A Bimannual Publication of the National Women's Education Centre of Japan

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON WOMEN'S STUDIES

Members of the Steering Committee were: Ms. Masako Aranou, Professor, Chiba University; Ms. Chisato Uno, Associate Professor, Kyoto Seika University; Mr. Haruko Kun, Professor, Tokyo Women's Christian University; Mr. Yoshiko Koba, Professor, Tokyo Gakugei University; Ms. Masako Hara, Professor, Osaka University; Ms. Miyako Fujio, Professor, Tokyo Seika University; Ms. Kuroko Funakoshi, Researcher on women's studies.

II. Outline of reports at the International Seminar on Women's Studies

1) Symposium: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGING SEX-ROLE

Reports were made on the present sex role in the industrialized as well as developing countries. After discussions on what might be done to change sex-roles, the following issues were raised:

1) "Sex and Gender: Changing Conceptualization of Sex-roles in the Last Forty Years: from Sex-roles to Gender"

Mr. Christine Béléguy, Researcher, Centre National de la Secrédité (France)

Sex reorganizes biological differences between male and female while gender is a general term given to socially and culturally determined roles of man and woman, and is therefore, a variable. We are apt to think of gender within the framework of sex and real social discrepancies between men and women as biological differences. This is because the concept of gender had evolved from that of the sex.

In reality man and women are cultural products of the society constructed on hierarchical relationship of gender. They do not represent natural biological differences. A society free of hierarchy, therefore, will help eliminate sex-role. If women emancipate men within the current hierarchical relationship then all men and women will be relieved.

It is difficult to imagine a society where men and women enjoy equality from the current sets of relationships. We must mobilize our knowledge and imagination to examine a new relationship between man and woman in order to achieve an equitable society liberated from hierarchy.

2) "Development and Society: Reproductive Relation and Political Economy"

Mr. Faruk Akhtar, Executive Director, UNHPS (Policy Research for Development Alternatives (Bangladesh))
Reproduction has become a new field of capitalist investment in industrial societies in which human life is produced through surrogate mothers and in-vitro fertilisation. Social relations of reproduction (forming relationships needed to sustain reproductive capacity to produce human species) is reduced to a capitalist relationship of production. Furthermore, the late phase capitalism is investing into the reproductive field of non-capitalist societies in the name of development. Population control is being carried out in the name of family planning activities.

In both the industrial and developing societies there is a striking similarity. In both women are reduced to a passive natural existence lacking any subjectivity. It is historically required of women to free their creative energies to resist destructive forces of late capitalism.

3) "Post-industrialization and Re-structuring of Gender Roles"
Ms. Chiharu Iwasa, Associate Professor, Kyoto Seika University (Japan)

In spite of the generally held myth that women enjoy individuality and equality, gender differences exist during the modern ages and was exploited by the capitalist. The relationship between capitalism and gender has been changing according to the level of development of capitalism. Feminists aim to challenge this exploitation.

The fourth period of post-industrialism created a labour market which was independent of the gender because of expanded job opportunities for women in service industries, low wage and unskilled men and the packaging of house-work as a service. New problems, however, are being created such as poliation of women's work. This is to say that while these jobs are on the hand an elite group of work was linked to gender these exists on the other hand a mass market very much criticised and limited by gender. In addition these is an ongoing global re-alignment of patriarchy in a new form.

This is to say the extricable housework is now being replaced with marginal labour taken up by other like Rousseau women, the aged or migrant workers. The issue for today's feminism is to fight against the divisive strategy of the capitalist by creating feminist consciousness consolidating men and women of all ages, class, race and nationality.

(2) Session I: FAMILY
The session dealt with reproductive technology and motherhood in Germany, China and Japan.

1) "Reproductive Technologies: Choice or Control?"
Ms. Reuven Klein, Research Fellow, Denk University (Australia)

Development of reproductive technologies (test-tube baby, surrogate mother, freezing eggs and embryos, egg banks, etc.) are nothing women have the right to refuse such technologies and to control her own body. IVF (in vitro fertilisation), an example of reproductive technology, in by and has a failed technology, giving the woman a healthy live child in only 3-10%. But experience continue because eggs appropriated via IVF technology seem to make infertile.

