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THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN JAPAN

WOMEN'S AND YOUNG WORKERS'
BUREAU, MINISTRY OF LABOR
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PREFACE

The Women's and Young Workers' Bureau in the Ministry of Labor of the Japanese Government herewith presents the "Status of Women in Japan, 1979".

This is a report on the status and activities of Japanese women who are playing ever greater roles in the rapidly changing society.

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

In prewar days women's position was kept decisively lower than that of men 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 Young Workers' 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 good deal in these years.

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

And in recent years the International Women's Year has made a tremendous impact on the Japanese scene in the form of a renewed awakening towards the right and liberation of women. Nationwide campaigns of the Government with the theme of the International Women's Year in cooperation with non-governmental organisations were carried out with remarkable effect.

However, there are not a few unsettled problems left for women. It is impossible to remove overnight the age-old social customs and pre-

judices, and we have had yet 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 elections 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.

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 " (Nov. 29, 1967)	30	33	23	24	74.8	73.3	7
32nd " (Dec. 27, 1969)	33	36	23	25	67.9	69.1	8
33rd " (Dec. 10, 1972)	36	38	25	28	71.0	72.5	7
34th " (Dec. 5, 1976)	38	40	27	30	72.8	74.1	7

Source: Election Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs

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

467 in total, up to 30th

486 in total, 31st, 32nd

491 in total, 33rd.

511 in total, 34th

(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	69.0	13
9th " (June 27, 1971)	34	37	20	22	59.1	59.3	13
10th " (July 7, 1974)	36	40	27	29	72.7	73.6	18
11th (July 10, 1977)	38	40	26	28	67.7	69.3	16

Source: Election Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs

Note: (1) 252 seats in total

Since the first election of 1946, women have taken part in 13 elections for the House of Representatives and 11 for the House of Councillors (the Upper House) of the Japanese Diet. In all these elections, the percentage of women voters at the polls have been approximately 60~70 percent of the total number of eligible women voters. Since 1968 the voting rate of women has exceeded that of men's. The attitude of women towards elections is no longer negligible both in number and their choice.

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.

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 1977 3,700 women were mediation commissioners of family courts, representing some 39 percent of the total membership, and 59,863 women were public and child welfare commissioners (37 percent). Also a considerable number of women have been appointed or commissioned to be civil liberties commissioners (1,215 women – 11 percent of the total), social education commissioners (108 women – 13 percent), and members of the board of education (28 women – 10 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 vice-ministers.

Table 2. Number of Assembly Members of Local Public Bodies

Years	(Persons)					
	Prefectural assemblies		Municipal assemblies		Town or village assemblies	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1955	2,436	32	21,240	158	114,015	455
1960	2,607	36	17,724	190	63,699	275
1965	2,565	41	17,732	198	56,712	311
1968	2,659	37	17,786	225	52,894	272
1971	2,705	26	20,133	350	49,453	198
1975	2,796	32	19,807	360	48,003	217
1977	2,734	34	19,557	414	47,381	233

Source: Election Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs

Note: 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.

II. WOMEN AND EDUCATION

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

In 1947 the new educational system was initiated 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 schools. Only a small minority of children attend private schools. In general, both sexes are taught same subjects, except some small modification on the practical side.

Since the school education system was started in 1872, the Japanese people have been quite eager to give schooling to 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-years' 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. Owing to the lowering down of the birth rate after World War II 'baby crop', the number of senior high school students has tended to decrease since 1965. But, more and more students advanced to the senior high school when they completed their compulsory education.

This is particularly true for girls.

Of 771,549 girls who finished the junior high school in March 1977, 9 out of 10 girls entered the senior high school. The comparable figure for 1955 was 5. Since 1969 the percentage of girls entering senior high schools has exceeded that of boys.

Girls occupied a half of the students in senior high schools all through the country in May 1977 (50% for girls and 50% for boys), in contrast to one-third for twenty years ago.

Table 3. Percentage of boys and girls entering senior high schools (%)

Year	Boys	Girls
1950	48.0	36.7
1955	55.5	47.4
1960	59.6	55.9
1965	71.6	69.6
1970	81.6	82.7
1975	91.0	93.0
1977	92.2	94.0

Source: "Report on School Statistics" Ministry of Education

Note: Include those attending night classes while employed.

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 1977, total enrollments of women were about 732,979 representing 33 percent of all students, about 28-fold increase as compared with the 1950 figure of 26,000.

Table 4. Percentage of senior high school graduates entering higher education (%)

Year	Male	Female
1950	34.6	17.2
1955	20.9	14.9
1960	19.7	14.2
1965	30.1	20.4
1970	25.0	23.5
1975	34.6	33.8
1977	32.2	34.3

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

Note: Included those attending night classes while employed.

Table 5. Enrollment of women in institutions of higher education 1977

Type of Institution	Total	(Persons)		
		Women		
		Number	Percent Distribution	As percent of total
Total	2,213,607	732,979		33.1%
4-year institutions	1,839,363	404,794	55.2	22.0
Public	434,235	98,895	13.5	22.8
Private	1,405,128	305,899	41.7	21.8
2-year institutions	374,244	328,185	44.8	87.7
Public	32,678	18,286	2.5	56.0
Private	341,566	309,899	42.3	90.7

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

Table 6. Number of female students in 4-year institutions by department - 1977

Department	Total	(Persons)		
		Women		
		Number	Percent Distribution	As percent of total
Total	1,747,057	390,454	100.0%	22.3%
Literature	230,923	140,032	35.9	60.6
Law, Politics, Economics & Industrial management	723,996	59,551	15.3	8.2
Science	53,005	8,040	2.1	15.2
Engineering	345,680	3,550	0.9	1.0
Agriculture	60,431	5,845	1.5	9.7
Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy & Nursing	103,380	33,155	8.5	32.1
Home economics	31,308	31,162	8.0	99.5
Teachers training	131,189	75,997	19.5	57.9
Arts	42,706	76,075	6.7	61.1
Others	22,577	7,047	1.8	31.2

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

As regards their curricula, by far the largest number of women major in literary courses, followed by teachers training and law, politics, economics and industrial management. 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.

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 1977 some 67 percent found employment by the time of their graduation, while the comparable figure for men was 76 percent. Those women who continued their studies at a still higher level were 2 percent of all the female 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 Young Workers' 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 postwar Japan had a great impact on the economic activities of women. The number of women workers had drastically 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. The number of part-time workers (less than 35 hours a week) has been increasing gradually, and in 1977 it counted 2,030,000. Besides, it is estimated that almost 1,330,000 housewives are engaged in industrial home work within their homes.

