

HSIEH ChiaLing (TUFS)

Part-time Labor in Japan: Through the Eyes of a Taiwanese Woman

In the author's native country of Taiwan, work mainly takes the form of full-time jobs. The ratio of women who choose to stop working due to their domestic circumstances is always very high. Even if they opt to work, the social perception of "a good wife and a strong mother" still remains, and they cannot abandon their household chores. Ultimately, they have to fulfill both household chores and their jobs, and this presents a very great burden for married women. Therefore the fact remains that married women are forced to make this kind of choice between "all or nothing".

In Japan, since the emergence of the working format known as "housewife part-timers" in the 1960s, part-time labor has always been viewed with criticism. Certainly, part-time labor is subject to significant criticism, even though it is widely adopted in Japan's corporate sector. However, if the current problems can be solved, part-time labor is expected to present an effective working format for working married women.

Although women are said to be tied to the home, it could also be said that men, conversely, are tied to their work. Being able to choose one's own mode of working and lifestyle is surely something that would make men happy, as well as women. If there were other working formats as well as just full-time, it would be easier for those who seek employment to join the labor market. In that case, those who seek more time for home life than work could also work part-time, while the unemployment situation could be eased by increasing opportunities for work-sharing and other employment in periods of economic stability or recession. Therefore, the author adopts a position not so much of criticizing part-time labor but rather one of expectation and/or evaluation.

The main components of this presentation, Part-Time Labor in Japan – Through the Eyes of a Taiwanese Woman – are:

1. Introduction
2. Criticism of Japan's part-time labor
3. What is part-time labor?
4. The present status of part-time labor in Japan
5. Issues facing part-time labor in Japan
6. Conclusion: Reviewing the social importance of part-time labor