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

OUTLINE OF ON-LINE INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SERVICE (INFORMATION CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION OF NWEC)

1. Women's Information Network and On-line Information Retrieval

It has been some time since establishment of a global information network concerning women was emphasized as an important infrastructure supporting movements for improving women's status. This resulted from the recognition that mutual exchange of information and support activities are essential as women's issues have common features across national boundaries.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is promoting the systematization of women's information in advance of other regions. The scheme of this WINAP (Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific) project carried out by ESCAP is to first have each country establish women's information base providing complete information of the country, and then to build an Asia-Pacific Information System centered around the ESCAP region.

Here in Japan, with the establishment of "Study Group on Women's Information" by the Office for Women's Affairs, Prime Minister's Office in 1993 and the consequent basic research on information and networking, it may be said that the foundation of information distribution is being gradually developed. There is, however, no national computerized network formation realized at present.

The Information Centre for Women's Education of the National Women's Education Centre will be starting an on-line information retrieval service for women and the family as of July, 1993. This information centre will be connected with women's centre and administrative organs in charge of women's issues through telephone lines and aims to provide nationwide the data stored at the information centre. This system will mark the beginning of Japan's Women's Information Network.

This report briefly introduces the outline and purpose of this on-line information retrieval service.

2. History of the Information Centre for Women's Education

The Information Centre for Women's Education, in charge of the on-line information retrieval service, was established in 1994 as a special library for women and family affairs to serve as the information arm of the National Women's Education Centre. Since then, as part of a social education facility, it has functioned as a data centre supporting women's lifelong learning.

It has also collected and provided Japanese and foreign books and other materials emphasizing the importance as a research library in this area.

In 1995, the Center was chosen as a project entitled "Fundamental Planning on Information Centre for Women's Education," calling to strengthen and combine the two functions. Furthermore, a national network initiative was adopted, reorganizing the Library into Information Centre for Women's Education so that it will be strategically situated to serve as the centre of national information on women and family.

Since then, the National Women's Education Centre has invested in office computers and developed Theonora on Women and the Family and women-related bibliographic database. In January 1993, medium-scale mainframe computer was purchased to offer on-line information retrieval service from July 1993.

3. The Purpose of Information System for Women's Education

The Information System for Women's Education is based on the "Fundamental Planning on Information Centre for Women's Education" mentioned above, with the objective of establishing "National On-line Network for Women's Information".

Specific goals of the system are as follows:

(3) Construction of a national on-line information retrieval system on women's information

The objective is to build a system which enables each facility to retrieve database prepared and stored in the Centre by connecting it with women's education facilities and women's administrative offices via public telephone network. This aims not only to support...
Chart 1 Concept Diagram of the Information System for Women's Education

- Collection of information & materials
  - monographs (Japanese books, Foreign books)
  - serials
  - newspaper clippings
  - learning information (questionnaire survey)

- Acquisition & registration
  - preparation of work sheet

- Information processing
  - subject analysis
  - keyword assignment

- Public service
  - circulation service
  - lending service
  - copy service

- Preparation for preservation
  - binding
  - slating

- NUCES system
  - input to NUCES database
  - online data input system
  - master database
  - library catalogue input
  - optical disk
  - magnetic tape

- Retrieval system
  - bibliography database
  - learning information database
  - thesaurus database

- Control & management
  - system maintenance, management, planning and implementation of programme, budget control

- Communication control

- Operations within the dotted line are not shown
Information activities now require related facilities, but also to strengthen and promote their information function and provide a basis for network formation.

(2) Construction of various databases on women and family

The database scheduled for public access in July, 1991 is mainly composed of bibliographic database of books, monographs, newspapers, periodicals and other monographs. It will be established to collect and save official and non-official documents. All documents and materials are University Libraries. This improves the quality of the Centre's database and its research function by benefiting from close relationships with universities.

As mentioned above, the main objective of this system is to build a database and construct a nationwide information retrieval system. For the purpose of ensuring rapid operation of these functions, processing of routine work such as circulation and book payment are not included in the computerized database.