Women in the Labor Force

The number of women in the labor force is 20,700,000 in 1977. This figure represented 38 percent of the country's entire labor force and 47 percent of the female population of 15 years of age and over.

The labor force participation rate of women had been decreasing for a long time, but it is showing increase in 1977. The participation of women in the age group of 40 to 54 years has been increasing year after year. As to younger generations more and more girls are seeking the higher level of education and their participation in the labor force has shown considerable decrease.

Table 7. Women in the Labor Force 1960-1977 (women 15 years of age and over)

	(10,000 persons)			
	Population	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation rate	As percent of total labor force
1960 average	3,370	1,838	54.5	40.7
1965 average	3,758	1,903	50.6	39.8
1970 average	4,060	2,024	49.9	39.3
1975 average	4,342	1,987	45.8	37.3
1977 average	4,434	2,070	46.7	38.0

Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

Table 8. Women in the Labor Force by Age Group

(10,000 persons)

	Number		Participation rate	
	1960	1977	1960	1977
Total	1,838	2,070	54.5%	46.7%
15 ~ 19 year olds	219	77	49.0	19.9
20 ~ 24	277	277	70.8	67.9
25 ~ 29	217	253	54.5	45.8
30 ~ 34	216	208	56.5	46.3
35 ~ 39	200	243	59.0	55.5
40 ~ 54	457	677	59.0	61.1
55 ~ 64	162	229	46.7	44.5
65 and over	80	83	25.6	15.4

Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

Table 9. Employed Women - 1977

(10,000 persons)

	Number	As As percent of total employed
Total	2,033 (100%)	38.1%
Agriculture and forestry	301 (14.8)	51.1
Fishery, aquatic-culture	8 (0.4)	17.8
Mining	1 (0.0)	5.3
Construction	66 (3.2)	13.2
Manufacturing	500 (24.6)	37.3
Wholesale, retail trade	624 (30.7)	45.5
Finance, insurance		
Real estate		
Transportation, communication	44 (2.2)	11.9
Electricity, gas water		
Services	450 (22.1)	49.0
Government	433 (1.6)	18.5

Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

Women in the labor force are divided roughly into three categories; paid employees, family workers and self-employed. The biggest portion was occupied by paid employees representing 62 percent in 1977, followed by 24 percent for family workers and 14 percent for self-employed. 45 percent of family workers belong to agriculture and forestry. In 1950, nearly 60 percent of women workers were employed as family workers in agriculture. However, because of the high and rapid economic growth and

modernization of industry in last two decades, the number of women workers has increased remarkably in paid employment, in sectors other than agriculture. In 1977 the majority of the women workers, about 85 percent, were paid employees in nonagricultural industries.

Table 10. Women in Paid Employment 1960 - 1977

Year	Number	(10,000 persons)
		As percent of all employees
1960	738	31.1%
1965	913	31.8
1970	1,096	33.2
1975	1,167	32.0
1977	1,251	33.2

Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

Women Paid Employees

Since the end of the last war the number of women in paid employment has been on the constant increase. In 1977 it counted 12.5 million, representing 33 percent of the total number of paid employees.

Table 11. Women Employees by Age Group

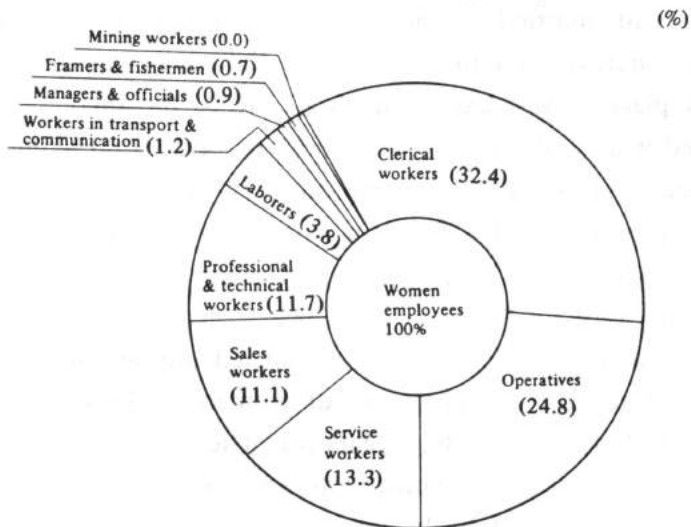
	(10,000 persons)					
	Number		Percent Distribution		Participation Rate*	
	1960	1975	1960	1975	1960	1975
Total	738	1,251	100.0%	100.0%	31.3%	33.2%
15 ~ 19 year olds	157	71	23.4	5.7	50.0	54.2
20 ~ 24	265	249	39.6	19.9	35.7	48.7
25 ~ 29		178		14.2		28.1
30 ~ 34		122		9.8		25.1
35 ~ 39	116	137	17.3	11.0	22.3	29.1
40 ~ 54		382		30.5		33.1
55 ~ 64	127	93	19.0	7.4	21.6	32.0
65 and over		21		1.7		22.8

Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

* Paid employee

Population 15 years old and over

Diagram 1. Women Employees by Occupation – 1977



Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

Traditionally participation rate of women in paid employment has been high only in younger generation. The tendency in recent years has been towards the increase in the number of older women workers.

As for the marital status of women employees, the recent trend is a 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 in this last decade was due to the increase in the number of married women workers. In 1977 55 percent of all women workers were married and 35 percent were single. An additional 11 percent were widowed or divorced. This is a considerable change from the situation in 1962, when only 33 percent of all women workers were married and 55 percent were single.

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 33.9 years in 1977 (as against 36.7 years for male workers).

Average duration of service of women workers was 5.8 years as against 10.5 years for men. The relatively 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 lower wage level for the female workers than their male counterparts.

Table 12. Women Employees by Marital Status

	(non-agriculture)		(10,000 persons)	
	1962		1977	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	802	100.0%	1,242	100.0%
Single	443	55.2	434	24.9
Married	262	32.7	677	54.5
Widowed and divorced	96	12.0	132	10.6

Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

Women's Employment by Industries and Occupations

In recent years the increase in women's paid employment has been most conspicuous in wholesale and retail and in service industries. Though manufacturing industries have the greatest share of the female labor force in paid employment, the number of women workers has continuously declined in the textile industry, which formerly was the typical employment field for women. The number of women workers has steadily increased in heavy industries such as metal and machine manufacturing.

