

# JAPAN LABOR BULLETIN

ISSUED BY THE JAPAN INSTITUTE OF LABOUR

*Vol.35 No.08*

*August 1996*

## CONTENTS

### **Working Conditions and the Labor Market**

- ▶ Upward Trends in the Labor Market and Recruitment Trends for New Graduates Next Spring

### **Human Resources Management**

- ▶ About 70% of Corporations Plan to Introduce Annual Pay System Employees' Pension Fund in Bad Shape
- ▶ -Employees' Pension Association and Ministry of Health and Welfare Respond to the Situation-

### **International Relations**

- ▶ International Conference on Labor Law

### **Public Policy**

- ▶ Nationality Clause for Local Public Servants -Comparison of Various Responses by Local Governments -

### **Special Topic**

- ▶ Female Labor Force after the Enforcement of The Equal Employment Opportunity Law

### **Statistical Aspects**

- ▶ Recent Labor Economy Indices
- ▶ Survey on Labor Economy Trends

## Working Conditions and the Labor Market

### Upward Trends in the Labor Market and Recruitment Trends for New Graduates Next Spring

The percentage of corporations which intend to recruit "larger numbers" of students graduating in March 1997 topped that of those which will hire "smaller numbers," a turnaround from their cautious stance in the past years, the Ministry of Labour said in a Survey on Labour Economic Trends released on June 6. In the previous year a higher percentage of companies recruited "fewer" students.

By industry, 18 percent (12% for the previous year) of wholesalers and retailers as well as eating and drinking establishments, 17 percent (10% for the previous year) of firms in services and 12 percent (10% for the previous year) of manufacturers said they will hire more new graduates, surpassing the percentage of those which will reduce the number of new hires. The findings are based on a survey conducted in May, with 2,684 companies with 30 and more employees responding.

Recruit Co., a major employment magazine publisher, said that the number of want ads for mid-career hiring for April rose 32.9 percent from the previous year, for the fourth straight month.

According to an official of Recruit Co., want ads for temporary job magazines began to recover from around the summer of 1994 and those for mid-career job magazines followed this trend and also turned upward. Want ads for mid-career job magazines have continued to show an upward trend, particularly in the computer-related sector, as well as in the electrical, electronics and machinery sectors. Also, the number of job openings for automobile manufacturing, building maintenance, construction and civil engineering, all of which were slow starters, has been increasing from the start of 1996. The number of job offers has turned positive in all sectors.

As we have seen, the number of job offers to new graduates next spring is growing. However, there is a large disparity in the new graduate employment depending on sectors. There are moves to substantiate software development divisions in the computer industries. Companies in the travel and distribution business plan to reinforce sales staff to offer better services. Many companies in real estate, which are unable to pull themselves out of a recession since the collapse of the speculative bubble economy and those in petroleum which are suffering from deregulation, are expected to either cutback hiring or hire no new

graduates again in 1997. Of the banks currently tallying the massive amount of bad loans, Sanwa Bank and Tokai Bank have decided to reduce their number of new hires, showing continued severe employment conditions.

## Human Resources Management

### About 70% of Corporations Plan to Introduce Annual Pay System

Around 70 percent of stock exchange-listed firms are considering or planning to implement an annual pay system, a trend that is more than double the percentage recorded in the previous survey of 1992, according to a recent survey published by the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development. The survey was conducted in January 1996 on those responsible for human resources development in 2,230 companies listed on eight stock exchanges across the nation. Replies were received from 510 of the 2,230 firms. Those who said they "are already adopting an annual pay system" were 9.8 percent, approximately the same figure as the 1992 survey's 10.4 percent. Meanwhile, 68.2 percent replied they "are specifically planning to implement a system" or "consider such a system in the years ahead," going far beyond the 29.7 percent recorded in the 1992 survey. On the contrary, 20.2 percent ruled out the possibility of instituting an annual salary program in the years to come, a sharp fall from the 1992 figure of 57.4 percent. As reasons for ruling out the possibility of the system, the highest, or 76.2 percent said "It is hard to precisely evaluate an employee's ability and performance," indicating that difficulties evaluating employee performance present a serious obstacle to the introduction of the annual pay system.

