

NWEC

NEWSLETTER

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

NWEC INTERNATIONAL FORUM 1999

1. Outline

The NWEC International Forum 1999 was held from Thursday, November 25th through Saturday, November 27th, 1999 (two nights, three days) with the theme "Empowerment is the Password to the Twenty-First Century - Towards a New Relationship of Sharing the Joy of Living".

The International Forum was held in view of the United Nations "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace in the 21st Century" which will take place in June 2000. Its objective was to examine issues important to the creation of a gender-equal society from an international perspective, contribute to the promotion of women's empowerment and create national and international networks.



Nine Japanese specialists and eight foreign specialists were invited to the forum which was attended by approximately 500 people from 20 countries.

A symposium with the theme "Women and Human Rights in Politics, Employment and Education" was held on the first day; three group discussions "Participation in politics and policy-making processes", "Employment" and "Education and learning" were held on the second day; and a plenary session was held on the third day. Enthusiastic discussion and active exchange of opinions took place over the three days ensuring that this international forum made a significant contribution towards the formation of a gender-equal society.

2. Symposium

Theme:

"Women and Human Rights in Politics, Employment and Education"

Coordinator:

Kuniko Inoguchi
Professor, Faculty of Law, Sophia University



Panellists:

Cecilia Ruthstrom-Ruin
Second Secretary, Embassy of Sweden in Japan (Swedish)

Linda Tsao Yang
US Executive Director, Asian Development Bank (American)

Prof. Kuniko Inoguchi

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Jyoti Tuladhar

Specialist on Gender and Women Workers Issues, ILO New Delhi, Regional Office (Nepalese)

Patricia A. Cranton

Honorary Research Scholar, University of New Brunswick and Director, Institute for Personal and Professional Empowerment (Canadian)

Opinions were exchanged on issues such as the global effects of the Asian Economic Crisis on measures promoting women's human rights and empowerment and possibilities of overcoming them as well as on the "reproduction of discrimination against women" and "revising 'stereotypes' developed over the years.

3. Group Discussions

(1) Group Discussion 1 "Participation in politics and policy-making processes"

Coordinator:

Norio Okazawa

Professor, School of Social Sciences, Waseda University

Panellists:

Cecilia Ruthstrom-Ruin

Park Keum-oak

Director-General, Friends of Love (Korean)

Yoko Kimura

Associate Professor, Faculty of Human Life and Environment, Nara Women's University

Following the coordinator's introduction, reports on the situations in Korea, Japan and Sweden were heard, and American and other foreign participants gave reports on the situations in their respective countries. Opinions were exchanged on topics such as the possibility of the declining birth rate and ageing of society benefiting rather than disadvantaging women, the quota system becoming a double-edged sword, and the need for increasing men's participation in the family and women's participation in society. A need to promote information disclosure was also discussed in order for women to identify policies in which they can exercise power.



(2) Group Discussion 2 "Employment"

Coordinator:

Mitsuko Shimamura

Journalist and Ex-Editor, Asahi Journal

Panellists:

Jyoti Tuladhar

Aiko Okawara

President and CEO, JC Foods Co., Ltd. (American)

Yukari Motani

President, Da Vinci Corporation and Founder & CEO, e-kocha.com

Following the coordinator's introduction, each panellist reported on the following issues:

- Global changes in the provision of conditions for working women (in the last quarter-century)
- The present status of women's employment in Japan and challenges
- Comparisons of attitude and discrimination in employment in America and Japan
- The present status of large corporations and foreign-affiliated corporations and issues involved therein

Opinions were exchanged on topics such as differences in wages, lifetime employment, ability-based evaluation, and the creation of new values during periods of change.



(3) Discussion Group 3 "Education and learning"

Coordinator:

Yoshiko Kanai

Professor, Faculty of Education and Human Sciences, Yokohama National University

Panellists:

Patricia A. Cranton

Maria Josephine Castro Barrios

Foreign Teacher, Osaka University of Foreign Studies (Filipino)

Makoto Nakamura

Professor, Faculty of Law, Okayama University,
Senior Specialist, Lifelong Learning, Ministry
of Education, Science, Sports and Culture

Masako Amano

Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and
Sciences, Ochanomizu University

Following the coordinator's introduction, each
panellist reported on the following issues:

- Education and liberation of a catholic, Filipino
girl student
- Education and learning for empowerment in
Japan
- Individuality, empowerment and authenticity in
lifelong learning
- Empowerment approaches to education and
learning

Following reports on the current situations in the
foreign participants' countries, opinions were exchanged
on topics such as women's entry into science and
engineering universities, coeducation vs. segregated
education, men's empowerment, questioning your own
sense of gender, and hidden curriculum.



