

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

STATISTICAL PROFILES

No. 16

**WOMEN IN
THE REPUBLIC
OF KOREA**

A COUNTRY PROFILE



UNITED NATIONS

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The profile has been prepared under project BK-X20-3-214, on improving statistics on women in the ESCAP region.

FOREWORD

The call for the development of statistics and indicators on the situation of women has, for some time, been voiced in various global and regional forums. It was first recommended by the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, adopted in 1975. The recommendations of the World Plan of Action were reaffirmed and elaborated in the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. On various occasions, the Commission, stressing the importance of social and human development, has recognized the need for improved statistics and indicators on women. It has noted that better indicators are required to monitor the situation of women and to assess the effectiveness of strategies and programmes designed to address priority gender issues.

The secretariat initiated the project on improving statistics on women in the ESCAP region in 1994. The project aims to support governments in their efforts to promote the full integration of women in development and improve their status in line with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women adopted in 1985. The project has been implemented by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) through its subprogramme on statistics, with funding assistance from the Government of the Netherlands.

As a major component of its activities, the project commissioned experts from 19 countries in the region to prepare country profiles on the situation of women and men in the family, at work, and in public life, by analysing available statistical data and information. The profiles are intended to highlight the areas where action is needed, and to raise the consciousness of readers about issues concerning women and men. The 19 countries are Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand in Asia; and Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu in the Pacific.

The secretariat hosted two meetings each in Asia and in the Pacific as part of the project activities. At the first meeting, the experts discussed and agreed on the structure, format and contents of the country profiles, based on guidelines prepared by the secretariat through Ms C.N. Ericta, consultant. The second meeting was a workshop to review the draft profiles. Participants in the workshop included the country experts and invited representatives from national statistical offices of Brunei Darussalam; Hong Kong, China; the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; and Viet Nam in Asia; of Marshall Islands; Tuvalu; and Vanuatu in the Pacific; and representatives of United Nations organizations, specialized agencies and international organizations.

The original draft of the present profile, *Women in the Republic of Korea*, was prepared by Ms Pak Po-Hi, Director, Korea Institute for Social Information and Research. It was technically edited and modified by the ESCAP secretariat with the assistance of Mr S. Selvaratnam, consultant. The profiles express the views of the author and not necessarily those of the secretariat.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands for its generous financial support, which enabled the secretariat to implement the project.



Adrianus Mooy
Executive Secretary

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PART I
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

In the past, Korean women were accorded a status that was inferior to that of their male counterparts, both within the family and in society. The tradition of total female submission had persisted in Korean villages until relatively recent times. Rapid industrialization and urbanization, accompanied by a significant rise in standards of living, have, however, contributed to an improvement in the status of women in many aspects; compared with the situation a few decades ago, Korean women today live longer, are better educated, have fewer children and enjoy more leisure.

Several international events, such as the International Women's Year in 1973, the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), and the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the General Assembly in 1979, were also instrumental in bringing about significant changes in policies and programmes to advance the status of women in the Republic of Korea.

On its part, the Government has adopted several measures to improve the status of women. In 1983, the Korean Women's Development Institute was established to act as the brain trust for the advancement of Korean women, carry out studies and research on women, provide education and training to develop women's resources, and assist women's organizations in their activities. In the same year, the Government also established the National Committee on Women's Policies under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office, charged with the responsibility for deliberating on and coordinating national policies concerning women. In 1988, the Ministry of Political Affairs was established under a woman Cabinet Minister to deal with women's affairs at the ministerial level. Fifteen bureaux of family welfare headed by women were established in 15 major cities and provinces in July 1988 to work for women's welfare in their respective areas. The Special Committee on Women in the National Assembly was established as a permanent body on

25 June 1994, and made responsible for the enactment and revision of laws pertaining to women's welfare.

Over the years, the Government has also taken steps to revise existing laws and enact new laws to eliminate discrimination against women and to ensure them equal rights and opportunities with men in various aspects of life. The Labour Standards Act, enacted in 1953, has been revised nine times, to guarantee, among other things, basic equality between men and women in employment, and special protection for pregnancy and maternity. The Equal Employment Opportunity Act, enacted in 1987 to guarantee equality between men and women in employment, was revised in 1989 to include provisions on equal pay for equal work regardless of the worker's sex.

After more than 30 years of persistent lobbying by women's organizations, the Family Law was revised in December 1989 and came into force on 1 January 1991. The revised law eliminates discriminatory elements and promotes the equal status of women in the family, particularly in regard to divorce, custody of children etc. The Mother-Child Welfare Act enacted in April 1989 provides for special measures to protect and assist families without fathers. The Act Relating to Punishment of Sexual violence and Protection of Victims, enacted in December 1993, was the result of active campaigning by Korean women's organizations to eradicate sexual violence, and is the first legislation of its kind in Asia.

Another significant effort to improve the status of women was made by including, for the first time, the Women's Development Section in the sixth five-year socio-economic development plan, 1987-1991. The seventh five-year plan contains programmes to improve the status of women in education, employment, welfare and cultural and social activities. The Basic Plan to Promote Working Women's Welfare (1994-1997), prepared by the Ministry of Labour and confirmed by the National Committee on Women's Policies in February 1994, aims at improving

the status of working women and their welfare by promoting their employment and enhancing their skills.

As a result of the various measures adopted and programmes implemented, the situation of Korean women has improved considerably during the past two decades. These changes are especially prominent in regard to the quantitative expansion of women's economic opportunities; their increased access to education and training; their improved health conditions as reflected in significant declines in mortality rates, particularly maternal mortality, and increase in life expectancy, which is much higher than that of males; and significant advances in their legal status, as noted earlier.

Despite the considerable progress made, Korean women still lag behind men in regard to higher education and better employment opportunities, and continue to be discriminated against in regard to recruitment and payment of wages. They are also very much under-represented in high-level political and administrative decision-making positions. Although Korean women today enjoy vast *de jure* equality, their *de facto* equality is still very low owing largely to the traditional cultural and customary biases against women that persist even to this day. The main task of bringing about fuller gender equality still lies ahead and calls for the formulation of appropriate policies and programmes in various areas, such as health, education, employment and economic activity, as well as in the legal, political and civil service fields.

A good part of the problems and issues are not quantifiable for lack of relevant data and information on a nationwide basis. There are several areas of women's concerns, such as the qualitative aspects of family life (including domestic violence), child development, and conditions of working women in the informal sector, in respect of which reliable and adequate information is not yet available.

An attempt has been made in the present profile to delineate the situation of Korean women within the limits of available data and

information. A comprehensive analysis and understanding of the various issues and problems confronting Korean women will be possible only when data on specific groups of women and on qualitative aspects of their life and work become available.

A. HIGHLIGHTS

The setting

1. Generally speaking, the Republic of Korea is a mountainous country; mountain terrain accounts for two thirds of the country's total land area of 99,268 km². Only about 20 per cent of the land is under cultivation at present. The Republic enjoys a temperate climate with four distinct seasons.
2. With a total population estimated at 44.6 million in 1996 and a density of 455 persons per km², the Republic of Korea is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Nearly three fourths of the country's population reside in urban areas.
3. The Republic is among the few Asian countries categorized as newly industrializing economies, with industry (including manufacture, construction, mining and power) contributing about 44 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and employing 32 per cent of the labour force. Estimates indicate that the GDP growth rate averaged 7.1 per cent between 1992 and 1996.
4. Since its very early days, the Republic has accorded high priority to human resources development. It has a well-developed system of education, with 100 per cent primary-school enrolment, and relatively high proportions of children in the relevant age groups being enrolled in the secondary and tertiary educational levels.
5. Since the 1960s, there has been considerable expansion in the public health and medical services of the country. Today, modern health facilities and services are easily accessible to people residing in urban as well as rural areas.

Women's profile

1. Males exceed females in the total population by a slight margin; in 1997, there were 101.5 males per 100 females, or 98.5 females per 100 males, in the country. This gender imbalance is largely attributed to a highly male-favoured sex ratio at birth.
2. Declining fertility and mortality have resulted in very significant changes in the age structure of the population. While the proportion of children aged 0-14 years has been declining, that of persons in working age and of older persons has been increasing over the years.
3. The proportion of children in the relevant age groups enrolled in general education is about the same for boys and girls. However, females are very much under-represented in institutions of higher education. There is also a tendency for students to pursue fields of study conforming to socially defined feminine and masculine roles.
4. While the majority of elementary school teachers are females, males constitute a higher proportion of the teachers in middle and high schools. Females are also very much under-represented in senior-level teaching and school management positions.
5. The educational attainment of both males and females has been increasing over the years, as reflected in trends in the average number of years of schooling, in the proportion completing particular levels of education, and in literacy rates. Today, nearly 97 per cent of Korean women aged 15 years and over are literate, the rate for men being 99 per cent.
6. The rise in living standards and the provision of better health and sanitation services have resulted in a tremendous improvement in the overall health status of Korean men and women. This improvement appears to have favoured females more than males.
7. In the past, the main cause of death was respiratory diseases, but today the largest number of deaths among both men and women occur as a result of non-communicable "lifestyle

diseases" such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes etc.

8. Mortality rates are lower for females than for males at all ages. There has been a rapid decline in maternal mortality over the years. Life expectancy at birth has increased steadily and today females have a life expectancy at birth of 74.8 years, which is 7.5 years longer than that of men.

Women in family life

1. Over the years, the traditional family and kinship institutions have undergone radical changes. The extended family is being increasingly replaced by the nuclear family, and there is movement towards greater equality in family relations and improvement in the status of women.
2. Although men have traditionally been accepted as household heads, recent decades have witnessed a substantial rise in the proportion of households headed by females. Available information also indicates that females generally assume headship responsibility upon the death of their spouses and that a greater proportion among female household heads compared with male household heads belong to the older age groups.
3. The number of fatherless families and unwed mothers has been increasing in recent times. There are several government programmes providing protective support to single and unwed mothers.
4. Marriage practices and patterns have also undergone transformation in recent decades. More and more marriages are "love matches" rather than arranged marriages. The mean age at marriage has also been rising for both males and females.
5. There have also been profound changes in the reproductive behaviour of married couples. Parents no longer desire to have many children. The drastic fall in the total fertility rates confirms that the small family has today become the accepted social norm.

6. The contraceptive prevalence rate has increased tremendously over the years. Survey results show that the vast majority of ever-married women use modern contraceptive methods, with permanent methods (female sterilization and vasectomy) being the most popular methods.

7. The number of divorce cases has more than doubled in the past two decades, and over 80 per cent of the divorces take place for reasons of domestic differences.

Women in economic life

1. Although women constitute more than half the working-age population, they have always accounted for a significantly lower proportion of the country's labour force. In recent decades, however, the female labour force has been increasing faster than the male labour force, thereby raising the relative share of females in the total labour force from 40.2 per cent in 1970 to 48.3 per cent in 1995.

2. Female economic activity rates are also substantially lower than male rates in all age groups. Female rates are particularly low at ages 25-34 years, owing to the tendency among employed women to withdraw from the labour force immediately after marriage.

3. The proportion of the female labour force employed in the agricultural sector declined from 59.7 per cent in 1970 to 26.7 per cent in 1992. Today, the largest proportion among employed women are engaged in the trade sector, and a third of the total employed males work as sales and service workers.

4. Women constitute not only a smaller proportion of the national labour force but a considerably higher proportion among employed women (35 per cent) compared with men (3 per cent) are also engaged as unpaid family workers.

5. Korean women generally work longer hours than their male counterparts in most economic sectors, but their average earnings are considerably lower than those paid to male workers in the same occupations or with similar educational qualifications.

6. The number of women working in the non-regular or informal sector has been increasing over the years, as indicated by a rise in the number of daily-paid or part-time workers. More than half the female workers in this category are employed in the manufacturing sector.

7. In recent years, there has also been an increase in the number of married women, particularly from low-income families, working as home-based piece-rate workers. Studies indicate that their earnings constitute on the average about 29 per cent of household earnings.

Women in public life

1. In the Republic of Korea, women constitute a little over half the total number of eligible voters. But the proportion of eligible voters actually exercising their voting rights at various elections is higher among males than among females.

2. Although women are almost as conscious as men of the need to exercise their voting rights, female participation in the political process as candidates has always been very poor.

3. Since very few women contest elections, they are very much under-represented in the legislature at the national and local levels.

4. Despite various measures adopted to increase female participation in the civil service, in 1995 women constituted only about 27 per cent of total government employees.

5. A very much higher proportion among female civil servants compared with male civil servants are concentrated in the lower ranges of the service. In 1995, only 1.3 per cent of all senior government officials were women.

6. Women are also very much under-represented in various government committees and commissions: in 1996, women accounted for only 8.5 per cent of the total number of members in the various committees and commissions.

B. THE SETTING

1. Location and physical features

The Republic of Korea, which forms the southern part of the Korean peninsula in eastern Asia, is bordered on the north by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; on the west by the Yellow Sea; on the south by the East China Sea, and on the east by the Sea of Japan. The physical area of the country is 99,268 km², or 38,328 square miles, which is almost the size of Portugal or Hungary and slightly smaller than Iceland.

Generally speaking, most of the country is hilly and mountainous, although its elevation is not high. There are three major mountain ranges: the Taebak and Sobak ranges, and the Chiri Massif. Mountainous terrain accounts for 66 per cent of the total land area. The most extensive areas of relatively flat land are along the western coast and in the Naktong Basin in the south-east, the two areas being separated by the Sobak Mountains. All the rivers in the Republic of Korea are short, the longest, Han, being 514 km. The other principal rivers are the Naktong, Kum and Somjia. Few of the national lakes are large.

2. Climate and rainfall

Part of the East Asian monsoonal region, the Republic of Korea has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons: mild spring, hot summer, cool autumn and cold winter. While summer temperatures are relatively uniform over the country, in winter the temperatures are colder in the north than in the south, and colder inland than on the coast. The annual mean temperature ranges from 13°C to 15°C in the south and from 11°C to 13°C in the central and northern parts of the country.

Most parts of the country receive a rainfall or more than 1,200 millimeters annually, and about half of the precipitation occurs in the summer months of June, July and August. A small amount of snow may fall during the winter.

3. Land-use patterns

The area under forests has been declining over the centuries since the people have been cutting down most of the ancient forests, with the exception of a few remote mountainous areas. Estimates for recent years indicate that forest coverage declined from 66.5 per cent of the total land area in 1978 to about 65.5 per cent in 1995. The disappearance of forests has been a major cause of soil erosion and flooding. In 1994, there were 28 nationally protected areas of outstanding national beauty or scientific importance, accounting for 7 per cent of the total land area.

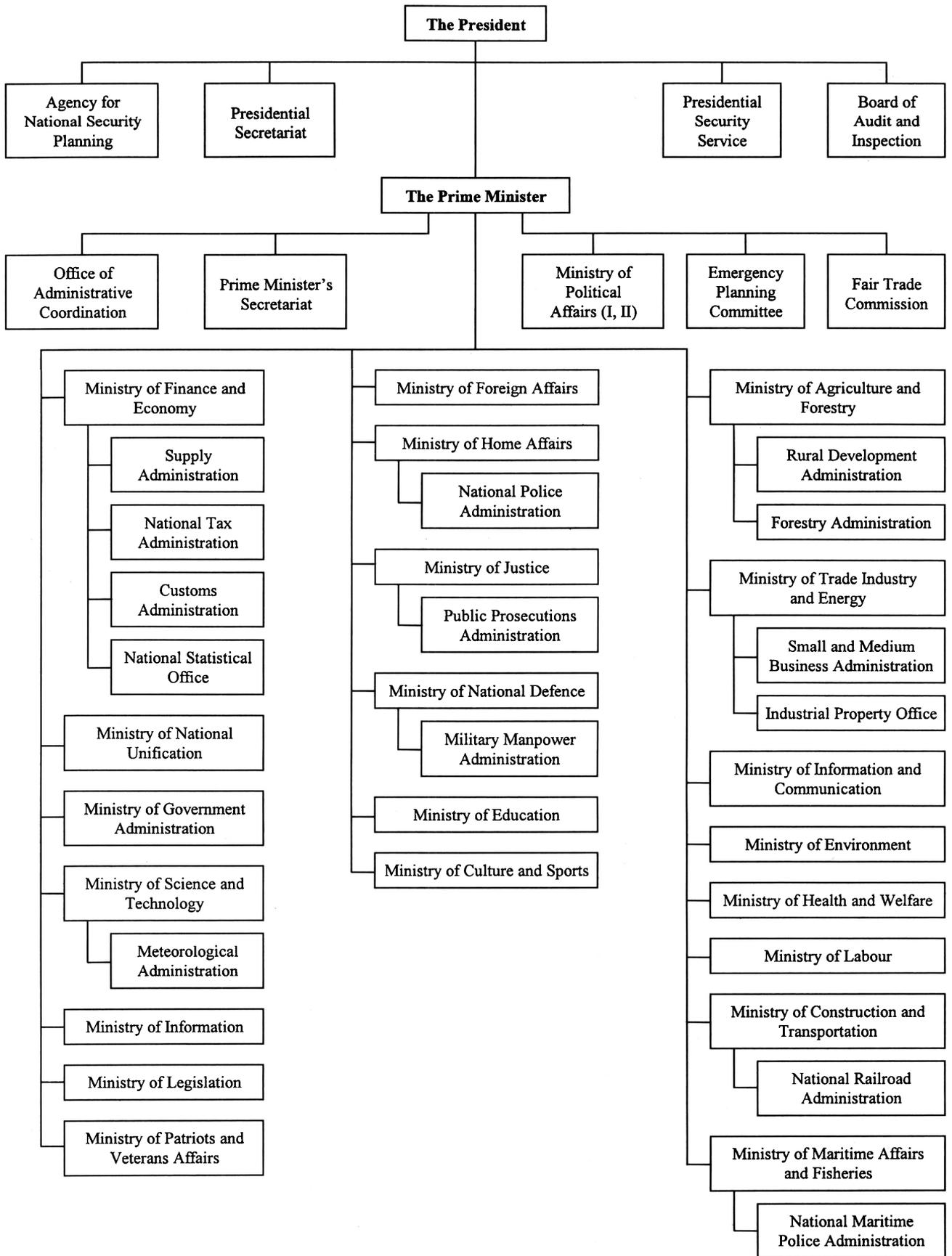
The area under cultivation has also been declining gradually over the years, as land was being lost to urban expansion and construction of roads and transport networks. The cultivated area amounted to about 20 per cent of the total land area in 1995, which indicates that there were 22 persons per hectare of cultivated land.

4. Government and administration

Under the Constitution of the Sixth Republic adopted in October 1987, executive power is vested with the President who is directly elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term, and cannot be re-elected. The President appoints and governs with the assistance of the State Council (Cabinet), led by the Prime Minister (see also figure 1). Legislative power is vested with a single chamber, the National Assembly (*Kuk Hoe*) consisting of 299 members who are popularly elected for a four-year term. The National Assembly has the right to impeach the President or any other designated high officials.

For administrative purposes, the Republic of Korea is divided into nine provinces, which in turn are subdivided into 55 cities (*shi*) and 138 counties (*kun*); the six metropolitan areas of Pusan, Taegu, Inch'on, Kwangju, Taejon and Ulsan, all of which enjoy a status equivalent to provinces directly under the central government; and one special city, Seoul, the capital of the Republic, which is administratively higher than a province.

Figure 1. The Central Administrative Organization



Source: National Statistical Office, *Statistical Handbook of Korea, 1997* (Seoul).

5. Population growth and distribution

The population of the Republic of Korea, according to the latest quinquennial census held in November 1995, was 44.6 million, or 1.2 million persons more than the 43.4 million enumerated at the previous census, held in November 1990. Although the population increased rapidly during the years following the end of the Second World War, there has been a slowing down in its growth rate since the 1960s. The population growth rate, which averaged 2.21 per cent a year during the period 1966-1970, declined steadily during the subsequent intercensal periods and averaged about 1.0 per cent a year during the period 1990-1995 (table 1).

Table 1. Population growth: 1966-1995

Census year	Enumerated population (thousands)	Average annual growth rate (percentage)
1966	29 193	
1970	31 466	2.21
1975	34 707	1.70
1980	37 436	1.57
1985	40 448	0.99
1990	43 411	0.99
1995 [#]	44 606	..

Source: National Statistical Office, *Population and Housing Census* (various years).

[#] Preliminary results.

The steady decline in the rate of growth has resulted from a fall in the crude birth rate from 30 per thousand in 1970 to 16 per thousand in 1994, owing largely to the successful implementation of family planning programmes. The decline in fertility is also reflected in the substantial decline in the total fertility rate, from 6.0 births per woman in 1960 to 4.5 births in 1970, and further to 2.7 births in 1980 and to 1.6 births in 1990. There has also been a significant decline in the crude death rate, from 10 per thousand in 1970 to 5 per thousand in 1994.

With an estimated 455 persons per square kilometre in 1996, the Republic of Korea is one of the most densely populated countries in the

world. But, as in most other countries, the population is not distributed evenly over the land surface. Because about 70 per cent of the country's land area is mountainous, the population is concentrated in the lowland areas, where population density is generally greater than the national average.

Rapid industrialization since the early 1960s has been accompanied by drastic changes in the spatial distribution of human settlements. The proportion of the national population residing in urban areas more than doubled, from 28.0 per cent in 1960 to 57.3 per cent in 1980, and further increased to 74.4 per cent in 1990, largely owing to rural-to-urban migration. Today, more than half of the country's population live in urban agglomerations of 1 million people or more, but the urban population concentration is more pronounced in the large cities. According to preliminary results of the 1995 census, the population of the capital city of Seoul was 10.2 million, or about 23 per cent of the total population, and of Pusan, the second largest city, 3.8 million, while that of Taegu and Inch'on was reported to be 2.5 and 2.3 million respectively.

