

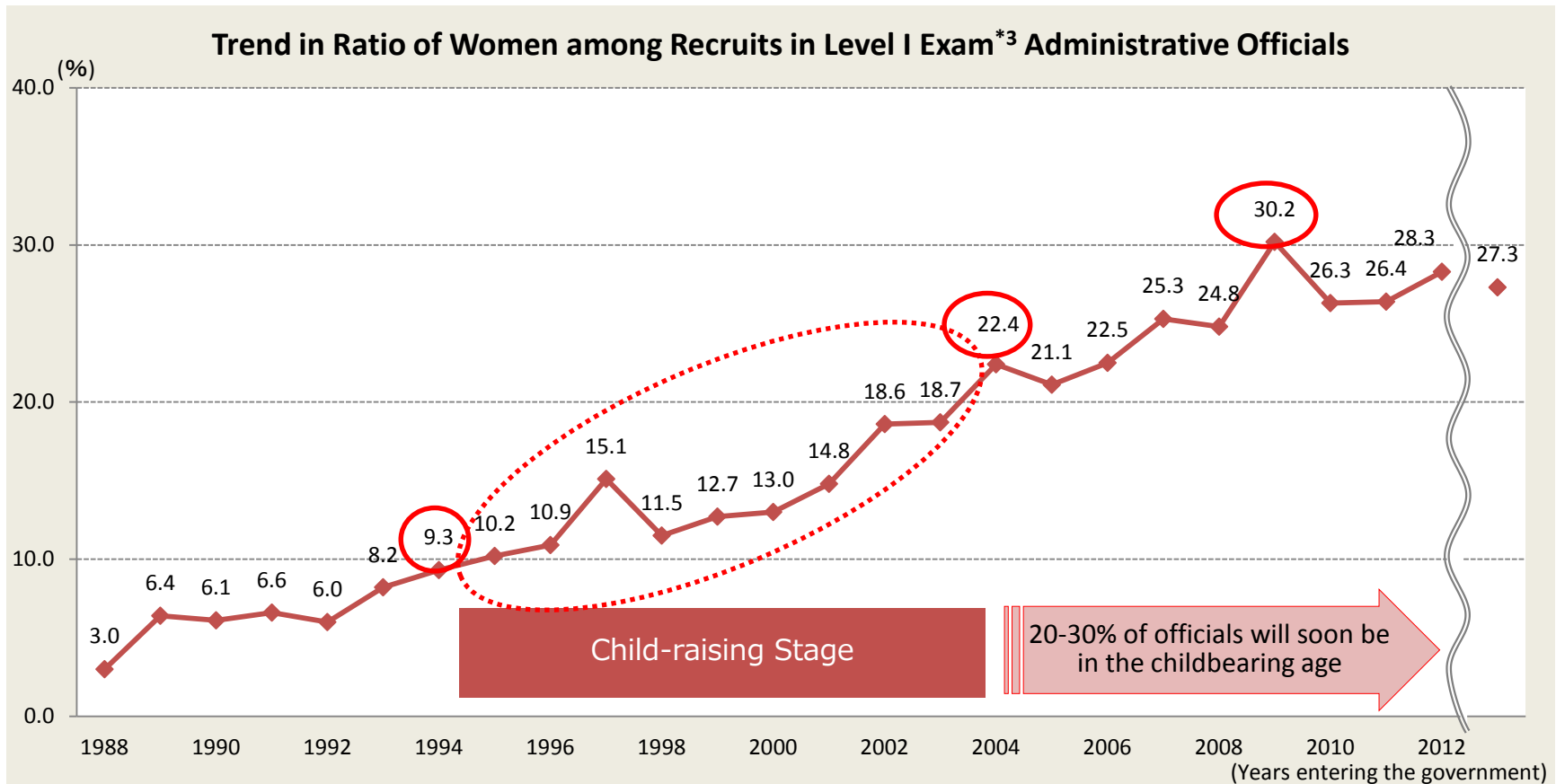
# Towards Sustainable Work Style

Proposals from Female Officials Working in the  
Japanese Central Government

– *overview* –

# An Increasing Number of Women are Joining the Government

- The percentage of women in the Japanese central government has been steadily rising – only 3% of newly-recruited were women in 1988, but it rose to nearly 10% in 1994, and to over 20% in 2004. Now it is approaching 30%.
- Female officials with 10 - 20 years of career (1994-2004 entrees) are in the child-raising stage. In the near future, female officials in the 20-30% women generation will be entering the childbearing age.