4. Plenary Session

Coordinator:

Mitsuko Shimomura

Panellists:

Specialists from the group discussions



Plenary Session

Following reports from the coordinators of each
group discussion, participants exchanged opinions on
the following issues:

- Voting for candidates striving towards the
formation of a gender-equal society.
- Re-examining from women's perspective things
taken for granted in a male-oriented society.
- The need for each of us empowering ourselves,
changing ourselves and changing the world.
- Active use of computers and new technological
equipment.
- To support the organisation (WINWIN) that
provides financial support to women candidates.
- We may say that we are experiencing a
phenomenal breakdown on the eve of creating a
new civilisation of the 21st century. But seen
from a different perspective, we can say that we
were born at an extremely good time. Let us
therefore build international networks, return to
our families and countries and do what we can
in our respective fields.



Tea ceremony after the Forum

*(Yuko Yuhara, Specialist,
Information and International
Exchange Division, NWEC)*

FORUMS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY LEARNING

The National Women’s Education Centre held forums to promote gender equality learning in four regions throughout Japan (Akita, Kanagawa, Hiroshima and Fukuoka Prefectures) with the aim of promoting lifelong learning towards the creation of a gender-equal society and contributing towards the formation of wide-area networks between institutions. An outline of the programme is described below.

1. Objectives

NWEC will conduct forums in collaboration with institutions involved in lifelong learning such as women’s educational institutions and lifelong learning centres to promote gender equality learning with the objective of promoting lifelong learning towards the creation of a gender-equal society and contributing towards the formation of wide-area networks between institutions.

2. Overall Theme

Let us think and discuss how we can live a full life

3. Programmes

- (1) To contribute to concrete issues in communities from the perspective of reconsidering social customs, attitudes and lifestyles towards the realisation of a gender-equal society.
- (2) To establish programme planning committee in each region (approximately 10 people including persons from the Boards of Education, officers in charge of women’s administration and intellectuals) to encourage active participation from all walks of life, including both men and women, elderly persons, etc.
- (3) To seek joint sponsors from among institutions that carry out wide area activities, such as public and private women’s centres, and those involved in lifelong learning such as lifelong learning centres.

4. Joint Sponsors

	Joint Sponsor/Date of Programme	Forum Name & Theme	Number of Participants
1	Hiroshima Women’s Conference (Sat.) 9 October (Hiroshima Prefecture)	Forming local networks for childcare and nursing from gender perspectives (an event in the lifelong learning festival)	Approx. 130
2	Akita Women’s Centre (Fri.) 22 October (Akita Prefecture)	Participate & Experience a Forum on Gender Equality Learning with the aim of establishing a new partnership	Approx. 550
3	Kanagawa Prefectural Kanagawa Women’s Centre (Sat.) 30 October (Kanagawa Prefecture)	A message from Enoshima, Shonan - towards the realisation of a gender-equal society in the new century The ageing society goes beyond generations	Approx. 300
4	Fukuoka Prefectural Women’s Foundation (Fukuoka Women’s Centre “Asubaru”) (Sat.) 27 November (Fukuoka Prefecture)	A “Drama Contest for Men and Women” towards a gender-equal society Learn about gender equality by performing or watching	Approx. 400

5. Main Programmes of Each Institution

(1) Hiroshima Women's Conference

① Group Discussions 10:00 ~ 12:15

- Making childcare and nursing a business - discussed how childcare and nursing support activities and group activities, mostly carried out by women on a volunteer basis, can be commercialised.
- Men, childcare & nursing - discussed what were required for men to participate more actively in nursing.
- Creating a forum for information and exchange - discussed the kinds of information necessary to engage in childcare and nursing in the region and how forum for exchange can best be established.

② Symposium 14:30 ~ 16:30

In order to share the content of the three group discussions held in the morning, cases and discussions heard in each group were reported. Following this, opinions were exchanged with the panellists on policies to encourage men, women and the community as a whole to shoulder responsibility for childcare and nursing and a discussion on what the family is and how it is changing was held. Finally, a discussion took place on forming community networks in 21st century society.



Hiroshima

(2) Akita Women's Centre

① Workshop "Keys to Good Planning" 10:00 ~ 11:45

- WATCH "Video" - Studied effective ways of using videos, including techniques for watching videos and holding discussions aimed at interpreting the message being conveyed by the video.
- PASTE "Collage" - Increased gender sensitivity by cutting out photographs and illustrations from newspapers and magazines, pasting them on vellum and interpreting the meaning and consciousness of gender.
- "Graphs" - Discussed gender image that emerges

from looking at a number of graphs and statistics concerning the notion of "men work, women stay home".

- "Diamond Ranking" - Discussed ideal partnerships and ranked them in order of importance on the assumption that "an infant's mother became ill".



Akita

② Talk & Talk "Towards Establishing a New Partnership" 13:15 ~ 15:00

First, the four staff members of the forum presented issues concerned with "new partnerships", "parent-child relations", "partnerships in schools", and "partnerships in community activities". This was followed by a free discussion focusing on new partnerships among Professor Chizuko Ueno of the University of Tokyo, the participants and a coordinator.

