

# Disparity in the Burden of Housework

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Our group discussed the problem of food loss in Japan, the aging society, and the unequal burden of housework. The main idea of this essay is about the disparity in the burden of housework in Japan, which I consider to be a particularly serious problem.

I believe that a major issue in Japan is the disparity in the burden of housework between men and women. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, in the case of dual-earner couples without babies and infants, wives spend 208 minutes a day on housework, while husbands spend only 12 minutes, or about one-seventeenth of what wives spend. In the case of two-earner couples with babies and infants, wives spend 414 minutes per day on housework, while husbands spend 68 minutes. Although the disparity in housework time has improved somewhat, the situation is still not equal. This disparity in the amount of time spent on housework may be linked to a number of problems, such as the declining birth rate and late marriages, where women do not want to have children or get married.

It has been a long time since there was advocacy of “women’s advancement in society,” but it seems that the social structure of women’s work, such as childcare and housework, which are considered free labor, has not changed.

So, how much equality has been achieved in housework between men and women in the world? I looked into how long husbands spend on housework in dual-earner households with babies and infants overseas. As mentioned above, the housework time spent by husbands with babies and infants in Japan is 68 minutes, while in the U.S., it is 190 minutes and in Sweden, it is 200 minutes, about three times as long as that of Japan. On the other hand, wives’ average housework time is 414 minutes in Japan, while it is 340 minutes in the U.S. and 330 minutes in Sweden.

One common occurrence internationally is that women spend more time on housework. However, if we take the ratio of men’s housework time to women’s housework time and compare it among developed countries, the ratio is 1 to 5 in Japan, while it is only around 1 to 2 in most countries. This shows that the disparity in the burden of housework between men and women is much worse in Japan.

So what are the causes of this serious situation? According to the OECD, Japanese men work the longest hours of paid work per day, more than two hours longer than the OECD average. In other words, it is not that Japanese men do too little housework, but that they work too much and as a result, they have less time for housework.

In order to break away from this serious situation, we need to make changes in the workplace. Specifically, we should make it compulsory for all men and women to take maternity leaves and make office work and telecommuting optional to reduce the time spent commuting. That way, you'll have more time to do your chores.

However, no matter how many reforms are implemented, if the people's mindset does not change, the reforms cannot be said to have been successful in the true sense. Although it is not an immediate measure, we should raise people's awareness, such as housework needs to be done regardless of gender, the disparity in housework time causes many problems, etc. from an early age by teaching the seriousness of the disparity in the burden of housework through school education.