

2008 IRSA

Working Group 34- An Evaluation of the Roles of Women Farmers in East Asia-

3rd Session: Evaluation about Women Farmers and Women's Empowerment in East Asia

Background and the factors promoting Women's Empowerment in Japanese Rural Society

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Abstract

In this report, the objective is to highlight women's empowerment, social constriction and how they adjusted or solved their problems in Japanese rural society. I have made several suggestions on the background and factors promoting women's empowerment.

In Japan, since in late 1980s, studies on Japanese women in rural areas have become very popular. As an example, in 1994 the Japanese Association for Rural Studies set aside a session entitled "Agriculture and Women: The changes of labor and consciousness".

From the numerous past studies, now we realize that women in rural Japan had made full use of their capabilities. However, the background and factors promoting women's empowerment need to be clarified and put into perspective. It is important to study the social process and interaction between *Ie*, *Mura* and women in detail.

From some cases I researched, results showed that women who experienced social constraints still managed to gradually change their conservative social norms, obtained cooperation from their family members, or were eventually accepted by men and admitted into the community. People in rural society encourage the efforts women make to change themselves although some tasks do remain to be solved. The family members, especially the husband supports the women's efforts. In numerous instances, it seems new social environments do exist.

Finally I will present one problem which has arisen from aging in rural society.

1 The Purpose of this Report and Research Method

Review and Issues

In the research about Japanese rural women, Hideko Maruoka(1937) is a pioneer. At almost same the time Mieko Ema, a folklorist did a great study about large traditional Japanese families in Hida-Takayama area.

They had a common viewpoint that many of the social problems of rural women were in their daily life and their society. In the late 1950s Yasuko Mizoue, a philosopher researched rural women's voice in the Sanin area. Akiyoshi Takahashi, a rural sociologist, studied the changes

of the rural family and the social status of women in the post World War II era from caused by the development of capitalism in Japan.

These studies clarified the rural women's social problems and created an analytical framework that the social status and social role of rural women should be linked with their social norms or social customs that they belonged to. But after these beginnings, later studies on rural Japan didn't focus this framework. On the other hand Takahashi's framework to study the process of capitalism in rural Japanese society and the changes of rural society and agriculture has become the mainstream in Japanese rural studies. And there were few about women farmers.

Since the late 1980s, rural sociologists started to focus on women farmers as an object of study again. This was the theme of the 42nd session of the Japanese Rural Studies Association in 1994. Sonoko KUMAGAYA took a part as the chair and was a symbol of that tendency. The book edited by the session presents the level of studies of women farmers. Afterward, there were many studies, Tokuya KAWATE about the actual conditions and issues of the agreement of rural family management and the changes of rural family, Wasa FUJII focused on the role of regional leadership of women farmers, Tomoko ICHIDA focused on the agent promoting agricultural policies, Yukiko NAGANO studied a woman independent from Ie. Since the mid-1990s I have studied some issues, the relationship between the changes of the structure of farmer's household economy and the process of getting their own personal income and the meaning and effects of having one's own personal income to themselves and the family and community.

Through those studies we have been certainly recognizing the expansion of the field for women farmers displaying their abilities. But there are some unsolved questions; how such women farmers could extend these fields? And what are the background and factors relating to women farmers empowerment? In this report I received many suggestions from MARUOKA, EMA and MIZOUE and so I have researched about some cases of women farmers empowered through the participation in some organizations and social networks. I think the process of expanding their activities is the adjustment to many constraints which were caused by gaps between women farmer's social action and the former social norms of rural society.

I will present the social constriction and the way of adjustment or solving and I will try to show the background and factors promoting women's empowerment.

In this report I define empowerment as "the process that women with which have no social power and no right to participate in household management, are becoming the agents in changing the society, politics and economy through many activities."

2 The framework of this study

The definition of some words; Ie, Mura, Tense relationship

First I will definite these words, Ie, Mura and Tense relationship. I define Ie as a life management system which seeks the final goal to maintain the members' life necessities. I

think Ie is made up of many components, the eternity of Ie, ancestor rites, maintaining and managing the family's property, the management of the family business, the rights of the village, the right of the master of the household. And if one of these components is lacking, we can identify the family as Ie. I define Mura as an organized hamlet. I define social constriction as a social relationship involving many conflicts arising from the gap between social norms in the social group and social action of the members.