Furthermore, IVF research has become interlinked with development of transnational vaccine. Women in developing counties are being used for such experiments. What is advertised as "choice" is a choice only for a few privileged white women whereas reality the "choice" is nothing but "control" of ALL women in ALL parts of the world. We must recognize this and stop the technology right now.

2) "Motherhood in Germany - Past and Present"

Women's movement in Germany has always evolved around "motherhood" with its appreciation varying greatly from time to time depending on circumstances. When the second era of feminism emerged in Germany towards the end of the 1960s, feminists fully denied the "role of women". The role was characterized by denial of marriage as an institution, rise in the number of women who chose not to have children, rise in the number of employed women, divorce and one-parent families.

By 1980s, notions of sex-specific role and family has evolved. Feminists no longer needed to neglect "women's role". It become easier for women to handle work and child-rearing. People now think of family and work in a different way. Women's movements based on symbiosis with motherhood are playing leading role in advancing social change in the post-industrial society.

3) "The Special Quality of Motherhood in Japan. Motherhood as a Keyword for Understanding Social Changes and Family Problems in Japan"
Ms. Masumi Ohsumi, Associate Professor, Keio Jogakuen College (Japan)

Japanese people share a common understanding of motherhood as an innate ability of women. This ambiguous definition of motherhood includes concepts that mothers are born with instinctive love for their children. The society, on the other hand, sees motherhood as something which is noble and incapable.

Japanese mother exists beyond the relations enjoyed between real mother and child. She is a symbol laden with symbolic value. This concept of motherhood helped establish the social significance of childbirth and as a result, raise women's place in society as representatives of motherhood. At the same time the society rejected full participation of women in society.

4) "Will Chinese Women Return Home?"
Ms. Eriki Ohtani, Senior Lecturer, Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts (Japan)

Under the new open-door policy adopted in China a much
Debated issue was that women should return home. The debate was spurred by the government policy which aimed at improving productivity by reducing surplus labor. Many Chinese women do not want to stay home and be simply housewives. Historical circumstances had propelled Chinese women to join the workforce before they had time to ask themselves, "who am I?" or "what does it mean to be a woman?". In other words, they appear to have little experience in conceptualization of women's problems as they seem to be preoccupied with everyday work. It is an interesting question whether emergence of "modern family" is a necessity of the process of modernization regardless of socialist or capitalist society.

(3) Session II: WORK
The session focused on women's work in the formal sector and examined female workforce in Japanese and U.S. social economies and development policy and female labor in Asian countries.

1) "The Impact of Micro-electronics Technological Innovation on Working Women - In Martin and Domestics" Ms. Emiko Shibusawa, Researcher on female labor problems (Japan)

Microchip innovation in micro-electronics technology brings increasing number of women, mostly part-time workers and highly educated women, into the workforce.

This is creating new types of discrimination against women in their working environment and conditions such as creating jobs with wage differences, longer working hours, increased amount of work, stressiness and maternal distress.

Structural reorganization of work is in underway in various ways, concentration of working women in small enterprises, make differences in working conditions, diversified and unstable employment, irregular work hours and decline in rate of movement.

If these disadvantages are to be turned into advantages, women must consciously and selectively pursue their objectives and participate in social decision making.

2) "Development Policy and Women's Labour in Asian Countries" Ms. Michiko Heshiki, General Secretary, Asia Women Workers' Centre (Japan)

At the beginning of the 1980s, countries in Asia began to shift their development policy from import substitution to export-oriented strategy of industrialization. Free trade zones were established for the benefits of multinational companies. In 1972 Japanese companies began to make full scale overseas investments. Female workers, who make up some 80 per cent of all workers in free trade zones, work under low conditions and their rights to organize are restrained.

Asian women workers who increased in number as a result of the development policies of governments and emergence of international corporations found themselves incorporated into corporate strategies. This meant that sex-role became a globally entrenched pattern of work creating north-south problem among the ranks of women. On the other hand, women quickly formed groups to address women's labor problems which in the past evolved into a global network.

National women workers' organizations were established in Korea and the Philippines. Asian women are fighting and appealing for solidarity under difficult circumstances.

3) "Women in the U.S. Service Economy: Economic Autonomy or Low Wage Work?" Ms. Heidi Harnisch, Director, Hunting for Women's Policy Research (U.S.A.)

