

Women's Active Roles will Revitalize Japan's Regions

From the "White Paper on Gender Equality 2015"

Summary

Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

June 2015

The Cabinet annually submits to the Diet a report on the state of formation of a gender-equal society and policies implemented by the government (the White Paper on Gender Equality).

Please see the White Paper (in Japanese) for more detailed information on sources cited.

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Women's Active Roles will Revitalize Japan's Regions

Section 1 Government Policies to achieve a Society where All Women Shine

(The Power of Women: Japan's Largest Potential Power)

The second Abe administration took over governmental duties in December 2012, identifying the power of women as one of Japan's largest potential power. The administration recognized that Japan would not create sustainable economic growth without the power of women, and to this end the cabinet has adopted a number of initiatives, including those discussed below.

- Improve nursery school infrastructure to shorten the number of children on waiting lists, find and educate more nursery teachers, and increase childcare leave benefits, as called for in the Japan Revitalization Strategy (June 2013 Cabinet Decision)
- Create a Comprehensive After-School Childcare Plan, develop child-rearing support professionals, construct new legal frameworks, review the tax and social security systems to realize women's choices of the way to work, etc., as called for in the Japan Revitalization Strategy Revised in 2014 (June 2014 Cabinet Decision)
- Create new movements nationwide, including the Council for Supporting Women to Shine, the World Assembly for Women (WAW!), etc.
- Establish the Headquarters for Creating a Society where All Women Shine and create a policy package for a society where all women shine
- Hold meetings of the Quality of Life Conference

(Construct a New Legal Framework)

The Bill on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace calls for implementing policies to promote women's participation and advancement in the workplace on national and local governments. In addition, this bill offers a framework to encourage public and private entities to undertake initiatives on their own. More specifically, this bill calls for formulation of basic policy plan by national government and implementation plans by local governments. It also provides that national and local government agencies and private-sector corporations must correct and analyze the data on issues of gender and employment, devise and disclose action plans including numerical targets, and announce the data regarding women's participation and advancement¹.

¹ Required for private-sector corporations with more than 300 regular employees. Private-sector corporations with 300 or less regular employees are required to make best efforts, considering the administrative burden.

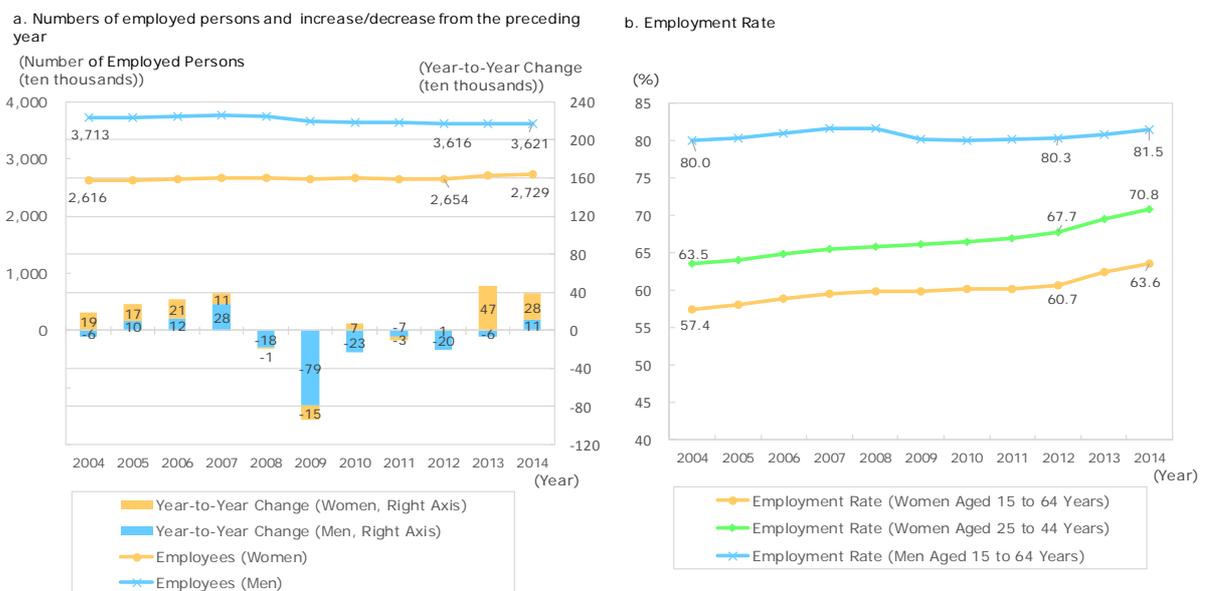
(Importance of Regional Initiatives)

The impact of governmental programs and other factors have led to much higher social mood for the participation and advancement of women. Combined with an uptick in the economy, 750,000 female employed persons increased in Japan between the years 2012 and 2014. Female employment rate of the working age population (persons aged 15 to 64 years) increased by 2.9%-point in the same period (I-Feature-Figure 2).

