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Korean women in the labor market

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KOREAN WOMEN IN THE LABOR MARKET

A Thesis

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By

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Abstract

KOREAN WOMEN IN THE LABOR MARKET

by Jeamin Seung

This study examines the ideological basis for the exploitation of female workers as well as female workers' activism and the improvement of women workers' working conditions in Korea[1].

It reveals that Confucian tradition is primarily responsible for the severe exploitation of female workers in Korea in the process of industrialization. Colonialism and the resultant male-dominated power elite exploited women workers in the name of Confucianism. This study shows how Korean women have struggled against sexual discrimination in the labor market despite their oppression and how they fought for the legislation of the Gender-Equal Employment Act.

According to my study, since the legislation, most of the labor conditions for Korean women have improved. However, there is no evidence of outstanding changes. For quantitative data, this study depends on analysis of statistics from 1985 to 1992, collected by the Korean Ministry of Labor and some Korean women's research centers.

To my Parents who always believed in my ability
and my Parents-in-law who always stand by me
with their unconditional love and support

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Statement of Problem

Sexual discrimination in the labor market is a global phenomenon. Women continue to work for equality in the work place. Women have supported legislation which would ensure them equal treatment in the labor market. Their efforts have resulted in equal employment legislation in many countries. Has legislation actually affected or changed women's working conditions? This is the starting point for my study.

Korea is no exception when it comes to sexual discrimination in the labor market in spite of the increasing participation of female workers. According to the teachings of Confucianism, in Korea women are considered inferior to men. As a result, Korean women have had to endure discrimination both in the private sphere and in the work place. Hence it is not surprising to see a high degree of segregation based on gender in the Korean labor market. Most female workers hold low positions or are assigned to low-paid tasks in Korea.

World-wide female employment in the paid labor market continues to grow. The same is true in Korea. However, an increase in the female labor force does not necessarily mean that women's status has improved. Under Japanese annexation and in the early industrialization period, many Korean female workers were mobilized for the labor-intensive textile industry, but they received low wages and endured long hours. During that time, women's traditional roles, as based on the teachings in Confucianism, which further promoted the existing sexual division of labor, were emphasized.

Since the 1970s, Korean workers have organized labor unions and struggled against the pervasive problems of low wages and long working hours. Many Korean female workers and feminists have raised the issue of sexual discrimination in the labor market. They persuaded the Korean government to start discussing the issue and, as a result, the Gender-Equal Employment Act was legislated in 1987 and revised in 1989 . This legislation assures that both sexes should be guaranteed equal opportunity and treatment in the work place, that women should be given up to one year maternity leave with pay, and that work places should offer child care. Its revision in 1989 adds the principle of equal pay for value-equal work and penal provisions for the employers who break the rules.[2] Many feminists and female workers in Korea played important roles in the legislation of the Act and their expectations for full equality have been high.

To understand the effectiveness of this legislation, it is necessary to understand the meaning of law to Korean people. In Korea, there is an old proverb that a good man [sic] can live without a law. Korean people traditionally live more by morality than the written law. To many Korean people, Confucianism is the basis for this morality. Confucianism has been an ideological base for Korean politics since the fourteenth century. Consequently Korean politicians have emphasized morality and used the law as a tool to punish those whom they deem immoral. For Korean people, a law refers to a criminal law rather than a civil law. Therefore Korean people tended to keep themselves away from law because they thought law was for immoral people. Laws, then, are put in place in order to control those people who break a moral as well as a criminal code.

In addition, Korean women have been less knowledgeable about the law than men because they were less educated and more likely to be illiterate than men. Since laws have been written in difficult languages such as Chinese, uneducated people could not read or understand them. More and more women in Korea have been educated since the 1960s, and they have started to get socially active. They started to realize the importance of the law. In the present Korean society, women as well as men depend more on the law and less on tradition and morality. Therefore, the impact of legislation is changing in contemporary Korea.

This thesis examines the following questions: What was the impact of Confucianism on Korean women's status, especially on female workers? Under the impact of Confucianism, how have Korean women participated in the labor market and what is their present situation? What did Korean women do to achieve equal rights in the labor market? What was the impact of the Gender Equal Employment Act (See Appendix, for text of the Act p.66. Henceforth it will be referred to as "the Act".) on the discriminatory treatment and low wage problem for female workers in Korea? Have conditions for them changed since the Act was legislated? If so, how are the conditions different? If not, why did the Act not improve the conditions for female workers? How can women win maximum benefits under the Act?

Background of the Gender Equal Employment Act

The call for equal employment legislation in Korea was late compared with other countries. Many of the provisions of the Equal Employment Act in

the 1980s in Korea were implemented earlier in other countries. Women's economic equality was discussed internationally in the early twentieth century. In 1919, the Versailles Treaty officially laid down as an international goal the principle enunciated by the United States Congress Industrial Commission in 1890--equal pay for work of equal value. The International Labor Organization was created to help to improve labor relations in 1919. The ILO set out to build up an international code of fair labor practice. In accordance with the Versailles Treaty, its stated aim was to ensure that all human beings, whatever their race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue their material progress and spiritual development in freedom and dignity in economic security and with equal opportunities.[3] In 1951, the ILO promulgated equal pay for work of equal value. In 1957 European countries adopted this standard.[4]

The Korean feminist movement emerged at the end of the 19th century in response to Japanese oppression.[5] Korean women started to struggle against Japanese colonialism and fight for modern education under the Japanese annexation (1910-1945). Only a small number of educated women participated in this movement at this time. Most Korean women were not aware of the unfairness of Confucian ideology due to lack of education. When they participated in the labor market under Japanese annexation, they rarely struggled against unfair treatment. At this time, women were concerned primarily with their homeland's liberation from Japanese colonialism. They believed that the problem of exploited female workers was due to Japanese colonialism so it would vanish with the independence of Korea. However they found that female workers were exploited in the same ways even after independence. Since independence from Japan (1945), Korean feminists have

worked for labor movements. Others, who mainly studied feminism in western countries, have worked in universities or led middle class women's movements.

The international issue of equal employment between the sexes was not discussed until the 1970s in Korea. Since then, Korean workers have organized labor unions and struggled against the pervasive problems of low wages and long working hours. In 1953, the Labor Standards Act, the Labor Union Law, the Labor Dispute Mediation Law, and the Council of Labor Law were legislated in Korea. The Labor Standards Act was the first legislation which banned sexual discrimination in the labor market in Korea. It provided that an employer should not discriminate against employees on the basis of sex, nationality, religion and social status. Even though labor laws have existed since 1953, they were not implemented to help women because they were initially written for and by men.

Korean women have fought for universal implementation of the laws for women as well as men. They criticized discrimination against women and struggled for legislation in the form of an equal employment law. Female workers in Dong-il Weaving Industry and HaiTai Confectionery, among others, played important roles in the labor movement. Since the 1980's, feminist groups around the Christian Academy, Family Law Counseling Center, and the YWCA have been concerned with discriminatory treatment and low wage structures for women, and they started organizing with female union members to call upon the government to correct the problem. Finally the Gender-Equal Employment Act was legislated in 1987. This Act states that both sexes should be guaranteed equal opportunities and treatment in work places, that women should be given up to one year maternity leave, and that work places should offer child care. However, the Act was implemented more as an election tool than to insure

substantive change . Although in 1987, Minjeong-dang, the ruling party, supported passage of the Act, female laborers and feminist organizations were not involved in the legislative process.

Since the Gender-Equal Employment Act was legislated in 1987, feminist organizations and female union members have criticized its incompleteness and called for revision to guarantee its effectiveness.[6] When the Act was first introduced, some researchers pointed out that it was prepared and passed without input from female workers or feminist groups, and it had no articles regarding the principle of equal pay for value-equal work in the same business.[7] Since then, Korean female workers and feminists struggled to change the legislation. Feminist groups fought for the revision of the Act by educating women about the incompleteness of the legislation. Female workers organized campaigns for the revision and distributed handbills about the necessity of changing it. Finally their struggle resulted in the revision of the Act in 1989. For the first time in Korea, women themselves participated in the legislation of a labor law. It was revised in 1989 to add the principle of equal pay for value-equal work in the same business, with penal provisions for the employers who break the rules. Many feminists and female workers in Korea played important roles in the revision of the Act.

Review of the Literature

Female labor force participation is rapidly growing all over the world. Despite the tremendous growth, women still hold traditional jobs, occupy low-status positions, and earn much less than men do. During the 1970s, the

academic literature moved away from studying women in the family toward examining their activities outside the domestic setting and investigating their place in social and economic relations (an INSTRAW Study-Joekes, 1986). There have been a tremendous number of studies of sexual discrimination in the labor market. Almost all of them, including studies by conservative male economists, agree on the fact that there is discrimination based on sex in the labor market.

Victor R. Fuchs (1988), for example, revealed that discrimination against women persists not only in the labor market but also in most economic and social institutions. He analyzed the impact of antidiscrimination legislation of the early 1960s in the United States and found that there has been almost no real change in women's employment, occupational segregation, and the wage gap. Finally, revealing his prejudice as a male economist, he concluded that women's lack of high economic position and progress since the 1960s is not primarily the result of prejudice or exploitation by employers but *the result of women's greater desire for and concern about children.* (Italics mine)

On the other hand, Barbara Bergmann (1986) analyzed the labor force experience of women in the United States economically. She looked at the impact of women workers in the U.S. economy. She emphasized that women's wages have been much lower than men's even though the real hourly wage for women workers has increased. She stressed that the most important factor contributing to low wages for women is sex segregation on the job. She criticized male economists who denied even the possibility of qualified women being dealt with unfairly by employers.

The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963 in the United States. Greenberger and Gutmann (1979) researched the impact of the EPA on female workers' low

wages. They compared the number of employees underpaid under the EPA from 1965 to 1976 and concluded that the EPA had no effect on the critical problem of women clustered in low-status, low-paying jobs where there are no male counterparts.

Women workers experience even greater sexual discrimination in developing countries than in developed countries. The experience of women in Western, developed countries like the United States has been relatively well-known since there have been abundant studies on women in those countries. In recent years, however, growing attention to women in the Third World has produced many studies on women workers in those countries. Junsay and Heaton (1989) argued that the existing research framework for women workers in developed countries did not fit for the Third World women. They generalized the pattern of women's mobilization to the labor market during industrialization and urbanization in developing countries, and emphasized development projects in those countries have shown negative consequences for women. Their study examined the differences of the patterns and determinants of female labor-force participation in three developing countries--Thailand, Colombia, and Egypt. One of the major determinants for the differences among the three countries is religion as an ideological base: Buddhism in Thailand, Islam in Egypt, and Catholicism in Colombia.

Lim (1983) shows the interactions between capitalist, imperialist, and patriarchal relations of production in developing countries. Most developing countries were industrialized by colonialism. Colonialists imparted capitalism in the colonized countries. They built factories and achieved remarkable economic growth by using abundant natural resources and a cheap labor force in those

countries. They exploited women as a low wage labor force, as well as men, emphasizing patriarchal relations in the labor market. Lim argued that the imperialist economic system still exists in the world market. Some Western manufacturers have located plants in developing countries in response to the competitive challenge from other mature capitalist countries. Imperialist capitalism reinforces the patriarchal exploitation of women in the labor market.