During the 10 years from 1967 to 1977 the absolute number of female workers most notably increased in wholesale and retail trade, and service industries. Increasing rates were high in wholesale and retail trade as well as service industries.

In 1977 the largest group of women in paid employment worked in manufacturing (30%), followed by services (27%) and wholesale and retail trade (26%), and women who worked in these categories of industries occupied nearly 90 percent of total women workers.

Table 13. Number of Women Employees by Industry

Industry	Number (10 thousands)		Percent distribution		Percent of all employees	
	1967	1977	1967	1977	1967	1977
Total	1,004	1,251	100%	100%	32.7	33.2
Agriculture, Forestry and hunting	15	9	1.5	0.7	32.6	29.0
Fishery and aquiculture	3	2	0.3	0.2	13.0	11.1
Mining	2	1	0.2	0.1	8.0	5.6
Construction	44	53	4.4	4.2	15.0	13.6
Manufacturing	362	379	36.0	30.3	34.2	33.7
Wholesale and retail trade	221	320	22.0	25.6	41.0	41.3
Finance, Insurance and real estate	57	79	5.7	6.3	44.2	47.3
Transport and communication, Electricity, gas, water and steam	37	41	3.7	3.3	12.0	11.6
Services	239	335	23.8	26.8	48.3	47.1
Government	25	33	2.5	2.6	15.9	18.5

Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force", Prime Minister's Office.

A considerable change has taken place in recent years in the occupational distribution of women workers. In 1977, 32 percent of all women workers were clerical — the highest among the major occupational groups of women — followed by operatives (28%) and service workers (13%).

On these three categories are concentrated 71 percent of all women workers.

The number of women in professional and technical occupations has increased faster than that of men. In 1977 women in such occupations accounted for 45 percent of all workers in these categories and 12 percent of all women workers.

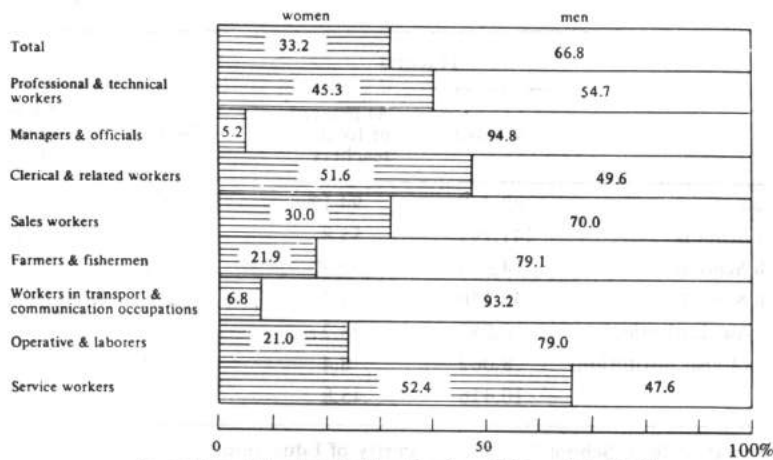
Teaching is one of the most traditional professions for women. According to the Report on Basic School Statistics of 1977 women teachers at all levels counted some 470,058 which represented 46 percent of the total number of teachers. As to those in administrative post, in 1977 there were 405 women principals in elementary schools, 18 in junior high schools, while before the war there were few women holding headship in public schools.

The number of women teachers in elementary schools increases each year, occupied 55% of the total number of elementary school teachers in 1977.

Nursing is another traditional profession for women. There were also many career women among pharmacists and doctors even before the last world war.

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.

Diagram 2. Participation Rate by Occupation - 1977



Source: "Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey", Prime Minister's Office.

Table 14. Employed Women in Selected Occupation

Selected occupation	Number (Persons)		As percent of total employed	
	1960	1975	1960	1975
Technicians	2,400	14,600	0.7%	1.8%
Teachers	277,970	464,100	34.6	40.5
Physicians	9,610	13,000	9.6	9.6
Pharmacists	13,940	35,700	39.5	51.4
Nurses	194,260	385,400	98.3	97.3
Artists	6,990	38,100	15.0	24.5
Scientists	2,280	3,900	7.0	5.1
Judges, Prosecutors, Lawyers	120	400	1.2	2.5
Kindergartner	24,350	73,800	84.2	94.6
Nursery nurses	45,000	171,800	100.0	100.0
Social workers	5,150	40,200	34.2	58.9
Managerial workers (non-governmental)	29,330	98,800	5.4	8.8
Clerks	978,910	2,612,300	32.5	44.2
Stenographers, Typists	66,990	76,600	95.9	97.2
Operatives (electric machinery)	159,460	383,000	40.8	43.8
Operatives (yarn, thread and fabric mills)	868,530	531,600	75.3	66.0
Service workers (except household)	1,252,790	1,960,700	68.7	64.3
Household workers	308,200	105,800	99.1	97.5
Civil servants in managerial posts	600	1,100	0.8	0.9
Telephone operatives	118,400	125,900	94.9	97.1
Farmers	7,114,640	3,361,700	54.8	52.8
Accounting clerks	616,500	1,639,900	48.5	65.4
Saleswomen and sales clerks	1,276,970	1,991,500	56.1	53.4
Garment and related textile fabrics workers	605,590	959,100	71.7	79.9

Source: "Population Census", Prime Minister's Office.

Table 15. Women Teachers and Principals in Schools – 1977

	(Persons)			
	Teachers		Principals	
	Number	As percent of total teachers	Number	As percent of total principals
Kindergarten	88,459	94.1%	3,420	44.2%
Elementary Schools	241,797	55.8	405	1.8
Junior High Schools	74,972	30.8	18	0.2
Senior High Schools	40,270	17.5	126	2.8
Colleges (2-year institution)	6,082	38.2	56	15.1
Universities (4-year institution)	8,062	8.4	21	5.0
Others	10,416	45.8	6	1.1

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

Wages and Working Hours

The average wage of women workers working in enterprises employing 30 regular workers and over in 1977 was 141,644 yen and that of men 253,698 yen per month. The highest wage was earned by women in services, the second transport & communication and these wages exceeded the average wage over 47,538 yen. On an average, women's wages are about 60% of men's wages, but this does not mean that women get 60% of men in equal job. Actually, in 1947 the principle of equal wage for equal work for men and women was established by the Labor Standards Law, and in 1967 Government of Japan ratified the ILO Convention No.100 "Equal Remuneration". This comparatively low wage is derived from the particular employment and wage system prevalent in the present Japanese economy. The wage is generally based on seniority of workers under the life employment system of each firm. That is to say, there is hierarchy of wages according to the age, duration of service, besides the skills of workers of that particular firm. And women workers are generally young, that is, many are in the starting stage of the wage scale, and short in duration of service as well as a great number of women are engaged in unskilled works. These factors cause lower wage of women than that of men on an average. For instance, the starting wages of new graduates of various school level indicate little or at least not much difference by sex.