Note 1/ "Women's Ratio among Recruits" are those who joined the government in respective year (including those who passed exams previously).

2/ Ratio for 2014 is as of March 31, 2013, and include Ministry of Defense.

3/ "Level I Exam" include Administration, Law, and Economy Divisions for until 2012. In 2013, they were replaced by "Comprehensive Exam" and include Administration, Politics/International Affairs, Law, and Economy Divisions. (Source: National Personnel Authority "Annual Report FY2012")

# How Do Female Officials Work?

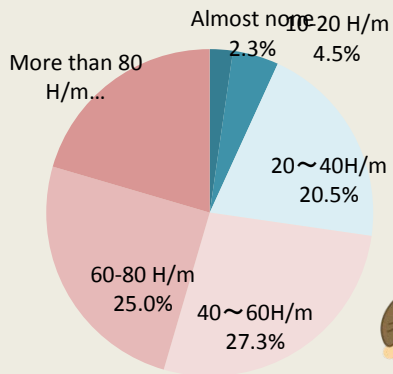
We have conducted a survey\* on the work style and family obligation – especially child-raising – among women working in the Japanese central government.

\* The survey was conducted in April, 2014. We have received 123 replies from women recruited in Level I Exam 10-20 years ago (mostly in their 30s).

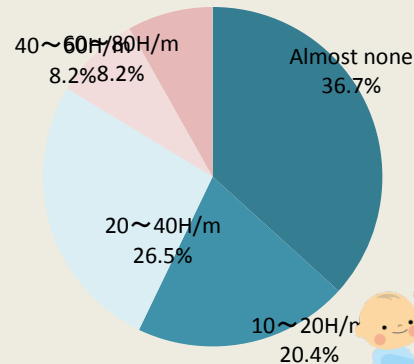
- 1. Perpetual Overtime Work:** Most of the women raising a child who is 3 years old or younger are accorded “favorable treatments” – they tend to have less overtime work (more than 50% do less than 20 hours/month overtime work); but when the child turns 4, overtime-work start to increase again.