The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women(Joekes, 1987) was a creation of the United Nations Decade for Women. (The World Conference of the International Women's Year held in 1975 in Mexico City was opening of the United Nations Decade for Women.) INSTRAW was explored the complexity of issues linking global economic trends with the changing position of women in the economy. Most developing countries scheduled export-driven development plans. This study shows that developing countries owe their remarkable growth of export manufacturing industries to a cheap female labor force in female-labor-intensive light industries, including foods, textiles, garments, chemicals, rubber and plastics, and electronics. Clothing in Hong Kong, India, South Korea, the Philippines, and Kenya, chemicals production in Kenya and Egypt, and electrical products in Hong Kong and South Korea, are produced primarily by female employees. According to this study, textiles is a heavily feminized branch in South Korea (with 67 % female labor force as opposed to 43 % in 1984).

In the United States, most research on Korean women deals with Shamanism and women or Confucianism and women's family lives, rather than women's labor force participation.[8] In Korea there has been a growing attention to female workers since the 1980s. Many researchers have analyzed the

exploitation of female workers in economic terms. They emphasized that industrialization by Japanese colonialists and development plans since the 1960s played a big role in exploiting Korean female workers. Some researchers used statistics to show female workers' situation. Others used case studies to show sexual discrimination in the labor market and feminist and women workers' activism. These studies reveal how Korean female workers have experienced discrimination.

Many studies show that female workers have been more oppressed in developing countries than in developed countries and they analyze their oppression economically. However, few studies examine the ideological basis for the discrimination against female workers in developing countries and how the ideology promotes the exploitation of women. My study is important because it shows how Confucianism as an ideological base plays a part in exploiting female workers in Korea.

In Korea there are many studies about female workers, which have, in turn, stimulated the government to legislate the Gender-Equal Employment Act. When the Act was first introduced some researchers pointed out that it was drafted and passed without input from female workers or feminist groups, and it had no articles regarding the principle of equal pay for value-equal work in the same business (Kim, 1989). Since the Act's revision, outlining equal pay for value-equal work in the same business, in 1989, much research has been devoted to the manner in which women could attain maximum benefits. Since the Act is still relatively new, there are very few studies that deal with the outcome or impact of this legislation in Korea. We need to further evaluate how this legislation has influenced the treatment of women in the labor market.

Methodology

Two research methods are used for this thesis. First, to understand and analyze the impact of Confucianism on Korean female workers, the situation of Korean female workers, and the Korean women's labor movement, I synthesized several existing research works.

Secondly, to further research the impact of the Act, I depended on data analysis of labor force statistics from 1985 to 1992, collected by the Korean Ministry of Labor and some Korean women's research centers. I calculated the proportion of the female labor force in the total labor force and the ratio of female wages to male wages to eliminate independent factors such as population increase or inflationary factors. Those independent factors appear in the actual numbers. For example, if the population increased, the actual numbers of workers should increase. For a rapidly growing country like Korea whose economy has been in an inflationary state, any nominal wage increase which does not match or outpace the inflation rate means a decrease of the real wage. We can expect an increase from those independent factors for both men and women. The changes of the actual numbers mean very little in regard to labor conditions for female workers. The proportion of women in the total labor force and the ratio of female wages to male wages eliminates the independent factors and shows the changes of labor conditions for female workers without regard to those independent factors.

Setting aside those independent factors, it should be noted that social changes could accelerate the increase. Since Korea opened its doors to the rest of the world, the idea of equality for women was transmitted from the Western world. Since Confucianism was predominant and still exists today, the idea of

equality has spread slowly in Korean society. Korean women started to become aware of their own oppression and sexual discrimination and began to pursue equality between the sexes in the 1970s. Since then, more and more women entered the job market for their economic independence as well as for survival. It can be assumed that if the increase of the proportion of women in the total labor force resulted only from such social changes mentioned above, the increase would be gradual. Likewise, if the ratio of female wages to male wages increased due only to the social changes, the increase would be gradual. The social change factor can be eliminated by examining whether there were distinguishing changes from the gradual increases since the Act was legislated.

The rates of increase were calculated from 1985 to 1992 in order to compare female labor participation and wage increases with those for men. The figures show the changes of the proportion of the female labor force to the total labor force and the ratio of female wages to male wages.

Chapter II

History and Women's Labor Participation in Korea

The Impact of Confucianism on Korean Women

In Korea, Confucianism has played an important role in determining women's status in the labor market as well as in the family. Patriarchal lineage, which still exists in Family Law in Korea, had its roots in Confucianism.

Confucianism originated in China and reached the Korean peninsula at various stages of its development. Korean ancestors entered the peninsula five thousand or more years ago. Three Korean kingdoms-Kokuryo, Baekje, and Shilla emerged. Confucianism originated from the ethical teachings formulated by Confucius in the fifth century B.C. in China and it has been imparted to succeeding generations by his followers.[9] In 372 ACE, a Confucian academy was established in the kingdom of Kokuryo bordering on China. Confucianism began to penetrate the southern part of the peninsula, and in 682, a Confucian academy was built in Kyongju, Shilla's capital. Since Buddhism was the dominant religion in both kingdoms, the role of Confucianism was limited to some state functions, most notably the education of officials. By 668 ACE Shilla had conquered the other two kingdoms. The united Shilla gave way to Koryo dynasty in 936, and Koryo to the Chosun dynasty in 1392.[10]

During the early fourteenth century, many personal contacts between Korean and Chinese scholars stimulated the growth of Neo-Confucian studies in Korea. Neo-Confucianism was principally a phenomenon of the southern part of China which was known as Southern Sung (1127-1279). Neo-Confucianism was grounded in the teachings of Chu Hsi and the Cheng brothers, and took the four

books--Lun-yu (Analects of Confucius), Meng-tzu (Works of Mencius), Ta-hsueh (Great Learning), and Chung-yung--as its scriptural foundation. Neo-Confucian learning provided important new methods for asserting elite status. Neo-Confucianism was a sociopolitical ideology which suggested ways to rule the state. Chu Hsi argued about the benefit the state draws from the lineal-agnatic principle.[11] In his Chin-ssu lu he quoted Cheng I:

> In order to control the minds of the people, unify one's kin, and enrich social customs so that people will not forget their origin, it is necessary to clarify genealogy, group members of the clan together, and institute a system of heads of descent.

Chu Hsi endorsed clarifying the line of descent, establishing the head of the descent group, and institutionalizing ancestor worship. He considered these three principles the main pillars upon which social and political stability rest.[12]

After the Koryo dynasty was founded in 936, Koreans imported the Neo-Confucian mourning system based on kinship from China. During the Koryo dynasty Koreans de-emphasized Chinese patrilineal bias by giving more prominence to maternal and affinitive kin. Designated as the protective spiritual power of the state by the founder of Koryo, Buddhism developed powerful economic institutions.

The reformers who founded the Chosun dynasty in 1392 needed a new ideology to justify their political beliefs. The new ideology had to counteract egalitarian Buddhism and its spiritual liberation which had been a leading ideology for the prior dynasty's leading class. The new ideology for the reformers was Confucianism. The Chosun dynasty was built on a firm Confucian basis and the tenets of Confucianism were applied to the Korean social order.

Confucianism stressed lineage, ancestor worship, and patrilocal marriage. These values still give sons the all important traditional role of successor to the family lineage and provider of old age support for their parents.

The father-eldest son relationship is distinctive in Korea. The father's household and lands were inherited by the eldest son. Other sons may have provision made for them during the lifetime of the father, or they may inherit smaller portions. In this regard an eldest son is responsible for the maintenance of aging parents, being expected to reside with them, and it is to him that the obligations for performing the ancestral rites fall. This pattern differs from the traditional Chinese system of equal division between heirs. The Confucian patriarchal lineage system in China became more strict when it was introduced to Korea. It was not until 1989 that the Family Law provided equal inheritance rights between brothers and sisters, regardless of their birth order or gender.[13]

According to the Confucianism, there are five social relationships. They are: 1) the relationship between sovereign and subject, guided by righteousness; 2) the relationship between father and son, guided by parental authority; 3) the relationship between husband and wife, guided by the separation of their functions; 4) the relationship between elder and younger brothers, guided by the sequence of birth; and 5) the relationship between senior and junior, guided by faithfulness.

In the Confucian view, the family has the central role in society. Three of the traditional five Confucian social relationships deal with family: father to son, husband to wife, and elder brother to younger brother (senior to junior). The fourth relationship, of ruler and minister, extends the family analogy to the entire polity. Most social relationships are conceived in terms of a hierarchical order

between unequal pairs of superior to inferior. The relation of superior to inferior has been especially emphasized between men and women.

According to the Confucian view, the law of nature accorded woman an inferior position. According to Confucius, a woman is a creature born to obedience.[14] Throughout her life, a woman's duty was to follow the three obediences: 1) before marriage, to obey the father; 2) after marriage, to obey the husband; and 3) in the event of the husband's death, to obey her son. After Confucianism was adopted as the national ideology in the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), obedience, chastity, and perseverance have embodied feminine virtue.[15] Women had to learn the virtuous conduct prescribed in the Chinese Confucian classics. After the age of seven, girls could no longer associate with boys or men.

The most fundamental feature of the Confucianization of Korean society was the development of the patrilineal lineage system. The lineage system was changed during the transition period from Koryo to Chosun. The most striking aspect of change was the narrowing of the descent calculation. The all-inclusive Koryo descent system, in which descent was traced through female as well as male links, was forced into a strictly patrilineal scheme. After the beginning of the Chosun dynasty, Korean lineages became much more rigidly structured than those in China.[16] The *Sadaebu*, which refers to the high class of the Chosun dynasty, separated themselves from the rest of society by emphasizing lineage to gain the social and political upper hand. They made good use of descent and heredity to monopolize the political life and the economic resources of Chosun. They had to keep their class from growing because there were limited political

and economic resources. They could keep their status by maintaining a strict patrilineal system.

The patriarchal lineage system became more rigid in the later part of the Chosun Dynasty when the centralization of government was threatened by growing local power. In the seventeenth century a daughter's descendants were excluded in genealogy and were not given the right of inheritance. Filial piety (*hyo*) was also emphasized in the Chosun dynasty. It was much stronger in Chosun than in China. Women were strictly isolated from politics. When a woman got married, she had to devote herself to parents-in-law and had to endure *sijibsari* which meant a slave-like work in her husband's home. As she had children, especially boys who could succeed to the lineage of the husband's family, she became a genuine member of the family and was empowered in the family. She was rewarded for her hard life when she gained a daughter-in-law who was expected to be faithful to her mother-in-law. The hard life as a daughter-in-law and powerful mother- in-law is also true in China and some other countries which have a strong Confucian patriarchal tradition. However, it has been much stronger in Korea since the latter part of Chosun dynasty as the patriarchal system grew more rigid and filial piety (*hyo*) was emphasized. Even though there were strict separate spheres for women and men in the Chosun dynasty, women had power in the private sphere as they became mothers. The rewards for mothers-in-law were one of the reasons why the system was upheld in Korea.[17]

Confucianism has played a leading role in defining women's status in Korea since 1392. Women in traditional Korean society have contributed through their continuous sacrifice and perseverance under prevailing

Confucianism. Women's labor contributions have been perceived under the notion of virtue without attention to the instrumental effects in Korea. Women's work was restricted to the domestic circle such as home management, household production, household labor, and production on family farms in the Chosun dynasty. Only some lower class women were engaged in professions such as medicine, shamanistic practice, and entertainment. How many women engaged in these occupations is not clear because economic and labor statistics only became available after Japanese annexation.[18] The Chosun dynasty structured its economy on peasantry management of agricultural production. In the peasantry, women's labor in the domestic circle was very important.[19] However their labor contributions were not considered economic activity but perceived as domestic activity under the strict separate spheres for men and women.