(3) Kanagawa Prefectural Kanagawa Women's Centre

In support of the United Nations' principles for elderly persons concerning independence, participation, care and respect, eleven forums were held towards the realisation of an affluent ageing society. A symposium was held to wrap up these eleven forums.

① Keynote Speech "A New Era of Nursing - a message to the ageing society" 13:00 ~ 13:30

Non-fiction writer Ms. Noriko Okifuji examined and analysed the ageing of society from the perspectives of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society, nursing and gender, and new community policies. She proposed building a better 21st century in which each person has a sense of independence but enjoys a web of relationships between men and women, women and women, and old persons and the young.

② Symposium 13:30 ~ 15:30

Four panellists presented issues regarding "A gender-equal society from the point of view of taxes and pensions", "Community activities of senior male volunteers", "Living together in the 21st century - thoughts on involving the elderly" and "The present



Kanagawa

status of policies and issues of an ageing society”. This was followed by a discussion in which Ms. Okifuji joined. Thoughts shared included the following. That conventional ideas concerning women’s employment and housework could not prevail in an ageing society, the need for public mechanisms that make society aware of existing strains (divorce and retirement from work as a result of having to assume nursing responsibilities, etc). It was recognised that in welfare there were four walls that had to be overcome (awareness, institutions, environment, and information and culture) and that resolving these was the key to attaining gender equality.

(4) Fukuoka Prefectural Women’s Centre Drama Festival 10:00 ~16:40

A drama contest was held with the aim of examining traditional social customs and attitudes that discouraged people from doing things solely because they were male or female and pushed them into specific jobs and roles. Eight groups from within the prefecture produced a diverse variety of original plays written around familiar themes involving women’s issues. While entertaining the audience, these plays encouraged people to think about the “gender” as it exists in all aspects of daily life.

Following the enactment of the plays, Ms. Ai Nagai, playwright and director, reviewed them and praised that “many works were powerful and had a high level of perfection”. A Grand Prix Prize, Division Prizes, a Scenario Prize and an Audience’s Prize were awarded.

Content of the Plays

- Working Women’s Voice “It’s a big thing!” - featured how amendments to the “Equality Law” and “Labour Standards Law” will benefit working women.
- Women’s Conference Agaroppon Okawa “Agaroppon”(a local folktale) - drawing on a local folktale, issues were raised concerning women’s life, what are testimonies of their lives-

- Drama club of Oki School “What a Family is to Me” - Events occurring in two families concerned with awareness of role sharing within families are described through the youthful eyes of junior and senior high school students. (received Division Prize)
- A small drama group Madam Farmers “Give me wings please” Part II - Highlighting farming families, this play focussed on food, agriculture and women’s independence.
- Tinkerbelle Drama Group “Love for our Teacher” - A musical featuring an event that happened to a drama group just before a performance - being your self without being caught in gender discrimination.
- Tagawa 21st Century Meeting “The Tale of Oura” - Looks at how women live today through the eyes of Oura, a woman who died as a human sacrifice some 400 years ago because she was a woman. (received Grand Prix)
- A Daydreaming Girl “Fairies?” - Tomomi, whose career is just taking off, has recently found a boyfriend. But are love and work compatible- (received Scenario Prize & Audience’s Prize)
- Iizuka Women’s Network “Part-timer Akiko” - What should women do to choose and decide to live their own lives without being caught in gender- (received Division Prize)



Fukuoka

6. Future Issues

- (1) In terms of planning and holding the forum, there is a need for National Women’s Education Centre to actively provide information and to collaborate and cooperate with co-sponsors to develop and popularise training programmes related to the creation of a gender-equal society.
- (2) In terms of programme planning, there is a need to devise techniques and contents that facilitate the active participation of participants.

(Asako Kon, Specialist, Programme Division, NWEC)

SURVEY REPORT

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: FROM FIELD RESEARCH IN NEPAL AND THAILAND (REPORT ON CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH ON WOMEN/GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT)

1. Outline of Survey Implementation

The National Women's Education Centre organised a project team to carry out Cross-cultural Research on Women/Gender and Development during fiscal years 1994-1998. Field research was carried out in Thailand and Nepal in 1996 and 1997 with a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (International Scientific Research) from the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture. Research conducted in 1997 aimed at determining the direction of reforms to the system itself by clarifying the mechanism of empowering women in the existing social system through finding relations between various factors thought to contribute towards the empowerment of women in Thailand and Nepal. In this way it was hoped to search for directions that will further empower women. The research targeted men and women living on relatively low incomes in areas where income generating projects were being undertaken. Research methods comprised of interviews with women and men using a questionnaire and interviews with key informants based on question categories in the hearing. Effective responses were obtained from 174 questionnaire-based surveys carried out in two areas in the north east of Thailand (Areas M and P) and 142 questionnaire-based surveys carried out in three areas

in the central mountain areas of Nepal (Areas B, C and K). Some of the results from these researches will be introduced below.

