

CAPACITY-BUILDING OF FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ADMINISTRATION OF WOMEN'S PRISONS IN JAPAN

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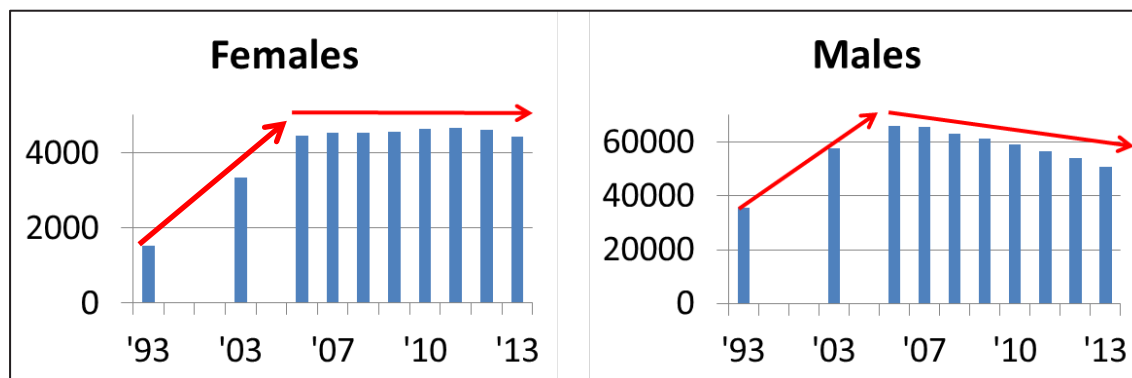
I. INTRODUCTION

Correctional officers who work directly with inmates are the most important people for achieving the rehabilitation of offenders. Accordingly, we must establish working environments where female officers are properly trained and developed; where they gain professional knowledge and enhance their skills on the treatment of inmates; and where they work positively and sustainably. Doing so will directly impact the treatment of female inmates and will contribute to their successful rehabilitation.

II. CURRENT STATUS OF FEMALE INMATES, WOMEN'S PRISONS AND FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS IN JAPAN

A. Number of Female Inmates and Offence Type in Japan

1. Number of Inmates



At the end of 2014, there were 52,860 sentenced inmates in Japan nationwide. Out of that number, female inmates make up 8.3%. After rapidly increasing from 1993 to 2006, the total number of female inmates generally remained flat, while the number of male inmates has been decreasing in recent years. Currently, the population of female inmates is about 3 times what it was in 1993.

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2. Offence Types

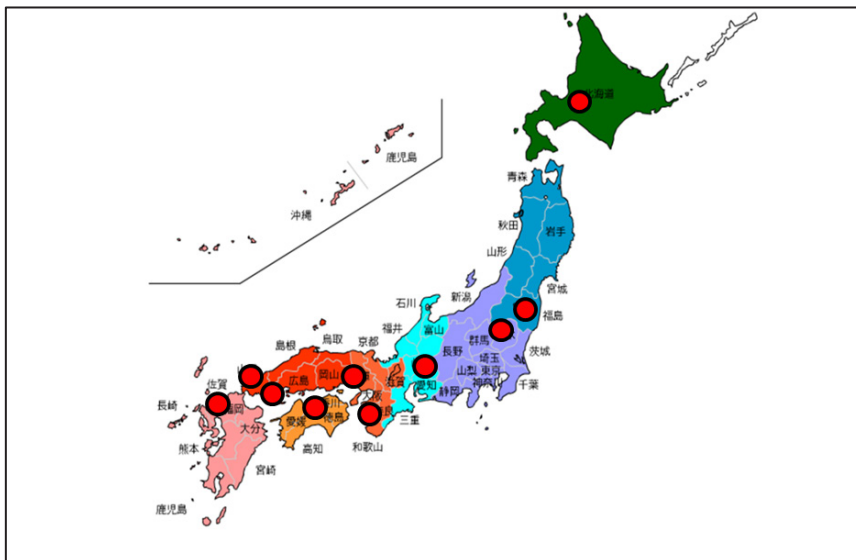


This graph shows the offence types in 2013. Theft and Stimulants Control Act violations totaled 80% of all offences committed by female offenders.

