

Special Feature: Womenomics

Womenomics

In 2005 Japanese society shifted to one with a declining population for the first time since statistics began in 1899, except for a three-year period during and after World War II. The phenomenon is often said to cast a shadow over the Japanese economy and society, bringing about a shortage of labor power, a shrinking domestic market, and a negative impact on social security. However, the future may not be so gloomy if Japan encourages more women to participate in the labor market.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, in fiscal 2005 Japan's total labor force, including those looking for work, marked the first increase in eight years of 66.54 million, up 150,000 over the previous year. Particularly notable is the increase of female workers: 150,000 over fiscal 2004 and 220,000 over the past three years. Of the total 66.54 million, 41.4%, or 27.52 million, are women. The figure rose 15.9% over the last two decades, compared with 8.4% for men.

To further promote female labor participation, the working environment for women, particularly those with children, needs to be improved. A public opinion survey released by the Cabinet Office in April 2006 shows that only 48% of pollees in Japan answered that their country is an easy place to raise children, against 78% in the United States and 98% in Sweden. In the fiscal 2006 budget, the Japanese government allocated ¥1,058 billion for a better environment for child rearing and other related projects, including subsidies for child day-care centers. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the number of children at day-care centers as of October 2004 stood at 2.09 million, an increase of 246,000 in the last five years. The number of day-care centers open for more than 11 hours a day was 13,166, up 47% from 2000. Some large Japanese companies have recently launched programs to rehire women who left employment after marriage and child-birth.

Trends in Working Population

(10,000 persons)

FY	Total	Female	Male
1985	5,975	2,374	3,601
1990	6,414	2,606	3,808
1995	6,672	2,701	3,971
1996	6,737	2,731	4,006
1997	6,794	2,767	4,027
1998	6,789	2,762	4,027
1999	6,775	2,753	4,022
2000	6,772	2,762	4,010
2001	6,737	2,753	3,984
2002	6,677	2,730	3,948
2003	6,662	2,735	3,927
2004	6,639	2,737	3,902
2005	6,654	2,752	3,902

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Note: Figures are for 15 years old and above.

Workforce Participation in Industrial Countries, 2004

(%)

	Female	Male
USA	59.2	73.3
Australia	55.8	71.0
UK	55.7	70.1
Korea (ROK)	49.9	75.0
France	49.2	62.0
Germany	48.9	64.9
Japan	48.2	73.4
Italy ^a	37.1	62.3

Source: International Labor Organization.

Note: Figures are for 15 years old and above. UK and USA are for 16 years old and above.

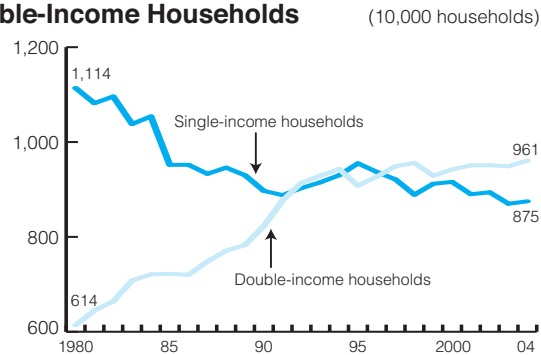
a. 2003.

Women's Workforce Participation by Age



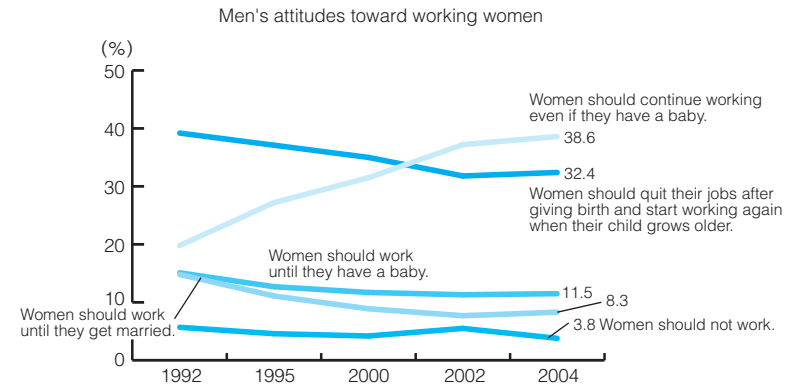
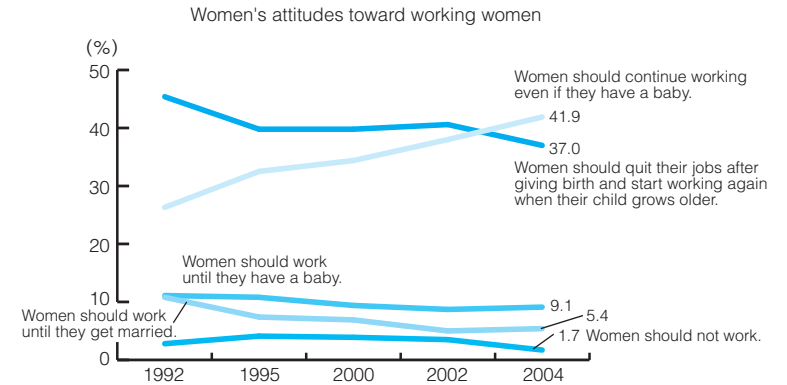
Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
 Note: Figures are the percentage of the labor force population in the total population of each age group. The labor force population is the total number of persons who worked for one hour or more for income, were off from work, or were unemployed but sought employment during the last week of each month in which a labor force survey was conducted.