The number of working women has increased in the past several decades and working for wages is now the experience of the majority of women. In recent years mothers of young children have entered and remained in the labor market in record numbers. As a result too, as is observed in labor force participation of women even during the peak child-bearing years for women which is usually in their twenties.

Several reasons may be cited for this dramatic change: a shift to service economy, availability of women with education and skills, declining real wages for men, increase in the number of households headed by women and spread of women's movement and women's desire to lead an independent way of life. American women want economic independence and are willing to assume the same economic responsibility as their male counterparts.

Shift to service economy benefited women even during the period of low economic growth. The U.S. is expected to face economic uncertainty, stagnation and demographic changes in labor force around the year 2000. Even then, the working women is projected to increase. Public policy and labor union strategies must deal with these changes. Women should play an active role in the process.

(4) Session III: SEXUALITY
The session examined the image of women in media and status of women in sex industry with slide presentation. Discussion focused on effective ways of sending message including the use of humor and art.

1) "The-Observing Women's Image in the Media" Ms. Arie Sinagton, Director, Meda Watch (U.S.A.)

In order to successfully redline women's image in the media, there is a need to change basic attitudes about women. Perceived of women's role and power must be tackled. The process is based on the policies of First. Boys represents self-line and respect for one's own body, personality, intelligence, energy and life.

The world's media industry is dominated by a handful of multinational corporations. This centralized control has become completely incompatible with freedom of information. Women are under-represented in the male-dominated media industry.

2) "Sexualities in Japan's Girls' Comic Books" Ms. Chieko Yoshida, Research Assistant,
Girls' comic books in Japan have several notable characteristics: a) comic books that have young girls as heroines depict them free from the conventional sex role identity. We find, however, a persistent supportive male character in the background. b) Comic books that depict same-sex relationships took a third party perspective. These comics, however, do not suggest any human relationships that can affect changes in sex roles. A common factor running through both of these types is the trend of deconstructing female roles. Comic books illustrate the difficulty girls face in forming their true sex identity in a society pregnant with sex discrimination.

3) "Filipina Women in Japan's Sex Industry"
Ms. Lisa Gao (Filipina), Project Coordinator of Migmanan Women's Programme Resource Center for Philippinen Concerns (Japan)

The number of Filipina women working in Japan has increased in the 1980s. Many work in the sex industry as "Karayakara". Because of the uncertain hours and circumstances of their employment, they have become invisible and faceless exponents within the Japanese society.

Japanese men, often depicted by ruthless ways of doing business, seek manipulative pleasure and relaxation in sexual activities. Most women silently acknowledge this. Women's liberation must essentially involve eradicating conditions that breed prostitution and enslavement of women. Women's liberation cannot be pinned at the sacrifice of the women in the developing world.

4) "Pentographic Culture and Sexual Violence"
Ms. Minako Fushimi, Restitutor on Women's Studies (Japan)

Pentographic culture is the product of male-dominated society which has viewed women as an object of desire and control. It is a reflection of the society that suppresses women. Pentographic culture has been bred by a combination of discrimination against women and economic imperatives. It has been spawned by the inadequacy of information and has been oppressed by the necessity of a materialistic relationship. "The corporate man and the woman behind the fantasies" that organises the claim of an individual.

It has gained citizenship because of the lack of relations between married couples and dissatisfaction of communication in an age which we proudly call the high-technology information age. In a society that consumes this, women's role has been reduced to one of either membership or possession.

If women in its course of placing of pentography, we must ensure cultivated hers about women. And we must admit similarly to give guarantee it and ensure shelter for women who need them. We must build network among women.

5) Session IV: EDUCATION

In this session the present status, its impact and future issues of women's studies was discussed focusing on its place in higher education.

1) "The Development of Women's Studies in Korea and its Impact on Korean Society"
Ms. Ph. Baela Chang, Assistant Professor, Ewha Women's University (Korea)

Ewha Women's University took the lead in establishing women's studies in Korea. First lectures on women's studies started at the undergraduate level in 1977. The lectures were popular among students and women's studies was initiated at the graduate level in 1982. Today many male students attend lectures on women's studies. The future tasks will be to examine the differences not just between male and female but among different groups of women.