4. Type of Machines

Computer at the Centre is Hitachi's HPAC M640/D0E, Main Memory 32MB, disk capacity of 1GB. Public telephone network used has 4 lines of 1200BPSs and 5 lines of 2400BPS.

5. Data Collection and Processing

The Information Centre for Women's Education has been acquiring, for years, texts more than 2,000 books and other monographs. 1,000 kinds of serial publications such as magazines and newspapers and has been compiling about 1,000 pieces of magazine article indexes.

In addition, the Centre has accumulated approximately 1,000 clippings of 60 national and local newspapers. In processing these materials, the staff mainly analyzes each content and then classifies and extracts keywords to 8.

These efforts that go into collecting and processing the materials are the key in maintaining the quality of the database. An important feature of the database is that all work is done from the standpoint of being useful in improving women's status.

In addition to the bibliographic database explained above, information on learning opportunities and status of database on women's centres will be collected based on national surveys conducted by the respective government agencies.

The processing diagram of data collection, processing and dissemination is shown in Chart 2.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Type</th>
<th>Number of Entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic database of monographs on women and the family</td>
<td>about 7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic database of local government publications on women and family education</td>
<td>about 16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic database of periodical articles on women and the family</td>
<td>about 12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic database of newspaper articles on women and the family</td>
<td>about 15,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content

- Title and name of author, classification, and keyword are main entries for published monographs, corporate research materials and materials published by women's organizations and groups on women and the family. Database is available for Japanese and foreign books acquired after 1987.
- Titles, authors, year of publication, classification, and keywords of materials published by local governments, boards of education, office of women's affairs. Database is available for those acquired after 1978.
- Title, name of author and magazine, volume number, keyword, statistics and monographs from about 200 periodical articles on women and the family from 1978 are available.
- Name of newspaper, date, headline, keywords of articles on women and the family reported in about 60 national and local newspapers are available. All articles on women in newpapers acquired after 1984 and articles referring generally to women and the family after 1990 are available.
8. On-line Information Retrieval System

(1) Outline of the Information Retrieval System

A bibliographic information retrieval system modelled after Hitachi's Database Management System "GBOS", in the system which receives and transmits data through lines. Data may be retrieved by indicating author, title, publisher, classification or keyword. The characteristics of this system are as follows:

1) A full-duplex and non-procedural system has been adopted in the data communication control procedure in order to reduce the burden of equipment investment of connecting facilities. When personal computers, modems, and communication software may be used, therefore, enabling connection at a relatively low cost.
2) With the integration of Theoritains Women and the Family developed by one center in the Information retrieval system and the Thesaurus of persons assigned as the database keyword, controlled retrieval of special subjects on women and the family is possible.

(2) Future Plan

The details of the database scheduled to be open to the public in July, 1994 are given in Table 2.

Table 2 Schedule of Database Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Database</th>
<th>Scheduled amount of Data</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistical database on women's lives</td>
<td>1,000,000 records</td>
<td>Collection, processing and analysis of important statistics on women and the family. The result will be displayed in on-line form for the Centre and exhibited as printed information for outside users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database on learning information</td>
<td>3,000 records</td>
<td>Number of project, conducting organizations, content, lecturer, classification (thematic), etc. of supplementary projects on women's education and home education conducted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, featuring distinctive study cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database on women's study programmes in Japan</td>
<td>1,000 records</td>
<td>Database of women's study programmes and courses offered at institutions of higher education conducted by the National Women's Education Centre since 1981. Data items include names of universities, persons in charge, lecture title, content, number of students attended by sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database on women's research and organizations</td>
<td>800 records</td>
<td>Address, size, opening hours, conditions for use, etc. of women's centres and organizations in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database on newsletters of women's organizations</td>
<td>1,000 records</td>
<td>Directory of Japanese and foreign institutions related to women and bulletin and news communication magazines published by women's organizations. Data includes names of publishing organization, magazine, frequency of publication and conditions for access, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Relatively simple and standard retrieval system is adopted assuming that users have little experience working with the system.

