

ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN IN FISHING COMMUNITIES STARTING BUSINESSES IN JAPAN

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Izumi Seki was born in Tokyo, Japan. She received her undergraduate degree in Sociology from Tokai University, and Ph.D. in Social Engineering from Hokkaido University. Since 2009, Prof. Seki has worked in her current capacity at Tokai University's School of Marine Science and Technology in the Department of Maritime Civilization. Prof. Seki's interests extend to the lifestyle, culture and activities of people in fishery and fishing communities, and she has traveled widely to conduct research on such communities throughout Japan. Recently, Prof. Seki has been pursuing research on fishing community tourism as a new form of industry complementing regional fishery activity, and has further investigated how entrepreneurial activity is being pursued by women in fishing communities. In addition, Prof. Seki and collaborators have established a group supporting women's activities in fishing communities. This group holds workshops and symposiums targeting women in fishing communities, and provides useful information for women who wish to start a business.



ABSTRACT

Until the present, women in fishing communities in Japan have supported community life and the fisheries industry without a visible presence; however, in recent years, many women have actively started appearing on the stage, taking advantage of various crises and other opportunities occurring in fishery and fishing communities to make viable contributions. Here, I report on the issues and prospects related to their activities.

Since investigation in a formal capacity has not been extensively conducted, many points remain unclear points concerning the actual conditions/activities of businesses being started by women in fishing communities. However, according to a questionnaire-format survey conducted by the Tokyo Fisheries Promotion Foundation in 2010, it was confirmed that there were 364 counts of businesses being initiated by women in fishing communities throughout the country. The Japan Fisheries Cooperative Association (JFCA) is an organization that is specifically responsible for promoting such activities, and they have stated that 65.8% of these activities are related to women's groups within the JFCA. Of these, 15.2% are newly-created organizations, and among these, there are many examples of corporate entities including limited liability companies or joint stock corporations. According to the results of the survey, sales related to processing/manufacturing and processed goods exceeded 60% of total sales. This was followed by 22% of sales being related to that of fresh fish/live fish, after which 9.9% of total sales was related to cafeteria management, and 8.2% to lunch delivery/sales.

The primary purpose of such business activities conducted by women is to stabilize household income even a little, where the householder is often a fisherman with an unstable income; furthermore, there is often the goal of making women more economically independent. However, such women's activities are not for money alone. What motivates women to undertake such activities is to give other women in the community the opportunity to work in and contribute to the community, and to not waste the fish that their husbands and sons have caught from the ocean, often under life-threatening circumstances. These women truly want to help consumers to understand more about fish and our precious fisheries resources. In this way, we believe that these women's contributions are essential to maintaining a healthy demand for fishery products in this country.

Regarding the challenges faced by such women in starting businesses, there are many issues and obstacles faced, such as sluggish sales, lack of successors, and lack of information and public support. However, there are many positive cases which have served to highlight product development, sales expansion, and the incorporation of new talent into current areas and activities. Such endeavors have also been undertaken with much enthusiasm by younger women members of the fishing community in recent years. Such young women are highly proficient in gathering and disseminating information using the Internet and SNS, and this has greatly impacted women's activities thus far.

Women of Japan's fishing communities think very seriously about the future of their home areas and fishery industries, and engage in these activities with pleasure and satisfaction, knowing that what they do is highly worthwhile. In conclusion, businesses promoted by women in the fishing community are true opportunities to encourage women's independence in the real sense of the word.

KEYWORDS

Activities in starting businesses, Continuance of activities, Encouragement of women's independence, Quality of life, Women in fishing communities

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Tokyo Fisheries Promotion Foundation (2011). Survey report on national fishing community group activity: Actual situation, 1-8.

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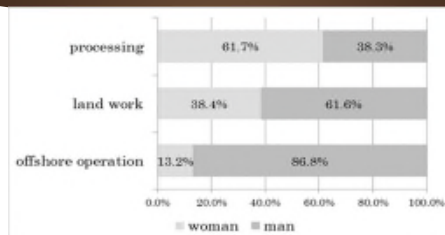
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ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN IN FISHING COMMUNITIES STARTING BUSINESSES IN JAPAN

- ▶ 1 Relationship between fisheries and women in Japan
- ▶ 2 Actual conditions of starting businesses by women in fishing communities in Japan
- ▶ 3 Purpose of starting business activities
- ▶ 4 Problems surrounding women's activities
- ▶ 5 Significance and perspectives of activities

Relationship between fisheries and women in Japan

The percentage of women engaged in work related to the fisheries industry in 2013