2) "Women's Studies in International Education: The Experiences of the Women and Development Programme at the Institute of Social Studies in The Netherlands"
Ms. Thalita Dorm, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Social Studies (The Netherlands)

The Women and Development Programme was established at the request of women in developing countries at the time of the second wave of feminist movement and the International Year of Women. The Programme conducts research and education to identify, analyse, and solve problems faced by women in the third world countries with a view to liberating them as human beings.

The Programme has four goals: a) maintain links with women's movements; b) understand the mechanism that generates discrimination and work out solutions to change power relations; c) identify and analyse discrimination in specific historical and socio-economic context of particular society; and that it should be interdisciplinary.

Courses are designed to benefit from the diverse background and experience of the participants through encouraging critical exchange and feedback. Field visits and surveys are used to build networks and efforts are made to synthesise theory and practice so that the future is to establish an alternative paradigm to replace the male-dominated and Eurocentric theories of social science.

3) "The Impact of Women's Studies on Education in Japan"
Ms. Nendo Russ, Professor, Waseda University (Japan)

Most women's courses at Japanese universities hinge on historical lecture format. Students who have taken women's studies courses remark that they were helpful in directing attention to the existence of discrimination based on sex. Other students, who took such courses gradually, particularly at university, have modified its after graduation either at home or at work.

Results of women's studies courses should be evaluated on a long-term basis.

Tasks for the future would include: a) amassing and compiling achievements in women's studies (preparing programmes and maps, and exchanging teaching experiences); b) reviewing studies and curricula from women's point of view (organisation of women's studies and related fields of study); and c) providing follow-up to women's studies education and linkage with social education.

6) Conclusion and tasks for future

It was confirmed that problems facing women are shared around the world, i.e., control of women through conventional household and reproductive technologies, new problems that arise in women's work from shift to service economy, image of women in media, sex industry and women and common problems concerning women's studies.

It was suggested that in order to exchange the fixed stéréotypes and eliminate discrimination, new relationships between men and women must be developed and a new society free of hierarchy and based on equality must be constructed. Women's
creativity must be mobilized for social change and solidarity among women should be strengthened to fight against capital's insidious marginalization of sex roles and bias against women in division of labor. Every opportunity must be seized to promote change of attitude by teaching women's studies. The way women is treated in the media and exploited in reproductive technology must be exposed. All in all women must act in unison and change the tide of discrimination.

The discussion and tasks at the International Seminar for Women's Studies may be summarized in the following four points:

1) Bridging theory and practice: In the past lectures on women's studies efforts have been made to bridge theory and practice by involving researchers in programme planning and using their research and reports on specific actions taken. This approach was adopted for the seminar.

In sessions on sexuality and education, researchers exchanged their research findings suggesting specific approaches that may be taken to change attitudes of women and society.

2) Link between higher education and social education: The need for establishing department of women's studies at institutions of higher learning and the kind of content of courses and operational methods were also discussed. Women's studies in social education remains to be discussed in future seminars.

The seminar recognized the importance of collaborating with institutions of higher learning to promote women's studies, and in place women's studies at the core of women's education. It was encouraging that about 35 per cent of participants were teaching staff and 25 per cent were civil servants. Active exchange of views on teaching experience was most positive.

The seminar was stimulating in advancing topics on women's studies. In-depth discussion was held on women's labour in the post-industrial society, discussion of women's liberation and theories on feminism.

3) The seminar benefitted greatly from the participation of women from developing countries who offered insight on women's issues from global perspectives. Impact of reproductive technology on women in developing and industrialized countries and Filipino women in sex industry were some of the topics highlighted.

The issue of women's labour in the framework of development policy and multinational corporations was also discussed. It was agreed that women's studies in Japan will need to incorporate perspective from developing countries.

It should be noted that women's studies in Japan entered its second phase following the International Seminar.

(Chisato Senda, Programme specialist, NWEC)

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

PROMOTION OF LIFELONG LEARNING

An increasing number of women are participating in social activities and enjoying it. More female students receive higher education and increasing number of women join the workforce. This can be attributed to changes in the social environment including longer life expectancy, availability of information technology, internationalism, and a shift to service economy.

According to the Opinion Survey on Lifelong Learning released in 1988 by the Prime Minister's Office, majority of the respondents said that enrollment in universities and lectures at universities should be opened to adult population. They expect universities and other institutions of higher education to play active role as providers of lifelong learning and education.

