Upper House) of the Japanese Diet. In all these elections, the percentage

**Table 1. Eligible voters, votes cast and voting rates by sex and the number of successful women candidates  
(General Elections of House of Representatives)**

Election	Eligible Voters (millions)		Votes Cast (millions)		Voting Rates (%)		Women Elected (1)
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
22nd General Election (Apr. 10, 1946)	16	21	13	14	78.5	67.0	39
23rd " (Apr. 25, 1947)	20	21	15	13	74.9	61.6	15
24th " (Jan. 23, 1949)	20	22	16	15	80.7	67.9	12
25th " (Oct. 1, 1952)	22	24	18	18	80.5	72.8	12
26th " (Apr. 19, 1953)	22	25	18	17	78.4	70.4	9
27th " (Feb. 27, 1955)	24	26	19	19	78.0	72.1	8
28th " (May 22, 1958)	25	27	20	20	79.8	74.4	11
29th " (Nov. 20, 1960)	26	28	20	20	76.0	71.2	7
30th " (Nov. 21, 1963)	28	30	20	21	72.4	70.0	7
31st " (Jan. 29, 1967)	30	33	23	24	74.8	73.3	7

Source: Election Division, Local Autonomy Agency

Note: (1) 466 seats in total, up to 26th General Election

467 in total, up to 30th

486 in total, for 31st

**(General Elections of House of Councillors)**

Election	Eligible Voters (millions)		Votes Cast (millions)		Voting Rates (%)		Women Elected (1)
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1st General Election (Apr. 20, 1947)	20	21	13	12	68.4	54.0	11
2nd (Jan. 4, 1950)	21	23	16	12	78.2	66.7	12
3rd (Apr. 24, 1953)	22	25	15	14	67.8	58.9	19
4th (July 8, 1956)	24	26	16	15	66.9	57.7	15
5th (Jan. 2, 1959)	26	28	16	15	62.6	55.2	13
6th (July 1, 1962)	27	29	19	19	70.1	66.5	17
7th (June 4, 1965)	28	31	19	21	68.0	66.1	17
8th (July 7, 1968)	32	34	22	24	68.9	67.0	13

Source : Election Division, Local Autonomy Agency

Note : (1) 250 seats in total

of women voters at the polls have been approximately 60-70 percent of the total number of eligible women voters. Though these percentages have been lower than those of men voters, the difference has been narrowing with each election. Thus in the last national election of July 1968 the voting rate of women exceeded, for the first time, that of men's. Furthermore in local elections very little gap can be seen between the voting rates of men and women, and in recent elections the voting rates of women were even higher than those of men. Generally speaking voting rate seems to rise as the electoral area is further removed from the center.

The number of eligible voters, both men and women, has been increasing steadily with the swell in the population, but in each of the years, the number of eligible women voters has been about 10 percent more than that of men, and for this reason, despite their lower voting rates, the number of votes cast by women exceeded that of men voters in recent elections.

### **Women in Public Office**

The discrimination between the sexes regarding the right to hold public office was completely eliminated after the war and, the revised Election Law for Public Offices granted women of 25\* years of age and above the right to be elected in all elections.

\* for a member of the House of Councillors and a headman of the prefecture, the eligible age to be elected is full 30 years of age and over.



Women have been occupying 20 or more seats in the National Diet all through these years since 1946. In the local autonomous bodies they are also active as members of local assemblies, though the proportion of the seats they occupy are smaller than in the National Diet.

Furthermore women have entered various appointive or commissioned public offices. For instance, in 1967, 5,479 women were Mediation Commissioners of Family Courts, representing some 30 percent of the total membership, and 33,829 women were Public and Child Welfare Commissioners (28 percent). Also a considerable number of women have been appointed or commissioned to be Civil Liberties Commissioners (1,016 women—11 percent of the total), Social Education Commissioners (107 women—13 percent), Youth Problems Councillors (133 women—9 percent) and the Members of the Board of Education (28 women—12 percent).

Two women have been seated in the Cabinet: one served as the Health and Welfare Minister (from July to December, 1960) and the other as the Director General of Science and Technology Agency (from July 1962 to July 1963). Several women have been appointed parliamentary viceministers.

**Table 2. Number of Assembly Members of Local Public Bodies**

Year	Prefectural assemblies		Municipal assemblies		Town or village assemblies	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1955	2,430	32	21,240	158	114,015	445
1960	2,607	36	17,724	190	63,699	275
1965	2,565	41	17,732	198	56,712	311
1966	2,536	40	17,867	201	55,634	326
1967	2,688	38	18,259	221	53,850	303

## II. WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Under the prewar educational system, although there was no discrimination in the compulsory education, co-education was seldom seen in the higher levels, and women were not admitted to the public universities except for a very limited cases, though some private schools accepted women in certain departments.

In 1947 the new educational system was initiated based on the Basic Law of Education incorporating the principles of co-education and equal opportunities of education for both sexes. Under this new system, compulsory education was extended from six to nine years; six years for elementary school and three years for junior high school, and every child, without discrimination as to sex, was made entitled to advance into a senior high school of three years and then a college or university of four years according to his or her ability.