Working hours of women in 1977 were 165 hours per month. As a tendency working hours have been decreasing for both men and women.

Table 16. Wages by Industries (Major Group) 1977
(Establishments employing 30 regular workers and over)

Industry	Total cash earning per month (yen)		Ratio of women's wages to men's wages
	Men	Women	
Total	253,698	141,644	55.8%
Mining	248,285	120,259	48.4
Construction	218,635	105,043	48.0
Manufacturing	238,434	109,694	46.0
Wholesale & retail	245,184	126,695	51.7
Finance & insurance	367,558	171,631	46.7
Real estate	265,386	129,488	48.8
Transport & communication	254,401	176,033	69.2
Electricity, gas & water supply	296,960	172,965	58.2
Services	288,306	189,182	65.5

Source: "Monthly Labor Survey," Ministry of Labor.

Trade Union Activities

Since the introduction of the Trade Union Law in 1945, a marked progress has been made in the trade union activities of women. As of June 1977, 3,370,000 women workers were members of the trade unions. This figure represented 27 percent of all women workers and 27 percent of the total union membership. Out of all the women member 28 percent are recruited from those working in the "manufacturing" industries. 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 are playing for the betterment of the working conditions and status of women workers at large.

Legislative Measures Concerning Women Workers

A. *The Labor Standards Law*, promulgated in 1947 provide protections mainly related to maternity. It covers all industries except for industrial home work and domestic service at home, regulates the minimum standards of working conditions. It establishes principle of equal remuneration for men and women and contains some special measures for the protection of women and minors.

Recently, from the viewpoint of promoting equality between sexes, review of special legislation for women workers in the light of scientific knowledge and technological advances was recommended by the Advisory Committee on Women's and Young Workers' Problems in Oct. 1976. This line was confirmed by the National Plan of Action for Women in January 1977. The Report^{*)} of the Study Group, an advisory body of the Minister of Labor, submitted in November 1978 and preparatory works for revision based on the report are going to be proceeded.

However, the current provisions are as follows:

(1) *Principle of Equal Pay for Men and Women*: Equal wages should be paid to men and women for work of equal value. The article provides that "the employer shall not discriminate women against men concerning

wages by reason of the worker being a woman.”

(2) *Working Hours and Rest Days of Women:* The employer shall not employ women above full 18 years old overtime more than 2 hours a day, 6 hours a week, and 150 hours a year, and not employ them on rest days in principle.

(3) *Prohibition of Night Work:* The employer must not employ women during hours between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. in principle. But this stipulation does not apply to the jobs specified by Ordinance as superintendent of a women's dormitory, air-stewardess, as well as women workers in agriculture, forestry, fishery, telephone operator, etc.

(4) *Restrictions on Dangerous and Harmful Jobs:* The employer must not employ women in dangerous or harmful jobs specified by Ordinances, nor in jobs which require the conveyance of heavy goods beyond 20 kg (30 kg for intermittent work).

(5) *Ban on Underground Labor:* The employer must not employ women in underground labor.

(6) *Maternity Leave:* The employer must not employ a woman for 6 weeks before childbirth when she requests rest days during the period. The employer must not employ a woman within 6 weeks after childbirth. However, when the woman requests to work after 5 weeks, it is permissible to assign her to a job that doctor pronounces unharmed to her. The employer must not dismiss a woman who is on maternity leave during the period and 30 days thereafter.

When a pregnant woman requires, the employer shall place her to a lighter job.

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.

(7) *Nursing Period:* A woman nursing a baby less than one year old may request nursing time, twice a day, each at least 30 minutes during the working hours, besides the ordinary recess.

(8) *Menstruation Leave:* The employer must not employ a woman who suffers heavily from menstruation or a woman engaged in jobs injurious to menstruation if she requests a menstruation leave.

*) The report says new legislative measures are necessary to ensure sexual equality in employment opportunities and working conditions pointing out that equality of men and women and freedom to select occupation are basic human rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

To bring about true sexual equality in employment, it is desirable for men and women to be put on the same footing.

In this respect, protective measures for women workers because of their physical differences from men should be limited to the minimum, and those measures now in practice other than the necessary minimum should be abolished. The report also calls for the enactment of a law to ensure sexual equality in recruitment, retirement, dismissal, wages, employment opportunities and other aspects.

As for specific protective measures for women provided for in the present Labor Standards Law, while measures for maternity protection should be more extensively provided, restrictions on overtime and night work by women should be made the same as those for male workers. Similar principle should be applied in restricting women from engaging in dangerous or harmful work.

The report goes on to say that there is no medical ground for giving women workers menstruation leave and therefore the practice should be abolished.

But because such practice has been going on for the past 30 years, sufficient consideration should be given to the various circumstances involved in solving this problem.

B. *Working Women Welfare Law*, established in July 1, 1972, aims at furthering the welfare and improving the status of working women by taking appropriate actions to help them reconcile their dual responsibilities of work and home, or to enable them to develop and make best use of their abilities.

Briefly the law stipulates the following items:

(1) Clarification of the fundamental idea concerning the welfare of working women, and the responsibility of employers, the State and local public bodies to promote the welfare of working women.

(2) The State and local public bodies shall organize campaigns to promote understanding for working women's welfare.

(3) The Labor Minister shall draw the basic guide line of actions for the welfare of working women.

(4) The State and local public bodies shall take appropriate measures to promote the vocational guidance and training.

(5) An employer shall endeavor to make arrangements for health control of his female employees who are pregnant or after childbirth, including time off for health examination.

(6) An employer shall endeavor to provide conveniences for child care for his female employees including the approval of child care leave.