The respondents referred to "precise evaluation of an employee's performance" as the No.1 reason for adopting the annual pay system (71.4%). In determining the amount of annual pay, they placed a greater emphasis on "the individuals' performance during the previous year," (82%), showing that the annual remuneration system is based on work performance. In the most recent renewal of annual pay scales, the rate of increase averaged 14.4 percent, while the rate of decrease averaged 4 percent. The comment, "did not decrease" annual pay for their employees was given by 51.4 percent, manifesting a relatively loose operation of the system. Among the pluses cited for adoption of the system were, "Those with a higher annual pay demonstrate more willingness to work" and "It enables precise evaluation of an employee's performance." On the minus side, meanwhile, were, "It places a heavier burden on the evaluator" and "Precise evaluation is difficult." As for overall evaluation of the annual pay system, the largest, or 63.3 percent of those in charge of personnel management noted, "Largely as we had expected," followed by 16.3 percent who said, "Cannot say anything at the moment," and 12.2 percent who remarked, "Have yet to see

a visible effect of the system."

---

### **Employees' Pension Fund in Bad Shape - Employees' Pension Fund Association and Ministry of Health and Welfare Respond to the Situation -**

The effects of the graying of Japanese society have begun to loom large among corporate employees, causing anxiety about the problems financing of corporate pensions. One of the corporate pension programs disseminated among large enterprises is the employees' pension fund scheme. This is a corporate pension program under which the employees can add their own benefits in addition to the benefits from the employees' pension which is a public pension. Amidst restructuring due to the recession, constraints on new hiring brought on by the falling revenue of insurance premiums and an increase in the number of retirees has pushed up benefits for them. Worse yet, lack of a reserve fund for the employees' pension funds scheme began to surface, with a drop in the working revenue caused by low interest rates.

According to the Employees' Pension Fund Association, after the bubble economy burst, already three employees' pensions funds have been liquidated due to financial straits. At the end of fiscal 1994, of about 8,000 funds a majority had been short of the revenue fund. From 1995, corporations came to reckon the lack of the revenue fund as the losses, to financially support the fund. Hitachi Group decided to deal with the lack of the revenue fund for fiscal 1995 and 1996 when closing the books for March 1996. Hitachi Ltd. announced that it will rely on 29 billion yen to bear the bulk of the losses of the employees' pension fund scheme. Other Hitachi Group firms will also cover the deficits. Furthermore, New Oji Paper Co., Ltd. reckoned on 7 billion yen in setting the account for March 1996, to cover the deficits of the reserve fund for the employees' pension fund for 1994 and 1995.

The Association also proposed that comprehensive support measures be taken to cope adequately with the deteriorating financing of the employees' pension fund scheme. In addition to the traditional system of assuring payments to liquidation of the fund, it will allow premiums to be raised for financially tight funds and will help in mergers with other funds to expand the fund, in order to prevent the fund from being dissolved due to a financial stringency.

In a May 1996 report on the employees' pension fund scheme, the Ministry of Health and Welfare proposed a plan to partially introduce defined contribution benefits within the benefits of the employees' pension scheme. Defined contribution benefits are intended to provide capital according to the amount contributed only for a given period upon retirement.

## International Relations

### **International Conference on Labor Law**

On June 3 and 4, the International Club of Labor Law Journals (ICLLJ) hosted an international colloquium at the Japan Institute of Labour in Tokyo, Japan. An academic society organized during the mid-1980s by editors of major labor law journals and concerned scholars of industrialized nations, the ICLLJ has sponsored conferences to promote consultations on cooperative relations and strengthen networks of labor law magazines. Since 1993, the ICLLJ has also held international colloquiums on comparative labor law to discuss current and important topics.

This year, the Japan Labor Bulletin sponsored a colloquium with a theme of "Future of Dispute Resolution in Labor and Employment Law." The discussion covered such topics as the features of each country's system for resolving employment disputes, the function and evaluation of present systems, and future prospects for establishing effective dispute resolution systems. The participants concluded that certain elements are important for effective dispute resolution, schemes for the adjustment or voluntary resolution of disputes, participation of trade unions in the dispute resolution process, and accessibility in terms of time and cost. Guests and audience members also engaged in very productive discussions with the representatives of the member journals.