The social constriction against Ie is arises from the gap between the activities of women farmers and the social norms of Ie. For example, the significant others for women farmers are her husband, her father in law, mother in law and children. Sometimes these constrictions are generated by the significant others, and other constrictions are resolved by them.

The social constriction against Mura arises from the gap between activities of women farmers and the social norms of Mura. For example, these are community management, events and projects of community groups.

Two pairs of social Norms and the Hypothesis of this Report

At present in Japanese rural society there are two contrasting pairs of social norms and people in rural society choose these norms in each context.

The first norm has existed from before World War II to present and is widely deep-rooted. 1-(1) "men belongs to the public, women belongs to the private.(the private norm)" 1-(2)"men are the leaders, women are the assistants(the assistant norm)". 1-(1)" the private norm" and 1-(2)" the assistant norm" are related to the idea of the predominance of men over women. So they have suited the former Ie and Mura. And in households, these two norms plus 1-(3) "men work, women work and do housework.(the new division of labor)" , justify the reasons why women undertake all housework.

1-(1)" the private norm" and 1-(2)" the assistant norm" have been recognized to they essentially connect Ie and Mura, but it is not true logically. If the circumstances around Ie as the life management system and Mura as an organized hamlet change, each suitable social norm might change. For example it is evident that after rapid economic growth, women's activities have been increased gradually.

The second norms are 2-(1)"sexual equality (the sexual equality norm)"and 2-(2)"estimate by achievement principle or ability principle (the achievement principle norm)". These have spread all over Japan since World War II, people know well it but in our daily life, it has not penetrated fully. Because they are considered politically correct, it is impossible to deny the value of the sexual equality norm and the achievement principle openly. So when an actor chooses any social action eating up those norms the response depends on the context. Generally in only women's activities they might be accepted positively. On the other hand in men's and women's activities it might be refused or denied and they are in derision and mockery openly or behind them.

In the field applied 1-(1)" the private norm" and 1-(2)" the assistant norm" as far as women

farmers taking a role in the private area and not taking a role in the public area, there might not be any social constriction for them. But if the women farmers had internalized both 1-(1)/(2) and 2-(1)/(2) she might feel the gap and might experience serious conflict. On the other hand in the same field, when she chooses to participate in her household agricultural management and community management at an equal position as men, she will have a social constriction from the gap between 1-(1) "the private norm" and 1-(2) "the assistant norm" and 2-(1)/(2).

So if women farmers are in such a double bind situation where there are two pairs of contrastive social norms, how have they acted and how have they expanded their acting field? I think if the gap between social norms and social action is diminished, then the social constriction might be solved. As far as they have fear of the generation of social constriction because of the social norm gap, they might restrict their actions to something suitable to 1-(1)/(2). And they could not expand their acting field. But in fact, they could act in many fields, I think there must be some background and factors promoting women's activities and in the situation, they might have chosen action against 1-(1)/(2) and they might have continued and gradually changed the social norms and actions.

I think there are three types of relations of norm and action. One is the power of norm 1-(1)/(2) has decreased because for some reasons, the family members or community don't obey the norm. Second is the power of norm 2-(1)/(2) has increased because for some reasons the family members or community has come to support the norm. Third it seems that they obey norm 1-(1)/(2) on the surface, but in fact, they support norm 2-(1)/(2) through a steady accumulation of actions and that effect related to norm 2-(1)/(2).

A Summary of Cases and these Characteristics

Since 1997, I have been researching rural Japan for over 10 years. I have chosen some groups and networks that have been acting for several years, or in some cases, for over ten years and piled up actual results. And almost none of them have shrunk from the social constriction in Ie and Mura. Further, more they seem to only act in a few limited circumstances. I have done fieldwork with such women farmers and groups or networks many times for a few years. The objects of this research are leaders of women farmers and other members in the same group or network, husbands, and formal institutions of agriculture including city hall, or prefectural government. The research fields are located in western Japan OKYAYAMA, TOTTORI, and SIMANE pref. except one field Iki-island at which I have continued fieldwork since the mid 1980s. I think it is important to visit research fields many times and I decided to study fields that one not far from my residence, I live in TOTTORI pref. At first, I considered taking a case where they act in some small area mainly in their hamlet and the surrounding hamlets (the activity under their feet). But as on my research I discovered that two nation wide networks have been influencing many women farmers strongly, so I changed my research course and added those two networks.

