

**October 20, 2008**  
**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:**  
**An NGO Report for the Working Committee before the Sessions:**  
**By Japan Network on Education for the Advancement of Gender Equality**

Movements against Educational Reactions and  
for Promoting Gender Equality

**[I] Introduction of Japan Network on Education for the Advancement of Gender Equality**

This network was formed in 1997 with aims at solving problems talked about in the U.N. Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. It has its members over the country and aims at promoting equality of men and women in various fields of education by exchanging their practices and activities. The members are striving for realization of a society with gender equality.

**[II] Aims of this Report:**

This report aims at adding facts to the Japanese government's 6th report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The government's report deals only the four years from May 2002 to 2006. During the two years after the government's report stopped explaining, the government and local authorities have done a lot of reactionary policies and practices. We describe part of them in this report, mainly about women and children. Many females hope the government will sign the protocol annexed to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

**[III] How Gender Equality is Treated under the Revised Fundamental Law of Education:**

**in relation with the article 10 (education) of the government's report 258 259**  
**260 261 262**

1. Promoting Coeducation and Gender Equality:

(1) The Fundamental Law of Education, which had been enacted after the World War II, together with the peace Constitution of Japan, was changed for the worse in December, 2006. So many people were against the revision, but the Government forcibly passed the Law through the Diet. In the new law the clause of coeducation was deleted. This shows the government's intention to hinder the coeducation the Japanese people have cultivated after the war. The new School Education Law, which was revised in accordance with the fundamental law, also abolished the clause of promoting coeducation. As Japan's gender exponent is still so low, the clause of coeducation and promotion of it is quite necessary.

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the ratio of coeducation in 2007 was 89.2 percent, while 3 percent was only for boys and 7.5 percent was only for girls. Under the old laws the coeducation has been advanced in the system, but the education for equal rights of men and women is not enough, and there is a prospect of danger to be changed for the worse under the new

education laws.

supplementary data; Figure 4-6 4-8

- (2) The most serious mal-revision of the new Fundamental Law of Education is that the government has acquired the power to interfere in the contents of education. In the new course of study moral education is abnormally stressed, while gender equality is treated lightly and will be taught only in social studies and domestic science.
- (3) Domestic science classes, in which male and female students learn the same contents, are very important to promote education of gender equality. The subject has become compulsory after the government signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. But from its start some schools, in the severe competition for prestigious schools, made little of the subject and let the students have less units and some schools used the classes of the subject for some school events like school festivals and field days. The ministry in charge of education knew those facts, but it did not regulate those ill practices. Under the new education laws the ministry has become far less eager to have the students learn domestic science. The government has made a new subject of domestic science which consists of only two units. With the new course of study, the ministry has increased more elective subjects, so that students have less chances to learn the same subjects in the same classrooms. We oppose to those steps taken by the ministry. Enough units of domestic science are indispensable for both boys and girls to grow up to be sound human beings. We urge the government to increase the classes of domestic science, in which both boys and girls learn the same contents together. The government should increase the number of teachers and install better facilities and appliances.

supplementary data; Figure 5-4

## 2. Severer Competition under the New Course of Study:

- (1) Two years have passed since the annual unified academic achievement tests in which all students of 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades over the country have to sit for the same tests. The results of the tests have been connected with the evaluation of students' academic achievements, that of each school's activities and teachers' evaluations. Many schools have been driven into severer competition for better results. Some students are taught similar questions before hand. Some have to sit for similar tests after winter vacations and some have to study more for the tests after regular lessons. In some public schools in Tokyo, private cram schools are used for the tests. The severe competition for academic achievements has made students feel stressful and discriminated against. Some students are apt to lose self-control with trivial matters. More students have become unable to go to school with stresses though they want to. Some cannot go into their classrooms and they can only get into sick rooms in schools. They have little time to play. Cases of bullying, suicide and violence are increasing. Many students are distressed at severe competition for academic achievements.

The results of the achievement tests lead to 'school selection' and 'school voucher' systems and accelerate competitions in education. They make differences in schools more prominent and make parents and students distrustful of school education. This trend is especially strong among junior high school where students aged from 13 to 15 go. Many students have lost their self-respect and willingness to learn.

- (2) Teachers are also suffering a lot in the new school system. Their activities are very restricted with orders from the board of education, principals and other managing members. They are suffering from long working hours, self evaluation of their activities, discriminatory wages, forced transfers of their work places, forced training and so on. Teachers are also thrown into severe competitions and with strict regulations all around them, some of them have lost their voluntary will to study and their creativity. These conditions have driven teachers into

poor health.

