

WOMEN IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN JAPAN: CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS IN RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY

Kaoru Nakata

Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency

Kaoru Nakata presently serves as Executive Director of the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FRA). Dr. Nakata holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Fisheries Science from Hokkaido University, and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Sciences from the University of Tokyo where her doctoral dissertation focused on studies in the field of fisheries oceanography. Dr. Nakata entered the Fisheries Agency of Japan in 1984 and commenced her career as a researcher at the Tokai Regional Fisheries Research Laboratory (presently the National Research Institute of Fisheries Science; NRIFS)

Thereafter, Dr. Nakata has held multiple positions at the directorial level; she was in charge of research promotion in the field of fisheries oceanography in her capacity as Director of the Marine Productivity Department of NRIFS during 2009-2010, and then as Deputy Director in the Research Management Department at FRA headquarters during 2011-2015. In 2016, when the National Fisheries University was integrated into the FRA, Dr. Nakata took up her present position, where she serves as Executive Director of the FRA as well as oversees operations at the National Fisheries University (located in Shimonoseki). In this manner, she is engaged in the advancement of fisheries-related education throughout Japan, while ensuring the smooth integration and cooperation of both organizations.



ABSTRACT

To “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life” was adopted as one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, as a component of the aim to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” as stated on the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. In the fisheries sector in Japan, female workers constitute 13% of those engaged in fishing activities (fishers), 38.4% of land-based workers, and 64% of those involved in the marine products- processing industries. However, the percentage of women at the decision-making levels in these various endeavors are extremely low. The rates of ordinary members and those serving in official capacities in fisheries cooperative associations are as low as 5-6% and 0.5%, respectively. Similar trends are also found in the fields of education and research. For example, the percentage of women researchers holding formal positions in the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FRA) has reached 11%, but those engaged in management-level positions constitute only 3% of the total.

In 2015, numerical targets for ratios of women at the management/decision-making level of incorporated administrative agencies in Japan, such as the FRA, were established under the Fourth Gender Equality Basic Plan. The FRA has been exerting efforts to increase recruitment levels of female researchers into the organization, and to furthermore promote capable women to the management/decision-making level (Fig. 1). At the present time, there is a very small candidate pool for women researchers who are at the career stage eligible for such promotion; hence, it will take time to reach the desired numerical targets, but this goal is starting to be realized.

In Japan, fishery-related production has declined in recent years, and the fisheries industry is facing an aging crisis. An increase of women members at the decision-making level in local communities is expected to lead to the establishment of various systems that will consider women’s needs and utilize their talents. Women are regarded to have a high level of competence in communicative skills, and in this regard, it is highly probable that their active participation will bring new power and energy to their respective communities. Increasing women’s participation in both the local community and in the research arena will be key to achieving a much-needed boost to Japan’s fisheries sector.

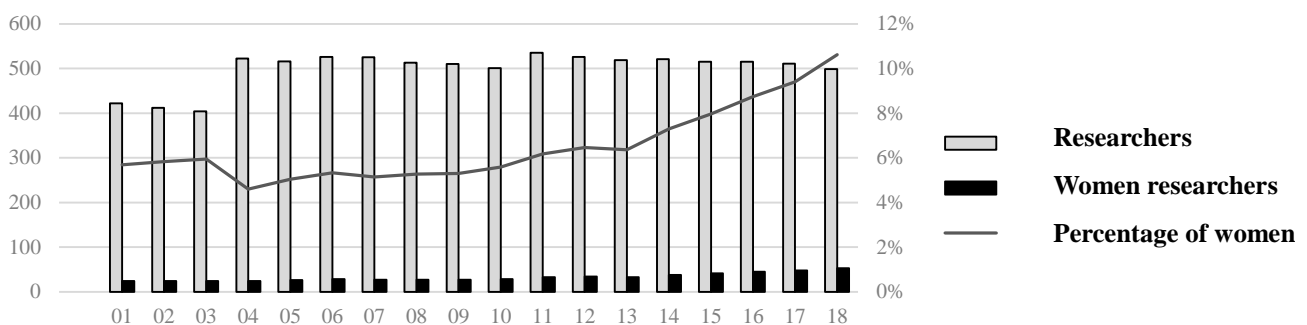


Fig. 1. Recent increasing trends for women researchers in the Japan Fisheries and Education Agency (FRA).

