

**Human Resources Development  
in Local Public Service in Japan**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Millions of public personnel are working for local public entities throughout Japan to provide wide-ranged public services for residents. In order to ensure stable and efficient provision of these services, which are so vital to people's quality of life and socio-economic development of each community, much attention should be paid to constantly maintaining and improving of administrative abilities and skills of local public officials, because it is them who should detect what are most urgent needs of residents and the community and respond directly to such needs.

Also, human resources development in local public service is one of the most important agenda for promoting administrative reform, which has been actively pursued by both the national and local government since early 1970's as the Japanese economy growth slowed down. While local government has been facing more and more diversified and complex administrative needs as such rapid and massive social and economic changes have been going on as globalization of economic activities, advancement of computer and telecommunication technology and aging

population, the number of local public officials has hardly increased. Under such circumstances, it is imperative to realize the idea of 'maximum services at minimum cost' by improving the abilities and skills of local public officials through effective human resources development programs.

This paper presents general situations and recent trends of human resources in local public service in Japan, and the basic framework and current major challenges for their development.

## I. AN OUTLINE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN JAPAN

### 1-1 Basic Structure of local Government

In general, three levels of government constitute the Japanese government system. They are the national government, prefectures and municipalities. The latter two are called ordinary local public entities, which form the two-tier local government system.

The territory of Japan is divided into areas of 47 prefectures, which are regional level governmental units, and then subdivided into areas of municipalities, which constitute grass root level governmental units. Municipalities (about 3,200 in total) are classified into cities, towns and villages, according to the degree of urbanization.

Japan is a unitary state. Therefore, unlike states in a federal state, prefectures in Japan are by no means sovereign. However, prefectures are not part of the national government either, while in unitary states regional level administrative units are often local agencies of the central government.

Japanese local governments, both prefectures and municipalities, are established on 'the principles of local autonomy' as stated in the Article 92 of the Constitution. Both prefectural governors and municipal mayors are directly elected by residents. Also, each local government has its assembly, the members of which are elected by popular vote. Local public

entities have the right to manage their property, affairs, and administration and to enact their own regulations within law (Article 94 of the Constitution).

In this sense, local public entities in Japan are often described as 'local autonomous bodies'. But, as they are not sovereign, they are also subject to national regulations and direction in accordance with national law to the extent such national intervention does not violate the principles of local autonomy.

#### 1-2 Broad Scope of Administrative Responsibilities of Local Government

Reflecting this nature of self-government, Japanese local public entities handle a broad scope of public services. Figure 1 illustrates division of responsibilities between the national government, prefectures and municipalities (It should be noted that administrative affairs listed in this figure are not exhaustive and that two or more levels of government cooperate with each other in providing vital public services or undertaking important projects).

As shown in this figure, public services closely related to people's daily life are provided by the hand of local governments.

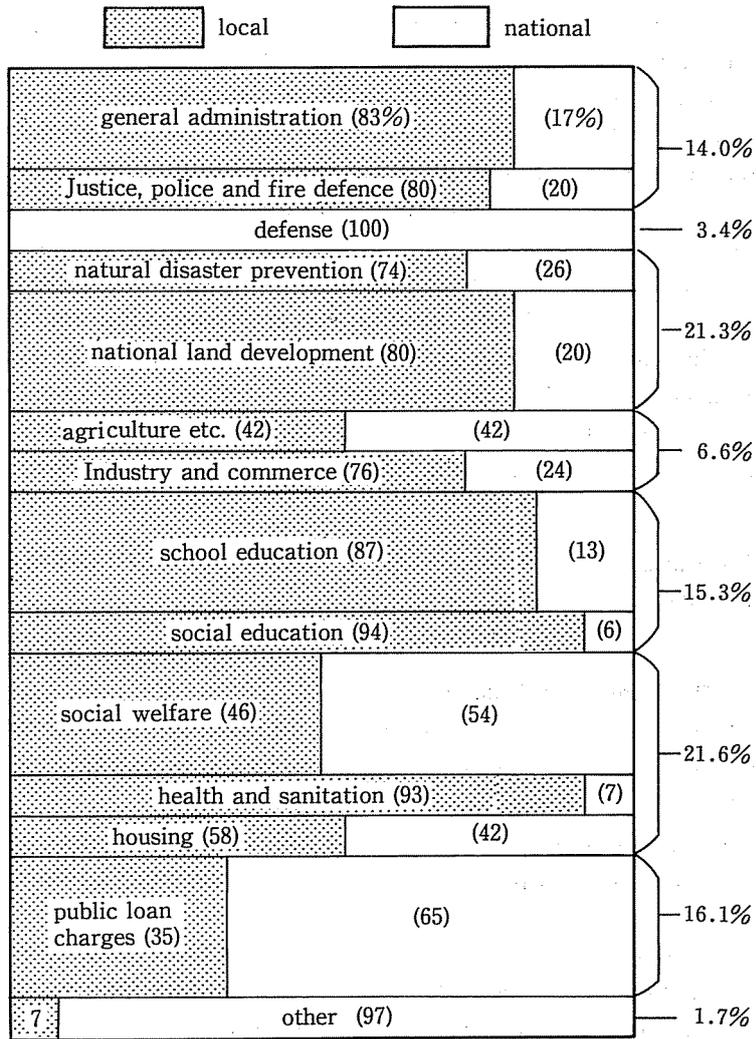
Municipalities, which are the closest governments to community residents, are called 'basic local public entities' in the Local Autonomy Law (the fundamental law concerning local government system) and provide various public services which form the basis of community life. They keep the record on family status and residential address of residents, operate compulsory education (elementary schools and junior high schools), water supply and sewage systems, and provide for fire defense services and social programs such as social aid, child welfare and welfare for the elderly.