Meanwhile, the total female non-labor force desiring to work rose to 3.03 million (2014), demonstrating the significant size of Japan's potential power.

In order to provide an environment in which women can fully contribute their talents in the home, in the community, and in the workplace, we believe that initiatives must be taken in regions based on their own circumstances.

I-Feature-Figure 2 Numbers of Employed Persons and Employment Rates by Sex (2004 to 2014)



(Notes)

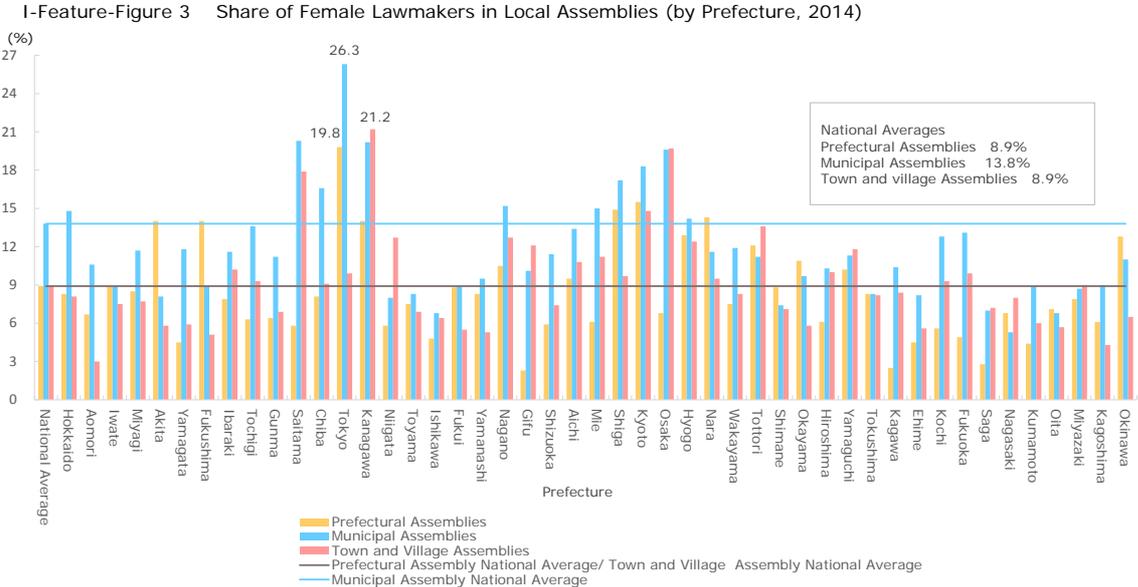
1. Source: "Labour Force Survey (Basic Tabulation)," the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC).
2. The data from 2005 through 2011 are the compatible time-series data (except for ratios).
3. The data of 2011 are supplemental estimates by the MIC.

Section 2 Active Participation of Women in Local Politics, Government, and Economics

1. Active Participation of Women in Local Politics

(Local Assemblies with a High Ratio of Women Members are More Numerous in the Tokyo Area² and Kinki Region)

Looking at the ratios of women lawmakers in (1) prefectural, (2) municipal, (3) town and village assemblies by prefecture as of December 31, 2014 shows that every ratio exceeds the national average, in Tokyo Metropolis, Kanagawa Prefecture, Nagano Prefecture, Shiga Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, and Hyogo Prefecture. In other words, Tokyo Area and Kinki region tend to have local assemblies with higher ratios of women lawmakers (I-Feature-Figure 3).



- (Notes)
- Source: Survey of the Number of Assembly Members and Managers of Local Public Bodies by Party Affiliation by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (as of December 31, 2014).
 - Surveys were current as of December 31, 2014.
 - Municipal Assemblies include ordinance-designated cities.
 - Female share of lawmakers in municipal or town and village assemblies is the ratio of female members to the total number of members in all municipal or town and village assemblies within each prefecture.

