

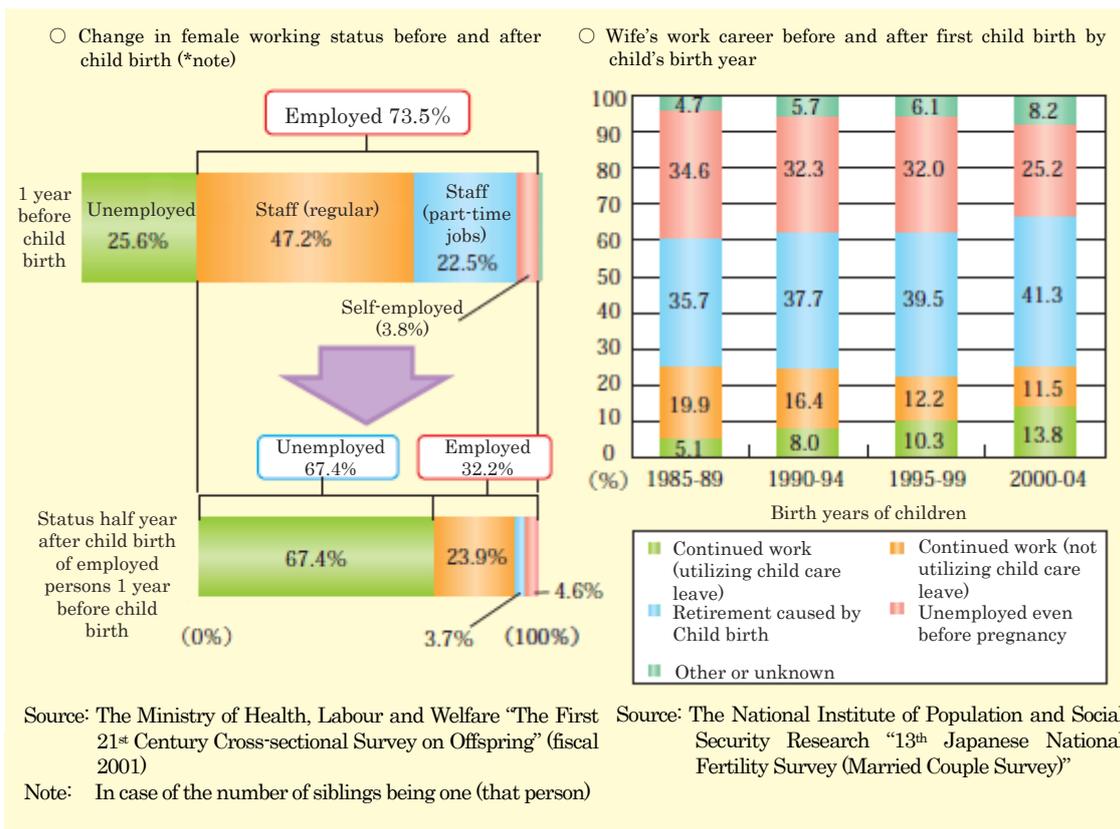
Chapter 3 ‘Work-Life Balance’ Promotion

Section 1 Importance of ‘Work-Life Balance’

- The major reason behind the rapid fall in the birthrate is the "various problem concerning working style". About 70% of women that worked before having a child then retire (*). Despite utilization of the child care leave system increasing the share of women continuing work before and after child birth has remained basically the same over the past 20 years. Based on that situation, and in order that the government and the private sector uniformly but drastically reform past working styles, in December 2007 at the “Government and the Private Sector Summit Conference For Promoting a Good Work-Life Balance” a “Work-life Balance Charter” (hereinafter referred to as “Charter”) and “Action Guidelines for Promoting a Good Work-Life Balance” (hereinafter referred to as “Guidelines”) were established.