Prefectures are regional level governments which cover a wider area encompassing many municipalities and provide services which require

**Figure 1 Division of Administrative Affairs Between the National and Local Governments (example)**

Field	Security	Social Infrastructure	Education	Welfare and Sanitation	Industry and Economy	
National	Diplomacy Defence Justice Penalties	Highway National road (designated sections) First class river	Universities Assistance for private schools (universities)	Social insurance Medical licenses Pharmaceutical license	Currency Customs • international trade Communications • postal Services Economic policy State-owned forests	
	Local	Prefectures	Police	National road (other sections) Prefectural road First class river (designated sections) Second class river Ports Public housing Determination of city planning	High schools • Special education schools Salary and personnel affairs for elementary and junior high school teachers and employees Assistance for private schools (Kindergarten to high school)	Public assistance (Towns and villages) Childrens' welfare Senior citizens' health and social welfare Public health centers
Municipalities			Fire defense Family registration Residential registers	City planning project Municipal road Mutatis mutandis rivers (as designates by the River Law) Ports Public Housing Sewage	Elementary schools • Junior high schools Kindergarten	Public assistance (Cities) Senior citizens' health and social welfare Childrens' welfare National health insurance Water Garbage and sewage disposal Public health centers

Figure 2 Ratio of Expenditures of Local and National Government (FY 1992)



administrative responsibilities beyond municipal boundaries. They are also responsible for setting educational standards, the operation of police services, and the administration of various tests and licences which require uniform nationwide or regional standards.

Because local public entities in Japan assume such wide-ranged administrative responsibilities, their total expenditures are much larger than national government expenditure. In 1993, the net total expenditure by local government was about 92 trillion yen, almost twice as large as the net total of national government expenditure (48 trillion yen).

Figure 2 shows the ratio of national and local government expenditure in various fields of public services. It is graphically illustrated by this figure that, apart from such services exclusively rendered by the national government as defense, local governments are taking care of a significant part of public services directly related to the people's life such as health, social welfare, education, roads, urban planning, police and fire defense.

## II. OUTLINE OF LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE PERSONNEL IN JAPAN

### 2-1 The Number of Public Personnel

The total number of public officials of national and local governments in Japan (full-time and permanent positions) was about 4.4 million in 1994.

Out of this total, three quarters (3.3 million) are local public personnel, working for local public entities, while the remaining 1,164, 000 are national government officials.

Accordingly, the number of local personnel is three times as large as that of national personnel. This also reflects the fact that, as already explained, local governments in Japan are responsible for a very wide area of administration and provide most of the public services related to

**Table 1. Number of National Public Personnel**

(March 31, 1995)

- non industrial	534,404(45.9%)
- industrial (postal service, printing, national forest, etc.)	324,808(27.9%)
- Japan self-defense force	273,801(23.5%)
- Ministers, parliamentary vice-ministers, etc.	143(0.0%)
- National Diet officials	4,066(0.0%)
- judiciary	24,768(2.1%)
- Board of Audit	1,246(0.0%)
- National Personnel Authority	713(0.0%)
total	1,163,949(100.0%)

**Table 2. Number of Local Public Personnel**

(April 1, 1994)

- Prefectures	1,734,665(52.7%)
- municipalities*	1,547,827(47.3%)
- designated cities	251,244(7.7%)
- cities	724,382(22.1%)
- towns and villages	374,044(11.4%)
- special wards	81,210(2.5%)
- cooperatives of local public entities	116,947(3.6%)
total	3,282,492(100.0%)

\* includes 23 special wards of Tokyo and cooperatives of local public entities.

**Table 3. Classification of Local Public Personnel**

(April 1, 1994)

	Total	Prefectures	Municipalities*
general administration	699,878 (21.3)	235,396 (13.7)	464,482 (30.0)
social welfare	474,636 (14.4)	88,852 ( 5.1)	385,784 (24.9)
education	1,281,001 (39.1)	1,031,899 (59.4)	249,102 (16.1)
police	253,994 ( 7.7)	253,994 (14.6)	—
fire defense	145,535 ( 4.4)	18,325 ( 1.1) **	127,210 ( 8.2)
public enterprises	427,448 (13.1)	106,199 ( 6.1)	321,249 (20.8)
total	3,282,492 (100)	1,734,665 (100)	1,547,827 (100)

\* includes 23 special wards of Tokyo and cooperatives of local public entities.

\*\* In Tokyo, fire defense in the area of special wards is administered by Tokyo Metropolis (prefecture) through Tokyo Metropolitan Fire Defense Department.

people's life.

As shown Table 1, 46% of the national public personnel are non-industrial officials, 28% are working for national enterprises such as postal services and printing and 24% are Self-Defense officials.

Among 3.3 million local public officials, 52.7% are prefectural officials working for a total of 47 prefectures, and 47.3% are municipal officials of a total of 3,200 cities, towns and villages (Table 2).

Nearly 60% of prefectural officials are educational personnel, as prefectures appoint and pay the salary of teachers and other educational officials of not only prefectural schools (mostly senior high schools) but also municipal elementary and junior high schools, which constitute compulsory education institutions.

The second largest category of prefectural officials are police officers (In Japan, prefectures are responsible for providing police services), which account for about 15%, followed by general administration person-

nel (13.7%).

On the other hand, in municipalities, 30% of their personnel are engaged in general administration. Therefore, in the field of general administration, municipal officials are twice as many as prefectural officials.

One quarter of the total municipal officials are those related to the provision of various social welfare services, which is one of the most important responsibilities of grass-root level government. Other major municipal services include fire defense and operation of public enterprises (such as water supply, sewerage and public transportation), which involve 8% and 21% of the municipal personnel respectively.

## 2-2 The Change of the Number of Public Personnel

The basic idea for administrative reform is to establish a more simplified and efficient administrative system, which will be able to respond accurately and flexibly to the changes in socio-economic conditions and administrative needs, while ensuring the consistency and comprehensiveness through various fields of public administration.