## Public Policy

### **Nationality Clause for Local Public Servants - Comparison of Various Responses by Local Governments -**

Over the issue of the "nationality clause" which stipulates that only Japanese nationals qualify for examinations for public servant clerical posts, Kawasaki City (close to Tokyo and with a population of about 1.25 million) decided on May 13 to do away with the nationality requirement for municipal public servants and open personnel recruitment examinations for posts other than firemen also to non-Japanese. Behind this decision lies the current situation of Kawasaki in which foreign residents, including South Koreans and North Koreans, account for 1.6 percent, or about 20,000, of all citizens. In addition, whereas the Cabinet Legislation Bureau notes that "public servants responsible for the use of public authority or formation of national will should be Japanese," the Kawasaki Municipal Government decided to abolish the nationality requirement clause, arguing that "there is no law prohibiting local governments from hiring foreign nationals and that specific types of positions involving public

authority are not clearly defined".

Meanwhile, the Personnel Commission of Kochi Prefecture decided on April 30 to postpone removal of the nationality requirement clause which constitutes qualification for taking examinations for prefectural general posts. The Commission's postponement was due to strong opposition from the Ministry of Home Affairs which responded to the views of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau which noted that restricting appointment of non-Japanese to public servant positions is "a natural principle of law." However, Kochi Prefecture Governor Hashimoto commented, "We will endeavor to eliminate the nationality requirement amidst the rising tide of globalization."

On May 16, the Tokyo District Court ruled that the Constitution of Japan does not guarantee that foreign nationals may take public servant positions, refusing a second-generation Korean woman's claim. She had filed a lawsuit against the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, claiming that the nationality requirement for taking an examination for administrative positions violates the Constitution which stipulates equality under the Law. The woman, a Tokyo Metropolitan Government worker, could not take a promotion examination for an administrative post because of her lack of Japanese nationality. In the ruling, the court said that "public servants who are involved in direct execution of important authority should be Japanese." It, however, noted that foreign nationals may take public servant positions of an auxiliary nature and academic and technological clerical positions in professional fields, thus showing an understanding for allowing foreigners to take general clerical positions as in the case of Kawasaki City. At present, some public servant positions call for Japanese nationality, depending on the local governments and types of jobs. However, the yardstick for determining which position requires Japanese nationality and in which job type is not clearly defined. With a growing number of foreigners with permanent resident status in Japan wanting to take public servant positions, the issue of the "nationality clause" will likely draw much heated public debate in the years ahead.

## Special Topic

### Female Labor Force after the Enforcement of The Equal Employment Opportunity Law

Sachiko Imada  
Assistant Research Director  
The Japan Institute of Labour



#### 1. Introduction

Ten years have passed since the enforcement in Japan of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (hereinafter "EEOL"). Review of the EEOL has been underway since 1995 and an interim report on it is coming soon. If the work on overhauling the EEOL progresses smoothly, a bill revising the EEOL will be submitted to a regular session of Diet in 1997. There lies, it seems, a rocky road before submission of the bill. True, amid the deteriorating employment environment since the burst of Japan's bubble economy, problems involving the EEOL were laid bare in a variety of ways with an outcry for reinforcing the effectiveness of the EEOL particularly among female workers and female students, thus fanning a demand for revision of the EEOL. But on the other hand, employers' attitudes toward revision of the EEOL are obviously negative. It is undeniable that the worsening of the employment environment will cool off corporate concerns for female labor. Employers want to avoid being placed under further control regarding management of female employees.

Needless to say, the gist of the forthcoming revision is how the present EEOL can be revised into an effective form that regulates gender-based discrimination. Labor and management are far and between in their opinions. There are no predictions of how their points of contention will be tackled in future deliberations. In this paper, I will outline how female employment has undergone changes in the 10 years since the enforcement of the EEOL and would like to reconsider the significance of the EEOL.

#### 2. Features of the EEOL

Japan's EEOL, it is fair to say, is considerably different from similar laws regarding equal opportunities in other countries<sup>1)</sup>. The law prohibiting sex discrimination in the U.S. and Europe covers comprehensively discriminatory acts in all stages of the employment process from recruitment, hiring to retirement and dismissal. In addition, it clearly "forbids"

discriminatory action and has in place a relief body with strong authority for solving disputes. Japan's EEOL, on the contrary, regulates separately each of the stages; recruitment (hiring), assignment (promotion), training (welfare provisions) and retirement (dismissal). Furthermore, it adopts two different forms of regulations. The first are rules requiring efforts that obligate employers to endeavor to offer equal opportunities and treatment to women in terms of recruitment (hiring) and assignment (promotion). The second are prohibitive rules that clearly forbid gender-based discrimination in terms of training (welfare provisions) and retirement (dismissal). The EEOL stipulates that an equal-opportunity mediation commission be established at a prefectural women's and young workers' office for solving disputes. The commission, however, does not have a legal authority.