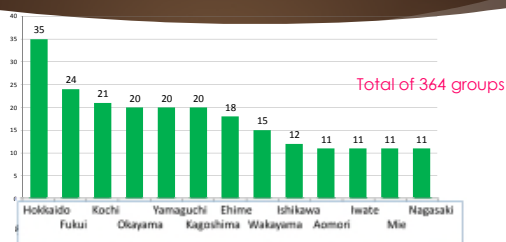
Fisheries Census 2013

Relationship between fisheries and women in Japan



Actual conditions of starting businesses

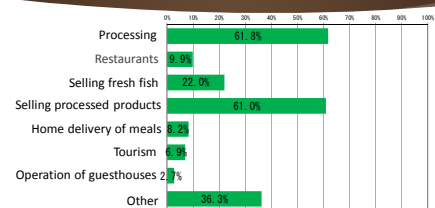
Prefectures with many women's business groups



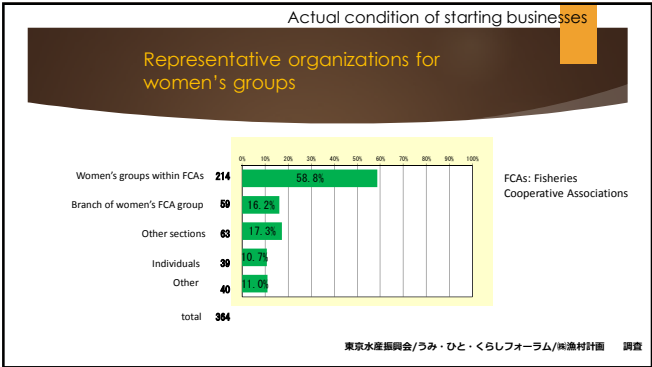
東京水産振興会/うみ・ひと・くらしフォーラム/県漁村計画 調査 2010年

Actual conditions of starting businesses

Activity content



東京水産振興会/うみ・ひと・くらしフォーラム/県漁村計画 調査



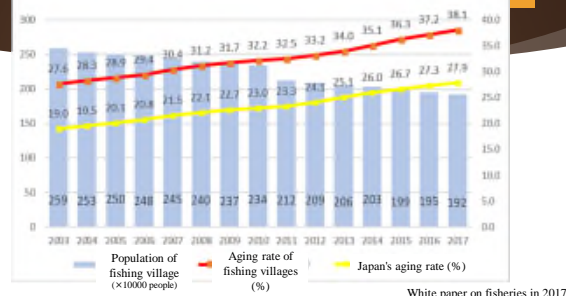
PROBLEMS SURROUNDING WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

Problems surrounding women's activities

- ▶ Lack of information: for example, regarding financial support projects
- ▶ Human relations: area-related human relations; family-related cooperation
- ▶ Advanced age of women engaging in activities
- ▶ It is sometimes difficult for women to express their opinions in public

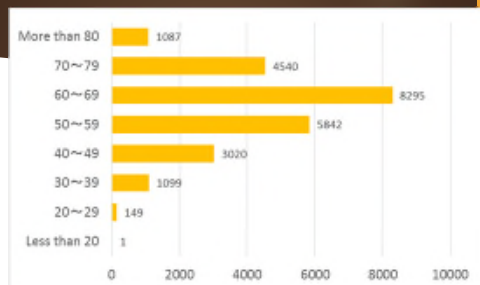
PROBLEMS SURROUNDING WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

Changes in population and aging rate of fishing communities



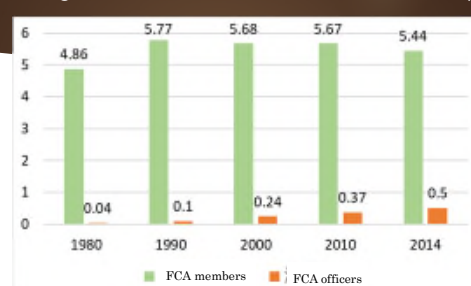
PROBLEMS SURROUNDING WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

Age group composition of women's groups in FCAs in 2017



PROBLEMS SURROUNDING WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

Percentage of women as FCA members and officers (%)



SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSPECTIVE OF ACTIVITIES

Many women have chosen fisheries as their occupation



Photo provided by Momoko Maeda

SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSPECTIVE OF ACTIVITIES

Young women find personal fulfillment in starting a business

Saori Masuda is married to a prawn farmer, and is committed to expanding sales channels. She has also received prizes at the national/ministerial level (for example, 2018 Prize of the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for Outstanding Women Entrepreneurs).

Currently in collaboration with neighboring vendors, she is responsible for the sale of more than 300 items produced by over 100 vendors.



CREATION WEB PLANNING Corporation
Representative Director Saori Masuda

Honda Smile Mission HP

<https://www.tfm.co.jp/smile/reports/kumamoto/20180410/>

SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSPECTIVE OF ACTIVITIES

Young people migrate to new areas and start their own businesses

Establishment of "TOBISHIMA" (a limited liability company) by young people (returnees: "U-turn" and newcomers: "I-turn")

- Listening to stories of the island (seeing how people actually live, observing the local culture)
- Making processed goods (learning island traditions)
- Management of cafes and restaurants
- Promoting tourism: "Island Experience Tour"
- Helping to promote successors for fisheries endeavors, and hospitality-related businesses

Thank you for your attention