3. Characteristics

Recently, the proportion of elderly inmates is increasing in Japan. Therefore, treatment and reintegration of such inmates has become a great issue.

B. **Women's Prisons in Japan**



There are 77 prisons in Japan nationwide. 10 are women's prisons. Twenty years ago, we only had 5 women's prisons, but to respond to the increasing number of female inmates, we have increased capacity to accommodate women. In 2013, the number of female inmates was 83% of their total capacity.

C. **Female Correctional Officers in Japan**

1. Number of Staff

There are 17,466 prison officers throughout Japan, and among them, only 1,419 are female, which make up 8% of all prison officers. In Japanese women's prisons, about 90% of prison officers are female.

2. Recruitment

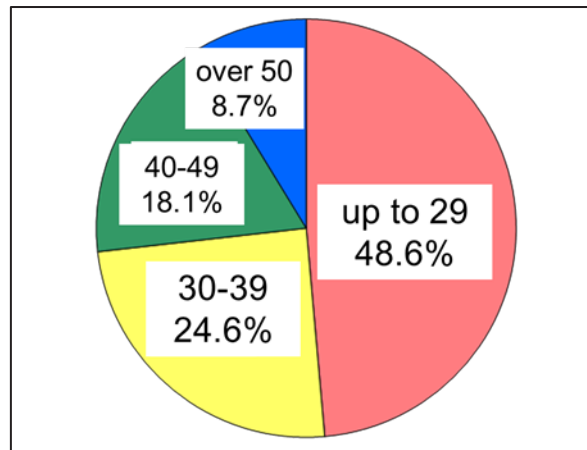
In Japan, all correctional officers start out as national government officials assigned to the Ministry of Justice. Firstly, newly appointed officers attend a 3-month basic training course at the Training Institute for Correctional Personnel, which is followed by 9 months of on-site training.

3. Promotion/Training

Those who wish to be promoted to a higher rank have opportunities to take the internal promotion exam. After passing the exam, training for senior officials is provided. The opportunities for promotion and participation in training programs are provided equally to male and female officers. Those who are capable and motivated female officers are promoted to leading positions, such as wardens or policy makers in the Ministry of Justice. However, since the number of female officers is still relatively low, we need to promote further measures for the capacity building and expansion of job categories and positions of female officers.

III. CHALLENGES FACING FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS IN JAPAN

A. Age Composition



About 50% of female correctional officers are in their twenties, and 25% are in their thirties. This means that the majority of female correctional officers are from younger generations.

B. Reasons Female Officers Quit Their Jobs Early

Why is the proportion of young female officers disproportionately high in Japan? This is because many female correctional officers do not continue their jobs after a few years. The number of female officers who quit within 3 years after recruitment is two times higher than that of male officers.

Why do female officers quit their jobs so early? One of the reasons is that they prioritize their private lives, such as marriage, child birth or raising children, over pursuing their careers. However, more than that, the characteristics of working at correctional facilities, such as long, irregular working hours or the burden of working with difficult inmates, puts a large amount of stress on female officers. In other words, the job of a correctional officer is not appealing to young women. The longer one continues to work as a correctional officer, and the higher one gets promoted to senior positions, the substance and the quality of work becomes more interesting and important, and to many, worthwhile and meaningful.

In addition, the skill of working with inmates is acquired through experience. Rehabilitation of offenders is an important duty of the state. This duty cannot be dismissed as

menial work which can easily be performed by anyone. Therefore, supporting young and in-experienced officers, and reducing the number of young women who quit, is most crucial for strengthening the entire correctional system.

IV. EFFORTS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S PRISON CONDITIONS

A. The “Marguerite Action” Business Model for Women’s Prisons, Female Inmates and Female Officers

In an effort to implement practical measures for both female officers and inmates, the initiative called the “Marguerite action” business model was adopted in January 2014. The “Marguerite action” seeks to create a good working environment in women’s prisons, improve the treatment of female inmates, and encourage the long-term employment of female officers. Therefore, this action includes various measures, such as:

- Capacity building for female officers,
- Reducing overcrowding of women prisons,
- Enhancing the entrustment of administration to the private sector,
- Developing new educational programs and vocational training programs,
- Supporting measures for reducing repeat offences and smooth reintegration of female inmates, and so on.