In this report I use 11 cases and I summarize each case on table.1. They started to act since the mid 1980s, but especially from the 1990s, except case10. They are in the stream JA(Japan Agricultural Co-operatives) and agricultural improvements and promotion centers in the prefecture have generated a revival of the kitchen garden, develop new agricultural products, for sale. The attribution of member is follows, age is 40 and although their child raising has come to the end of the first stage, they have little time for women farmer's activities. They don't work regulate and full time in a non-agriculture job and they work at the house agriculture management. There are many effects of their activities. For example, they are gaining economic power by having their own personal income, becoming proud of agricultural and revitalization of their community.

Table.2 presents each characteristic based on table.1. The criteria are a degree of voluntary participation, activity norm, constriction from Ie and constriction from Mura. A degree of voluntary participation is judged whether participation to group or network is voluntary or automatic (compulsory). Activity norm means that they apply the standards of action in the activity. I identified which norm they apply through many narrative data in my fieldwork. I think that there are almost no relationship between the activities under their feet and the degree of voluntary participation.

The member of activities of which the degree of voluntary participation is high (cases 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, and 11) are not only hamlets but also whole cities all over Japan. So if she participates in the activity, she will make many more relationships drastically. The activity norm is almost 2-(1) the sexual equality norm and 2-(2) the achievement principle norm.

On the other hand I can find that activities of which the degree of voluntary participation are low are organized by existent social groups and they might participate with a unit of the hamlet. So at the beginning of the activity norm, they were 1-(1)" the private norm" and 1-(2)" the assistant norm". But during their activities the norm began changing to 2-(1) the sexual equality norm and 2-(2) the achievement principle norm.

Thus, of the beginning of on activity, the degree of voluntary participation is related to a difference of the social norm in many cases. But as they continue, activity norms might change gradually from 1-(1)" the private norm" and 1-(2)" the assistant norm" to 2-(1) the sexual equality norm and 2-(2) the achievement principle norm, and the degree of voluntary participation is not related to a difference of social norm. I will describe 3.

In cases 3, 6, and 8, the degree of voluntary participation seems low, but actually it is high. The reason is that they chose a common strategy when they recruit new members for the group. They recruit from all houses in the hamlet. They aim to impress that the activity is not done by limited members as to have the approval of Mura. I will describe 3.

At first the social constriction against Ie is usually high, but it becomes gradually low. However, there are some cases where the social constriction against Ie is low from the beginning. What is the mechanism to change the social constrictions? I will describe 3.

The social constriction against Mura, in one case, remained low from the becoming, and in

another case, decreased overtime. For example cases 9, 10, and 11 are activities beyond Mura. The people in their hamlet seldom hear the news of the activity and don't know about or are not concerned with the activity. So we could not see if in such cases, social constriction was generated.

In notes we could find that women farmer activities are related to some public organizations, farmers' cooperatives, municipalities and county. I will state 5 if they use these organizations effectively, this is one of the factors promoting women's activities.

3 Some constrictive Experiences of Women Farmers and their Responses to it Constriction against Ie and the Responses

Constriction against Ie is generated by a gap between the social norm applying Ie and women farmer action. Most constrictions that they experience at the beginning when they start on activity are caused from the gap among 1-(1) the private norm, and 1-(2) the assistant norm, 1-(3) the new division of labor and their action. At first, when she decides to participate, she has to ask to her husband, father in law and mother in law. There are many women in such situations. Generally it was common for them to act suitable to 1-(1)/ (2)/ (3). So except when they act with men they can't decide only their willing. In research I often heard that many women said they couldn't make a decision without asking their husbands.

In case 9 in spite of the fact that time were so short in the forum, there were few women who couldn't decide by themselves. Mrs. I .W, she is the leader of the network, says that if they would like to decide to distribute time in everyday life they have to express their opinions to their family, especially to their husband and they also have to manage the farm work and housework properly.