6. Ethnicity and religion

In past centuries, people from different Asian countries had migrated into the Korean peninsula, but very few have remained permanently. Consequently, the Republic of Korea and its northern neighbour, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, are among the world's most ethnically homogenous nations. Foreigners, including Westerners, Chinese and Japanese, constitute a negligible proportion of the population whose residence was generally temporary in the Republic of Korea. A common language and culture are also viewed as an important element in Korean identity.

Traditionally, ancestor worship has been simultaneously a social ethic and a religion of the Korean people, who strongly believe that deceased family members do not pass into oblivion but remain, in spiritual form, securely within the family circle. Hence, succeeding generations are obliged to remember the deceased in a yearly cycle of rituals and ceremonies.

According to a 1991 investigation, 54 per cent of the Koreans were reported to be adherents of one or the other of the world's formal religions, this proportion being significantly higher among females (60.5 per cent) than among males (46.8 per cent) and in urban (56.5 per cent) compared with rural (46.7 per cent) areas. Among those reported to belong to a formal religious faith, the majority among males as well as females (51.2 per cent) were Buddhists, while another 45.0 per cent were Christians, and 1.8 per cent Confucians.

7. The economy

With a per capita GDP estimated at \$ 10,650 in 1996, the Republic of Korea is categorized among the few Asian newly industrializing economies (NIEs). Estimates also indicate that between 1992 and 1996 the country's annual GDP growth rate averaged 7.1 per cent, a rate which was almost close to the long-term average growth rate that had been sustained since the beginning of the industrial development programme in 1963. However, since late 1997, the Korean economy, like that of most other Asian NIEs, has been facing a severe economic crisis.

Industry (including mining and quarrying, manufacture, construction and power) contributed 44.4 per cent of GDP (table 2) and engaged 32.5 per cent of the employed labour force in 1996. The important branches of manufacturing, which alone accounted for 30.3 per cent of

GDP in 1996, are electrical machinery, transport equipment (mainly road motor vehicles and shipbuilding), non-electrical machinery, chemicals, iron and steel, food products and textiles.

The percentage contribution of the agricultural sector (including forestry and fishing) has been declining over the years, and in 1996 this sector accounted for 6.4 per cent of GDP (table 2) and engaged 11.6 per cent of the employed labour force. Although rice is the principal crop, maize, barley, potatoes, sweet potatoes and fruits are also important, as is the raising of livestock. Fishing provides food for domestic consumption as well as a surplus for export.

The service sector contributed 50.8 per cent of GDP and employed 22.5 per cent of the labour force in 1996. An important source of "invisible" export earnings is overseas construction work, which expanded in the 1970s when the wage rates of the Republic enabled it to win labour-intensive contracts, particularly in the newly enriched oil-exporting countries of the Middle East.

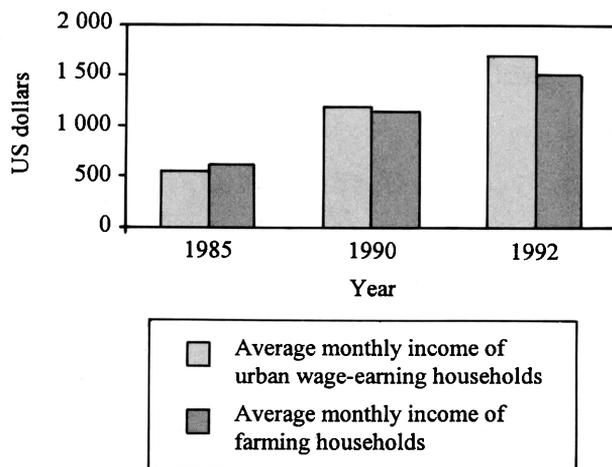
Personal incomes have been increasing owing to a rise in manufacturing and other wage rates as well as to the transfer from low-paid occupations in the agricultural and allied sector to higher-paid occupations in industry and services (see figure 2). This has resulted in a shift to an increasingly affluent lifestyle. Surveys indicate that household

Table 2. Percentage distribution of gross domestic product by broad sector: 1992-1996

Sector	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	8.1	7.4	7.0	6.6	6.4
Mining and quarrying	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	29.3	29.3	29.8	30.3	30.3
Construction	11.5	11.8	11.4	11.3	11.3
Electricity, gas and water	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5
Wholesale and retail trade, hotels	12.8	12.6	12.6	12.5	12.4
Transport, storage and communications	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.8	8.3
Financial and business services	16.2	17.2	17.4	17.2	17.2
Government services	6.8	6.6	6.2	5.8	5.5
Total, including others	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Bank of Korea, *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, cited in Economist Intelligence Unit, *South Korea, North Korea: Country Profile 1997-98* (London).

Figure 2. Urban and rural household incomes: 1985, 1990 and 1992



Source: National Statistical Office.

expenditure increased by about 30 per cent between 1992 and 1996, with a substantially higher increase in spending on transport and communications (45.6 per cent) compared with that on food, beverages and tobacco, which increased by only 16.5 per cent.

8. Social infrastructure

(a) Education

The Republic of Korea, like many other Asian countries, has a long history of providing formal education. Since the very early days of the Republic, successive governments have accorded very high priority to education. Public sector expenditure on education has also been generous, averaging more than 2 per cent of the gross national product (GNP). It is generally accepted that the willingness of individuals to invest a substantial proportion of their income in education has been an important factor contributing to the spectacular progress that the Republic of Korea has achieved in regard to modernization and economic growth.

The national education system comprises three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary education, which is provided free, is compulsory for all children between ages 6 and 12 years. By 1970, the Republic of Korea had achieved 100 per cent primary-school enrolment. In 1995, about 3.9 million children were enrolled in the 5,772 primary schools

located throughout the country. In addition, there were 8,960 kindergartens for pre-school children.

Secondary education begins at 12 years of age and lasts for up to six years, comprising two cycles of three years each. In 1995, there were 2,683 middle schools with a total enrolment of about 2.5 million students, and 1,830 high schools with approximately 2.2 million students. Estimates indicate that about 92 per cent of the children in the relevant age groups are currently enrolled at the secondary level.

Higher education is categorized into three levels: universities, junior colleges, including teachers' colleges, and graduate schools. In 1995, there were 131 university-level institutions with a total enrolment of 1,187,755 students, and in 1994, enrolments in the 368 graduate schools totalled 112,728 students. The 145 junior vocational colleges and the 11 teachers' colleges had 10,384 and 766 students respectively in 1995.

As will be discussed later in this profile, the Republic of Korea has one of the highest literacy rates in the world. Only 3.7 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over was estimated to be illiterate in 1995.

(b) Health services

Over the centuries, the people of the Republic of Korea had relied on acupuncture and herbal remedies to treat a wide variety of illnesses. It was only in the late nineteenth century that the modern health-care system developed in the West was introduced into the Republic by Western missionaries and Japanese doctors attached to the military units stationed in the peninsula. A more systematic development of modern health and medical care services took place with the annexation of the country by Japan in 1910. In the early days, most health facilities and personnel tended to be concentrated in the urban areas, particularly Seoul and Pusan. Rural areas had very limited facilities since doctors had very little incentive to work in those areas where the majority of people could not pay for treatment.

Since the 1960s, the Republic of Korea has witnessed considerable expansion in its public health and medical care services. An extensive network of health administration was set up with the establishment of health centres in all *guns*, or county-level administrative units, in 1962, and of health subcentres in all *myuns*, or sub-counties, in 1964. These constituted the main network of the government health-care service until the late 1970s. In 1984, the government set up about 1,310 primary health-care posts in remote rural areas to cater largely for agricultural and fishing villages.

Over the years, medical facilities have increased steadily and today the health network includes general hospitals, sanatoriums, dental clinics, maternity homes and specialized hospitals. The number of health personnel has also increased tremendously. In 1996, there were 459 hospital beds per thousand persons, and 59 physicians and 14 dentists for every thousand persons in the country. Further, under the national insurance scheme, medical and industrial accident insurance covers 24 per cent of the total population and 26 per cent of the economically active population.

(c) *Water supply and sanitation*

The proportion of the population with access to piped water increased from 13.2 per cent in 1962 to 36.9 per cent in 1972, and

further to 59.4 per cent in 1982 and to 80.1 per cent in 1991. Data from the 1990 census indicate that this proportion was considerably higher in urban areas (93.1 per cent) compared with rural areas (28.1 per cent).

C. WOMEN'S PROFILE

1. Demographic characteristics

(a) *Gender balance*

A slight excess in the number of males over females in the total population has been an important demographic feature reported by all population censuses undertaken in the country since 1960. Mid-year estimates of the population by sex based on census data indicate that the proportion of females in the total population fluctuated between 49.4 and 49.8 per cent between 1960 and 1996. In 1996, there were 101.5 males for every 100 females, or 98.5 females per 100 males (table 3).

It is customary to explain the observed gender imbalance in the total population in terms of three important factors: a relatively higher underenumeration of females than males at the censuses; differential mortality; and male-favoured sex ratio at birth. In the Republic of Korea, there is no adequate evidence to suggest that underenumeration is relatively larger in

Table 3. Estimated population by sex, percentage female and gender ratio: 1960-1996

Year	Estimated population (thousands) ^{a/}			Percentage female	Gender ratio	
	Both sexes	Male	Female		Males per 100 females	Females per 100 males
1960	25 012	12 550	12 462	49.8	100.7	99.3
1966	29 436	14 830	14 606	49.6	101.5	98.5
1970	32 241	16 309	15 932	49.4	102.3	97.7
1975	35 281	17 766	17 515	49.6	101.4	98.6
1980	38 124	19 236	18 888	49.5	101.8	98.2
1985	40 806	20 576	20 230	49.6	101.7	98.3
1990	42 869	21 568	21 301	49.7	101.3	98.8
1997	45 991	23 170	22 821	49.6	101.5	98.5

Source: National Statistical Office.

Note: These estimates exclude foreign nationals, and do not agree with the enumerated population for various years shown in table 1.

respect of females than males. As will be noted later in this section, mortality rates among females are lower than those among males, and females have an average expectation of life at birth which is significantly higher than that for males. Hence, the observed excess of males in the total population has to be attributed largely to a male-favoured sex ratio at birth.

In the Republic of Korea, as in many other countries in the world with available data, the number of male births exceeds that of female births every year. In most of these countries, the sex ratio at birth ranges between 104 and 107 male births per 100 female births. However, in the Republic of Korea, the sex ratio at birth has been increasing in recent years, reaching 115.3 male births per 100 female births in 1994 (see annex table C.1 and figure 3), which is much higher than what could be considered the normal sex ratio at birth of 107.

The rising sex ratio at birth in the Republic of Korea has been attributed solely to sex-selective abortion. A 1988 study based on 278 pregnancy cases reported that, while more than 90 per cent of the tested pregnancies indicating male foetuses resulted in normal births, more than 30 per cent of those indicating female foetuses were terminated by induced abortion.

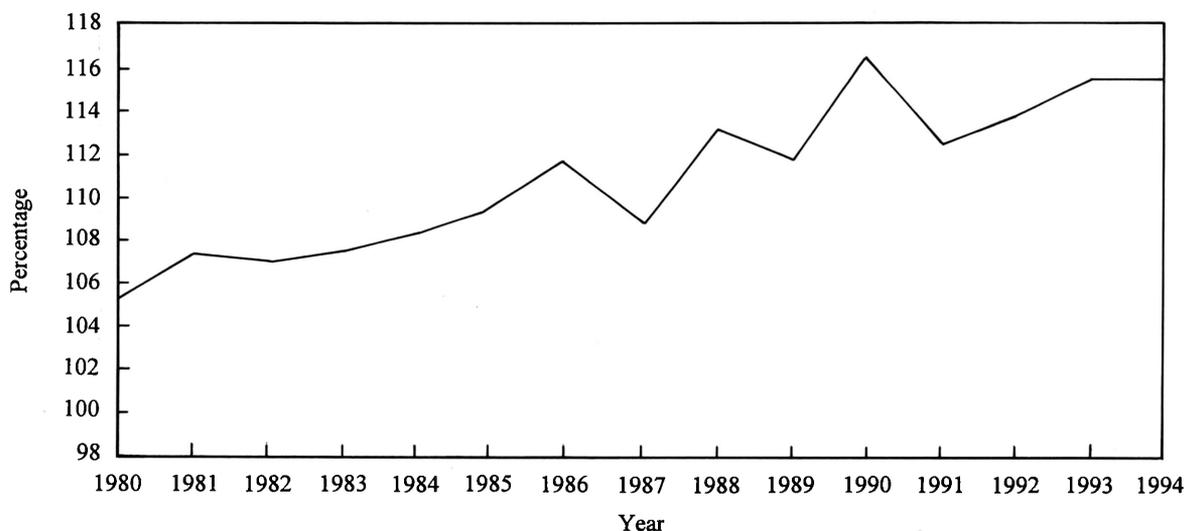
Available evidence also indicates that the sex ratio at birth tends to increase with increasing parity (annex table C.1). A 1995 study also reported that sex-selective abortion appears to be especially prevalent among families having only daughters. Another study noted that the abortion rate tends to increase with parity and time, and is much higher among families with at least one son, which indicates the changing preferences towards smaller families while the son preferences are maintained.

The age-specific gender ratios indicate that males outnumber females at all ages excepting at the older ages 55 years and above. In 1995, the number of men also substantially exceeded that of women at ages 0-14 years; at these ages the sex ratio or number of males was clearly above the range observed in respect of the normal population, reflecting the increasing sex ratio at birth. The excess of females at ages 55 years and above is clearly due to the very much higher male than female mortality at these ages (table 4 and also figure 4).

(b) Age structure

The percentage distribution of the estimated population by conventional five-year age group and by sex for selected years from 1971 to 1996 is given in annex table C.2, and this distribution, according to three broad age groups,

Figure 3. Trend in sex ratio at birth: 1980-1994



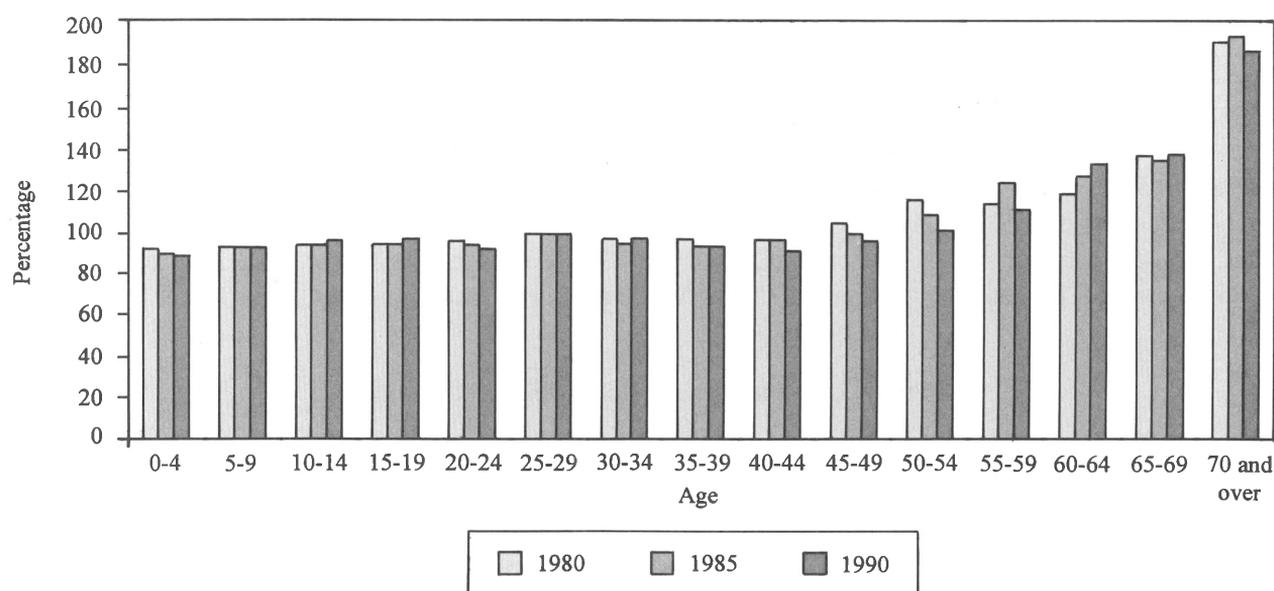
Source: Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

Table 4. Age-specific gender ratios: 1985, 1990 and 1995

Age group	1985		1990		1995	
	Males per 100 females	Females per 100 males	Males per 100 females	Females per 100 males	Males per 100 females	Females per 100 males
0-4	108.0	92.6	111.2	89.9	114.5	87.3
5-9	107.1	93.4	107.3	93.2	110.5	90.5
10-14	106.7	93.7	106.0	94.3	107.7	92.9
15-19	106.6	93.8	103.9	96.3	105.7	94.6
20-24	106.1	94.2	109.1	91.6	105.9	94.4
25-29	99.2	100.8	99.5	100.6	100.6	99.4
30-34	104.2	96.0	103.8	96.4	103.3	96.8
35-39	105.4	94.9	106.1	94.2	104.2	95.9
40-44	102.8	97.2	107.4	93.1	106.1	94.3
45-49	99.7	100.3	102.3	97.7	105.9	94.4
50-54	91.4	109.4	97.9	102.1	100.1	99.9
55-59	79.3	126.0	88.3	113.2	93.5	106.9
60-64	77.7	128.6	74.7	133.7	82.3	121.5
65-69	73.7	135.5	71.6	139.6	67.6	148.0
70+	50.7	197.4	52.6	190.1	54.0	185.1

Source: National Statistical Office.

Figure 4. Females per 100 males in specific age groups: 1980, 1985 and 1990



Source: National Statistical Office.

0-14, 15-59, and 60 years and over, is shown in table 5. It will be noted that as a result of the rapidity of the demographic transition, there have been profound changes in the age structure of the population during the last few decades. In particular, there have been sharp decreases in the young population and substantial increases in the population of working age and older persons.

In 1970, because of the high birth rates then prevalent in the Republic of Korea, children aged 0-14 years constituted around 40 per cent of the total population, this proportion being slightly higher for males (41.2 per cent) compared with females (39.5 per cent). But the sharp decline in fertility which had taken place during the subsequent years had resulted in these proportions decreasing to 29.3 per cent

Table 5. Percentage distribution of the estimated population by broad age group and sex: selected years, 1971-1996

Year	0-14 years		15-59 years		60 years and over	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	41.2	39.5	53.9	54.2	4.9	6.3
1976	38.7	36.3	56.7	57.0	4.6	6.7
1986	30.5	29.0	64.2	62.8	5.3	8.2
1990	26.7	25.0	67.3	65.7	6.0	9.3
1996	23.9	21.8	68.6	66.6	7.5	11.6

Source: National Statistical Office.

for males and 21.8 per cent for females in 1996. Concomitantly, the relative share of the working-age population, 15-59 years, increased from 53.9 to 68.6 per cent for males and 54.2 to 66.6 per cent for females during the same 25-year period.

In the past, population ageing was not a serious problem in the Republic of Korea, since only about 5 per cent of the country's population consisted of older persons aged 60 years and over. However, over the years the older population has been increasing rapidly in both absolute and relative terms, and this increase was more marked among females than among males. In 1996, nearly 8 per cent of all males and about 12 per cent of all females in the country were aged 60 years and over. The higher proportion of older persons among females compared with males is largely due to the higher male than female mortality at these ages.

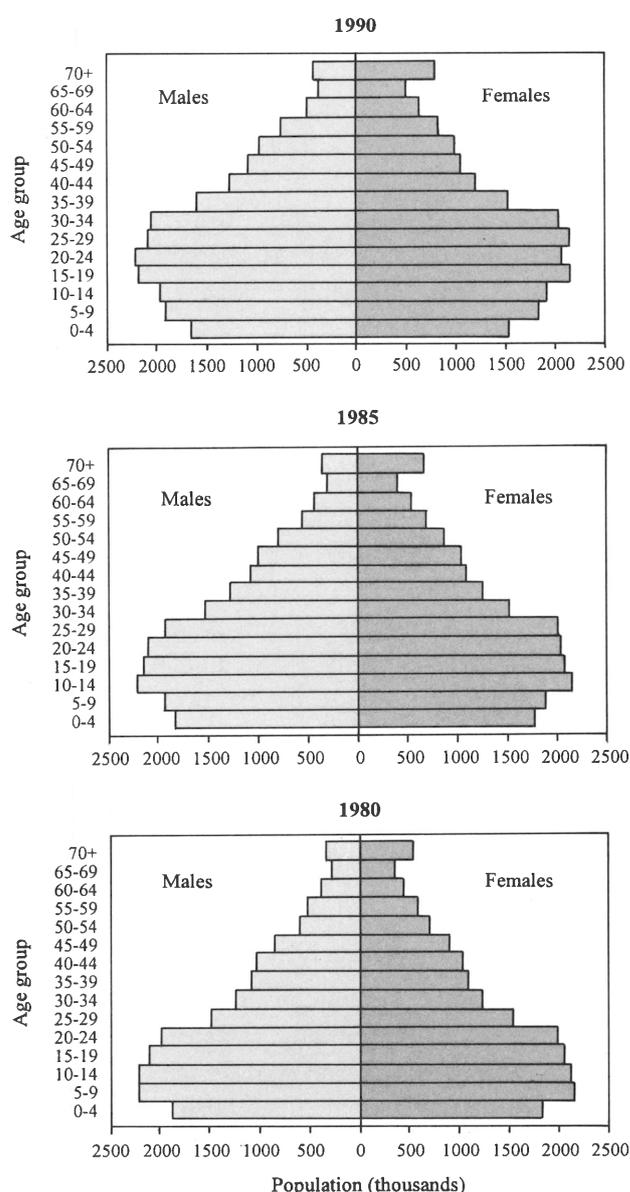
As a result of the demographic transition, the age structure of the population has changed from a pyramid-shaped pattern which is typical of less developed countries to a bell-shaped pattern characteristic of the developed countries (see figure 5).

