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## General Survey

### 1999 White Paper on the National Lifestyle

In December 1999 the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) released the Fiscal 1999 *White Paper on the National Lifestyle*. This white paper is divided into two main parts. The first part, entitled “Maintaining Vitality in the Workplace within a Changing Employment Situation” documents the substantial new tasks created by changes that are occurring in the Japanese working environment.

In addition to long-term trends, such as demographic aging of the population and declining birthrates, economic maturity and globalization, the employment environment has substantially changed since 1990. First, the unemployment rate has been rising and many Japanese enterprises have been making efforts to restructure their businesses. The National Survey on Lifestyle Preferences, also conducted by the EPA, revealed that the proportion of employees who believe their “work situation is satisfactory, without fear of unemployment” has declined steadily since the mid-80s. Correspondingly, the proportion of respondents who answered that their work situation is “unsatisfactory” has been increasing and accounted for half of all answers in 1999. In 1998 the Japan Institute of Labour (JIL) conducted a survey targeting 670 people who were rehired out of the jobseekers who visited the Shinjuku Public Employment Security Office. The survey showed that many of the people who had lost their jobs and subsequently found new employment experienced a drop in income compared with their previous incomes. Workers under 30 years old reported an average drop of 11 percent, those in their 30s reported 13.1 percent, 18.9 percent for those in their 40s, and 24.3 percent for those in their 50s. These indicators of a deteriorating employment situation also revealed enormous insecurity and distress among workers.

Second, traditional Japanese employment practices, such as the lifetime employment system and the seniority wage system, are also changing. Enterprises are beginning to opt for a wage system based on employees' ability and achievement. The proportion of enterprises that have adopted an annual salary system is 12 percent. Among large enterprises with 1,000 or more employees, the proportion has reached 25 percent. Meanwhile, a Ministry of Labour survey shows a mere 10 percent of enterprises surveyed indicated they “highly value the lifetime employment system”, whereas about half the enterprises responded that they “do not insist on it.” The average length of continuous employment in terms of age group shows no conspicuous signs of change in the lifetime employment practices, yet the job-switching rate is increasing among young workers.

As problems related to unemployment become more widespread, employment insurance

payments play a vital role as a security net. The paper outlines the necessity of taking measures on behalf of part-time and dispatched workers, who are expected to increase in number, but who do not qualify for coverage under such insurance. Moreover, as systems emphasizing ability and achievement begin to prevail and the labor market becomes more flexible, individuals are placing more importance on self-improvement.

The white paper argues in favor of enhancing human resources as an essential component to revitalize the economy, improve lifestyles, and provide a safety net for economic society. In order for such mechanisms to work properly, the paper recommends further deregulation and the formation of a highly flexible labor market matched to a highly flexible, high-quality and multi-skilled labor force. In addition, the paper states that it will be necessary for both individuals and companies to be receptive to the competitive society these changes will bring about.

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

### **Special Survey of Labour Force Survey**

In fiscal 1999, the Management and Coordination Agency of Japan conducted an additional Special Survey of Labour Force Survey in August, as well as in February. Supplementary to the monthly Labour Force Survey, a Special Survey is normally conducted every February for the purpose of gaining a more thorough view of both the employment and unemployment situations.

According to the findings of the August Special Survey, 49.55 million people were employed, excluding corporate executives, up by about 420,000 from the number reported in the previous survey in February. Of those employed, the number of regular employees (36.88 million) remained the same as in the previous survey, whereas the number of non-regular employees (part-time workers and temporary staff members) increased by 450,000 to 10.69 million. Thus, the rise in the total number of employees directly reflected the rise in the number of non-regular employees. The number of temporary workers from job placement enterprises, surveyed for the first time, totaled 280,000, half of which were women aged between 25 to 34.

The number of unemployed people was 3.2 million, a rise of 10,000 over the six-month period since the February survey. Those who had been jobless for more than 12 months totaled 710,000 or 22.2 percent of the total, while the 2.91 million people who had quit a previous job over the same period dropped by 50,000. The reasons stated for leaving the job

included “dismissal or personnel adjustments,” accounting for 16.7 percent, “reaching retirement age or expiration of contract” (10.9%), “deterioration of labor conditions” (10.0%), “another job or something else I wish to do” (9.0%), “closure of enterprise, company bankruptcy, closure of own business” (7.2%), “labor conditions different from those expected” (7.2%), “family-care, housekeeping, schooling, illness etc.” (7.2%), “poor business prospects of the company” (4.5%), “marriage, childbirth, child-care, etc.” (3.2%), and “other reasons” (20.4%). The most common reasons for quitting a previous job by age group were “another job or something else” for those aged between 15 and 34, “dismissal or personnel adjustments” for those aged between 35 and 54, and “reaching retirement age or expiration of contract” for those aged 55 and older.

