

ABOUT
THE WOMEN'S AND
MINORS' BUREAU

Women's and Minors' Bureau
Ministry of Labor
Japan

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Mission of the Bureau

After the end of World War II, the Government of Japan set about its policy based on the principle of democracy putting much emphasis on the improvement of the conditions of women and children, in conformity with the genius of the Constitution which guarantees the fundamental human rights and equality of men and women. Thus the Women's and Minors' Bureau, entrusted with a mission as described below, was set up in the Ministry of Labor when the latter was established in the National Government in September 1947.

The Women's and Minors' Bureau, as a government department is charged with the responsibility to elevate the status of women to promote the protection and welfare of women and young workers including those in industrial homework and domestic service.

The Bureau in addition is responsible for the promotion of welfare of workers' families and family workers in small undertakings.

To discharge these responsibilities, the Bureau undertakes surveys, and educational campaigns and offers guidances to local governments, employers and workers. It also enforces two laws under its jurisdiction, the Working Women's Welfare Law¹⁾, and the Working Youth's Welfare Law²⁾, which clarify the responsibilities of the state as well as the enterprises and local governments to ensure the comprehensive arrangements for the well-being and advancement of working women and youth respectively.

In addition, the Bureau administers matters concerning the establishment, revision, abolishment and interpretation of related stipulations of Labour Standards Law peculiar to women and minor workers.

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- Note: 1) Working Women's Welfare Law, promulgated and came into force on July 1, 1972, aims at furthering the welfare and improving the status of working women by taking appropriate actions to help them combine their dual responsibilities of work and home, and to enable them to develop and make best use of their abilities.
- 2) Working Youth's Welfare Law, promulgated and came into force on May 25, 1970, aims at furtherance of welfare and development of working youth by taking appropriate action to promote vocational guidance and training, or to set up the welfare facilities for young workers.

Organization of the Bureau

The Bureau has the national office, with the Director-General and the following 4 divisions:

- a. General Affairs' Div.; in charge of general affairs, including the matters relating to budget, personnel and the coordination of the works of the Bureau.
- b. Women Workers' Div.; in charge of the matters relating to the protection and welfare of working women.
- c. Minor Workers' Div.; in charge of the matters relating to the protection and welfare of working youth.
- d. Women's Div.; in charge of the matters relating to the improvement of the status of women, the problems of women working on farm or in family trade, industrial homeworkers and the welfare of workers' families.

There is a tripartite advisory committee on women's and minors' problems attached to the Bureau, which has the advisory function to the Ministry of Labor.

The Bureau has local offices throughout the country, one office in every prefecture. The local offices and under the direct supervision of the national office, being independent from the prefectural governors. Attached to the local offices, there is a network of the Extension Agents, consisting of 3,000 learned citizens, appointed by the Minister, who assist the work of the local offices on the voluntary basis.

Works of the Bureau

The Bureau carries out such works as:

- (1) Finding facts, collecting information relating to working women and youth, and the status of women by means of field surveys, meeting of experts, etc.
- (2) Education of the public, by organizing meetings and campaigns, and publication of the materials relating to the facts about women and youth as well as through mass-media.
- (3) Giving guidance and advice to employers and agencies concerned in relation to the activities for the welfare of women and youth.
- (4) Liaison and coordination service concerning women's problems.
- (5) Providing counselling service on the problems of women and youth.
- (6) Administering the matters concerning the establishment, revision, abolishment and interpretation of the provisions of Labour Standards Law particular to women and minors, and advising the Director-General of the Labour Standards Bureau concerning the matters relating to the enforcement of the said provisions of the law.
- (7) Taking measures to promote the welfare of working women and youth specified by the Working Women's Welfare Law and the Working Youth's Welfare Law, including the formulation of the Basic Welfare Policies.
- (8) Subsidizing local autonomous bodies to encourage and help them develop appropriate works for the needs of the area such as the establishment of

welfare facilities.

- (9) Offering help to employers to introduce home help service within industry for the benefit of their employees.
- (10) Offering cooperation to the work of the U.N. Commission of the Status of Women and inviting women officials to seminars from countries in Asian area.