(The Ratio of Female Successful Candidates is Increasing in Proportion to the Ratio of Women Candidates)

An examination by prefecture of the ratio of women candidates in local assemblies for nationwide local elections during 2011 reveals that prefectures with a high ratio of women candidates also have proportionally high ratios of women voted in. We also see that prefectures with a high ratio of candidates between the ages of 25 and 44 trend higher in the ratio of women candidates. In combination, these trends suggest that increasing young candidates

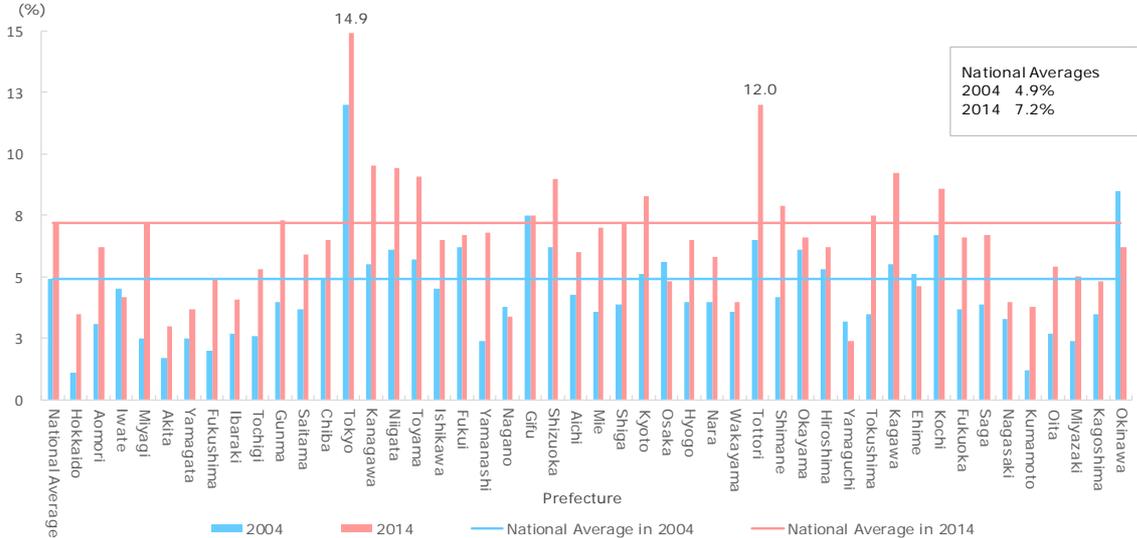
²Tokyo Area: Tokyo Metropolis, Saitama Prefecture, Chiba prefecture and Kanagawa prefecture

regardless of gender and activating local politics through the involvement of younger generations are ultimately likely to result in higher ratios of women lawmakers.

2. Active Participation of Women in Local Government
(Variances among Prefectural Governments in Ratio of Women in Managerial Positions)

Looking at the ratio of women in managerial positions by prefectural governments as of April 1, 2014 reveals a wide variance among prefectures. While Tokyo Metropolis and Tottori Prefecture report ratios of 14.9% and 12.0%, other several prefectural governments are below the 5% mark (I-Feature-Figure 6).

I-Feature-Figure 6 Female Share of Managerial Positions in Prefectural Government (by Prefecture, 2004 and 2014)



- (Notes)
- Source: Survey of the Number of Assembly Members and Managers of Local Public Bodies by Party Affiliation by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (as of December 31, 2014).
 - Surveys were current as of December 31, 2014.
 - Municipal Assemblies include ordinance-designated cities.
 - Female share of lawmakers in municipal or town and village assemblies is the ratio of female members to the total number of members in all municipal or town and village assemblies within each prefecture.

(Significant Variance among Municipal, Town and Village Governments)

As of April 1, 2014, there were 61 local bodies (3.5% of total municipal, town and village governments) in 28 prefectures with a ratio of women managers in excess of 30%. Itanocho in Tokushima Prefecture had the highest ratio of women in managerial positions at 54.1%. Meanwhile, a total of 307 bodies (17.6% of total municipal, town and village governments) in 42 prefectures have no women in managerial positions.

(Hiring of Women for Prefectural Senior Positions Exceeds 20%)