The number of those suffering from mental disorders is increasing and some teachers even committed suicide with long stressful working conditions. Female teachers are often forced to quit their jobs because of hard work and family jobs.

3. Teachers with the Revision of Teaching Licenses:

The law for teaching licenses was also revised and teachers have to get their licenses renewed in every ten years and they have to attend lectures prepared by the authorities. This new system has made teachers quite uneasy because of the forced studying. The practices will deprive teachers of their voluntary will to teach and freedom of thought. The new system will also make unable to be with students because of busy schedules to receive the lectures. It will make dependent teachers who follow the orders of the government and other authorities blindly.

4. Danger of the Nation's Intrusion into Family Education:

Under the new fundamental law the importance of education in families is abnormally stressed and the law has made it possible for the government to order each family how they should lead their family life and what part the husband wife should share in the family.

Before and during World War II, the government intruded into each family and controlled the thought of each person and eventually drove the country into the war of invasion. The government today advocates the importance of family education and is making a drive for each family to follow. This reminds us of those old days before the war. We feel danger in the revised law.

5. Problems of Revised Three Social Education Laws: (promulgated June 11, 2008)

- (1) Under the revised Fundamental Law of education, education is classified into three categories; social education, family education and school education. The new social education laws put more priority on lifelong learning rather than individual growth in order to respond to the needs of the society and to build the society based on intelligence. So far lifelong learning had been attached importance, while the budget for school education and the number of teachers were decreased. And the introduction of temporary workers at social education facilities such as libraries also led to the decrease in educational budget and residents' right has been treated lightly.
- (2) A new clause of 'making use of learning results' is included in the new law. This has made it possible for the government and local authorities to interfere in social education which should be independent from all authorities. Under the pretext of 'making use of results of lifelong learning', the government allotted the budget of 50.04 billion yen for regional activities of assisting schools. As in the case of a junior high school in Sugunami Ward, Tokyo, where the school has opened the night course to gain academic achievements using a private cram school, some schools have introduced market principles into school education. This has caused many kinds of troubles, such as abolition of PTAs.
- (3) Improvement of community centers, libraries, museums and others, which residents can use freely, is the most important in the field of social education. Most of workers at those public facilities are women and many of them are temporary workers or part-timers. We demand those people should be regular workers and they have enough chances to have professional skills and knowledge.
- (4) The revision of the laws has made it possible for the administration to get its opinion on family life into homes, like 'parent studies' of the Education Rebuilding Council. Forcing one-sided views on families or family

life by the administration is not useful and desirable for families trying hard to bring up their children healthy and independent. Instead of the administration's enlightenment, it is more important to provide young couples with chances to learn how to share jobs at home, how to bring up children and how to build sound family, from the standpoint of gender equality. It is also important to foster the power to assist new couples in each community.

Related (Article 5 164 165)

#### **[IV] Hard Life of Women and Children in Social Inequalities;**

**Related (report Article 11 306□312)**

The livelihoods of mothers and children are getting much worse in expanding of social inequalities. Today 55.6 percent of women workers are non-regular employees. The number of households whose yearly incomes are less than 2 million is increasing, This means many people are having a hard life which is below the life on welfare. Conditions are especially bad in single-parent families. Mothers often have to do two or three part-time jobs to live on. They have to work a long time, so they have little time to spend with their children. The children's lives have become more irregular. At school they feel uneasy and many cannot concentrate themselves on studying in classes.

In those families where parents can afford to spend some money, children are often sent to cram schools or made to learn something like the piano, abacus and others. Some children go to famous schools using trains or buses. Social inequalities are getting stronger among children living in the same region. Financial differences are making children choose different courses for the future. Some students cannot go to the schools they want to attend because of poverty. Survey on how poverty is having influences on children's lives and future courses is needed and assistance for children in poor financial families is urgent.

Besides single-parent families, many people, men and women of all ages, are suffering from inhumane hard working conditions with long overtime work and low wages. Especially young people are losing their self-respect and confidence because of insecure employment and unstable future. Revisions of labor laws are necessary so that every one can work and live happily and with dignity as a human being.