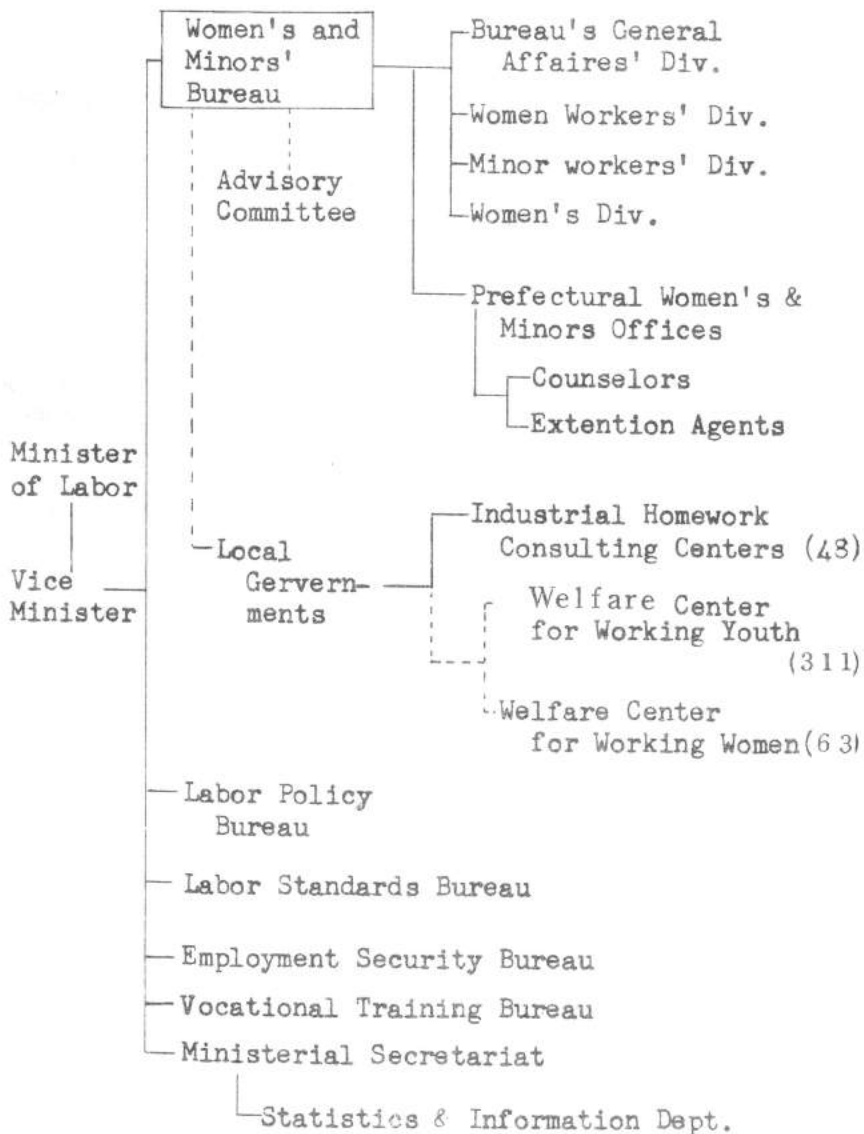
Channels of administration

Policies and programs of the Bureau are carried out through 2 main channels;

- 1) Prefectural women's and minors' offices under the supervision of the Bureau undertake surveys, educational campaigns and the measures largely concerned with protection of women and young workers;
- 2) Local governments, prefectural and municipal, under the aid and guidance of the Bureau, undertake matters relating to vocational guidance, vocational training, the establishment and running of welfare facilities, and other matters assigned by the welfare laws for working women and youth.

As to the welfare facilities, there are now 63 working women's welfare centers, 311 working youth's welfare centers, 43 industrial homework consulting centers.

Diagram of the Women's and Minors' Bureau



Laws relating to the Women's and Minors' Bureau

Ministry of Labour Establishment Law
(Selection)

Chapter I General Provisions

(Mission of the Ministry of Labour)

Article 3. The Ministry of Labour shall be the Government organ responsible for the integrated administration of the affairs and enterprises of the National Government, as enumerated below, to improve the welfare of the wage earners and advance their opportunities for securing profitable employment, thereby making contribution to the economic prosperity and the stabilization of the people's life:

(1) - (2-2) Omitted

(3) Research, adjustment and coordination of the problems for promotion of women's status and other women's problems;

(4) - (9) Omitted

(Power of the Ministry of Labor)

Article 4. For the purpose of carrying out the responsibilities provided for in this law, the Ministry of Labor shall have the powers as listed below; such powers shall, however, be exercised in accordance with laws (including orders issued thereunder):

(1) - (32-8) Omitted

(32-9) To draw the Basic Plan for Women Workers' Welfare and to provide for the standards of establishments and managements of Welfare Centers for Working Women, based on the Working Women's Welfare Law (Law No.113 of 1972);

(32-10) To draw the Basic Plan for Young Workers' Welfare and to provide for the standards of establishments and managements of Recreation Centers for Working Youth, based on the Working Youth's Welfare Law (Law No.98 of 1970);

(32-11) - (50) Omitted

Chapter II Ministry Proper

Section I Internal Subdivisions

(Functions of Women's and Minors' Bureau)

Article 9. The Women's and Minors' Bureau shall take charge of the following affairs;

- (1) Promotion of the working conditions peculiar to women and minor workers, and their protection;
- (2) Prohibition of employment of children;
- (3) Drafting of the Basic Plan for Women Workers' Welfare and other matters concerning the administration of the Working Women's Welfare Law, excluding the provisions of Article 7 and 8;
- (4) Drafting of the Basic Plan for Young Workers' Welfare and other matters concerning the

administration of the Working Youth's Welfare Law, excluding the provisions of Article 8 to 11;

- (5) Family labor problems and domestic servants;
- (6) Other labor problems peculiar to women and minor workers, in addition to those listed in the preceding items;
- (7) Worker's family problems, excepting, however, matters assigned to other Ministries by law;
- (8) Research, liaison and coordination on problems of the promotion of women's status and other women's problems, provided that such adjustment and coordination shall not preclude other Ministries from carrying out such affairs as are placed thereunder by law.

Section III Local Branch Offices

Part 3 Women's and Minors' Offices

(Women's and Minors' Offices)

Article 17-2. The Women's and Minors' Offices shall be established in such prefecture and their titles shall be prefixed by the names of the prefectures concerned.

- 2. The locations of the Women's and Minors' Offices shall be the sites of the prefectural governments of the prefectures concerned.
- 3. The jurisdictional areas of the Women's and Minors' Offices shall be the areas of the prefectures concerned.

4. The Women's and Minors' Offices shall take charge of the affairs prescribed in each item of Article 9.
5. The Internal organization of the Women's and Minors' Offices shall be provided for by the Ministry of Labor Ordinance.