(c) Marital status

The percentage distribution of the population aged 15 years and over by marital status and sex from 1970 to 1995 is shown in table 6.

It will be noted from the table that among persons aged 15 years and over, the proportion

Figure 5. Age structure of the population: 1980, 1985 and 1990



Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1993* (Seoul).

Table 6. Percentage distribution of persons aged 15 years and over by marital status and sex: selected years, 1970 to 1995

Year	Never married		Married		Divorced		Widowed	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1970	37.4	24.9	59.8	59.1	0.4	0.9	2.4	15.2
1980	40.4	28.7	57.4	57.4	0.4	0.6	1.9	13.3
1985	39.6	28.1	58.3	58.7	0.5	0.7	1.6	12.5
1990	38.2	27.8	59.3	58.8	0.7	0.9	1.8	12.5
1995 ^{a/}	35.2	25.3	62.0	60.3	1.0	1.2	1.7	13.2

Source: National Statistical Office, reports on the population and housing censuses for various years.

^{a/} Based on a 2 per cent sample tabulation of the data from the 1995 Population and Housing Census.

never-married has been declining since 1980. In all the five years in respect of which data are presented in the table, this proportion was significantly higher for males than females, but this gender gap has been narrowing over the years. According to the 2 per cent sample tabulation of the data from the 1995 Population and Housing Census, the proportion single among males was nearly 10 percentage points higher than that for females.

The proportion married among both males and females aged 15 years and over has also been increasing over the years and this proportion has been slightly higher for males than for females in some years. In 1995, about 60 per cent of females compared with 62 per cent of males aged 15 years and over were reported to be married. This statistical artifact is due to the reporting of a higher proportion of females than males as being widowed or divorced. In other words, the proportion ever-married (including the married, widowed and divorced categories) has always been significantly higher among females than males, indicating that the incidence of marriage is higher among females compared with males.

The proportion widowed has always been considerably higher among females than males; in 1995, this proportion for females (13.2 per cent) was nearly eight times that reported for males (1.7 per cent). The marked sex differential in the proportion widowed is due to several factors. First, Korean men usually marry women who are younger than themselves, and

this means that in general husbands will die earlier than their wives. Further, as noted earlier, mortality among men is higher than among women, and this, together with the differences in average age at marriage, results in a higher incidence of widowhood among women, particularly at the older ages.

Third, in the Republic of Korea, as in most Asian countries, a widowed male has a better chance of remarriage than a widowed female, thus ending his widowhood. Although there is no objection to the remarriage of widows in the Republic of Korea, in practice this is rare owing to continued adherence to the Confucian ideal of the chaste widow. Further, women do not wish to lose the access to their children which remarriage automatically involves.

2. Educational background

(a) Educational participation

(i) General education

With the enactment in 1948 of the Education Act which, among other things, made primary education compulsory for all children in the relevant age groups, primary-school enrolment ratios have been rising rapidly. By 1970, the Republic of Korea had achieved universal primary education, with reported gross enrolment ratios of 102.9 for males and 101.9 for females. These enrolment levels remained more or less stable until 1995 (table 7). Primary-school completion ratios have also been very high;

Table 7. Enrolment ratios in primary, middle and high schools by sex: selected years, 1970 to 1975

Year	Primary school (6-11 years)		Middle school (12-14 years)		High school (15-17 years)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1970	102.9	101.9	65.1	46.5	36.7	24.1
1975	103.0	103.4	80.8	67.0	51.1	35.8
1980	100.7	101.4	96.4	92.6	74.4	62.2
1985	99.4	102.5	100.0	99.3	81.9	74.5
1990	99.5	100.1	98.6	98.2	90.5	83.8
1995	101.9	100.6	100.3	100.9	90.3	89.4

Sources: For 1970 and 1975, National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1993* (Seoul); for 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995, Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

available data indicate that 98.9 per cent of all enrollees completed this level of education in 1992, and that practically all primary-school graduates (99.9 per cent) advanced or progressed to middle school during the period 1985-1992.

In 1985, compulsory education was extended to middle-school level, and since then enrolments at this level have also been increasing rapidly. In 1970, a considerably higher proportion among boys (65.1 per cent) compared with girls (46.5 per cent) at ages 12-14 years were enrolled in the middle schools. But in subsequent years this gender gap has been narrowing, and in 1995 the gross enrolment ratios were almost equal for girls (100.9) and boys (100.3). Available information also shows that 97.7 per cent of male students and 97.9 per cent of female students successfully completed middle-school education in 1992; among these graduates, 98.5 per cent of the males and 98.1 per cent of the females advanced to high schools.

In 1970, only 36.7 per cent of the males and 24.1 per cent of the females aged 15-17 years were enrolled in high schools. Since then, high-school enrolments have been increasing rapidly, this increase being more marked in respect of females than males. Consequently, the gender gap in enrolment ratios has been narrowing over the years and in 1995 the male enrolment ratio of 90.3 per cent was almost equal to the female ratio of 89.4 per cent (table 7).

The high-school programme is classified into two course streams: general high schools, which provide an academic type of education; and vocational high schools, which specialize in a number of fields, such as agriculture, fishery, commerce, trades, merchant marine, engineering and the arts. Given the entry into higher education, the majority of students attend general or academic high schools; for instance, in 1996, about 55 per cent of all high-school students were enrolled in academic high schools, this proportion among boys (61.3 per cent) being significantly higher than the 54.7 per cent reported in respect of girls (table 8).

It is also evident from table 8 that in the vocational high schools, the majority of the girls are concentrated in commercial schools, while the majority of the boys follow technical courses such as engineering, agriculture and science. It is also interesting to note that the proportion among male students enrolled in agricultural courses has been declining over the years.

(ii) Higher education

While enrolments in primary and middle schools cover all students in the appropriate age brackets (6-11 and 12-14 years respectively), and about 90 per cent of boys and girls aged 15-17 years are enrolled in high schools, participation in higher education is relatively low in the Republic of Korea. Gender disparity in enrolment is also very marked at this educational level.

Table 8. Percentage distribution of high-school students by high-school classification and sex: selected years, 1980 to 1996

High-school classification	1980		1985		1990		1996	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
General high school^{a/}	54.6	55.4	61.3	55.3	68.4	60.1	61.3	54.7
Vocational high school	45.4	44.6	38.7	44.7	31.6	39.9	38.7	45.3
Agricultural	5.3	0.3	4.0	0.5	2.9	0.5	1.1	0.7
Technical	19.9	0.9	17.0	0.1	15.6	0.3	23.0	2.8
Commercial	10.6	30.6	8.5	28.9	6.3	27.5	6.0	26.9
Fishery and marine	0.7	0.6	0.8	–	0.8	0.1	0.6	0.0
Comprehensive	6.4	8.2	7.7	11.5	5.5	10.6	5.4	11.3
Vocational	2.4	4.0	0.7	3.6	0.5	0.9	2.6	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education, *Statistical Yearbook of Education*, 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1996, cited in Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

^{a/} Arts, physical science and science high schools are included in general high schools.

In 1980, about 24 per cent of all males aged 18-21 years were enrolled in colleges and universities, the corresponding proportion for girls being considerably lower, at 8.4 per cent. During the subsequent 16 years, these enrolment ratios increased rapidly, the male ratio more than threefold and the female ratio more than fivefold. Yet in 1996, the female enrolment ratio of 45.1 per cent was considerably lower than the male ratio of 77.6 per cent (table 9; see also figure 6).

The relatively low enrolments at higher levels of education are obviously due to the low student advancement rate from high schools to institutions of higher learning. Although these rates for both males and females rose rapidly between 1980 and 1996, the proportion of high-school graduates entering college and university is at present only about 62 per cent among males and 53 per cent among females (table 9). The relatively low advancement rate is largely due to the fact that college entrance depends upon ranking high in objectively graded examinations.

An important phenomenon relating to tertiary-level education in the Republic of Korea, as in most other countries of the region, is the tendency for students to pursue fields of study conforming to socially defined feminine and masculine roles. Available data indicate that

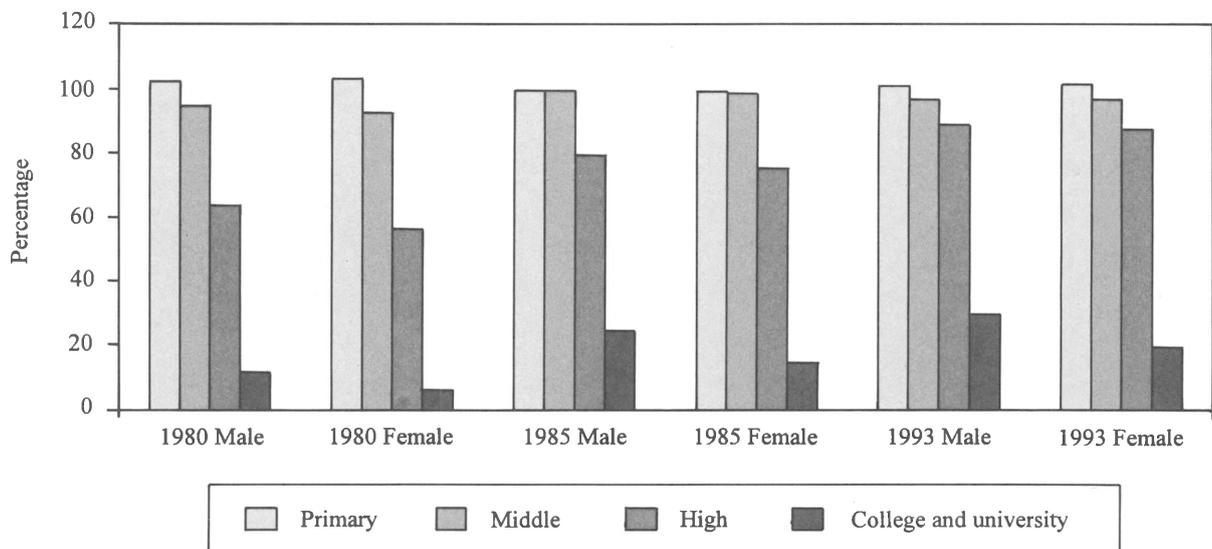
Table 9. Advancement rates from high school to college and university, and enrolment ratios in college and university by sex: selected years, 1980 to 1996

Year	Advancement rate		Enrolment ratio	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980	30.3	22.9	24.3	8.4
1985	38.3	34.1	50.2	22.9
1990	33.9	32.4	50.0	23.9
1991	33.7	32.6	51.8	24.8
1992	35.3	33.1	54.4	27.3
1993	39.9	36.7	57.9	29.9
1994	48.2	43.5	63.2	33.5
1995	52.9	49.8	69.7	38.6
1996	61.5	53.1	77.6	45.1

Source: Ministry of Education, *Statistical Yearbook of Education*, 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1996, cited in Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

there is a continuing concentration of female students in liberal arts and education courses, while the preference of male students is for pure and applied sciences. For instance, between 1985 and 1996, the proportion enrolled in natural science courses at the junior colleges was over 66 per cent among males and less than 30 per cent among females. In all other fields of study, the enrolment proportions are higher

Figure 6. Enrolment ratios by level of educations and sex: 1980, 1985 and 1993



Source: National Statistical Office.

for females than for males. Practically all students in teacher training courses are women, and a significantly higher proportion among female students compared with male students are enrolled in medical courses, which concentrate mostly on nursing and pharmacy (table 10).

Undergraduate enrolments in colleges and universities follow similar sex-type patterns as junior college enrolments in regard to the selection of study disciplines. Although the proportions among male and female students enrolled in natural science courses increased steadily between 1980 and 1996, in 1996, nearly 52 per cent of male students compared with only 28.6 per cent of female students were in this discipline. Males also outnumber females in social science studies, but in other fields the proportion enrolled among females is higher than the corresponding proportion among males (table 11).

(iii) Teachers

An important factor contributing to the expansion of girls' enrolments at the primary and secondary levels of education has been the increase in female teachers both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the total teaching cadre. The distribution of teachers by level of education and sex is shown in table 12.

It is evident from table 12 that, during the 16-year period 1980-1996, there was a rapid increase in the number of female teachers in absolute as well as relative terms at all three levels of general education. The number of female teachers increased by over 75 per cent in the elementary or primary schools and by over two and a half times in the middle and high schools during this period. Since the increase in the number of female teachers has been faster than that in the number of male teachers, the relative share of females in the total number of teachers has been increasing steadily over the years. In 1996, females outnumbered males as teachers in elementary schools and almost equalled males in the total number of middle-school teachers. The proportionate share of females in total high-school teachers also increased significantly, from 17.1 per cent in 1980 to 24.2 per cent in 1996. The increasing number of females recruited to the teaching service was due to the rising educational attainment of women over the years, as well as to their preference or aptitude for teaching.

Although the number and relative share of women teachers have increased enormously during the past two decades, women are still very much under-represented in the senior-level management and teaching positions. In

Table 10. Percentage distribution of junior college students by major divisions and sex: selected years, 1980 to 1996

Year	Humanities		Social sciences		Natural sciences		Medicine and pharmacy		Arts and physical education		Teacher training		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980	9.5	24.0	8.4	12.1	76.5	17.5	3.4	21.1	2.2	23.5	–	1.8	100.0	100.0
1985	1.7	2.4	18.5	17.7	68.9	24.3	4.9	12.8	5.9	26.1	–	16.6	100.0	100.0
1990	2.4	4.6	16.6	21.6	70.7	25.3	5.6	21.8	5.2	15.2	–	11.6	100.0	100.0
1991	2.5	4.9	16.1	23.1	70.6	25.1	5.3	20.4	5.4	15.8	–	10.7	100.0	100.0
1992	2.7	5.2	16.2	24.5	69.0	26.6	6.4	19.8	5.5	14.4	–	9.7	100.0	100.0
1993	2.9	5.3	16.6	25.8	68.0	26.4	6.4	18.8	5.9	15.2	–	8.5	100.0	100.0
1994	3.1	5.8	17.4	26.4	66.8	26.6	6.1	17.4	6.6	15.6	–	8.1	100.0	100.0
1995	3.2	6.4	17.4	26.4	66.5	27.0	5.7	16.7	7.1	15.6	–	7.8	100.0	100.0
1996	3.1	6.5	17.4	26.2	69.2	27.9	4.9	16.3	7.9	15.4	–	7.6	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education, cited in Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

Table 11. Percentage distribution of undergraduates by major field of study and sex: selected years, 1980 to 1996

Year	Humanities		Social sciences		Natural sciences		Medicine and pharmacy		Arts and physical education		Education		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980	8.5	28.3	25.2	7.3	41.7	5.7	4.8	7.7	8.6	19.5	9.0	28.0	100.0	100.0
1985	12.6	25.6	32.5	14.6	42.1	19.9	3.0	13.2	3.9	5.2	6.0	21.5	100.0	100.0
1990	11.2	24.5	31.7	17.2	45.7	27.0	3.5	4.8	4.0	13.2	3.9	13.2	100.0	100.0
1991	10.9	23.9	31.2	17.5	46.7	28.0	3.5	4.7	4.2	13.4	3.5	12.5	100.0	100.0
1992	10.4	23.7	30.7	17.9	47.8	28.4	3.5	4.7	4.4	13.1	3.2	12.3	100.0	100.0
1993	10.1	23.7	29.7	18.5	49.3	27.9	3.5	4.6	4.5	13.1	2.9	12.1	100.0	100.0
1994	9.9	23.4	28.9	19.2	50.4	28.3	3.4	4.6	4.6	12.8	2.8	11.7	100.0	100.0
1995	9.8	22.9	28.9	20.7	51.3	28.6	3.4	4.6	4.6	12.5	2.7	10.8	100.0	100.0
1996	9.8	22.8	27.7	22.1	52.1	28.6	3.2	4.5	4.7	12.2	2.5	9.8	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education, cited in Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

Table 12. Teachers by educational level of school and sex: 1980 to 1995

Year	Elementary school			Middle school			High school		
	Both sexes	Female	Percentage female	Both sexes	Female	Percentage female	Both sexes	Female	Percentage female
1980	119 064	43 792	36.8	54 858	18 010	32.8	50 948	8 729	17.1
1985	126 785	54 500	43.0	69 553	26 808	38.5	69 546	14 181	20.4
1990	136 270	68 143	50.0	88 565	40 911	46.2	92 159	20 964	22.7
1991	137 442	70 647	51.4	90 879	42 840	47.1	94 625	21 785	23.0
1992	137 864	72 259	52.4	93 670	44 638	47.7	95 707	21 977	23.0
1993	138 035	73 693	53.4	95 335	45 560	47.8	96 027	21 976	22.9
1994	137 655	74 525	54.1	97 881	47 259	48.3	96 427	22 099	22.9
1995	136 747	75 428	55.2	97 820	47 844	48.9	98 406	23 134	23.5
1996	135 932	76 993	56.6	97 417	48 447	49.7	100 876	24 429	24.2

Source: Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

1996, less than 7 per cent of all principals and vice-principals of elementary, middle and high schools were women, who also accounted for less than a third of all master-teachers in these schools. It was only at the lower levels of the teaching service that women constituted about 70 per cent in elementary schools and 59 per cent in middle schools. The vast majority of the temporary teachers in the three levels of schools were also women (table 13).

(b) Educational attainment

The increasing participation of Korean men and women in various levels of education has resulted in a marked improvement in their overall educational attainment over the years. This improvement is reflected in an increase in the average years of schooling; a rise in

the proportion completing particular educational levels or cycles; and an increase in the literacy rates.

(i) Average number of years of schooling

The average number of years of schooling completed by Korean men and women aged six years and over in selected years from 1960 to 1990 is shown in table 14.

It will be noted from table 14 that in 1960, Korean men had on the average 4.78 years of schooling, or 1.86 years more than their female counterparts. During subsequent years, the average number of years of schooling increased rapidly, the increase being faster in respect of females than males. Yet, in

Table 13. Percentage share of males and females in the various hierarchical positions of the teaching service: 1996

Hierarchical positions	Elementary school		Middle school		High school	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Principals	95.8	4.2	93.3	6.7	95.9	4.1
Vice-principals	93.0	7.0	93.8	6.2	98.3	1.7
Master-teachers	69.5	30.5	75.2	24.8	91.8	8.2
Teachers	29.6	70.4	41.4	58.6	70.0	30.0
Temporary teachers	9.2	90.8	11.1	88.9	32.5	67.5
All positions	42.8	57.2	49.2	50.8	75.4	24.6

Source: Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

Table 14. Average number of years of schooling of persons aged six years and over by sex: selected years, 1960 to 1990

Year	Male	Female	Male/ female difference
1960	4.78	2.92	1.86
1980	8.67	6.63	2.04
1985	9.66	7.58	2.08
1990	10.55	8.58	1.97

Source: National Statistical Office.

1990 this average for men (10.55 years) was about two years more than the average of 8.58 years reported for females. This would mean that, even after 30 years of women's educational development, there has been no reduction in the gender gap in regard to the amount of education received.

The overall average number of years of schooling, however, masks the variations in these averages across broad age groups. Relevant data available for 1980, 1985 and 1990 clearly show that the average number of years of schooling for both males and females rises sharply between ages 6-19 and 20-29 years, thereafter declining with increasing age, this decline being gradual until ages 40-49 and precipitous thereafter. In 1990, Korean men and women aged 20-29 years had about four

years more education than their brothers and sisters at ages 6-19 years. The decrease in these averages with increasing age is due to the fact that, compared with the current school-age population, the present-day older persons had less access to educational opportunities when they passed through their school-going ages (table 15).

It will also be noted from table 15 that over the years there has been a decrease in the gender differences in the average number of school years at all age groups excepting the oldest age group, 50 years and over. In 1990, females aged 6-19 years had slightly longer years of schooling than their male counterparts, reflecting the enrolment and completion rates in primary, middle and high schools. It will also be noted that the gender difference in the average number of school years increases with advancing age, reflecting the historical trends in educational participation.

(ii) Educational levels completed

Data available for the 25-year period 1970-1995 show a rapid rise in the proportions of Korean men and women aged 25 years and over who had completed various levels of education. According to these data, there has been a marked decrease in the proportion with only primary or incomplete primary-level education during this period: from 61.2 to 18.6 per cent for males and from 84.7 to 36.2 per cent for females. Concurrently, the proportions

Table 15. Average number of years of schooling by broad age group and sex: 1980, 1985 and 1990

Age group	1980			1985			1990		
	Male	Female	Male/ female difference	Male	Female	Male/ female difference	Male	Female	Male/ female difference
6-19	6.60	6.10	0.50	6.71	6.71	—	7.70	7.79	-0.09
20-29	10.33	9.44	0.89	11.34	10.61	0.73	12.26	11.81	0.45
30-39	10.19	8.10	2.09	10.93	9.28	1.65	11.78	10.37	1.41
40-49	9.01	5.95	3.06	9.88	7.14	2.74	10.64	8.35	2.29
50+	5.03	2.25	2.78	6.49	3.08	3.41	7.56	3.92	3.64
All ages 6+	8.67	6.63	2.04	9.66	7.58	2.08	10.55	8.58	1.97

Source: National Statistical Office.

completing middle school, high school and college/university education have been increasing steadily for both males and females (table 16).