### **Compulsory Education**

Compulsory education is provided free in publicly maintained school. Only a small minority of children attended independent schools. In general, both sexes are taught the same subjects to the same standards, although there is some modification on the practical side to suit differences in interests and requirements.

Since the school education system was started in 1872, the Japanese people have been quite eager to give schooling to their children, both boys and girls. Already in 1904, the percentage of school attendance of girls in primary schools was over 90 percent of the population of the primary school age. Today under the nine-year compulsory education system, the school attendance of both sexes is virtually 100 percent.

### **Secondary Education**

The compulsory education is followed by the senior high school. The number of senior high school students has been increasing year after year. In 1967 it was approximately twice as much as that in 1955.

Of 953,000 girls who completed their compulsory education in March 1967, 71 percent advanced to the regular senior high schools, 3 percent entered night classes and 20 percent found employment. Comparable figures for 1955 were 46 percent, 2 percent, and 39 percent respectively.

The ratio of boys and girls in senior high schools all through the country was, in May 1967, 52 percent for boys and 48 percent for girls.

**Table 3 Percentage of boys and girls entering senior high schools**

Year	Total	Boys	Girls
1950	42.5	48.0	36.7
1955	51.5	55.5	47.4
1960	57.7	59.6	55.9
1965	70.6	71.6	69.6
1966	72.3	73.5	71.2
1967	74.5	75.3	73.7

Note: Include those attending night classes while employed.

Source: "Report on School Statistics" Ministry of Education.

### Higher Education

Since the initiation of the new educational system, the number of women in institutions of higher education has shown a surprising increase every year. As of May 1967, total enrollments of women were about 394,000, a 15-fold increase as compared with the 1950 figure of 26,000. In 1967, one in every ten women of the age group 18-21 year olds was in the higher education, while there were three students out of ten boys of the same age group.

**Table 4. Percentage of senior high school graduates entering higher education**

Year	Total	Male	Female
1950	30.3	34.6	17.2
1955	18.4	20.9	14.9
1960	17.2	19.7	14.2
1965	25.4	30.1	20.4
1966	24.5	28.2	20.6
1967	23.7	26.1	21.1

Note: Included those attending night classes while employed.

Source: "Report on School Statistics" Ministry of Education.

**Table 5. Enrollment in 4-year institutions of higher education**

	Number of Institutions	Number of Students	Rate of Women Students
1955	228	523,355	12.4
1960	245	626,421	13.7
1965	317	937,556	16.2
1966	346	1,044,296	17.0
1967	369	1,160,425	17.5

Source: "Report on School Statistics" Ministry of Education.

A majority of women students were enrolled in private institutions of higher education, especially in the separate schools for girls only.

As regards their cullicula, by far the largest number of women major in the literary courses, followed by the home economics and nursing; in these two together are approximately two-thirds of all women students. Besides, there are relatively large number of women students in the teachers' training courses, and the medicine, dentistry and pharmacy courses. Compared with men students, there are fewer women majoring in such subjects as engineering, law, politics and economics, though more and more women students tend to choose these subjects for their future career.

**Table 6. Number of students by department and sex (1967)**

	Total	Male	Female
Literature	233,886 (100.0%)	95,031 (40.6%)	138,855 (59.4%)
Law, Politics, Economics & Industrial Management	469,468 ( " )	449,339 (95.7 )	20,129 ( 4.3 )
Science	34,538 ( " )	29,051 (84.1 )	5,487 (15.9 )
Engineering	240,065 ( " )	238,282 (99.3 )	1,783 ( 0.7 )
Agriculture	45,031 ( " )	42,757 (95.0 )	2,274 ( 5.0 )
Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy	41,540 ( " )	26,314 (63.3 )	15,226 (36.7 )
Home Economic, Nursing	111,974 ( " )	436 ( 0.8 )	111,025 (99.2 )
Teachers Training	90,249 ( " )	29,658 (32.9 )	60,591 (67.1 )
Others	69,427 ( " )	41,029 (59.1 )	28,398 (40.9 )
Total	1,335,665 ( " )	951,897 (71.3 )	383,768 (28.7 )

Source: "Report on School Statistics" Ministry of education.

After graduation most of these women take up their career though sometimes with considerable difficulties in finding employment suitable to their qualifications and abilities. Out of all women who completed their higher education in March 1966 some 60 percent found employment by the time of their graduation, while the comparable figure for men was 82 percent. Those women who continued their studies at a still higher level were 3 percent of all the graduates.

### **Adult Education**

In addition to school education, the new educational system emphasizes adult education for men and women. Under the Social Education Law special programs such as summer courses in universities, mother's classes, exhibitions and various types of gatherings are organized for women in general and particularly for house-wives by national and local government.

Besides, many governmental organs and related bodies conduct under their jurisdiction various educational activities for women; especially the Women's and Minors' Bureau of the Labor Ministry carries out a number of campaigns

and other activities in its programs for the promotion of the status of women and the highlight is the Women's Week.