The outbreak of the oil shock in 1973 shook the Japanese economy and society drastically, leading to a slow economic growth and huge financial deficits in late 1970's. Under such circumstances, the Japanese government established in March, 1981, a consultative commission for a thorough review of the Japanese administrative system, which had overly expanded its scale and scope during the high growth era of 1960's and early 1970's.

Since then, the Japanese government has actively and steadily enforced wide-ranged administrative reform plans, including privatization of three major government enterprises (Japan Railway, Nippon Telephone and Telegram and Japan Tobacco), reform of administrative organizations, the reduction of the number of national public personnel, preparation of the Administrative Procedure Law, and reform of public pension

system.

As a part of these administrative reform measures, the number of public service officials has been strictly controlled.

In the last ten years, while the total number of workers in Japan has increased by 12.5% from 57 million (1983) to 65 million (1993), the increase rate of the number of public personnel during this period is no higher than 0.2% from 4,430,000 to 4,437,000. As a result, the ratio of public officials to the total workforce has continually dropped from 7.7% to 6.9% in the decade (Figure 3).

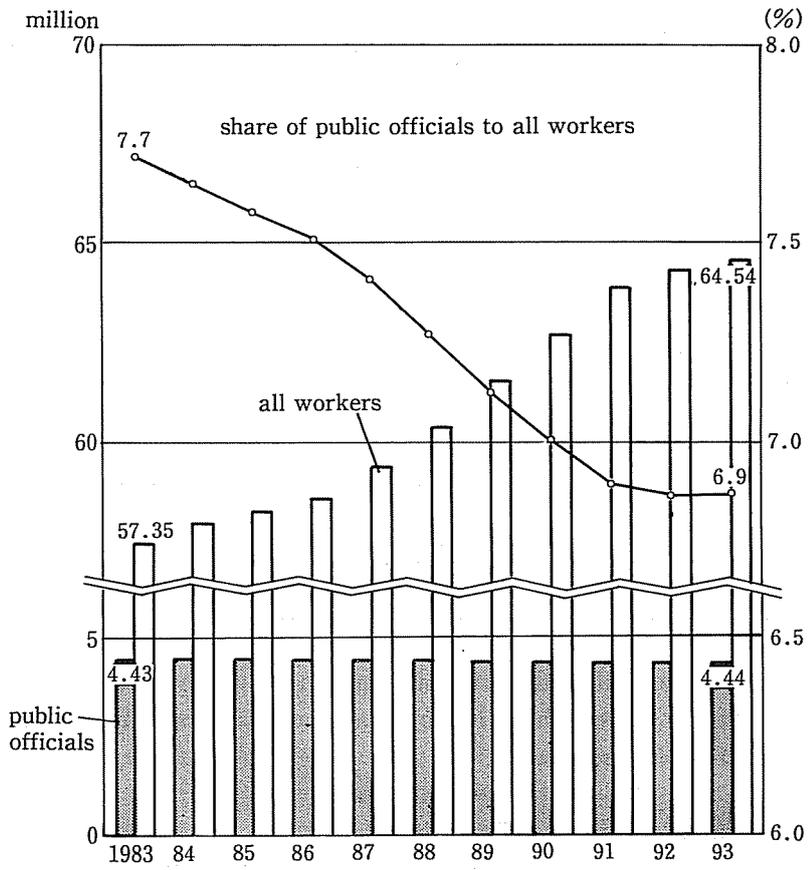
The number of the national public personnel has decreased by 2.7% from 1,198,000 in 1983 to 1,166,000 under strict control. The number of the local public personnel, on the other hand, has seen a slight increase of 1.2% from 3,232,000 to 3,271,000 in the same period.

Table 4 follows the changes in the number of local public personnel. The total number of local public officials including both prefectural and municipal officials decreased for five consecutive years between 1984 and 1988, then has turned to a slight increase since 1989.

Although prefectural officials have been decreasing again in number since 1992, the number of municipal officials is still growing and its increase rate has been over 1% since 1991. The recent increases in municipal officials are attributed to several factors. In 1989, laws concerning welfare services for the elderly were amended so that municipalities should take more responsibilities in that field, and each municipality has formulated and been actively promoting its comprehensive plan for promoting health and welfare of the elderly. Based on these plans, municipalities have increased the number of social welfare personnel. Also, in accordance with fiscal policies to stimulate the slow economy after the burst of "bubbles", local governments have been expanding their public works expenditures, which have necessitated more officials engaging in public works.

It is stressed, however, that local governments should pay much

Figure 3 Changes of the Number of Workers and Public Officials



**Table 4. Changes of the Number of Local Public Personnel**

year	all local governments		prefectures		municipalities	
	number	increase rate	number	increase rate	number	increase rate
		%		%		%
1974	2,857,336	—	1,558,893	—	1,298,443	—
1980	3,167,744	1.6	1,705,587	1.5	1,462,157	1.7
1981	3,205,718	1.2	1,725,090	1.1	1,480,628	1.3
1982	3,224,815	0.6	1,737,629	0.7	1,487,186	0.4
1983	3,231,650	0.2	1,743,024	0.3	1,488,626	0.1
1984	3,230,740	△ 0.0	1,743,236	0.0	1,487,504	△ 0.1
1985	3,222,019	△ 0.3	1,744,633	0.1	1,477,386	△ 0.7
1986	3,217,016	△ 0.2	1,743,600	△ 0.1	1,473,416	△ 0.3
1987	3,216,930	△ 0.0	1,744,787	0.1	1,472,143	△ 0.1
1988	3,215,470	△ 0.0	1,741,975	△ 0.2	1,473,495	0.1
1989	3,218,752	0.1	1,741,179	△ 0.0	1,477,573	0.3
1990	3,228,318	0.3	1,741,447	0.0	1,486,871	0.6
1991	3,241,911	0.4	1,744,376	0.2	1,497,535	0.7
1992	3,254,291	0.4	1,742,121	△ 0.1	1,512,170	1.0
1993	3,270,799	0.5	1,739,214	△ 0.2	1,531,585	1.3
1994	3,282,492	0.4	1,734,665	△ 0.3	1,547,827	1.1

attention to controlling the total number of their personnel by making every effort to improve the efficiency of administrative operation and the abilities of their personnel.