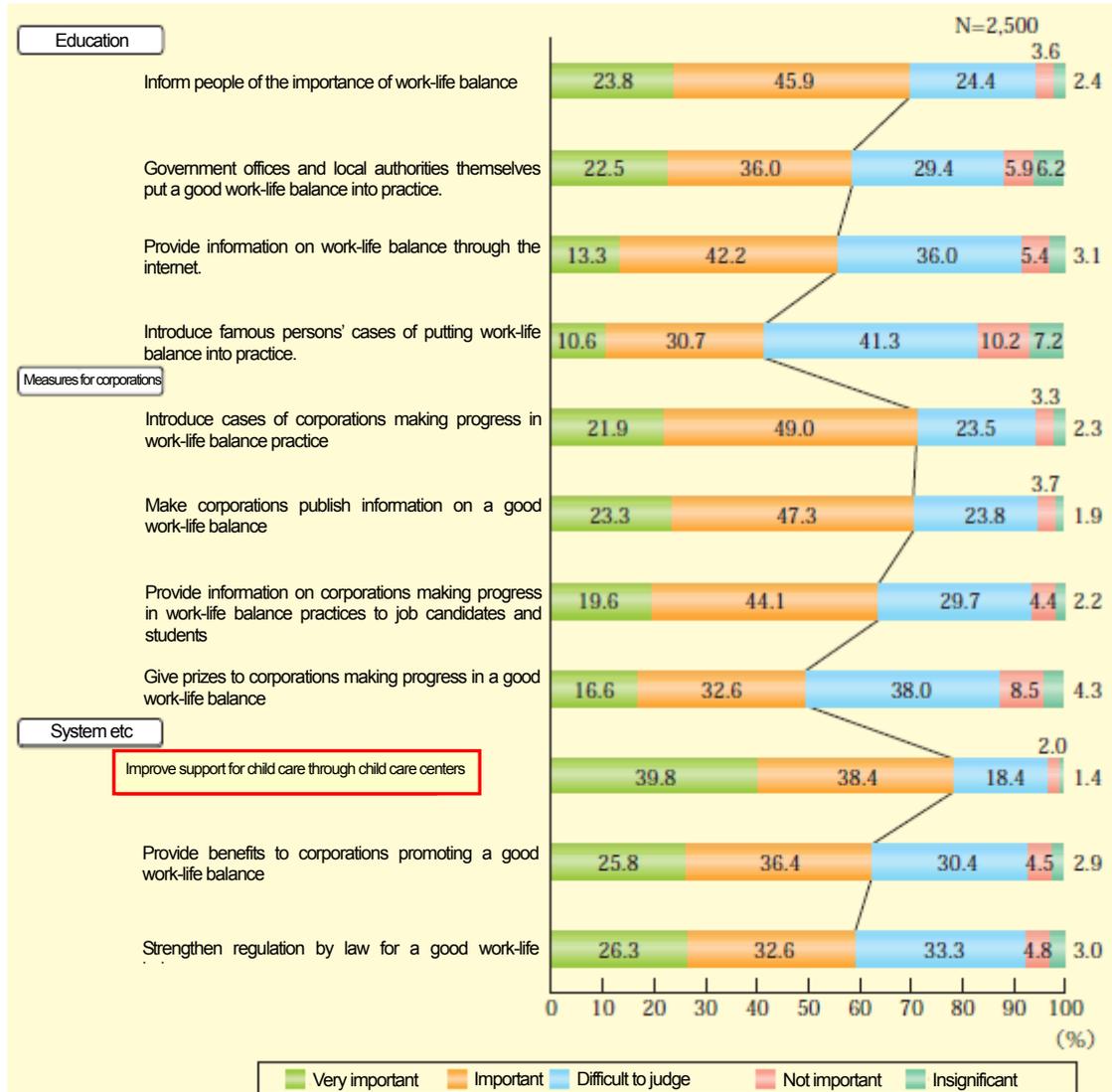
Note: In case of the number of siblings being one (that person)

Dia. “Alternative selection” between work and marriage, child birth and care



The share of persons is almost 90% that consider it necessary to “prevent useless operations and work” as the effort of businesses being important in approaching a “society that has realized a good work-life balance”. Overall the share of persons is high that consider it necessary to make an effort regarding the responsibility of leaders.

Dia. The most important efforts that the national government should make in being a “Society where a good work-life balance has been realized”



Source: The Cabinet Office “Survey on Awareness of Work-life Balance” (August 2008)

Section 2 Efforts of each subject toward realization of Balance between an Individual’s Work and Personal Life

1. Improvement of promotion systems

- In order to promote a good work-life balance according to the Charters and Action Guidelines, in January 2008, a “Work-Life Balance Promotion Office” was established within the Cabinet Office. In addition, with a view to an attempt to promote cooperation for realization of a good work-life balance a “Committee for Promoting and Evaluating Cooperation in a Good Work-Life Balance” was established in April the same year, and the “Matters to be Grappled with toward Realization of a good Work-Life Balance” then created in July the same year summarizing the matters to be emphatically grappled with in the promotion of effective efforts in fiscal 2008 and with their new development in fiscal 2009 taken into consideration.