Also women's organizations are active in this field, and in addition, all media of mass communication, such as newspapers and magazines and in particular radio and television, are keenly engaged in their respective programs of such activities.

### III. WOMEN WORKERS

The rapid expansion of economy and progress of industrialization in post-war Japan had a great impact on the economic activities of women. The number of women workers has radically increased, and the range of their occupations has been extended. The most marked features of the employment of women in recent years are the rise in the labor force participation of mature and married women and the change in their work patterns. Though the number of part-time workers is not definitely known, it is no doubt increasing.

#### **Women in the Labor Force**

The number of women in the labor force reached 20 million in 1967. This figure represented 40 percent of the country's entire labor force and 52 percent of the female population of 15 years of age and over.

Though the number of women in the labor force has been on the constant increase with the swell in the population, the recent tendency has been towards the decrease in the labor force participation rate of women. This phenomenon is most evident in the age group of 15 to 19 years. One of the major reasons of this trend is to be ascribed to the fact that more and more girls are seeking higher level of education, as is shown in the Section II (Women and Education).

Women in the labor force are divided roughly into three categories; paid employees, family workers and self-employed. The biggest portion was occupied by the paid employees representing 52 percent in 1967, followed by 34 percent for family workers and 15 percent for self-employed. 62 percent of family workers belong to agriculture and forestry. It was not many years ago that the family workers outnumbered paid employees, and occupied the largest portion of

**Table 7. Women in Labor Force 1962-1966 (Women 15 years of age and over)**

(Unit: 1,000 persons)

	Population	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation rate	As percent of total labor force
1962 average	34,880	18,610	53.4%	40.3%
1963 "	35,810	18,620	52.0	40.0
1964 "	36,750	18,780	51.1	39.9
1965 "	37,580	19,030	50.6	39.8
1966 "	38,310	19,490	50.9	39.8

Source: "Labor Force Survey" Statistics Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister.

**Table 8. Employed Women**

(Unit: 1,000 persons)

	Number	As percent of total employed
Total	20,040	40.1%
Agriculture and forestry	5,220	54.0
Non-agricultural industries	14,820	36.8
Fishery, aquatic culture	160	26.2
Mining	30	9.4
Construction	510	14.0
Manufacturing	4,980	38.5
Wholesale, retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate	4,960	45.3
Transportation, communication, electricity, gas, water	400	11.9
Services	3,510	51.6
Government	260	16.1

Source: "Labor Force Survey" Statistics Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister.

women in the labor force.

Due to the progressive industrialization an increasing number of women took up gainful employment and consequently the number of family workers steadily went downward.

### **Women Paid Employees**

Since the end of the last war the number of women in paid employment has been on the constant increase. In 1967 it counted 10 million representing 33 percent of the total number of paid employees.

**Table 9. Women in Paid Employment 1962-1966**

(Unit: 1,000 persons)

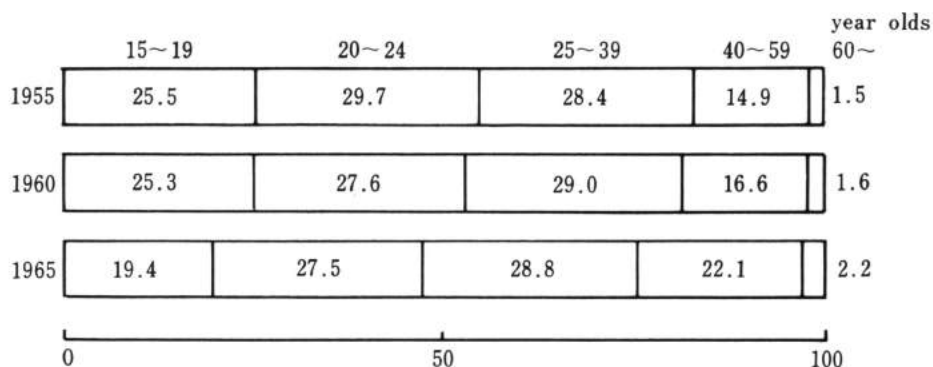
Year	Number	As percent of all employees
1962	7,850	31.5%
1963	8,110	31.5
1964	8,350	31.3
1965	8,730	31.4
1966	9,290	32.0

Source: "Labor Force Survey" Statistics Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister.

Participation rate of women in paid employment has been traditionally high in the age bracket under 30 years. But the tendency in recent years has been towards the increase in the number of older women workers while the number of those under 30 has been more or less on the decline.



**Diagram 1. Women Employees by Age Group**



Source : Population Census

As for the marital status of women employees, the recent trend is the marked increase of married women in paid employment. It is significant that the net increase of some 3 million in the number of women employees that took place between 1960 and 1967 was due to the increase in the number of married women workers. In 1967 40.3 percent of all women workers were married and 49.1 percent were single. An additional 10.5 percent were widowed or divorced. This is a considerable change from the situation in 1960, when only 24 percent of all women workers were married and 63 percent were single.

