

males comprised 0.5%. Therefore, more women workers now who continue to work enjoy longer leave period for childbearing.

A survey conducted in workplaces with more than 30 employees revealed other provisions offered to workers with family responsibilities as follows: 42% replied that their company had short work-hour provision; 10% replied that they had flexible work hours; 25% replied that they had varying work shifts; 31% replied that they had a provision to limit overtime work for workers with infants; 11% replied they had sickness leave for family care; 2% replied that they had use of an internal company child care center; and another 2% replied that they had child care allowance. Morita and Kaneko (1998) and Higuchi (1996) found that women who work at companies which provide child care leave have longer years of tenure.

What is puzzling is that despite the generous Child Care Leave Law, continuation of work by mothers with infants did not show a rise in 1990's as I have mentioned in the previous sections. According to the *Eleventh Japanese National Fertility Survey*, a little more than 6% of all childbirth after 1992 was cared through child care leave, and the figure was less than 8% for children born between 1995 to 1997. More mothers took advantage of the child care leave after the law took effect, but the portion of female workers who continued to work after childbirth stagnated. This could have been due to the deep recession in the 90's. Non-standard work which had increased most rapidly often did not give rights for child care leave. The *Eleventh Japanese National Fertility Survey* showed that women with higher education, higher salaries, and those working in the public sector were found to utilize the leave more often rather than returning directly to work after maternity leave. Opportunities for higher income, however, did not seem to give high impetus for continuation of work after childbirth (Nagase, 2000). Presence of grandmothers in households, wife's mothers' work history, family values, educational attainment and being publicly employed or not were evidently the factors that increased continuation of work after childbirth. Child care has changed in the past 20 years for women who continued to work. More relatives living in the same household helped in the 70's. Yet in the 90's, care from mothers, daycare services and child care leave were the main method for child care of working mothers.

Need for Change in Employment Practice

We have overviewed the changes in women's average educational attainment, women's attitude and inertia in labor participation following childbirth; a significant point, however, is that the changes occurred notably in the form of an increase of the population who stay childless, rather than those who continue to work while maintaining a family.

Government policies aimed at supporting work and family have not yet effectively increased the portion of women with family and career. The available options for many females, particularly those who want to maintain a career, are still likely to be either heavy work commitment without having children, or having children with a low-paying job. Consequently, along with an increase in child care facilities, changes in employment practices are also necessary. *Nikkeiren*, an employer's organization, pointed out the need for a special type of employment status with similar work conditions of standard workers but with more freedom in terms of work hours. In addition, *Rengo*, a labor union's organization, discussed the need for improving wages and conditions of part-time workers. Thus, there is an increasing recognition for the need for change among various labor organizations and other parties.