Accordingly, the EEOL is undeniably ineffective in terms of removal of unequal employment conditions between men and women. This is due to the fact that the nation at that time had yet to build a consensus on equal employment of both sexes and also that labor and management were pitted against each other in their opinions and struck a balance, with no coordinated views and opinions based upon a fundamental idea of equality. Management were apprehensive of the collapse of the male-oriented regime of employment. Women, meanwhile, expressed concern about forfeiting their vested rights under the protective stipulations for women of the Labour Standards EEOL (LSL). Both sides confronted each other head-on over "equal or protection?" Worse still, the public at large joined them in objecting to enactment of the EEOL per se, claiming that gender equality will collapse the nation's culture and values<sup>2</sup>). Thus, a heated controversy raged over the bill.

Thus, deliberations on the bill went on amidst great confusion and bewilderment. The bill, which the administrative body first considered modeled on the American Equal Opportunity Law, met heated opposition from both labor and management and has had its teeth taken out of it. These are the conditions under which the EEOL, which is extremely inadequate in terms of legal binding power, came into being. Protective provisions for women of the LSL which were pointed out as contrary to realizing equality were abolished for some jobs such as managerial and professional jobs, but remained effective for many other jobs.

The EEOL has been enforced with many problems yet to be solved. Thus, the current revision of the EEOL is sort of like "toeing the line" over issues of contention which had been shelved. Things, however, are clearly different from 10 years ago. Women's consciousness of work and their abilities and the environment surrounding them have all undergone dramatic changes. What is, above all, important is that the reality of female employment during the past 10 years clearly substantiates the significance and limits of the EEOL. Therefore, elaborately studying the realities to clarify what the problems are and discussing the



significance of future female employment in Japanese society based upon unbiased recognition should naturally lead to avoidance of unfruitful disputes and pave the way for reform.

### **3. Trends in Female Employment**

How then has women's employment undergone changes in these past 10 years? Great fears were entertained over the effectiveness of the EEOL since it was inaugurated. But the change of female employment was far more rapid than had been expected through steadfast expansion of female employment in both facets of supply and demand and a business boom following enforcement of the EEOL.

Notable changes in female labor force are, first, an increase in working women. In 1994, 26.94 million women were in the work force in Japan, accounting for 40.5 percent of the entire Japanese working population. The female labor force participation rate (the proportion of the labor population in the population 15 years old and over) stood at 50.2 percent (Statistics Bureau, Management and Coordination Agency, Labor Force Survey). Incidentally, in 1985, the year in which the EEOL went into effect, the female working population was 23.67 million; the labor force participation rate stood at 48.7 percent; and the proportion of women in the total work force was 39.7 percent. This means the growth of working women, the rising percentage of working women and the expanded proportion of women in the labor market. Changes are even more remarkable in the job market alone. In 1994, 20.34 million (15.48 million) were employed by others, accounting for 77.8 percent (67.2%) of all female workers employed. Women made up 38.8 percent (35.9%) of all Japanese employees. The figures in parentheses are for 1985. In the last 10 years, women employees have increased 1.4 times, manifesting that approximately three in four working women are employed by others. In addition, changes were also observable in job types, further expanding the job fields for women. Although many women are still in clerical jobs, some women have been venturing into such areas as skilled work, manufacturing and construction which were traditionally for men. Furthermore, there is an increasingly visible number of women doing professional and technological jobs, further expanding women's domain in the company.

Thus, the number of working women, and that of female employees in particular, increased and their job fields expanded. Behind this lies a growing number of women who possess both a willingness to work and ability. Changes in corporate efforts to vigorously tackle the active utilization of women may also be pointed out.