**Table 10. Women Employees by Marital Status**

(Unit: 1,000 persons)

	1966		1967	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	6,930	100.0%	10,170	100.0%
Single	4,370	63.1	4,990	49.1
Married	1,690	24.4	4,100	40.3
Widowed and divorced	860	12.4	1,070	10.5

Source : Population Census, Office of the Prime Minister for 1960.

Labor Force Survey, Office of the Prime Minister for 1967.

The increase in the number of older and married women workers has led to the higher level of the average age of women workers, which marked 29 years in 1967 (as against 33.6 years for male workers).

Average duration of service of women workers was 4.1 years as against

8.2 years for men. The younger age combined with the shorter service means lower education and less skill, which directly leads to limited chances of promotion as well as to the lower wage level for the female workers than their male counterparts.

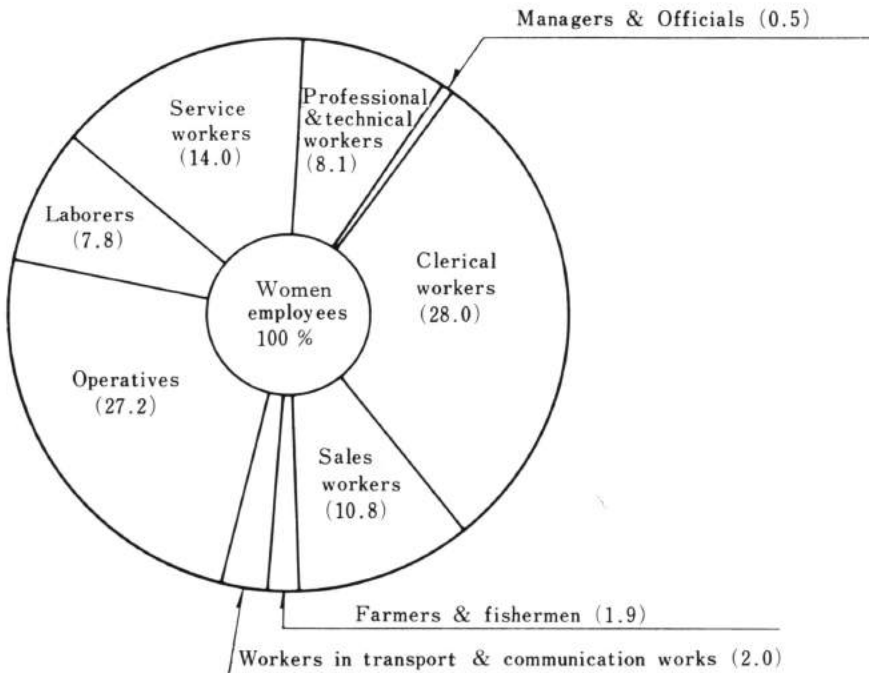
The Labor Standards Law provides for the principle of equal pay for men and women for equal work. Although the national economic growth made it possible to raise the general wage level, the average wage of women workers are still less than half that of male workers.

### **Women's Employment by Occupation**

A considerable change has taken place in recent years in the occupational distribution of women workers. In 1967 28 percent of all women workers were clerical—the highest among the major occupational groups of women—followed by operatives (27%) and service workers (14%). On these three categories are concentrated nearly 70 percent of all women workers. The most significant increase has been observed in the number of clerical workers, which, in 1955, was less than that of operatives.

The number of women in professional and technical occupations has

**Diagram 2. Women Employees by Occupation, 1967**



increased faster than that of men. In 1967 women in such occupations accounted for 42 percent of all workers in these categories and 8 percent of all women workers.

**Diagram 3. Participation Rate by Occupation, 1967**



Teaching is one of the oldest professions for women. In May 1967 women teachers at all levels counted some 324,000 which represented 36 percent of the total number of teachers. As to those in administrative post, in 1967 there were 134 women principals in the elementary schools, 13 in the junior high school, while before the war there were few women holding headship in public schools. In private colleges and universities there were as many as 8,400 women in the faculties as well as 92 presidents, but in public universities relatively smaller number of women are found in such capacities.

Nursing is another old profession for women, and there were many career women among pharmacists and doctors even before the war.

**Table 12. Women Teachers and Principals in Schools**

Type of schools	Teachers		Principals	
	Number	As percent of total teachers	Number	As percent of total principals
Elementary of schools	172,398	49.1%	134	0.6%
Junior High Schools	59,670	25.7	13	0.1
Senior High Schools	33,978	17.0	158	4.0
Colleges and (2-year institution)	5,234	38.9	65	21.7
Universities (4-year institution)	5,349	8.0	28	7.8

Source : " Report on Basic School Statistics, 1967 " Ministry of Education.

A number of women hold administrative posts in Government service, and there are increasing numbers of women lawyers, judges, architects, designers, accountants, etc. active in their respective fields, which were almost exclusively monopolized by men before the war.

### **Protection of Women Workers**

The Labor Standards Law enacted in 1947 provides various maternity protection measures in addition to the general regulations on the working conditions for men and women workers. For instance, women are kept from midnight work with a few exceptional cases; women can take maternity leave of 6 weeks both before and after childbirth, and mothers nursing a baby less than one year old can take nursing rest, twice a day, of at least 30 minutes' duration each, during the working hours, besides the regular recess.