Exciting programmes are being suggested to encourage lifelong learning among women. In 1983, the flood-quoets for the Planning and Promotion of Policies Relating to Women drafted the New National Plan of Action towards the 21st century. One of the priority policies in the Plan is to offer a wide range of alternatives for lifelong learning. The Plan suggests providing training opportunities for women designed for each phase of their lives.

Since April 1989, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has been supporting “Women’s Lifelong College” programmes for promoting women’s lifelong learning” jointly with board of education in each prefecture and higher educational institutions. The College is designed to meet the ever diversifying and specialized needs of women for lifelong learning.

The programme supports women in career building, political and community and other social activities by providing places of learning advanced and specialized skills and knowledge. The programme also encourages women to keep up their studies and to put them to effective use.

This model programme is characterized by collaboration between society and academic institutions. Schools provide courses, library, language facilities and professional teaching.
staff. These are strategically combined with experience and expertise accumulated in the field of social education with pragmatic approach in the needs of women.

The budget for thirty lecturers has been appropriated in fiscal 1989. The amount constitutes a significant portion of the overall budget set aside for women’s education. These programmes operated by prefectoral board of education will be financed in part by the national government.

The composition of the program is outlined below:
1) College planning and organizing committee
   The committee, to be made up of about ten people from colleges and women’s organizations will be responsible for setting curriculum and preparing teaching materials.

2) Re-establishment of college
   The college will offer courses reflecting the needs of each region. The courses include women’s studies, international understanding, household management and lifelong learning.
   An average of thirty lecture hours will be given in a year on a one-to-one basis. The courses will offer seats to fifty to one hundred participants.

They will be offered in cooperation with public and private universities and junior colleges.

3) Certificate will be awarded to those who complete courses.
   Their names will be registered as leaders of community activities.

In 1989, there were twenty-four courses given in twenty-two prefectures and cities. Community leaders, working women and women with elder or even young children took and enjoyed specialized courses provided to them on college campuses.

It is hoped that women intellectually stimulated and "refereeshed" will become agents for their community leadership.

(Women’s Education Division,
1-life-long Learning Bureau,
Minister of Education, Science and Culture)

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HOME ECONOMICS FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, MALE AND FEMALE

Advances in science and economic development have produced affluent society. Today’s society is also aging, international and information-oriented society. To meet these changes, school education is in a process of transformation. A new curriculum which includes some revisions, was announced in March 1989 after examination by the education council.

The revision requires all students to take home economics which was in the past reserved exclusively for female students. Home economics as an academic subject has been revised several times since its introduction after the Second World War. So far home economics was designed primarily to teach daily skills of home management.

The revision of 1989 requires both male and female students to take home economics for the following reasons:

For all students, regardless of sex should be provided knowledge and skill necessary for everyday living. They should be more than that but also learn to respect and be of help to their family.

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WOMEN’S GROUPS IN JAPAN

The Women’s Group section is written by representatives of the group introduced.

FEDERATION OF JAPANESE WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS

The Federation of Japanese Women’s Organizations was established on
April 5, 1953 by Japanese women aspiring for peace, Sachie Harumasa, known as the pioneer of women’s movement in Japan, became its first president.

In the following year, the United States of America conducted hydrogen bomb test in the Bikini atolls. Crew of a Japanese fishing boat operating nearby suffered exposure from the radioactive fallout. The Federation of Japanese Women’s Organizations sent an appeal to the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), calling for the support of women around the world to ban nuclear weapons.

The "Appeal from Women in Japan", describing the details of the victims of the radioactive fallout was sent worldwide and created a sensation. The Appeal prompted women in the world to initiate the World Mothers Congress. Since then the Japanese Mothers Congress has met every year. The Federation affiliated to the WIDF in 1957 and has since been working for world peace in cooperation with international women’s movements.

During the height of the Vietnam War, the Federation of Japanese Women’s Organizations conducted a 100,000 yen fund-raising campaign to help mothers and children in Vietnam. The campaign contributed to the establishment of the Hansen Friendship Hospital.

