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Japanese Women's ongoing Battle in Labor Issues

Before World War II, women were minimized when comparisons were made between the men and women in the workforce. It all drastically changed after the transformation era, which basically means changes seen years after the end of the war. Some changes were seen to affect positively toward women. Women are granted after the abolishment of the ie (patrilineal family) a system ran by mainly male, the right to vote and other rights. However, among the areas of labor women stayed marginalized just like years before the war. During these changes, there was supposed to be a huge positive turn regarding decreasing the marginalization of women in the workforce. However, the representation of women's contribution in labor stayed almost untouched and they are facing challenges in this area.

One of the many problems that women are facing is job insecurity in their employment. As far as what Jeff Kingston states in his article [Contemporary Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change since the 1980s](#), women have been the ones absorbing every unequal change done in wages and security in jobs. For example, it is known that men are the ones to enjoy any flexibility in terms of layoffs or limitation on hours, due to the part-time jobs taken by women. Now part-time jobs are another challenge for women. They usually take up these positions not because that is what is easiest, but that is what gives them more time for other activities. Part-time jobs are a way to have women not only under man's recognition in labor, but also it is what provides mothers the opportunity to juggle hours with family (children) and work hours. This type of employment is targeted to those women who are mothers. As this type of employment is what allows most of the mothers to take care of their children, it is also difficult

to have family-friendly policies in some positions. Many do face the risk of having their job position removed after returning from maternity leave. It is described in the same article mentioned above that even those who do return to work, are not granted to getting the same position as the one they had before they left. Now those who do return to work, go under jobs titled as precarious. Pretty much, taking part-time jobs isn't so positive nor negative, it completely just depends how much support some corporates are willing to give to these mothers and the result is that these companies lack that type of support. It has taken some mothers to decide between two crucial paths: career or children. The expectations with this type of issues in this area is that many will leave their career path in order to do what feels most appropriate.

Other issues that women are facing is taking undesirable jobs. The jobs being taken by women are usually younger and titled as ambitious women. The two positions are: the nightlife scene known in Japan as *kyabajo* or a full-time housewife. Ann Alisson describes these two strategies used by these young women in her book titled *Precarious Japan* in chapter three. Pretty much what women do here is work in cabaret clubs, and well it is an alternative for a more secure job, maybe not the most recommended, but may be the way to prevent falling into poverty. As mentioned above another job likely to be taken is being a full-time housewife which in my opinion does not guarantee any profit in return.

Moreover, women are facing problems in other factors to what maybe would not affect male the same way. In the article of David Leheny titled [Fears, Norms, and Politics in Contemporary Japan](#), young women once again are a target of a practice known as compensated dating in return for money and allowances. What is expected from them can be just dating or to have sex with them and usually older men are who accompany these young girls. I am aware that

this is not considered a job, but for these girls that is what it might mean, and I interlink this practice with labor issues because some profit is received.

My last point may be viewed as an example of what some women or girls have fallen into all due to the marginalization and limited opportunities in the workforce. All the battles of providing some stability in their jobs has reflected different eras and ages, but as it can be observed, it all comes down to women fighting because that lack of representation and stability in these labor issues.