User accessing this Information Retrieval System must choose the required file and identify data which will be retrieved by inputting command. The retrieval key is generally in Japanese or Roman letters, but the author, title, keywords can be retrieved by indicating Chinese characters. When no appropriate keyword is found, users may choose one by merely displaying part of the Thesaurus on the screen.

(4) Type of Database and its content

The details of the database scheduled to be open to the public in July, 1994 are given in Table 2.

(5) Future Tasks

As mentioned above, the system is designed to construct a domestic network and, by implication, database is mostly in Japanese. For the purpose of providing an international network, it is important to remove language barriers. The National Women's Education Centre is studying following points for the future:

1) Collection of foreign documents.
2) Assignment of English keywords to foreign documents.

Unfortunately the Thesaurus on Women and the Family is not yet compiled by the Centre in Japanese and assignment of English keywords to foreign documents is desirable. Possibility of translating the Thesaurus into English and ways of doing so will be investigated by the Centre.

Nelike database exchange is considered as a preliminary step to founding future regional and global online network.

(Nobuko Asahina, Information Specialist, NWEC)
SUMMARY OF NWEC EXTENSION PROGRAMME

In the afternoon, a symposium was held with four lecturers who have been cooperating in advising the Centre's projects. Symposium addressed the pertinent questions of new lifestyle for men and women towards the 21st century. Many questions were raised from the floor and the panelists enjoyed active exchanges of views.

Responses in both lectures were positive. In fact results of the questionnaire indicated that participants found the event satisfying. Women's leaders particularly found information useful for their educational activities. The Centre was able to conclude that the programme accomplished its initial objectives by greatly contributing to women's education and family education in both Honshu and Kyushu. In view of the favourable outcome the Centre will continue this programme next year making visits to various regions in Japan.

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN

The Women's Group Section is written by representatives of the group introduced.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S CONSULTANTS

Main work of women's councillors is to provide protection for the present and potential prostitutes at welfare centres and offices. These consulting officers are appointed by administrative organs and city authorities. The Council is composed of women councillors in Japan to promote friendly and to improve the quality of consultation by mutual cooperation. It plans to enhance its position and thereby to promote smooth implementation of the Prevention of Prostitution Law.

The Prevention of Prostitution Law was enacted in May, 1956 after many years of struggle by pioneering anti-prostitution movements. The law is based on the concept of "respect for human rights".

In accordance with the law, women's consultative officers, consultants, and women's welfare centres were set up in each administrative district as operating facilities for the purpose of protection and rehabilitation of women.

The project name, Women's Protection Program is designed to conduct educational activities with a view to improving social environment, including early detection of girls' quest for protection (including present and potential prostitutes), counseling, guidance, survey, providing accommodation and protection. Each project covers a specific area and is carried out with the cooperation of related organs.

National Council of Women's Consultants

The National Congress of Echino Prefecture was constituted in November, 1969 when it was found that there was a need for collaboration and information exchange. The work was acute as there were frequent changes in the target girls and some prostitutes had only one contact against greater demand. Currently membership is 427. Main activities of the Council consist of research on the protection of prostitutes, public relations work concerning women's protection, communication and cooperation with related unions, studies on education and technical skills of women's consultants.

The Council has a sub-regional block covering the whole country with each group carrying out individual activities in accordance with its respective policy. National meeting is held once a year.

For further inquiries, please contact: Promotion Office for Prevention Measures, Ministry of Health and Welfare, 1-3-5, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100

May 1991
If we exaggerate the idea that prevention of effective and efficient medical care depends on women pharmacists, the motto of the Association, therefore, is to stress the importance of life-long education.

(2) Creating favorable environment for Women Pharmacists

With the formulation of Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1985, equality in employment was secured when midnight work was approved for female pharmacists. In 1987, a research was conducted using questionnaires in 68 Japanese hospitals with more than 100 beds to assess working conditions of day and night shift for women. In 2979, the problems of wage and working hours were identified by a similar research by the same organization. These important but unreasonable efforts have this right for women. We are currently working to ensure implementation and full realization of the law.

For the future, emphasis should be placed on establishing child-care support centers in hospitals and pharmacies.