The survey this time questioned whether unemployed people had received vocational or other types of training while unemployed. Of the 3.2 million unemployed, 500,000, or 15.6 percent, had studied to obtain a certificate of some kind, or received vocational education or training. The proportions of such unemployed people by gender and age are shown in the accompanying “Statistical Aspect. The chart shows that the proportion of unemployed females who have vocational training while job-seeking is higher than that for males (20.3% for females and 12.5% for males). It also shows that the 25-34 age group contains the highest proportion of such unemployed (27.5% for females and 20.9% for males).

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### **Growth Rate of Starting Salaries**

According to a provisional report of the 1999 Basic Survey on Wage Structure, the starting salary of newly employed people who graduated from universities in March 1999 averaged ¥196,600. This figure is up by 0.6 percent from the previous year, a lower rate of increase than from 1997 to 1998 (0.8%). Male university graduates employed by large companies with 1,000 or more workers were paid ¥197,200 (up 0.8% from the previous year), mid-sized companies with 100 to 999 employees paid ¥195,800 (up 0.1% from the previous year), and small companies with 10 to 99 employees paid ¥197,500 (up 2.1% from the previous year).

This is the first time since the survey was conducted that starting salaries at small companies exceeded that of large companies. In 1997 starting salaries for new university graduates was higher at large companies, but the rate of increase was higher at small companies for the last two consecutive years, by 0.6 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively. On the other hand, the starting salary at mid-sized companies fell behind that of small and large companies both in terms of the actual amount and the rate of change from the previous year.

The average starting salary for female university graduates rose by 1.3 percent to ¥188,700, a higher growth rate than in 1998 (0.1%). By company size, the salary of female university graduates was ¥186,800 in large companies with 1,000 or more employees, ¥189,500 in mid-sized companies with 100 to 999 employees, and ¥190,700 in small companies with 10 to 99 employees. Until 1996 the starting salary for female university graduates was higher at large companies than at either small- or mid-sized companies. However, due to the low growth rate, starting salaries offered by large companies have been bypassed by those offered by small- and mid-sized businesses.

If starting salaries of new university graduates are used as an indicator, it appears that despite the economic recession small companies are taking active measures to hire new university graduates.

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### **Employment Rates for the Disabled Remain Flat**

As of June 1999 the employment rate of disabled people stood at 1.49 percent, the same level as the previous year, according to the Ministry of Labour.

It is obligatory for employers to hire a certain number of disabled people under the Law for Employment Promotion, etc., of Persons with Disabilities. The legal rate of employment in the private sector had been set at 1.6 percent, but was raised to 1.8 percent in July 1998. At the same time, the range of firms subject to the statutory employment quota was expanded from those with 63 or more regular employees to those with 56 or more, and the definition of disabled was widened to cover people with intellectual disabilities, as well as those with physical disabilities. Because of these revisions, the proportion of companies failing to fulfill the statutory employment quota reached 55.3 percent, exceeding 50 percent for the first time. A levy, incidentally, is imposed on companies that fail to meet their quota, calculated according to the number short of the default employed (¥50,000 per month per person).

In terms of company size, small- and mid-sized companies with fewer than 300 employees maintained a high level of actual employment but showed a downward tendency, whereas the rate of employment rose at companies with 300 or more employees, thus narrowing the gap between different-sized companies (from 1.86% to 1.72% for companies with fewer than 100 employees, from 1.45% to 1.41% for companies with 100 to 299 employees, from 1.37% to 1.39% for companies with 300 to 499 employees, from 1.38% to 1.44% for companies with 500 to 999 employees, from 1.48% to 1.52% for companies with 1,000 employees or more). However,

a greater proportion of large firms failed to meet their legally set rate of employment, with 77.0 percent of firms with 1,000 or more employees failing to satisfy their quota.

The number of disabled people employed at private firms in 1999 stood at 254,562. On the one hand, the number of disabled people dismissed from their jobs has increased: 1,629 in fiscal 1996 (from April 1996 to March 1997); 2,091 in fiscal 1997; 2,950 in fiscal 1998. Though the number decreased to 1,220 for the first half of fiscal 1999 (April to September), the figure still maintains high standards. On the other hand, the number of disabled people seeking work as of the end of September hit a record high of 122,176, an increase of 12,682 over the past year.

The Ministry of Labour intends to continue to promote further the Emergency Vocational Stability Project for Disabled Persons, which it manages in cooperation with Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers' Association). Launched in January 1999, the project gives disabled people, assisted by the firms concerned, opportunities for workplace training, including trial employment over a three-month period. The number of disabled people who had received training by the end of October 1999 numbered 777. Of those, 434 obtained short-term job contracts and 141 were actually employed.