Despite a distinct improvement in the levels of education completed, the educational attainment of women is generally lower than that of men. For instance, in 1995, the proportion of adult females with only primary or incomplete primary-level education (36.2 per cent) was nearly twice the corresponding proportion for males (18.6 per cent). While the proportion of women who had completed middle-school education (16.9 per cent) was slightly higher than that for men (14.5 per cent), a substantially higher proportion among males compared with

females had completed high school or college/university education. The proportion of men with college/university degrees (25.7 per cent) was twice that for women (see also figure 7).

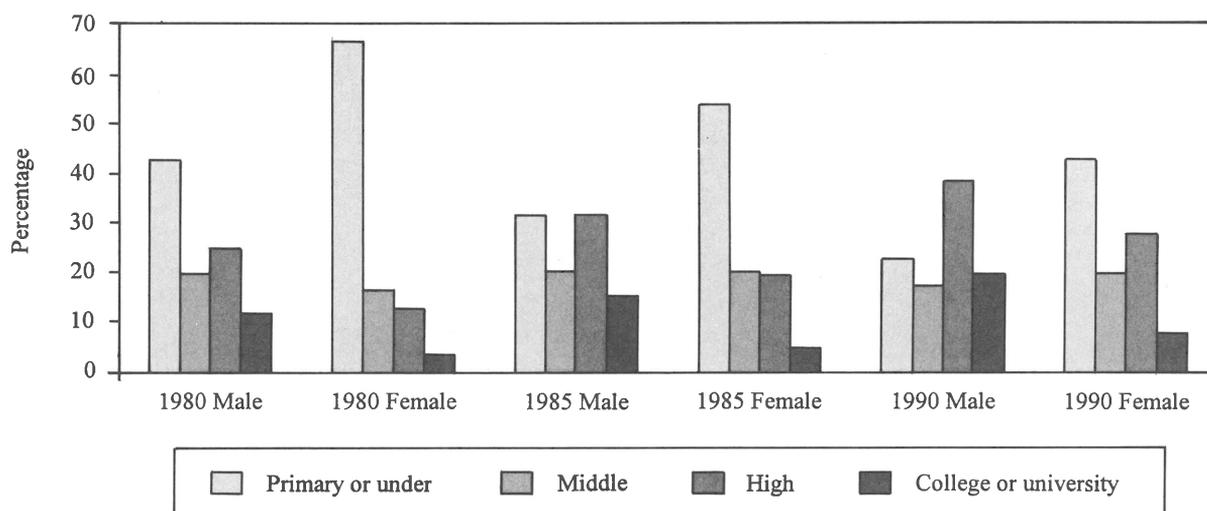
Available data relating to persons with college/university degrees indicate that the relative share of women in the total number of degree holders increased steadily between 1980 and 1996. In 1980, women accounted for 31.8 per cent of all persons with bachelor's degrees, 19.7 per cent of those with master's degrees, and 9.0 per cent of all doctorates. But by 1996, these proportions had risen to 41.4, 29.5 and 16.6 per cent respectively (table 17).

Table 16. Percentage distribution of persons aged 25 years and over by level of education completed and sex: 1970 to 1995

Year	Primary school complete/incomplete		Middle-school graduates		High-school graduates		College/university graduates	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1970	61.2	84.7	15.1	8.2	15.2	5.5	8.5	1.6
1975	53.1	77.1	17.7	12.1	19.7	8.4	9.5	2.4
1980	42.8	67.0	19.8	16.5	25.4	12.9	12.0	3.6
1985	31.9	54.1	20.5	20.5	32.1	20.2	15.5	5.2
1990	23.3	43.0	17.6	20.3	38.9	28.4	20.1	8.3
1995	18.6	36.2	14.5	16.9	41.2	34.1	25.7	12.8

Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea* (Seoul), 1993 and 1996.

Figure 7. Percentage distribution of adult males and females by educational attainment: 1980 to 1990



Source: National Statistical Office.

Table 17. Persons with bachelor's, master's and doctor's degrees by sex: 1980 to 1996

Year	Bachelor's degree		Master's degree		Doctor's degree	
	Both sexes	Percentage female	Both sexes	Percentage female	Both sexes	Percentage female
1980	49 735	31.8	5 028	19.7	524	9.0
1985	118 584	36.1	16 690	18.5	1 347	10.2
1990	165 916	37.0	19 788	23.8	2 481	13.3
1991	175 586	36.3	21 539	24.5	2 980	13.4
1992	178 631	37.0	22 438	25.3	3 211	13.2
1993	184 868	38.7	24 519	27.8	3 711	14.7
1994	179 519	40.6	25 787	28.0	3 818	15.2
1995	180 664	41.4	27 398	28.4	4 107	16.9
1996	184 212	41.4	29 189	29.5	4 462	16.6

Sources: National Statistical Office, *Population and Housing Census Report*, 1982, 1987, and 1992; and Ministry of Education, *Statistical Yearbook of Education*, 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1996.

The increase in the number of degree holders has also resulted in an improvement in the graduates/population ratios, but this improvement has been more pronounced in the case of females compared with males. The number of bachelor's degree holders per 10,000 population increased fourfold, from 8.47 in 1980 to 33.96 in 1996 for females, and by less than threefold for men, from 18.9 to 47.37, during the same period. The number of master's degree holders per 10,000 population increased over sevenfold in the case of women and over fourfold in the case of men. There was also an 11-fold increase in the ratio of female doctor's degree holders per 10,000 females, the corresponding increase among men being about six and a half times (table 18).

(iii) Literacy rates

Another reliable indicator of the educational attainment of the people is the literacy rate. Data from the past censuses indicate that there has been a steady rise in the literacy level of men and women aged 15 years and over during the past three decades or so, but this increase has been more marked in the case of women compared with men. Consequently, the gender gap in literacy rates has narrowed over the years (table 19). Today, the literacy rate of Korean women (97 per cent) is only about two percentage points lower than the male rate (99 per cent). These rates also indicate that the Republic of Korea has succeeded in achieving universal adult literacy.

Table 18. Number of degree holders per 10,000 people by sex: 1980 to 1996

Year	Bachelor's degree		Master's degree		Doctor's degree	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980	18.09	8.47	2.15	0.53	0.25	0.03
1985	37.48	21.18	6.72	1.53	0.60	0.07
1990	48.06	28.35	6.80	2.18	0.99	0.15
1991	51.33	29.69	7.47	2.45	1.19	0.19
1992	51.21	30.48	7.63	2.62	1.27	0.20
1993	51.75	32.74	7.98	3.11	1.43	0.25
1994	47.67	33.00	8.29	3.28	1.45	0.26
1995	46.88	33.58	8.68	3.49	1.82	0.31
1996	47.37	33.96	9.04	3.83	1.63	0.33

Source: Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Yearbook on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

Table 19. Literacy rates of persons aged 15 years and over by sex: 1960 to 1995

Year	Literacy rates (percentage)		
	Male	Female	Male/ female difference
1960	84	60	24
1970	95	83	12
1980	97	90	7
1995	99	97	2

Source: National Statistical Office.

3. Health status

The overall health status of the Korean people has improved tremendously over the years owing to a rise in living standards, as reflected in the provision of better water supply and sanitation, housing, diet and medical services.

(a) Morbidity trends and patterns

A systematic analysis of the incidence of morbidity in the Republic of Korea is hampered to a considerable extent by the lack of comprehensive and reliable data. For the country as a whole, the Government has, since 1977, been collecting information on morbidity at three-year intervals through the Social Statistical Survey. In addition, ad hoc surveys have been carried out by the Korean Institute of Population and Health. Information is also available from anthropological-type surveys conducted in five ecologically distinctive communities throughout the country, which gives a rough picture of the

relationship between community-related factors and morbidity.

It has to be noted, however, that survey data on sickness and diseases are basically subjective in nature and thus lack any vigorous measurement criteria from the medical point of view. The comparability of these surveys is also highly questionable in view of the concepts, methods, reference periods and timing adopted in respect of each of the surveys.

According to the Social Statistical Surveys, the morbidity rate, or the proportion of the population reported to be sick during the reference period of two weeks prior to the survey date, had doubled from 9.2 per cent in 1980 to 18.5 per cent in 1992. In all the survey years, the morbidity rate was significantly higher for females than for males, owing perhaps to the fact that females outnumber males considerably at older ages. The survey data also indicate that the average number of days confined in bed as a result of illness was slightly lower for females than for males up to 1986; in recent years this average has been about the same for men and women (table 20).

A fair assessment of changes in morbidity patterns could be obtained from data on causes of death, although the quality of reporting on causes of death continues to be unsatisfactory. The certificates from physicians account for only about 50 per cent of all deaths, and it is also suspected that a significant proportion of doctor's certificates are issued without examining the patient or the body of the deceased. Further, there have been frequent changes in

Table 20. Morbidity rates and average number of days confined in bed, by sex: 1980 to 1992

Survey year	Morbidity rate			Average number of days in bed		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
1980	9.2	8.3	10.0	4.4	4.6	4.2
1983	7.6	7.1	8.1	4.3	4.6	4.0
1986	12.8	11.5	13.4	2.0	2.0	1.9
1989	16.6	15.0	18.0	1.1	1.0	1.1
1992	18.5	16.1	20.8	0.9	0.9	0.9

Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Statistical Survey* (for various years).

the classificatory definitions and causes of death. Nevertheless, the data are of some value in assessing the changing patterns of mortality and thus of morbidity in the Republic of Korea.

Traditionally, the main cause of death has been respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis, bronchitis and pneumonia, followed by gastrointestinal diseases. However, the incidence and fatality of both types of illness declined during the 1970s and 1980s. Data for the 1980s and 1990s (annex table C.3) indicate that diseases typical of developed industrialized countries (such as cancer, heart, liver and kidney ailments, diabetes and strokes) are increasingly becoming the primary causes of death among both males and females in the Republic of Korea.

It is evident from annex table C.3 and table 21 that diseases of the circulatory system, injury and poisoning, and neoplasms, are today the three most important causes of death among both males and females. The tensions and social dislocations caused by rapid urbanization has apparently resulted in an increase in the incidence of mental illnesses, which in 1994 ranked as the eighth most important cause of death among females and the ninth most important among males. The changes that have taken place in the major causes of death are considered partly to reflect the modernization of the mortality pattern in response to a rising standard of living.

The 1995 National Health and Attitude Survey collected information relating to the incidence of diseases such as malignant neoplasm, diabetes, hypertension, cerebrovascular diseases, heart diseases and liver diseases, which largely affect adults. According to the data from this Survey, morbidity rates are highest in respect of hypertensive diseases, the rate for females (31.45) being considerably higher than that for males (21.69). The second highest morbidity rate is in respect of diabetes among males and heart diseases among females. The Survey also revealed that the morbidity rates generally rise with increasing age until a peak is reached at ages 60-69 years (table 22).

(b) Mortality levels and differentials

In the absence of reliable vital registration data, attempts have been made to estimate the mortality levels and trends on the basis of data from censuses and sample surveys. Available estimates (annex table C.4) indicate that overall mortality rates have been declining steadily over the years with improvements in the standards of living and in the general health status of the population. These estimates also show that in all years, the male mortality rates have been systematically higher than the female rates, but that this gender gap has been narrowing over the years (see also table 23).

It is also evident from annex table C.4 that the decline in mortality between 1970 and

Table 21. Changing rank order of ten major causes of death among males and females: 1980, 1990 and 1994

Major cause of death	1980		1990		1994	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Diseases of the circulatory system	1	1	1	1	1	1
Injury and poisoning	2	5	3	4	3	4
Neoplasms	3	3	2	3	2	2
Diseases of the digestive system	4	4	4	5	4	10
Symptoms and ill-defined conditions	5	2	5	2	6	3
Diseases of the respiratory system	6	6	6	6	5	5
Infectious and parasitic diseases	7	7	7	8	7	9
Diseases of the nervous system	8	8	9	9	10	6
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	9	9	8	7	8	7
Genito-urinary	10	10	10	10	11	11
Mental illnesses	..	..	..	..	9	8

Source: National Statistical Office, *Annual Report on the Cause of Death Statistics, 1995*.

Table 22. Morbidity rates of adult diseases by age group and sex: 1995

Age group	Malignant neoplasm of the stomach		Diabetes mellitus		Hypertensive disease		Cerebro-vascular disease		Heart disease		Liver disease	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
20-29	–	–	1.79	1.56	2.98	1.56	0.60	–	2.39	2.08	19.08	9.36
30-39	0.50	–	6.51	2.92	15.53	3.41	0.50	–	1.00	9.74	14.03	13.15
40-49	0.66	–	30.36	15.51	33.00	36.41	5.28	1.35	5.28	28.32	25.08	10.79
50-59	1.80	–	48.52	44.81	63.79	100.41	10.78	14.11	17.07	42.32	35.94	8.30
60-69	4.97	3.69	99.34	65.19	91.06	129.15	36.42	27.06	16.56	56.58	33.11	17.22
70 +	9.06	1.44	27.19	60.52	78.55	112.39	60.42	36.02	33.23	50.43	9.06	8.65
All ages	1.00	0.34	16.77	15.47	21.69	31.45	5.92	5.56	5.29	17.43	15.95	8.20

Source: Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, *National Health and Attitude Survey, 1995*, reported in National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1996* (Seoul).

Table 23. Mortality rate by sex: selected years, 1970 to 1994

Year	Mortality rate per thousand population		
	Male	Female	Male/female difference
1970	9.2	6.8	2.4
1975	8.9	6.4	2.5
1980	8.4	6.2	2.2
1985	7.0	5.0	2.0
1990	6.9	4.9	2.0
1994	6.2	4.7	1.5

Source: National Statistical Office.

1994 has occurred at all age groups for both males and females. Further, the mortality rates are also lower for females compared with males at all ages, and this gender gap widens with advancing age.

Along with the decline in overall mortality rates, there have also been considerable declines in infant and childhood mortality rates over the years. Available estimates indicate that in 1979, the infant mortality rate was significantly higher among baby girls than among baby boys, but this gender differential has been disappearing since 1983. Similarly, the mortality rate for children aged 1-4 years was higher in respect of females than males in 1979, but in subsequent years for which data are available,

girls had a lower mortality rate than boys (table 24).

An important factor that has contributed to the spectacular decline in infant and childhood mortality has been the substantial progress made in regard to immunization against communicable diseases. In order to extend immunization coverage for children, the Government had carried out massive cost-free vaccination activities, particularly among low-income communities. Currently, all young children and, if necessary, some schoolchildren, receive BCG, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, DPT, polio, German measles, and other vaccines. For children entering elementary schools, vaccination records are checked, and those with incomplete records are required to complete immunization within 90 days of school entrance.

Estimates indicate that maternal mortality rates also declined rapidly, from 83 per 100,000 live births in 1970 to 30 per 100,000 live births in 1992. This decline has largely been attributed to various basic services which the Government has been providing under the revised Mother-Child Health Act of 1986. The increasing patronage of MCH services has also resulted in an increasing number of pregnant women being steered towards medically supervised deliveries. Available information indicates that an increasing proportion of birth deliveries in both urban and rural areas take place in hospitals attended by trained medical

Table 24. Infant and childhood mortality rates by sex: selected years, 1979 to 1991

Year	Infant mortality rate			Child mortality rate		
	Male	Female	Male/ female difference	Male	Female	Male/ female difference
1979	32.8	42.7	-9.9	2.29	4.32	-2.03
1983	16.00	15.51	0.49	2.03	1.97	0.06
1985	14.84	14.52	0.32	1.64	1.48	0.16
1989	12.09	11.58	0.51	1.23	1.10	0.13
1991	9.89	9.39	0.50	1.02	0.88	0.14

Source: National Statistical Office.

personnel. In 1991, for instance, 91 per cent of all births took place in hospitals, this proportion being higher in urban (93.5 per cent) than in rural (79.8 per cent) areas. Similarly, 99.1 per cent of those deliveries in urban areas and 93.0 per cent of those in rural areas were attended by doctors or trained midwife/health workers (table 25).

(c) Life expectancy

The improvement in the health status of Korean men and women is also reflected in the spectacular rise in their average life expectancy. Recent estimates prepared by the United Nations indicate that between 1950-1955 and 1990-1995, life expectancy at birth increased from 46.0 years to 67.2 years for males and from 49.0 years to 74.8 years for females. Throughout this 40-year period, female life

expectancy was higher than male life expectancy, and this gender gap has been widening over the years. Currently, a Korean woman could expect to live, on the average, 7.5 years longer than her male counterpart (table 26).

D. WOMEN IN FAMILY LIFE

1. The Korean family

(a) Family structure

In the Republic of Korea, as in most other countries, the family still constitutes the basic unit of social life. Traditionally, the Korean family has been patrilineal, and the extended family, consisting of several conjugal families related through the male line, has been the most common family type. The male head of the

Table 25. Percentage distribution of birth deliveries by place of delivery and type of assistance received by the mother during delivery: selected years, 1980 to 1991

Place of delivery/ type of assistance	1980			1986			1991		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Place of delivery									
Hospital	53.7	74.9	24.4	85.8	92.1	72.9	91.0	93.5	79.8
Home	43.1	21.2	73.5	12.9	6.2	26.5	5.1	4.4	8.2
Other	3.2	3.9	2.3	1.3	1.7	0.6	7.1	5.6	13.6
Type of assistance									
Doctor	51.7	71.2	24.6	77.4	84.2	63.4	90.8	93.1	80.6
Midwife/health worker	7.8	8.1	7.3	10.8	10.7	11.0	7.2	6.0	12.4
Family member	39.2	19.7	66.2	11.6	4.9	25.3	1.3	0.5	4.5
Other	1.3	1.0	1.9	0.2	0.2	1.3	0.8	0.5	2.4

Source: Korean Statistical Association, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1991*; and Korean Institute for Health and Social Affairs, *Family Formation and Pattern of Child Birth in Korea, 1992*.

**Table 26. Life expectancy at birth by sex:
1950-1955 to 1990-1995**

Period	Life expectancy at birth (years)			
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Female/ male difference
1950-1955	47.5	46.0	49.0	3.0
1955-1960	52.6	51.1	54.1	3.0
1960-1965	55.2	53.6	56.9	3.3
1965-1970	57.6	56.0	59.4	3.4
1970-1975	62.6	59.3	66.1	6.8
1975-1980	64.8	61.3	68.4	7.1
1980-1985	65.9	63.5	71.1	7.6
1985-1990	69.6	65.8	73.7	7.9
1990-1995	71.0	67.3	74.8	7.5

Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 1996 Revision* (Sales No. E.98.XIII.5).

patrilineal family controlled all the family properties and was generally the sole provider of economic support. Filial piety, or the unquestioned obedience which the son owed to the father, was the normative foundation of the Korean family.

An important concern of the traditional family group has been the begetting of a male heir to maintain the continuity of the family lineage, to inherit family property, and to perform ancestral rituals in the household and at the family grave site. By custom, the oldest son assumed leadership of the family upon his father's death, and inherited his house and a greater share of the land than his brothers. The oldest son's household, the stem was known as *k'unjip* or "big house", while that of each of the younger sons was referred to as *chagunjip*, or "small house". The main line of descent from generation to generation was traced through the stem family of the oldest son.

Traditionally, men and women were strictly segregated both inside and outside the household, and the woman's role in the family was a subordinate one. Upon marriage, a woman had to leave her parental home and move to her husband's house, where her duty to her husband, or rather to her husband's family, was absolute and unquestionable. Very often she was abused and ill-treated, not only by her

mother-in-law but also by her sisters-in-law. However, once she gave birth to a son, the stressful phase of married life would come to an end and she would be treated with respect.

Over the years there have been radical changes in the structure of the Korean family system. The traditional complex extended family structures began to weaken or break down and were being increasingly replaced by structurally simpler two-generation nuclear families. Data from the censuses indicate that nuclear families composed of either a married couple or a married couple and their children today constitute nearly 80 per cent of the families in the country (table 27). In other words, a conjugal relationship between husband and wife had taken precedence over the relationship between a son and his parents. These developments have not only led to greater equality among family units established by the eldest and younger sons, but also to an improvement in the status of women. The wife no longer has to endure the domination of her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law, and she now plays an important part in family decision-making.

The changes in family structure that have taken place over the years are also reflected in the composition and size of households. In

Table 27. Percentage distribution of households by family type: 1970 to 1995

Year	Family type			
	Nuclear ^{a/}	Extended ^{b/}	Other	All types
1970	71.5	18.8	9.7	100.0
1975	70.7	11.4	17.9	100.0
1980	74.0	11.2	14.8	100.0
1985	75.3	10.7	14.0	100.0
1990	76.0	10.2	13.8	100.0
1995	79.9	10.7	9.4	100.0

Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1996* (Seoul).

^{a/} Including families comprising married couples only; married couples and child(ren); and father or mother with child(ren).

^{b/} Including married couples and parent(s); and married couple with parent(s) and child(ren).

1975, households with five or more members constituted the majority (59.0 per cent) of all households in the country. But by 1995, nearly 82 per cent of the households had either four or less than four members. Available data indicate that single-person households have also been on the increase in recent years. Consequently, the average household size decreased from 5.0 in 1975 to 3.3 in 1995 (table 28).

The changes that have taken place in the Korean family structure could be attributed to several factors. First, the influence of Western civilization, and particularly of Christianity, altered and weakened the traditional family system. The missionary influence was particularly significant in the case of females whose conversion to Christianity enabled them to emerge from their seclusion and participate actively in religious and social affairs. Second, the expansion of educational opportunities for both males and females resulted to some extent in giving them economic independence, and this, together with the recognition of the importance of the individual, was responsible for a large number of couples marrying by free choice and setting up their own independent households. Further, the introduction of compulsory co-education at the elementary level, the importation of books and periodicals dealing with the outside world, the right to private ownership of property, and changes in the legal enactments transferring responsibility from the oldest male head of the extended family to the male parent of the conjugal family, further accelerated the changes in the traditional family system.