Korean society was closed to the rest of the world during the Chosun Dynasty to maintain stability. Stability was easily maintained by segregating people according to inherited social class, age, sex, centralized bureaucracy, and an agrarian economy with few signs of capitalistic development.[20] Korean women were forced to achieve Confucian feminine virtue and were forced to undertake sexually segregated household affairs assigned to them by Confucian culture and a closed society pursuing stability. Therefore, Korean women were not provided equal opportunities to train themselves for full participation in social, political, and economic activities.

History of Korean Women's Labor Participation, 1900-1975

In the beginning of twentieth century, Korean women, with the exception of nobility, increasingly started to participate in the labor market. Since Korean society was based on agriculture, most women worked in rural areas. Japanese imperialists introduced capitalism to Korea and obstructed autonomous industrialization when they annexed and colonized Korea in the early twentieth century. Japanese annexation set the direction for Korean women's labor participation for the future during this early industrialization. Japanese imperialists took advantage of the patriarchal system when they employed Korean women as factory workers. Since Japan introduced capitalism, the Korean economy has employed women and has also exploited them, making good use of the traditional sexual division of labor and sexual hierarchy from Confucianism.

After the annexation, Japanese usurious capital invaded the Korean agricultural area. Since the Japanese government and great landowners monopolized agriculture, Korean peasants had to migrate to urban areas. These migrants who lost their homes and farms were employed at factories owned by Japanese as cheap laborers. Japanese colonialists took most of the Korean agricultural products, and they accelerated the impoverishment of Koreans.[21]

Japan achieved astonishing growth in the textile industry by forcing Korea to supply raw material for the industry and to buy their products.[22] As Japan pursued its economic self-interest, it forced the Korean government to recruit more Korean women as low wage workers. During this period Korean women started to participate in the labor market not for economic equality or economic independence but to survive the impoverishment which was accelerated by

Japan's imperialistic policy. At this time, an increase of female labor participation meant the exploitation of female workers rather than improvement of women's status.

Korean women's participation in the labor market was exploited by Japan without resistance because of women's unequal status as directed by Confucianism. It was considered a virtue for women to be confined to the roles of birthing and raising children, house keeping, farming, etc., even after they started to participate in the labor market. Japanese imperialists stressed the Confucian patriarchal system when they employed Korean female workers. For example, the employers sent the wages to female workers' families or paid wages to female workers' fathers.[23] The traditional sexual segregation and sexual hierarchy in the domestic circle were applied to factory workers. Inferior-superior relationships from Confucianism were applied to the relationships between employers and employees and the relationships between female workers and male workers. Japanese imperialists rationalized the hierachichal sexual division of labor and lower wages for female workers using Confucian values.

At this time, Korea also started its capitalist industrialization with labor-intensive textile industry. Many Korean women began participating in manufacturing labor at the lowest wage. In the early twentieth century, under Japanese annexation, the largest number of female workers still engaged in agriculture.[24] The percentage of female workers in manufacturing increased significantly even if a very small number of female workers on the whole worked in that area. Korean male workers earned half of the wage that Japanese male workers earned. Korean female workers earned one fourth the wage of Japanese

male workers and Korean teenage female workers earned one sixth.[25] Forty-six per cent of all Korean factory workers were compelled to work over twelve hours a day. The textile industry, which depended mostly on younger female workers as a cheap labor force, enforced long labor hours. Eighty-two and two-tenths per cent of the workers in the textile industry were forced to work over twelve hours a day.[26] Despite the increasing number of industrial accidents and illnesses, only 1% of the factories had clinics in 1938.[27]

In the early twentieth century, opportunities for modern education opened to women. Even if the number of educated women was very small, they started to participate in governmental and professional occupations. The sexual division of labor was more striking in the professional sector than in the manufacturing sector. Most women occupied a disproportionate number of teaching jobs as the number of educational institutions increased. The percentage of women in education was much higher than in other professional sectors.

Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945 when Japan was defeated in World War II. However, it was not a true liberation for Korea. The Soviet Union and the United States divided and ruled Korea for years. They established military administrations in North and South Korea. The Soviet Union built a communist government in the northern part, and the United States built a capitalistic government in the southern part. North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950. The Soviet Union supported the communists to expand its power. The Korean War resulted in a truce in 1953. Since then, Korea is still divided into two countries. A threat of war has played a major role in keeping an anti-communist conservative government in South Korea.

After the war, the period from 1953 to 1961 was one of very slow recovery from the war with massive assistance from the United States. Even in 1960, after the damage inflicted during the war had been repaired, Korea's per capita GNP was still only $80 (US) in current prices. The trend changed abruptly, however, with the beginning of the Five-Year Economic Development Plan in 1962 (see Table 1). The purpose of the Plan was to reconstruct the national economy through using Korea's cheap labor force as other overpopulated and resource-scarce countries had done. Since Korea lacked natural resources and capital, the government decided to import foreign capital and resources. The Plan was organized on the idea that since Korean labor was less expensive, foreign capital and resources could be used to make products which could then be exported and marketed at lower costs. Reliance on a cheap labor force was essential to this economic strategy.[28] Since then, many women have been employed at low wages to meet that purpose.

One typical example illustrates the situation for female workers in the 1970s. Ok-sun Lee came to Seoul from a rural area to work in 1974. She was employed in a ceramic factory. She was hired at 410 won ($1.03 in 1974 dollars) per day. To this was added 40 won (10 cents) for lunch (the plant was lacking a cafeteria) and 10 won for the fact that she had graduated from middle school. Her total earnings were thus 460 won ($1.15) per day and 11,040 won per month if she worked 6 days a week.[29] Considering that the subsistence living expense calculated by the Ministry of Labor was 69,053 won per month in 1974, we can see how low the wages for female workers were in comparison.[30]

The Korean capitalist economy used traditional Confucian ideology to justify low wage employment the same way that Japanese colonialism did.

According to Confucius, the relationship between sovereign and subject should be guided by righteousness and faith. Workers were told by the employers that they should endure low wages faithfully to reconstruct the national economy. Under the Confucian ideology even lower wages were rationalized for female workers. In the Confucian view, the law of nature accords woman an inferior position and a woman is a creature born to obedience. The employers emphasized a family-like relationship with workers and between female and male workers. They applied women's inferior position under Confucianism to female workers' lower wages. Since Korean female workers started to participate in the labor market without any challenge to the Confucian view, the employers, and even female workers themselves, took it for granted that female workers were paid much less than male workers. Some female workers, especially in the foreign-based factories, did not protest the inequities between male and female workers but rather the fact that female workers abroad, in Europe or the United States, were paid eight to twelve times as much for the same work.[31]

Since the 1960s, female participation in the labor force has grown sharply with modernization and industrialization. Urbanization and industrialization in Korea attracted young men from agricultural areas and stimulated more women to participate in agricultural labor. In 1974, majority of agricultural workers (53.4%) in rural areas was female workers.

The marital status of urban female workers and female agricultural and fishing workers are quite different in Korea. In the 1970s, most female workers in the agricultural and fishing industries were married while most urban female workers remained unmarried. Eighty-four and eight-tenths per cent of female workers in rural area were married in 1970s.

In the urban area, 82.3% of female workers in the service and basic industry were unmarried and 89.7% in manufacturing industry were unmarried.[32] On the whole, the percentage of unmarried female workers in urban area was higher than other countries. The rate was 77.5% in Korea while it was 43.4% in Japan and 17% in the United States.[33] Married women can hardly find jobs in the Korean labor market and many female workers quit their jobs as soon as they get married.

Confucianism influences women's job decision in Korea. According to Confucianism, the most important value is the family. When women marry, they follow their husbands' decision regarding where to live, when to have babies, and so on. Sometimes women quit their jobs when their husbands move to other cities due to a job change or when they marry men who want their wives to stay at home. Those husbands usually want their wives to do housework and raise their babies who will carry on the family name.

The Five-Year Economic Development Plan triggered the participation of female workers. Women's participation in the labor market was disproportionately high in manufacturing industries and especially centralized in the labor-intensive early industries (see Table 2).[34] Although the trend changed dramatically as Korea's economy grew, 84% of female workers in Korea participated in manufacturing industries in 1974.[35]

Although women have participated in the workforce in various capacities in Korean economic life, their unpaid labor contributions are not equally valued against paid labor, and the participation of female workers in the paid labor market is regarded as secondary and supplementary. While the government plan in the 1960s and 1970s mobilized many women as workers, the plans based

on lower costs exploited female workers with low wages and long labor hours and reinforced the sexual division of labor in the labor market. Therefore, in this period as well as under the Japanese annexation, the increasing female labor participation did not necessarily mean that women's status improved.

The basic female employment patterns in the 1960s and 1970s were not so different from that under Japanese annexation. Japan took advantage of Korean women as low wage workers in the labor-intensive textile industry during the annexation. Under Japanese annexation, Korean educated women considered their struggle against colonialism the more urgent business in their movement and they believed independence from Japan would liberate female workers from exploitation. However, the exploitation still existed after liberation. Likewise Korean female workers were mobilized to the labor-intensive textile industry as low wage workers in the early industrialization periods. They were employed earning even much lower wages than male workers who also were paid very low wages. The Korean capitalistic economy as well as Japanese imperialists pursued maximum benefits in their economic development plans by rationalizing the lower wages for female workers through Confucianism.

CHAPTER III

Korean Women in the Labor Market

The Working Conditions of Korean Women

Since the Japanese invasion, the discriminatory practice of low wages for female workers has continued in Korea. According to the statistics from ILO in 1982, the average wage for Korean women was 44.8% of that for men while the percentage for French women was 87.7%, for British women 69.5%, for West German women 72.5%, and for Japanese women 53.8%.[36] The average wage for women improved to 53.18% of that for men by 1988. In the professional or managerial sector, based on a highly educated labor force, the average wage for women was 70% of that for men.[37] Most Korean women, however, work in manufacturing or service sectors except a very small number of educated women. In the manufacturing industry, female workers account for 65.8% of the labor force but women were paid only 58.96 % of the wage men are paid in 1988.[38]

Female workers increased outstandingly in tertiary industries[39] in the 1980s. The tertiary industry was enlarged with the expansion of industries such as restaurants, lodging, entertainment or pleasure-seeking industries because the government has promoted tourism since the 1970s. Most employees are unmarried women in their twenties.[40]

On the whole, there were more unmarried female workers in urban areas than rural areas in Korea in the 1970s. Since the 1980s the unmarried female labor force has been increasing in specific industries. The government encouraged tourism as a strategy to overcome the scarce natural resources in the

1970s. With the governmental policy, service industries have expanded. Since the 1980s, female workers in the service sector and tertiary industry increased dramatically. It is noticeable that most of the female workers in that industry are unmarried females in their early 20s.