## International Relations

### Working Holiday Programs Attract More Participants

A rapidly growing number of people are being attracted to the Working Holiday Programs, which enable young people to stay abroad for a long period and to work there temporarily. The number of Japanese who signed up for the program in 1992 was 10,502, exceeding 10,000 for the first time, and reached 16,845 in 1997. Although the number fell to 15,753 in 1998, it still remains high. On the other hand, the number of people from other countries who signed up for the program to come to Japan peaked at 5,467 in 1992, and has been falling since, reaching 2,367 in 1998.

The working holiday visa programs commenced in 1980, with participants from Australia, followed by New Zealand in 1985, Canada in 1986, and the Republic of Korea in 1999. A similar system was set up with France in December 1999, and another is expected to start with Germany this year. Japan and the United Kingdom have also agreed to introduce the program. It is expected that with more partner countries, more young people are likely to take advantage of the programs.

At present, the programs impose certain restrictions during the stay abroad, such as hours of attendance at a language school and working hours. Moreover, a working holiday visa is issued to each participant only once. Even so, the programs undoubtedly provide young people with a great opportunity to experience life abroad via closer relationships with the people and the country they visit.

## Special Topic

### The Current Situation of “Family-friendly” Policies in Japan

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#### 1.0 Introduction

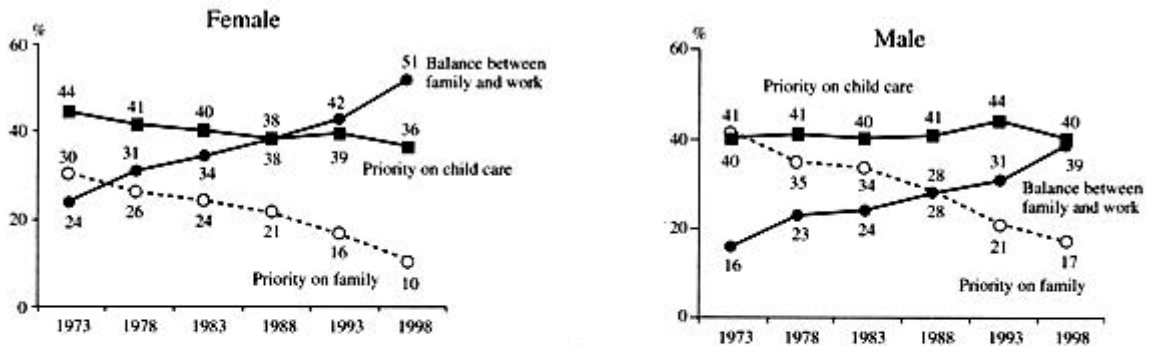
Japanese workers are beginning to seek reconciliation of the demands of work with family life. In response to requests from their employees, some firms are introducing “family-friendly work practices.” In order to assist such firms, in autumn 1999 the Japanese Ministry of Labour set up a system of “awards for family-friendly firms”<sup>(1)</sup>. This article discusses the background of these family-friendly measures, the current situation, and future tasks facing Japan.

#### 2.0 Background

There are three salient reasons why family-friendly policies are required. First, while the number of traditional families – where the husband earns and the wife devotes herself to domestic chores and child care – is decreasing, the number of households in which both husband and wife have incomes is increasing. Also increasing is the number of single-parent families. That is, the Japanese family is taking more varied forms than before. Second, due to the aging of society, an increasing number of employees face the necessity of managing, at the same time, care of the elderly and work. Third, even though a substantial proportion of men still support the notion of the traditional division of labor between men and women in the home, the proportion of both men and women supporting such traditional notions is rapidly decreasing (Figures 1 and 2). Not all women wish to work as men do, although more and more women regard work as important, even after marriage. Meanwhile, men are also beginning to seek lifestyles outside the traditional preoccupation with work, which enable them to attach

importance to life at home and to harmonize their work with family life.

**Figure 1. Views Concerning Married Women Maintaining Their Jobs (by gender)**



**Notes:**

1) In this survey question, respondents were asked: "What do you think about married women continuing work?" They were required to choose one answer from the following three alternatives:

<Priority on family>

"(A woman) should give priority to taking care of her family after marriage."

<Priority on child care>

"(A woman) should continue work even after marriage but only until she has a child."

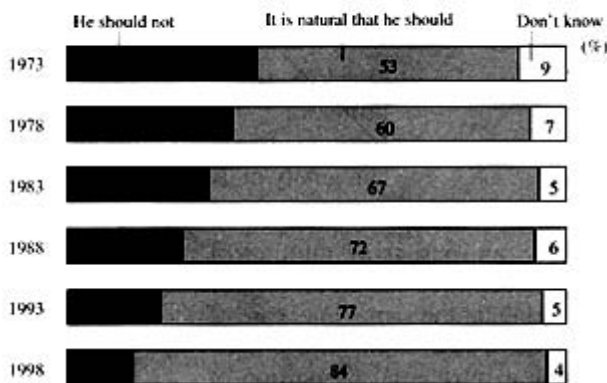
<Balance between family and work>

"(A woman) should continue work even if she gets married and gives birth."