However, the business recession after the burst of the economic bubble has cast a shadow on the employment of women that steadily expanded, having a great impact particularly on

recruitment and hiring of women. Consider hiring of 4-year-college graduates in the technological field, for instance. Companies which hired only male graduates accounted for 61.7 percent of all firms questioned, far surpassing the figure of 37.0 percent which employed both men and women graduates (Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Survey on Female Employment Management). Incidentally, in 1992, the former was 49.6 percent and the latter 48.2 percent. The expansion of women's job clearly came to a halt.

In the past several years female college students have had difficulty finding jobs. The tight job situation, dubbed "a super ice age for landing work," for them was taken up as the subject of heated debate in the Diet. The reality of a double-track personnel management system corporations have introduced to respond adequately to enforcement of the equality law indicates that the expression is not exaggerating. The dual path system is a system which divides women into two categories: *sogoshoku*, or those on a management track who are in charge of core jobs, and *ippanshoku*, or those on a general office work track who are responsible for jobs of a fixed and auxiliary nature. On each of the tracks, personnel management are treated in a different manner in terms of recruitment and hiring, assignment and promotion, wages, education and training and out-of town transfers which come together with a move out. In some cases, companies offer an intermediate *sogoshoku* track or a *gyomushoku* (business operations job) track and even provide a *senmonshoku* (specialist jobs) track. Either way, the dual path system has benefits for workers in the context of achieving harmony between private and career life and also for companies in terms of the active utilization of workers according to their ability and aptitude. The system, a remake of the old gender track system before enforcement of the EEOL, however, was criticized as creating more disparity based on gender. From the present situation, this criticism hit it right. Of those firms which recruited for so-called *sogoshoku* comprehensive positions, 78.5 percent "recruited both men and women" and 21.5 percent "recruited men alone." But only 27.6 percent hired both males and females and 72.3 percent employed only males. Thus, although the system was expected to consider choices of the way people work, the reality is that it is obviously an expedient means of differentiating between men and women.

In short, looking back on female employment in the past 10 years, it is fair to say that jobs for women have certainly undergone changes and have expanded quantitatively. They have steadily changed qualitatively also and women have advanced into a variety of job fields. Corporations also are eager to utilize women vigorously, and the weight of women in corporate society has certainly grown. The fact is, however, that the effects of the business recession have had greater effects on women than on men. The following picture may be depicted concerning this fact. Expanded employment of women was due to the fact that amid the

worker shortage resulting from the nation's bubble economy, women were funneled into vacant positions unable to be filled by men. But women were the first to go once there were no more positions left vacant.

Opinions may be divided as to whether this judgement is right or not. It is clear, however, that male dominance is still deep-rooted in corporate attitudes toward a preference for men. Also, the present EEOL has been evidently unsuccessful in driving a wedge into such corporate behavior.

#### **4. Support Policies for Job Stay (Tenure)**

In the midst of over-discrimination between men and women in recruitment and hiring, it is natural that voices calling for reinforced legal effectiveness of the EEOL have been raised. As I mentioned earlier, the EEOL is extremely weak in its regulating power. From employment of women during the period of 10 years since the EEOL was enacted, the gist of the forthcoming revision clearly lies in strengthening the legal regulation power. To this end, it is essential to forbid discrimination against women in recruitment, hiring, assignment and promotion and to make prohibitions effective by an administrative commission which has authority to give orders with a legal force.

Simply reinforcing the restraining power of the EEOL is not enough to realize equal employment opportunities for both men and women. Supporting job stay (tenure) of women in step with the strengthening of the restraining power is also important. The issue of job staying occupies a particularly important position in realizing equal employment opportunities between the sexes. Stopping work in mid-career is a serious loss to career development of the worker her/himself as well as to the company. Particularly in Japan, large companies have instituted employee management premised on long-term employment tenure. Therefore, it has been common practice for many companies to manage men and women differently, in all stages of the employment process ranging from hiring, assignment and training through promotion to retirement. Men are expected to work long-term and women are highly likely to stop working in mid-career for reasons of marriage, childbirth and child care. The double-track personnel administration system mentioned above, it is safe to say, was devised with due consideration given to this practice. What is important is that as a natural consequence of the practice, a distinction between men as core workers and women as auxiliary workers has taken root in many workplaces. Thus, how women's job staying is supported is an important task in realizing the equal job opportunities in the workplace.