On the other hand, in the manufacturing industry married female workers have increased since the 1980s. More and more young unmarried female workers turn to the service and basic industry and married women from the working class have to work for their survival due to economic indigence. The increasing number of female married workers does not mean women continue to work immediately after marriage in Korea. Korean women are involved in a two-step work career: employment while single, a possible period of inactivity after marriage, and the resumption of work after the birth of a child or two.[41]

The subsistence living expense per month in Korea calculated by Ministry of Labor in 1987 is 220 thousand won ($ 275). While 15.9 % of male workers are paid less than the minimum costs, 76.5% of female workers are paid even less .[42] Additionally, the longer they are employed, the wider the wage difference becomes. In the manufacturing industry, the rate of wage increases for male workers is twice as much as that for female workers.[43] According to a report from Daewoo Industry, which is the third largest conglomerate company in Korea, 85.3 % of the female and male workers have families to support and most of them have families of three or more to support.[44] The subsistence living expense (per month) for a family of four in Korea was 466,100 won ($ 583) in 1985. Nevertheless approximately 80% of female workers are paid below 200,000 won ($ 250) which is less than half of the subsistence expense for a family of four.

A female laborer alone can not support a family. She earns a bare living for herself.

Besides the lower wages which female workers receive for the same job as male workers, the sexual division of labor accentuates the low wage problem for female workers. While men mainly occupy those jobs in professional or administrative sectors, most women work in the service or the manufacturing sectors. In Korea, the sexual division of labor has long existed. Women are employed at lower status jobs with lower income. It is true of working class women. (working class men occupy jobs with higher wages than working class women). In manufacturing, women have been excluded from some industries with higher wages such as the auto, steel, or machine industries. They mostly have worked in the textile, electronics or sewing industries with lower wages. Hyundai and Lucky Gold Star are two of the biggest conglomerates. Both have very large plants which have more than 5,000 workers. Lucky Gold Star manufactures electronics and electrical equipment while Hyundai makes heavy machinery and automobiles. Gold Star hires a large female labor force but Hyundai does not.[45] Some conglomerates limit employment to persons who finished their military service in Korea which has the conscription system for men. Others express their intention directly by limiting their employment to men.[46]

The long working hours for Korean workers have been well known. According to the statistics from ILO in 1979, working hours for Korean workers were the longest in Asia.[47] The average working hours for female workers were 9.7 hours a day and 236.8 a month while the hours for male workers were 9.0 hours a day and 225.6 a month in 1981.[48] Even though the average working

hours decreased to 216.5 hours a month for women and 215.9 for men in 1990, the manufacturing industries reported the longest working hours for their workers. Female workers in the manufacturing industry work 224.2 hours a month and they work the longest hours throughout the industrial sector.[49]

The Labor Standards Act was legislated in 1953 and it has been amended several times since then. Although the Labor Standards Act amended in 1961 provided menstruation leaves, maternity leaves, and nursing hours, it was not effective for female workers except for a small number of professional women. Since Korean government restricted labor movement when it began the Five-Year Economic Development Plan in 1962 and those provisions regarding maternity were not publicized to women workers at that time, women could not be organized to fight for those.[50] Most factories do not pay for menstrual leaves and sometimes do not allow them at all. Female workers do not dare to ask for maternity leaves or nursing hours because they are threatened with being fired if they are pregnant.[51]

Women's Movement (Labor and Feminist) and Legislation of Gender-Equal Employment Act

Since the 1970s Korean workers have organized labor unions and struggled against the pervasive problems of low wages and long working hours. Female workers in Korea started to turn their interests to women's issues as well as labor issues in 1970s. They asked for maternity leaves, nursing leaves, and a child day care system by forming a labor union movement.[52] Female workers played important roles in the labor movement. While educated women fought

against patriarchal family law and a *kisaeng guankuang* , a tourism based on prostitution, other female workers struggled for their survival in the 1970s.

In a military coup d'état in 1961, a military dictatorship seized power until a civilian won the presidential election in 1993. In the 1970s the Korean economy was under the Five-Year Economic Development Plan to reconstruct the national economy. The military government asked workers to sacrifice themselves for the national economy. Workers, especially female workers, were exploited by being paid low wages. The government suppressed the labor union movement. Despite their oppression, female workers fought for better working conditions.

In the 1970s, female workers fought for the minimum wage guarantee and eight working hours a day as authorized by law. The goal of the minimum wage was to raise it to the level of a subsistence living expense. The goal of an eight-hour day was to guarantee regular, fair working hours. Female workers in HaiTai, a leading confectionery company in Korea, started to struggle for an eight-hour day in 1975. They had to work twelve hours a day and work in shifts day and night. In 1976, they resisted work on Sundays and in 1979 they resisted overtime work asking for an eight-hour day. Finally they won it in 1980. They could earn the same amount of money with eight hours a day as they earned with twelve hours a day. Their struggle encouraged female workers in other confectionery companies to fight for the goal of the eight-hour day. The successful case in HaiTai affected the status of other factory female workers.[53]

Ms. Lee works in a US corporation where about 6,000 female workers are employed.[54] The company forced female employees to quit the company when they got married or got pregnant. Many female employees had to marry secretly to continue to work. If they were pregnant, they had to quit, because there were

no maternity leaves in the company. Ms. Lee also married secretly. When she was pregnant she could no longer keep it a secret. She organized a labor union which consisted of married women to struggle for maternity leaves. In 1982, the company fired six union members but that did not stop them. The union members finally won sixty days of maternity leave with pay before and after childbirth. As she fought along side the union members, Ms. Lee gained confidence in herself and came to realize the importance of a labor union.[55]

Korean female workers started the struggle against sexual discrimination in the labor market by organizing a labor union in the 1970s . In 1972, female workers in Dong-il weaving industry organized a labor union to win a monthly menstrual leave and a one-day leave a month. The company continued to suppress the union movement in several ways. However, the female workers were well organized for the fight and finally won. The most outstanding labor union movement in the 1970s was the YH female labor movement. In 1975, female workers in YH Apparel company organized a labor union to fight against low wages and long labor hours. In 1979, the company closed because of labor union tactics. The female workers began their strike in the building of *Shinmin-dang,* an opposition party. The government suppressed the strike and killed Kyungsook Kim who was the leader of the union. Since then, the labor union movement became a political issue in Korea due to the YH labor union movement.[56] In 1976, female workers from several small scale businesses in *Chungyechun* formed an alliance to struggle against low wages. There are many small scale businesses which make shirts in Chungyechun. The employers of those businesses tried to suppress female workers' demands for a raise in their wages. They fired female workers who fought for raises and kept them from

being employed in other factories. All the workers in Chungyechun organized a strike. The employers had to accept their demands because shirt production in Chungyechun was cut off simultaneously. It did not take more than one day for the female workers to win their demands for higher wages. The Chungyechun workers' victory was an inspiration to other the workers in small scale businesses in helping them form their own labor movements.[57]

In the 1970s, the Korean feminist movement paid less attention to female workers than to educated women. Feminists mainly struggled for the revision of the patriarchal Family Law and against the Kisaeng Guankuang, tourism based on prostitution. Korean family law had a strict patriarchal lineage system in the 1970s. Feminists fought against it through their alliance with the Christian academy, the Family Law Counseling Center and the YWCA. In 1973, feminists from sixty-one feminist organizations organized the Pan Korean Women Family Law Revision Promotion Organization. As a result, the family law was revised in 1977 even though the revision was not totally satisfactory. The revised law still kept provisions which granted the first son the headship of a family, authorized more inheritance for sons than daughters, and so on. After 1977 the organization continued to fight against the unsatisfactory family law. Finally women won another revision of the family law in 1989. The new revision authorized same inheritance for sons and daughters even though it still keeps sexual discrimination such as patriarchal family succession.

In the 1970s, the Korean government encouraged tourism as a strategy to overcome scarce natural resources. The government neglected and even encouraged prostitution as a means of bringing foreign tourists to Korea. Women from the Christian Academy and the Young Women's Christian

Association (YWCA) organized to stop the Kisaeng Guankuang. They also fought in Japan, the source of most of the tourists for the Kisaeng Guankuang.

It was not until the late 1970s that Korean feminists turned their interests to female workers. The feminist movement changed in the 1980s. Feminist organizations started to include women en masse in addition to educated women. Those organizations aimed at supporting women who were alienated from society and achieving a democratic society against the military dictatorship at that time. They supported female workers in the labor movements. The representative organization was *Pyungwoo-hoi* (Peaceful Friendship Organization) which was organized in 1983. Women in *Pyungwoo-hoi* struggled against female workers' compulsory retirement after marriages. They also supported the female labor movement at *Tomboy Apparel* where the employer fired some workers unfairly.[58] Many feminist organizations and female workers' organizations were established including *Minwoo-hoi* . Finally feminist organizations were unified as the Korean Women Organization Union in 1987.[59]

Korean female workers also established a unified organization. In 1987, the Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA) was founded to unify all the female labor union movements. Their objectives included : Improving the status of women; gaining benefits for women; increasing public awareness for the problems faced by women workers, empowering women workers to live a positive and active life, eliminating all forms of discrimination, and organizing married and single women workers and the wives of male workers so that they become a force in the movement for women's liberation. Since its formation, KWWA has been trying to raise specific issues of women workers and also to work together with the general labor movement. From mid 1987 to mid 1988,

when the Korean labor movement was its height, KWWA supported the formation of women-led trade unions, and the struggles of women workers to reform the unions in their companies.[60]

In 1987 *Minjeong-dang*, the ruling party, legislated the Equal Employment Act as a strategy to win a presidential election campaign. The act was legislated by the male-dominated party without any consideration for women's opinions even though it was legislation affecting women.

Since the Gender-Equal Employment Act was legislated in 1987, feminist organizations and female union members have criticized its incompleteness and called for a revision for greater effectiveness. When the Act was first introduced, it did not address the principle of equal pay for value equal work in the same business. Women in the YWCA held a public hearing for the Act and *Minwoo-hoi* held a public discussion on the Act in 1988. Since the Act was enacted in 1987, many feminist organizations have educated the female public, including female workers, about the incompleteness of the Act and the necessity for revision. Led by the Korean Women Organization Union, Korean women in those organizations fought for the revision of the Act. They campaigned for the revision and they held a signature-collecting campaign. They also distributed handbills alerting the public about the necessity of the revision. The Korean Women Organization Union submitted a revised bill for the Equal Employment Act to the Congress in 1989 and it was passed that same year.[61] Finally, their struggle resulted in the revision of the Act in 1989. For the first time in Korea, women themselves participated in changing legislation that would affect them as women in the labor force.

The revised Act adds the principle of equal pay for value-equal work in the same type of business. In defining the criteria for value-equal work, the Act outlines technique, endeavour, responsibility, working conditions and other work-related requirements. Any other business established by the same employer for the purpose of wage discrimination shall be considered identical with the original business.[62]

The act also adds penal provisions for the employers who break the rules. Any employer who violates the provisions of the act shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than two years or a fine not exceeding five million *won*.