In 1955, a law was promulgated making it mandatory that a replacement be found for women teachers taking pregnancy leave. It specifies for the local governments to provide teachers to substitute the women teachers while they are taking maternity leave, in order to protect motherhood as well as to maintain the regular classes.

Some private enterprises initiated a so-called child-care leave scheme to make it available for married women to stay at home for a certain period—usually less than 3 years—after childbirth, if they so want.

The Women's and Minors' Bureau was established in the Ministry of Labor in 1947 and has since endeavored to improve the protection, welfare and status of working women.

### **Labor Union Activities**

Since the introduction of the Labor Union Law in 1945, a marked progress has been made in the labor union activities of women. As of June 1967, 2,894,000 women workers were members of the labor unions. This figure represented 28 percent of all women workers and 27.6 percent of the total union membership. Out of all the women members 38 percent are recruited from those working in the "manufacturing" industries, including the textile industry which occupied approximately 11 percent. Though only a few women are as yet placed in a position to take the leadership of union activities, still we cannot overlook the significant part union women are playing for the betterment of the working conditions and status of women workers at large.

## IV. WOMEN IN FAMILY LIFE

### **The Status of Women in Family Law**

Based upon the Constitution of 1946 the Civil Code was revised in 1947, and the revision effected a revolutionary change in the legal status of women in the family.

The new legislation provided women with every possible rights—property rights, inheritance rights, the right of marriage and divorce, parental rights, etc.—resulting in various changes in the way of living and pattern of family life. The following is a brief survey of the status of women in family law and actual practice thereon.

(Marriage) The mutual consent of both sexes is the only requirement for contracting marriage, and the consent of the parents is necessary only in the case the parties to the marriage are minors (that is, below 20 years of age). The minimum age of marriage is 16 for women and 18 for men. (The average age of contracting marriage in 1964 was 24.8 years for women and 28.1 years for men). The only formality required for entering into marriage is the official registration thereof, which must be conducted by the parties concerned and two or more adult witnesses, either orally or with document.

The parties to a marriage may settle their property rights before marriage by entering into contract and registering it. However, such cases are rare in actual practice. Almost in every case, the parties to the marriage leave their property rights on the “statutory property system”, under which all property owned by one party previous to the marriage and all property acquired in his or her name during marriage become his or her personal property; however, any property, in regard to which it is uncertain whether it belongs to the husband or the wife, is presumed to be the property in their co-ownership. As to the expenses of the marriage life, both the husband and the wife assume a share of such expenses, taking into account their property, income and all other circumstances.

(Divorce) Besides the “Judicial Divorce” permitted by court trial in case certain causes exist as prescribed in the law, the legislation provides for the “Divorce by Agreement”, under which a divorce can be obtained when mutual agreement of both parties is formally notified to the registrar. In the “Judicial Divorce” there is no discrimination between the sexes with regard to the causes for seeking divorce. In actual practice, about 90 percent of all the divorces

are "divorces by agreement".

In case the parties fail to come to the agreement, either party may apply to the Family Court for mediation. The Court makes all efforts, on close contact with both parties and others concerned, to get at a conclusion for the best of the parties. In 1965, 8.7 percent of all the divorces were "divorces through mediation" by the Family Courts. (The Family Courts are established all over the country to take care of all sorts of troubles concerning family life with very simple procedure and almost free of charge, dealing at the same time with cases of juvenile delinquency).

There is no institution of alimony, but a woman, when divorced, may demand distribution of property from the husband, though the actual amount of such distribution is generally very small because the husbands are seldom in possession of much property.

For some time after the war, the divorce rate was conspicuously high, but before many years it began to decline, and therefore the last few years it has remained without much fluctuation. The number of actual cases was 82,900, or 0.83 cases per 1,000 population, in 1967.

(Parental Rights) Both parents exercise their parental authority in concert; they are absolutely equal with regard to their rights and duties to their children.

In case of dissolution of marriage, the parental rights may be taken over either by the father or the mother, or by both when there are more than two children, according to the mutual agreement or through mediation of the Family Court. In actual cases the mothers very often take over the parental rights after divorcement.

(Inheritance Rights) The prewar inheritance system based on the principle of the sole inheritance by the eldest son has been abolished. The new Civil Code provides for the joint inheritance of the children, both male and female, in equal shares, and the wife always has the right to inherit her husband's property, regardless of whether or not he has left a will. The share of the spouse in a intestate succession is as follows: one-third in the case of the spouse and his (her) children being successors; one half in the case of the spouse and his (her) parents being successors; and two-thirds in the case of the spouse and his (her) brothers and sisters being successors.

### **Changing Patterns of Family Life**

In recent years certain social factors have been developing to effect further changes in family life. One of the factors is the drastic decline in the birth rate. The vital statistics show that the nation's birth rate decreased from

28.1 persons per 1,000 population in 1950 to 19.7 persons in 1967. In consequence, the average childbirth expectancy per one couple dropped from more than 5 in the prewar years to 2.3 in 1962. At the same time, child bearing ages tend to concentrate during the period from 25 to 29 years of age. Also, the extension of the life expectancy should be noted; in 1967 it was 68.9 years for men and 74.2 for women—more than 5 years extension during the past ten years.