#### **[V] Attacks on Normal Sex Education;**

**Related (report Article 12 365 366)**

Since 2002 attacks have been repeated on normal and assiduous efforts of sex education at Nanao School for Handicapped Children in Tokyo as extreme and abnormal education. The school authorities are now checking contents of lessons forcing teachers to hand in lesson plans before hand. Lessons of sex education are especially restricted. The lessons are critically examined whether they are planned following the course of study, or based on the growth of minds and bodies of the children. The restrictions are getting severer and severer, ignoring children' interest and knowledge.

There are so many things that give influence on high school students in relation with sex. A survey shows the following are what high school students are influenced in regard to sex; friends, manga stories, comic books, magazines, TV programs, teachers, video tapes. Besides these, there are PCs, and adult videos which 49 percent of high school students have watched. Although there are a lot of pornographic information around them, most students are normal and serious on this matter. They hope they will be taught the matter seriously and scientifically.

With a lot of sex knowledge and information convenient to men, the number of cases of HIV/AIDS and STDs is increasing. Pregnancy and abortion by high school students and young women are increasing. With these facts in mind sex education

at schools should respond to children's interest and knowledge and it should be based on scientific facts. It should also include lessons teaching relations between human rights and sex with the spirit of gender equality for its base.

supplementary data; Figure 4-14 figure 5-8 figure 5-10 figure 5-12

## **[VI] Against Reactionary Attacks on the Movements for a Gender-Society and for Education for Equality of Both Sexes;**

### **introduction of the report 10 article 5 145 146**

1. Around 2000, adverse movements against promotion for gender equality got stronger. And in 2004 the Tokyo Metropolitan Government ordered that public schools should not use the word 'gender free,' which means a society without gender gaps or movements for such a society. It issued an order that students' family names on rolls should not be mixed as such practices were based on 'gender free.' In Japan in many coeducational schools boys' names and girls' names are separated on rolls. Boys names usually come first and girls names come after them. In 2006 the Cabinet Office of the central government also issued an order that local governments should avoid using the word 'gender free,' as it caused troubles.

supplementary data; Figure 4-9 4-12

2. The results of the textbook screening, which is peculiar to Japanese education and hinders freedom of thought and teaching, are getting more reactionary. The word 'gender' and 'comfort women,' which means women forced to be sex slaves during World War II by the Japanese Imperial army, have been checked out of textbooks for junior high school students. The explanations of the word 'various types of families' are closely examined and restricted. Those reactionary scholars and politicians who label themselves as believers in 'liberal historical view' put pressures on the textbook screening committee so that their opinions are included in textbooks. Those people do not admit invasions and crimes committed by Imperial Japan before and during World War II. Textbooks are more reactionary under the influence of those people. Revision or abolition of the textbook screening should be studied.
3. Neo-conservatives and other reactionary groups are opposing Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society and its basic plans. They want to abolish or revise those law and plans. They are making movements to make local assemblies over the country pass their petitions to realize their opinions.

In Tsukuba-mirai-toshi in Ibaragi Prefecture, a meeting to hear a lecture on a gender-equal society, which had been prepared by the city office and the lecture, was stopped with violent acts and threats.

In Matsuyama City, Ehime Prefecture, the city assembly adopted a petition entitled "A Petition on the Application of Ordinance on a Gender-Equal Society." This petition includes a statement that gender studies and women studies are not recommended to be learned or studied. In Matsuyama, city libraries stopped lending services for 21 kinds of books whose titles include 'gender free.' Among those even a picture story book was included. This practice deprive people of the rights to study and to know. In other districts, the words, 'gender' and 'women studies' have become taboo words in public female centers.

Fighting against those reactionary trends and striving to improve the contents of the third program of Basic

Law for a Gender-Equal Society scheduled to be completed are very important for us. Realization of a gender-equal society is one of the most important tasks in this century, and making concrete measures is quite necessary.

### **Conclusion;**

Reactionary trends are gaining strength and competitions in schools are getting severer. But many goodwill practices have been carried out over the country, depending on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Constitution of Japan. Many teachers are striving today, hoping that all children will grow up free and independent. Movements by women to build better communities are getting stronger and spreading, overcoming the discriminatory notion that men and women have their own roles.

We earnestly hope the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women will fully study and examine the situations so that those movements and practices will become greater.

