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The Social Norm and the Awareness of the Constraints of Rural Women in Japan

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Abstract

The custom of the division of roles according to gender has become firmly rooted in rural villages, and impedes the creation of a gender-equal society. In a study on this subject, the social norm of a rural society that affects women's social activities and their awareness of constraints were analyzed sociologically and psychologically.

1. Fact-finding interviews and a questionnaire survey concerning the social participation of rural women were conducted in X City in Akita Prefecture. The city has been actively promoting projects for gender equality in recent years.

2. Acts that impede the social activities of rural women include going out in conspicuous clothing and the receiving of an assignment to a post without regard to the social order, which results in accusations and calumnies. If rural women carry out these acts, sanctions are likely to be imposed on them: middle-aged and elderly women find it difficult to go out to pursue their own business, and young women are shunned by the neighbors.

3. As for the awareness of such constraints, there are differences between the generations. If rural women go out to attend meetings, the younger generation is likely to worry whether their parents-in-law would be displeased in terms of child rearing and nursing care, the middle generation would worry whether their husbands would be displeased in terms of farm work and household tasks, and the elderly generation would worry whether neighbors would be displeased about their going out.

Introduction

As for a reason not advanced by the woman's participation, the lack at the time spent in social participation of the woman of the full-time farm household etc. have been

given in the farm village.

In the background, the awareness that rural woman feels constraints of a system barrier, the prescriptive social norm by which the woman's social activity in the local society is prevented, and the woman exists.

It is necessary to clarify the realities that exist in the background of such a reason to promote participation in the decision of woman's policy in the farm village.

This research understands the realities of the prescriptive social norm to persist in the habitual practice and the custom that the rural society that is the barrier the achievement of the gender-equal society is attempted in the farm village possesses. And, how the barrier that prevents the rural woman's social participation is maintained is clarified.

Method

Akita Prefecture X City was selected to the case investigation ground based on the purpose of the research. And, the realities of the self-control of the content of the action that received social sanction and the woman of the prescriptive social norm that was the barrier the achievement of the gender-equal society was attempted in the rural area were understood. As a result, how the barrier that prevented the rural woman's social participation was continued and maintained were clarified.

The formation of the awareness that rural woman feels constraints and the distribution vote investigation concerning social participation were executed for two women (mother and daughter, about 300 people) in the house (164 households) where the report member in the Nokyo female part existed for that in November 2003. The distribution collection is done by the mailing custody. Table 1 shows the distribution collection situation.

Table 1 Distribution collection situation

The distribution number of houses	Number of distributions	Number of collections	Collection rate (%)
165	330	137	41.5

Findings and Implications

1. Criticism and action speaking ill and Social sanction at that time

Fig.1 is the one that the difference of the criticism and the action speaking ill according to the generation was seen.

The difference is seen between generations when seeing according to the generation. It is common to each generation and there a lot of answers when going out by the appearance that stands out more than the person.

On the other hand, a lot at attaching to the official position such as villages disregarding order in an aged generation of 65 years old or more with 25%. A lot at doing a gaiety of dress and a thick make-up and doing the labour for farming in a young generation of 49 years old or less with 21%.

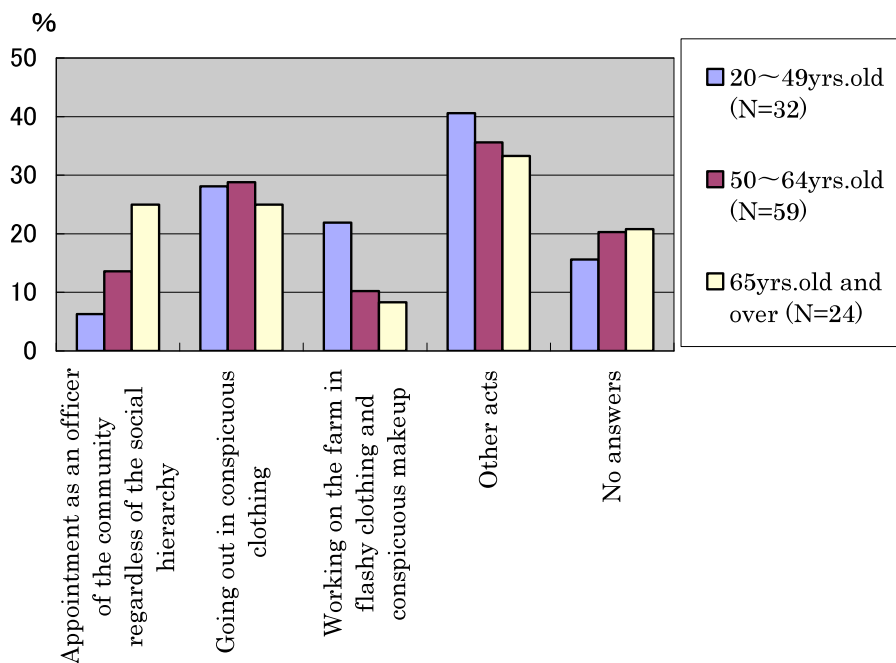


Fig.1 Acts that invited accusations or calumniation

The one that the social sanction received when such an action is taken was seen is Fig.2. Most with about 25% though it becomes difficult for going out for the generation of 50 years or more of me to go out if it sees according to the generation.

