



Japanese Women in Science and Engineering: History and Policy Change (Routledge Contemporary Japan Series)

By Naonori Kodate, Kashiko Kodate

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The gender gap in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) varies greatly from country to country, and the number of Japanese women in these fields remains relatively few. This prompts us to ask why the proportion of female scientists in Japan is still remarkably low and what measures the government, universities and research institutes are taking to address this issue.

This book sheds light on historical developments and the current gender equality situation in Japan, through the lens of women in STEM. It shows how a policy of gender equality in science and engineering has been introduced through the coordinated efforts of academia, scientific societies and the government, and how this has led to a slow but steady increase in female representation. The book draws on extensive data including interviews with government officials, scientists and educators in Japan to provide a revealing case study on how the underrepresentation of women in the fields of science, technology and engineering has been approached and dealt with by a national government. It heralds a new era for female scientists, by showcasing several programmes undertaken by government, universities and national research institutions to support multiple career paths for and the progression of female scientists in Japan.

Tracing the historical development of Japan's policies towards women in science and education, this book will be welcomed by students and scholars interested in Japanese studies, comparative social policy, gender studies, employment and the history of science and technology.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book written by Professor K. Kodate, along with co-author and second son Dr N. Kodate, offers an excellent overview of historical developments in female education in Japan, while focusing on the progress made by Japanese women in STEM in recent years. Leaving aside Professor Kodate's own achievements in promoting gender equality in the field, her experience as an excellent scientist, educator, and pioneer as a woman in science who struck a great life-work balance is also reflected in the book."

Atsuko Toyama, Former Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

"This book deals with the situation surrounding Japanese women in scientific research. As the authors state, 'like many other countries, Japan is still in the middle of tackling the common problems known as 'glass ceiling' and 'leaky pipes' that are facing women in STEM'. The book is very timely as it offers a very deep and documented study of the past and present. The analysis of the past, current laws and policies aimed at achieving equality between men and women, the important role played by scientific societies and the results in terms of statistics and surveys is a very helpful way to focus our minds on the future. I firmly believe that studies like this book will help move the situation forward."

María J. Yzuel, Department of Physics, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Spain and Former President of SPIE, the International Society for Optics and Photonics

"This important book explains why women's participation in STEM fields has lagged so badly in Japan relative to other industrialized nations, and describes how and why change is finally accelerating. Deeply held beliefs about women's role in Japanese society remain a serious barrier. Time does not change these - visionary and courageous leadership, laws, and data-driven remedies are required."

Nancy Hopkins, Amgen Inc. Professor of Biology (emerita), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

About the Author

Kashiko Kodate is Professor Emeritus at Japan Women's University in the Department of Mathematical and Physical Science, currently a specially-appointed Professor at the University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo, and CEO of Photonic System Solutions Inc. (PSS). She was a former Director of Gender Equality Bureau at the Japan Science and Technology Agency.

Naonori Kodate is a Lecturer in Social Policy in University College Dublin, Ireland. His main research area is comparative social policy, particularly in health care. He has co-edited a book entitled *Maternity Services and Policy in an International Context: Risk, Citizenship and Welfare Regimes* (Routledge, 2015).

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