2. Outline of Survey Results

Question items in the survey covered basic attributes related to the project; marital status; household/family composition; routine of work and daily life; productive activities; cash income and cash payment; progress, growth and development; affiliations and positions held; as well as age; level of education; and caste affiliations (jaat).

Improvement of education levels is an important issue for advancing women's empowerment. Education levels of the participants in this research were comparatively higher in Thailand than in Nepal and men were generally better educated than women (Figure 1). Reasons for this are thought to include factors such as the failure of girls to enter school because they have to help with things like housework and the high drop-out rate of girls who do enter school. And also the fact that boys are given more opportunities for education as they are expected to play larger social and economic roles are thought to be reasons for this.

Whether or not a woman has a cash income greatly

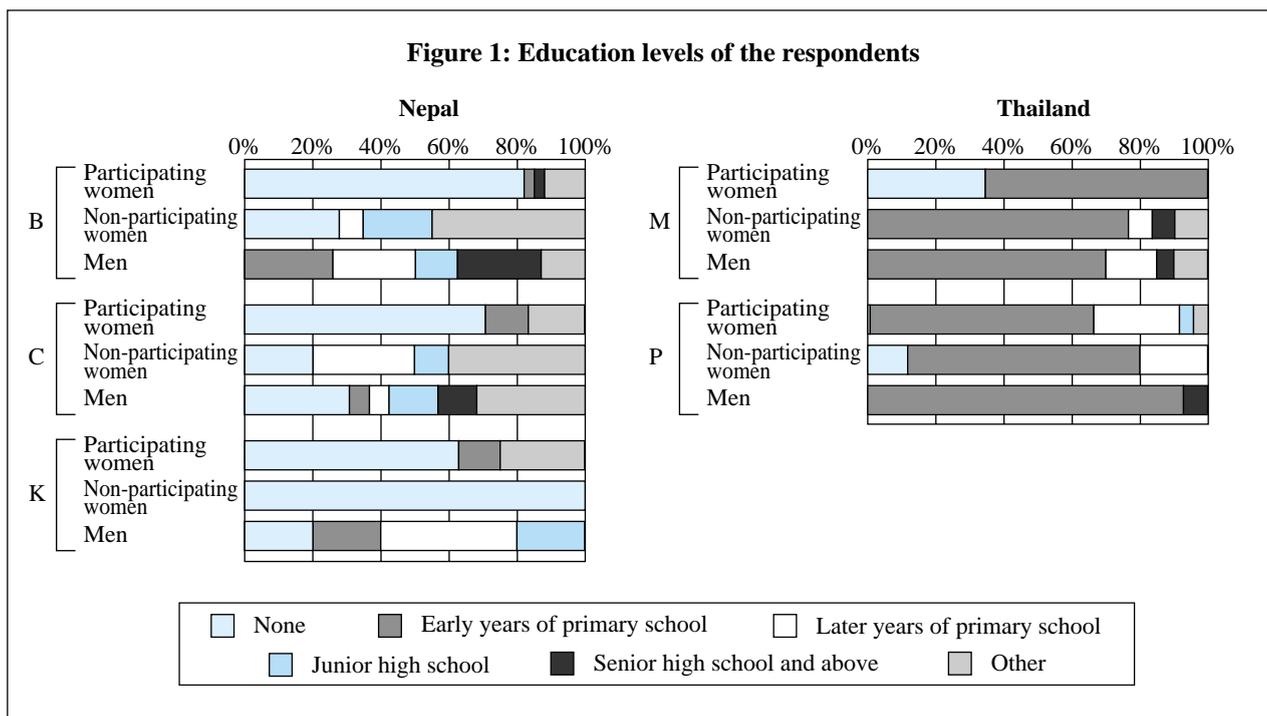


Figure 2-1: Increases in household income (%)

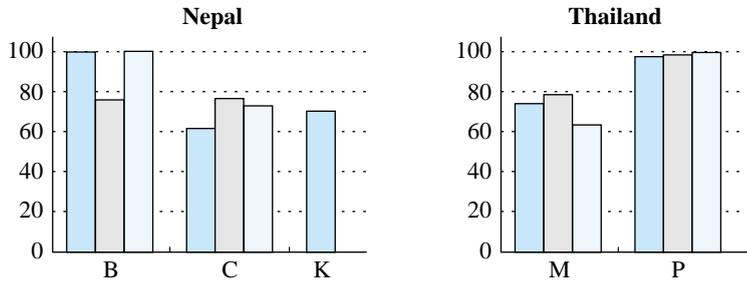
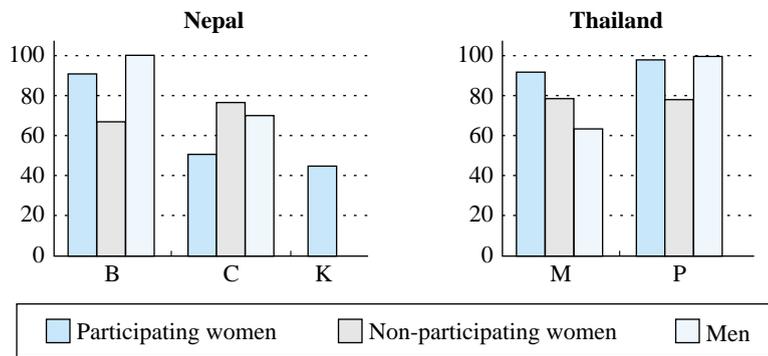