After the decision to participate with their husband's permission, the next problem was how to act against 1-(3) the new division of labor. A lot of women farmers don't want to change the norm. So they choose a way not changing the social norm and overcoming it by their own effort so as to avoid conflict with surrounding people. In many cases, first they talked about their activity to their family, they didn't ask for reconstruction of their family role structure. If it is very difficult for them to try to take two roles, one is conventional (farming, housework and mothering) and the other is new (activity). Before they would go out, they finished doing their ordinary housework. They didn't think that it was good that instead of them someone else would have to do their work. Except in case 6, all cases did so.

After starting activity, being busier but more satisfied to get appropriate economic awards, most family member changed their consciousness and attitudes gradually. The recognition and cooperation of her activity began to promote more and more. For example they tried to help her with the housework or to undertake instead of her. As the result, though women farmers didn't loudly protest their opinions, the family role structure began to be reorganized "naturally". Women farmers say that the cause of change is to present her efforts and results to her family and community.

In cases 1, 2, 3, 4, their activities are all concerned with morning market participation and management. So they are usually very busy from pre evening to night or from evening to midnight in preparation. At first, after they complete all their work, both farming and housework, they prepare for it. But after a while her husband, son and daughter-in-law undertake a part of her role or help her. There are various operations, for example gathering vegetables from the field, cleaning them, sorting them by size, packing, labeling, delivering, cooking and do the dishes.

In case 7 there are some members who are in their 30s and mothering is their main role. At first, it was a big problem how young mothers could participate in the activity. Because mothering is different to other housework, it is a continual task. At first, among members they helped each other, gradually most husbands and mother-in-laws helped

Thus at the beginning there is a constriction against Ie, in many cases the constriction gradually diminishes. As a result of women farmers and their family members changing the family role structure, 1-(1) the private norm, 1-(2) the assistant norm, 1-(3) the new division of labor have lost that power, have been modified a little, 2-(1) the sexual equality norm and 2-(2) the achievement principle norm have been applied. Because Women farmers know well how difficult it is to change social norms, they seldom choose strategies changing social norms by themselves.

A Constriction against Mura and the responses

Constriction against Mura is generated by the gap between social norm 1-(1) the private norm 1-(2) the assistant norm and women farmer action. From some cases we find that they have two choices to respond to social constriction.

One is that they try to hide the gap. They don't seek to directly change the applied social norm from 1-(1)/ (2) to 2-(1)/ (2) and they behave as if they obey 1-(1)/ (2). In case 6 Mrs. K .Y, the leader of the group says that she thinks if women only try to jump the gun they will fail. It is better to accumulate results and show them to men. Women are changing, men are changing and the community is changing. In N hamlet people have a division of labor where men work at non-farming, women work at farming and housework. So most women in N hamlet have had the initiative in house farming management and most men have taken an assistant role. The women processing group was established in the mid 1980s when N hamlet accepted the county project. From the beginning, the men were very cooperative and built the process yard for women by themselves. Through activities a sense of solidarity in group members become stronger and therefore it gave them satisfaction to live in N hamlet. And it gives them energy. There is no choice but for men to support women activities.

The second choice is to use male community leaders. Women have already built up a cooperative relationship with their husband within the family, so they ask their husbands and neighbors to do public relations work for many people in various situations. Especially the husband of female leader is usually a male leader in the community and he has a strong

influence in the community.

In case 5 women in rural society both farmers and non farmers have tried to revise their own eating habits and they have also reconsidered family relationships, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law family role structure, and community planning. Men have been influenced by wife and mother who acted and actually changed. And they began to help and support women activities. For example one of the male leaders said that members of HIMAWARI-KAI looked happy and he envied them, so the men to try something, too. This positive comment encouraged and supported women activity

Thus not only women but men work to change social norms to hamlet reduce 1-(1)/ (2) and diminished or shut out constriction against Mura.

4 Backgrounds of promoting Empowerment

A Creation of an Atmosphere fitting to the Social Norm 2

From all 11 cases we can find some social atmosphere which is suitable to 2-(1),(2) and promotes women farmer activities widely. Now it is becoming common for women farmers to participate in their own farm management, to work on production, processing and sales with social groups or networks. In interviews, I often have heard these phrases "proper", "natural", and "times have changed", "women abilities are being to estimated properly", "We don't have to struggle anymore.", "it is old-fashioned to be concern about gender".