Dia. Problems to be urgently grappled with



2. Efforts by the national government

(1) Gradually creating a people's trend in making the effort

a. Opening a portal site for promoting a good work-life balance

- In order to comprehensively provide a variety of information related to a good work-life balance promotion and to further the general public's efforts, including corporations and related organizations, in February 2008 the "portal site for promoting a good work-life balance" was opened on the home page of the Cabinet Office. (<http://www8.cao.go.jp/wlb/index.html>)

b. The national movement for promoting the good work-life balance "Change! Japan" Campaign.

- In June 2008, under a key word of "Change! Japan", a people-participation type campaign was commenced upon. In addition, using the catch phrase of "Let's change our work styles" and using the character of a frog that it is easy to be familiar with the "Changing work styles" theme is being disseminated to people in various industries and classes through improvement of the portal site and creation and distribution of posters and public relation tracts.



Logo

(Combination of catch phrase and character)

c. Send lecturers to various study meetings, seminars, and symposiums

- Since the formulation of charters and action guidelines cases have been increasing that a good work-life balance is being selected as the theme at various study meetings, symposiums and seminars sponsored by local authorities, and hence the Cabinet Office is actively sending lecturers to make lectures and provide explanations.

(2) Work at corporations

- In order to promote a good work-life balances at corporation it will be necessary to make efforts under the leadership of their executives. Activities are affirmatively being taken any time the Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs visits a corporation, industrial organization, and so forth, and then informing the executive class persons of the ideals of charter and guidelines and requesting them to concretely cooperate in the efforts.

(3) Reviewing male work styles

- Although more than 30% of males would like to take child care leave the percentage of males actually taking it remains low at 1.56% (2007). In addition, the time spared by males for child care and housework has remained at a prominently low level when compared to that of European countries and America. Because of this situation “Papa’s Experience Notes on Child Care Leave” have been collected and utilized in disseminating role models of practices used in taking child care leave and returning to work. In addition, and aiming at developing employment environments that enable both males and females to simultaneously manage work and child care, discussions are being held on reviewing the Child Care and Long-term Care Leave Law, such as in making compulsory the system for short labor hours during the child care period and introducing the so-called “Papa and Mama’s Child Care Leave Plus”.

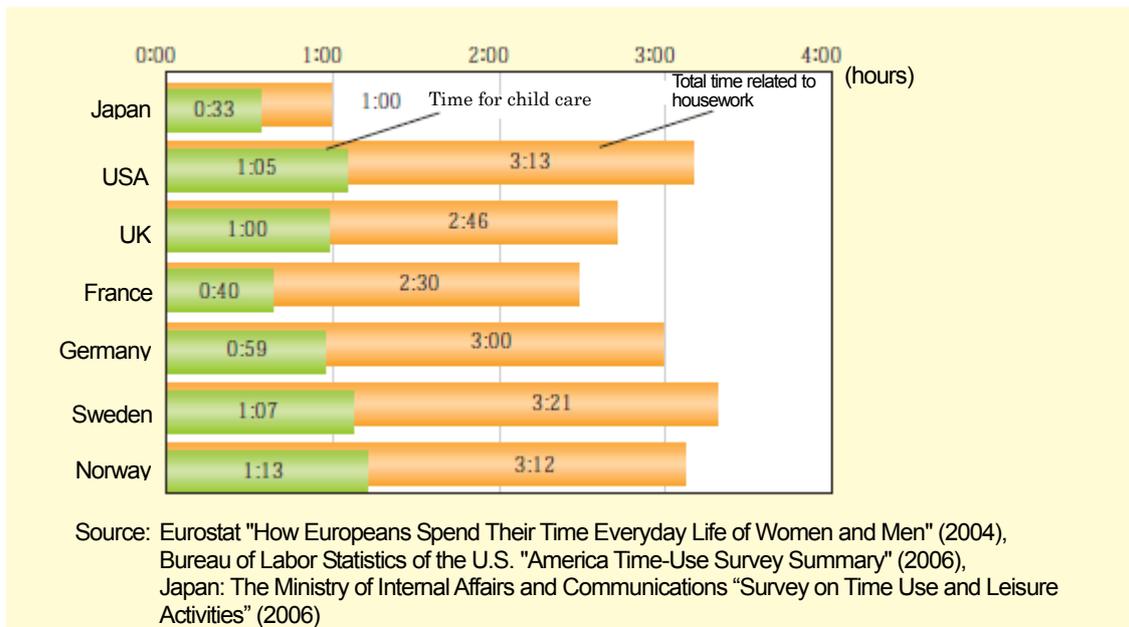
Dia. Percentage of persons taking child care leave