Child care leave is the scheme, which enables a woman worker with an infant to stay at home for a certain period without losing her employment status at the enterprise and with the guarantee of returning to employment on completion of the leave. To promote introduction of the child care leave among enterprises, the Government is giving an administrative guidance with incentive bounty to employers.

(7) The local public bodies shall endeavor to establish "Welfare Center for Working Women". The local public bodies have endeavoured to establish "Welfare Center for Working Women" under the assistance of the national government. The function of the centers, which will count 95 in the end of fiscal 1978, is to provide various programs for women workers as comprehensive regional facilities.

(8) The Labor Minister, with a view to administering the law successfully, shall undertake necessary surveys, and also is entitled to request the cooperation of the administrative agencies concerned in presentation of necessary information and materials.

C. *Child-Care Leave Law*: A long demanded Child-Care Leave Law was adopted on July 3, 1975. The law applies to women teachers of public kindergarten, primary schools and junior and senior high schools. It also applies to medical nurses and day-nursery nurses in public institutions. The law, effective from April 1, 1976, allow mothers with children under twelve months to take up to one year's leave if they wish to do so. During their leave, they are not paid, but are assured of returning their former posts.

In connection with this law, from January 1978 another kind of bounty is prepared for employers of the private medical institutions who have adopted child care leave scheme and paid certain percentage of salaries to the nurses, midwives, etc. who took the leave.

D. *The Employment Security Law*, promulgated in 1947, provides all people with opportunities to get jobs suitable to their abilities. For the enforcement of this law about 481 Public Employment Security Offices have been established throughout the country, and women who got placements through these offices in 1977 were 1,128,540 (except part-time workers and these who graduated from school in that fiscal year).

E. *Vocational Training Law*, established in 1958 and revised in 1969 and 1978, is to foster skilled workers needed for manufacturing and other industries by providing vocational training and conducting trade tests in order to enable workers to acquire and improve necessary skills, and thereby to assure the security of employment and the improvement of the worker's status as well as contribute to the development of the national economy.

There were about 425 Vocational Training Centers in 1977, where a number of training opportunities are opened to men and women equally providing assistance for them to acquire skills necessary for jobs.

However, most women trainees are enrolled in a relatively limited group of occupations, e.g. garment and textile fabrics work, sewing and knitting machine operation, clerical work, typewriting, and printing or service works such as barber and beautician.

F. *The Industrial Homework Law*, established in 1970, provides for those matters which are considered most fundamental and imminent for the improvement of the working conditions of homeworkers. They include the guarantee of the minimum amount of homework wages, safety and hygiene, a system of homeworkers' pocketbook, etc.

G. *The Trade Union Law*, promulgated in 1949, aims at promoting the status of workers by establishing equal standing for both workers and employers in their bargaining, and protecting workers on their collective activities.

H. *Legislations Concerning Social Security for Women Workers*: The welfare of women workers are also protected by other social insurance laws which cover all workers.

These laws assure workers of benefits resulting from accident sickness, unemployment, old age, etc.

Workmen's Accident Compensation Insurance Law, established in 1947, provides a worker with prompt and equitable protection against his or her injury, invalidity or death due to the causes of occupational accidents or diseases for which the employer has an obligation to compensate according to the stipulation of the Labor Standards Law. The law also regulates to establish the necessary institutions for the welfare of the worker in occupational accidents or diseases.

The Health Insurance Law, established in 1922, provides for the

payment of benefits to insured persons and to persons supported by them in case of sickness, injury and death attributable to causes of sources outside of their employment. This law contains maternity benefit provisions as stated in Chapter VI *Social welfare for women*.

The Employment Insurance Law, established in 1975, grants an unemployment insurance benefit to the insured person when he or she is out of job. An insured person who is out of job and cannot be employed in spite of his or her will and ability to work, is paid 90 days in minimum, 300 days in maximum of 60% to 80% of his or her average daily wage in proportion to his or her total period of insured employment.

I. *The Welfare Pension Insurance Law*, established in 1941 and revised in 1954 provides for the payment of benefits in case of old age, invalidity, death or retirement of a worker and contributes to the stabilization of livelihood and the promotion of welfare, of a worker and his or her survivors.

Specific Measures for Promoting Employment of Widows

A. Women's and Young Workers' Bureau initiated a special vocational training system for widows and housewives who generally find greater difficulty in obtaining suitable jobs.

Industrial Home Work Consulting Centers: The aim of these centers is to provide housewives and widows who encounter with difficulty in doing gainful work outside their homes, with information, consultation, reference and other conveniences, and thus help to solve problems concerning industrial home work. 9 of the Homework Consulting Centers were reorganized to the Womens' Employment Assistance Centers in the fiscal year of 1978. Altogether there are 49 centers which were established in the years between 1955 and 1978. The Women's and Young Workers' Bureau subsidized these centers with one-third of expenses and gives necessary guidance and supervision as to their management and services.

B. In order to promote employment of widows with children under 20 years of age, the Women's and Young Workers' Bureau is endeavouring to improve comprehensive counselling and guidance for employment and upgrade vocational training for them. Countermeasures for widows are as follows:

Comprehensive counselling and guidance, as well as practical training are provided for widows who wish to find employment. Widows who receive this training receive skill acquisition allowance and commutation allowance (From 1978, maximum ¥1,470/day).

In 1978, the vocational counsellors were first assigned for the betterment of vocational guidance and counselling for widows in main Public Employment Security Offices.

From fiscal 1978 a vocational training allowance is paid to widows who attend workshop adaption training as well as to those who receive public vocational training (Average of 74,933 yen a month).

An incentive bounty is paid to employers who employ widows continuously through the placement of the Public Employment Security Office (13,000 yen a month per one widow).

And Employers who carry out workshop adaption training receive allowance for this training (Monthly allowance is 12,000 yen).

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 provides 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 1977 was 25.0 years for women and 27.4 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 husband or wife, is presumed to be the property in their co-ownership. As to the expenses of the marriage life, both husband and 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 perscribed 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 agreement, either party may apply to the family court for mediation. The court makes all efforts, in close contact with parties and others concerned, to get at a conclusion for the best of the parties. In 1977, 10 percent of all the divorces were "divorces through mediation" by the family courts (The family courts are established in 1949 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 (or man), when divorced, may demand distribution of property from the husband (or the wife), 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 it soon began to decline, and therefore the last few years it has remained without much fluctuation. The rate is getting high in these years. The number of actual cases was 129,000 or 1.14 cases per 1,000 population, in 1977.