One of the main factors generating such social atmosphere is local government policy, specifically approval of the Basic Law on Gender Equality, promoting agreement on family management since the 1990s. Case 11 is a typical sample. Mrs. I.W. is the leader of that forum and has served on agricultural the committee since 1999. She is the first female committee member in Masuda city in Shimane pref. In case 2 Mrs. K.N. and In case 3 Mrs.A.Y. are both female directors of farmer's cooperative.

The second factor is a historical result through the farmer's cooperative movement and farmer life improvement by municipality staff. Except in case 9, all case leaders and many members were empowered through such movements or activities. In each activity most women farmers got their own bankbook for the first time and they improved gradually. These facts are not so well-known but actually are a huge result.

The present atmosphere that expects and encourages women farmer activity is one of the social backgrounds promoting their activity. Women make the most of the many chances they can use working on projects, and agreeing on the family management tactically.

The 6th Industrialization of Agriculture and revaluation of women's Roles

The 6th industrialization of agriculture reevaluates women farmers' role and it is one of social backgrounds promoting their activity. The recognition that farmers do not only plant crops but also do many things has been spread and it increases farmer's motivation and activity dramatically. Now women farmer activity is various; production, processing and sales,

exchanges between rural-urban and making groups or networks for intimate relationships. So it is impossible to do without women in rural life. Men can't cover these services.

For a long time women farmers have done housework steadily but it was unpaid work and not evaluated properly. Recently, through other activities their housework is evaluated, high, and useful. It makes their confidence for them. Women farmer ability is very attractive for family income, community revitalization.

A Contribution to Continuance of Ie by Women Farmer

Ie is a life management system and it is an important matter for each member including women continuance of Ie. I found that social factors promoting women farmers' empowerment are changing the way of continuance of Ie. Figure 1 .presents change of income detail and change of social norm from pre-rapid economic growth to present in three periods. The first period is pre-rapid economic growth. At that time, Ie is a free labor system and the head of family directs other family members. The social norm 1-(1)/ (2) applied to that situation. But since rapid economic growth it has been modernizing agriculture and increasing the number of farmers with side jobs. The social norm changed from 1-(1)/ (2) to 2-(1)/ (2) .

The second period is rapid economic growth. There is a spreading of increasing farmers with a side job, as well as mechanization and modernization in farming. The household structure is becoming organized complex income of Ie and personal income of member. In a part of farm management it has remained that Ie is a free labor system and the head of family directs other family members. The social norm 1-(1)/ (2) applied to that situation. But in a part of non-farm jobs depend on each member's ability, so it applies to 2-(1)/ (2). And in more households, the ratio of income from non-farm jobs is increasing, therefore family power structure and role structure has been changing.

The third period is the activity that women farmers have gotten her personal income since the mid 1980s. In household economics, the ratio of income from non-farm job is increasing more and more.

Thus the whole society it has been changing radically surrounds agriculture and farmer. Each farmer tried to change the principle of house management and social norm to survive. As the result of those it is promoting background women farmer activity.

A Contribution to Continuance of Mura by Women Farmer

Mura is an organized hamlet. Former according to 1-(1) the private norm and 1-(2) the assistant norm it has been considered that men manage Mura and the management of community are men's roles. Men are leaders, women are assistants, planning, proposal and action are all done by men, and women obey men's directions.

But in underdeveloped, aging and mostly rural societies, a new situation has come, they can't disregard women in quantity. And we have already described the 6th Industrialization of Agriculture and reevaluation of women's Roles. Not only quantity, but also quality of women

farmers is evaluated highly, so Mura's interest and women's interest harmonize; most people think it is important for Mura revitalization that men and women collaborate together.

After all, women farmers activity is one of the ways of Continuance of Mura is, it is one of social backgrounds promoting women farmer activity.

5 Some Factors promoting of Women's Empowerment

Increasing of social resources of Women Farmer

Women farmers have increased their social resources and it makes it easier to respond to some problems of activity and it has influenced the family power structure and promotes her activity.