Figure 2-2: Women participants gained discretionary income (%)



affects her empowerment. In areas where women’s income generating projects are comparatively successful, women participating in the project earn incomes from products made by the project (herb teas in area P of Thailand and bamboo crafts in area B of Nepal). A high percentage of respondents claimed to have “increased family income” or to have “gained discretionary income” as a result of implementing the project (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). Moreover, the results revealed that whereas in Thailand, daughters often are the ones working away from home, in Nepal women never leave home to go out to work even if they earn an income by working on a neighbours land.

According to the women participating in the project that we questioned, housework such as drawing water, collecting firewood, cooking rice, washing dishes (Nepal only), cooking side dishes (Thailand

Figure 3-1: Washing (multiple answers) (%)

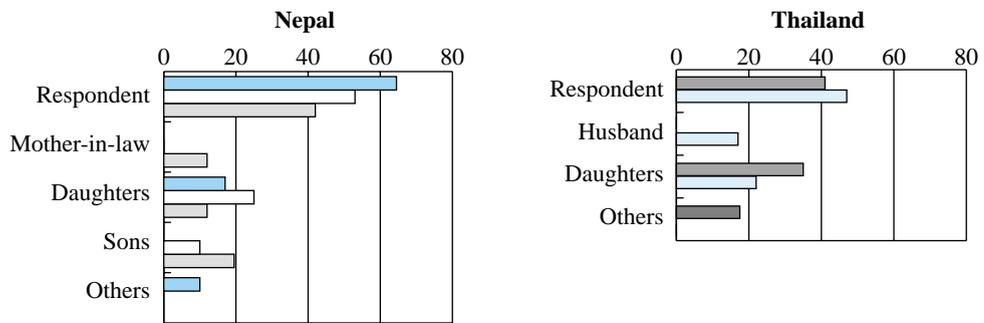
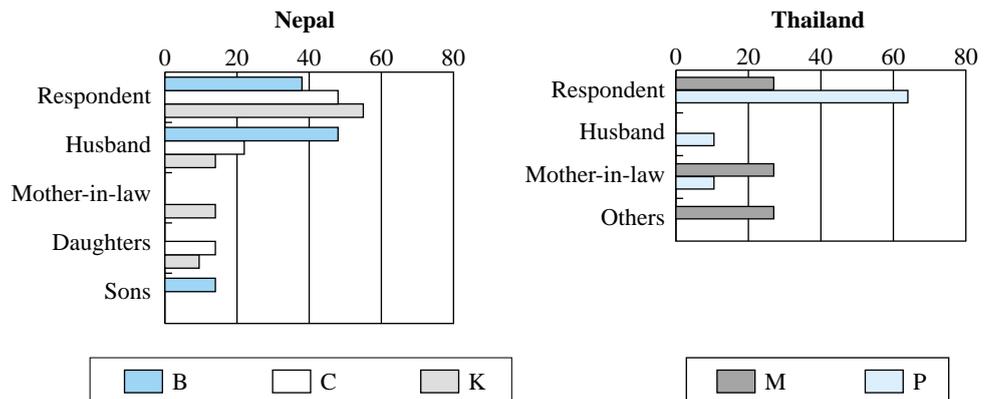


Figure 3-2: Daily Shopping (multiple answers)(%)



only), looking after infants, cleaning, washing clothes and ordinary shopping, was mostly considered woman's work and undertaken by the respondents themselves. However, in Thailand husbands shared these work more than their counterparts in Nepal whereas Nepalese husbands tended to take on daily shopping (Figures 3-1 and 3-2). In both Thailand and Nepal approximately 20% of couples lived with their parent/parents. A characteristic of the North East Thailand where this research was conducted is that it is customary for the couple to live with the wife's parent/parents so many of these respondents lived with their own parents, whereas in Nepal most lived with their husband's parent/parents.

A seventeen-point questionnaire concerning the result of the project was asked. Both in Thailand and Nepal a large number of respondents checked the following items: "villagers have greater esteem and confidence in the women participants as a result of the project" and "the participating women took initiative in organising and managing the project" (the exception was Area C in Nepal). (Figures 4-1 and 4-2) This can be considered an important index for achieving empowerment. In Thailand however, many responded that "the project caused conflict among participating women" (Figure 4-3) suggesting that successful projects increase conflicts. This is of great interest in relation to empowerment.