In spring 1976, the Civil Code was amended, responding to the strong demand for equality of men and women by women's organisations, to the effect that the divorced persons may use sur-name during marriage continuously after the divorce, upon application within 3 months after the divorce, which can be done without consent of the other party of the broken marriage. Prior to this amendment, the persons who had changed sur-name upon marriage, in most cases women, were required to resume their previous sur-name after divorce.

(Parental Rights) Both parents exercise their parental authority in concert; they are absolutely equal with regard to 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 media-

tion 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 an 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 15.5 persons in 1977. In consequence, the average childbirth expectancy per one couple dropped from more than 5 in the prewar years to 2 in 1972. At the same time, child bearing ages tend to concentrate during the period from 25 to 29 years of age. Also, the life expectancy should be noted; in 1977 it was 72.7 years for men and 78.0 for women – four years extension during the past ten years.

Table 17. Trends in Vital Statistics, 1930–1977

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
70	103,119	18.8	6.9	11.8	10.0	0.93
75	111,251	17.1	6.3	10.8	8.5	1.07
76	112,420	16.3	6.3	10.0	7.8	1.11
77	113,499	15.5	6.1	9.4	7.2	1.14

Source: Vital Statistics, Ministry of Health and Welfare.

* 1975 is round numbers.

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 house-work.

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. According to a survey (1975), the average hours spent by housewives for social, cultural and recreational activities are about 7 hours — twice as many as those in prewar years. The time spent by housewives for housework is 7 hours and 46 minutes.

All these changing circumstances have much to do with the increasing number of married women who want to undertake gainful work. About a half of all married women are in the labor force. 6 out of 10 married women workers have children under 18 years of age. One out of 5 have children under 6 years of age.

According to the Annual Report on the Labour Force Survey 1977, the number of married women working out of their homes was 6.8 million, occupying 2.4 percent of all married women. Over 1 million of these married women workers have children under 6 years of age. In 1977, there are 19,664 day nurseries (12,287 in public and 7,377 in private) all over the country which accommodate about 1.9 million children under 6 years of age (1.2 million in public and 687 thousand in private). 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 the increase of nuclear families, unlike the traditional type of the Japanese family where the husband's parents and other relatives used to 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 over the housekeeping work in her place, and frequently the husband takes off from his work to do the housework, or the wife tries to do the chores though she is supposed to be in bed, thus causing much unstableness in the family life.

V. RURAL WOMEN

Increased Participation in Agriculture

The labor force in agriculture, being on the decrease in recent years, accounted for 11 percent of the total labor force in 1977 while women occupied 51 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. Statistics indicate that in 1977 about 86 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 heads of the families or eldest sons leave home, though in most cases families keep on their farming enterprises. The consequence is that in these families women, especially 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 circumstance has made it necessary for them to increase their time in 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 recent years for farming households and as a result of modernization of housekeeping facilities, housekeeping work has been getting less and less toilsome. With the use of electric appliances such as washing-machines and electric pans, and other improvements in domestic facilities, farm women have been relieved of 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, which aim at improving rural home life. At present about 2,326 officials — all women — are at work in this field throughout 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 visiting houses with expectant mothers or sick people, along with the general improvement of public health programs, has helped to improve 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 resident in modern industries in urban areas has paved the way for 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 and social problems at large.

Most women in farm households have been organized themselves into members of agricultural cooperatives or regional women's clubs. Those who have children of school age are members of 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 community.

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 set up in 1946, in accordance with the provision of Article 25 of the Constitution, 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, etc., and 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 Young Workers' Bureau. Also, the training of Home Helpers to be employed by enterprises (See Section IV Women in Family Life) is mostly aimed at helping widows.

Child Rearing Allowance

The Child Rearing Allowance Law was enacted in 1961. The allowance given to low-income fatherless families in accordance with the number of children.

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.

Children's Allowance

Based on the Children's allowance Law enacted in January 1972 (Law No. 73, May 1971), Children's Allowance Scheme was established as the last measure of social security in Japan.

The responsible body for administration is the Ministry of Health and Welfare. This scheme is contribute to the stability of family life as well as to promote the healthy growth of children who will carry on the future society by granting the allowance to the persons who bring up their children. There are approximately 2 million requisite children to be granted the allowance.

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 such as Child Guidance Centers. In 1977 there were about one million children under 6 years of age in 19,664 authorized day-nursery centers, of which 12,287 were public institutions and 7,377 were private.

Health Insurance

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

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. In 1977, there

were 858 health centers, in order to give free medical examination and health guidance to the community residents, as well as to improve the sanitation of the community. Special emphasis is put on the health guidance for expectant mothers and infants, and such activities may be ascribed to the definite drop of the infantile death rate in recent years.

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. As of 1977 they have been established in 680 villages across the country.

Old Age Pension

The Welfare Pension Scheme established in 1942 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 (60 for men) on condition that 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 1955. Under this system any man or woman who made 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 World War II, the aspiration among women for the betterment of life has created a great number of women's clubs aimed at improving 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 indispensable.

Various Types of Women's Clubs

There are about 25,000 regional women's clubs, whose total membership counts 6 million. 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 higher standards of women's status and develop the welfare of communities.

The second largest membership is found in the women's department of agricultural cooperatives, counting about 2.9 million in about 5,000 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 and improvement of health, etc.

Apart from these regional organizations, 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 large. For instance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the oldest among the Japanese women's organizations, was founded in 1886, with the purpose of promoting peace and social welfare based on christianity, especially by prohibition of alcohol. They have always been active to improve the status of women. Especially their constant efforts to abolish the licensed prostitution system in prewar times are most highly appreciated.

The League of Women Voters of Japan has a brilliant record in the struggle for political rights of women. Its original organization was established in 1924 by progressive women who fought courageously for the realization 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 4,000 in all.

Besides above-mentioned organizations, there are Women's League for Protection of Human Rights, Women Lawyers' 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 international organizations, and send delegates to respective international conferences. Sometimes Japan offers to act as host to such international meetings.

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, 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, which aimed at punishing exploiters of prostitution and protecting the women needing rehabilitation. Also many of them are keenly interested in the issues regarding atomic and hydrogen bombs and unite their activities in the campaigns for peace.