2) The data source is a survey on "Value Orientations of the Japanese" conducted by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation). This survey has been carried out every five years since 1973, using the same survey cards with the same questions and methodology every time. The survey sample is 5,400 people aged 16 or older across the country.

Source: Makita and Ida, 1999.

**Figure 2. Views Concerning a Husband Engaging in Housekeeping and Child Care (total for both sexes)**



**Notes:**

Respondents to this survey question were asked: "There are two views concerning the idea that a father should help with the housekeeping and look after the child(ren). Which do you agree with?" They were required to choose one of the following responses:

<He should not>

"Because a husband is head of the family, he should not assist in the housekeeping or look after the child(ren)."

<It is natural that he should>

"A wife and a husband should help each other, so it is natural for the husband to help in the kitchen and take care of their children."

<Don't know>

Source: Makita and Ida, 1999.

As the figures show, both men and women are increasingly attaching value to harmonizing family life and their work. Realization of such a balance nowadays regulates the degree of satisfaction not only with family life, but also with work itself. Accordingly, the rigid division of labor by gender, and the traditional form of the family, are beginning to break down. Additionally, so is the type of company management and human resource management based on the premise that the central interest of employees' lives is their company and work.



Nonetheless, the view still persists that the harmonization of the two is the responsibility of individual employees. However, many employees tend to experience stress, or a sense of pressure, from the difficulty of attempting to reconcile without assistance the demands of work and family life. It has been pointed out that such stress leads to lowering the productivity of workers and increasing the numbers of workers giving up their jobs. In light of these facts, helping employees to manage family life and work at the same time is beginning to be seen as a task to be undertaken by companies at the level of management. In other words, it has been understood that appreciating and supporting the employee as somebody who not only works, but also has a life at home, has the effect of raising productivity and keeping employees in their jobs<sup>(2)</sup>. A company that provides adequate measures to help its employees reconcile the claims of work and family life is regarded as “family-friendly.”

### **3.0 The Current Situation Concerning the Adoption of Family-friendly Policies**

The Families and Work Institute in the U.S. distinguishes three stages of family-friendly policy development (Galinsky et al., 1991). In the first stage, the harmonization of family and working lives is considered to be an issue to which companies should not commit themselves. Thus, support from companies is confined to women's issues of child care. In the second stage, support for the reconciliation of the demands of work and family life is recognized as a task for human resource management. Supportive measures are designed for both men and women and extend their coverage to family care as well as child care. In the third stage, such measures are not only perceived as a matter of human resource management, but are also highly valued as a key policy for companies' competitiveness. The scope of supportive measures is extended to various aspects of workers' lifestyles. At this stage, the concept of the “reconciliation of work and family life” develops into the “reconciliation of work and lif.”

At which stage do family-friendly policies in Japanese companies stand? Under the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law, workers may take child care leave until the child reaches the age of one, and family care leave for a three-month maximum<sup>(3)</sup>. Thus, in terms of the legal system, Japan stands at the second stage of family-friendly policies. However, the majority of workers who take such leave are females, and, in practice, Japan can be seen as being only on its way to the second stage. For example, according to the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Labour (1997), between April 1, 1995 and March 31, 1996 a mere 0.6 percent of male workers took child care leave following the birth of a child.

Incidentally, family-friendly policies are not just limited to child care or family care leave. There is a variety of measures open to companies who wish to demonstrate support for the

reconciliation of child care and work. These include a system of shorter working hours, flextime, the provision and operation of child care facilities within enterprises, and a reemployment scheme for workers who have left work for child care reasons. Table 1 shows the percentages of Japanese companies carrying out such measures.

From this data, it can first be seen that the scale of measures other than child care leave and family care leave adopted by Japanese enterprises is proportional to company size, being relatively low in small- and medium-sized companies.

Second, many of the supportive measures for reconciling the demands of child care and work, other than child care leave, are related to working hours. These measures include a scheme for shorter working hours, a system for starting or finishing work later or earlier, and a scheme for exemption from work in nonscheduled hours.

Third, the introduction of supportive measures for reconciling the demands of family care and work, other than family care leave, is lagging behind measures associated with child care. The most common measure adopted is a scheme for shorter working hours.

Fourth, apart from the measures seen above, leave schemes for care of family members and reemployment schemes are relatively common.

### **3.1 The Current Situation of the Introduction of Family-friendly Policies as seen in Comprehensive Indices**

It is evident then that family-friendly measures take various forms besides child care and family care leave and that a modest proportion of companies have introduced such measures. Moreover, where child care and family care leave are concerned, some companies provide their employees with more generous schemes than the standards guaranteed in law.