When asked for their opinions on twelve items concerned with changes resulting from development, overall agreement was reached in both Thailand and Nepal on items such as "opportunities for education have increased", "villagers have come to recognise women's abilities" and "incomes have increased". When asked their opinions on whether development-induced changes were good or bad, almost all respondents said that recognition of women's ability and greater socio-economic opportunities such as increased income were good.

3. Future Issues

These research results were published in the Japanese language

as a report titled "Women's Empowerment and Development - From Field Research in Thailand and Nepal" (National Women's Education Centre, March 1999), and is widely available. In this report, Professor Meguro, the Chairperson pointed out that questions identifying empowerment were established in line with prior research and empirical knowledge and "development of the ability to solve a series of problems" seemed to be a useful measure of empowerment. Further development of empowerment measures and the fine-tuning of gender analysis models are important issues in the future.

(Machiko Ito, Researcher, Programme Division, NWEC)

Figure 4-1: Villagers have more esteem and confidence in the women participants (%)

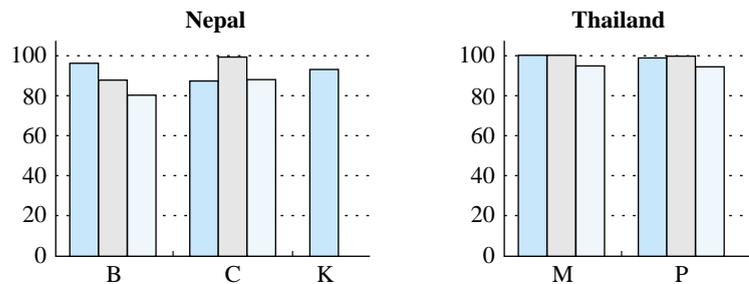


Figure 4-2: Women participants took initiative in organising and managing the project (%)

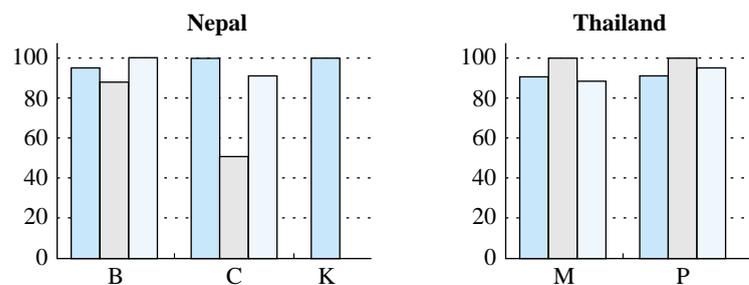
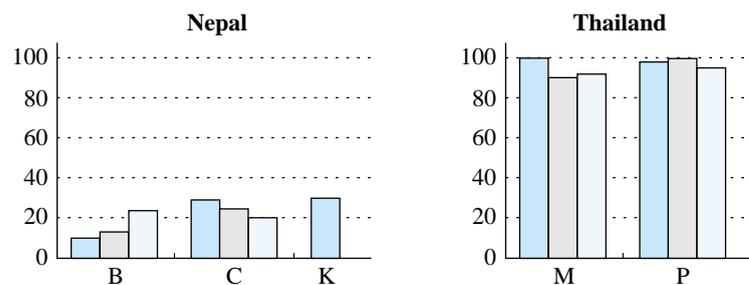


Figure 4-3: The project created conflict among women participants (%)



Legend: ■ Participating women ■ Non-participating women ■ Men

WOMEN'S CENTRE IN JAPAN

YU-AI FUKUI

Outline of the Life-long Learning & Women's Centre (Yu-Ai Fukui)

The Life-long Learning & Women's Centre (Yu-Ai Fukui) is a complex facility that fulfils functions of both the women's centre and life-long learning centre. In addition to providing a place for citizens to meet, take part in activities, express themselves and engage in exchange, the Centre actively supports activities that contribute towards the building of a gender equal society. The Centre was established with the aim of enhancing the life-long learning of each and every citizen of the prefecture.

Functions

- Study & Training --- Provides study opportunities through Fukui Life Academy and Fukui Women's University programmes and training programmes to foster leaders.
- Support for Exchange --- Supports all forms of exchange by providing a venue for holding events, independent activity groups, wide-area study groups, volunteer activity associations, etc.
- Planning & Counselling --- Supports overall planning of events, publication of PR flyers, counselling services for life-long learning and general counselling services for women, and women's participation in society.
- Surveys & Research --- Carries out surveys of study needs and awareness and aims to enhance all kinds of specialised research.
- Information --- Building the base for information networks for life-long learning including information related to women's participation in society.