Spreading hours of nursery centers for the benefit of working mothers as well as improvement of tax system for part-time workers should be reviewed.

The average age of women pharmacists working at pharmacies and medical facilities is 38.6 while it is 30.0 for those employed at business enterprises. Women university graduates work for an average of four to five years before they quit temporarily. It is usually ten years later that they return to work. This leaves an average age of ten years is assumed to be due to maternity and childcare. This is a loss of human resources especially where there is a shortage of pharmacists from the point of view of preventing separation of dispensary functions from medical practice.

By arranging a workable environment, women's length of service can be lengthened to the benefit of women themselves and improvement of medical care and well-being of the people at large. Foundations to accomplish this is essential that an appeal is made to politicians and public authorities. A woman has been elected to the House of Councillors and it is hoped that she will represent interests of those whom she represents.

(3) Promotion of the Separation of Dispensary from Medical Practice and Cooperation in Local Community.

In cooperation with “Teen Year Welfare Golf Fowl for the Aged” conducted by the Ministry of Health and Welfare services will be provided to local communities.

For further inquiries, please contact:
Japao Women's Pharmacist Association
Chairperson: Minako Akihama
Kawam Heim 709, 1-47-2 Higashi-Hababara, Tishihama, Tokyo 172
Tel: 03-3987-6820

THE FIRST WOMAN TO CLIMB THE HIGHEST PEAKS ON SIX CONTINENTS

Mr. Junko Tabei

In January, 1951, Mrs. Junko Tabei, 55-year-old alpinist, with four-party, successfully reached the summits of Mount Fuji (3,776 m), the highest mountain in the Pacific. The group flew to the Antarctica by a light airplane to launch a base camp at 3,200 meters above sea level. On their third day, they climbed the camp at 5,000 meters eleven days later. All the members of her party reached the summit after climbing for 3,000 meters and seven cold at minus 23 degrees. Junko Tabei climbed Mt. Everest (8,848 m), the highest peak in the world, in May, 1975 as the first woman alpinist. Thereafter, she continued her pursuit at Mont Blanc (4,810 m Europe), Aconcagua (6,963 m in South America) and McKinley (6,194 m in North America). She became the first woman alpinist in the world to successfully reach the summits of the highest mountains on six continents.

Junko Tabei managed a prestigious English school, while pursuing her favorite hobby of mountain climbing. She is the mother of a university freshman and a 13-year-old son. Mountain-climbing clubs identify seven continents in the world. For Junko Tabei she only united continent in Australia. There, the highest range is 2,000 meters above sea level. She and her alpinist husband hope that the whole family may enjoy the climb there.
'NON-FAMILY' WOMEN ARE ON THE INCREASE:

— report on the 'Obisso Survey on Women' —

Masao Azuno
Professor
Department of Literature
Chiba University

J. Traditional view of marriage is crumbling

According to the Opinion Survey on Women released by the Prime Minister's Office on January 12, 1991, increasing number of women participating in social activities are dramatically changing the way people think about the lives of women. Such changes are led by youth rather than men.

The survey was conducted every three to five years and the last was made in September 1990. Five thousand adults were interviewed across the nation, yielding a valid response rate of 73 percent. Focusing on changes in consciousness over the past three years since the previous survey (1987), it is possible to predict, to a certain extent, a trend regarding the popular desired types of women or relations between the sexes.

In the present survey, greatest change in consciousness observed was the view regarding marriage as the first step to forming a family.

Marriage of women

Asked about whether women should marry, 46 percent of all respondents (non-men: 44% - 46% women) answered positively. This is a sharp drop compared to 74 percent in the previous survey (men: 79% - 80% women).

By contrast, those who said "it does not matter" whocher women should or should not marry, amounted to 35 percent (women: 32% - 38% men).

Interestingly, there was a considerable age-dependent difference here. In particular, three out of four women in their twenties (73%) have negative attitudes toward marriage.

Women in their twenties say "it is up to the individual" (85%), and pointed out that "women do not necessarily have to get married to move the window to marry" (73%), etc. (Table 1). This shows that a growing number of young women question the traditional role of Japanese society which claims that "marriage is happiness for woman".