And in the International Women's Year, over forty organizations worked jointly to extend the campaign throughout the country and in November they had the National Convention of the International Women's Year, the largest non-governmental event of the year attended by more than two thousand three hundred people. In the Convention a resolution was adopted, calling on national and local governments to make every effort to eliminate discrimination against women in every field of society.

VIII. DECADE FOR WOMEN

In the beginning of 1975 the proclamation by the Prime Minister to launch the International Women's Year in Japan and the announcement by the Government of its determination to strengthen its efforts to improve the status of women were issued.

A "Resolution on the Enhancement of the Social Status of Women in the International Women's Year" was adopted in June 1975 by both Houses of the Japanese Diet on the initiative of women Representatives.

And in September 1975, in line with paragraph thirty-four of the World Plan of Action, adopted in the World Conference of International Women's Year in Mexico, the Japanese Government established within the Prime Minister's Office interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery with a mandate to implement the recommendations of the Plan. The body, "Government Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies relating to Women" is headed by the Prime Minister and is composed of representatives of deputy ministers and four civilian advisors, who are all women.

The secretariat of the Headquarters was established within the Prime Minister's Office. A woman was newly appointed as the head of the secretariat and several staff members are assisting her in her job.

At the same time, the Advisory Council to the Prime Minister on Women's Affairs was organized within the Prime Minister's Office. The Council consists of thirty-three members appointed by the Prime Minister in their individual capacities. After a series of discussions, the council made recommendations in November 1976 with regard to the policy items to be included in a national plan of action for improving the status of women.

Having this recommendation in mind the Headquarters made the National Plan of Action in January 1977, taking into consideration the needs and problems peculiar to Japanese women. The National Plan of Action incorporates the Government's basic thinking on matters relating to women, guidelines for policy for the next ten years, which have been declared by the United Nations "The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace". The five major areas covered in the policy guidelines shown in the outline of the National Plan are (a) improvement of the legal status of women, (b) increased participation of women in political, economic,

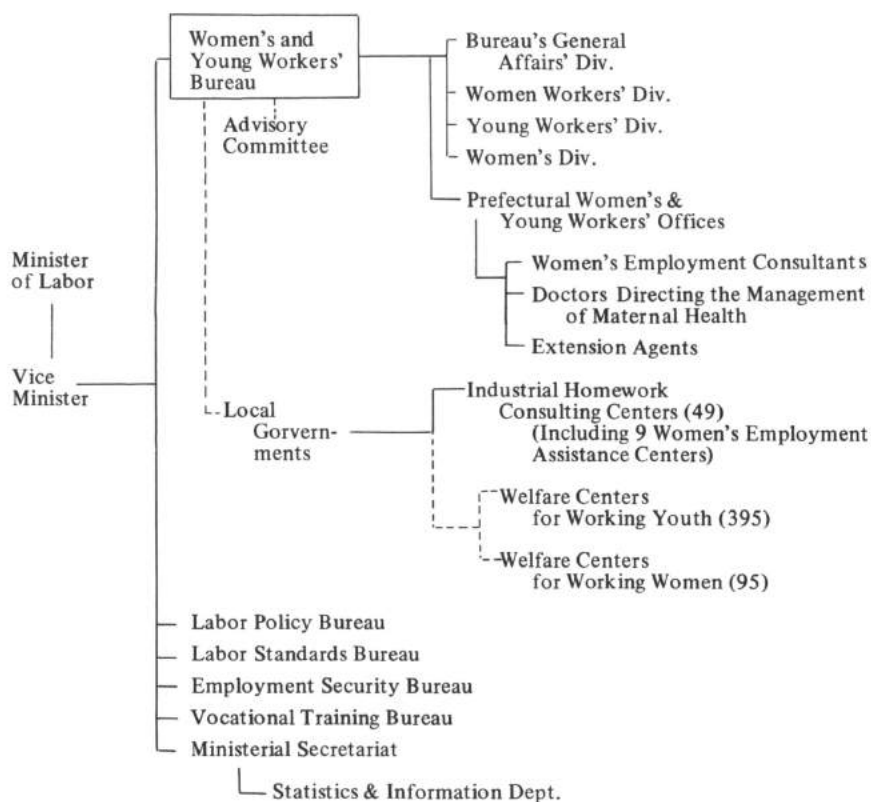
social and cultural activities, etc. (c) due consideration for maternity and protection of the health of women, (d) ensurance of economic stability of the ages, and (e) promotion of international co-operation.

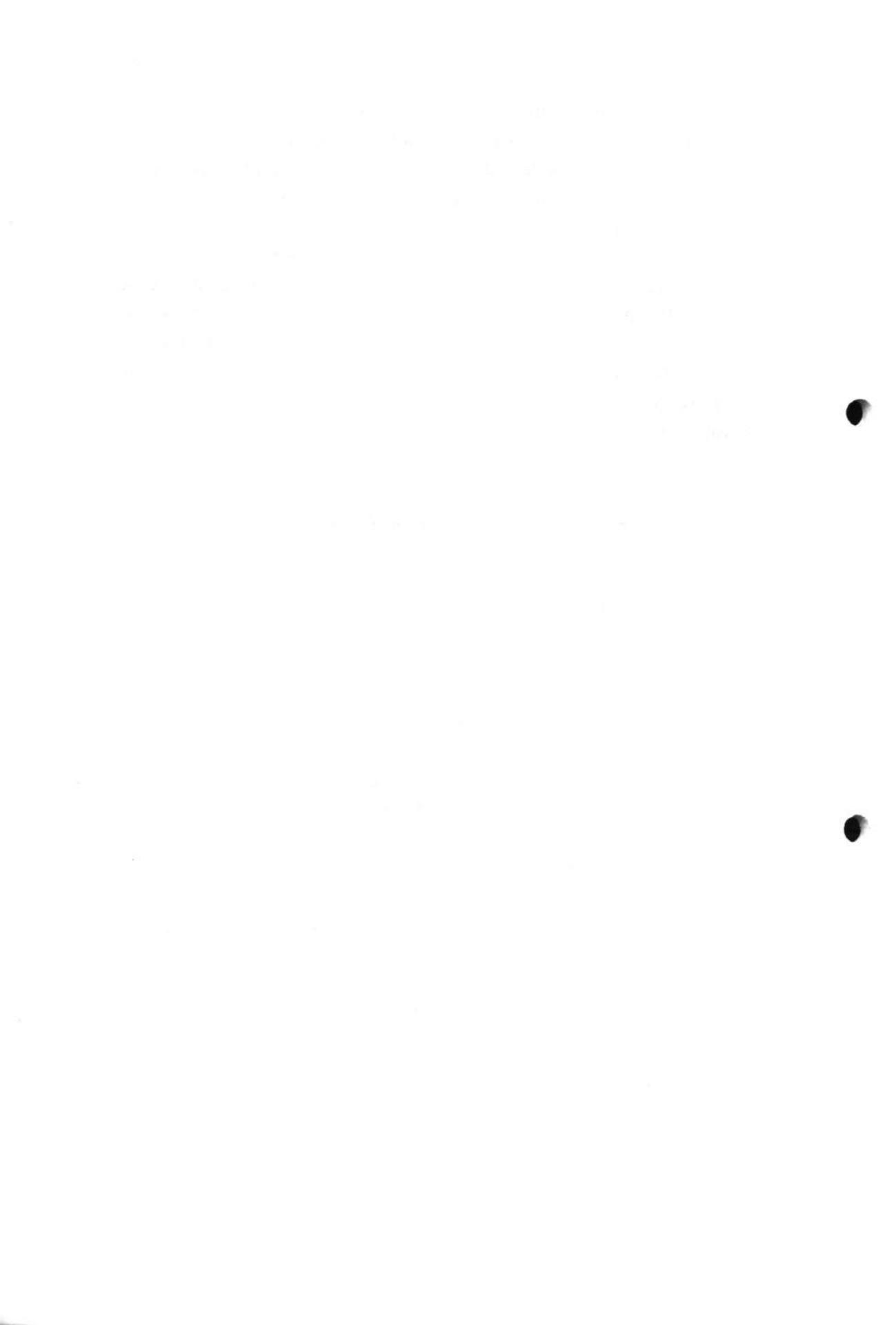
About the Women's and Young Workers' Bureau