### 2-3 Trends in Personnel Expenditure

Personnel expenditure accounts for a considerable part of the total expenditure by local governments. In 1993, its share amounted to 29.3% in prefectures and 20.4% in municipalities. Since 1985, however, when these figures stood at 36.7% and 23.8% respectively, the share of personnel expenditure has been gradually and steadily reduced, which means that the rise of personnel cost has been kept lower than the expansion of total expenditures of local government in this period. (Figure 4)

It is necessary, though, to keep an eye on the increase of number of officials and the rise in personnel cost because recent years have seen a growing share of the general revenue (local tax and other revenues which local public entities can decide by themselves on how to use) allocated for personnel expenditure, which may lead to less flexible financial management.

### III. GUARANTEE OF STATUS OF LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE OFFICIALS

#### 3-1 Local Public Personnel as Servants of the Entire Community

The Constitution of Japan provides in Article 15 that all public officials are servants of the entire community and not any group thereof. This provision manifests a principle that the government employees have in essence a fundamental character as servants of all the people.

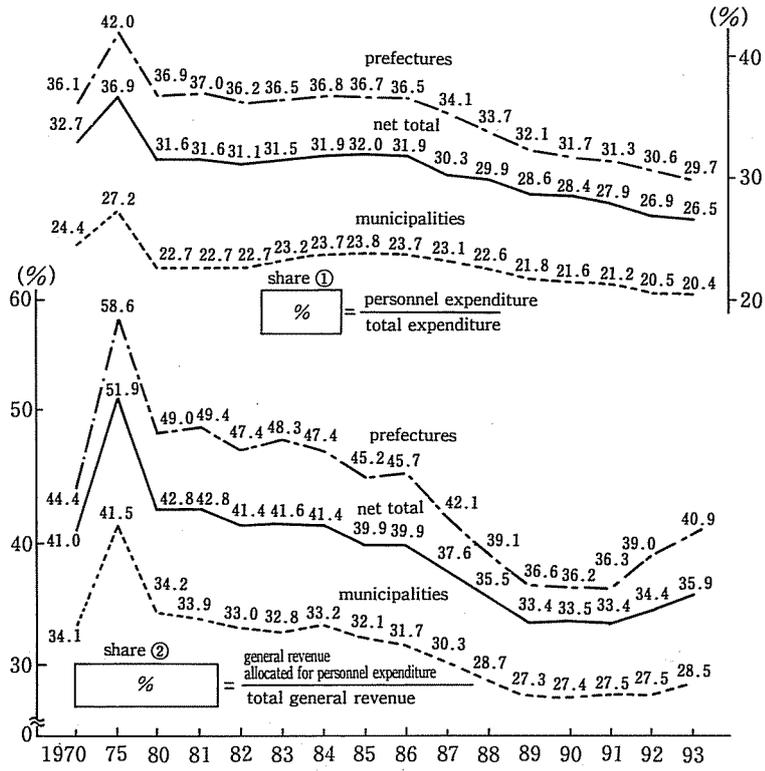
Because of this status, their basic rights as workers as well as their political activities are restricted by national statutes.

For example, all public personnel are prohibited to go on strike, slowdown and other acts of disputes because such acts may cause great damage to life or well-being of the people. Police and fire service personnel are prohibited from organising and collective bargaining; other personnel retain this rights, but cannot conclude collective agreements.

These restrictions are based on the principle that government employees are public servants of the whole community, and such restrictions are in the interest of public welfare.

In compensation for these restrictions, however, status and working conditions of local public personnel are securely guaranteed by measures based on the provisions of the Local Public Service Law, so that they can devote themselves to public service without feeling insecure about their quality of life. Such measures are imperative in order to secure integrity

Figure 4 Share of Personnel Expenditure to the Total Expenditure



and morale in public service and maintain high quality human resources.

Following are major measures to guarantee status and working conditions of local public personnel.

\* It should be noted that, although the Local Public Service Law apply to by far the most of local public personnel, local officials of certain types are excluded from its application. Those local officials to whom the Law does not apply are classified as "special public service", which include governors, mayors and assembly members, who are directly elected, vice-governors, vice-mayors, chief-accountants, treasurers and members of administrative committees, who are appointed by the chief executive with the consent of the assembly, and temporary or part-time advisors and researchers. Unlike regular public service personnel, they are not appointed on the basis of the merit system nor on a life-long basis.

### **3-2 Appointment and Promotion Based on the Merit System**

Appointment and promotion of personnel must be made on the basis of competitive examination, merits in performance of duty, or other demonstrations of ability. This means that the merit system is one of the basic principles for appointments, so that maximum efficiency of local public service may be achieved. The merit system is the opposite to the spoils system, under which privileged persons can occupy the posts in civil service regardless of their ability and fairness and stability of public administration are damaged more often than not. Therefore, establishment of the merit system is considered as one of the essential requirements for a modern public service personnel system.

In addition, equality of opportunities for entering into civil service is also established in the Local Public Personnel Law, and discrimination based on race, sex, religion and social status is prohibited.

### **3-3 Lifetime Employment and Guarantee of Status**

Generally speaking, most local government officials are employed on the basis of life-time employment. Therefore, they usually continue to work in the same local government until they reach a retirement age, which is determined by bylaw of each local government (usually 60 years of age).