**Table 1. Introduction of Family-friendly Measures**

	Total	Establishments with 500 or more employees
<b>Measures to help workers handle both child care and work</b>		
1. Shorter working hours	17.5 %	48.6 %
2. Flextime	5.6	12.1
3. Starting or finishing work at a later or earlier time	14.1	23.6
4. Exemption from work in nonscheduled working hours	14.5	37.9
5. Installation of a crèche at the workplace	0.3	5.7
6. Financial assistance for expenditure on child care	0.9	3.9
7. More than one measure out of 1-6	28.2	75.1
<b>Measures to help workers to handle both family care and work</b>		
8. Shorter working hours	5.2	31.9
9. Flextime	1.0	6.0
10. Starting or finishing work at a later or earlier time	2.2	7.2
11. Subsidies for costs on family care	0.8	3.0
12. More than one measure out of 8-11	5.9	37.0
<b>Other measures</b>		
13. Care leave for dependent family members	7.6	15.2
14. Reemployment	16.4	25.7

**Notes:**  
1) The survey covered private establishments with five or more employees.  
2) A scheme for care leave for family members is a system to enable employees to take leave to look after a family member. Types of leave in this scheme include paid holidays, leave of absence, and various other forms.  
3) Under a reemployment scheme, a company reemploys workers who have left the company due to child or family care, in their own company or in a group company.  
**Source:** The Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labour (1997). The survey was conducted in July 1996, when it was a duty for enterprises to "endeavor to provide" Family Care Leave.

Table 1 shows the ratios of establishments introducing family-friendly measures in terms of their purposes. In order to gain an insight into how satisfactory these measures are, let us now analyze them, not in terms of the adoption rate of individual measures, but as a whole.

For the purpose of this analysis, Table 2 documents comprehensive indices concerning the family-friendly policies adopted by firms. Data utilized for the indices are from the Survey on Women Workers' Employment Management conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1996. It should be noted in passing that at the time of the survey a child care leave scheme was mandatory, whereas a family care leave scheme remained a duty for enterprises to "endeavor" to fulfill.

In the comprehensive indices, points were given to a firm when it adopted a certain family-friendly measure. Concerning legally compulsory measures, points were given, in principle, when a firm provided its employees with more generous schemes than legally required. Take, as an example, (a)-1 in Table 2: "Regulations on schemes for child care leave." Since child care leave is legally compulsory, two points were given to a firm that had relevant terms of employment, but none to a firm that did not have such terms. Even a firm failing to gain points in this subject cannot refuse a request guaranteed under law, from an employee for child care leave. However, points were not given to such an establishment because it was assumed that it might be difficult for employees to take child care leave without viable arrangements based on terms of employment. For family care leave, because at the time of the survey in 1996 enterprises needed only to "endeavor" to provide it, points were not given where there was no practice or scheme. One point was given where provision was made, and two points where a company had relevant employment terms. The comprehensive indices

range from zero to 34 points. Of the total 34, eight points are allocated to measures concerning schemes for child care leave, 15 points to measures to assist employees to reconcile the demands of work with child care, and 11 points to measures related to family care leave (including a scheme for care leave for family members).

**Table 2. Criteria for the Comprehensive Indices of Family-friendly Policies**

	Point(s)	Additional point(s)
<b>(a) Schemes for Child Care Leave (8 pts.)</b>		
1. Regulations on schemes for child care leave	2	
2. Leave of absence for more than a year	1	
3. Financial support, one-time allowance	1	
4. Pay raise during or after leave	1	
5. Inclusion of leave in tenure when retirement allowances are calculated	1	
6. Policies for maintenance and improvement of occupational abilities of workers who have taken leave	1	
7. System for return to original post after leave	1	
<b>(b) Schemes to Support Employees Who Need to Reconcile Work with Child Care (15 pts.)</b>		
1. Scheme for shorter working hours	1	**
2. Flextime available when employees need to care for their children	1	**
3. System for starting or finishing work later or earlier	1	**
4. Scheme for exemption from work in nonscheduled working hours	1	**
5. Installation of a crèche at workplace	1	**
6. Financial aid for the costs of child care	1	**
7. Scheme for shortening working hours by at least two hours	1	
8. System of reemployment (including already existing practice of reemployment)	1	*
<b>(c) Schemes for Family Care Leave and Others (11 pts.)</b>		
1. Scheme for family care leave (including existing practice of giving leave)	1	*
2. Leave of more than three months	1	
3. Financial support as one-time allowance	1	
4. Advance payment or exemption from payment of social security premiums	1	
5. Pay raise during or after leave	1	
6. Inclusion of period of leave in tenure when retirement allowances are calculated	1	
7. Policies for maintenance and improvement of occupational abilities of workers who have taken leave	1	
8. System for return to the original post after leave	1	
9. Scheme for care leave for family members (including existing practice of giving leave)	1	*
<b>Notes:</b>		
*One point to be added when a firm has relevant terms of employment.	employees to take child care leave until the child reaches at least one year of age.	
**One point to be added when a firm has a scheme to allow its	Source: Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labour (ed., 1999a).	