	(%)	
	Women	Men
fiscal 2007	89.7	1.56
500 or more	94.0	0.66
100-499	93.3	0.57
30-99	87.6	2.43
5-29	65.3	8.85
fiscal 2005	72.3	0.50

fiscal 2007

Source: The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare “Result Overview of ‘fiscal 2008 Basic Survey on Employment Equality’”
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/houdou/2008/08/h0808-1.html>

Dia. Time related to child care and housework of males with children aged less than six (one entire week)



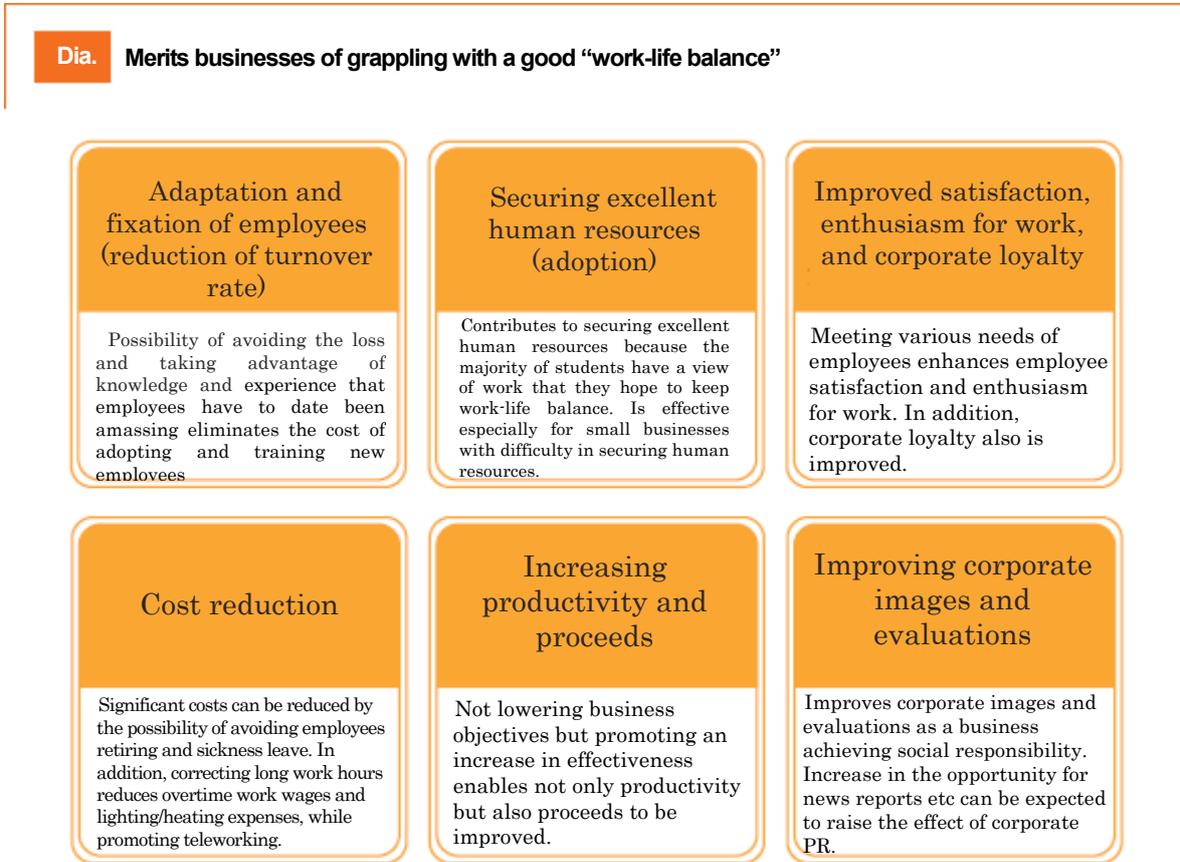
Source: Eurostat "How Europeans Spend Their Time Everyday Life of Women and Men" (2004), Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. "America Time-Use Survey Summary" (2006), Japan: The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities" (2006)

(4) Reduction of long work hours

- The problem exists with long work hours not only being highly likely to damage people’s health but also preventing them from securing enough time for housework and child care. With a view to not only preventing people from working long hours but also enabling them to work while securing living hours the Labor Standards Law was amended in December 2008. The main content of that amendment is as follows: (1) regarding extra wages for overtime work the existing rate of 25% shall be raised to 50% for the case of any work hours exceeding 60, (2) regarding annual leave, the currently used unit for that leave is days, but if a labor-management agreement has been concluded the acquisition of annual leave by the hour shall be made possible for up to 5 days.