In the past most women married at least one. The very existence of expressions such as "unconditional" or "bed-mate" (old maid and spinster) suggests that women who do not marry are exceptions. It has been taken for granted that women married at marriageable age and raised children. Since mid-eighties, however, this attitude started to change.

The most salient change was in the average age of marriage. In 1974 women married at around the age of 24.5. In 1980, only a decade later, women were marrying at the age of 22.5. (1980 Vital Statistics, Ministry of Health and Welfare). The average age of woman's marriage tends to be higher in the urban areas, where employment opportunities are greater.

For instance, according to the 1985 statistics for the City of Tokyo, the ratio of unmarried women in the 25-29 age group has reached an all-time high of 43.4 percent (1985 Vital Statistics, City of Tokyo). These women do not remain single by choice or simply because they had missed the chance. For increasing number of women marriage and family is becoming a matter of choice.

In the urban areas the definition of 'marriageable age' is shifting from 'Christmas Eve' (24 years) to 'New Year's Eve' (31 years). There are some of the facts reflecting young women's changing views on marriage.

Fig. 1. Do you think it is better to enact an elective system which gives a married couple choice between taking the same surname and keeping separate surnames?

![Fig. 1](image)

* (Number of Pollees)

May 1991
### Table 1: Women’s Marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Married w/ Separate Surnames</th>
<th>Married w/ Same Surname</th>
<th>Do not Marry</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married couple</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife's father's surname</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's surname</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife's father's surname</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's surname</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Maried couple with separate surnames

There is also a change concerning which surname to use after marriage. Japanese civil law requires that married couple share the same surname by stipulating that they "adopt either the husband's or the wife's surname." The Japanese system which requires adapting the same surname without any alteration is rare one in the world.

The last survey asked whether the law should allow married couple to choose between taking the same or separate surnames. Thirty percent (women=23%, men=38%) supported in married system. While the majority did not support it (men=50%, women=42%), supporters of the system showed a solid increase, considering they accounted for only 13 percent (as men vs women) in the previous survey.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the electorate system supporters by gender and geographic area. There is higher ratio of people demanding the electorate system in urban areas. In particular, it is as high as 90 percent among women living in the twenty-three wards of Tokyo.

Breakdown by age group showed that the both men and women, the younger the respondents, the higher the ratio of supporters of the electorate arrangement. Those who favored the electorate system were then asked, if given choice, would they prefer to adopt separate surnames after marriage. One in four persons (women=29%, men=23%) were positive. Women were particularly disposed in favor of separate surnames.
In principle, under the current provision of the civil law which obliges married couples to adopt the same surname, there is a choice for the couple to choose between husband's name or wife's. In practice, however, few couples discuss the matter between themselves, as it is considered natural for the wife to change her surname to the husband's. In fact, only 2 to 3 percent of married couples have chosen the wife's surname.

This is probably due to the deep-rooted concept of family which historically favored women to accept the surname of the family into which the marriage enters. However, more recent years women have been increasingly critical of this. Underlying these changes is the increase in the number of women with professional careers who wish to maintain their careers after marriage and without changing their names. They do not see any reason to be subordinated to their husbands. Another aspect of this tendency is a reflection of our times. It is inevitable that change one's name when one is the only child of the family.

There are also deep-seated negative opinions on the matter. According to this argument, changing the same surname is more convenient for the identification of complex and strengthens the sense of commonness between husband and wife. Children of couples with separate surnames may suffer the disadvantages because of the lack of continuity of families. The survey suggests, however, that increasing numbers of people continue to demand the law to be changed to give couples an opportunity to choose which names to adopt together or separately.

"Men go to work, women stay home?"

In summarizing the changes in views regarding marriage and adoption of separate names, it is important to note how the notion of sex roles is seen. Thirty-five percent of men and 25 percent of women surveyed agreed to the idea of division of labor as expressed by a phrase: "men go to work, women stay home." By contrast, 34 percent of the men and 43 percent of women disagreed. In the previous survey, 26 percent of men and 39 percent of women were disagreeable.