Using Yu-Ai Fukui as a base, the Centre provides a variety of services towards the realisation of a gender-equal society

As a general centre for women, the Centre provides courses (Fukui Women's University) that aim to make citizens aware of women's affairs and help them gain skills required for their participation in society and knowledge necessary for them to actively take actions in creating a gender-equal society. It also provides courses (Fukui Women's Sophia) that aim to nurture leaders who will be active in the community and human and councils. From



the perspective of gender equality, the Centre provides courses (Courses Fostering Gender Equality Advisors) aimed at nurturing advisors who can guide and advise



study activities, and manages "Yu-Ai Empowerment College" that encourages people to plan and carry out self-study courses not just sit and listen. It also develops study programmes, produces teaching materials and audio-visual materials towards the creation of a gender-equal society.

The Centre has also established a general counselling service for women to deal with various issues involving women at home, at work and in the community. General counselling (general counsellors for women are available every Monday); special counselling (lawyers, clinical psychologists are available once a month and medical doctors are available once every two months).

Towards creating a caring and "learning Fukui" where anyone anywhere anytime can pursue life-long learning

As a life-long learning centre, the Centre holds training courses for persons in charge of life-long learning and life-long learning information networks and PTA advisors in addition to seminars that foster life-long learning leaders. The Fukui Life Academy established in 1992 provides a wide range of citizens with life-long learning opportunities through various courses, lectures and seminars. It also collects and stores information on life-long learning within the prefecture and makes it available through its network system and engages in study counselling.

Furthermore, the Centre also engages in nurturing wide-area study groups, loans audio-visual materials and teaching aids, develops teaching materials, and carries out training courses for audio-visual education advisors with the aim of expanding citizens' scope of study.

Facilities

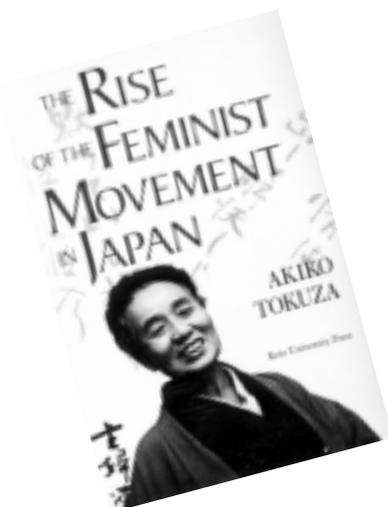
- Multipurpose Hall (Max. 700 people)
- AV Hall (Max. 130 people)
- Computer Room
- Cooking Room
- Fitness Room
- Music Room
- Creation Room
- Film-making Room
- Japanese Room
- Tea Room
- Classroom
- Children's Room (A nursery nurse is employed so that visitors with children can participate in courses and activities without concern.) Etc.

PUBLICATIONS

1. The Rise of the Feminist Movement in Japan

(Written by Akiko Tokuza. Published in 1999 by Keio University Press Inc. 302 pages. ISBN 4-7664-0731-8.)

This study is a unique effort to explore the emergence of women's independent political and social role in Japanese society.



The traditional role of women in Japan had been the quiet but nurturing daughter, wife, and mother. They had no power nor visibility as persons even in their own homes. But the coming of the Taisho Democracy set afoot some dissent, led by Hiratsuka Raicho, Ichikawa Fusae, and Oku Mumeo, in the form of a women-oriented organization, the Shin Fujin Kyokai (New Women's Association), in the early 1920s. As in the case of other social movements, both in Japan and in the Western democratic societies, this agitation led to mobilisational effort. Progress was slow due to world events and the outbreak of World War II; but in the case of Japan, advances were accelerated by the U.S. Occupation, which gave support and impetus to the movement for improvements, especially in the political status of women.

This study proposed to examine the progress of these efforts to improve the political, economic, educational, and family status of Japanese women focusing on the communication and organising activities of Oku Mumeo, whose life spans the period and whose efforts have been influential in all four areas of women's activities.

The major conclusion of this study is that the successful institutionalisation of the feminist movement in Japan is due not only to the organisational abilities of Oku Mumeo but also to her effectiveness as a communicator of ideas to all levels of Japanese society. Thus, communication is an important variable in

describing and analysing the process and stages of development of a social movement.

Akiko Tokuza was born in Kyoto in 1932, and is at present professor of English and Speech Communication at Tokyo Keizai University.

2. The Mountain is Moving: Japanese Women's Lives

(Written by Patricia Morley. Published in 1999 by UBC Press. 226 pages. ISBN 0-7748-0675-3.)

This book describes postwar Japanese society and the roles that women are expected to play within it. Based on interviews with hundreds of women, the book examines many spheres of women's lives, including education, marriage and child rearing, work outside the house, caring for the elderly, political power or lack of it, and volunteerism. Patricia Morley also examines a diverse and compelling range of stories and novels by and about Japanese women, revealing both the patterns that concern sociologists and the exceptions that interest philosophers and writers.