### **Supplementary Data; from Statistics on Japan's Gender No. 3**

[III] 1. Promoting Coeducation and Gender Equality

(2) supplementary data; figure 4-6 4-8

(3) supplementary data; figure 5-4

[V] Attacks on Normal Sex Education

supplementary data; figure 4-14 figure 5-10 figure 5-12

[VI] Against Reactionary Attacks on the Movements for a Gender-Society and for Education for Equality of Both Sexes;

supplementary data; figure4-9 4-12

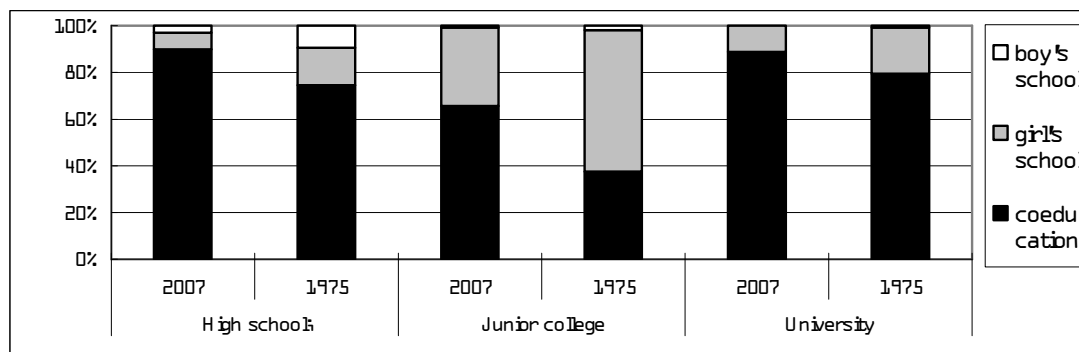
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## Supplementary Data; from Statistics on Japan's Gender No. 3

### □□) 1. Promotion of Coeducation and Gender Equality Education

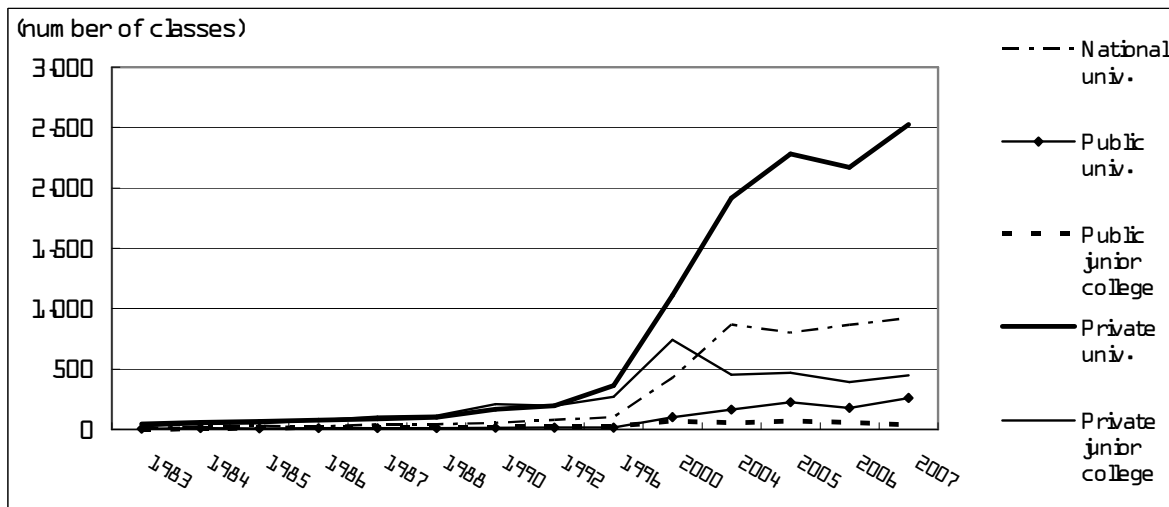
□□ Figure of supplementary data:

Figure 4-6: Percentage of gender coeducation; the number of coeducational schools are rapidly increasing, and public girl's (boy's) schools are decreasing.



From "Basic Investigation of Schools" by Ministry of Education and Science □ Ministry of Education □

Figure 4-8: Number of classes about feminism and gender in university; since 1996 it's increasing rapidly.