This means that between the two surveys, there was a 14-point and 11-point increase among men and women respectively (Figure 2).

International comparative studies in the past showed that Japanese men have a particularly strong sense of sex roles. Today, however, there is a bipartition tendency between those who belong to a system by which men and women may separately work, as it were (55%), and those who hope to be liberated from it (45%). Today Japanese seem to find themselves in between these opposing directions.

It is hard to say yes or no to

 doesn't know

2. Society is still headly-predominant

Changing views on marriage and sex roles show that there is a growing trend among women to expand their beyond their homes and to make self-realization. This is the so-called "non-family" option. The important question is to what extent is the change in women's consciousness matched by reality surrounding them. The latest survey revealed that women's participation in society is growing at a rapid pace, a big gap remains between consciousness and reality.

The Moses of women

Fifty percent of respondents agreed that Japanese women did not enjoy equal status as work and are generally accepted in society. Opinion was largely divided, however, in long-term institutional areas and at home. (Figure 3).

Compared with the previous survey, there was an increase of figures for equality of status (22% to 28%), but with no substantial increase in work nor acceptable norms.

The perception of male/female status showed a large discrepancy according to the gender of respondent. In all four areas described, more than women considered women enjoyed equal status. Interestingly, 32 percent of men considered women were given equal status at work while only about half the women (29%) agreed. By occupation, perceived inequality was as high as 88% in managerial/specialized technical / clinical jobs and equally for general workers (46%).

Fig. 2

' Men go to work and women stay home'

Fig. 3

On equality of status between men and women

May 1991
Those who replied that there was no equality at work were asked about the prospects for the future. Thirty-six percent (men 60% vs 29% women) were optimistic that equality would be attained in the near future while 44 percent (men 46% vs 18% women) were cautiously optimistic. They agreed that equality will be eventually reached but that it will take considerable time. Thirty-seven percent (men 41% vs 32% women) was more pessimistic. They did not believe equality will ever come. Here, too, women’s reactions were more pessimistic (Figure 4).

It is difficult to evaluate the singular significance of the differences seen between men and women with regard to perceived reality and prospects for the future. Generally, however, we may say that the survey results reflect (1) the difference in the level of expectation or level of demand for the equality of sexes, and (2) the degree of satisfaction with present. In considering the status of men and women, it appears that men tend to stress those aspects which have already become equal, while women tend to look at those areas which have not yet attained it.

All in all, it may be pointed out that work place has shown most resistance to giving women equal status. It is feared that it may continue to resist change in the future. Productivity and efficiency sought by business corporations make the challenge perhaps more difficult. Women’s pessimistic outlook on the status of women at work points to the adamant refusal of many businesses to change.

Opportunity to Demonstrate Ability

Women feel that their status continues to be unequal in many areas of Japanese society. Where, then, does women’s sense of inequalities come from? Simplicistically speaking, that arises from the fact that Japanese society has not sufficiently provided a “structure of open opportunities” allowing women to demonstrate her abilities.

This is also supported by the separate question “Today’s Japanese society, who has more opportunity to demonstrate their ability, men or woman?” Overwhelmingly notably, in fact over 80 percent (women 64% vs 82% men) answered that men had, while only 2 percent thought women enjoyed more. Thirty-five percent (men 16% vs 17% women) did not see much difference. Regardless of sex or age of the respondents, it is clear that the Japanese society is generally perceived as a male-preferenced society (Table 2).

3. More public offices to women, more family responsibility. (10% response)

The existence of a gap between what women aspire to as a way of life and the reality has been brought to light. This gap will expand farther as more women choose the “non-family” option.

There must be more participation of women in society if the reality is to change and greater opportunities are to be opened. In turn, certain adjustments must be made and social measures put in place. The survey inquired into the necessity of women’s social participation and the measures needed to promote it.

Need for women’s participation and measures to be taken

In the society of the future, is it necessary to further promote women’s social participation? Absolute majority, i.e., 78 percent (women 78% vs 7% men) supported such a view. There was very little difference in the respondents' group by sex or age.