Table 3 presents the percentage of enterprises that were given no points, and the average points of the comprehensive indices, by company size and industry. The following features are clear from the table.

First, in terms of aggregate points, the comprehensive index ranged between zero and 28 and averaged a low level of 3.3.

Second, the low average of the index is attributable to the large number of enterprises with zero points. Such enterprises account for 51.3 percent of the whole, which means that more than half of the respondents had no family-friendly policies apart from those legally required.

**Table 3. Comprehensive Indices, by Establishment Size and by Industry**

	1) % of enterprises with 0 points	2) Average
Total	51.3 %	3.3 pts.
<b>By size of establishment</b>		
500 or more employees	1.3	11.7
100-499	13.3	7.5
30-99	32.6	4.8
5-29	55.4	3.0
<b>By industry</b>		
Mining	60.0	2.0
Construction	71.4	1.5
Manufacturing	57.7	2.4
Electricity, gas, thermal supply, water	14.2	11.1
Transportation and telecommunications	44.7	4.9
Wholesale and retail trade, food and drink establishments	49.7	3.6
Financing and insurance	4.4	7.8
Real estate	41.7	3.5
Services	48.0	3.4

Source: Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labour (1997).

Third, the comprehensive indices show that the differential among different-sized enterprises was substantial, with the larger firms providing the more generous measures. The difference between enterprises with 500 or more employees and those with fewer than 500 was particularly significant. Although the data are not documented here, 25.4 percent, or one fourth of all enterprises with 500 or more employees, gained 16 or more points of the comprehensive indices.

Fourth, by industry, adoption of family-friendly policies was fairly common in such categories as electricity, gas, thermal supply, water, and financing and insurance, whereas the construction, mining, and manufacturing industries fell behind.

In summary, at the time of the survey, when child care leave was legally mandatory and family care leave was a duty for enterprises to "endeavor" to fulfill, only about half the enterprises surveyed had family-friendly policies more generous than legally required. In addition, a wide variation in the indices was found among different sizes of enterprises and among different industries.

The comprehensive indices were calculated according to the presence or absence of the schemes in question, although the introduction of such schemes may not necessarily mean that they are taken advantage of in practice. Thus, it might be possible to incorporate in the comprehensive indices points associated with whether or not the schemes are actually used. It is possible that the inclusion of such points could increase the indices for enterprises with a large number of employees because of the higher probability of their having employees who use the schemes. However, the results of an analysis based on comprehensive indices, including the degree of utilization of the measures as well as the degree of their introduction, roughly demonstrate the same tendency as that gained from comprehensive indices based on

the degree of introduction alone (see Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labour, ed., 1999).

Finally, schemes for child care and family care leave are now mandatory by law, although the actual utilization of the schemes relies, essentially, on whether or not company regulations concerning the leave exist. Enterprises with such regulations have a higher rate of utilization than those without any, even where the establishment sizes are equal (Sato, 1999). Many of the enterprises with company regulations on child care and family care leave are also, in other ways, making efforts to help their employees harmonize family life with work, for instance, through the adoption of other family-friendly policies.

#### **4.0 Future Tasks**

In Japan, child care and family care leave have been established as employees' rights under the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law, although the following should also be mentioned as future tasks for family-friendly policies.

First, although the measures are intended for both men and women, the actual workers who make use of child care and family care leave are, in both cases, disproportionately women. It will be a future task to discover why few male workers take advantage of the schemes and then encourage them to do so. For this purpose, it will probably be effective, for example, to hold seminars to promote the concept of a “new role” as father among male workers.

Second, the degree of understanding of the need for family-friendly policies varies widely among managers, and respecting the harmonization of family and working lives is not, thus far, commonly accepted at the managerial level. At some workplaces, this creates an atmosphere such that workers find it awkward to ask for leave. The outlook of such workers will need to be changed.

Third, some family-friendly measures in force abroad are not yet applicable to Japan (Lewis and Lewis, 1996). Job sharing and term-time working, for example, have not been introduced at all in Japan. It will be necessary to consider the possibility of adopting such measures.

Fourth, there are as yet no practical scholarly studies examining the effects on company management of the support for reconciling the demands of work and family life. A gradual accumulation of such practical studies must be achieved in the future.