On the other hand, in the region each other, the companion often receives attention from the relative and the relative in the meeting etc. without easily who becomes a gap besides in a young generation of 49 years old or less.

The factor that the rural woman controls own behavior shows the gaiety of dress in this at the young generation and it is shown that there is a difference in an aged generation among assumption and generations to the official position to disregard order.

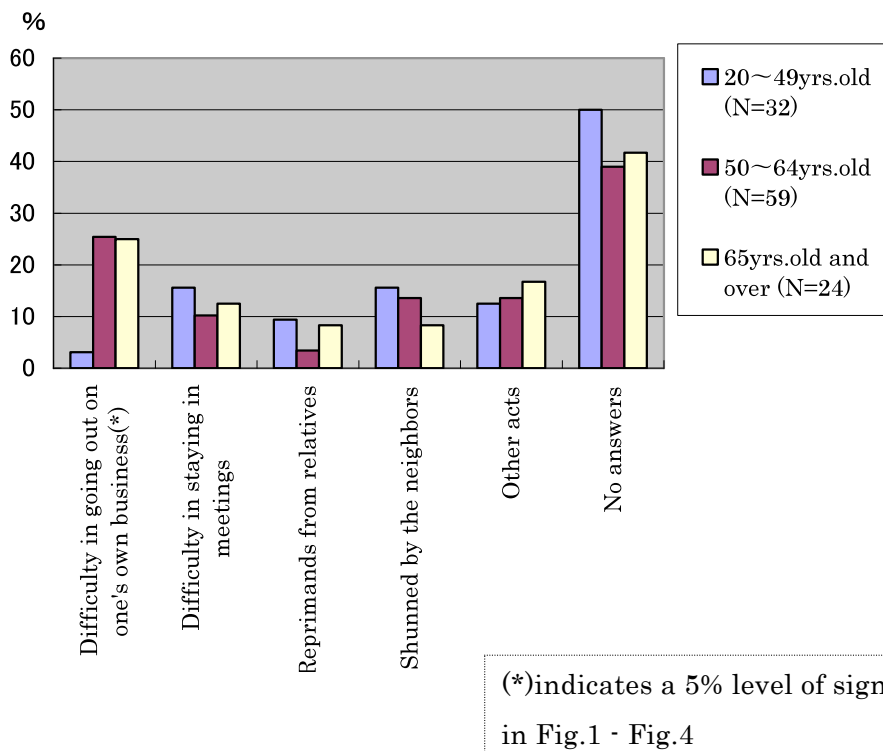


Fig.2 Sanctions against acts in the previous question

Moreover, if it is not easy to go out for the generation more than prime of life of me while the young generation receives immediate attention of the relative and the relative to the content of punishment, the situation in which self-control works more strongly is shown.

2. Other party who rural woman feels constraint to when going out and the content of that

Fig.3 is the one having seen about the other party who rural woman feels constraint to when meeting and training. There is the difference between the following generations when seeing according to the generation. The awareness of the constraints by the young generation of 49 years old or less to parents-in-law is as a lot of as that of father-in-law (19%) of mother-in-law (34%).

On the other hand, there are a little a lot of constraints to the husband in the generation of the prime of life of 50 to 64 years old with 37%. The aged generation's of 65 years old over feels constrains to neighbors is more than other generations with 21%.

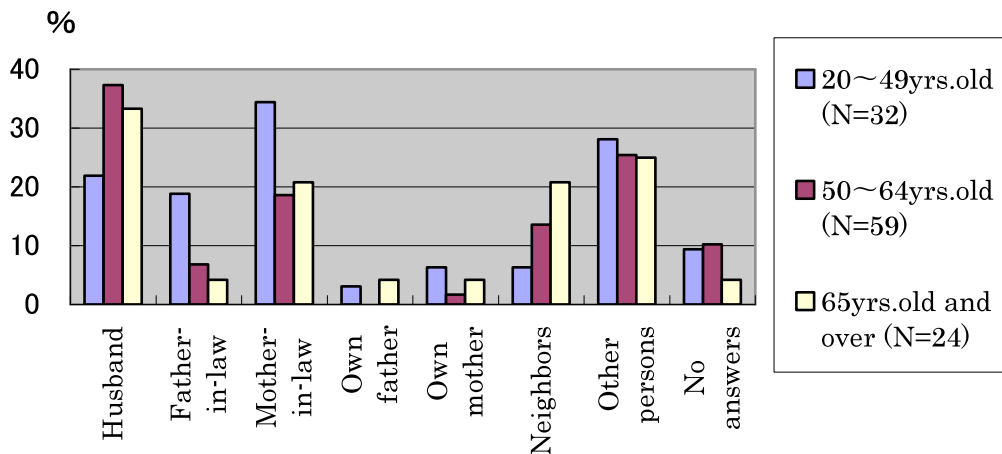


Fig.3 Persons made to feel constraints

Next, we see the reason for the awareness of constraints when going out. There are a lot of reasons of nursing of the child care and the senior citizen for a young generation of 49 years old or less with 22%. On the other hand, there are a lot of reasons why agriculture and the home life of the house become careless for the generation of prime of life from 50 to 64 years old (32%). It became a result that there were a lot of reasons that eyes in the vicinity were anxious in an aged generation of 65 years old or more (Figure is omitted).