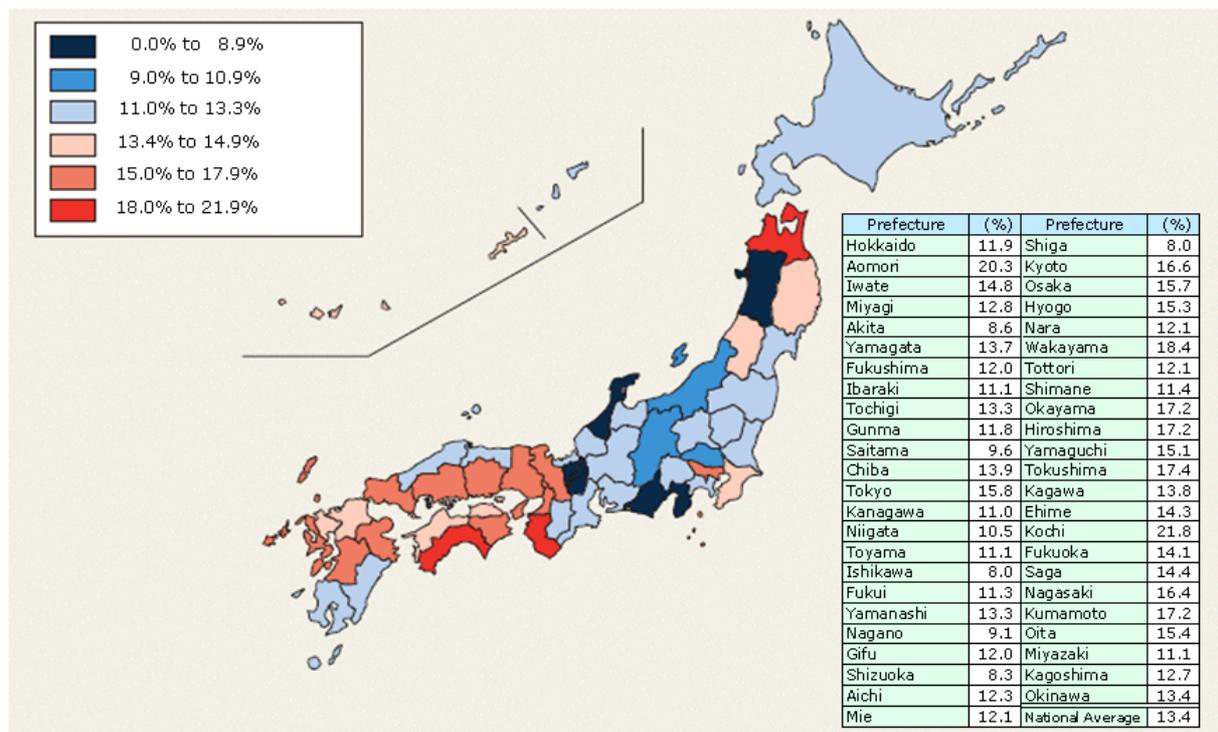
The national average ratio of women making up prefectural senior positions between FY2004 and FY2013 is 21.2%. Among those prefectures that reported a higher ratio of women hired in senior positions, not all have high ratios of women in managerial positions at this point in time; however, we expect the number of women working in managerial positions to grow in the future.

3. Active Participation of Women in Local Economies

(The Ratio of Female Administrative and Managerial Workers Tends to be Higher toward Japan's Kinki Region and Westward)

Looking at the ratio of female administrative and managerial workers by prefecture reveals that Japan's Kinki region and westward have many prefectures reporting higher than the national average of 13.4% (I-Feature-Figure 10).

I-Feature-Figure 10 Female Share of Administrative and Managerial Workers (by Prefecture, 2012)



(Notes)

1. Source: "Employment Status Survey (2012)," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
2. Administrative and managerial worker is defined as a person engaged in management or administration of overall or a part of business entity (a section or greater), such as making operational management policies, creating action plans based on management policy, supervising or managing workers. Includes government employees.
3. Some small islands may not be displayed on the map.

(Women's Interest in Receiving Promotions is Likely Stronger Depending on Systems and Conditions)

Examining the interest of working men and women in receiving a promotion at work (2015) reveals that the ratio of both permanent employees and non-permanent employees who are interested in a promotion is higher for men than for women. However, more women than men responded that their place of employment had no system for or available opportunity to be promoted. Considering this fact, we can conclude that given proper systems and conditions for promotion, the number of women who desire a promotion would increase.

(Japan's Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu Regions Report Higher Rates of Female Entrepreneurs)

Looking at the ratio of entrepreneurs to employed females (2012) reveals that Japan's Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu regions have prefectures that report higher figures than the national average.

According to a survey of companies that received financing from Japan Finance Corporation, nearly 30% of females responding indicated that their occupation immediately preceding their entrepreneurial venture was either as a non-permanent employee or as a housewife, likely having little or no business management experience. Further, looking at the motivation behind starting a business shows that female entrepreneurs responded more frequently than male entrepreneurs that they wanted to have a job where age and gender didn't matter or that they wanted to do more with their hobby or talent. Women's entrepreneurialism may not only activate regional economies, but also provides an important platform to expand their abilities and satisfy their need for self-actualization.