Fifth, it is necessary not only to adopt family-friendly policies, but to establish firmly in business management, and in human resources management, respect for the need to balance

work and home. Possible challenges are to give up beliefs such as seeing long working hours as a synonym for productivity or loyalty to the firm, or acceptance of multiple careers as an alternative to a single full-time career. In this sense, the target will be to achieve “diversity management,” where workers with varying needs and values are accepted equally and put to use.

Finally, it is essential, together with the enrichment of family-friendly policies, to provide the conditions for equal opportunity of employment for men and women so that women will not be restricted to fixed spheres of work and career paths<sup>(4)</sup>.

Notes:

(1) Family-friendly firms must meet the following four criteria, set by the Ministry of Labour, to receive awards: (1) the terms of employment include schemes for child care and family care leave that are more generous than legally required, and the schemes are actually being used by employees; (2) the firm offers schemes (such as flextime, a scheme for shorter working hours, or a home-based work system) enabling its employees to explore a flexible working style, taking into consideration the balance between work and family, and the schemes are used by its employees; (3) the firm offers various other measures making it possible for its employees to strike a balance between work and family life (such as a nursery in the enterprise or financial support for the costs of child care and family care services), and the schemes are being used by its employees; and (4) the prevailing atmosphere in the firm already makes it easy for its employees to harmonize work with family life.

The ministry offers the following awards: The Ministry of Labour's Good Company Award, a Labour Minister's Award for Effort, and an Award of the Head of the Women's and Young Workers' Office. The Good Company Award for fiscal 1999 went to Benesse Corporation (education and publishing).

(2) This is based on a company survey of female workers. To the question as to whether “your company has established certain schemes to help make working life compatible with family life, thus promoting female workers' full capabilities,” 16.6 percent of surveyed firms answered in the affirmative (64.0% of companies with 5,000 or more employees), whereas 14.9 percent (73.0% of companies with 5,000 or more employees) responded “not at the moment, but planning to do so” (Women's Bureau, the Ministry of Labour, 1999b). According to the results of this survey, the number of companies that will carry out family-friendly policies seems likely to increase. The survey was conducted in January 1999, and was aimed at private firms with 30 or more employees at their head offices.

(3) In April 1992, child care leave became mandatory for enterprises with more than 30 employees, and mandatory for all enterprises in April 1995. On the other hand, family care leave became mandatory in April 1999. When an employee takes child care leave, the employee's share of the portion of social security premiums designated for health insurance and welfare pension insurance is exempted. Also, an employee does not receive a salary while on child care and family care leave, but is paid 25 percent of the wages he or she earned before taking leave from employment insurance.

(4) The revised Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into effect in April 1999. The previous version of the law prohibited sexual discrimination against females only in terms of mandatory retiring age, retirement and dismissal. It also stipulated a “duty to endeavor” to do away with sexual discrimination with respect to recruitment and hiring, assignment and promotion, training and education, and fringe benefits. From the time the law was revised, discrimination in these latter areas has been prohibited and subject to penalties. In addition, positive action by companies to further the utilization of female workers was prescribed.

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## JIL News and Information

### **Seminar on the Economic Crisis, Employment and the Labor Market in East and Southeast Asia**

—Sponsored by the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, the Japanese Ministry of Labour, and the Japan Institute of Labour—

A seminar on the Economic Crisis, Employment and the Labor Market in East and Southeast Asia was organized in Tokyo under the sponsorship of the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Japanese Ministry of Labour, and the Japan Institute of Labour (JIL) from October 13-15, 1999. Tripartite delegations from Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, officials of international organizations and the Japanese Government, and academic resource people met to discuss recent labor market trends related to the financial crisis, examined the role of governments, trade unions, and employers' associations in each nation and considered policy options both for mitigating the impacts of the crisis and for building strong labor policies in the region.

The discussions were very constructive because of the interaction of the tripartite delegations, the well-prepared documents on which the proceedings were based, and the sharing of experiences across countries.

This was the first time for the World Bank and the ILO to hold such a seminar regarding the Asian financial crisis. The seminar demonstrated the usefulness of collaboration between the World Bank and the ILO in supporting a social development agenda.



## Summary of Discussion at the Seminar

The seminar opened with reports on the economies and the labor market in each of the participating countries. These were followed by reports on Japan's experience with employment and unemployment policies. Subsequent discussions focused on income maintenance policies in developing countries, support policies for socially disadvantaged people, active labor market programs (ALMPs), and social dialogue. Below is a summary of conclusions which emerged from the discussions.

1. Generally, the macroeconomics and labor market conditions in the five Asian countries are improving although the overall situation remains severe.
2. Wide diversity exists throughout the region in the stage of economic development, the impacts of the financial crisis, and the current status of the recovery. Therefore, countermeasures need to be designed in accordance with each country's situation.
3. The financial crisis has created opportunities for strengthening democratic mechanisms, particularly social dialogue in each country. This can enhance the search for solutions to the negative socio-economic impacts of the crisis, and facilitate recovery by building consensus and securing commitment to decisions taken.