Trends in Double-Income Households



Source: Cabinet Office, *Danjo kyodo sankaku hakusho* (White Paper on Gender Equality).
 Note: "Single-income households" are households consisting of working husbands in industries other than agriculture and forestry with wives who are not in the labor force or employed. "Double-income households" are households in which husbands and wives are both employed in industries other than agriculture and forestry.

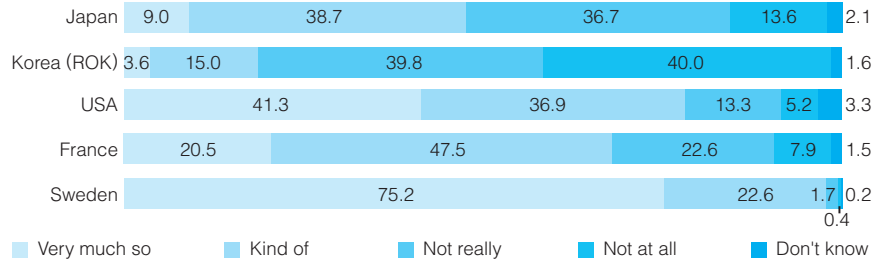
Transition in Attitudes to Working Women



Source: Cabinet Office, *Danjo kyodo sankaku hakusho* (White Paper on Gender Equality).

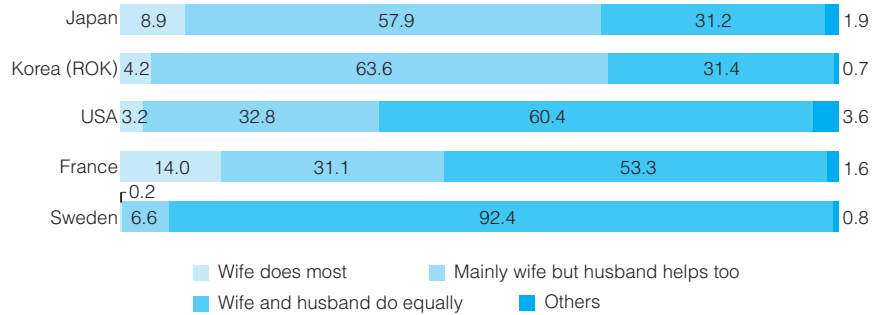
Opinion Survey

Do you think your country is an easy place to raise children? (%)



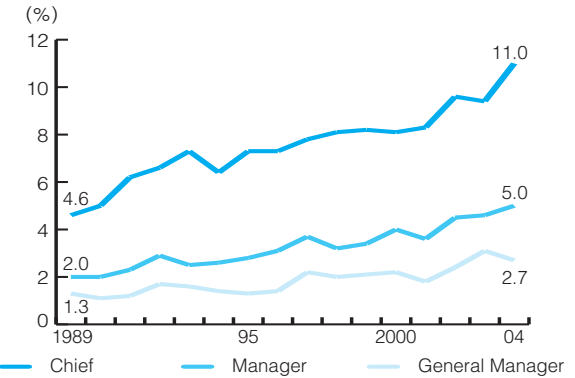
Source: Cabinet Office.
Note: The survey was conducted October–December 2005.

Sharing of Child Rearing



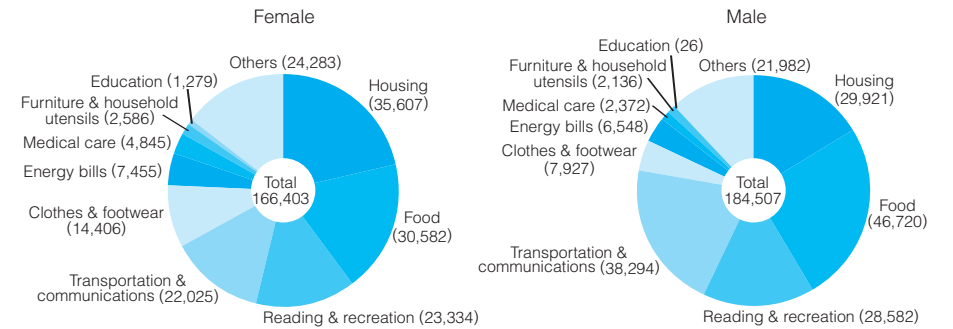
Source: Cabinet Office.
Note: The survey was conducted October–December 2005.

Trends in Share of Female Executives in Private Companies



Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

Average of Monthly Disbursements, 2005 (Single-person Household) (¥)



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
Note: Figures are for under 34 years old.