Table 28. Percentage distribution of households by household size: 1975 to 1995

Number of household members	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
One	4.2	4.8	6.9	9.0	12.7
Two	8.3	10.5	12.3	13.8	17.3
Three	12.3	14.5	16.5	19.1	20.7
Four	16.1	20.3	25.3	29.5	31.4
Five	18.3	20.0	19.5	18.8	12.4
Six or more	40.7	29.8	19.5	9.8	5.5
Average number of household members	5.0	4.5	4.1	3.7	3.3

Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1996* (Seoul).

(b) Household heads

In the Republic of Korea, as in most other Asian countries, males have traditionally been designated as the heads of households. However, in recent decades, the number of female-headed households has been gradually increasing in absolute as well as relative terms. Data from the censuses indicate that for the country as a whole, the proportion of female-headed households increased from 10.8 per cent in 1960 to 16.8 per cent in 1995 (table 29). This increase has been attributed to several factors, such as a rise in marital dissolution, comparatively lower rates of remarriage of divorced and widowed women, greater gains in life expectancy of females relative to males, and increasing levels of spousal separation resulting from migration.

Table 29. Percentage of female-headed households by urban and rural area: census years, 1960 to 1995

Census year	Republic of Korea	Urban	Rural
1960	10.8	..	..
1966	12.0	..	..
1970	10.5	..	..
1975	12.8	15.2	10.4
1980	14.7	15.5	13.5
1985	15.7	16.4	14.3
1990	15.7	15.3	16.9
1995	16.8	16.1	19.2

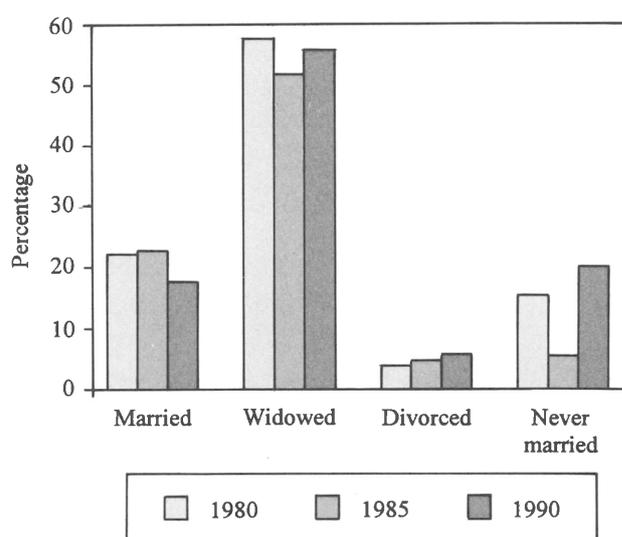
Source: National Statistical Office, *Population and Housing Census* (various years).

It is also evident from table 29 that, while the proportion of female-headed households was significantly higher in urban than in rural areas about two decades ago, today a higher proportion of rural than urban households are headed by females because of the increasing incidence of spousal separation resulting from rural-to-urban migration. When rural male household heads move to urban areas, the wives usually assume responsibility as household heads.

An analysis of the census data for the period 1975-1995 indicates that the majority of female household heads are those living in a state of marital disruption. In 1995, for instance, nearly two thirds (62.7 per cent) of all female household heads in the country were either widowed or divorced, and this proportion was considerably higher in rural (84.3 per cent) compared with urban areas (55.2 per cent). The analysis also indicates that, while the proportion of households headed by married females has been decreasing, the proportion headed by never-married women has been increasing in both urban and rural areas. In 1995, the proportion of households headed by never-married females in urban areas (26.0 per cent) was more than four times the corresponding proportion of 6.2 per cent reported in respect of rural areas (annex table D.1; see also figure 8).

The percentage distribution of household heads by five-year age group and sex for the country as a whole as well as for urban and rural areas in 1980, 1985 and 1990 is given in

Figure 8. Percentage distribution of female household heads by marital status: 1980, 1985 and 1990



Source: National Statistical Office.

annex table D.2, and this distribution by four broad age groups for 1980 and 1990 is given in table 30.

It will be noted from annex table D.3 and text table 30 that a considerably higher proportion of female household heads compared with their male counterparts are in the older age groups. In 1990, for instance, 59.1 per cent of all female household heads in the country were aged 45 years and over, the corresponding proportion among males being only 40.2 per cent. In other words, while the majority of the male household heads are below 45 years of

Table 30. Percentage distribution of household heads by four broad age groups, sex and residence: 1980 and 1990

Year/residence	Below 30		30-44		45-59		60+	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980								
Republic of Korea	15.2	18.5	45.8	24.4	28.1	37.3	10.9	19.8
Urban	18.9	24.7	50.7	27.3	23.7	33.9	6.7	14.1
Rural	10.3	8.1	38.7	19.8	34.2	43.0	16.8	29.1
1990								
Republic of Korea	13.4	18.6	46.4	22.3	28.6	31.5	11.6	27.6
Urban	15.2	23.5	50.5	26.2	26.2	30.2	7.9	20.2
Rural	7.5	6.0	33.6	11.6	36.0	34.9	22.8	47.4

Source: National Statistical Office.

age, the majority of the female household heads are aged 45 years and over. It is also evident from table 30 that in the rural areas the majority of the male as well as female household heads are aged 45 years and over, and that in 1990 this proportion for females (82.3 per cent) was very much higher than that for males (58.8 per cent).

It is also interesting to note that the proportion of household heads who are below 30 years of age is substantially higher among females than among males, particularly in the urban areas. In 1990, about 24 per cent of all urban female household heads were below 30 years of age, the corresponding proportion for males being about 15 per cent.

(c) *Fatherless families*

The Government has accorded special priority to the protection of fatherless families. The Mother-Child Welfare Act, which was enacted in 1989 and came into effect in 1991, applies to women who are widowed, divorced, unwed, or abandoned by their spouses and who have children under 18 years of age. Under the provisions of this Act, mother-child welfare committees have been established at the national level, as well as at the level of each city and province, to help formulate policies and programmes for female-headed or fatherless families.

According to a survey undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the number of fatherless families decreased from 75,889 in 1989 to 55,772 in 1992. Nevertheless, the number of these families receiving welfare benefits and public assistance increased from 35,790, or 47.2 per cent of all fatherless

families, to 40,514, or 72.6 per cent, during the same period (table 31).

In accordance with the Mother-Child Welfare Act, the Government meets the cost of accommodating homeless single-mother families with children under 18 years of age in protection facilities for three to five years and assists them in becoming self-sufficient or self-supporting families. When the families leave the facilities, they are each given 1.5 million won to enable them to establish their own independent households. In 1993, there were 39 maternal and child protection facilities housing 864 families, comprising 2,866 persons.

In addition, there are five mother-child support facilities that are operated to provide housing only to those fatherless families experiencing difficulty in supporting themselves or which include battered wives. Two temporary shelters are operated to protect these families for a specified period. Since 1992, all low-income fatherless families have become entitled to permanent low-rental apartments specially constructed for such families. Moreover, beginning in 1993, the education grant for children of low-income fatherless families, which previously covered only up to middle-school level, was extended to cover high-school education.

(d) *Unwed mothers*

Traditionally, unwed mothers were ostracized by Korean society. However, in recent years unwed mothers have come to be regarded as an important area for social policy. Although it is very difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of the number of unwed mothers in the country, it is generally agreed that their numbers have

Table 31. Fatherless households provided with support under the Mother-Child Welfare Act: 1989 to 1992

Households/population	1989	1990	1991	1992
Target households	75 889	65 755	58 922	55 772
Target population	239 272	207 370	184 186	170 561
Households protected: Number	35 790	35 922	38 888	40 514
Percentage	47.2	54.6	66.0	72.6

Source: Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

been increasing over the years and will continue to increase in the future.

The Government provides medical insurance benefits to unwed mothers and operates 10 centres nationwide to provide services such as antenatal and post-natal care, vocational counselling, adoption, and child protection. In addition, there are 23 vocational guidance centres and 127 counselling centres for the rehabilitation of unwed mothers, as well as for the education of young girls to prevent them from becoming unwed mothers.

(e) Older women

As noted earlier, in section C, the health of Korean women has improved remarkably over the years and their mortality rates, particularly at the older ages, are considerably lower than those of men. Consequently, Korean women live longer than their male counterparts and substantially outnumber males at ages 65 years and over. The number of older women is also increasing every year, and the majority of them are widows.

Available data indicate that the number of older persons who have to live alone is also increasing owing to the nuclearization of families, and at present account for 5.2 per cent of all households. The number of older women living alone is also increasing, and consequently their share of public welfare expenditure is rising rapidly. In 1991, women constituted nearly 73 per cent of the older persons living in residential care or homes for older persons. Under the Welfare Law for the Elderly, enacted in 1981 and revised in 1993, the Government has formulated policies and programmes to provide free medical examination, give allowances to older persons, and operate the home-maker service for older persons.

2. Family formation

(a) Marriage

As noted earlier, perpetuation of the family line was considered to be the main function of the family in traditional Korean society. Hence,

early and universal marriage was the accepted social norm. Marriage was compulsory for all persons except the physically handicapped. Poor families which could not afford to get their children married were given assistance by the Government for the purpose, while rich parents who did not get their children married were subject to punishment. No matter how old they were, the unmarried were not socially regarded as adults. According to available data, nearly all men (99.7 per cent) and all women (99.8 per cent) were reported to have been ever-married at age 50.

In the past, every marriage was arranged; otherwise it was not considered legitimate. An elaborate and costly marriage ceremony, regardless of its financial consequences, was a must for the rich as well as the poor families. In order to guard against incest and even marriage within the clan at large, which were some of the strictest social taboos, marriage was pre-arranged by parents or by hired professional matchmakers. It was common for the bride and groom to meet for the first time at the marriage ceremony.

However, with rapid modernization, there have been radical changes in marriage practices, particularly in the urban areas. An increasing number of marriages today are "love matches" or *yona*. Most educated and employed women challenge the rights of parents to choose a marriage partner. Prospective brides and grooms meet in coffee shops and lounges and hold interviews before they would decide to consider marriage seriously.

Another closely related trend is the increasing average age at first marriage. Because of increasing education and employment, there is a rising tendency among young men and women to refrain from early marriage but to enter into marital union at a later stage. Estimates based on census data indicate that, between 1960 and 1995, the singulate mean age at first marriage had increased from 25.4 to 29.3 years for males, and from 21.6 to 26.1 years for females, and that similar increases had occurred in both urban and rural areas (table 32).

Table 32. Singulate mean age at first marriage by sex and residence: census years, 1960 to 1995

Census year	Republic of Korea		Urban		Rural	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1960	25.4	21.6	26.8	22.8	24.9	21.0
1966	26.7	22.8	27.7	24.0	26.1	22.0
1970	27.1	23.3	27.5	23.8	26.8	22.6
1975	27.4	23.6	27.6	24.2	27.1	22.9
1980	27.3	24.1	27.4	24.3	27.3	23.5
1985	27.8	24.8	27.8	25.0	27.9	24.0
1990	28.6	25.5	28.4	25.5	29.1	25.2
1995	29.3	26.1	29.3	26.2	29.6	25.2

Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1996* (Seoul).

(b) Reproductive patterns

In addition to shifts in marriage practices and patterns, the Republic of Korea has also experienced remarkable changes in the reproductive behaviour of women during the past four decades or more. In particular, the attitude of Korean women towards family size has undergone a very significant transformation, and these changes are reflected in the trends in various fertility indicators.

Recent estimates prepared by the United Nations indicate that the Republic of Korea

has realized an unprecedented decline in fertility to far below the replacement level within a short span of about three decades. According to these estimates, the crude birth rate had declined dramatically from 45.9 per thousand of the population in the period 1955-1960 to 15.5 during the period 1990-1995, while the total fertility rate had declined from 6.33 children per woman to 1.65 children per woman during the same period. In other words, today an average Korean woman would give birth to 3.68 fewer children compared with her counterpart about 30 years ago (table 33).

Table 33. Crude birth rate, total fertility rate, gross reproduction rate and net reproduction rate: 1950-1955 to 1990-1995

Period	Crude birth rate ^{a/}	Total fertility rate ^{b/}	Gross reproduction rate ^{c/}	Net reproduction rate ^{d/}
1950-1995	37.0	5.40	2.51	1.79
1955-1960	45.9	6.33	2.95	2.28
1960-1965	39.6	5.63	2.62	2.11
1965-1970	31.9	4.71	2.19	1.83
1970-1975	28.8	4.28	1.99	1.73
1975-1980	23.9	2.92	1.36	1.26
1980-1985	21.3	2.50	1.17	1.10
1985-1990	16.5	1.80	0.84	0.80
1990-1995	15.5	1.65	0.77	0.74

Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 1996 Revision* (Sales No. E.98.XIII.5).

^{a/} Number of births per thousand population.

^{b/} Average number of children who would be born to a woman during her lifetime if she were to bear children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates.

^{c/} Gross reproduction rate is a measure of the average number of daughters produced by a woman during her complete lifetime, and is obtained by multiplying the total fertility rate by the ratio of female births to total births.

^{d/} The net reproduction rate is a measure of the extent to which a cohort of newly born girls will replace themselves under given schedules of age-specific fertility and mortality.

Data from national sources indicate that a spectacular decline in fertility has also occurred among Korean women in various reproductive ages. Despite these declines, the peak fertility continues to be for women aged 25-29 years (table 34).

The dramatic reduction in the total fertility rate that has occurred during the past three decades has largely been attributed to the successful implementation of the family planning programme. Survey data relating to ever-married women aged 15-44 years indicate that the contraceptive prevalence or practice rate had increased from 54.5 per cent in 1979 to 77.4 per cent in 1994, and that this increase had occurred among women in both urban and rural areas, as well as among all age groups over the years. Available data also indicate that the contraceptive prevalence or practice rate was slightly higher in rural than in urban areas in 1991 and 1994 (table 35).

Over the years, the fastest increase in contraceptive practice rate has been recorded in respect of ever-married women aged 15-24 years, the rate more than doubling from 18.3 per cent in 1979 to 40.6 per cent in 1994. In all six years for which data are presented in table 35, the contraceptive practice rate rises with increasing age, reaching a peak at ages 35-39 years.

Data from the various rounds of the National Fertility and Family Health Survey also show that the vast majority of the ever-married women in the Republic of Korea use modern contraceptive methods such as sterilization, IUDs, pills and condoms. The proportion using modern contraceptive methods increased from 77.8 per cent in 1979 to 86.3 per cent in 1994. However, the proportions using each of these methods varied over the years; while the proportions using sterilization (including vasectomy) and condoms increased by and

Table 34. Age-specific fertility rates: selected years, 1970 to 1994

Year	Age-specific fertility rate						
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
1970	19.3	192.8	320.1	205.4	105.8	46.0	13.1
1975	14.2	177.6	262.8	145.6	57.9	20.7	5.0
1980	12.9	141.4	244.1	106.6	30.6	8.5	2.0
1985	10.1	118.5	158.9	41.0	8.0	2.2	0.5
1990	4.1	83.9	170.1	50.3	9.5	1.5	0.2
1994	3.7	68.2	195.5	71.0	14.1	2.0	0.2

Source: National Statistical Office, *Annual Report on Vital Statistics* (various years).

Table 35. Contraceptive prevalence rate among ever-married women aged 15-44 years by residence and age group: 1979 to 1994

Residence/age group	1979	1982	1985	1988	1991	1992
Residence						
Republic of Korea	54.5	57.7	70.4	77.1	79.4	77.4
Urban areas	55.1	58.7	71.5	77.7	79.3	77.1
Rural areas	53.6	55.7	67.7	75.5	80.0	78.4
Age group						
15-24	18.3	22.5	35.8	44.4	45.7	40.6
25-29	40.9	44.6	60.8	65.4	61.4	60.1
30-34	68.5	71.7	84.2	86.7	84.4	81.3
35-39	71.9	79.0	87.2	89.6	93.7	89.6
40-44	53.3	62.3	69.6	81.6	87.2	87.4

Source: Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, *National Fertility and Family Health Survey* (various years).

large between 1979 and 1994, those using IUDs and oral pills generally declined during this 15-year period. Further, permanent methods (female sterilization and vasectomy) have accounted for over 50 per cent of all methods since 1985 (table 36).

A cross-tabulation of the data from the 1994 National Fertility and Family Health Survey by contraceptive methods used and age groups indicates that, while non-permanent or reversible methods are popular among younger ever-married women (15-34 years), sterilization and vasectomy are the preferred contraceptive methods among those aged 35-44 years. The proportion using permanent methods increases with age, from 5.9 per cent among those aged 15-24 years to 81.4 per cent among those aged 40-44 years. Condoms are the most popular among reversible methods, being used by more than a third of

ever-married women aged 15-24 and 25-29 years (table 37).

3. Marital disruption

Persons who are either widowed or divorced/separated are deemed to be living in a state of marital disruption. Data from the censuses indicate that the number widowed and divorced among persons aged 15 years and over has been increasing over the years, and that there have always been considerably more females than males who were either widowed or divorced. For instance, in 1995, the number of females aged 15 years and over reported to be widowed was 2.3 million, or nearly eight times the corresponding number of males, while the number of divorced females (207,000) was substantially higher than the number of divorced males (176,000) in 1995. In other words, a total

Table 36. Trends in contraceptive use by method among ever-married women aged 15-44 years: 1979 to 1994

Contraceptive method	Percentage using a specific method in					
	1979	1982	1985	1988	1991	1994
Female sterilization	26.6	39.9	44.9	48.2	44.5	37.0
Vasectomy	10.8	8.8	12.6	14.3	15.1	15.0
Intra-uterine device	17.6	11.6	10.5	8.7	11.3	13.6
Oral pills	13.2	9.4	6.1	3.6	3.8	2.3
Condoms	9.5	12.5	10.2	12.6	12.8	18.5
Other methods	22.2	17.8	15.6	12.6	12.5	13.7
All methods	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, *National Fertility and Family Health Survey* (various years).

Table 37. Contraceptive practice rate by method of contraception and age group: 1994

Contraceptive method	Practice rate of specific methods at ages					
	15-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	All ages 15-44
Female sterilization	3.9	9.0	27.1	49.3	63.4	37.0
Vasectomy	2.0	8.0	15.6	20.3	14.3	15.0
Intra-uterine device	20.7	19.6	15.6	10.7	7.9	13.6
Oral pills	6.4	3.5	2.8	1.8	0.7	2.3
Condoms	36.0	36.6	23.6	9.2	6.5	18.5
Others	31.0	23.5	15.3	8.8	7.2	13.7
All methods	40.6	60.1	81.3	89.6	87.4	77.4

Source: Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, *National Fertility and Family Health Survey, 1994*.

of 2.5 million women compared with 469,000 men aged 15 years and over were reported to be living in a state of marital disruption in 1995 (table 38).

As noted earlier, in section C, the considerably higher incidence of marital disruption among females compared with males is due to a combination of factors, such as higher male than female mortality, particularly at the older ages, greater gains in life expectancy for females relative to males, and the very much lower rates of remarriage for widowed and divorced females compared with their male counterparts.

In traditional Korean society, only husbands were able to seek and obtain a divorce. A husband was entitled to divorce his wife if she was barren, and barrenness was defined simply as the inability to bear sons. Further grounds

for divorce were the incompatibility of the wife and her in-laws. Today, both men and women have the right to obtain a divorce.

Available data also indicate that the number of divorce cases almost trebled, from 22,980 in 1980 to 65,838 in 1994. These data also indicate that domestic differences have been the main reason for divorce in the vast majority of the cases; in 1994, nearly 83 per cent of the divorces were on the grounds of domestic differences (table 39).

E. WOMEN IN ECONOMIC LIFE

1. Labour-force participation

In the Republic of Korea, women constitute more than half the population in the working

Table 38. Number of widowed and divorced persons aged 15 years and over by sex: census years, 1980 to 1995

(Thousands)

Census year	Widowed		Divorced		Widowed + divorced	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980	226	1 666	44	77	270	1 743
1985	221	1 788	66	100	287	1 888
1990	283	2 037	110	139	393	2 176
1995	293	2 277	176	207	469	2 484

Source: National Statistical Office, *Population and Housing Census* (various years).

Table 39. Percentage distribution of divorce cases by reason for divorce: selected years, 1980 to 1994

Year	Number of divorce cases	Percentage distribution of divorce cases by reason				
		Domestic differences	Family troubles	Ill-health	Economic problems	Other
1980	22 980	74.6	5.3	3.3	3.6	13.1
1985	38 429	80.9	4.1	1.6	3.0	10.4
1989	42 726	82.7	3.4	1.4	2.1	10.4
1990	45 467	82.6	3.5	1.4	1.8	10.6
1991	48 498	83.7	3.4	1.2	1.7	10.0
1992	53 904	84.6	3.0	1.2	1.9	9.3
1993	60 028	83.7	2.9	1.0	2.2	10.2
1994	65 838	82.9	2.6	1.0	2.7	10.8

Source: National Statistical Office, *Annual Report on Vital Statistics* (various years).

ages 15 years and over. Yet, available data indicate that women account for around 40 per cent of the country's economically active persons or labour force. In 1995, for instance, women accounted for 51.6 per cent of the working-age population but only 40.3 per cent of the total economically active persons in the country. Consequently, the overall economic activity rate or labour-force participation rate has always been considerably lower for females than for males (table 40).