I define social resource as educational background, life experience, and economic power. In increasing social resources there are two circumstances. One is dependent on life course and the other is relative in comparing generation or gender.

Most women I interviewed were born post World War II and were educated under democratic and sexual equal society. Their educational background is the same as their husbands. In case of women born in pre war, the leader had graduated girl's high school; it was superior at that time. So in comparing with the husbands' high educational background, it has not influenced the family power structure.

For women there were some opportunities to gather life experience, such as; working at non-farming jobs, commitment to farming management, participation in women activity of farmers' cooperative. These opportunities might give them another world except the world constituted by between house and field. And they could have a relative perspective of farmer life and farmer management. They realize the double binding situation of gap among two different norms and discuss to solve that situation with their companion. Thus they realize themselves deeply and change their attitude to farming more subjectively.

It is important for women farmers to have economic power. As we found that the increasing of the member's income means not only a plus for management of Ie but also an enlargement of the member's power to manage Ie from Figure 1.

Thus women have much social recourse that makes family relationships change. First relationships of couples changes so that the wife has not obeyed one-sidedly and they respect each other. This decrease of social resource's difference makes couple construct equal or close to in equal relationship. There is reverse relation between father-in-law and mother-in-law and women, they regard that it is possible to have an equal relationship with them. In relationships among Mother and child and grandmother and grandchild, women farmers have a priority as lively workers and respectable mothers or grandmothers.

Empowerment through the activities of Women Farmers

The increasing of social resources makes it easier for women farmers to participate in activity and to continue. And more women's empowerment makes them promote. I think that

there are two types of empowerment. One is at an individual level, and the other is at a whole group member level. They help and stimulate each other. In 11 cases I found that women leading activity have distinguished talents as leaders. Those are high educational background, intelligence, humor, positive thinking and high responsibility. Those are attractive to many people and they follow her intently. They have changed their lives from applied only conservative norm 1-(1)/ (2) to added 2-(1)/ (2). As a result of the practice of responsible tasking they studied and learned how to consider, state her opinion, and cooperate with many people. And while growing up, they are changing social relationships among members. In many cases, I have heard that most women have become proud of their companion, in spite of the fact that the other members are the same.

First women have experienced to perform at a post for a few years at only women groups or so, they were becoming to be able to collect their thoughts and state opinions in public. After that, in the situation that is composed men and women they can speak without hesitation. They have confidence because they have been growing up and surrounding people have changed their view of them. I often have heard in research “the bigger position women farmer have given and performed the more she is empowered.” “People admit their inferiority to her”. In community or regional societies to make fellowships and act together makes women’s empowerment increasing.

Effective using of public agents and organizations

From Table 2. I found that most activities are related to some public agents and organizations. It varies on the relationship but there is a similarity among them; the prestige of it, funds, wisdom, technique, the place for activity, paperwork support system, and so on is important social resources for their activity. If they could use them effectively, the activity might be advanced smoothly. For example, when women start to act as in the phrase, “The staff in the center of agriculture improvement is encouraged,” they are a big influence to family and hamlet. And there is some fund for activity that really helps them. Advice by staff of public agents and organizations about activity helps them with accuracy.

Recently women farmers have recognized that they are becoming the targets of some policies, construction of gender equality society, agreement of family management, exchange projects rural and urban, and so on. Although I think we have to study the effect and result of them carefully, it is obvious for women farmers that such public agents and organizations are supportive if they need any help.

Mobilizing resources from other activities

From research I found that there is a mutual complementary relationship between activity under their feet and a nation wide network. In activity under their feet, they must get many suggestions, various networks beyond hamlet or region as well as universal problems about women farmer, agriculture, food, modern society, and so on. And they could confirm the

purpose of activity and the validity of it. In case 11 I heard that a member said at a meeting of the network in front of the members, "Have you ever experienced when you try to talk about serious or social topics among your neighbors or hamlet why do you choose such topic? It is unsuitable. In my community I have no friends to talk about social matters. So I present at the meeting of this network I always cheer and enjoy and confirm my validity of activity and thought".