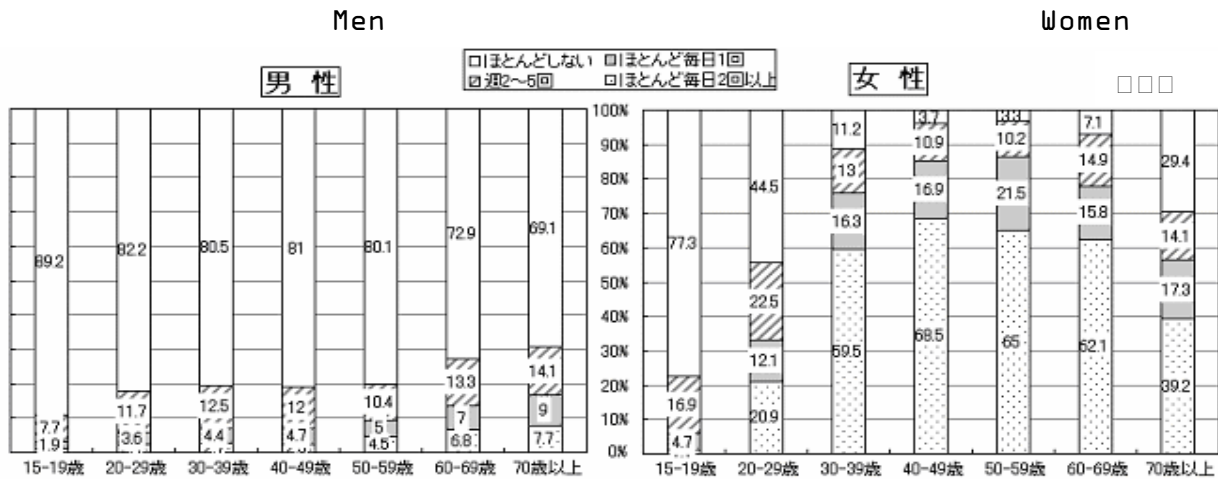


" Investigation of Classes about Feminism and Gender" by National Women's Education Center

□ Figure of supplementary data

Figure 5-□ Purchasing food and cooking - Men, whose answer was "do almost nothing," account for 70-80% in all age groups.

- almost never
- one time every day
- 2□□ times per week
- more than 2 times every day



From "The Statistics of National Health and Nutrition" by Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2000

□□□ Bashing at sex education by reason that it is going too far.

Figure of supplementary data

Figure 4-14: Survey of sexual harassment at school; 40% of students have experiences of sexual harassment at school.

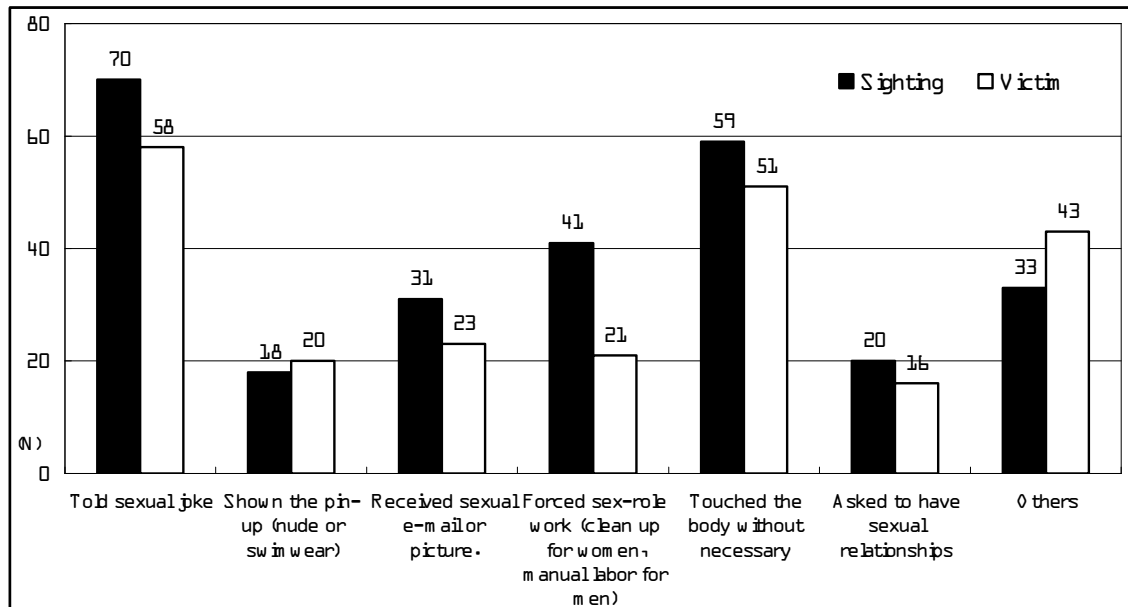
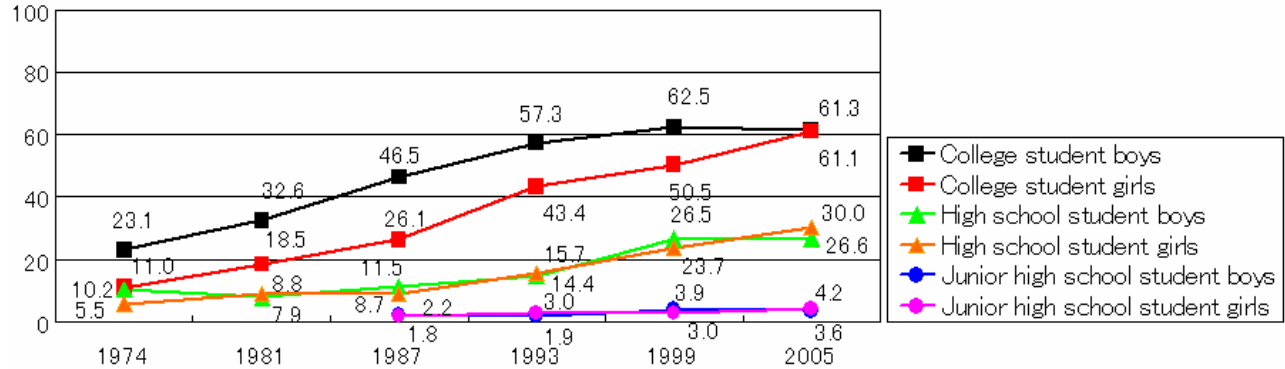