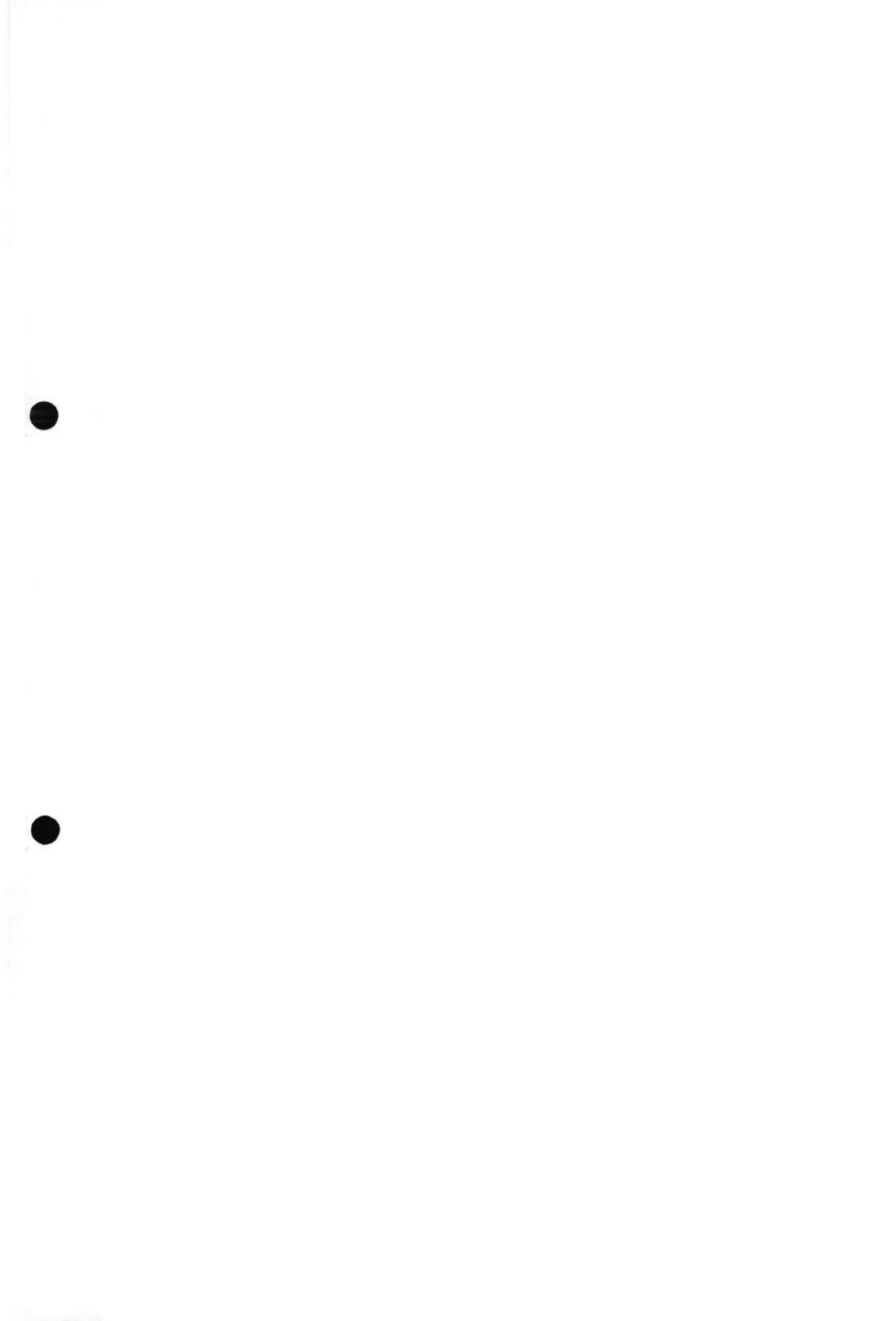
The Women's and Young Workers' Bureau, in the Ministry of Labor, is concerned with the responsibilities for the welfare of women and young workers. The Bureau, in addition, is responsible for the improvement of the status of women as a whole.

To discharge these responsibilities, the Bureau undertakes surveys and education campaigns, and offers guidance to local governments, employers and workers. It enforces two laws under its jurisdiction as well, the Working Womens' Welfare Law and the Working Youth's Welfare Law. The Bureau further deals with related stipulations of the Labor Standards Law with special reference to women and young workers. The organizational chart of the Bureau is shown in the below.

Organizational Chart of the Women's and Young Workers' Bureau









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