Therefore, it is important to create an effective tripartite framework to enhance the exchange of ideas and policy-making. This must be accompanied by efforts to strengthen the capacity of trade unions and employers' associations to engage in constructive social dialogue.

4. A strong labor policy framework includes active labor market programs including human resource development, a social safety net for workers, and the appropriate labor laws and standards. These components need to be well-balanced and integrated. Countries need to consider both growth and social protection objectives and the formal and informal sectors.
5. It is important to strengthen technical cooperation across countries and between countries and the international organizations to cope with both the impacts of the crisis and the need for policies for the long run, considering the ideas of social partners. The collaboration between the ILO and the Bretton Woods institutions is important in order to implement this cooperation effectively.
6. The sharing of the experiences in each country and the international experience should enhance the policy dialogue throughout the region.

Ultimately, each country must examine its options to address labor issues. Further tripartite dialogue will be important. The JIL, working together with the ILO, the World Bank and the Japanese Ministry of Labour, looks forward to following up the seminar with technical assistance and further dialogue.

**Invitation to the IIRA 12th World Congress  
May 29-June 2, 2000, Tokyo**

An opportunity to share your experiences and ideas with other leading industrial relations professionals from around the world! Anyone wishing to participate is encouraged to register soon, to take advantage of the “regular” registration rates, which will apply until March 31, 2000.

<b>Congress Overview</b>	
Venue	Keio Plaza Inter-Continental Tokyo & JIL Shinjuku Office
Date	Monday, May 29-Friday, June 2, 2000
General Theme	Global Integration and Challenges for Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management in the 21st Century
Registration	The registration and hotel booking forms are included in the Second Announcement brochure, which will be mailed by the IIRA 12th World Congress Secretariat upon request. On-line registration will also be available at the following web site: <a href="http://www.jil.go.jp/jil/iira12th/reg.htm">http://www.jil.go.jp/jil/iira12th/reg.htm</a> .
Contact	IIRA 12th World Congress Secretariat c/o The Japan Institute of Labour 4-8-23, Kamishakujii Nerima-ku, Tokyo 177-8502, Japan Tel: +81-3-5991-5195 Fax: +81-3-3594-1115 E-mail: <a href="mailto:iira12th@jil.go.jp">iira12th@jil.go.jp</a>

–IIRA Study Group Information –

On Friday, June 2, 2000, the following IIRA study groups will have meetings. If you are interested in attending any one of the meetings, please contact the coordinator whose e-mail addresses, fax numbers are shown on the web at:<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/govlab/iira/index.htm#study>

- #1. Industrial relations as a field and industrial relations theory
- #3. Equality in pay and employment
- #4. Workers' participation
- #6. Public policy and industrial relations
- #8. Justice, judges and industrial relations
- #10. Trade unions in the future
- #15. Industrial relations in the public sector
- #16. The Comparative Industrial Relations Research and Teaching Society (CIRRTS)
- #17. Industrial relations and societal transition
- #18. Unemployment
- #19. Industrial relations in countries in transition from centrally-planned to market economies

## Statistical Aspects

### Recent Labor Economy Indices

	November 1999	October 1999	Change from previous year
Labor force	6,776 (10 thousand)	6,811 (10 thousand)	4 (10 thousand)
Employed	6,481	6,500	0
Employees	5,357	5,373	-19
Unemployed	295	311	4
Unemployment rate	4.4%	4.6%	0.1
Active opening rate	0.49	0.48	0.01
Total hours worked	157.4 (hours)	154.6 (hours)	-0.3
Total wages of regular employees	(¥ thousand) 264.2	(¥ thousand) 263.8	-0.2

Note: \* Denotes annual percent change.

Source: *Rūdōryoku Chōsa* (Labour Force Survey), Management and Coordination Agency; *Shokugyō Antei Gyōmu Tōkei* (Report on Employment Service), *Maitsuki Kinrō Tōkei* (Monthly Labour Survey), Ministry of Labour

**Percentage of Unemployed Who Have Received Vocational Training While Job-seeking**

Age	Total	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and older
<b>Total</b>							
Unemployed (in 10 thousands)	320	73	83	42	50	59	13
Percentage who have received vocational training (%)	15.6	13.7	24.1	16.7	14.0	6.8	7.7
<b>Males</b>							
Unemployed (in 10 thousands)	192	40	43	23	29	45	12
Percentage who have received vocational training (%)	12.5	12.5	20.9	13.0	10.3	6.7	8.3
<b>Females</b>							
Unemployed (in 10 thousands)	128	33	40	19	21	14	1
Percentage who have received vocational training (%)	20.3	15.2	27.5	21.1	19.0	14.3	0.0

Source: Special Survey of Labour Force Survey, Ministry of Labour.