Korean female workers won revision of the Gender Equal Employment Act by fighting for it themselves. Even though the Act was legislated by a male-dominated ruling party, change in its provisions was a result of the continuous work of the female workers' labor union. Female workers allied with feminists in the labor movement in the 1980s. Feminist groups played a key role in revising the Gender Equal Employment Act. The alliance of the Korean women's labor organizations with feminist organizations has proven to be a powerful force for change in Korea in regard to women's work.

CHAPTER IV

The Impact of the Gender-Equal Employment Act

Has there been any significant change after the Gender-Equal Employment Act became law? How effective has the Act been? The answers depend on data analysis of labor force statistics from 1985 to 1992, collected from the Korean Ministry of Labor and Korean women's research centers. In this chapter, I analyze data about the labor force. I am aware of the limits of this study: not enough time has elapsed to see significant changes reflected in implementation of the new legislation. However, through this study I hope to show how discriminatory practices previously leveled against female workers have begun to improve since the Act was legislated and revised.

Table 3 gives the actual numbers of the female and male labor force in Korea and the percentages of the female labor force to the total labor force. These numbers and percentages are important for my analysis because they show whether the Act affected the actual number of women employed. Of course, an increase of a female labor force does not necessarily mean that women's status improved. Even though many Korean women were mobilized into the labor market under Japanese annexation and during the early industrialization period, their traditional roles as based on Confucianism and the sexual division of labor were more strongly reinforced than any time in history. However, since the 1980s, the Korean economy has depended less on the labor-intensive textile industry than during the early industrialization period. Contemporary Korea

put more weight on late industries than early industries in manufacturing (see Table 2) and service and tertiary industry in non-manufacturing.[63]

The labor-intensive textile industry is fading in Korea. Because of increasing prices of commodities and various labor union movements, wages for workers have increased. This resulted in increasing production costs. Higher export prices weakened Korean competitiveness in the world markets. The industry could not afford to employ as many workers as they employed in the past. As a result, some of the female workers in the industry lost their jobs and others turned to service and tertiary sector. In addition, in the 1980s, the standard of living, as a whole, improved in Korea. More and more Korean women started to participate in the labor market not only for their survival but also for economic independence and self-fulfillment. Consequently, an increase of women in the labor market began to change women's status in contemporary Korea.

The female labor force in Korea has been increasing since 1985 (Table 3). The rate of actual female labor participation to the total labor force increased significantly from 1985 to 1987 (Figure 1). The female labor force stopped increasing between 1987 and 1988 and increased again in 1989. Since 1989, the actual rate of female labor participation has been increasing, though more slowly than before that time. There was no increase between 1991 to 1992. Table 3 demonstrates that the rate of female labor participation increased greatly between 1985 to 1987 but the rate of increase has slowed down since 1989. In addition, the percentage of female labor participation to the total labor force increased even faster from 1985 to 1987 than it increased since 1987.

The female labor force has been increasing continuously over the past decade. Within various industries, the number and proportion of female workers to all workers have increased at different rates since 1985 (Table 4 and Figure 2). These numbers and percentages are important because they show how differently the female labor force in each industry has changed and what industry has been most influenced by passage of the Act . Since the 1980s, most Korean female workers have been engaged in the service and tertiary industry. In 1974, 84% of female workers were working in the manufacturing industry. The proportion of female workers is higher in the agricultural and fishing industry. It is interesting that while the actual numbers of female workers in the agricultural and fishing industry have decreased, the percentage of female workers to the total workers is increasing. Modern industrialization forced the large rural population, especially the male population, to migrate to urban areas. The unbalanced urbanization population forced more rural women to engage in agricultural labor. The percentages of female workers in the agricultural and fishing industry have been increasing since 1985. However, we can not necessarily assert that the female labor force in agriculture increased because of the Act since there were no major increases since 1987 even considering other contributing factors.

The percentage of female workers in manufacturing industry increased from 1985 to 1987 and from 1988 to 1989 but since 1989 the rate has been decreasing (Figure 2). In the service and tertiary industry, the actual number of female workers increased significantly (Table 4). The service and tertiary industry rates were most influenced by the Act. However, the rate of increase from 1985 to 1986 is 2.09% while from 1986 to 1987 it is 2.05%. The rate decrease

from 1987 to 1988 is -0.25%. The percentage of female workers from 1988 to 1991 was increasing but the increase was not as high as 1985 to 1987. Therefore, there has not been any significant changes after 1987 and 1989.

Age also plays a role. Korean women mostly work while in their twenties and quit their jobs in their thirties when they typically marry and have children. They come back to work later, in their forties and older, when their children have grown and they can devote less time to housework. The Act protects maternity benefits and bans forced retirement due to marriage and pregnancy so that female workers can work in their later years. I felt it was important to determine if the number of female workers in their thirties and older increased as much as those in their twenties.

The percentage of female workers to total workers is the highest in the 20-29 age group and the actual number of female workers is the highest in the forty and older group. Both the percentage and the actual number of female workers are the lowest in the 30-39 age group. Female workers in their twenties have been increasing since 1985 (Table 5). The percentage of female workers in their twenties also has been increasing (Figure 3). The rate of increase is the highest between 1985 and 1986 (Table 5). The rate is 3.2% from 1985 to 1986 but it fell to 1.4% until 1988. It increased slightly to 2.3% in 1989 but decreased again from 1989 to 1991. Since 1991 the rate has been increasing. The rate of female workers in their twenties has been increasing even though not significantly after 1987 and 1989. The rate of increase of female workers in their 30s, however, is different. It increased from 1985 to 1987 but since 1987 it decreased except between 1987 and 1988. The rate of female workers in their forties and older has not increased significantly. The percentage of female workers in their forties and older

increased only 0.2% between 1985 and 1992 (Table 5). The rate of increase is -3.6% from 1990 to 1991 and it is 0% from 1991 to 1992. From Table 5 and Figure 3 we can see that the percentage of female workers in their thirties and over forties has not increased significantly since 1985 and there is no sign of change after the Act. It would appear that the Act influenced female workers in their twenties more because there has been a continuous increase in female workers in their twenties since 1985.

Education also affects women's labor participation. Do higher levels of education cause an increase in the female labor force? Table 6 shows the actual numbers of female workers and the percentages of the female laborer force to the total labor force on two educational levels. In Table 6 and Figure 4, non-college graduates refers to high school graduates and below. Compulsory education is required up to high school so most people graduate with a high school degree today. The percentage of non-college graduate female workers as well as the actual number is much higher than college graduate female workers (Table 6). However, the percentage of college graduate female workers has been increasing much faster than that of non-college graduates (Figure 4). For non-college graduates, the percentage has scarcely increased since 1987. It even decreased from 1987 to 1988 and from 1990 to 1991. The percentage of college graduate female workers increased dramatically from 1985 to 1986 and it continued to increase until 1992. The percentage rate increased again from 1988 to 1989 but decreased after 1986. It would seem that the Act of 1987 and 1989 did not encourage more non-college graduate female workers to participate in the labor market. The continuous increase in the percentage of college graduate female

workers is not necessarily a result of the Act but due in part to changing attitudes regarding higher education for women in Korea.

The unemployment rate is important for my analysis. If the opportunity for female labor participation increased and working conditions for female workers improved, it should follow that the female unemployment rate would decrease.

The percentage of male unemployment has been decreasing since 1985 (Figure 5). The female unemployment rate decreased also from 1985 to 1988 but it started to increase in 1988. The female unemployment rate decreased slightly after the Act was legislated in 1987 but it had been decreasing significantly since 1985. Figure 5 shows the increase in female unemployment since 1988. Since the female unemployment rate has been increasing since 1988, there appears to be no improvement after the Act.

Wage differences are a good indicator of discrimination in the work place. Table 8 shows the percentage of female workers in three wage brackets. Most female workers were in the lowest wage bracket, below two hundred thousand won, from 1985 to 1987. Since 1987, most female workers have been in the middle wage bracket. In terms of the percentages of female workers to the total labor force, the highest rate of female workers are in the lowest wage bracket (Table 8). Considering that the subsistence living expenses for 1 person was 220,000 won in 1987 and for a family of four was 466,100 won, female workers who are paid less than 200,000 won earn less than a living wage. Assuming working conditions improved since the Act was legislated, the number of female workers in the lowest wage bracket should decrease. Female workers in the lowest wage bracket decreased substantially since 1985. However, considering

that low-wage male workers also decreased, we can assume that this is due to the decreased value of the won. The percentage of female workers to the total labor force in the lowest wage bracket decreased 6.7% between 1985 and 1986 but increased again since 1986. It did not decrease significantly until 1990 (Table 8). Female workers from the middle wage group have been increasing remarkably since 1985. The rate of increase was 81.3 % between 1987 and 1988 and it was 28.8 % between 1990 and 1991. The percentage of female workers to the total labor force in the highest wage bracket is increasing slowly and the percentage in the lowest wage bracket is decreasing. From Table 8 we can see the middle wage group of female workers increased significantly since 1987. From these figures it would appear that the legislation mostly affected female workers in the middle wage bracket.

The percentage of female workers by marital status (Figure 7) shows that the increase in married female workers grew while unmarried female workers declined as a proportion of the labor force. The number and the percentage of unmarried female workers have been much higher than those of married female workers while the opposite is true for male workers.[64] The percentage of female unmarried labor force to the total female labor force in Korea is higher than in other countries. Many Korean women quit their jobs or are forced to do so by their employers when they get married. Employers, as a whole, believe that women would devote themselves less to their work after marriage. They emphasize women's traditional roles especially devotion to their families as specified under Confucianism. Sometimes women accept this view for themselves. In Figure 7, the highest rate of increase of married female workers is from 1986 to 1987. The rate decreased to 2.3 % from 1988 to 1989 and the

percentage of married female workers has not significantly increased since 1990. Therefore, the increase in married female workers does not seem to have any relation to the legislation of the Act.

Many Korean women quit their jobs or have been forced to do so when they got married or pregnant. The Act banned the unfair treatment of women such as firing married or became pregnant women and provided maternity leave. We would expect that more women would continue to work after they got married, pregnant, and had children since the Act was legislated. Figure 8 shows the female labor force by years. Table 10 indicates that more than 70% of female workers have job experience from 1 to 9 years, 26% below 1 year, and approximately 2% over 10 years. Despite the small number, the percentage of female workers with long experience has been increasing steadily while the other two groups show little change. To understand the impact of the Act, it is more effective to compare the percentages of female workers with experience from 1 to 9 and below 1 year, since not much time has elapsed since the Act. From 1989 to 1990 the percentage of female workers with experience from 1 to 9 years increased while the percentage below 1 year decreased. However, the percentage of female workers with longer experience decreased since 1990. Therefore, the Act does not appear to have influenced female workers to stay on their jobs after 1987 and 1989.

The Equal Employment Act was revised in 1989 and provided equal pay for equal work. Korean female workers have been employed at lower status jobs with lower income and they have been paid much less than male workers even when they participated in the same job. Employers have rationalized low wages for female workers using the tenets of Confucianism. The change of the ratio of

female wages to male wages shows how working conditions for female workers have improved. Table 11 and Figure 9 show the percentage of female wages to male wages. The female wage is not much higher than half of the male wage. It was, at most, 56% in 1991. Fortunately, it has been increasing since 1985 (Figure 9). The female wage itself and the ratio of female wages to male wages is very low as indicated in Table 11. The percentage has been growing comparatively quickly (Figure 9). The speedy increase started in 1985 before the Act was legislated and it decreased slightly between 1991 and 1992. Even though the ratio of female wages to male wages is increasing, the increase does not seem to be a result of the Act. While the percentage of female wages to male wages is not higher than 50%, females' work hours compared to males' are roughly the same (Table 10). Figure 10 shows that female work hours are decreasing and are less than male work hours. It appears that the Act may have had an impact on the exploitation of female workers by decreasing the number of hours worked per day.