Since enforcement of the EEOL, support systems for job tenure, such as the child-care leave system, the family-care leave system and the re-employment system, have been steadily

consolidated. As for the child-care leave system, the EEOL Concerning Child Care Leave was enacted in 1991, legally permitting employees of both sexes with a child dependent to take a leave of absence for a certain period of time to tend to the tasks of child-care. The family-care leave system, as compared to the child-care leave system, has yet to come to stay, but it has become law in 1995 in such a manner that it is incorporated into the child-care leave program and is scheduled to be implemented in a full-fledged manner four years later in 1999. The re-employment system is a product of special measures for re-employment incorporated into the EEOL. Prior to the child-care leave system and the family-care leave system, the system has allowed the government to provide employers benefits since 1986.

Many working women are confronted with the problem of achieving a balance between career and family. This is due to the fact that women have so far been expected to do almost all the domestic chores. The new concept that "men should also take on some of the domestic burden" is spreading in terms of both the people's consciousness and institutions. However, signs of doing something about it have yet to emerge visibly, and in reality working women undertake even heavier responsibilities in family works. Thus, in order for women to do the same tasks as men on the job and display their full enthusiasm and ability to continue their working lives, it is vital to harmonize their careers with family. In this sense, the child-care leave and the family-care leave system are essential support measures for working women.

Following enforcement of the EEOL, what changes have taken place for women's job staying at stages of marriage and childbirth/child-care? Let us see a comparison of cohorts in women's job staying from pre-marriage to after-marriage and then from childbirth to after-childbirth<sup>3</sup>). According to the results of the comparison, the younger cohort are more likely to stay in the same job at the stage of marriage than the older cohort. Many women, however, quit work upon childbirth and especially a year after childbirth, indicating that there is no difference in cohort trends. It cannot be said that the tendency for women to stay in the same job a year after childbirth, or in the child-care period, is rising. What should particularly be noted is the outcome of cohorts for what should be dubbed "a generation of the EEOL." The marriage rate and the childbirth rate for those of this generation are lower than those for other generations. In other words, women of the EEOL generation tend to not get married and not have babies, or they tend to put off marriage and childbearing until later. However, of those who have married and have a child in this cohort category, many stop working just as those in the old cohort category. The ratio of women staying in the same job a year after childbirth represents 20 percent, with no gap in cohort trends at all between the old and the new cohort generations. In this sense, it is fair to say that there are no effects of the EEOL visible whatsoever. But many women in this cohort category remain unmarried and childless, and what action they will take upon marriage and childbirth or upon job staying at

that point deserves much attention.

All things considered, support policies for women's job staying, such as the child-care leave program, have been consolidated following inception of the EEOL, but major changes have not occurred in the realities of job tenure upon childbirth. Women do not marry at all or marry in later years in a structure in which they quit work once they have a child. Furthermore, women, it seems, choose to not have children or delay having children.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The revision of the EEOL is clearly intended to reinforce it. Toward this end, it is necessary to launch a body with a legal force in order to forbid discrimination against women in recruitment, hiring, assignment and promotion and to be effective in prohibitions. Reinforcing regulations alone is not enough, however. Many women are much handicapped by discriminatory practices amassed from past years under the entrenched system of a gender-based division of labor. A typical example is women's taking on much of the domestic burden and child-care. Consolidation of an environment in which both men and women can share the domestic burden is necessary, and improving conditions for both sexes to be able to participate in a fair competition is an immediate task to be tackled. Reinforcing support measures which uphold women's handicaps as well as strengthen restrictions are also essential.

According to an annual government report of vital statistics released the other day, in 1995 a total of 1.187 million babies were born in Japan, a drop of 51,261 from the year before, a record low. The total fertility rate also fell to an all-time low of 1.43. The nation's ongoing declining birthrate is being fueled by a variety of changes in society. It is, however, clear from the above discussion that the trend toward fewer children is not unrelated to women's having difficulty achieving a balance between job and family and child-care in particular. It is hoped that in future Diet deliberations, lawmakers will conduct an exhaustive debate on the significance of the EEOL and will present a bill revising it that can satisfy the nation's need for an equality law for the coming 21st century.