## Number of overtime working hours/month

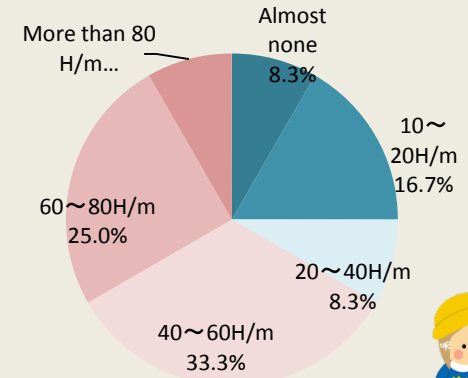
Women without a child



Woman raising a 3 years old child or smaller



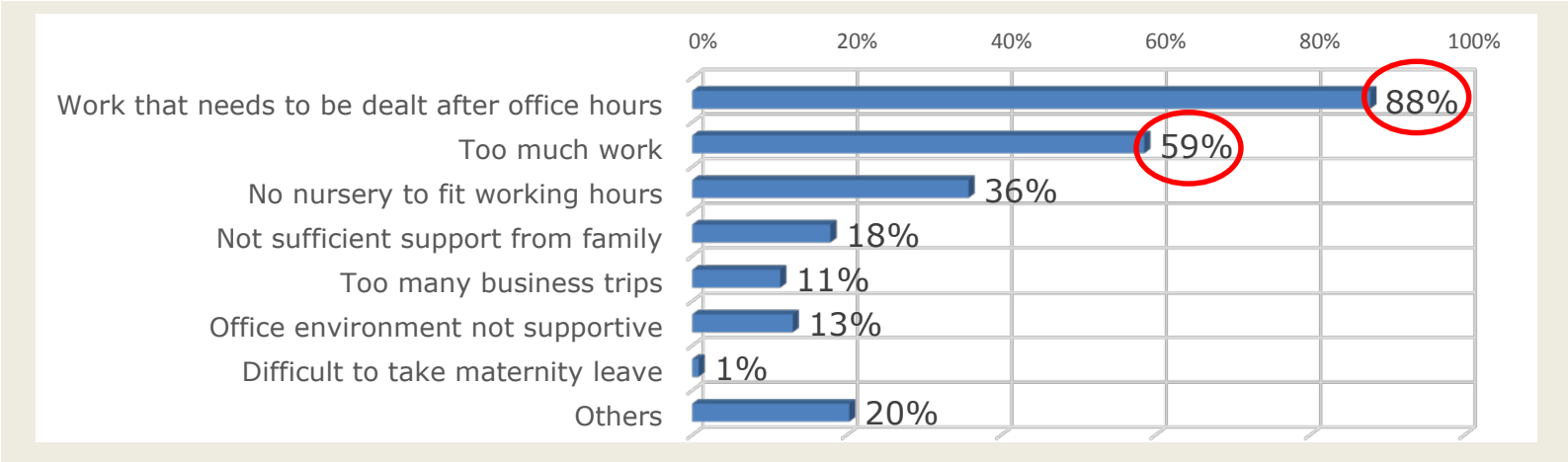
Women raising a 4-6 years old child



- 2. Dilemma of balance between work and family obligations:** All (100%) of the women with children who replied to the survey said they have experienced dilemma/anxiety towards the balance between work and family issues; 60% experienced especially strong anxiety.

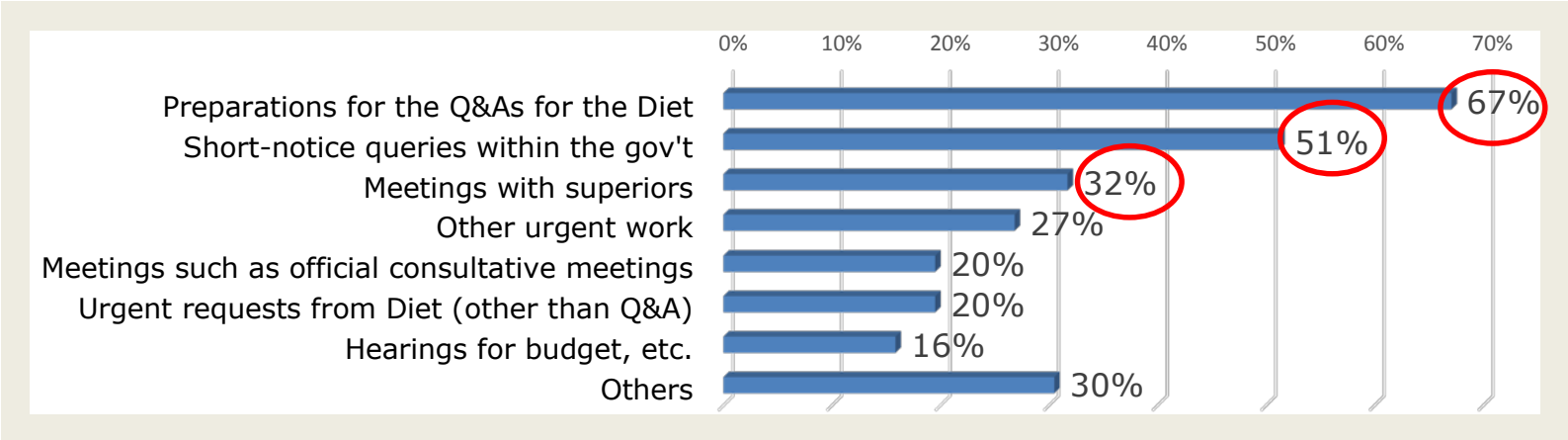
80% of women without a child also felt difficulty/anxiety towards balance between work and family obligations in the coming future.