Those who considered it necessary to promote women’s social participation were then asked what steps might be taken to that end. Measures suggested include “opportunities for education and training for women’s social participation” (38%), “establishing support system for men and women who have both family and professional responsibilities” (29%), and “giving married women family responsibilities” (25%). (Answers to the question do not add up to 100% as multiple answers were permitted.)

After women (39%) more than men (18%) supported the idea that men should have more family responsibilities. In a sense this underlines women’s realistic perception that women’s social participation is not reciprocated by men’s participation in family responsibilities.

Table 2: Who has more opportunity to demonstrate ability, men or women?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of poll</th>
<th>Men (Subject)</th>
<th>Mea</th>
<th>Men’s chances are better than women’s</th>
<th>Women (Subject)</th>
<th>Women’s chances are better than men’s</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2,055</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,516</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Need for men’s participation in home and community, and measures required

A large majority (70%) of the respondents agreed that men should participate more in home and community activities. The demand is stronger in women (72%) than in men (69%) and more particularly among women in their thirties (79%) and forties (70%) whose husbands are at the prime of their lives.

In order to encourage more participation at home and community, shorter working hours (56%) and establishing support system for couples who maintain both professional and family responsibilities (56%) were cited by many. Of these two measures, men favor the former (68%-38%-women), and women the latter (48%-50%-men).

It is common knowledge that the working hours of Japanese male workers are considerably longer than in other countries. For instance, male workers living in metropolitan Tokyo spend nearly eleven hours a day for work, including commuting time. Needless to say, the long working hours of men affect women, too. Both men and women hope that the social system will be reorganized, including setting up of social support system, so that their working and family/community lives can be more balanced.

Women in public offices

It is right for more men to be involved in home and community

Fig. 5  Should more women take public office?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Members of the Diet, prefectural, municipal and village assemblies]</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Municipal officers, heads of wards, towns and villages]</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Members of national and prefectural committees]</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total (N = 3,753), Men (N = 1,455), Women (N = 2,098)

May 1991
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.
- A comprehensive training facility available to any group whose subject matter relates to women's education.
- Exchange of information among women's education bodies 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 of issues touching on 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 an NWEC application form at least 30 days in advance but not 90 months before intended use.

PUBLICATION

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE OFFERING ON JAPANESE WOMEN

WOMEN IN THE JAPANESE WORKPLACE

By Mary Sato, University of Oxford, 19 Clarendon Road, Highbury, London N1 6RU, 108 pages; £20.00 ISBN 09110484-9. (Revised and updated in 1999, this book is the result of a project funded by the Japan Foundation.

The book is thoroughly and succinctly reviewed by Dr. Ronald Dyer, Director of the Japan-Europe Industry Research Centre, Imperial College, London, as follows:

As Japanese companies expand their operations overseas, Mary Sato, an economist who has lived in Japan since 1978, presents the treatment and experiences of women working under Japanese management in Japan, Britain and Ireland. Her book is a valuable addition to the growing literature on women's work in Japan, and is especially timely for those interested in the roles of women as employees in the workplace.

While drawing on a wealth of information on the treatment of women in Japanese companies, Sato's book is an excellent introduction to the experiences of women working in Japanese companies and the challenges they face.

Who are the women who work in these companies? What are their experiences and challenges? This book provides valuable insights into the treatment of women in Japanese companies and highlights the need for greater understanding of the issues involved.

FOREIGN VISITORS TO NWEC

As of 1 March 1991, the NWEC has received 4095 visitors from 121 countries. Following are notes on some of the recent visitors of the Centre:


16 to 30 January 1991: Two study groups from the Republic of China undertook 25 members each to observe the education system and facilities in Japan.

27 March - 1 April 1991: 23 foreign participants from eight countries, in the second Conference of the Pacific Rim Consortium on Women's Studies.

The author points out that there is a strong tendency in Western countries to regard the Japanese society as oriental and quantify much of their observations upon the situation particularly of Japanese working women from a Eurocentric perspective. In an attempt to avoid this stereotyped conclusion, the author focuses on the actual conditions of today's working women in Japan based on an extensive survey as well as the views of middle-aged women who seem to form a large part of the Japanese work force.