### Note

- 1) Tadasi Hanami, *Gendai no Koyo Byodo (Equal Employment in Contemporary Society)*, Sanseido, (1986). Akira Okuyama, "Kintoho 10nen no Genjo to Kadai (Japan's Equal Employment Opportunity Law)", *Nihon Rodo Kenkyu Zasshi*, Vol.38, May No.5, (1996).
- 2) Yutaka Kosai, "Keizai Rondan (Economic Topic)", *Nihon Keizai Sinbun*, 29/7/1984. Michiko Hasegawa, "Danjo Koyo Byodo Howa Bunka no Seitaikei wo Hakaisuru (Equal Employment Opportunity Law Destroys the Ecological System of Culture)", *Chuokoron*, Aug. (1984).
- 3) Sachiko Imada, "Josi Rodo to Shugyo Keizoku (Women's Employment and job Stay)", *Nihon Rodo Kenkyu Zasshi*, Vol.38, May No.5, (1996).

## Statistical Aspects

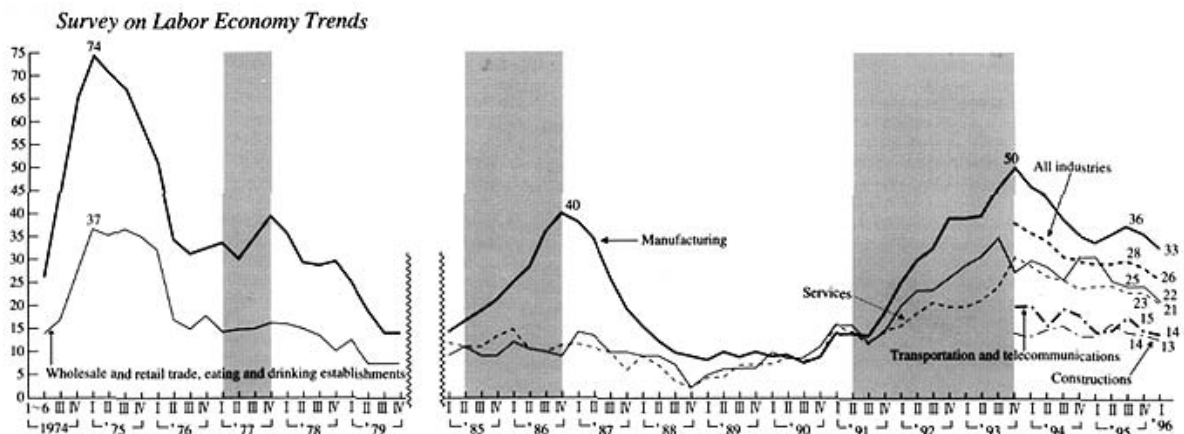
Recent Labor Economy Indices

	May 1996	April 1996	Change from previous year
Labor force	6,770 (10thousand)	6,731 (10thousand)	36 (10thousand)
Employed	6,530	6,496	4
Employees	5,326	5,302	45
Unemployed	240	235	32
Unemployment rate	3.5%	3.5%	0.4
Active opening rate	0.69	0.67	0.02
Total hours worked	154.5 (hours)	166.8 (hours)	1.5*
Total wages of regular employees	283.6 (¥ thousand)	286.9 (¥ thousand)	1.5*

Source: Management and Coordination Agency, Ministry of Labour.

Notes: 1.\*denotes annual percent change.

2.From February 1991, data of "Total hours worked" and "Total wages of regular employees" are for firms with 5 to 30 employees.



Source: Ministry of Labour, Trends in Percentage of Establishments which Implemented Industrial Employment Adjustments (Actual Results)

Notes 1) Survey taken in April-June 1984 for the services and in October-December 1993 for construction and transport and telecommunications.

2) Of the enterprises surveyed, those implementing labor adjustments resorted to such measures as voluntary retirements and dismissal, temporary transfers, reassignment, cutbacks and suspension of mid-career hiring, suspension of contract renewals and dismissal of temporary, seasonal workers and part-time workers; suspension of employees with pay, holidays substituted, an increase in the number of holidays and vacation such as summer holidays, and limits on overtime.

3) The rising percentage of enterprises which carried out labor adjustments is ascribable to the recession following the first oil crisis in 1974-75, the high-yen slump at a time of the Plaza Accord in 1986, and the recession following the collapse of the bubble economy in 1992-94.