**Table 13. Trends in Vital Statistics, 1930-1967**

Year	Population in thousands	Live Birth Rate (per 1,000)	Death rate (per 1,000)	Natural increase rate (per 1,000)	Marriage rate (per 1,000)	Divorce rate (per 1,000)
1930	64,450	32.4	18.2	14.2	7.9	0.80
35	69,254	31.6	16.8	14.9	8.0	0.70
50	83,200	28.1	10.9	17.2	8.6	1.01
55	89,276	19.4	7.8	11.6	8.0	0.84
60	93,419	17.2	7.6	9.6	9.3	0.74
65	98,275	18.6	7.1	11.4	9.7	0.79
67	99,056	19.7	6.7	13.0	9.4	0.83

Source: Vital Statistics, Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Besides, the mode of living is changing as a result of the introduction and wider use of modern household appliances such as electric washing-machine, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, electric pans etc. Furthermore the mass production of various sorts of instant food, ready-made clothes and other daily necessities has much facilitated women's housework.

Due to these changes in living conditions, women have been spared much of the time and energy spent on their housework, and now they enjoy much more free time at their disposal than a decade ago. According to a survey, the average hours spent by housewives for social, cultural and recreational activities are 7 hours—twice as many as those in prewar years.

All these changing circumstances have much to do with the increasing number of married women who want to undertake gainful work. With accelerated influx of married women into the labor force more than four out of ten female employees were married in 1967. They are employed in every occupational field on full-time or part-time basis. However, a new problem has arisen from such a situation—how to successfully combine their family responsibilities with their working life.

Another feature of the changes in the pattern of the family in recent years is an increase of small-sized families consisting of the husband, wife



and minor children, unlike the traditional type of the Japanese family where the husband's parents and other relatives live together. This fact, while generally welcome to the wife, presents sometimes a certain difficulty to the family. That is, when the wife is sick in bed or in confinement, there is nobody to take up housekeeping work in her place, and often the husbands are found staying out of work to engage in housework, or the wives working while they are supposed to be in bed, thus causing much of unstableness in the family life. As a countermeasure to this situation, the Women's and Minors' Bureau initiated a program of the Home Help Service. The project characterizes itself in the voluntary employment by individual enterprises of a certain number of homehelpers who are to be sent out to the employees' homes in case of such need. The government assumes the responsibility for the supply of qualified homehelpers as well as the training for them with special arrangement of training courses. Also it gives guidance to each enterprise to ensure the appropriate and effective operation of the project. Quite a number of companies have adopted the scheme in the highly industrialized areas of the country.

## **V. RURAL WOMEN**

### **Women's Part in Agriculture**

The labor force in agriculture, being on the decrease in recent years, accounted for 19 percent of the total labor force in 1967, while women occupied 54 percent of the whole agricultural labor force.

With the rapid expansion of industry, an increasing number of farm people, especially family members with small farm lands, are entering factories and firms as paid workers. The statistics indicate that in 1966 about 80 percent of the total farm households have one or more members engaged in paid employment or some independent enterprises other than farming. Not only younger sons and daughters but often the heads of the families or the eldest sons are thus leaving off farming, though in most of these cases the families keep on their farming enterprises. The consequence is that in these families the women, especially the wives are obliged to take up ever greater part in farming, in many cases even the sole management of the enterprises.

Thus with increased participation in farming, women are assuming greater authority and responsibility in the family as well as in the community. But the same circumstances have necessarily increased their farm labor even though new methods of farming with machinery and chemicals have been introduced.

### **Women in the Family**

With higher standards of living attained in these years for farming households, housekeeping work has been getting less toilsome as a result of the modernization of housekeeping facilities. With the use of electric appliances such as washing-machines and electric pans, and other improvements in domestic facilities, farm women have been relieved from the hardship of their housework to a considerable extent.

One of the influences to this end may have come from the Living Improvement Projects taken up by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry since 1948 for the improvement of rural home life. At present about 2,320 officials—all women—are at work in this field all over the country. They visit homes of farmers and give advices on housekeeping problems or hold lecture meetings and demonstrate home improvement programs in rural life.

Furthermore in many districts women have succeeded in organizing cooking centers and day-nurseries on cooperative basis.

The initiation of health center system with public nurses going round

every house with expectant mother or sick people to attend and nurse them, along with the general improvement of public health programs, has helped improving the health of farm women and children to a great extent. The National Health Insurance Scheme has worked much to the same end, making all members of the family eligible for medical treatment.

The general use of radio and television sets in rural areas has contributed in a large measure to leveling off the cultural standards in different parts of the country. Also the increasing participation of rural residents in modern industries in urban areas has paved the way to the modernization of the way of living in rural households.

These changes in rural life, however, has caused a substantial increase in household expenses. It is not seldom that housewives themselves work in factories during slack seasons or are engaged in homework, in order to supplement their family income or to pay for children's education. Farm women are having less and less free time.