Conversely nationwide networks must get many findings and realize about activity under their feet. In case 11, in general, while each member engages in her house farming, she belongs to some local group or network. Through daily life experience they realize problems and bring them to the network meetings or national conferences once every few years. So they have generated an ideal image and even actuality of women farmers that they would like to become, women they could consider by themselves and act.

What do Women Farmers realize about the society and their action?

They realize that if they would like to change society like they want to, it is necessary for them to recognize the frame of the existing society and change it. They are becoming aware of politics and sometimes help assembly members and there is a new wave that women farmers aim to become assembly members or committee members and try to change their social situation.

In case 2 and 3 each leader has become female director of farmer's cooperative. In case 9, the leader became the first female agricultural committee member in 1999 in Masuda city in Shimane Prefecture.

In case 8, in a national conference once every few years, there was a subcommittee for increasing female assembly members for female opinions of assembly. After that discussion some women farmers became candidates of city assemblies and a few won elections. Women farmer's consciousnesses of politics have been changing.

In this context I define politics as meaning not only election or assembly but also power politics that are established in agricultural groups or organizations. So, except for assembly member of municipalities or Congress, I come into view a director of farmer's cooperative and members of agricultural committee. The appeal for, "Let's start to get management positions in the organization. If we only complain, the situations will never change." It has sympathized with many women farmers.

6 Conclusion

I focused how women farmers could extend these fields. Women farmers have experienced social constriction in activity from gap between her action, 1-(1) the private norm, 1-(2) the assistant norm and 1-(3) the new division of labor. But they tried to overcome by pretending to obey those norms in surface but actually they continued acting based on 2-(1) the sexual equality norm and 2-(2) the achievement principle norm. As a result, their activity has

contributed to the continuance Ie and Mura, they succeeded to change social norm from 1 to 2.

From 11 cases we found some social backgrounds that are creating an atmosphere fitting to the social norm 2, change of agriculture and evaluation of women farmer, and the continuance Ie and Mura. And the factors promoting women's empowerment are increasing the social resources of women farmers, effective use of public agents and organizations, mobilizing resources from other activities, and changing attitudes in society. Thus these social backgrounds and factors have made women farmer expand their activity fields.

Finally, I describe some problems. One is if in farmer life, is sexual division of labor right or wrong. The second is how to construct systems to distribute labor payment in family farming, including agreement of family management. The third is how to make women farmers' activity successful in aging, rural societies. Now many women farmers groups or networks have a common problem that they don't have any successors.

Table 1. Outline of cases

	area	group name	starting period	activity content	member ascription	result
1	Whole Iki island, Nagasaki pref.	Noukyoufureai-ichi	1985 ~	farm and fi shing products,processed goods	40 ~ 70s females in farm cooperative	economic power' pride as a farmer
2	Ishida-chou, Nagasaki pref.	Isidafureai-ichi	1991 ~	farm and fi shing products,processed goods	40 ~ 70s females of farming and fi shing	economic power' pride as a farmer
3	Y-hamlet, Gounoura-cho, Nagasaki pref.	unmanned vegetable market	1985 ~	farm products	40 ~ 70s females of farming	economic power' pride as a farmer
4	Kayou-cho, Okayama pref.	T organic farming group	1992 ~	orgnic products	40 ~ 70s females of farming	economic power' pride as a farmer
5	Kamitake-area, Kayou-cho, Okayama pref.	K himawari group	1996 ~	food life improvement, holding events	30 ~ 80s rural women	enjoy life' community revitaliation
6	Nagatou-hamlet, Okutu-cho, Okayama pref.	N women processing group	mid 1980s ~	farm products,processed goods, exchange rural-urban	30 ~ 80s rural women	economic power community revitaliation
7	Miyou-hamlet, Kofu-cho, Tottori pref.	M women processing group	1996 ~	farm products,processed goods, exchange rural-urban	30 ~ 70s rural women	economic power, community revitaliation, self confi dence
8	O area, Kooge-cho, Tottori pref.	Mikado house	1996 ~	farm products,processed goods	40 ~ 80s rural women	economic power, self confi dence
9	Masuda-shi, Simane pref.	Masuda women farmer forum	1999-2000	conference, lecture,workshop	40 ~ 70s women farmer	shareing problem, self confi dence, making friends
10	All over Japan	Female ladder group	1969 ~	handing on reading notebook, conference	female readers of Nihon Nougyou Sinbun	shareing problem,making friends
11	All over Japan	Exciting heroine network in rural	1993 ~	conference, lecture,workshop	10s ~ 80s women farmer, consumer	making friends, considering food and agriculture