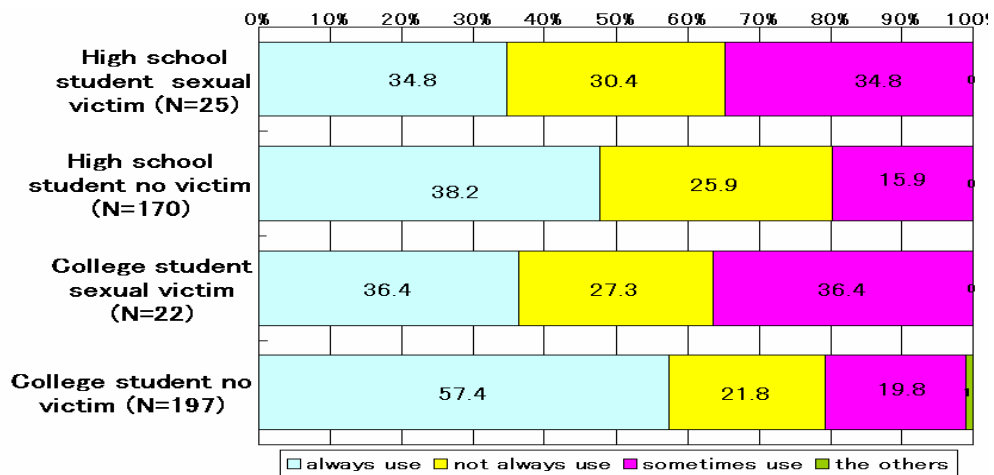


Figure 5-8 Sexual Behavior □ Experience of sexual intercourse becoming earlier □



From "The 6<sup>th</sup> Report of Whole Japan Investigation about Sexual Behavior of Youth" by the Juridical Foundation, Japan Sex Education Association (The result of the investigation in 2005)