As Ms. Lee's struggle for maternity leave shows in Chapter 5, women could win their rights by organizing labor union movements. It is important to determine if the Act stimulated more female workers to fight against their unfair treatment. Table 13 and Figure 11 shows the number of labor union members by gender and the percentage of female labor union members to male members. Female labor union members increased from 1985 to 1989 significantly but started to decrease since 1989. The percentage of female members to male members has been declining continuously since 1985 (Figure 11). Considering the growing number of male labor union members, it is surprising to see that the number of female members, as well as the percentage of female members, is

decreasing (Table 13). There does not appear to be an increase in female labor union participation since the implementation of the Act.

Summary

As a whole, female labor participation has been changing in a positive direction except for female unemployment and female labor union participation. The number of female workers is increasing in agricultural, manufacturing, and service industries (Figure 2). Considering that an unbalanced urbanized population forced more rural women to engage in agricultural labor, the growing percentage of female agricultural workers is not a positive change. Female manufacturing workers increased until 1991 and the percentage of female workers to the total labor force increased from 1985 to 1988 but started to decrease since 1989. Only in the service and tertiary industry did the number and the percentage of female workers increase steadily. The percentage of female workers in their twenties is growing steadily while the percentage of those in their thirties and forties is not (Figure 3). Employment opportunities for young women are getting better but the opportunities for older women have not improved. The number and the percentage of college graduate female workers are growing faster than that of non-college graduates, even though non-college graduate female workers outnumber college graduate female workers (Table 6). The female unemployment rate decreased from 1985 to 1988 but it started to increase since 1988 (Figure 5). The percentage of female workers in the middle wage group increased sharply since 1985 (Figure 6). The percentage of married female workers has been growing since 1985, though it is small in comparison to

the unmarried female workers (Figure 7). Most female workers have work experience of one to nine years and only a small number of female workers have work experience over ten years (Table 10). The percentage of female workers with one to nine years experience has not increased while the percentage with over ten years is increasing continuously (Figure 8). The percentage of female wages to male wages is growing even though it still is not over 60% (Table 11). Female work hours compared to male work hours have been decreasing (Figure 10). The percentage of female members to male members in labor unions is decreasing steadily (Figure 11).

As shown from the tables and figures above, female labor participation in Korea has been changing in a positive direction in most cases. Only the percentage of female workers in the total labor force in the service and tertiary industry (Figure 2), the percentage of female workers in the middle wage bracket (Figure 6), and female work hours (Figure 10) changed significantly since the Act was legislated. However, in most cases the changes had already started in 1985. I could not find any evidence that there were outstanding changes after the Equal Employment Act was legislated in 1987 and revised in 1989. I conclude that the Equal Employment Act has not significantly affected female labor participation in Korea.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Sexual discrimination in the labor market is a world-wide phenomenon. Women workers have experienced discrimination more in the developing countries than in the developed countries. Discrimination in Korea has been more severe than in many other developing countries because Confucianism is an ideology that rationalized and supported the oppression of women. A male-dominated government and power structure applied Confucianism, which had originally been used to define women's status in the family, to women workers in the labor market. The female labor force was exploited through long hours and low wages, further emphasizing women's low position under Confucianism.

Despite severe discrimination, more and more Korean women have participated in the labor market. They have struggled against their unfair treatment since the 1970s. Women workers fought by organizing unions. Feminist groups also supported the labor movement. Many of their struggles were successful and women workers were able to realize their potential and became empowered through their organizing efforts.

Women's attitudes towards their legal rights are changing in Korea. To protect themselves from sexual discrimination, one of the ways women workers could depend upon was an effective law. Their struggles resulted in the revision of the Equal Employment Act. The Act was first legislated by a male-dominated ruling party in 1987 but lacked effectiveness. Through the efforts of women workers and feminists, the Act was revised in 1989.

Since the Act has only been in effect a few years, it is premature to fully evaluate the impact the Act has had on women. Nevertheless, I hope this study can at least show how the situation for female workers has been changing since this legislation was introduced and revised. By turning our attention to the impact of the Act on women, feminists and female workers may be inspired to fight for its practical application in the future.

My data analyses show that virtually all situations affecting Korean female workers have been improving throughout the years. The percentage of female workers in the total labor force in the middle and high wage brackets is increasing (Figure 6). Even if the actual number of married female workers is much lower than unmarried, the percentage of married female workers is growing while the percentage of unmarried is not (Figure 7). Despite the small number, the percentage of female workers with long work experience has been increasing continuously (Figure 8).

Total female labor participation has been increasing as well (Figure 1). However, this does not apply to women of all classes in Korea. It applies only to specific groups. The percentage of female workers is increasing steadily only in service and tertiary industry (Figure 2), among women in their twenties (Figure 3) and among college graduates (Figure 4). There are still pervasive separate spheres between women and men despite the fact that Article 6 of the Act provides equal opportunity to women and men with regard to recruitment and employment. Even though Articles 7 and 8 of the Act banned sexual discrimination in the promotion of workers and forced retirement for married or pregnant women, only the number of female workers in their twenties has been increasing. Opportunity for employment is increasing only for college graduate

female workers even though the actual number of non-college graduate female workers is still almost nine times the number of college graduate female workers in Korea.

From my analyses, I was able to show there were no significant changes after the Act was implemented. Korean female workers played important roles in the legislation of the Equal Employment Act by organizing labor unions and struggling against their unfair treatment until the Act was legislated. However, Korean female workers depended on the Act itself too much and have not continued the struggle for maximum benefits under the Act. (For example, the female worker who won a maternity leave by organizing a labor union after the Act was legislated). I think women's struggle for their rights should be followed by the legislation of the Act. Women should fight for a proper application of the Act, because male-dominated government is still in charge of the execution of the Act. Considering that female labor union members have decreased since 1989 (Figure 11), I assume that Korean female workers became less active in the struggle against their unequal treatment for them after the Act was legislated.

The Equal Pay laws were passed in 1963 and 1964 in the U.S., but fifteen years later the female/male wage ratio remained unchanged at about 60 percent. The ratio started to climb only in the 1980s.[65] Considering the example of the United States, Koreans may be premature in their expectations that significant changes will be made at this point. However, the Gender-Equal Employment law in Korea was legislated much later than similar legislation in other countries. Discriminatory practices against Korean female workers continue to be a problem today. Korean feminist groups and female workers need to continue the

fight for maximum benefits under the Act and not depend on the prevailing male-dominated governmental agencies to look out for women's welfare.

Table 1

Major Indicators of Korean Economic Growth

	GNP per Capita (US$)	GNP (billion US$)	GNP Growth Rate(%)	Inflation Rate (%)	Foreign Exchange Rate (won/US$)
1960	80	1.95	1.1	10.5	65.0
1961	82	2.10	5.6	12.2	130.0
1962	87	2.31	2.2	15.4	130.0
1963	100	2.72	9.1	22.7	130.0
1964	103	2.88	9.6	23.0	256.0
1965	105	3.01	5.8	5.8	272.1
1966	125	3.67	12.7	12.7	271.5
1967	142	4.27	6.6	13.5	274.6
1968	169	5.23	11.3	13.8	281.5
1969	210	6.63	13.8	12.9	304.5
1970	243	7.99	7.6	13.5	316.7
1971	285	9.37	9.3	13.9	373.2
1972	316	10.57	5.4	16.1	398.9
1973	396	13.50	14.0	13.5	397.5
1974	535	18.55	8.4	29.5	484.0
1975	591	20.85	6.8	25.7	484.0
1976	800	28.65	13.5	20.7	484.0
1977	1,028	37.43	10.7	15.7	484.0
1978	1,406	51.96	11.0	21.9	484.0
1979	1,662	62.37	7.0	21.2	484.0
1980	1,589	60.30	-4.7	25.6	659.9
1981	1,719	66.20	6.6	15.4	700.5
1982	1,773	69.30	5.4	6.7	748.8
1983	1,914	76.00	11.9	3.9	795.5
1984	2,044	82.40	8.4	3.8	827.4
1985	2,150	83.70	5.4	4.1	890.2
1986	2,300	95.30	12.3	2.7	861.4
1987	3,098	118.60	12.8	3.7	792.3
1988	4,040	169.20	12.2	4.3	684.1

Note: GNP and GNP per capita are in current prices. The rate of inflation is based on GNP deflator.

Sources: Byung-Nak Song, The Rise of the Korean Economy, New York, New York:Oxford University Press, 1990.

Table 2

The Structure of the Manufacturing Industry (per cent)

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1986
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Food and Beverages	36.5	26.1	29.3	23.1	20.2	15.3
2. Textiles and leather	25.2	28.3	20.8	20.9	17.7	15.1
3. Wood products	3.4	3.2	3.3	2.1	1.5	1.2
4. Paper products	5.8	7.6	5.4	4.4	3.7	4.1
5. Non-metallic mineral products	4.9	4.4	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.3
6. Chemical Products	9.7	13.9	18.1	19.8	23.1	20.7
7. Basic metals	2.7	3.9	1.0	2.9	6.4	7.5
8. Metal products and machinery	10.3	11.3	14.4	19.3	20.5	29.6
9. Other manufacturing	1.5	1.3	3.2	2.8	1.9	2.2
Summary						
Light industry						
Early industry	61.7	54.4	50.1	44.0	37.9	30.4
Middle industry	14.1	15.2	13.2	11.2	10.2	11.8
Heavy industry						
Late industry	22.7	29.1	33.5	42.0	50.0	57.8

Note: Early industries = (1-2), middle industries = (3-5 and 9), and late industries = (6-8).
Sources: Byung-Nak Song, The Rise of the Korean Economy, Oxford University Press, 1990.