Notes: made based in fi eldwork

Table 2. Characteristics of cases

	area	Degree of voluntary participaiton	activity social norm	constriction against le	constriction against Mura	notes
1	Whole Iki island, Nagasaki pref.	high	2 - ①□□	high→low	low	activities of women farm cooperative
2	Ishida-cho, Nagasaki pref.	high	2 - ①□□	high→low	low→high□ low	independent→cityhall, Chamber of Commerce and Industry
3	Y-hamlet, Gounoura-cho, Nagasaki pref.	looks like low, but high	looks like, but 2	low	low	independent→□ -hamlet
4	Kayou-cho, Okayama pref.	high	2 - ①□□	high→low	high→low	started as county project
5	Kamitake-area, Kayou-cho, Okayama pref.	high	2 - ①□□	low	high→low	started as reconstruction of community female group
6	Nagatou-hamlet, Okutu-cho, Okayama pref.	looks like low, but high	looks like 1, but 2	low	low	started as county project
7	Miyu-hamlet, Koufucho, Tottori pref.	low	1□□	low→high□ low	low→high□ low	started as county project
8	O area, Kooge-cho, Tottori pref.	looks like low, but high	1, □	high→low	low→high	started as county project
9	Masuda-shi, Si mane pref.	high	2 - ①□□	high→low	low	started as county and cityhall project
10	All over Japan	high	1, □	high→low	low	Nihon Nogyou Shinbun
11	All over Japan	high	2 - ①□□	high→low	low (□ high□ low)	support by Ienohkari Association

Notes: made based in fieldwork

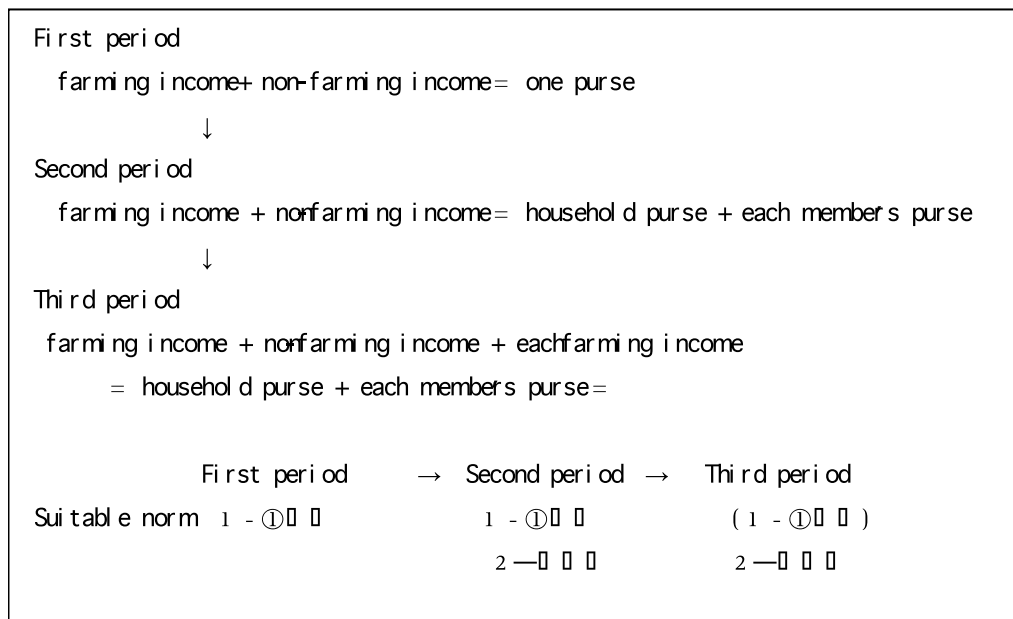


Figure1 . Detail of household and change of suitable norms

Notes: Made based in fieldwork.

Except for large full-time farmer management.

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