3. Corporate efforts

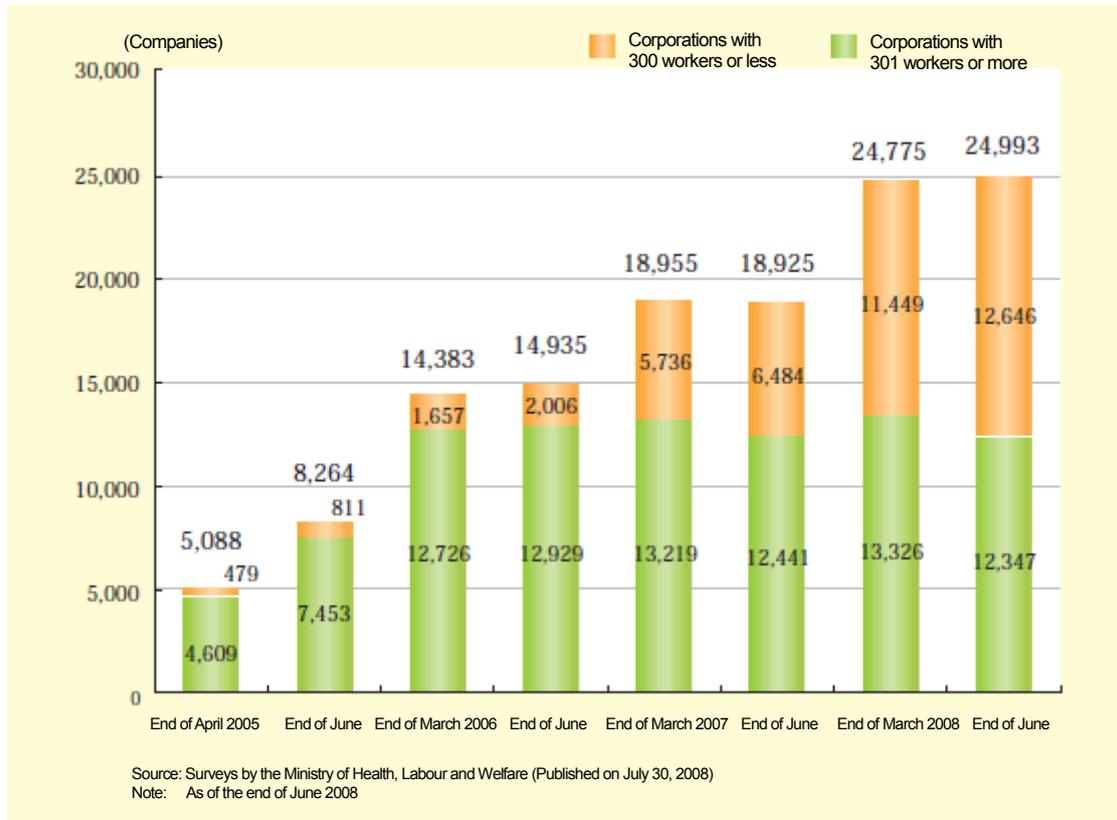
- Businesses too are increasingly getting interested in efforts toward realization of a good work-life balance by actively taking them as an “investment in the future”.



Source: The Cabinet Office “For the Realization of Work-Life Balance”

Note: For more information, refer to “Corporate merits gained through efforts toward work-life balance”(The Expert Examination Committee on Work-Life Balance, the Gender Equality Conference, April 9, 2008).

Dia. Change in the number of action plans submitted by general business owners



4. Efforts by regions

- The Cabinet Office created the “Cases of Efforts toward a Good Work-Life Balance Made by Local authorities” (March 2008) and published 48 individual cases contributing to the promotion of efforts at the regional level from 231 effort cases reported by local authorities. The following can be listed as being representative of them: (1) building frameworks for strengthening dissemination and promoting the power of understanding, (2) taking measures so that the whole of society can promote the efforts of corporations and organizations, and (3) developing support and services that allow individuals a variety of choices. In addition, management reformations are being actively performed by local authorities as an organization, such as in setting “No overwork days”.