There are some 50,000 nuclear arms in the world. Man will destroy himself in a case of a nuclear war. As Women of Japan, the world’s only country in which the atomic bomb was dropped, we are committed to abolishing nuclear arms from the face of the earth. The Federation is collecting signatures for the "Hiroshima-Nagasaki Appeal" which calls for a ban on nuclear arms.

The target is to collect one billion signatures from around the world. The Federation has also organized three campaigns called the "peace wave" jointly with women’s organizations in Japan and elsewhere.

The Federation of Japanese Women’s Organizations is working for equal rights and improvement of women’s status in society. To this end, the Federation has released a proposal to realize the United Nations’ goal of “equality, development and peace” in Japan. With regard to the New National Plan of Action it has submitted a request to the government.

At present the Federation has 500,000 members affiliated to women’s organizations, labour unions and women’s departments of citizens’ groups. These organizations have their own programmes but launch joint action on matters of mutual concern such as opposing the recent introduction of consumption tax and to tendencies toward militarism.

The current president is Fuki Kubo, (Vice chairman of WIDF). The Federation publishes monthly journal, Fujin Tsushin (Women’s communication) and an annual Fujin Hakesho (Women’s memoir) (The publications are all written in Japanese.)

For further inquiries please contact: 203, 8-17-8, Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151 Federation of Japanese Women’s Organizations (Nihon Fujin Domuri Kaigi-ka) tel: 03-440-6407 fax: 03-5427-5583

**JAPANESE MOTHERS CONGRESS**

As illustrated earlier, the establishment of the Japanese Mothers Congress is closely related to the appeal the Federation of Japanese Women’s Organizations has made to WIDF in 1953. The Appeal prompted women in the world to initiate the World Mothers Congress. Since then the Japanese Mothers Congress has met every year.

The World Mothers Congress was held in July 1955 in Lausanne, Switzerland. Some 1,060 mothers from around the world took part in the Congress. Its programme for 4,100 mothers in Japan organized Japanese Mothers Congress which met for the first time from June 7 to 9 to elect representatives among other business. Some two thousand representatives participated in the Congress which came to be known as the “Congress of Appeal with Mothers”.

Japan was represented by sixteen ordinary mothers, some of whom were mothers who had lost their children during the war. A bomb victims and the labourers. Upon their return from the World Congress, they organized two thousand meetings to report on their experience.

In due course these meetings became the catalyst for formation of mothers congress throughout Japan. At the same time the Japanese Mothers Congress became an annual event. The 36th Congress will be held in July 1990 in Chiba Prefecture.

"Mothers who give birth to life desire to bring up and protect it" (a verse from the poems dedicated to the World Mothers Congress) became the slogan of the congress held in places such as local communities, cities and prefectures. The central theme of the mothers congress is the abolition of nuclear arms.

The congress also addresses a wide range of issues from garbage management to national security articulating and putting into action women’s diverse demands. Mothers fought against polio, encouraged children to complete high school, improved school milk, and campaigned against price hikes (10,000,000 signatures) and for peace (3,000,000 signatures).

Grass roots activities are incorporated in the annual Japanese Mothers Congress. As present the central executive committee is made up of 48 organizations and all decisions are made on the principle of consensus agreement.

For further inquiries please contact: 2-9-2-1, Minamiaoyahachi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 119 c/o Nihon Kyosha Kaden BLD., Japanese Mothers Congress (Nihon Koysha Teikoku Renrakukai) tel: 03-310-1816, fax: 03-310-1837

**Street demonstration during Japanese Mothers Congress in 1980**

May 1990
1 Background

In April 1976, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into being in Japan. In the United States, anti-discrimination laws (prohibiting discrimination, the Equal Pay Act (1963) and Article 7 of the Civil Rights Act (1964), were formulated some twenty years ago ahead of most industrialized countries. The bill for the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in Japan was originally ruled out after the law in the U.S., but when finally enacted, the law was less drastic than initially designed.

Employees opposed the enactment on the grounds that the success of the Japanese economy in the post-war period had depended on the Japanese type of employment pattern which consisted of male-centered employment pattern based on lifetime employment, seniority-based wages and company-wide unions. They claimed that they needed time before the concept of equal opportunity in employment was broadly accepted.