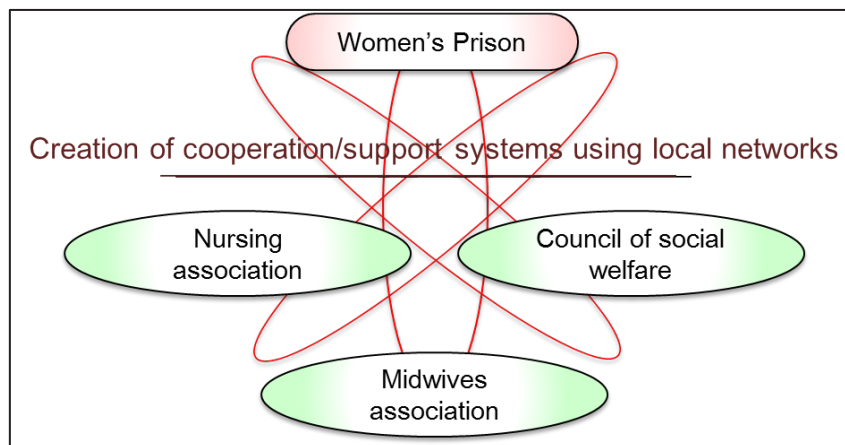
B. Capacity Building for Female Officers in the “Marguerite Action”

The following measures have been implemented in order to improve the working environment and capacity building for female officers participating in the “Marguerite action”:

- Preparation of a new recruitment plan to increase the number of female officers,
- Securing work-ready officers by promoting the re-employment of female officers who have resigned, and other mid-career workers,
- Improvement of training content for senior female officers,
- Offering more opportunities for promotion into administrative positions to female officers,
- Expansion of job categories for female officers, including placement in male prisons,
- Enhancing the opportunity to exchange opinions and information among officers in women prisons, and,
- Promoting public relations actively and improving the public image of female officers.

In addition to these measures, establishing flexible working hours taking into account the needs of female officers, offering more vacation time as well as reducing overtime, and establishing support systems for female officers with personal and professional concerns are essential.

C. The Community Support Model Project for Women's Prisons



The Community Support Model Project for women's prisons launched in 2014 at three women's prisons in Japan. This project enables young officers to receive support and advice from local experts such as nurses, midwives, caseworkers, job assistance workers and other counselors in regards to female inmates' health conditions, pregnancy matters, family matters and reintegration into society. This project is assisted by well-known private groups and experts on women's welfare and medical care.

Although the project aims to improve the treatment of female inmates according to their gender-specific needs, there are additional benefits, such as developing cooperative relations between prisons and local communities and improvement of the knowledge and treatment skills of young officers. By involving these private groups, female officers come to realize the importance of work in women's prisons. As a result, the project brings about a virtuous cycle to enhance the pride and job satisfaction of female officers. Since it will be difficult to increase the number of staff immediately, it is necessary to rely on the cooperation and support of private groups, such as welfare services, medical services, private companies, and volunteers.

Recently in Japan, the Prime Minister is strongly promoting active roles for women in society. In line with this policy, the Ministry of Justice has also commenced various measures to support female officers. In order to address the increase of female inmates, we have implemented various measures for the improvement of facilities and accommodations within women's prisons. In addition, in order to complement the disproportionate age composition of female officers, we have fostered the involvement of the private sector and the cooperative relationship between prisons and local experts.

Furthermore, from fiscal year 2015 to 2018, we are aiming to decrease the turnover rate of female officers by half and improve the working environments of women's prisons. This will enable female officers to work with responsibility and pride. In addition, we are planning to implement comprehensive measures such as deploying 200 female officers, taking practical measures to reduce the burden of female officers' work, and providing detailed support systems for young female officers.

V. CONCLUSION

The improvement of the working environments in women's prisons largely impacts the improvement of inmate treatment. Furthermore, improving women's prisons, which are the minority of Japan's prisons, will gradually impact the Japanese prison system as a whole. Japan's Correction Bureau is committed to continuing its efforts to improve the environment of women's prisons, to improve the treatment of female inmates and to improve the development of female correctional officers, through joint efforts by government, individual specialists and citizens.