Table 3

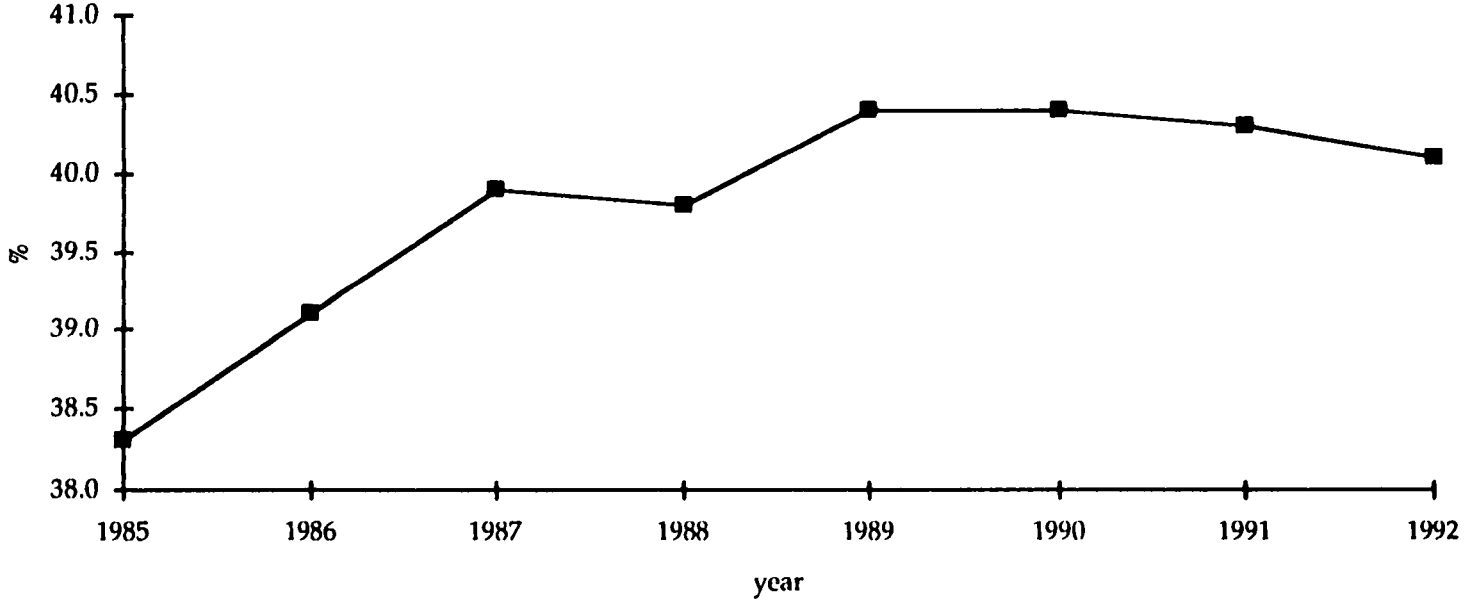
Labor Force by Gender (Age 15 or more)

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Female workers	Age15 or more (thousands)	5,975	6,296	6,735	6,891	7,259	7,474	7,657	7,770
	Labor Force % to Total labor force	38.3	39.1	39.9	39.8	40.4	40.4	40.3	40.1
	% Increase		2.1	2.0	-0.3	1.5	1.1	-0.2	-0.5
Male workers	Age15 or more (thousands)	9,617	9,819	10,138	10,414	10,716	11,013	11,355	11,615
Total	Age15 or more (thousands)	15,592	16,115	16,873	17,305	17,975	18,487	19,012	19,385

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 1

Percentage of the Female Labor Force to the Total Labor Force



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 4

Female Labor Force Location by Type of Sector

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Agricultral &	(thousands)	1,619	1,621	1,608	1,552	1,544	1,499	1,397	1,384
Fishing Industry	% to Total Female Labor Force	27.8	26.3	24.3	22.9	21.7	20.4	18.6	18.2
Mining & Manufacturing	(thousands)	1,356	1,547	1,862	1,976	2,067	2,058	2,064	1,922
Industry	% to Total Female Labor Force	23.2	25.1	28.2	29.2	29.0	28.0	27.5	25.3
Service &	(thousands)	2,858	2,998	3,143	3,243	3,513	3,785	4,047	4,303
Tertiary Industry	% to Total Female Labor Force	49.0	48.6	47.5	47.9	49.3	51.6	53.9	56.6
Total Female Labor Force	(thousands)	5,833	6,166	6,613	6,771	7,124	7,342	7,508	7,609

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 5

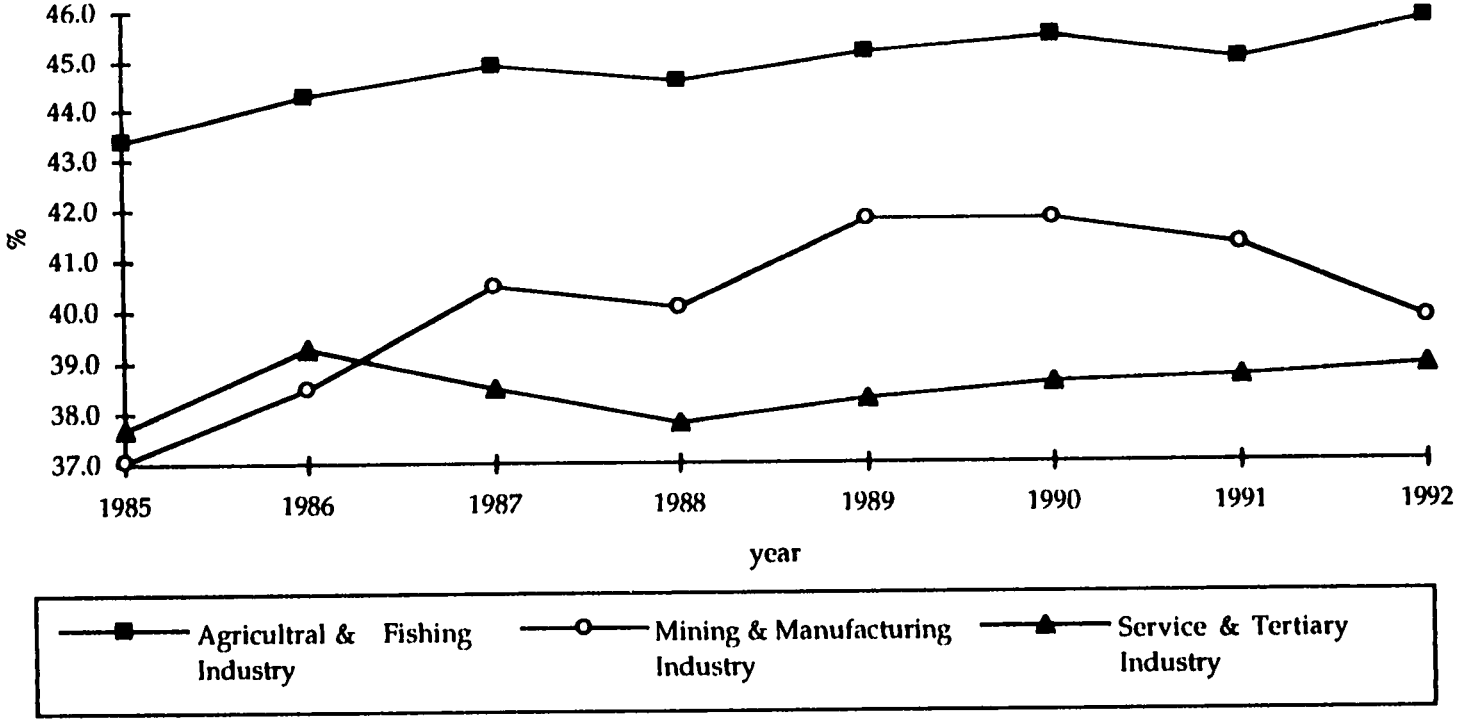
Labor Force by Industry and Gender

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Agricultral & Fishing Industry	Female (thousands)	1,619	1,621	1,608	1,552	1,544	1,499	1,397	1,384
	Female %	43.4	44.3	44.9	44.6	45.2	45.5	45.0	45.8
	% Increase		2.1	1.4	-0.7	1.3	0.7	-1.1	1.8
	Male (thousands)	2,114	2,041	1,972	1,932	1,876	1,793	1,706	1,641
	Total (thousands)	3,733	3,662	3,580	3,484	3,420	3,292	3,103	3,025
Mining & Manufacturing Industry	Female (thousands)	1,356	1,547	1,862	1,976	2,067	2,058	2,064	1,922
	Female %	37.1	38.5	40.5	40.1	41.8	41.8	41.3	39.8
	% Increase		3.8	5.2	-1.0	4.2	0.0	-1.2	-3.6
	Male (thousands)	2,303	2,467	2,740	2,831	2,866	2,871	2,940	2,904
	Total (thousands)	3,659	4,014	4,602	4,807	4,933	4,929	5,004	4,826
Service & Tertiary Industry	Female (thousands)	2,858	2,998	3,143	3,243	3,513	3,785	4,047	4,303
	Female %	37.7	39.3	38.5	37.8	38.3	38.6	38.7	38.9
	% Increase		4.2	-2.0	-1.8	1.3	0.8	0.3	0.5
	Male (thousands)	4,720	4,831	5,029	5,337	5,649	6,031	6,422	6,765
	Total (thousands)	7,578	7,829	8,172	8,580	9,162	9,816	10,469	11,068

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 2

Percentage of the Female Labor Force to the Total Labor Force by Industry



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 6

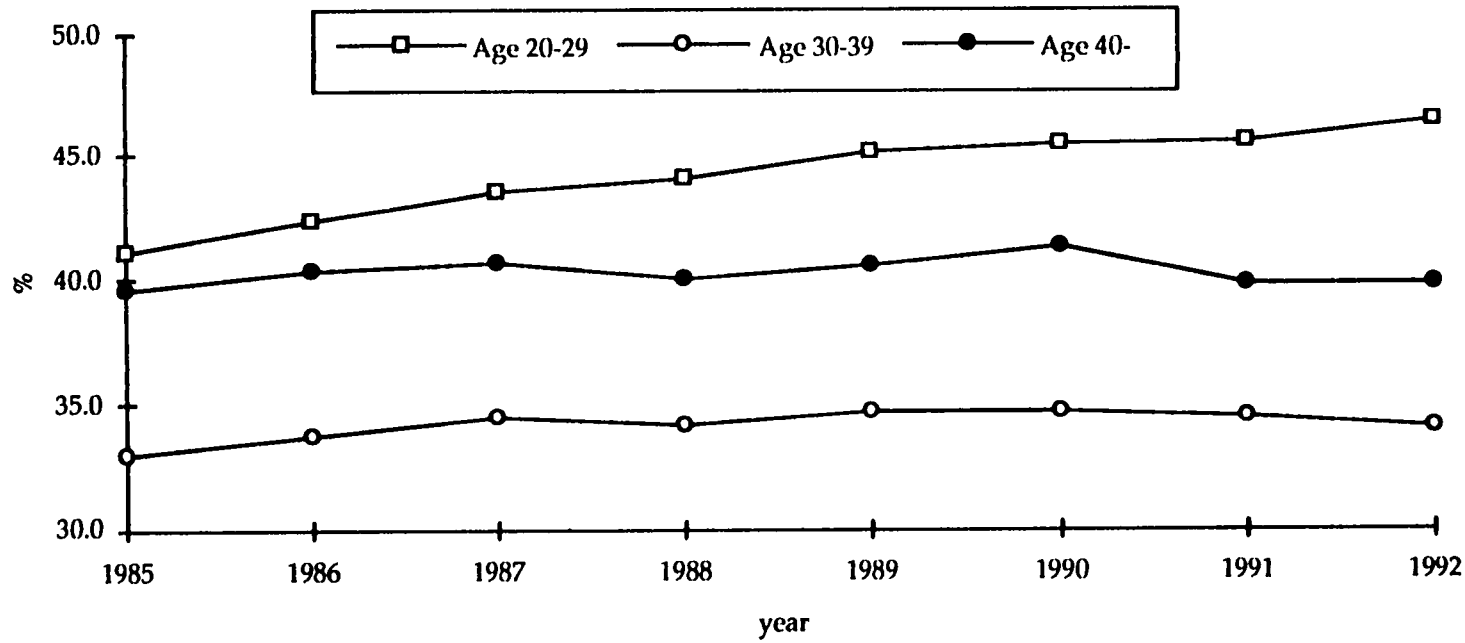
Labor Force by Gender and Age

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Age 20-29	Female (thousands)	1,673	1,781	1,875	1,901	1,975	2,003	2,054	2,069
	Female %	41.1	42.4	43.5	44.1	45.1	45.5	45.6	46.4
	% Increase		3.2	2.6	1.4	2.3	0.9	0.2	1.8
	Male (thousands)	2,394	2,421	2,436	2,412	2,404	2,402	2,450	2,390
	Total (thousands)	4,067	4,202	4,311	4,313	4,379	4,405	4,504	4,459
Age 30-39	Female (thousands)	1,316	1,421	1,563	1,612	1,677	1,748	1,816	1,857
	Female %	33.0	33.7	34.5	34.1	34.7	34.7	34.5	34.0
	% Increase		2.1	2.4	-1.2	1.8	0.0	-0.6	-1.4
	Male (thousands)	2,674	2,792	2,965	3,119	3,158	3,283	3,446	3,606
	Total (thousands)	3,990	4,213	4,528	4,731	4,835	5,031	5,262	5,463
Age 40-up	Female (thousands)	2,485	2,601	2,783	2,890	3,112	3,234	3,278	3,369
	Female %	39.6	40.3	40.7	40.0	40.5	41.3	39.8	39.8
	% Increase		1.8	1.0	-1.7	1.3	2.0	-3.6	0.0
	Male (thousands)	3,794	3,858	4,054	4,339	4,580	4,592	4,955	5,101
	Total (thousands)	6,279	6,459	6,837	7,229	7,692	7,826	8,233	8,470