On the other hand, female workers also opposed the law because it would mean deterioration of their working conditions. The Labour Standards Law formulated in Japan after the second world war (1947) under the guidance of General Headquarters (GHQ) signalled minimum working conditions and made provisions to protect female workers. The law made it a prerequisite to expect women to work under equal conditions alongside men and gave protection to help women who were generally forced to work under harsh conditions during the post-war period. The provisions banned women from overtime, night work and work on days off. Women were also accorded monthly leave during the annual period under the law.

Women were unassured, therefore, that if the Equal Employment Opportunity Law were to be introduced, it would conflict with the protective provisions in the Labour Standards Law and would take away their privileges (gains) and worsen working conditions.

Finally, the Law was enacted underlining in a new era of equal employment opportunities. It was felt that protective provisions would be accordingly revised.

2 Equal Employment Opportunity Law

The Law basically mandates employers to exercise best effort not to discriminate against female workers in recruitment, hiring, job assignment and promotion. On the other hand, it prohibits employers from discriminatory treatment in terms of training, welfare, retirement and lay-offs. It must be noted that while these "prohibition clauses" entail no penalties, it is considered that employers have learned the hard way through having legal cases in the press and taken "equality" in these fields more seriously.

Some of the protective provisions were revived including limits on overtime (for example, 3 hours a day in the old law), high-away and work on days-off. It is, however, not practical to apply the tenets across the board as majority of working women today are unskilled and not highly educated.

Accordingly for the time being these are two levels of application. Women in managerial jobs or limited clerical jobs are treated in the same way as male workers. All other female workers enjoy protective provisions with a very few changes.

3 Impact of the Law on Female Workers

After four years since the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, it is difficult to accurately appraise any statistically reliable impact on female labour. The Law is expected to have an impact on correcting wage differentials between the sexes.

Table 1 shows changes in average monthly wages of male and female workers. The wage differential diminished quickly during rapid economic growth (1960 to early 1970s). With a more reduced growth following the Old Crisis, the gap widened. The wage differential seems to have narrowed again slightly after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into force. We can see this more clearly by comparing the starting wage of female workers according to the level of education.

Table 1 Average monthly wage differential between male and female workers
Table 2 indicates that after the enactment of the law, female workers' starting salary (college and junior college graduation) has edged closer to that of male counterparts. The law appears to have had little effect on junior high and high school graduates.

This shows that highly educated women have appeared to benefit most from the Law. This can be explained according to the measures taken by business corporations in screening female workers. That is to say, corporations offered few courses to those who would work the same as men and take on ground jobs and those who will be satisfied doing evil jobs and being assistants to male workers.

Employers reasoned that it will not be economically justifiable to treat women who are working only temporarily, the same as men. Of the highly educated women only a fraction chose the first option: a reserve for elite. Most women are not attracted to men's style of work which means much overtime work and readiness to accept transfers.

In the four years since its existence, the Law has become established among Japanese corporations.

Table 2 Differential in starting pay between male and female college graduates and difference by educational level (1987)

<table>
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<th>education</th>
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<th>differential according to education</th>
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<td></td>
<td>medical job</td>
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</table>

Table 3 shows changes in the condition of recruitment in two years after enactment. In the past many Japanese corporations advertised exclusively for male recruits. Today increasing number of companies recruit without specifying sex in response to the demand for equality.

Women's labour participation in Japan continue to show an M-shaped curve falling at child-bearing age even with their changes. The bottom in M-shaped curve, however, is less pronounced than in the past indicating that more women consider job as a career rather than temporary part-time before marrying. In the future the impact of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law is expected to expand to all women workers and not merely the highly-educated.

Table 3 Recruitment by sex (number of companies) before and after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law
SURVEY REPORT

The "Women's Education Study Group" was established by National Women's Education Center in fiscal 1986. The Group selects basic data on women from various statistics and, through its analysis, studies the change in the awareness and social conditions of women in Japan. Each year it also publishes "Studies of Women as seen in Statistics." This report introduces statistical surveys on women's labour in Japan.

(a) Working Population

Working population is defined as the number of persons aged 15 and above capable of work minus those currently not working due to old age, schooling, or household and persons who have not actively looked for employment.

Labour force participation rate is defined as the proportion of working population to population of persons aged 15 and above. In 1988 the female labour force participation rate was 48.9% per cent and that of male, 77.1 per cent.