3. Formations of the awareness that rural woman fell constraints

It is thought that the presence of the gender discrimination, 'the help of house is compelled only to the girl in the childhood', is related to the formation of the constraints.

Here, gender discrimination in home of childhood was seen as one of the formation factors that rural women feel constraints. Fig.4 is a difference concerning the gender discrimination received to the childhood according to the generation. "Especially, there was no distinction of the man and woman" has the majority in 49 years old or less (72%).

On the other hand, there are a lot of answers that there was gender discrimination such as "Help of housework etc. are (63%) disciplined only with the girl" and "(42%) that the lesson is different from the boy and the girl" in 65 years old or more. That is, "There was especially no gender discrimination" accounts for 70 percent in a young generation of 49 years old or less in the generation more than one's fifties while "Only

the girl of help of housework" was started, and the gender discrimination had been received to the childhood.

This shows that the gender discrimination of the childhood thought to be one of the formation factors of the awareness that rural woman feels constraints has decreased.

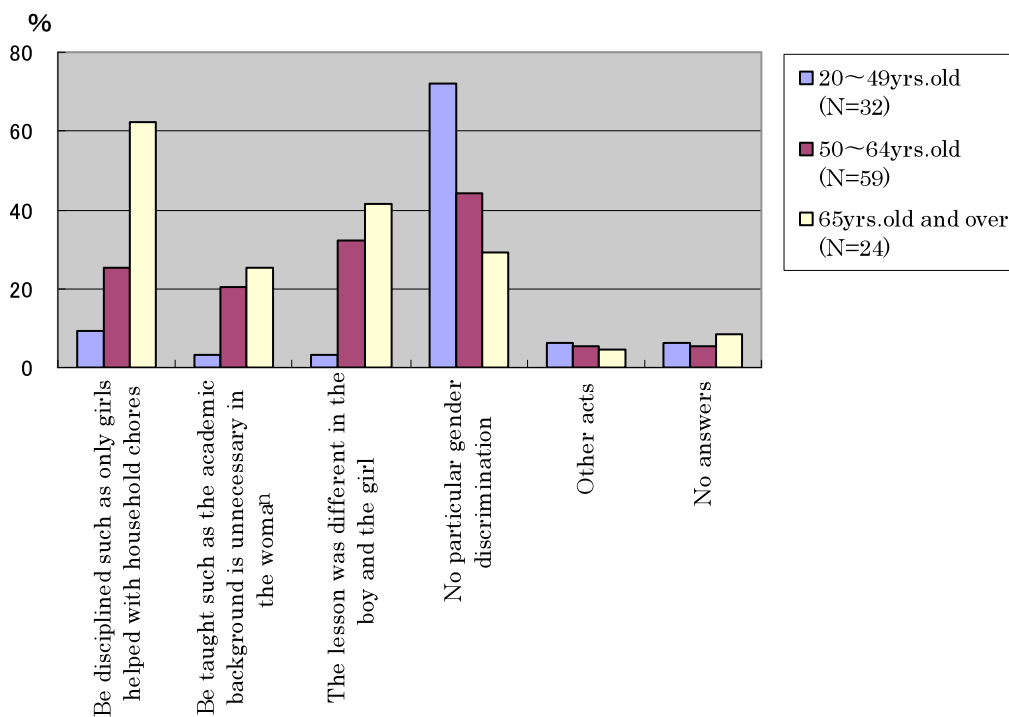


Fig.4 Gender discrimination in home of childhood

Conclusion

This paper saw the prescriptive social norm in the rural society by which a social activity of the rural woman in Japan was prevented based on the result of the questionnaire survey in Akita City X city to the rural woman and the realities of the awareness which rural woman feel constraints. As a result, it was clarified to restrict an own action by the woman's own awareness of her constraints in rural woman's each generation. It was especially clarified that there was still a prescriptive social norm "If working on the farm in flashy clothing and conspicuous makeup, the companion becomes a gap in the region each other" in the young generation in that. Moreover, the realities "When going out because the child's child care and the senior citizen's nursing were given, keep one's distance from parents-in-law" were clarified.

The young generation will be especially thought that of a child is taken care, it nurses in the house, and the cooperation between families concerning the role of which the

young generation is taking charge is indispensable now to advance the achievement of the man and woman cooperation participation society in the rural society in the future.

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