**3. Why so much overtime work?:** 88% says “there are duties that has to be tackled after regular working hours.” 59% answered “there are too much work.”



**4. What are “duties that has to be tackled after regular working hours”?:** 67% point out “preparations for the Q&As for the Diet (Japanese parliament).” 51% mentions of “short-notice queries within the government.” 32% says “meetings with superiors.”

- The survey also finds out the frequency of the “duties that has to be tackled after regular working hours” for women with children are more than 2-3 times/week.



# Unsustainable “Everyone-Stay-Until-Midnight” Work Style

Unless we change the way we work, our work is no longer sustainable just by treating mothers favorably, as number of women in the central government increase.

## “Everyone-Stay-Until-Midnight” Work Style is No Longer Sustainable

1 **No More Available Posts** --- There will no longer be any more posts for favorable treatments (posts with less overtime work), unless we change the way we work.

### **Child-raising period tends to be longer than people expect!**

We need to have someone to look after children even after they enter elementary school at age 6. If one bears 2-3 children, it could take 10-15 years for the youngest child to be somewhat self-reliant enough to stay home alone. It is unrealistic to offer such posts with less overtime work throughout that period.



2 **Difficult to Balance Work with Child-Raising** --- It is becoming common to return to ordinary work style (i.e. constant overtime work) after children become certain age (typically when they enter elementary school), but then, face difficulty in balancing work with family matters.

3 **Too Much Burden on Other Workers** --- Work that mommy-workers cannot deal are currently handled by other workers, but their burden is getting more and more heavy.

4 **Increasing Insufficiently Skilled Workers** --- If engaged in “mommy posts” for too long, women with children would lack necessary experiences to become managers in the government. If we keep current custom of “treating mother workers favorably,” we would face organization management problems, with the increasing number of women with insufficient experiences.

We need to change the way we work by minimizing overtime work, and make our work style sustainable in the government

# Changing the Way We Work

## Things to Realize

### 1. Condense work within ordinary working hours

#### (1) Minimization of “everyone-stay-until-midnight” type work

Minimize the type of work that is done with the idea that everyone should stay until late: short-notice requests (e.g. requests made on the previous evening with the deadline set on the next morning); meetings scheduled at nights, etc.

#### (2) Streamlining of work itself

### 2. Telecommuting

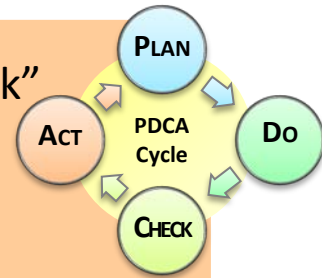
There could be cases that we cannot finish our work within working hours even with the above (1) and (2). For those cases, telecommuting could be the clue.



- A) **Support women officials** engage in both work and child-raising; enable **more efficient human resource management**.
- B) **Contribute to more gender-equal society**: Men would be able to take more role at home, and support their spouse engage more in work and relax from childcare.
- C) **Workers with various circumstances (e.g. elderly care) would also be able to work**.
- D) **Sustainability of the organization rise**.
- E) **Quality of policy improve**, by all workers being able to spend more time out of office, take good rest, and thereby acquire better views as ordinary citizens, and build flexible ideas.
- F) **Less taxpayers burden** by lessening expenditure associated with overtime-work.

Effects

# 10 Proposals to Change the Way We Work – Points –



1: Structure PDCA Cycle to monitor and continue “Change the Way We Work”

2: Change our values and the way we think

“We must be available 24/7” → put more weight on time efficiency and output

3: Change the personnel evaluation measures to alter our values

→ Put more weight on productivity

4: Prepare training programs for managers to change values

5: Build mutual check system for work between ministries

6: Improve the scheduling for hearings for budget, etc.