### **Organization Activities**

With the prevalence of mass communication and adult education, the mind of farm women has gradually turned to the thoughts of their well-being in the daily life and social problems at large.

Most of the women of farm households have been organized as members of the agricultural cooperatives or regional women's clubs. Those who have children of school age are members of the P.T.A. (Parents and Teachers Association) organized in every school. Lecture meetings and workshops held under the sponsorship of these institutions afford them opportunities for social training. Also there are increasing number of women organized in small groups with their specific purposes. All these organizations, large or small, are contributing in their respective ways to the welfare of the community and the betterment of daily life, and through the participation in organization activities women are learning much and improving the consciousness as organic members of the community, which is to be enlarged to the consciousness as members of the nation.

## **VI. SOCIAL WELFARE FOR WOMEN**

Due to the cooperative efforts made by the Government and voluntary organizations, social welfare services and security system of Japan have made a considerable progress in recent years, though there still remains much to be accomplished. Below is given a brief survey of the social welfare schemes now in effect to be applicable to women.

### **Public Assistance**

Public assistance program is carried out under the Daily Life Security Law to give aids both in money and in kind to those families unable to make living. The Law was set up in 1946 in accordance with the provision of the Article 25 of the Constitution, which established the responsibility of the Government to see that all the people shall have a minimum standard of living and shall be eligible for assistance if in need. According to a survey, of all the families receiving benefits under this law nearly one half are headed by women, mostly widowed or divorced.

### **Mothers' Welfare Fund Loans**

The Law for Maternal and Child Welfare of 1964 ensures government loans for widowed and divorced mothers to open or continue business, to acquire training, to etc., and also for their children to attend school or to prepare for a new job.

In order to give vocational aid to widows, the Training Centers for Domestic Work and the Centers for Industrial Home Work have been set up by the Women's and Minors' Bureau. Also, the training of Home Helpers to be employed by enterprises (See Section IV Women in Family Life) is mostly aimed at widows.

### **Child Rearing Allowance**

The Child Rearing Allowance Law was enacted in 1961. The allowance is given to the low-income fatherless families in accordance with the number of children. It is expected that this program will be a step toward the establishment of the Family Allowance System in Japan.

Fatherless families are protected by several measures besides those mentioned above. They are entitled to live in the Homes for Mothers and Children, and the Tax Law provides for a certain reduction from their income tax and also for the payment of a lower local tax.

### **Child Welfare Institutions**

Child Welfare Law of 1948 proclaims the nation's responsibility for healthy development of children both in body and mind, and for the protection of mothers too. Under this law many social welfare institutions, such as Homes for Infants, Day Nurseries, Children's Homes and various institutions for handicapped children, Maternity Homes and Homes for Mother and Children have been set up, as well as governmental organs like Child Guidance Centers.

### **Health Insurance**

Under the health insurance schemes the insured and their dependents are provided medical care at very lowcosts.

In case working women thus insured give birth to a child, they are entitled to the benefit of a certain amount for confinement expenses. Also they are paid an amount equal to 60 percent of their daily remuneration for a period of 84 days, as well as a nursing allowance.

### **Health Centers**

Health Centers established under the Health Centers Law have much to do with the health of children and expectant mothers. The network of Health Centers was reorganized and expanded in 1947 to set up one center for every 100,000 population, in order to give medical examination and health guidance to the community residents, free of charge, as well as to improve the sanitation of the community. Special emphasis is put on the health guidance for expectant mothers and infants, and to such activities may be ascribed much of the definite drop of the death rate of infants attained in recent years.

Almost all of the health centers have a Eugenic Bureau established under the Eugenic Law of 1948. It undertakes advisory services on marriages from the eugenic standpoint, and also gives guidance on the proper method of birth control, which has had a great effect on the birth rate of the nation, as we have seen already.

In 1958 Health Centers for Mothers and Children were initiated to take care of mothers and children in rural areas. Especially they are designed to extend protection to pregnant mothers, and are provided with adequate facilities for confinement. By the end of 1967 they have been established in 459 villages across the country.

### **Old Age Pension**

The Welfare Pension Scheme established in 1941 covers all workers in enterprises with more than 5 employees. Under the scheme female workers

can get an annuity on attaining the age of 55 years (60 years for men) on the condition that the contribution has been paid for more than 20 years. The wife of a beneficiary is entitled to an annuity on her husband's death.

Those who are not covered by the Welfare Pension Scheme are covered by the National Pension Scheme, set up in 1959. Under this system any man or woman who has made a contribution for more than 25 years is to receive an annuity on attaining the age of 65. As a provisional measure men and women above the age of 70 are entitled to receive an annuity, with no liability of contribution, and so are widows with children (Widows' Pension).

## VII. WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

After the World War II, the aspiration among women for the betterment of life has created a great number of women's clubs aiming at the improvement of women's status in general or the attainment of their specific purposes, and this was furthermore encouraged by the national policy to foster spontaneous civic activities of women.

The increased spare-time in the daily life of women and the rise in their educational attainment have much stimulated women to take active part in community life, while the rapidly changing situation of the community has made women's contribution to the society were indispensable than ever.