The low level of female participation in the labour force is typical of a society in which males have traditionally been the principal breadwinners and therefore enter the labour market on completion of their studies or when they become physically able to participate in economic activity. By and large, women assume responsibility for household chores, which are not considered to be "economic" activities. Studies have also shown that, as in many other Asian countries, the participation of Korean women in the labour force tends to be negatively influenced by marriage, childbirth and child-rearing.

It will also be noted from table 40 that the overall economic activity rate, or the proportion of the economically active population to the total population aged 15 years and over, increased between 1970 and 1995, and that this increase was more marked in the case of females compared with males. During this 25-year period, while the male labour force

increased by about 84 per cent, the female labour force more than doubled. Consequently, the female activity rate increased by 10.7 percentage points, compared with an increase in the male activity rate by 4.0 percentage points.

The faster increase in the female labour force was due to a number of factors. First, there have been changes in the overall social climate in favour of women's economic participation. The expansion of female education has resulted in the increasing participation of Korean women in the social and economic life of the country. A marked decrease in the total fertility rate and an increasing reliance on electrical appliances for household chores have greatly reduced the burden of domestic duties and freed women for work outside the family setting. The establishment of low-cost day-care centres for the benefit of working mothers and their children has also enabled several women to re-enter the labour market.

Second, the industrial development of recent decades has led to an expansion of employment opportunities for females in factories. Third, there has been an increase in the entry of older women into the active agricultural labour force, particularly to compensate for the shortage of farm labour caused by the influx of male workers into industrial occupations outside the rural sector. Fourth, the 1989 Directive to Implement the Regulations Concerning the Employment of Civil Servants,

Table 40. Total population and economically active population aged 15 years and over, and activity rates by sex: selected years, 1970 to 1995

Year	Total population aged 15 years and over (thousands)				Economically active population aged 15 years and over (thousands)				Economic activity rate (percentage)		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percent-age female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percent-age female	Both sexes	Male	Female
1970	18 942	9 313	9 629	50.8	10 378	6 753	3 625	34.9	54.8	72.5	37.6
1980	25 319	12 255	13 064	51.6	14 455	9 020	5 435	37.6	57.1	73.6	41.6
1985	27 553	13 295	14 258	51.7	15 450	9 617	5 833	37.8	56.1	72.3	40.9
1990	30 887	14 907	15 980	51.7	18 406	11 030	7 376	40.1	59.6	74.0	46.2
1995	33 558	16 251	17 307	51.6	20 796	12 433	8 363	40.2	62.0	76.5	48.3

Source: National Statistical Office.

and the 1991 Directive to Implement the Regulations Concerning the Employment of Local Civil Servants, led to a sizeable increase in the number of female civil service employees at the central and local government levels. Fifth, the government has carried out various activities designed to facilitate women's re-entry into the job market by creating or expanding existing employment opportunities for women seeking work on a part-time basis.

The age-specific economic activity, or labour-force participation rates, for males and females in 1985, 1990 and 1995 are shown in table 41.

It will be observed from table 41 that the activity rates for females are substantially lower than the male rates at all age groups excepting the younger ages 15-19 and 20-24 years. This may be largely due to the fact that a higher proportion of males than females at these ages are still in school and college and are therefore not seeking employment. It will also be noted from table 41 that the activity rates for males and females rise steeply from a low level of about 10 per cent in the case of males and 15 per cent in respect of females, to 58 per cent for males and 66 per cent for females at ages 20-24 years. Thereafter, the trends are quite different for both sexes. In the case of males, the age-specific participation rate continues to rise until it peaks at

ages 30-34 years, flattening out at this level through ages 45-49 years and thereafter declining to a low of about 54 per cent at ages 60 years and over. The female rate declines substantially after ages 20-24 until ages 30-34 years, rises to a peak at ages 40-44 years and thereafter declines to reach a low of about 29 per cent at ages 60 years and over. The interesting feature, however, is that, with increasing female labour-force participation, there has been an increase over time in the female economic activity rates at all age groups.

According to a recent study, the decline in the female participation rates at ages 25-29 and 30-34 years was largely due to the fact that most employed women exited the labour market immediately after marriage, and there were relatively few women who left owing to the first or last childbirth. The study also noted that the period when those women re-entered the labour market was between the birth of the last child and the child's entrance into an elementary school. Thus, while in many other countries women withdraw from the labour market with the birth of the first child, in the Republic of Korea women tend to exit almost immediately after marriage (Taechong Kim: 1997).

An analysis of the data on labour-force participation by marital status for the years 1983, 1986, 1989 and 1992 indicates that in all these years, the highest labour-force participation

Table 41. Economic activity rates by age group and sex: 1985, 1990 and 1995

Age group	1985		1990		1995	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-19	14.5	21.1	10.8	18.7	9.3	14.6
20-24	63.3	55.0	60.2	64.6	58.0	66.1
25-29	90.8	35.8	91.9	42.5	89.6	47.8
30-34	96.4	43.6	97.2	49.6	97.1	47.5
35-39	96.4	52.8	96.9	58.0	96.9	59.2
40-44	94.9	58.3	95.7	60.7	96.6	66.0
45-49	93.2	59.3	94.2	63.9	95.3	61.0
50-54	88.0	52.4	90.6	60.0	91.3	58.3
55-59	77.4	47.2	83.6	54.4	83.9	54.2
60+	44.3	19.2	50.1	26.5	54.2	28.9
Total	72.3	40.9	73.6	46.2	76.5	48.3

Sources: National Statistical Office, *Comprehensive Time Series Report on the Economically Active Population Survey, 1995*, and *Annual Report on the Economically Active Population Survey, 1996*.

rate was in respect of the married among males and of the divorced among females. For instance, in 1992, the male participation rate reached a very high rate of 90.8 per cent among married men followed by a rate of 88.2 per cent for divorced men. In the case of females, the participation rate was highest (73.8 per cent) for divorced women, followed by a rate of 42 per cent among single women (annex table E.1 and figure 9).

2. Employed labour force

(a) Activity status

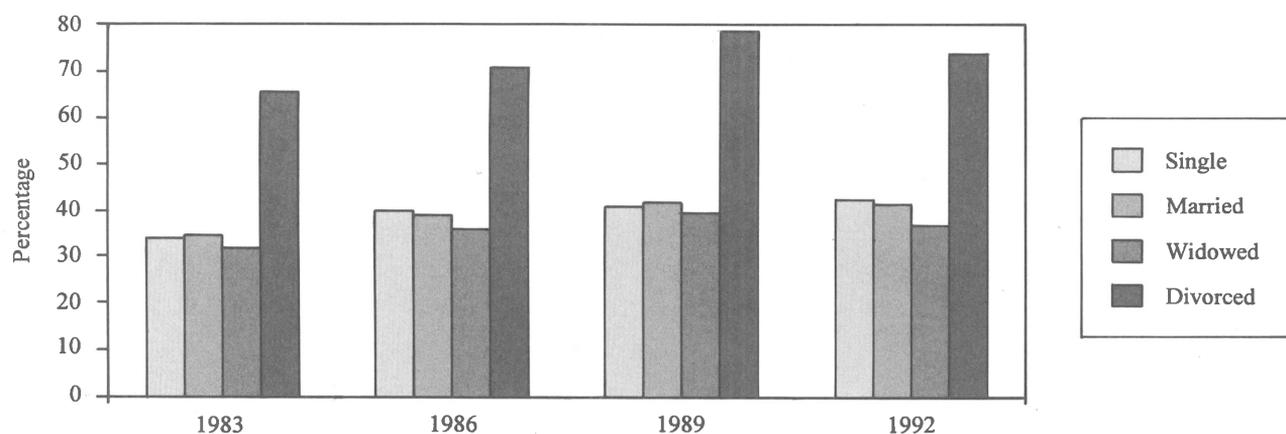
The economically active population or labour force includes both employed and unemployed persons. Employed persons are usually defined as those who, during the reference period, worked as paid employees, employers, own-account workers or unpaid family workers.

Persons who had a job but were temporarily absent from work for such reasons as vacation, ill-health, bad weather or labour-management disputes were also considered as being employed.

The numerical and percentage distribution of the labour force by activity status, that is, employed or unemployed and by sex, in 1985, 1990 and 1995 is shown in table 42. It will be noted from the table that the vast majority of economically active males and females are employed and that the proportion employed is slightly higher among females compared with males.

The type of activity that an employed person performs can be looked at from the point of view of (a) the industry or the activity of the establishment in which an employed person works during the time reference period; (b) the occupation or kind of work performed

Figure 9. Female labour-force participation rate by marital status: 1983, 1986, 1989 and 1992



Source: National Statistical Office.

Table 42. Distribution of the labour force by activity status and gender: 1985, 1990 and 1995

(Thousands)

Year	Male					Female				
	Econ-omically active	Em-ployed	Percent-age em-ployed	Un-employed	Percent-age unem-ployed	Econ-omically active	Em-ployed	Percent-age em-ployed	Un-employed	Percent-age unem-ployed
1985	9 617	9 137	95.0	480	5.0	5 833	5 692	97.6	141	2.4
1990	11 030	10 709	97.1	321	2.9	7 376	7 243	98.2	133	1.8
1995	12 433	12 153	97.7	280	2.3	8 363	8 224	98.3	139	1.7

Source: National Statistical Office.

during the time reference period; and (c) the employment status as employer, employee, self-employed or unpaid family worker.

(b) Industrial attachment

The numerical distribution of the employed persons aged 15 years and over by major industrial group and sex in 1970, 1986 and 1992 is given in annex table E.2, and the corresponding percentage distribution is shown in text table 43. It will be noted from these two tables that there were radical changes in the pattern of industrial attachment of employed persons between 1970 and 1992. In 1970, the largest proportion of employed females (59.7 per cent) as well as of employed males (45.9 per cent) were working in the primary industrial sector comprising agriculture, forestry and fishing, while the manufacturing sector was the second most important source of employment, engaging 14.1 per cent of employed males and 14.5 per cent of employed females. In that year, the third largest proportion among females was employed in the trade sector, and among males, in the social and personal services sector.

With rapid industrialization and modernization, the agricultural sector has been losing its importance as the main avenue of employment, and there has been a decline in the number and relative share of employed males

and females working in that sector. In 1992, the proportion among females and males employed in the sector was less than half the respective proportions in 1970. Concomitantly, there has been an increase in the number and proportion of males and females employed in the manufacturing, trade and service sectors. Today, the most important source of employment is the manufacturing sector for males and the trade sector for females. In 1992, the second largest proportion of females were employed in the agriculture sector and of males in the trade sector. In that year, a larger proportion of employed females than males were engaged in the agriculture, trade and service sectors.

(c) Occupational structure

The numerical distribution of employed persons by major occupational category and sex in 1992 and 1996 is shown in annex table E.3; the respective percentage distributions are given in text table 44. It will be noted from these tables that in 1996, while the largest proportion of employed males (19.9 per cent) were engaged as crafts and related workers, the largest proportion among females (33.1 per cent) were service workers. In absolute as well as relative terms, males exceed females in highly paid occupations such as senior officials and managers, professionals, and technicians and junior professionals. Females outnumber males

Table 43. Percentage distribution of employed persons by major industrial group and sex: 1970, 1986 and 1992

Major industrial groups	1970		1986		1992	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	45.9	59.7	24.2	35.2	17.4	26.7
Mining	1.4	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.6	0.1
Manufacturing	14.1	14.5	24.5	21.2	24.5	20.0
Electricity, gas and water	6.7	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1
Construction	0.4	0.1	9.4	1.1	11.7	1.9
Wholesale and retail trade etc.	12.0	13.7	16.9	26.4	19.9	28.9
Transport and communications	4.6	0.7	7.0	1.0	7.1	1.1
Finance, insurance and business service	1.2	0.5	3.9	2.8	2.4	3.7
Social and personal services	13.2	9.9	12.4	12.1	15.9	17.5
Unclassifiable and not stated	0.5	0.1	-	-	-	-
All industrial groups	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: National Statistical Office, *1970 Population and Housing Census Report*, vol. 2, and *Report on Employment Structure Survey*, 1987 and 1993.

Table 44. Percentage distribution of employed persons by major occupational category and sex: 1992 and 1996

Major occupational category	1992		1996	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Legislators/senior officials and managers	3.6	0.3	4.2	0.3
Professionals	5.1	5.1	5.3	4.2
Technicians and junior professionals	12.6	4.4	11.1	7.3
Clerks	7.1	13.9	10.1	15.7
Service workers, shopkeepers, and sales workers	15.4	26.8	15.3	33.1
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	16.8	25.7	9.9	12.7
Craft and related workers	16.5	8.4	19.9	9.2
Plant and machinery operators and assemblers	14.8	5.8	15.2	3.5
Elementary occupations	8.0	9.6	9.0	14.0
All occupations	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: National Statistical Office.

in low-paid clerical, service and elementary occupations.

(d) Employment status

The employed persons have been classified according to their employment status into four broad categories: (a) the self-employed or own-account worker, that is, a person who operates his/her business alone or is engaged independently in a trade or profession for fee or profit and has no employees in the business other than unpaid family workers; (b) an employer or person who either operates his/her own business or is engaged independently in a profession or trade for profit and employs, in connection with his/her business, one or more workers other than unpaid family workers; (c) a

paid employee or person who works for public or private employers and receives remuneration for his/her work in money wages, salaries, commissions, gratuities, piece-rates or in kind; and (d) an unpaid family worker or a person who works without pay of any kind in a business operated by any member of the household, excluding housekeeping.

The percentage distribution of the employed persons by employment status and sex in 1960, 1970, 1986 and 1992 is given in table 45.

It will be noted from table 45 that there have been remarkable changes in the status distribution of the employed persons over the past three decades or so. In 1960, while the majority of employed males (56.7 per cent)

Table 45. Percentage distribution of the employed population by employment status and sex: selected years, 1960 to 1992

Employment status	1960		1970		1986		1992	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Self-employed	56.7 ^{a/}	22.1 ^{a/}	43.9 ^{a/}	17.6 ^{a/}	34.8	18.4	30.6	15.3
Employer					4.3	1.2	6.1	1.9
Paid employee	24.4	16.1	43.6	30.0	56.3	42.1	60.8	48.1
Unpaid family worker	18.2	60.5	11.9	52.1	4.7	38.3	2.5	34.7
All statuses	100.0 ^{b/}	100.0 ^{b/}	100.0 ^{b/}	100.0 ^{b/}	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: National Statistical Office, *Population and Housing Census*, 1960 and 1970, and *Employment Structure Survey*, 1987 and 1993.

^{a/} Self-employed and employers combined.

^{b/} Including the employment status category "unknown".

were reported to be engaged as either self-employed or employers, the majority of employed females (60.5 per cent) were reported to be unpaid family workers. Only about 24.4 per cent of employed males and 16.1 per cent of employed females were then engaged as paid employees. Since 1960, the proportion of employed persons working as paid employees has been rising steadily among both males and females, and by 1992, the largest proportion among males as well as females were engaged as paid employees, although this proportion for males (60.8 per cent) was significantly higher than that for females (48.1 per cent).

It is also evident from table 45 that there have been very significant declines in the relative share of employed males and females engaged as unpaid family workers. Yet, in 1992, more than a third of the employed females were still working as unpaid family workers, the corresponding proportion for males being only 2.5 per cent. In all the four years in respect of which data are presented in table 45, the proportion of employed reported to be working as employers and self-employed was higher among males compared with females.

(e) Number of hours worked

The number of hours worked during a specified time period is often used as a

yardstick to measure the level of labour utilization in a country. This is particularly so in countries where the supply of labour exceeds the demand, although shorter working hours do not necessarily reflect imperfections in employment conditions. The average number of hours worked per week by males and females in various economic sectors in 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995 is shown in table 46.

It will be noted from table 46 that, overall, Korean women worked longer hours per week than their male counterparts in 1980, 1985 and 1990, but that in 1995, the average number of hours worked per week was slightly higher for males (47.9 hours) than for females (47.1 hours). It is also evident from this table that the average number number of hours worked varies from sector to sector, the average for females being consistently higher than that for males in the mining and trade sectors. In 1995, females worked as many hours as their male counterparts in the service sector, but in the other five sectors, the average number of hours worked per week was higher for males than for females.

(f) Wage differentials

Employment conditions for women are still considerably inferior to those of men, and this is reflected in the substantially low average

Table 46. Average number of hours worked per week by major industrial sector^{a/} and sex: 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995

Major industrial sector	1980		1985		1990		1995	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mining	41.7	47.3	41.0	47.9	35.9	44.1	43.6	46.7
Manufacturing	52.8	53.5	53.5	54.2	49.9	49.6	49.5	48.6
Electricity, gas and water	49.0	44.1	50.4	46.1	48.1	44.4	49.2	45.6
Construction	50.6	48.9	49.0	48.1	45.9	44.7	45.8	45.5
Trade, restaurants and hotels	50.3	51.0	49.7	50.5	47.4	47.8	46.1	46.8
Transport, storage and communications	49.9	53.1	53.1	53.7	49.1	46.0	48.0	45.2
Finance, insurance, real estate, business services	45.6	45.2	46.1	45.0	44.0	42.6	46.1	44.4
Community, social and personal services	47.4	46.6	46.7	46.5	44.4	44.6	44.4	44.4
All sectors	50.9	52.6	51.5	52.8	48.2	48.4	47.9	47.1

Source: Ministry of Labour, cited in National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1996* (Seoul).

^{a/} In respect of establishments employing 10 or more workers.

wages paid to women workers compared with their male counterparts. In 1972, the average monthly wages of female workers were only 43.6 per cent of the average wages paid to male employees. During subsequent years there have been remarkable increases in average wages, the increase being more pronounced in the case of females than males. Whereas the average monthly wages of male workers increased 26-fold, that of female workers increased about 34-fold between 1970 and 1992. Yet in 1992, the average monthly wages of female workers were only about 56 per cent of those received by their male counterparts (table 47).

Table 47. Average monthly wages by sex of employees: selected years, 1972 to 1992

(Thousands of won)

Year	Average monthly wages		Female wages as percentage of male wages
	Male	Female	
1972	30.3	13.2	43.6
1985	328.1	158.4	48.3
1990	588.3	323.6	55.0
1992	801.7	446.7	55.7

Source: Ministry of Labour.

The gender gap in wages persists, although to a somewhat reduced extent, despite various measures adopted by the Government to narrow this differential. The principle of equal pay for equal work was first formalized in the Republic of Korea in October 1987, when the Constitution was revised. A new article (article 32-4) was added to the Constitution, stipulating that women “shall not be subjected to unjust discrimination in terms of employment, wages and working conditions”. The principle of equal pay for equal work was not included in the Equal Employment Opportunity Act enacted in December 1987; however, as a result of the campaign mounted and representations made by women’s organizations, the Act was revised in April 1989 to include the principle of equal pay for equal work. Under the terms of this

revision, employers who violate the law are subject to punishment of either two years imprisonment or a fine of 5 million won. In 1989, the Government also introduced minimum wages as a measure for improving the working conditions of production workers.

The Act, however, does not provide concrete standards for measuring “equal work”, and this renders the implementation or enforcement of the law difficult. In the Republic of Korea, wages are usually determined by a host of factors such as the nature of the occupation, level of education, years of work experience and seniority of the worker, and not by the quality of the work. Consequently, it is difficult to assess the value of the work performed by an employee. Available information also indicates that wages vary greatly within the same occupational category as well as for the same level of education.

The average monthly wages by occupational category and sex of the employees for 1985, 1988 and 1992 are given in table 48. It will be noted that in 1992, the gender gap in wages varied markedly between the various occupational categories, being narrowest in respect of the occupations in the administrative and managerial category, and widest in regard to production, transport workers and labourers. In the administrative and managerial category, for which the wage level is usually the highest, female employees are relatively older and have more years of work experience. Hence, the average wages of females in this occupational category are about 90 per cent of the male wages. But it is interesting to note that the gender gap in wages in this category widened between 1985 and 1992.

The larger gender differential in wages in respect of the various occupational categories other than administrative and management occupations is due to the fact that females working in those categories are relatively young and have shorter working experience compared with their male counterparts. As noted earlier, females employed in the category of production, transport workers and labourers receive an average wage which is only 56 per cent of

Table 48. Average monthly wages by occupational category and sex: 1985, 1988 and 1992

Major occupational category	1985			1988			1992		
	Male	Female	Female as percentage of male	Male	Female	Female as percentage of male	Male	Female	Female as percentage of male
Professional and technical	472.4	330.5	70.0	628.2	396.2	63.1	925.9	635.7	68.7
Administrative and management	680.2	665.3	97.8	840.9	784.5	93.3	1 434.4	1 288.5	89.8
Clerical workers	363.7	186.8	51.4	471.6	257.4	54.6	800.8	467.4	58.4
Sales workers	322.8	159.8	49.5	442.9	236.0	53.3	641.1	422.4	65.9
Service workers	229.1	152.5	66.6	332.2	227.9	68.6	543.7	417.7	76.8
Production, transport workers and labourers	258.9	136.9	52.9	377.0	209.6	55.6	698.8	401.6	57.5
All occupations	328.1	158.4	48.3	448.8	233.6	52.0	801.7	446.7	55.7

Source: Ministry of Labour.

that which males working in these occupations receive; most of these female workers have low levels of education, very limited opportunities for training, and are concentrated in labour-intensive industries where opportunities for promotion or career advancement are poor even for those with long years of experience. Consequently, female workers in these occupations tend to quit work after marriage or more on to other jobs, thus creating another vicious cycle of short average working years and low average wages.