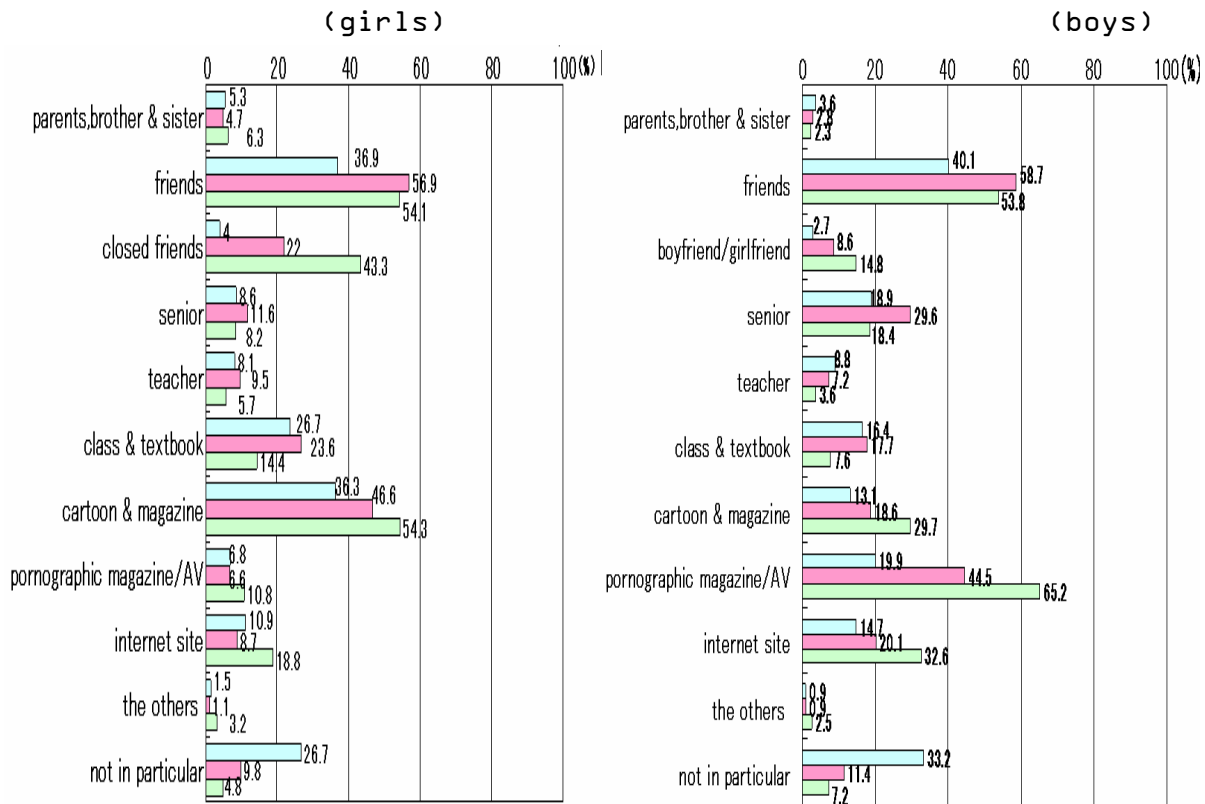
Figure 5-10 Experience of sexual violence and condom use



From "The 6<sup>th</sup> Report of Whole Japan Investigation about Sexual Behavior of Youth" by the Juridical Foundation, Japan Sex Education Association (The result of the investigation in 2005)

Figure 5-12 Sources of sex Information

Girls mainly get sex information from comics or magazines, while boys get it mainly from pornographic magazines or adult videos. Information from friends is large in number for both boys and girls, but accuracy of such information is supposed to be doubtful. The rate of learning it at school tends to be small. It is necessary for children to have more chance to get correct knowledge about sex.