A survey by the Women's and Minors' Bureau indicates that 63.5 percent of all adult women are members of one or more organizations—women's clubs for the most part.

### **Various Types of Women's Clubs**

There are about 19,500 Regional Women's Clubs, whose total membership counts 6.7 million and occupies almost 60 percent of the total membership of all women's organizations. The unit clubs in villages, towns, or cities affiliate to the prefectural federations, which in turn affiliate to the National Council of Federation of Regional Women's Clubs. Each regional clubs deals with problems in its own region, but the purposes common to all these organizations are to achieve the higher standard of women's status and develop the welfare of the communities.

The second largest membership is found in the women's department of agricultural cooperatives, counting about 3 million in total in about 6,378 units. Each unit organization affiliates to the prefectural federation which in turn affiliates to the National Council of Women's Organizations of Agricultural Cooperatives. These organizations try to elevate the economic and social standards of rural women through the activities of agricultural cooperatives. Although they deal chiefly with local problems, the National Council adopts certain general themes to be stressed for each year and recommends them to the unit organizations; for instance, education programs on farm management, improvement of health, etc.

Apart from these organizations of regional nature, there are a number of women's clubs working for specific purposes. Among the well-known organizations of this kind are National Widows' Association, Young Women's Christian



Association, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Association of University Women, League of Women Voters, Housewives' Association and others. Some of these organizations have a long history of brave struggle, though their membership is not so big. For instance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the oldest among the Japanese women's organizations, we founded in 1886, with the purpose of promoting peace and social welfare based on Christianity, especially by prohibition of alcohol. They have always been alert in action to improve the status of women. Especially their constant efforts to abolish the licensed prostitution system of the prewar times are most highly appreciated.

The League of Women Voters of Japan has a brilliant record in the struggle for the political rights of women. Its original organization was established in 1924 by progressive women enthusiastically fighting for the acquirement of woman suffrage. They worked persistently and did not overlook the slightest opportunity to present a bill granting women the right to vote, until the organization was forced to dissolve by the government in 1940. After the war it was reorganized to engage in the political education of women with the newly granted voting rights, and also to enlarge the opportunities for women to work in public office. Now it has a membership of about 6,000 all through the country.

Besides above-mentioned organizations, there are Women's League for Protection of Human Rights, Women's Bar Association, Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Women's Democratic Club, Women's League for Peace and Freedom, and others, which are all national organizations.

Some of these organizations are affiliated to the international organizations, and occasionally send delegates to the respective international conferences.

Thus the activities of women's organizations are manifold according to their purposes of establishment, but they often cooperate in order to deal with common problems. For instance, they work hand in hand in the campaigns for cutting down commodity prices, for fair and clean elections, or in support of or opposition to certain actions proposed by the government or other authorities. Especially, in May 1956, the united pressure of many women's organizations successfully led to the enactment of the Prostitution Prevention Law, aiming at punishing exploiters of prostitution and protecting the women needing rehabilitation. Also many of them are keenly interested in the issues regarding atom and hydrogen bombs and unite their activities in the campaigns for peace.

## APPENDIX

### THE MAJOR WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN JAPAN

Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union	360-3, Hyakunin-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo
Young Women's Christian Association of Japan	15-4, Kudan, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Japan Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	c/o Naruse Kinenkan, 1-8-2, Mejirodai, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
National Friendship Association	11-20-2, Nishi Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo
The League of Women Voters of Japan	Fusen Kaikan, 21-2, Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
Japanese Women's Democratic Club	18-31-3, Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
Housewives Association of Japan	Shyfu-Kaikan, 1, 6-bancho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Japanese Association of University Women	Oin-kai, 6-1-2, Otsuka, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
National Widows' Association of Japan	Shyakai Jigyo Kaikan, 4-3-3, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
National Council of Women's Organizations of Agricultural Cooperatives	Nokyo Bldg., 5-1, Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
National Council of Federation of Regional Women's Clubs	Tokyo Fujinjido Kan, No. 4, Shibakoen, Minato-ku, Tokyo
National Council of Women's Department of Fishery Cooperatives	Sankaido Bldg., 13-9-1, Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo
Association for Problems Relating to Women	Floor 4, New Yotsuya Mansions, 21-1, Yotsuya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo
National Association for Improvement of Life	No. 722, Sangiin Kaikan, 1-1-2, Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
All Japan Women's League	Floor 4, Masuda Bldg., 5-4-2, Iidabashi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Japan Women's Class Room	4th Mori Bldg., 1, Sakuragawa-cho, Shiba Nishikubo, Minato-ku, Tokyo
Japan Women's Conference	National Diet Library, 1-10-1, Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
New Japan Women's Association	Floor 4-6, Reimei Bldg. 36-1, Jinbo-cho, Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

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Source: Women's and Minors' Bureau, Ministry of Labor.

Note: Those organizations which have over 10 chapters and 500 membership are mentioned in order of their foundation.



WOMEN'S AND MINORS' BUREAU, MINISTRY OF LABOR  
OTEMACHI, CHIYODA-KU TOKYO, JAPAN