They may be dismissed against their will in some cases before they reach a retirement age from a viewpoint of securing efficiency in the civil service or maintaining the moral and integrity of personnel.

Such dismissals are possible, however, only when there is a reason which falls under any of the conditions specified by the Local Public Personnel Law, for examples, when the official's performance of duty is unsatisfactory or when he or she commits a misconduct which disgraces his/her status as a servant of the entire community.

In other words, status of local public personnel is protected by the Law from political or other external pressures, which might affect their fair and impartial performance if personnel management were unstable and vulnerable to such forces.

### **3-4 Guarantee of Working Conditions**

Although public personnel assume a special status as servants of the whole community and their rights as workers are restricted to some inevitable extent, they are also workers whose economic lives depend on salaries and other compensation. It is necessary and important, therefore, to guarantee their working conditions by other measures than a negotiation between employers and employees, which is a major setting process of working conditions of private employees, so that public officials can devote themselves to their duties without worrying about their livelihood and local governments can attract a high quality human resources.

Firstly, the Local Public Service Law requests local governments to take appropriate measures so that compensation, working hours, and

other working conditions of personnel may be suitable to the general and social environment. According to the Law, such factors should be taken into consideration in fixing their compensation as cost of living, compensation for personnel of the national government and other local governments and workers in the private sector.

Secondly, compensation, working hours and other working conditions for the personnel of each local government are fixed by its bylaw enacted through the approval of its assembly. In other words, working conditions of local public personnel are firmly secured because they are based on the highest form of expressing the will of residents of the community, the ultimate master of local officials.

Thirdly, each local public entity has either a personnel committee or an equity committee, instituted primarily to improve working conditions and hear complaints of employees of the local public entity. Public officials who are not satisfied with compensation and other working conditions can apply to the committee for appropriate action.

As a matter of fact, the level of payment for local public personnel is slightly (2.4%) higher than that for national public personnel (as of April 1st, 1993). This suggests that the local public service is fairly competitive also with private companies in terms of compensation, because salary and other compensation of national government officials are determined on the basis of an annual survey of private workers' compensation conducted by the National Personnel Authority.

#### **IV. RECENT CHANGES IN HUMAN RESOURCES IN LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE**

##### **4-1 Growing Popularity of Local Public Service**

Posts in local public service have been more and more difficult to get. In the last five years, the number of applicants for local public service has

continually increased. In 1994, 256,136 persons took competitive examinations for prefectural offices, and only 14,868 were successful, which means that total applicants were 17.2 times the number of successful applicants. This multiple has steadily grown since 1990 as shown in Table 5.

The growing number of applicants in recent years is partly due to the stability of status and working conditions of local public service, the merits which appear even more attractive when the economy in general is in a poor condition like in these years.

It is also true that more and more people are finding the local public service a fulfilling job as local governments have been becoming more self-reliant and creative in providing public services so that different local needs, rapidly changing environment and diversified value of residents are accurately answered.

**Table 5. Total and Successful Applicants of Competitive Examination for Prefectural Officials**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Total Applicants(A)	99,075	115,101	167,082	220,294	256,136
Successful(B)	18,015	19,973	21,610	18,198	14,868
A/B (times)	5.5	5.8	7.7	12.1	17.2

#### 4-2 Higher Educational Background of Local Public Officials

Local public officials with higher educational background are rapidly growing (Table 6). In 1993, university graduates accounted for 43.9% of the total local public personnel, 3.9% increase compared with 1988. On the other hand, ratio of junior high graduates, senior high graduates and junior college graduate decreased by 2.0%, 1.7% and 0.2% respectively.

#### 4-3 Rising Average Age

While the average age of national public personnel has been declining since 1985 when a retirement age limit system was introduced, that of

**Table 6. Composition of Local Public Personnel by Educational Background**

	1988	1993
university	1,281,017 (40.0)	1,431,268 (43.9)
junior college	481,514 (15.0)	481,933 (14.8)
senior high school	1,155,223 (36.0)	1,118,078 (34.3)
junior high school	286,942 ( 9.0)	229,877 ( 7.0)
total	3,204,696 ( 100)	3,261,156 ( 100)

local public personnel has been continually rising since 1974 (Table 7).

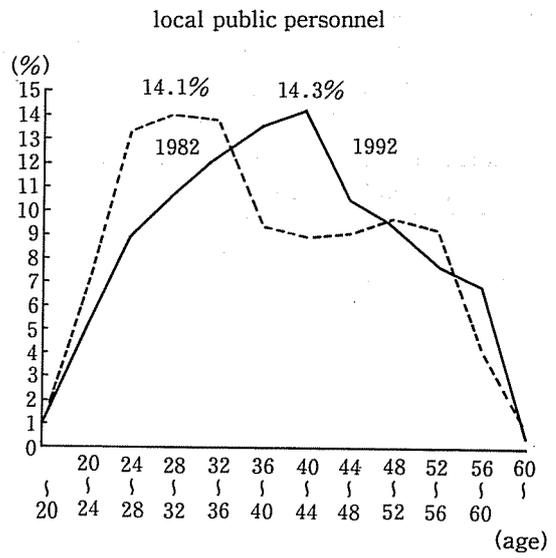
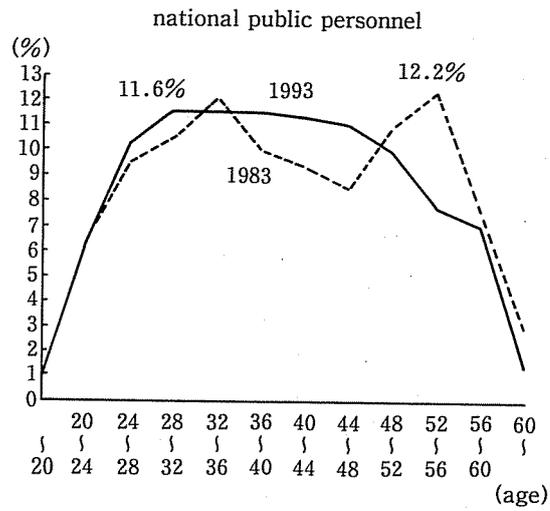
In 1983, local public personnel were about 4 years younger than national public personnel on average. The situation reversed in 1990, and the average age of local officials was 0.8 years higher in 1993.