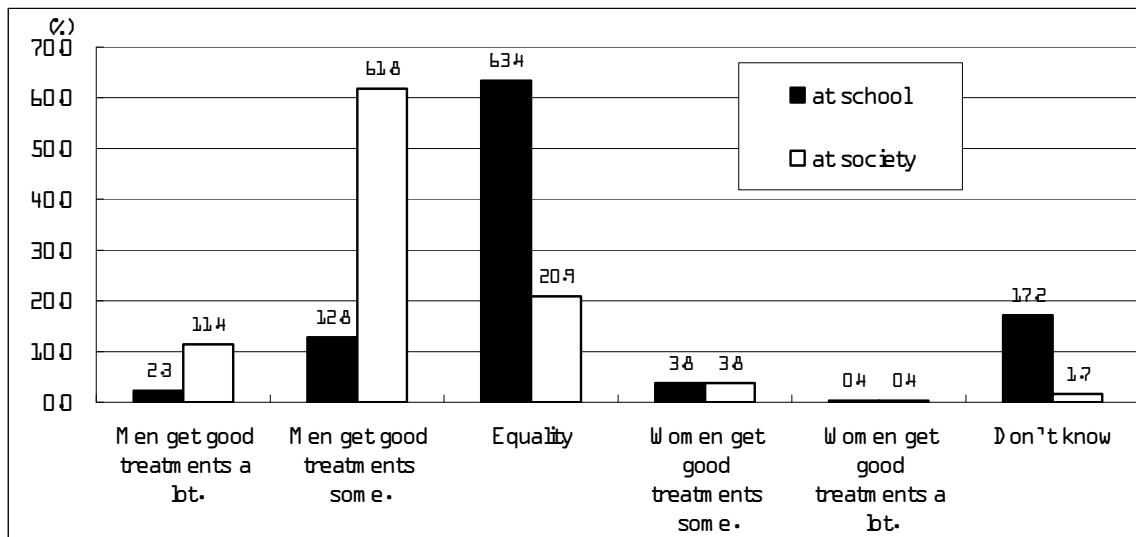


From "The 6<sup>th</sup> Report of Whole Japan Investigation about Sexual Behavior of Youth" by the Juridical Foundation, Japan Sex Education Association (The result of the investigation in 2005)

□□) Interruption with Promotion of “Gender-equal Society” and “Gender Equality Education” □□  
 Supplementary Data

Figure 4-9: feeling about sexual equality at school and that in society

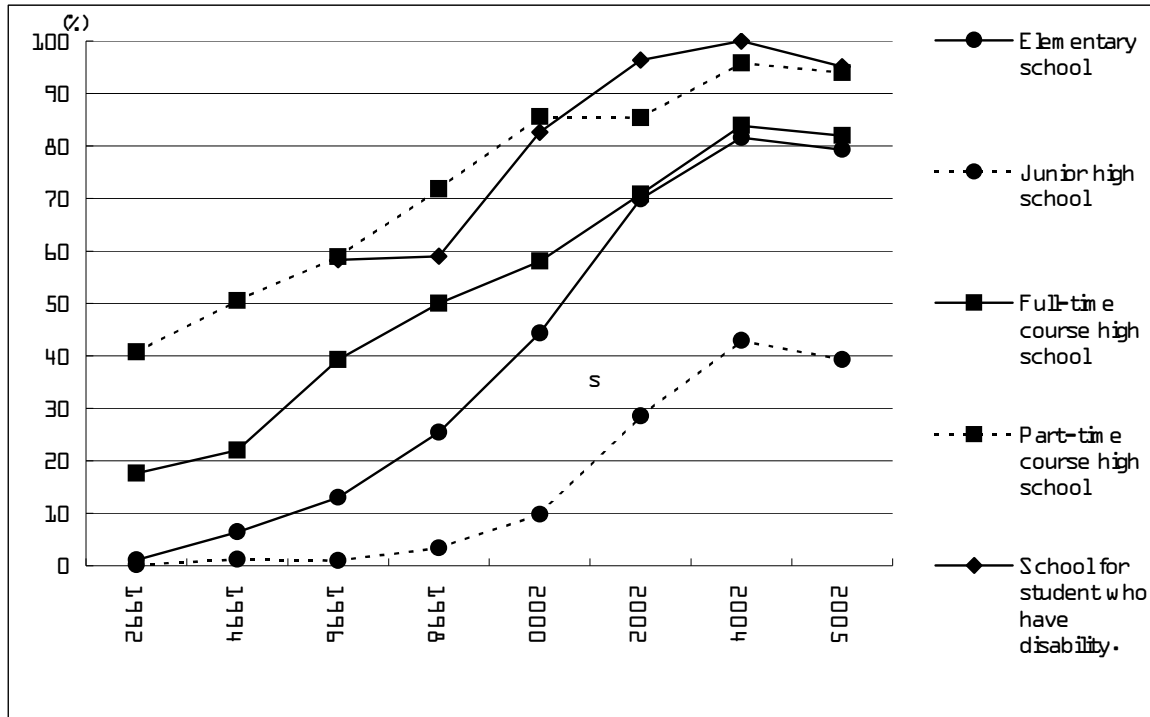
People feel sexual equality at school, but they feel inequality bitterly in society; more than 60% of women feel male supremacy.



From The Investigation of Public Opinions about Gender-equal Society by the Cabinet Office in 2007

Figure 4-12: Rates of using gender mixed-name-lists in public schools in Tokyo

In Tokyo the rates of using gender-mixed-name-lists began to decrease from 2004 to 2005. In August 2004, Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education directed that public schools shouldn't make gender-mixed-name lists based on the idea of gender-free, because they believed that the idea of gender-free denied all male-like or female-like characters of human.



Reprinted from “The Rates of Using Gender-mixed Name Lists in Public Schools in Tokyo”  
by Tokyo Metropolitan Education Office