

Committee for Promoting Equal Participation of Men and Women in Science and Technology

1. What is the "Committee for Promoting the Equal Participation of Men and Women in Science and Technology"?

The dawn of the 'information-age' has underscored the need for utilizing the diverse abilities of both men and women for the development of science and technology of the 21st century.

In July 2001, the "Committee for Promoting Equal Participation of Men and Women in Science and Technology" started as a branch committee of the Japan Society of Applied Physics (JSAP). The aim of the Committee was simply to increase awareness for greater cross-gender cooperation to create a society where both men and women can work as equals. The Committee was not initiated as a forum for women to vent grievances against men. The JSAP is a large and influential organization with members from industry, administration and academia. The Committee has no doubts that the participation of the JSAP in this cause will facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues to promote the equal participation of men and women in society.

2. Background to the formation of the Committee

The falling birth rate and ageing society in Japan have resulted in greater demands on women to participate in a wider range of social activities. The Basic Law for the Gender-Equal Society was enacted in June 1999 and in January 2001 the Japanese government created "The Council for Gender Equality" in the Cabinet Office.

However, statistics reported in the fiscal 2000 white paper on gender-equality published in June 2001, showed that Japan was in 41st place among 70 nations on an international index of the participation of women in decision-making processes. This was even lower than the 38th position held in 1999. These figures highlight the fact that Japan is far behind the international average with respect to such matters.

As a consequence of this state of affairs, a preparatory committee was established to encourage the equal participation of both men and women in the JSAP in February 2001. After holding the first meeting during the JSAP Spring Meeting 2001, a "Committee for Promoting Equal Participation of Men and Women in Science and Technology" was inaugurated in July 2001. The second meeting was held during the JSAP Autumn Meeting 2001, and a symposium is planned for the JSAP Spring Meeting 2002, as described on the following page.

3. Aims and Plans

3-1. Mental Restructuring

In the short term, there are considerable costs involved in arranging sufficient nurseries, reducing working hours, and giving both male and female employees parental leave. However, in the long term, one can envisage tremendous long-term benefits from the equal participation of men and women in society. A 'mental restructuring' of both the male and female mindset is required in order to change the current male centered social structure in Japan.

3-2. Development of opportunities for women scientists and engineers

There are very few women in the field of science and technology in Japan and a concerted effort will be necessary to change these circumstances. In particular there is a drastic need for a re-evaluation of the social attitude towards the education of women in science and engineering. Further, there are still insufficient opportunities for women to achieve managerial positions in industry compared with their male counterparts.

4. JSAP membership survey

The Committee members are aware of their limitations and reality of the difficulties involved in changing the status quo of our society. The JSAP recently carried out a survey of its members and preliminary analysis of the results shows: (i) no significant differences between men and women with respect to scholarship awards; (ii) a slightly larger percentage of male members were assigned to executive positions than female members; (iii) female members had a heavier burden of housework. A full analysis of the survey results will be presented at a special symposium of the JSAP Spring Meeting in 2002, and also at the International Conference of IUPAP-WG "Women in Physics" in March 2002 in Paris as an activity report of the JSAP (see the next page).

5. The Committee members envisage the JSAP to have the following roles:

5-1. The JSAP can increase the public awareness of the issues by

- (a) Organizing symposia related to such issues
- (b) Finding role models for achieving equal participation of men and women in society, and introducing them to society
- (c) Proposing relevant positive action
- (d) Investigating and publicizing the situation of foreign countries
- (e) Encouraging interaction with other scientific and academic organizations involved in similar activities
- (f) Endeavoring to improve understanding of science and technology amongst the younger generation

5-2. Within the JSAP

- (a) Assignment of women to committee members, representatives, councilors, and directors (it may be necessary to determine the ratio of men and women in accordance with the ratio of the JSAP male/female members)
- (b) Setting up a day-care nursery during JSAP meetings
- (c) Take an active interest in and assist with resolving the problems of its membership. For example, issues related to childcare, maternity leave, and use of maiden names.

6. Finally

It should be emphasized that this Committee is not involved in activities for the benefit of only female members. The aim is to work for a society in which both men and women can work and realize their full potential on equal terms. In order for this goal to be achieved, our current objectives are to study what we can do to improve the situation as members of JSAP.

JSAP



Committee members

Kashiko KODATE (Chair, Japan Women's University),
Yoshikazu TOYAMA (Vice-chair, Fujitsu),
Miyoshi AYAMA (Utsunomiya University),
Kay DOMEN (Fujitsu Quantum Devices Limited),
Akiko GOMYO (NEC Corporation),
Mutsuko HATANO (Hitachi, Ltd.),
Kazue ISHIKAWA (Sophia University),
Fusako IWASE (The Furukawa Electric CO., LTD.),
Naoko KASAI (National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology),
Yukari MATSUO (RIKEN),
Toshio OGINO (NTT),
Yoshiko OHASHI (Keio University),
Yoshiko OKADA-SHUDO (The University of Electro-Communications),

Tsugunori OKUMURA (Tokyo Metropolitan University),
Kunio TADA (Yokohama National University),
Madoka TAKAI (The University of Tokyo),
Emi TAMECHIKA (NTT),
Miyoko O. WATANABE (Toshiba Corporation),
Hidetoshi FUKUYAMA (Advisor, The University of Tokyo),
Toshio GOTO (Advisor, Nagoya University),
Kenji KAJIYAMA (Secretariat, The Japan Society of Applied Physics),
Kayoko ITO (Secretariat, The Japan Society of Applied Physics),
Fumiko ITAMI (Secretariat, The Japan Society of Applied Physics)

Symposium on Promoting Equal Participation of Men and Women in Science and Technology

*What social challenges will
scientists and engineers face
in the new millennium ?*

What do you think ?

Come along and voice your views.

13:00-17:00, March 28, 2002

Tokai University

Shonan Campus, Hiratsuka, Japan

International Conference of IUPAP-WG

“ Women in Physics ”

March 7-9, 2002 Paris, France

<http://www.jsap.or.jp/men-women>