KEYWORDS

Decision-making levels, Fourth Gender Equality Basic Plan, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5

Women in Fisheries: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Contributions to Research and Industry

Women in fisheries and aquaculture in Japan: Current achievements and future prospects in research and industry

Kaoru NAKATA
(Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency)



5 GENDER EQUALITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

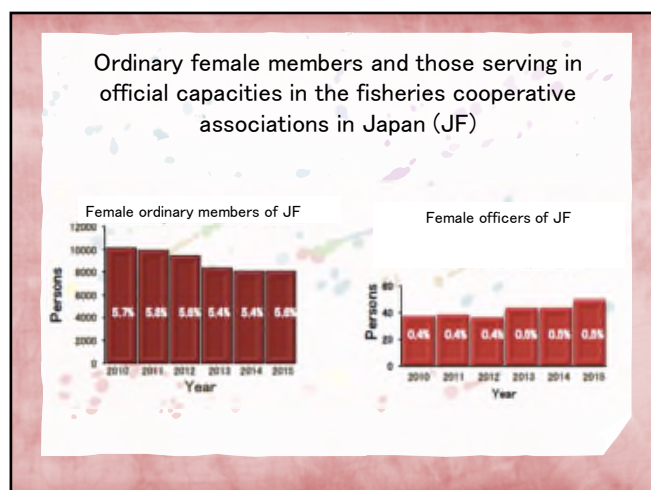
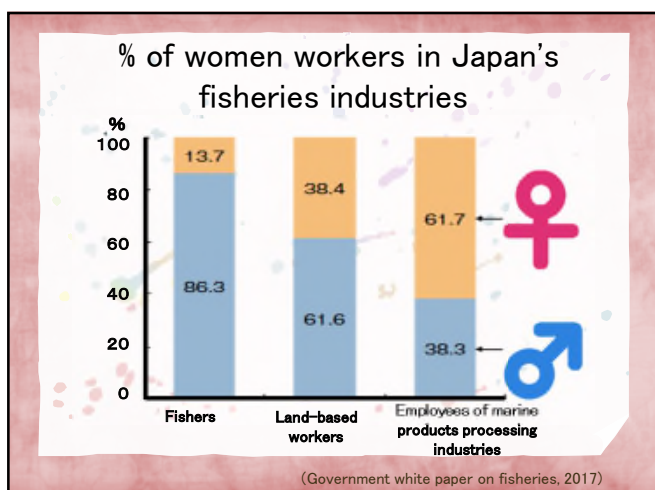
5.5
Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

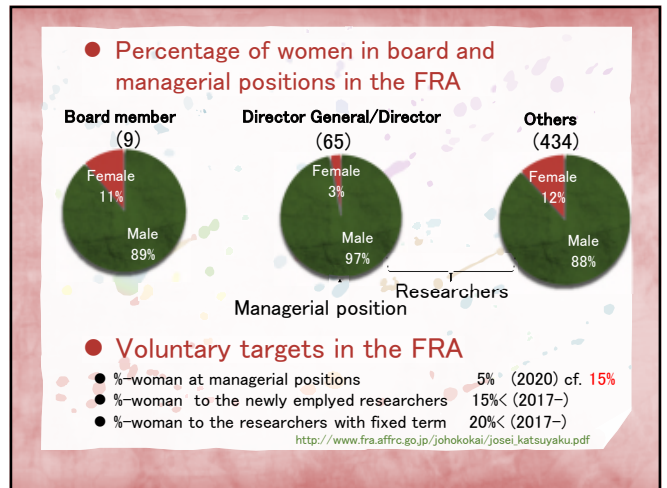
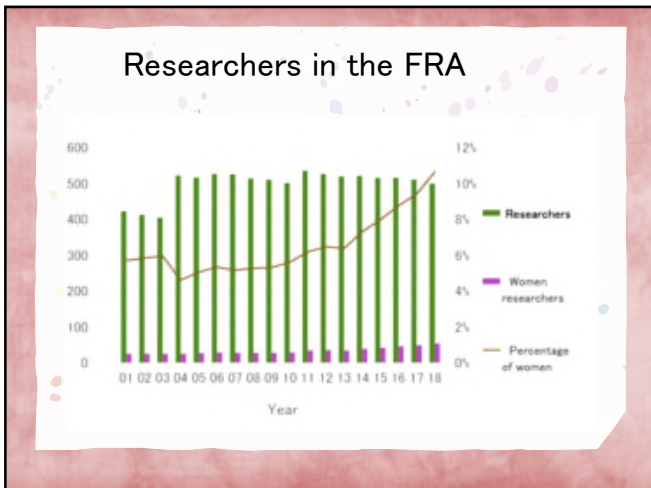
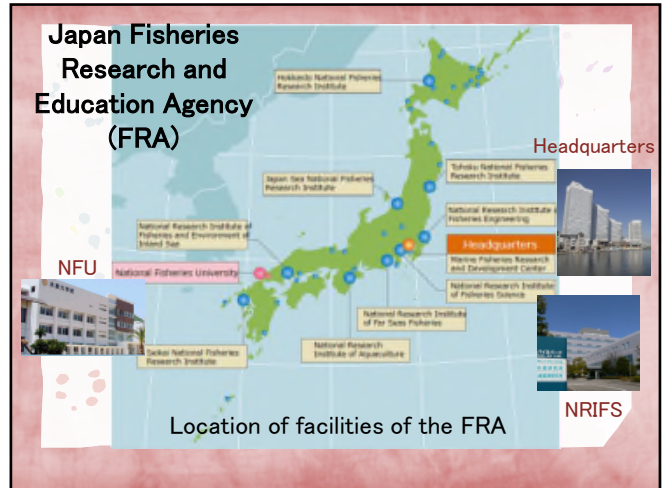
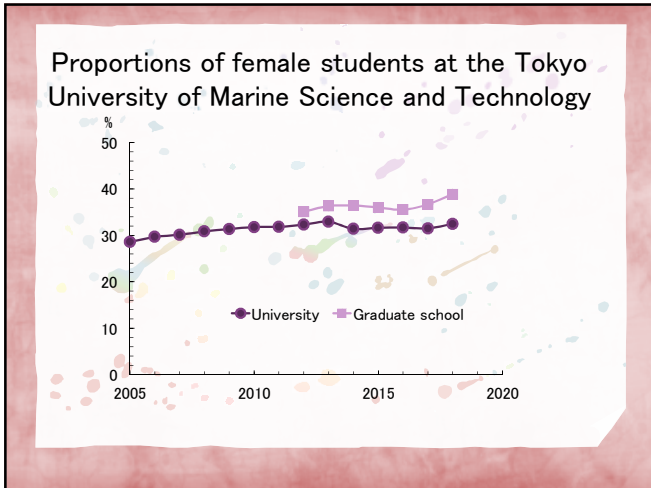
Today's topic