As illustrated in Figure 5, the largest age group in local public personnel belongs to the post-war babyboomer generation (born in 1947 ~1949). As they are now mid-forties and vying for a limited number of managerial posts, much attention should be paid to their treatment in human resources management, so that efficiency of public service and morale of personnel should not be hampered.

**Table 7. Changes of the Average Age of Public Personnel (general administration)**

	1968	1973	1978	1983	1988	1993
all local governments	35.0	34.6	35.9	37.2	38.9	39.5
- prefectures	36.2	36.2	37.9	38.8	39.5	39.4
- designated cities	34.7	34.1	35.7	36.9	38.6	39.8
- cities	34.4	33.7	35.2	36.9	39.2	40.1
- towns and villages	33.7	33.3	34.5	35.9	38.3	39.1
- special wards	34.2	31.2	33.3	34.5	36.2	37.6
national government	36.7	38.3	39.7	40.1	39.5	38.7

**Figure 5 Classification of Public Personnel by Age**



#### 4-4 Increase of Women in Local Public Service

Working women have been increasing as needs for female workforce grow in the labor market, women's educational background rises, and more and more women have a strong will to work.

The total female workers (non-agricultural sector) quadrupled from 4.4 million in 1955 to 18.8 million in 1991, increasing their share to the total workforce from 28.8% to 38.2%.

The local public service sector also has seen an increasing number of women (Table 8). In the last five years, the total number of female local public officials has grown from 321,134 to 350,393. Especially share of female officials in managerial and supervisory officials has been rapidly expanding. These trends are likely to continue, since also in initial appointment, the share of women has been steadily increasing (Table 9).

Needless to say, discrimination based on sex is prohibited in personnel management in local government by the Local Public Service Law (equality of employment opportunity for women in the private sector was established by statute in 1986). In the past, though, most female local officials were posted only at clerical work.

As recent trends show, however, an increasing number of women are expected to be appointed to more responsible posts in future.

From this viewpoint, one of the most important agenda of human resources development in local public service will be to make good use of female officials' abilities in civil service, by taking measures on development of female officials' management skills, enhancement of their morale, and improvement of their working environment (eg. support to child-rearing).

**Table 8. Proportin of Women in Local Public Personnel  
(general administration)**

[All Local Public Entities]

Level	1989			1994		
	total number	female	%	total number	female	%
director-general	10,780	33	0.3	13,298	96	0.7
deputy director-general	6,667	37	0.6	8,747	89	1.0
director	83,563	1,836	2.2	96,375	3,397	3.5
sub-total	101,010	1,906	1.9	118,420	3,582	3.0
deputy-director	87,658	7,817	8.9	111,384	14,096	12.7
section-chief	223,691	39,303	17.6	264,274	59,390	22.5
sub-total	311,349	47,120	15.1	375,658	73,486	19.6
other officials	646,212	272,108	42.1	630,583	273,325	43.3
Total	1,058,571	321,134	30.3	1,124,661	350,393	31.2

**Table 9. Share of Female Applicants to Examinations  
for Prefectural Officials**

	1980	1985	1990	1994
Total Applicants	253,283	200,097	99,075	256,136
women (share : %)	79,941 (29.6)	64,974 (32.5)	34,394 (34.7)	100,362 (39.2)
Successful	28,516	21,942	18,015	14,868
women (share : %)	5,635 (19.8)	4,697 (21.4)	4,856 (27.0)	4,784 (32.2)

## V. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE

### 5-1 Role of Personnel Training in Human Resources Development

The goal of human resources development in public personnel is to maximize productivity of governmental activities and better the quality of various public services, by improving working efficiency of public officials.

The Local Public Service Law stipulates in the article 39 that local public officials should be given opportunities to undergo training so that they can display and improve their working efficiency. It is also stated that the appointing authority is responsible for providing such personnel training.

Personnel training aims to maintain and improve the quality of the existing human resources in public service. As mentioned earlier, most local public officials are employed by local public entities on a lifetime basis. Therefore, in-service training is very important in human resources development in local public service in Japan.

Human resources development in a broad sense, however, is not to be promoted only through personnel training but also related with almost all aspects of personnel management ; recruitment, job rotation, promotion, compensation, and so on. All these measures should be effectively coordinated so that personnel may be constantly motivated to develop their skills and abilities.

Then, personnel training, if it is placed in such a sophisticated personnel management system, can play a central role in coordinating personnel management measures from a viewpoint of enhancing working efficiency of personnel.

In reality, however, personnel training is not always well incorpo-

rated into personnel management system. Therefore, many local officials tend to see their training more as routine rituals at long intervals than as opportunities to prepare themselves for broader and higher responsibilities.

Also, there are many other obstacles to smooth and effective operation of personnel training such as limitation of budget, insufficient training facilities and staff, and difficulty of sparing enough time for training busy personnel.

With all such limitation existing, the general level of personnel training for local public service officials has risen significantly, as chief administrators are more aware of importance of human resources development especially when social and economic situations surrounding local government change so rapidly.

In recent years, many local governments are implementing not only traditional types of training courses but also creative or unique measures for the purpose of encouraging new thinking which can accommodate changing needs and value.

The following are present situations of local public personnel training in Japan. Also, Appendix shows an example of training programs of one prefecture.