Data from the Ministry of Labour also show that the average wage paid to female workers is considerably lower than that paid to male workers, even if the level of educational attainment of both sexes is identical, and that this gender gap narrows with the rising level of educational attainment. In 1992, for instance, the average wages of females with middle-

school or less than middle-school education were about 57 per cent of the average wages paid to their male counterparts, but women with four or more years of college education received an average wage which was about 73 per cent of that drawn by males with similar educational attainment (table 49 and figure 10).

3. Non-regular sector employment

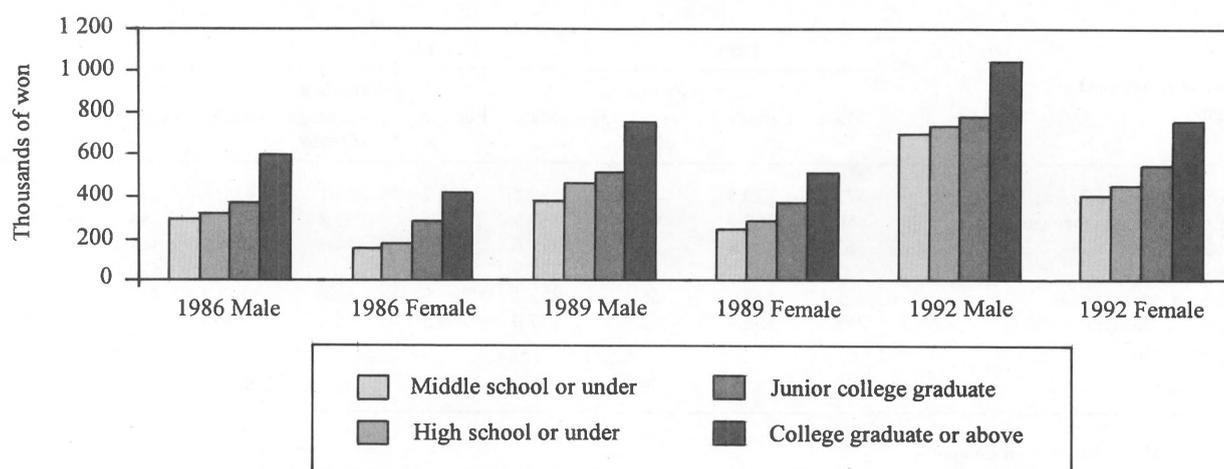
In the Republic of Korea, non-regular sector employment is characterized by work instability, frequent changes of jobs, and mostly part-time or seasonal employment. However, a systematic analysis of employment trends and patterns in the non-regular sector is to a large extent handicapped by a lack of comprehensive data and information. Nevertheless, based on available information, an attempt is made in this section to analyse the situation of women

Table 49. Average monthly wages by level of education and sex: 1986 and 1992

Educational level	1986			1992		
	Male	Female	Female as percentage of male	Male	Female	Female as percentage of male
Middle school or less	282.4	152.1	53.9	701.0	398.7	56.9
High school or less	321.0	179.7	56.0	732.8	438.6	59.9
Junior college graduate	370.9	277.2	74.7	777.7	536.6	69.0
College graduate and above	592.1	419.8	70.9	1 034.9	754.0	72.9
All educational levels	355.0	176.0	49.6	801.7	446.7	55.7

Source: Ministry of Labour.

Figure 10. Average monthly wages by educational level and sex: 1986, 1989 and 1992



Source: Ministry of Labour.

employed on a daily basis, or as pieceworkers in their homes.

(a) Daily workers

With the slowing down of the economy since 1989, there have been significant changes in employment patterns in the Republic of Korea. An important shift relevant to this analysis has been the increase in the number of daily-paid employees. Available data for the years from 1985 to 1991 also indicate that this increase has been more pronounced in the case of female compared with male workers. Whereas the number of daily-paid male workers increased by about 33 per cent from 640,000 in 1985 to 850,000 in 1991, the number of daily-paid female workers increased by 48 per cent from 541,000 to 801,000 during the same period (table 50).

Table 50. Trend in daily-based employment^{a/} by sex: 1985 to 1991

Year	(Thousands)		
	Both sexes	Male	Female
1985	1 181	640	541
1986	1 270	706	564
1987	1 312	690	622
1988	1 316	710	606
1989	1 542	729	813
1990	1 642	793	849
1991	1 651	850	801

Source: National Statistical Office.

Note: ^{a/} Excluding the agriculture sector.

The faster increase in the number of female daily-paid employees has been due to two important factors: (a) a labour shortage in the manufacturing sector since the late 1980s, which resulted in the entry of older women into the industrial labour force on a daily basis; and (b) a marked rise in the demand for service workers in the aftermath of the 1986-1989 economic boom, especially for household help, for which middle-aged and older women were well qualified even though they lacked special job skills.

Data from the Occupational Wage Survey, conducted annually by the Ministry of Labour, also show that in 1991 there were 199,000 males and 59,000 females employed as part-time or as daily-paid workers in various industrial concerns with more than 10 employees. It is clear from table 51 that, while the highest proportion among males (67.9 per cent) was engaged in the construction sector, the highest concentration of female part-time workers (53.4 per cent) was in the manufacturing sector.

(b) Home-based pieceworkers

The process of industrialization has also been accompanied by an expansion in informal sector employment, particularly of home-based work in which married women from low-income families have been participating in increasing numbers. Although comprehensive data in regard to this type of economic activity are

Table 51. Distribution of hourly and daily paid employees by broad industrial sector and sex: 1985 and 1991

Broad industrial sectors	1985				1991			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent-age	Number	Percent-age	Number	Percent-age	Number	Percent-age
Agriculture and forestry	775	0.4	842	1.5	246	0.1	482	0.8
Mining	2 418	1.3	787	1.4	943	0.5	294	0.5
Manufacturing	29 117	15.4	34 760	63.5	26 569	13.3	31 793	53.4
Electricity, gas and water	374	0.2	81	0.1	153	0.1	120	0.2
Construction	132 421	69.9	9 492	17.4	135 344	67.9	12 624	21.2
Wholesale and retail trade	3 018	1.6	2 964	5.4	3 814	1.9	3 988	6.7
Transport, storage, communications	14 050	7.4	1 119	2.0	21 804	10.9	1 163	2.0
Finance, insurance, real estate	1 650	0.9	1 052	1.9	4 628	2.3	5 433	9.1
Personal and social services	5 718	3.0	3 611	6.6	5 768	2.9	3 648	6.1
All sectors	189 541	100.0	54 708	100.0	199 269	100.0	59 545	100.0

Source: Ministry of Labour, *Occupational Wage Survey*, 1986 and 1992.

not available, a few case studies and limited surveys suggest that married women, especially from urban low-income strata, choose to work at home because of domestic and child-care responsibilities. Constrained by this necessity, they accept any work that comes their way, paying scant attention to attendant employment conditions. Their work is usually regarded as "side jobs" by their employers and family members, and even by the women themselves.

The piece-rate workers are employed mostly by export industries which produce garments, toys etc. The work involves highly labour-intensive tasks such as sewing, removing threads, assembling parts, threading beads, folding envelopes and packing. The items are manufactured/produced with the raw materials or unfinished goods supplied by subcontractors, and the finished products are returned to the subcontractors. The wages are based on a piece rate, which is the unit price multiplied by the work output. If the unit price is low, the worker has to work more in order to secure a certain level of daily or monthly income.

According to a household survey on the economic activities of married women and the working conditions of home-based workers carried out by the Korean Women's Development Institute in June/July 1989, married women from low-income families opted for home-based

work so that they could combine their household chores with production work to earn supplementary income. The average age of married women engaged in home-based work and covered by the survey was 35.3 years, but was as low as 33.2 years for those engaged in machine sewing and as high as 36.2 years for those engaged in other assembly work. The survey also reported that the women engaged in home-based work were working on the average 7.74 hours a day for 21.6 days a month, that is, 167.2 hours per month (table 52).

The 1989 survey also reported that the average monthly wage for piecework was 104,894 won, but this average ranged from 68,247 won for those engaged in hand-sewing to 163,667 for those doing knitting work, and further to a high of 193,694 for those doing machine sewing. Payment is usually made once a month, often a few days late. For many workers, the delay in payment creates problems in regard to their household finances. However, the home-based workers' income accounted on the average for about 29 per cent of the family income.

The survey also recorded five problems which have been reported by the respondents as unsatisfactory aspects of home-based work: low wages; irregular workload; harmful working

Table 52. Working conditions of home-based working women by nature of activity: 1989

Nature of work	Average age (years)	Average working hours per day	Average number of days worked per month	Average monthly working hours	Average monthly income
Knitting	25.9	9.28	22.7	210.7	163 667
Machine sewing	33.2	8.99	22.5	202.3	193 694
Sewing	35.8	7.18	21.8	156.5	68 247
Crafts	34.0	5.58	23.8	132.8	113 333
Other assembly work	36.2	7.33	20.9	153.2	76 608
All home-based activities	35.3	7.74	21.6	167.2	104 894

Source: Roh Mi-hye, "A study on home-based work in Korea", *Women's Studies Forum*, 1990 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1990).

environment owing to excessive noise, dust and bad odour from synthetic glue; rush jobs and time pressure; and hard labour. There are also other difficulties, such as having to store work materials in their limited living space and family members being subjected to noise, dust, foul smells etc. Furthermore, piece-rate workers are not protected under the provisions of the Labour Standards Act and hence have no recourse against an unsatisfactory work environment, payment delays or industrial accidents.

F. WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

1. The political scene

The Constitution of the Republic of Korea, promulgated in 1948, declared and guaranteed equal rights for men and women in all spheres of life. Since then, Korean women have legally been entitled to the same political rights as their male counterparts: the right to vote; the right to be elected; the right to assume public office; and the right to affiliate themselves with political parties. Women have exercised these rights by participating in all 14 general elections to elect National Assembly (Parliament) members, 14 presidential elections, and 6 national referenda. Although there has been a steady increase in women's participation in the political process over the years, as will be noted later in this section, women continue to be very much under-represented in the political and decision-making sectors.

(a) Voters

The number of eligible voters and voter turnout rates by sex in the various presidential and parliamentary (National Assembly) elections, as well as in the several referenda carried out in the country during the period 1963-1996, are given in table 53. It will be noted from this table that women have always constituted the majority, around 51 per cent, of the total eligible voters in all three types of polls conducted in the country during the past 33 years.

Although women have been slightly outnumbering men in the total number of eligible voters, the voter turnout rate, or the proportion of eligible voters actually exercising their franchise, has consistently been higher for males than for females. It is also clear from table 53 that the voter turnout rate has generally been higher in presidential elections and referenda than in parliamentary or National Assembly elections. The lowest voter turnout rate, for both males and females, was recorded at the parliamentary elections held in 1996; only about 65 per cent of eligible male voters and about 62.0 per cent of female voters went to the polls in that election.

According to a random sample survey of 1,574,136 persons, or about 5.0 per cent of the total number of eligible voters in 1996, conducted by the Central Election Management Committee, the voter turnout rate in respect

Table 53. Eligible voters and voter turnout rate by sex in various presidential and parliamentary elections and referenda: 1963 to 1996

Nature of election/year	Number of eligible voters				Voter turnout rate (percentage)			
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percentage female	Both sexes	Male	Female	
Presidential	1963	12 985 015	6 360 220	6 624 795	51.0	..	88.9	81.3
	1967	13 935 093	6 890 206	7 044 887	50.6	..	84.9	82.3
	1971	15 552 231	7 741 598	7 810 633	50.2	..	81.4	78.3
	1981	20 944 034	10 337 534	10 606 500	50.6	84.6	..	..
	1987	25 873 624	12 773 733	13 099 891	50.6	89.2	..	..
	1992	29 422 658	14 499 358	14 923 300	50.7	81.9	82.6	80.9
Parliamentary	1963	13 344 149	6 504 359	6 839 790	51.3	..	73.8	70.5
	1967	14 717 354	7 191 612	7 525 742	51.1	..	78.6	73.8
	1971	15 610 258	7 681 407	7 928 851	50.8	..	75.2	71.3
	1973	15 690 130	7 765 078	7 925 052	50.5	..	72.3	70.2
	1978	19 489 490	9 597 998	9 891 492	50.8	..	79.0	75.2
	1981	20 919 120	10 332 593	10 586 527	50.6	..	80.6	76.3
	1985	23 987 830	11 848 071	12 139 759	50.6	84.6	..	..
	1988	26 198 205	12 926 481	13 271 724	50.7	75.8	..	..
	1992	29 003 828	14 296 473	14 707 355	50.7	71.9	72.2	70.9
	1996	31 488 294	15 490 279	15 998 015	50.8	63.9	65.3 ^{a/}	62.0 ^{a/}
Referendum	1969	15 048 925	7 392 357	7 656 568	50.9	..	78.6	75.7
	1972	15 676 395	7 759 326	7 917 069	50.5	..	92.8	91.0
	1975	16 788 839	8 316 593	8 472 246	50.5	..	80.7	79.0
	1980	20 373 869	10 060 740	10 313 129	50.6	..	96.1	94.8
	1987	25 619 648	12 662 467	12 957 181	50.6	78.2	..	..

Source: Central Election Management Committee.

^{a/} Based on a random sample survey of about 5 per cent of eligible voters conducted by the Central Election Management Committee.

of both sexes was found to be 63.6 per cent, which is only 0.3 per cent less than the 63.9 per cent derived by tallying the election figures. This survey also revealed that the voter turnout rate for males (65.3 per cent) was 3.3 percentage points higher than that of 62.0 per cent reported for females.

The sample survey conducted after the 1996 parliamentary elections also revealed that the voter turnout rate was lowest (25.2 per cent) in respect of women aged 20-24 years, and that this rate was less than half the corresponding rate of 52.4 per cent recorded for males. The female voter turnout rate was found to be higher than the male rate at ages 25-39 but at ages 40 and over the male rates exceeded the female rates. Particularly at ages 60 years and over, the voter turnout rate for males (83.4 per cent) was considerably higher than the female rate of 68.5 per cent (table 54).

Table 54. Voter turnout rate by age group and sex: 1996 National Assembly elections

Age group	(Percentage)	
	Male	Female
20-24	52.4	25.2
25-29	42.4	45.4
30-34	55.6	59.9
35-39	67.5	68.5
40-49	76.4	74.1
50-59	83.9	78.8
60 +	83.4	68.5
All ages	65.3	62.0

Source: Central Election Management Committee.

It is thus clear from table 54 that the relatively lower turnout of female voters compared with male voters in the 1996 National Assembly polls was largely due to the considerably lower percentage of female voters aged 20-24 years and 60 years and over going to the polls compared with their male counterparts.

(b) *Candidates*

Although women have been almost as conscious as men of the need to exercise their voting rights, their participation in the political process as candidates at various elections, at the national as well as local levels, has been very poor. This is evident from the data on candidates contesting the parliamentary elections from local and national constituencies (table 55).

It will be noted from table 55 that fewer than 2 per cent of the total number of candidates contesting the parliamentary or national assembly elections from local constituencies have been women, and that in recent elections women constituted about 10-13 per cent of the candidates contesting in the national constituencies. In 1996, women accounted for about 2.6 per cent of all candidates – local and national constituencies combined – contesting elections to the National Assembly.

The very low proportion of women candidates contesting elections is due to a number of factors. First, under the patriarchal family system which still characterizes Korean society, the man of the family is deemed to be the leader and women are not permitted to assume leadership roles. The socially accepted gender roles assign men to the public arena and women to the domestic sphere. Second, the political parties are highly centralized, organized around a few dominant male personalities and run in an authoritarian fashion. The patronage

is normally extended by the “bosses” to their male “underlings”, and women are invariably shut out from these network relationships. Third, women candidates often find it very difficult to obtain funds to finance election campaigns. These funds are provided by businessmen, who are normally reluctant to “invest” in women candidates whose chances of success at the polls are perceived by the donors to be very slim. Fourth, the deep-seated sexual biases are internalized in women through vigorous socialization processes, resulting in women themselves tending to hide away from involvement in politics and considering politics as being “above my concern”.

(c) *Legislators*

Since very few women come forward or are nominated as candidates to contest elections, still very few are elected as members to the National Assembly. Available data indicate that between 1948 and 1967, women accounted for less than 2 per cent of the total number of representatives in the National Assembly. This proportion increased to 2.5 per cent in 1971 and further to 5.0 per cent in 1973. Since then, the percentage share of women in the total National Assembly representatives has been declining, and in 1996 only 3 per cent of the National Assembly seats were held by women (table 56).

The local administrative autonomy system, reinstated in 1991, marked a turning point in

Table 55. Candidates in parliamentary elections by sex: 1967 to 1996

Election year	Local constituency				National constituency			
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percent-age female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percent-age female
1967	702	698	4	0.6	119	115	4	3.4
1971	577	575	2	0.3	121	114	7	5.8
1973	339	337	2	0.6	73	63	10	13.7
1978	473	468	5	1.1	..	..	7	..
1981	635	625	10	1.6	228	213	15	6.6
1985	440	433	7	1.6	171	162	9	5.3
1988	1 046	1 032	14	1.3	..	..	13	..
1992	1 052	1 033	19	1.8	154	138	16	10.4
1996	1 389	1 369	20	1.4	161	140	21	13.0

Source: Central Election Management Committee.

Table 56. Representatives in the National Assembly by sex: 1948 to 1996

Year	Number of National Assembly representatives			Percentage female
	Both sexes	Male	Female	
1948	200	199	1	0.5
1950	210	208	2	1.0
1954	203	202	1	0.5
1958	233	230	3	1.3
1960	233	232	1	0.4
1963	175	173	2	1.1
1967	175	172	3	1.7
1971	204	199	5	2.5
1973	219	208	11	5.0
1978	231	222	9	3.9
1981	276	268	8	2.9
1985	276	268	8	2.9
1988	299	293	6	2.0
1992	299	293	6	2.0
1996	299	290	9	3.0

Source: Korean Women's Development Institute.

the political status of Korean women. At the first elections to the local-level assemblies held in 1991, only 40 women were elected to the small or basic unit local assemblies, and another 8 women to the large or broader unit local assemblies. Together, these 48 female members accounted for a little less than 1 per cent of the 4,771 members elected to both types of local assemblies in that year. However, the number as well as the relative share of women local-level assembly members increased significantly at the second elections held in 1995. At that election, 72 women were elected to

the basic unit local assemblies, where they constituted 1.5 per cent of the total membership, while another 55 women were elected to the broader unit local assemblies, accounting for 5.6 per cent of the 987 members elected to this level of local assemblies (table 57).

(d) Cabinet ministers

In 1985, a woman was appointed Minister of Health and Social Affairs. Since then, four women have served at the ministerial level, succeeding each other as the Second Minister of State for Political Affairs (in charge of women's affairs). In 1993, with the instalment of a new civilian government, three women were appointed ministers: the Minister of Health and Social Affairs, the Minister of the Environment, and the Second Minister of State for Political Affairs. In that year, the Second Vice-Minister of State for Political Affairs was also a woman.

2. Civil service

Available data indicate that the total number of government employees increased by about 44 per cent from 628,546 in 1983 to 903,816 in 1995, but that this increase was more pronounced in the case of female employees compared with male employees. Whereas the total number of male employees increased by about 33 per cent from 494,078 to 657,348, the number of female employees increased by 83 per cent from 134,468 to 246,468 during the same 12-year period. Consequently, the relative share of females in

Table 57. Local-level assembly representatives by sex: 1991 and 1995

Election year	Type of local-level assembly	Number of representatives			Percentage female
		Both sexes	Male	Female	
1991	Basic unit	4 303	4 263	40	0.9
	Broad unit	858	850	8	0.9
	Total	5 161	5 113	48	0.9
1995	Basic unit	4 771	4 699	72	1.5
	Broad unit	987	932	55	5.6
	Total	5 758	5 631	127	2.2

Source: Central Election Management Committee.

total government employees increased from 21.4 per cent in 1983 to 27.3 per cent in 1995 (table 58; see also annex table F.1).

The substantial increase in the number of female civil servants, particularly since 1989, has been due to the fact that consequent upon the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, which came into force in 1988, the Government revised the Ordinance for the Employment of Civil Servants in 1989. Under the terms of this revision, sexual discrimination was prohibited in the recruitment of civil servants. Further, in 1991, the Local Government Civil Servants Employment Procedure Law was enacted to increase substantially the number of female civil servants at the provincial and district levels. Another measure taken that helped to increase female representation in gov-

ernment service was the establishment in 1988 of family welfare bureaux in each of the 15 metropolitan and provincial governments and the appointment of women as heads of these bureaux. A further step along the same lines was taken in 1991 with the establishment of a division of family welfare in each city, provincial and district-level administration; 169 women were appointed to head these divisions.

Although the number of women employed in the civil service has increased rapidly over the years, they are mostly concentrated in the lower levels of the service. Available data indicate that women are grossly under-represented in senior decision-making positions of the civil service, accounting for only 1.3 per cent of all senior government officials in 1995 (table 59).

Table 58. Distribution of government employees by sex: selected years, 1983 to 1995

Year	Number of government employees			
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percentage female
1983	628 546	494 078	134 468	21.4
1989	693 567	536 179	157 388	22.7
1990	801 870	608 102	193 768	24.2
1991	837 582	632 051	205 531	24.5
1993	884 033	649 126	234 907	26.6
1995	903 816	657 348	246 468	27.3

Source: Ministry of Government Administration.