- Present state of women's participation at the decision-making level in the fisheries sector
- Merit-based increase of women at decision-making/managerial positions
- How to proceed in increasing participation of women in positions with leadership

Examples of numerical targets for the desired proportion of women in managerial positions under the 4th Gender Equality Basic Plan

Items	2015 (%)	2020 (%)
Incorporated administrative agency		
Director and section chief	13.5	15
Board Member	10.5	13
Private enterprise		
Section chief	9.2	15
Director	6.0	10





- Why did they choose not to become researchers?
- Why are the proportions of women at managerial/decision-making positions low?

% female students

% women researchers

Gender differences in occupation choice: Low % of women in the managerial classes

(Sakata, 2014)

- Gender stereotyping

Agency	Communion
♂ individual's striving to master the environment to assert the self, to experience competence, achievement, and power	♀ a person's desire to closely relate to and cooperate and merge with others (Rudman & Glick, 2008)

Gender differences in occupation choice:
Low % of women in the managerial classes

↑

- **Gender stereotyping**
 - Fields where men dominate
 - Women cannot feel that they belong to such fields
 - Decline of interests in such fields
- Numerical targets can be effective for promoting women's activities in the fisheries sector

Leadership
 Changes in the image of effective leadership

- The recent leadership image seems to fit with women's stereotypical characteristics, rather than men's
- Enlightenment on recent effective leadership style is important

What is management?

Director of the Marine Productivity Division (2009–2010)
 National Research Institute of Fisheries Science (NRIFS)

- *Management of researchers and their research
 - Discussion with each researcher to decide his/her annual plan
 - Advising to make his/her goals more appropriate and to obtain better results
- *Assisting the Director General
- *Building cooperative relationships with prefectural fisheries research centers
- *Responding to emergency situations in fisheries
 - ex. F1 NPP accident (2011, Mar.11-)

Severity of the fisheries industries in Japan (1)

- Decrease in fisheries production

Severity of the fisheries industries in Japan (2)

- Decrease in seafood consumption

Severity of the fisheries industries in Japan (3)

- Decrease in workers in fisheries industries
- Predominance of elderly workers

For achieving sustainable fisheries

- Importance of having enough income to live by fishery-related work and to allow children to receive an appropriate education
- Problems of local fishery industries vary from region to region
- It is important for workers in the regional fishery industries to **think about** how to deal with the problems **for themselves**.
I'd like to earn my livelihood by fishing and have enough income to allow my children to receive an adequate education



For constructing local strategies to achieve sustainable fisheries

- Collecting information on measures taken at other places with similar problems, and sometimes cooperating with researchers is effective.
- Women are generally good at obtaining information by establishing networks



For researchers, it is worthwhile if their research results are utilized in the fisheries industries

Increase of women members at the decision-making level in the fisheries sector

- Because things of interest differ according to gender, an increase of women's participation will broaden the scope of view and help make various types of information more available.
- Easier introduction of various systems that meet women's needs => male-friendly, too.
- Increase of women at the decision-making level will be key to achieving a much-needed boost to Japan's fisheries sector.

Thank you!!