(b) Ratio of workers by sex and status of work

For both female and male, employed workers have increased while workers in family enterprise have recorded a decline.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Female

- self-employed
- employed

B. Male

- self-employed
- employed

1980-1985
(c) Female labour force participation rate by age group

The female labour force participation rate shows a J-shaped curve peaking in the 20 to 24 and 40 to 49 age brackets and hitting bottom in 25 to 29 age bracket. Since 1975, however, the bottom has been climbing steadily. The female labour force participation rate recorded a high average of 54.5 per cent around 1980 when many women took part in farming and other primary industries. The rate had fallen thereafter but has been steady recovering since 1975 if very modestly.

(4) Ratio of single and married female workers (non-agricultural)

The rise in female labour participation rate in recent years has been propelled by an increase in the number of middle-aged, married women joining the workforce. In 1980, married women, divorced or widowed women accounted for 68.2 per cent of all female workers, up from 44.7 per cent in 1972. The ratio exceeded 50 per cent in 1980.

(4) Ratio of part-time female workers

In 1980, part-timers made up 8.9 per cent of the total female workers. The ratio increased steadily to 23.6 per cent in 1984.

May 1990
INTRODUCING NWEC

The National Women’s Education Centre was founded in 1977 by Japan’s Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The Centre’s activities include:

Training for women in the form of seminars, lectures, group discussions, individual study projects, and other educational programmes. The Centre’s comprehensive training facilities are available to anyone whose subject matter relates to women’s education.

Exchange of information among women’s education leaders from Japan and overseas, as well as others who are interested in women’s issues.

Information gathered and disseminated by NWEC’s extensive libraries of printed and audiovisual materials.

Research issues relating to women’s and family education.

Apart from NWEC-sponsored programmes, our facilities are available to women’s groups and individuals for study programmes and cultural exchange free of charge (excluding meals and accommodation).

To use our facilities, please complete and submit a NWEC application form at least 10 days in advance but not six months before intended use.

PUBLICATION

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE OFFERING ON JAPANESE WOMEN

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

(Women’s Ministry Office, Japan 1-6-1, Nagatacho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100. February 1990, 56 pages. In English. This publication is not on sale. Any inquiries on it are requested to be made to the above address.)

The socio-economic changes and development in the post-Showa years, the brightening of the enjoyment life, a declining birth rate, and rising educational levels have brought with them remarkable changes in Japanese women’s lifestyle.

With the increase in the number of women in employment or otherwise active in society outside the home, women are now playing an increasingly important role in the economy and society.

In parallel with these new trends, there have been a wide spectrum of measures to make full use of women’s abilities in society especially since International Women’s Year. The efforts to meet such needs have been increased in the National Diet, the Ministries and Agencies and private organizations.

The Japanese Women Today, prepared by the Office for Women’s Affairs of the Prime Minister’s office in collaboration with the Ministries and Agencies, aims at introducing to the international community the present status of Japanese women and government’s policies regarding women.

This report consists of three parts, covering various aspects of women’s issues in Japan such as (1) current status of women’s (geographical and socio-economic data, family life, women’s attitudes and daily activities, school and social education, the current situation of female workers and employees, employment conditions, personnel management, part-time employees, employment situation for new graduates, structural changes in female employment, female workers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries), (2) policies related to women’s improvement of the legal status of women during the United Nations Decade for Women, formulation and implementation of the New National Plan of Action etc., (3) questions and answers concerning women’s issues in Japan.

The Japanese Women Today, including the latest statistics, provides updated information on the status of Japanese women to those who study women’s issues in Japan as well as to those who are concerned with enhancing the status of women or promoting an international understanding of women’s issues.

FOREIGN VISITORS TO NWEC

As of 31 March 1990, the NWEC received 7,000 visitors from 122 countries. Followings are some of the recent visitors of the Centre.


11 December: Ms. Asako S. Flavet, Director of the International Women’s Rights Action Watch, USA.

16 February 1990: Ms. Tanakamuro Patricia, Senior Educational Officer of the Ministry of Education, Tonga.

26 February: Ms. Sei-Wah Chung, Pro-consul of the Eswatini Women’s Institute, Korea.

26 March: Dr. Bronson Carbin, Director of the Scottish Child and Family Alliance: UK Report Representatives of the European Commission Children’s Network.