Table 59. Number of senior government officials by sex: 1986 to 1995

Year	Number of senior government officials			
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percentage female
1986	4 797	4 789	8	0.2
1987	4 726	4 718	8	0.2
1988	5 084	5 070	14	0.3
1989	5 680	5 590	90	1.6
1990	5 959	5 872	87	1.5
1991	6 432	6 346	86	1.3
1992	6 744	6 650	94	1.4
1993	7 043	6 947	96	1.4
1994	7 133	7 030	103	1.4
1995	7 683	7 581	102	1.3

Source: Ministry of Government Administration, reported in National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1996* (Seoul).

A classification of the government employees working in the executive branch by nature of their assignment or postings in 1983 and 1995 is shown in table 60. It will be noted that there has been a significant shift in the assignment patterns over the 12-year period. The proportion among female employees working in general services and in technical services increased during this period, while the proportion working in a temporary capacity declined markedly. Yet, a very high proportion among females work on special assignments; this proportion increased slightly from 55.2 per cent in 1983 to 56.6 per cent in 1995, and the proportion has always been considerably higher for females than for males.

3. Government commissions and committees

There are numerous commissions and committees from which the government seeks advice at the presidential, prime ministerial or ministerial

level. In order to increase the number of women in those bodies and thus expand their participation in national decision-making, the Ministry of Political Affairs formulated a plan which includes the compilation and distribution to various government ministries of a roster of 4,700 women qualified to serve on their committees. In part as a result of this action, female representation in the various committees and commissions increased from 2.2 per cent in 1984 to 9.0 per cent in 1990, but declined slightly to 8.5 per cent in 1996 (table 61).

Available data also indicate that women usually serve in committees or commissions set up by those ministries or agencies dealing with social affairs (education, health and welfare, public prosecution etc.), and are very much under-represented in committees or commissions dealing with economic development (economic planning board, science and technology, agriculture, rural development, trade and commerce; physical infrastructure etc.) (see annex table F.2).

Table 60. Government servants in the executive branch by category or nature of assignment, and sex: 1983 and 1995

Nature of assignment	1983				1995			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
General service	168 465	34.6	19 964	15.1	229 451	35.5	51 570	21.2
Technical service	49 331	10.1	9 233	7.0	142 464	22.1	43 676	18.0
Special service	200 182	41.1	73 051	55.2	258 539	40.0	137 467	56.6
Temporary	62 587	12.9	28 814	21.8	5 831	0.9	3 883	1.6
Other	6 233	1.3	1 367	1.0	9 597	1.5	6 277	2.6
Total	486 798	100.0	132 429	100.0	645 882	100.0	242 873	100.0

Source: Ministry of Government Administration.

Table 61. Membership of government committees and commissions by sex: selected years, 1984 to 1996

Year	Number of members			
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Percentage female
1984	7 071	6 915	156	2.2
1988	10 645	10 060	585	5.5
1990	11 374	10 355	1 019	9.0
1996	28 649	26 213	2 436	8.5

Source: Ministry of Political Affairs.

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PART II
ANNEX TABLES

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Table C.1 Sex ratio at birth[#] by birth order: 1970 to 1994

Year	Birth order				
	Total	1st	2nd	3rd	4th and over
1970	109.5	110.2	109.3	109.1	109.4
1971	109.0	108.1	107.7	109.7	110.1
1972	109.5	109.0	109.5	109.5	110.1
1973	104.6	106.2	105.3	103.9	103.0
1974	109.4	114.7	108.5	108.4	104.8
1975	112.4	120.0	109.8	110.8	105.5
1976	110.7	113.6	110.1	109.9	107.1
1977	104.2	104.3	103.6	104.5	105.1
1978	111.3	111.6	110.9	110.8	112.0
1979	106.4	106.2	106.2	106.7	107.5
1980	105.3	106.0	106.5	106.9	110.2
1981	107.2	106.3	106.7	107.1	112.9
1982	106.8	105.4	106.0	109.2	113.6
1983	107.4	105.8	106.2	111.8	120.0
1984	108.3	106.1	107.2	116.9	128.1
1985	109.4	106.0	107.8	129.2	146.8
1986	111.7	107.3	111.2	138.6	149.9
1987	108.8	104.7	109.1	134.9	148.8
1988	113.3	107.2	113.3	165.4	183.3
1989	111.8	104.1	112.5	183.1	201.1
1990	116.6	108.6	117.2	190.8	214.1
1991	112.5	105.8	112.6	181.4	201.3
1992	113.8	106.3	112.6	194.1	220.1
1993	115.5	106.6	114.8	205.3	246.7
1994	115.3	106.1	114.2	205.9	237.7

Source: National Statistical Office, *Annual Report on Vital Statistics, 1995*, cited in Seung-Ju Yang and others, *Statistical Year Book on Women, 1996*, Research Paper No. 220-6 (Seoul, Korean Women's Development Institute, 1997).

[#] Number of male births per 100 female births.

Table C.2 Percentage distribution of the estimated population by five-year age group and sex: 1971, 1976, 1986, 1990 and 1996

Age group	1971		1976		1986		1990		1996	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	13.7	13.4	12.6	11.9	10.0	9.4	8.0	7.3	8.3	7.4
5-9	13.5	12.9	13.1	12.2	9.8	9.4	9.2	8.7	7.4	6.7
10-14	14.0	13.2	13.0	12.2	10.7	10.2	9.5	9.0	8.2	7.7
15-19	11.5	11.0	12.9	12.2	11.1	10.6	10.7	10.2	8.9	8.4
20-24	8.7	8.3	9.5	9.1	10.6	10.0	10.2	9.8	9.5	9.1
25-29	7.2	6.8	7.2	7.2	10.0	10.0	10.1	9.8	9.8	9.4
30-34	6.6	6.7	6.2	6.1	8.3	7.7	9.7	9.4	9.5	9.1
35-39	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.2	6.5	6.1	7.2	6.9	9.4	9.1
40-44	4.5	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.3	6.0	5.7	7.2	7.0
45-49	3.8	4.2	3.7	4.4	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.5	5.4
50-54	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.6	4.1	4.4	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.6
55-59	2.6	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.8	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.2	4.5
60-64	2.0	2.3	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.8	2.3	3.1	3.1	3.8
65-69	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.5	2.1	1.8	2.5	2.0	2.9
70-74	0.8	1.3	0.7	1.2	0.9	1.5	1.1	1.7	1.3	2.1
75+	0.8	1.0	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.8	2.0	1.2	2.8
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: National Statistical Office.

Table C.3 Distribution of deaths from seventeen major causes and by sex: 1980, 1990 and 1994

Major cause of death	1980			1990			1994		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
Infectious and parasitic diseases	5 707	3 649	2 058	5 471	3 814	1 657	5 693	3 886	1 807
Neoplasms	15 707	9 090	6 617	38 490	24 765	13 725	49 466	31 788	17 678
Endocrinic, nutritional and metabolic diseases	1 366	768	598	4 780	2 618	2 162	7 978	4 099	3 879
Diseases of the blood	245	127	118	332	155	177	469	230	239
Mental disorders	915	574	341	1 078	642	436	4 559	2 491	2 068
Diseases of the nervous system	1 988	1 118	870	2 091	1 126	965	2 371	1 300	1 071
Diseases of the circulatory system	38 130	21 814	16 316	57 045	29 987	27 058	68 907	33 374	35 533
Diseases of the respiratory system	7 094	3 837	3 257	7 606	4 289	3 317	11 192	6 328	4 864
Diseases of the digestive system	11 150	7 569	3 581	15 481	11 776	3 705	17 589	12 828	4 761
Genito-urinary diseases	1 259	695	564	1 564	857	707	2 267	1 207	1 060
Complications of pregnancy	159	..	159	90	..	90	86	..	86
Skin diseases	78	38	40	45	17	28	226	93	133
Diseases of the musculoskeleton and connective tissue	536	289	247	844	338	506	2 259	745	1 514
Congenital anomalies	316	179	137	1 168	644	524	1 167	643	524
Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period	55	29	26	125	78	47	238	133	105
Symptoms, signs and ill-defined conditions	16 065	7 298	8 767	25 309	10 523	14 786	24 194	8 847	15 347
Injury and poisoning	12 655	9 226	3 429	29 491	21 946	7 545	32 016	23 644	8 372
Total	113 425	66 300	47 125	191 010	113 575	77 435	230 677	131 636	99 041

Source: National Statistical Office, *Annual Report on the Cause of Death Statistics, 1995*.

Table C.4 Age-specific mortality rates by sex: selected years, 1970 to 1994

Age group	1970		1975		1980		1985		1990		1994	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	4.7	4.5	3.1	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.2	2.0	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.2
5-9	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.2	1.6	1.5	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4
10-14	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.2	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.3
15-19	3.5	2.5	2.9	2.2	2.0	1.4	1.6	0.9	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5
20-24	4.2	3.5	3.7	3.0	2.8	1.8	1.9	1.0	1.5	0.7	1.3	0.6
25-29	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.1	2.9	2.0	2.3	1.1	1.9	0.9	1.7	0.7
30-34	4.0	3.3	4.6	3.7	3.5	2.3	2.8	1.3	2.5	1.0	2.2	0.9
35-39	5.5	4.1	5.3	3.6	5.4	3.0	4.1	1.8	3.7	1.4	3.1	1.1
40-44	9.1	5.3	9.3	5.0	8.0	3.8	7.0	2.8	5.4	2.0	4.8	1.5
45-49	14.9	7.0	13.1	6.8	12.1	5.5	10.4	4.1	9.0	3.4	6.6	2.3
50-54	22.4	10.0	22.2	9.7	18.5	8.1	14.2	5.9	12.3	4.7	10.6	3.8
55-59	33.1	14.2	31.8	12.9	27.4	11.1	21.4	8.7	17.1	6.9	15.2	5.8
60-64	47.5	20.4	51.8	21.3	42.6	17.3	33.1	13.3	26.8	11.3	21.8	9.3
65-69	72.9	31.9	67.9	27.6	64.1	28.2	50.3	22.8	40.8	18.7	35.2	16.2
70-74	95.5	49.1	81.9	41.9	99.8	46.1	76.1	38.4	65.1	33.5	56.2	29.7
75-79	225.2 [#]	179.2 [#]	235.1 [#]	119.9 [#]	159.8	77.9	118.0	63.8	104.8	60.4	92.0	55.6
80+					357.2	194.8	240.2	154.1	212.1	149.7	200.4	147.0
All ages	9.2	6.8	8.9	6.4	8.4	6.2	7.0	5.0	6.5	4.9	6.2	4.7

Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea, 1996* (Seoul).

[#] Mortality rate for ages 75 years and over.

Table D.1 Percentage distribution of female household heads by marital status and by urban and rural area: 1975 to 1995

Census year	Area	Marital status of female household heads				
		Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced	All statuses
1975	Republic of Korea	11.8	24.5	59.4	4.3	100.0
	Urban	16.4	26.0	52.0	5.5	100.0
	Rural	4.9	22.4	70.0	2.6	100.0
1980	Republic of Korea	15.7	22.2	58.1	3.9	100.0
	Urban	21.6	24.5	48.8	5.1	100.0
	Rural	6.0	18.6	73.4	2.0	100.0
1985	Republic of Korea	20.7	22.7	52.2	4.3	100.0
	Urban	26.5	24.7	43.5	5.3	100.0
	Rural	7.8	18.2	71.8	2.2	100.0
1990	Republic of Korea	20.4	17.7	56.3	5.6	100.0
	Urban	25.8	20.3	47.1	6.9	100.0
	Rural	6.3	10.8	80.7	2.2	100.0
1995	Republic of Korea	20.9	16.3	55.3	7.4	100.0
	Urban	26.0	18.7	46.1	9.1	100.0
	Rural	6.2	9.4	81.8	2.5	100.0

Source: National Statistical Office, *Population and Housing Census* (various years).

Table D.2 Percentage distribution of household heads by age group and sex: census years, 1980, 1985 and 1990

Age group	Sex	1980			1985			1990		
		Republic of Korea	Urban	Rural	Republic of Korea	Urban	Rural	Republic of Korea	Urban	Rural
Below 24	Male	3.8	4.7	2.7	3.4	4.0	2.3	2.5	2.8	1.4
	Female	12.8	17.4	5.2	14.6	18.6	5.7	11.8	14.9	3.8
25-29	Male	11.4	14.2	7.6	12.5	14.5	8.7	10.9	12.4	6.1
	Female	5.7	7.3	2.9	7.1	8.8	3.1	6.8	8.6	2.2
30-34	Male	15.7	18.7	11.4	16.4	18.7	12.1	18.1	20.2	11.8
	Female	6.0	7.3	3.9	6.1	7.2	3.6	6.7	8.1	2.8
35-39	Male	15.1	17.0	12.5	15.0	16.5	12.0	15.5	16.9	11.3
	Female	7.8	8.9	6.2	7.3	8.4	4.9	7.3	8.7	3.7
40-44	Male	15.0	15.0	14.8	13.0	13.8	11.6	12.8	13.6	10.5
	Female	10.6	11.1	9.7	8.9	9.6	7.4	8.3	9.4	5.1
45-49	Male	12.2	11.0	13.8	12.1	11.8	13.6	11.0	11.0	10.9
	Female	12.7	12.3	13.3	10.9	10.9	10.9	9.5	10.1	7.9
50-54	Male	8.6	7.2	10.6	9.7	8.3	12.4	10.0	9.0	13.1
	Female	12.9	11.7	14.9	11.6	10.6	13.8	10.8	10.1	11.9
55-59	Male	7.3	5.5	9.8	6.6	5.2	9.4	7.6	6.2	12.0
	Female	11.7	9.9	14.8	11.0	9.4	14.7	11.2	9.7	15.1
60+	Male	10.9	6.7	16.8	10.9	7.2	17.9	11.6	7.9	22.7
	Female	19.8	14.1	29.1	22.5	16.5	35.9	27.6	20.2	47.2
All ages	Male	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Female	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: National Statistical Office, *Population and Housing Census* (various years).

**Table E.1 Labour-force participation rates by age group and marital status:
1983, 1986, 1989 and 1992**

Age	Male					Female				
	Total	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Total	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced
(1983)										
Total	71.8	40.3	90.4	45.1	83.0	33.9	34.0	34.1	31.6	65.3
14-24	31.7	29.9	92.9	–	100.0	29.1	31.3	17.8	100.0	100.0
25-29	92.8	85.1	98.7	100.0	75.0	27.8	63.0	21.9	62.5	75.0
30-34	98.2	92.2	98.7	100.0	100.0	33.1	66.7	31.0	83.3	60.0
35-39	98.2	85.0	98.4	87.5	100.0	41.3	63.6	38.8	84.0	61.9
40-44	97.0	71.4	97.3	88.9	81.8	48.7	75.0	45.2	79.8	72.7
45-49	96.1	80.0	96.4	88.2	100.0	50.5	66.7	46.7	71.3	63.6
50-54	91.1	66.7	91.7	86.4	71.4	47.3	100.0	45.5	51.8	63.6
55-59	80.8	–	81.9	66.7	50.0	41.9	–	44.1	38.6	40.0
60+	48.1	–	51.7	24.7	33.3	15.9	50.0	23.2	12.2	75.0
(1986)										
Total	74.4	42.8	90.8	51.8	84.4	39.0	39.9	39.0	35.6	70.3
(1989)										
Total	74.8	43.9	91.1	52.7	87.9	41.7	41.2	41.8	39.5	78.6
(1992)										
Total	75.9	45.5	90.8	51.4	88.2	41.5	42.1	41.8	36.8	73.8
14-24	26.6	25.3	93.8	–	–	35.2	36.1	27.3	–	100.0
25-29	90.0	84.5	98.0	100.0	100.0	38.7	76.2	27.1	80.0	83.3
30-34	97.5	92.2	98.7	100.0	94.1	38.6	72.5	35.8	79.2	74.1
35-39	97.7	89.2	98.4	90.9	91.2	48.2	77.1	45.5	88.1	80.5
40-44	97.1	77.8	97.7	85.7	88.2	53.3	71.4	50.1	86.4	78.8
45-49	96.0	90.9	96.3	91.7	90.0	56.0	83.3	52.1	80.6	73.9
50-54	92.6	83.3	93.0	88.2	81.3	54.9	50.0	52.3	64.5	64.3
55-59	86.2	75.0	86.9	73.8	66.7	51.1	100.0	50.9	51.0	55.6
60+	52.4	75.0	55.9	29.7	40.0	25.8	100.0	37.4	19.2	40.0

Source: National Statistical Office, *Report on the Employment Structure Survey*, 1984, 1987, 1990 and 1993.

Table E.2 Numerical distribution of employed persons aged 15 years and over by major industrial group and sex: 1970, 1986 and 1992

Major industrial group	1970		1986		1992	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	3 021	2 136	2 376	1 977	1 978	1 788
Mining	93	7	113	7	63	5
Manufacturing	928	520	2 408	1 187	2 790	1 340
Electricity, gas and water	28	2	51	3	61	7
Construction	441	20	929	63	1 337	124
Wholesale and retail trade etc.	790	489	1 667	1 480	2 265	1 939
Transport and communications	304	25	689	56	814	74
Finance, insurance and business services	80	17	387	158	279	250
Social and personal services	869	353	1 216	679	1 811	1 175
Unclassifiable and not stated	24	6	–	–	–	–
All industrial groups	6 578	3 575	9 836	5 610	11 398	6 702

Sources: National Statistical Office, *1970 Population and Housing Census Report*, vol. 2, and *Report on the Employment Structure Survey*, 1987 and 1993.

Table E.3 Numerical distribution of employed persons by major occupational category and sex: 1992 and 1996

Major occupational category	1992		1996	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Legislators/senior officials and managers	411	21	524	25
Professionals	579	340	657	357
Technicians and junior professionals	1 441	297	1 363	612
Clerks	812	929	1 241	1 323
Service workers, shopkeepers and sales workers	1 756	1 798	1 881	2 791
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	1 918	1 720	1 222	1 073
Craft and related trade workers	1 885	565	2 455	774
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	1 685	390	1 875	295
Elementary occupations	909	643	1 112	1 184
All occupations	11 398	6 702	12 330	8 434

Source: National Statistical Office.

Table F.1 Government employees by branch of activity and sex: selected years, 1983 to 1995

Year/sex	Branch of government activity					Total	
	Executive	Legislative	Judicial	Constitution Committee	Central Election Management Committee		
1983	Both sexes	619 227	1 804	6 678	15	822	628 546
	Male	486 798	1 213	5 488	10	569	494 078
	Female	132 429	591	1 190	5	253	134 468
1989	Both sexes	683 738	1 303	7 424	18	1 084	693 567
	Male	528 545	877	5 998	13	746	536 179
	Female	155 193	426	1 426	5	338	157 388
1990	Both sexes	788 312	3 039	8 914	136	1 469	801 870
	Male	597 668	2 162	7 073	97	1 102	608 102
	Female	190 644	877	1 841	39	367	193 768
1991	Both sexes	823 831	2 991	9 005	150	1 605	837 582
	Male	621 524	2 039	7 095	108	1 285	632 051
	Female	202 307	952	1 910	42	320	205 531
1993	Both sexes	869 680	3 003	9 365	165	1 820	884 033
	Male	638 163	2 096	7 329	117	1 421	649 126
	Female	231 517	907	2 036	48	399	234 907
1995	Both sexes	888 755	3 020	9 973	170	1 898	903 816
	Male	645 882	2 078	7 776	120	1 492	657 348
	Female	242 873	942	2 197	50	406	246 468

Sources: Ministry of Government Administration, *Statistics of Government Personnel*, 1983 and 1989, and *Yearbook of Ministry of Government Administration*, 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1996.

Table F.2 Membership in committees or commissions by government ministry/department and by sex: 1996

Government organization	Number of committees/commissions	Number of members			Percentage female
		Both sexes	Male	Female	
Ministry of Political Affairs II	3	53	29	24	45.3
Emergency Planning Committee	1	27	27	–	–
Fair Trade Commission	1	7	7	–	–
Economic Planning Board	34	626	617	9	1.4
Supply Administration	3	29	27	2	6.9
National Statistical Office	1	63	61	2	3.2
Ministry of Government Administration	7	148	135	13	8.8
Ministry of Science and Technology	6	87	86	1	1.1
National Unification Board	3	85	80	5	5.9
Government Legislative Administration Agency	1	25	25	–	–
Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs	4	50	50	–	–
Ministry of Home Affairs	14	261	255	5	1.9
National Tax Administration	4	59	58	1	1.7
Customs Administration	7	91	91	–	–
Ministry of Justice	9	90	86	4	4.4
Public Prosecution Administration	2	21 178	19 115	2 063	9.7
Ministry of National Defence	23	307	305	2	0.7
Ministry of Education	9	429	372	57	13.3
Ministry of Culture and Youth	12	310	294	16	5.2
Board of Audit and Inspection	1	19	18	1	5.3
Office of Administrative Coordination	5	99	93	6	6.1
Police Administration	1	7	6	1	14.3
Ministry of Agriculture	19	370	351	19	5.1
Rural Development Administration	1	20	20	–	–
Forestry Administration	4	46	46	–	–
Ministry of Commerce and Industry	26	742	726	16	2.2
Industrial Advancement Administration	2	55	55	–	–
Patents Administration	7	89	86	3	3.4
Ministry of Construction and Transport	34	858	854	4	0.5
Ministry of Health and Welfare	35	695	606	89	12.8
Ministry of Environmental Administration	20	348	340	8	2.3
Ministry of Labour	20	847	771	76	9.0
Meteorology Department	3	24	24	–	–
National Railroad Administration	21	194	191	3	1.5
Ministry of Maritime and Ports	11	160	160	–	–
Ministry of Communication	5	58	55	3	5.2
Ministry of Information	3	93	91	2	2.2
Total	362	28 649	26 212	2 436	8.5

Source: Ministry of Political Affairs II.

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