7: Improve the process of drafting a bill

8: Make telecommuting more prevalent

9: Personnel management with respect to the gender difference of women

- ✓ Let women with children experience more \*ordinary\* posts by changing work style.
- ✓ Don't wait until 30s to let people experience busy, but important work.
- ✓ More relaxed seniority system, etc.

10: Improve the process of the preparations for the Q&As for the Diet



# Preparation for the Q&As for the Diet

-- Different Time Schedules --

\* Image based on typical time schedule  
(8-9 hours after question clarified)

When Questions were  
**Noticed on the Previous  
Evening (T-1)**

When Questions were  
**Noticed two days prior  
to the Assembly (T-2)**

**T-1 6 : 0 0 pm**

Scheduling of Assembly/Committee

Questioner Decided

**Outline of Questions on Notice**

All Staffs ordered to \*Stay\*

**T-2 6 : 0 0 pm**

**T-1 7 : 0 0 pm**

**Clarification of Questions**  
\*sometimes, we end up with lots of "if questioned" Q&As

**T-1 10 : 0 0 am**

**T-1 9 : 0 0 pm**

Questions Allocated to Responsible Staffs

**T-1 12 : 0 0 pm**

Concerned Staffs ordered to \*Stay\*

**T-1 10 : 0 0 pm**

Drafting of Answers



**T-1 1 : 0 0 pm**

**T-1 11 : 0 0 pm**



Consultation with Concerned Parties

**T-1 2 : 0 0 pm**

**T 0 : 0 0 am**

Answering Points Set  
(Clearing w/in ministries; sometimes w/ the Prime Minister's Office)

**T-1 3 : 0 0 pm**

**T 3 : 3 0 am**

**Set Q&As**  
(Attach References – Print – Set)

**T-1 6 : 3 0 pm**

**T 7 : 0 0 am**

Lecturing to the Speaker

**T 7 : 0 0 am 7**



# 18 Items We Can Start by Ourselves on a Grassroots Level

There are many things that we can start by ourselves to change the work environment. We would like to keep some of those in mind as “18 Items” when engaging in work.

## Some of the Examples of the “18 Items”

### **1. Encourage the Team Members**

- ✓ Share your ideas on the missions of the team.
- ✓ Measure the distance between "goal" and "reality," and tell concretely what can be done to fill the gap.

### **2. Act as Team Managers**

- ✓ Know until what time your team members are staying at the office.
- ✓ If your junior(s) are staying long hours at the office, analyze the cause together, and think of ways to go home earlier.

### **3. Improve Efficiency of Work and Increase Productivity**

- ✓ Think of the true "output" and "outcome" of the individual work.
- ✓ Consult the objective and the basic path of the work (if needed, to the seniors) before actually starting the work so that the work would not be wasted.

# Mindset for Female Officials

There are also things we – as women – want to bear in mind while we ask others to change the way they work. We would like to bear in mind the following:

## **1. Responsibility towards Work**

- ✓ Tell your bosses and colleagues clearly of your will and situation, including your restrictions (e.g. childcare), and what you can do under the restrictions. Do the best you can within the given time limit.
- ✓ Be as creative as possible to make the work more efficient, in order to realize the maximum achievement within the given time.
- ✓ Don't be too dependent. Try to set a backup system (e.g. emergency nanny) by yourself, in case of need, to facilitate others' workability.

## **2. Gratitude towards Care & Support**

- ✓ We would be given lots of care and support from bosses and colleagues while we raise children. Do not forget to be grateful for such care and support.

## **3. Sense of Indebtedness and Respect towards Others**

- ✓ Maintain the mind that you would owe a lot to the organization. It is important to do lots of challenging work \*before\* you actually have restrictions, and contribute to the organization.
- ✓ There are various models for child-raising and elderly care. Pay respect towards diverse values.