Morley asserts that the legendary Japanese system of white-collar labour can only be maintained by the efforts of women who maintained by the efforts of women who remain at home to take care of their husbands, their children, and their aging relatives. In recent years, however, increasing numbers of Japanese women have begun to seek change and empowerment beyond the domestic sphere.

Engagingly written, this book is a unique introduction to Japanese society and will appeal not only to those curious about modern Japanese culture but also to all those with an interest in women's issues.

Patricia Morley is a prolific writer and the recipient of many awards, including the 1987 Ottawa Citizen Award for Non-Fiction. She is Professor Emerita at Concordia University.

Introduction to NWEC

1. Publication

Research Report on Policies to Promote Home Education with a Gender Equality Perspective (Japanese)

This report summarises research carried out in the first year of a three-year project, "Research on Policies to Promote Home Education with Gender Equality Perspective", commissioned in 1998 by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture. The overall objective of this research is to examine policies that contribute towards a gender-equal society by promoting gender-free home education that gives rise to awareness and a sense of values, whilst respecting the individuality and human rights of each and every child. It also aims to develop home education programmes and teaching materials. This year's objective was to grasp the status of planning and operation of home education programmes in each region.

Journal of the National Women's Education Centre of Japan, Vol. 3 (Japanese with some English)

The National Women's Education Centre publishes the journal as a means of contributing, from a gender perspective, to international and interdisciplinary research as well as practical research concerning lifelong education. Volume 3, "Life long Learning and Education", has just been published.

2. Sponsored Programmes

(1) The 1999 NWEC Training Course on Information Processing of Women's Issues

This course has been held annually since 1989. It provides training in the use of information media and the analytical and summarising skills concerning awareness development on women's issues with the aim of deepening mutual understanding of women's issues in the Asian Pacific region and promoting a network for women's information within the region. The training course, held during the forty-day period 25th July through 1st September, 1999, was attended by six persons from the following six countries: Fiji; Kiribati; Malaysia; Mongolia; the Philippines and Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan was invited to attend for the first time. Due to the renewal of equipment in 1999, the results of this course were made accessible world-wide for the first time.

(URL <http://www.nwec.go.jp/itt/index.html>)



(2) The 1999 Forum on Women's and Gender Studies

This forum aims to contribute to women's empowerment and the establishment of women's human rights towards the formation of a gender-equal society and was held on August 6th-8th, 1999 with the theme "Women's Empowerment and Women's and Gender Studies - Creating New Values". It provided a forum for information exchange and the pooling of results from diverse research, education and practical activities concerned with women's and gender studies carried out by organisations, groups, individuals and administrations. Approximately 800 persons attended the first forum in 1996 whereas attendance exceeded 2000 persons this year as the scale of the event has been expanding annually.

(3) The 1999 Seminar on Child-Raising by the Community and Family

This seminar aims to contribute towards the formation of a gender-equal society by providing practical training that promotes men's participation in home education and community activities, and to

support home education that fosters rich humanity in children. The seminar held on 17th-18th September, 1999, was attended by 89 persons (69 women and 20 men), including social education administrators, persons from women's institutions and PTAs, groups and organisations that support family education.

The Forum on Home Education (co-sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, NWEC and the Saitama Prefectural Board of Education) held in the afternoon of the 18th September was attended by approximately 250 persons. Introduction of the five-day school week from 2002 is expected to afford children more leisure time in their daily lives. In view of this the forum provided a worthwhile opportunity for specialists and participants to discuss how communities should participate in child-rearing and how men and women should actively co-operate in raising their children so as to nurture children's interest "ability to live life".

(4) The 1999 Guatemalan Education Administrators' Course

The course is held under the joint auspices of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Osaka University, Kobe University, Fukuoka University, Hiroshima University and NWEC, for the benefit of the Guatemalan education administrators and regional administrators. Its objective is to contribute to enhance the functions of the Guatemalan regional education administration by transferring technology and know how on Japanese school administration, school education and teacher development. This course has been held since fiscal 1997 to contribute towards a particularly urgent issue, the advancement of education for girls from indigenous tribes. Twelve trainees from Guatemala attended the course held from 1st November through 4th December 1999. Four days of this course, (21st-24th November) were held at NWEC, and the opportunity this part of the course provided for home visits that facilitated contact with Japanese families and real experiences of how children are disciplined and educated at home was particularly well received.



EDITOR'S NOTE

The NWEC Newsletter is published semi-annually with the aim of introducing NWEC study, exchange, research and information programmes, as well as information concerning women in Japan to overseas readers. It also aims to promote the formation of international information networks in the fields of women's education and home education.

As of January 2000, this newsletter is distributed free of charge to approximately 1500 institutions (and individuals) in 178 countries throughout the world. However, as we wish to increase our distribution we would appreciate if you would contact us at the address below if you know of any institution that would be interested in receiving this newsletter.

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