#### **5-2 Training Institutes for Local Public Personnel**

Most of prefectures and large cities have their own training institutes, separate from a personnel division, within their executive organization. 46 out of 47 prefectures and 11 out of 12 designated large cities have a such training institute, usually headed by an experienced official of director-general level. In the remaining one prefecture and one designated city, a section within Personnel Division is responsible for personnel training. In most prefectures and designated cities, more than ten staff are engaging in provision of training.

Among 52 cities (excluding above-mentioned designated large cities)

with a population of 300,000 or more, all of which have an average of 3.8 training staff, 22 cities have their own training institutes for their officials.

As for smaller cities, towns and villages, very few have such training institutes. As the number of personnel is relatively small in municipalities, it is not always effective nor economical to provide training courses independently for their officials. Therefore, most of municipalities entrust their officials' training to prefectural training institutes. Also, in 24 prefectures, municipalities within the prefecture have jointly established a municipal personnel training institute.

On the national level, Local Autonomy College, established in 1953 under the Ministry of Home Affairs, provides high level training for local public officials selected and sent by their respective prefecture or municipality. Main courses at LAC include 6 month courses for prefectural and large city personnel (twice a year) and 3 month courses for municipal personnel (three times a year). The College is located in Tokyo and all the participants from all over Japan stay in a dormitory during the term. This dormitory system contributes greatly to building up a human network of local public personnel, for whom it is usually difficult to have opportunities to make friends with local officials in other local governments.

About 1,000 local officials attend LAC each year and the total number of graduates since its establishment exceeded 40,000 in 1995. As each local government selects LAC participants from candidates for senior officials, many LAC graduates are now assuming high ranking positions in local governments throughout Japan, including 5 prefectural governors and nearly 300 municipal mayors.

Besides Local Autonomy College, there are two central institutions established for training municipal personnel.

One is Japan Academy for Municipal Personnel (JAMP), inaugurated in 1987 at Chiba city, which offers a variety of short courses (4-10

days) on specialized skills and recent important policy agenda for an annual total of 4,800 municipal officials.

The other one is Japan Intercultural Academy for Municipalities (JIAM) established in Otsu city in 1992. This institute specializes in training municipal officials for expanding their administrative capacity to respond to “internationalization” of Japanese society. It provides one month and three month courses and many short-term courses. Its three month course includes a 13 day overseas training.

Both JAMP and JIAM are operated by the Japan Municipal Development Corporation, which undertakes various projects aiming at furthering the development of cities, towns and villages throughout the country.

### 5-3 Personnel Assignment for Training Purposes

Many local governments have training programs in the form of personnel assignment. Under these programs, some local officials are assigned for a time to offices of the national government, other local authorities, or private companies so that they can develop their management skills or acquire specialized expertise through the working experience in a different organization.

In recent years, a growing number of local governments are sending their officials to private companies for training purpose, as they see public services can learn a lot from management know-how of the private sector to promote efficiency of government services. 70% of the prefectures and 36% of large cities now have such programs. The period of assignment is usually three months to one year. Private companies chosen as training workplace are as varied as banks, thinktanks, advertisement firms, department stores, trading companies, telecommunications and so on.

Also overseas training has been increasing in local public service training, as responses to globalization have emerged as one of most important agenda of Japanese local government. In 1993, a total of nearly

1,500 prefectural officials were sent overseas for training purposes. Although the United States and European countries are most popular for such overseas training, local officials sent to China and other Asian countries have increased in number in recent years.

#### 5-4 Support to On-the-Job Training and Self-Development

On-the-job training (OJT) is to develop abilities and skills of workers through their regular work at their workplace. One of the important responsibilities of managers and supervisors of each office is to educate and train their staff through daily performance of duties.

It is often stressed that OJT should be the main means of personnel training, because, compared with group training, which necessitates that personnel be absent from their offices, OJT has such merits as follows ;

- it is easy to accommodate training to individual officials' ability, character, potentials, and so on.
- as the training is directly tied with the trainee's duties, their higher motivation is expected.
- evaluation is easier because effects of training are clearly observed.
- it is easier to relate the training with personnel management.
- OJT is much less expensive than group training.

It is necessary, however, to provide sufficient support to OJT, since its effectiveness is very much dependent on managers' and supervisors' viewpoints and personality, and without such support, effective OJT can not be provided in some offices. There are many prefectural and municipal training institutes offering such supports as distributing OJT manuals and holding seminars for OJT leaders.

Finally, self-development by each official is often placed in the total personnel training system. The fact that self-development must be the basis of any personnel training measures is sometimes forgotten as training programs prepared by each organization are highly developed in Japan where lifetime employment is broadly established.

Although each official should be responsible for self-development, in recent years, training institutes are actively providing support to activities related to self-development, such as paying for correspondence training courses and helping spontaneous workshops organized by personnel.

## CONCLUSION

In Japan, massive socio-economic changes have been concurrently taking place such as rapid aging of population, lower birthrate, more globalized economy and society, advancement in computer and telecommunication technologies, and growing demands for better quality of life.

Under such circumstances, local governments, as closest governmental units to people, are expected to play a more active role in responding effectively to more and more diversified administrative needs of people, and making their respective community a more attractive and vigorous living place.

In answering such expectations, administrative and financial reforms of local government have been promoted in order to strengthen its self-reliance and efficiency. As a significant move in this direction, Law for Promoting Decentralization was enacted in May, 1995, and necessary actions will be discussed and taken in coming years under the Law, so that more administrative responsibilities should be transferred from national government to local governments and the latter should be able to formulate and execute regional and community policies in a more creative and coordinated fashion.

Whether such reforms including decentralization actually take effect or not, however, very much depends on administrative capabilities of local public personnel, who are to undertake more diversified and heavier responsibilities.

In this viewpoint, human resources development in local public ser-

vice is one of the most important agenda for preparing Japanese administrative systems for its further changing society.

Under a centralized administrative system, most jobs of local officials is to follow faithfully the policies formulated by the central government, and apply those policies to the local needs. This system has worked well when the largest concern of government is achieving the minimum standard of quality of life throughout the country.

However, under a decentralized system, which is considered effective in achieving higher level of quality life in accordance with different demands in different communities, local public officials themselves should detect most necessary needs of their community and formulate their own policies to satisfy those needs.

Local personnel, then, must be well endowed with policy formulation skills so that decentralization is further promoted as expected. Hence, development of policy formulation skills constitutes one of the most urgent challenges for human resources development in public service in Japan.

Also, as mentioned in IV., significant changes are going on in human resources in Japanese local public service, such as higher educational background, higher average age, and increase of women. It is important that such changes are well taken into consideration in personnel training programs and other human resources development measures, so that those changes will not reduce the efficiency of local public services but rather contribute to making local government more responsive to rapidly changing administrative environment.

## APPENDIX

### Example of Training Programs Provided by a Training Institute of a Prefecture

#### Basic Training Courses

- Courses for Newly Appointed Officials
  - 10 days with 2 nights (the first term) + 5 days (the second term)
  - 250 officials (divided into 2 classes)
  - major classes
    - the prefecture and its administration (9 hours)
    - administrative laws, the Local Autonomy Law and local public finance (20)
    - business practices (35)  
business manners, documents, fiscal accounting, personnel system, morals of public officials, etc.
    - group discussion on major administrative issues (9.5)
    - sports, orientations, etc. (10)
- Courses for Non-Managerial Officials I
  - officials (high school graduates) about 4 years after their appointment
  - 4 days
  - 80 officials
  - major classes
    - the Civic Code (6), economics (3), seminar for improving bargaining skills (9), organization and efficient work (6), orientation (0.5)
- Courses for Non-Managerial Officials II
  - officials about 4 years (university graduates) or 9 years (high school graduates) after their appointment
  - 3 days (compulsory classes) + 3 days (optional classes)
  - 420 officials (divided into 5 classes)
  - major classes  
(compulsory)

problem-solving techniques (6), research on major policy issues (12)

(optional)(18.5 hours each)

the Constitution, the Civic Code, administrative laws, the Local Autonomy Law, the Local Public Personnel Law, bargaining skills, creativity development, urban policy, policy science, sociology, economy, internationalization, self-development, document formulation

- Courses for Non-Managerial Officials III
  - officials about 9 years (university graduates) or 15 years (high school graduates) after their appointment
  - 4 days
  - 480 officials (divided into 6 classes)
  - major classes
    - policy formulation (6), public policy (3), personnel management (6), organization management (6), basic policy issues of the prefecture (1.5)
- Courses for Section Chiefs
  - (1) course for the newly promoted
    - officials newly promoted to section chiefs
    - 1 day
    - 350 section chiefs
    - major classes
      - Governor's lecture (0.5), morals of public officials (2), human rights (1), job of a supervisor (1.5)
  - (2) basic course for section chiefs
    - officials newly promoted to section chiefs
    - 3 days with 2 nights
    - 350 section chiefs (divided into 7 classes)
    - major classes
      - leadership (6.5), communication (3), work management (3), staff

- education (2.5), health management (1), job of a supervisor (3)
- (3) case study course
  - officials promoted to section chiefs in the last 2 years
  - 2 days
  - 350 section chiefs (divided into 7 classes)
  - major classes
    - case studies (12)
- (4) optional course
  - section chiefs 4 years after their promotion
  - 3 days with 2 nights
  - 380 section chiefs (divided into 7 classes)
  - major classes
    - (option A) lectures and discussion on policy formulation (18)
    - (option B) lectures and discussion on policy issue solving (18)
- Courses for Deputy-Directors
  - officials newly promoted to deputy-directors
  - 4 days with 3 nights
  - 240 deputy-directors (divided into 5 classes)
  - major classes
    - management (27)(organizational management, priority setting, solution formulation and evaluation, strategy development, etc.), health management (1)
- Courses for Directors
  - officials newly promoted to directors
  - 3 days with 2 nights
  - 120 directors (divided into 4 classes)
  - major classes
    - (course for developing decision-making skills) Harvard method case studies (18), health management (1.5)(course for developing management skills) enhancing management skills, staff education, activating workplace, communication, health management (total 19.

5)

- \* besides above courses, there are two courses for non-clerical workers (drivers, guards, etc.)

#### Special Training Courses

- management seminar (1 day)[2,000 trainees]
- policy research seminar (11 days/2 nights)[25 trainees]
- lectures for female officials (3 days)[50]
- refresh seminar (3 days)[40]
- OJT leaders training (1 day)[100]
- training course for section-chiefs training leaders (7 days)[18]
- training course for business manner training leaders (4 days)[20]
- workshops for internal lecturers (1 day)[total of 190]

#### Promotion of Self-Development

- assistance to officials (20 persons) who take correspondence courses approved by the training institute (courses on creativity development, practical skills, laws, management, economy, personal computers and foreign languages)
- publication of information letters and booklets

#### Departmental Special Training

- planned and implemented independently by each of 18 departments

#### Personnel Assignment for Training Purposes

- private companies
  - 4 officials
  - one year
- Local Autonomy College
  - (Course I : 6 months) - 6 officials (section-chief class)
  - (Course I special : 1 month) - 1 (female official)
  - (Course III : 3 weeks) - 1 (deputy-director class)
  - (International Business Course) - 1
- Universities
  - (long-term : 2 years) - 3

(short-term 70 days) - 4  
- overseas  
(long-term : 1 year) - 1  
(short-term : 3 months) - 6