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 3

Percentage of the Female Labor Force to the Total Labor Force by Age Group



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 7

Female Labor Force by Age Group

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Age 20-29	(thousands)	1,673	1,781	1,875	1,901	1,975	2,003	2,054	2,069
	% to Total Female Labor Force	30.6	30.7	30.1	29.7	29.2	28.7	28.7	28.4
Age 30-39	(thousands)	1,316	1,421	1,563	1,612	1,677	1,748	1,816	1,857
	% to Total Female Labor Force	24.0	24.5	25.1	25.2	24.8	25.0	25.4	25.5
Age 40-up	(thousands)	2,485	2,601	2,783	2,890	3,112	3,234	3,278	3,369
	% to Total Female Labor Force	45.4	44.8	44.7	45.1	46.0	46.3	45.9	46.2
Total Female Labor Force	(thousands)	5,474	5,803	6,221	6,403	6,764	6,985	7,148	7,295

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 8

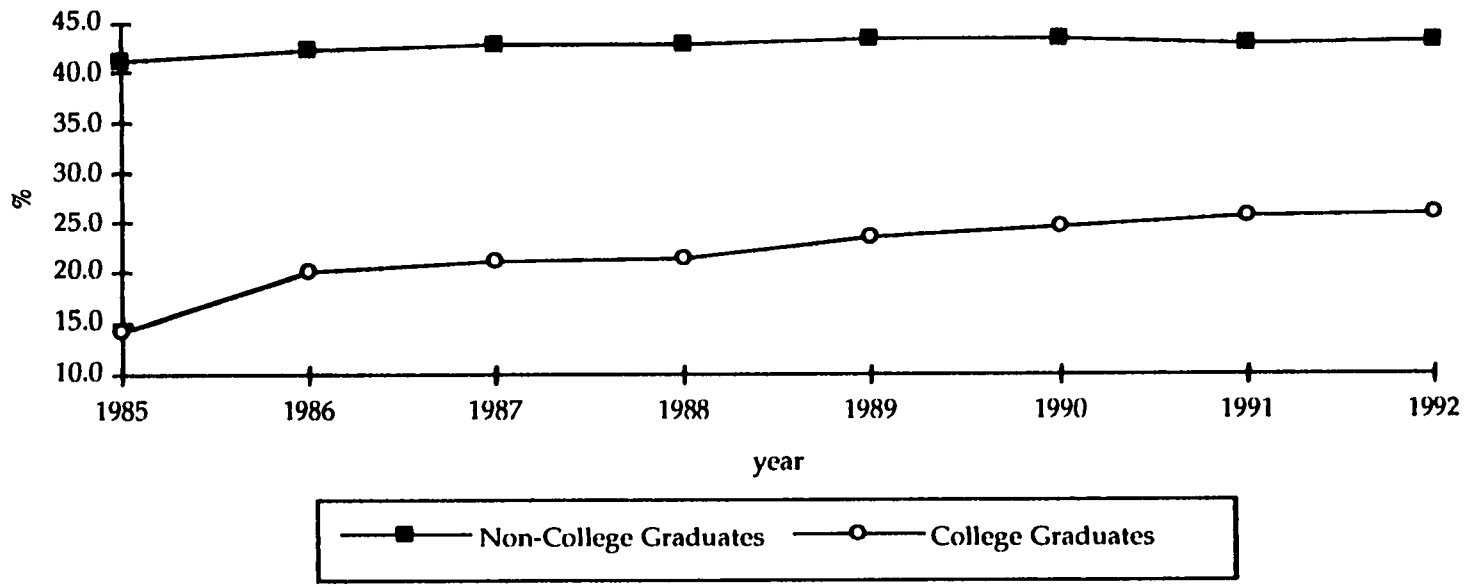
Labor Force by Gender and Educational Level

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Non-College Graduates	Female (thousands)	5,548	5,834	6,229	6,329	6,586	6,735	6,825	6,825
	Female %	41.3	42.2	42.9	42.7	43.3	43.3	42.9	43.0
	% Increase		2.2	1.7	-0.5	1.4	0.0	-0.9	0.2
	Male (thousands)	7,889	8,006	8,291	8,478	8,637	8,839	9,072	9,060
	Total (thousands)	13,437	13,840	14,520	14,807	15,223	15,574	15,897	15,885
College Graduates	Female (thousands)	129	332	384	441	538	606	683	784
	Female %	14.1	20.0	20.9	21.4	23.5	24.6	25.5	25.8
	% Increase		41.8	4.5	2.4	9.8	4.7	3.7	1.2
	Male (thousands)	785	1,330	1,450	1,621	1,754	1,856	1,996	2,252
	Total (thousands)	914	1,662	1,834	2,062	2,292	2,462	2,679	3,036

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 4

Percentage of the Female Labor Force to the Total Labor Force by Educational Level



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 9

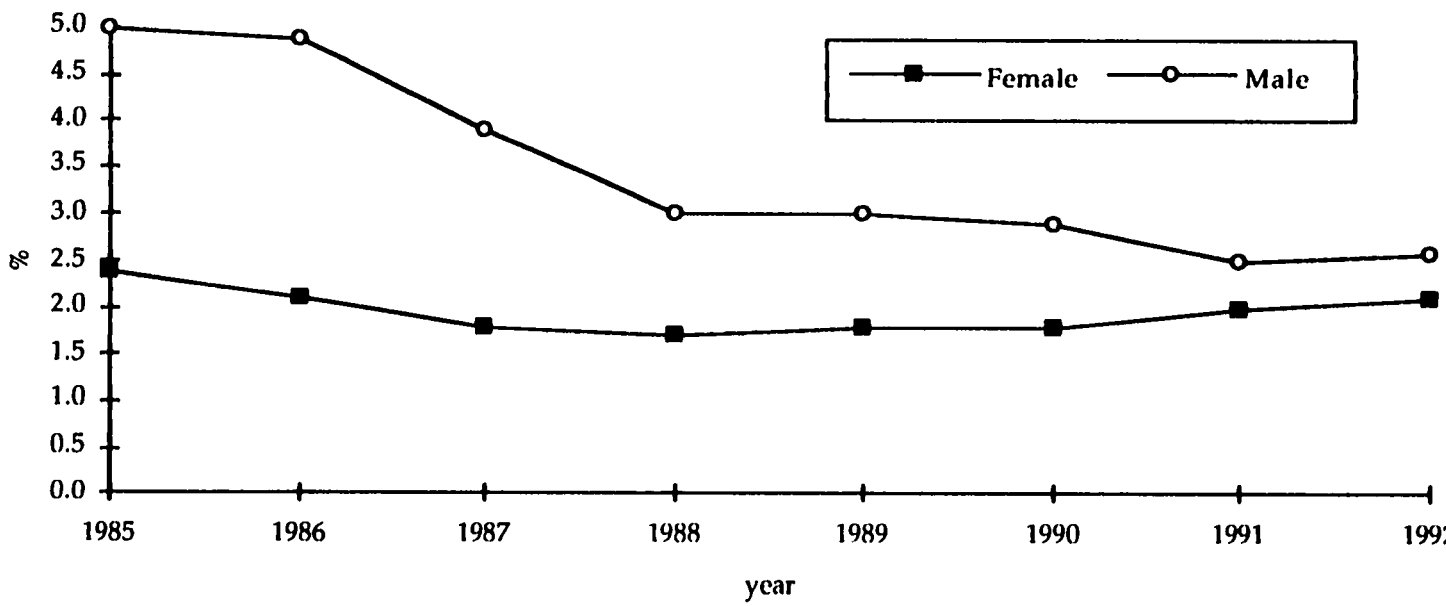
Unemployment by Gender

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Female	Unemployment (thousands)	141	131	122	120	134	133	150	161
	Rate (%)	2.4	2.1	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.1
	% Increase		-12.5	-14.3	-5.6	5.9	0.0	11.1	5.0
	Total Labor Force (thousands)	5,975	6,296	6,735	6,891	7,259	7,474	7,657	7,770
Male	Unemployment (thousands)	480	480	397	315	325	318	287	303
	Rate (%)	5.0	4.9	3.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.5	2.6
	Total Labor Force (thousands)	9,617	9,819	10,138	10,414	10,716	11,013	11,355	11,615
Total	Unemployment (thousands)	621	611	519	435	459	451	437	464

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 5

Unemployment Rate



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 10

Labor Force by Wage Bracket and Gender ($1=800 won)

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
<20 (ten thousands won)	Female	1,575,221	975,465	981,698	591,378	182,425	109,693	17,754	5,979
	Female %	76.6	71.5	76.3	74.4	75.5	78.7	67.2	74.1
	% Increase		-6.7	6.7	-2.5	1.5	4.2	-14.6	10.3
	Male	482,190	389,049	304,741	203,174	59,221	29,708	8,670	2,092
	Total	2,057,411	1,364,514	1,286,439	794,552	241,646	139,401	26,424	8,071
20-50 (ten thousands won)	Female	176,401	252,365	503,866	900,258	1,172,985	1,312,263	997,985	765,119
	Female %	10.8	13.4	20.9	37.9	48.4	48.9	63.0	71.9
	% Increase		24.1	56.0	81.3	27.7	1.0	28.8	14.1
	Male	1,464,196	1,629,596	1,911,161	1,474,144	1,249,427	1,372,720	586,352	299,525
	Total	1,640,597	1,881,961	2,415,027	2,374,402	2,422,412	2,684,983	1,584,337	1,064,644
≥50 (ten thousands won)	Female	8,685	13,752	23,860	80,225	142,427	103,504	456,944	718,848
	Female %	3.1	3.7	4.2	5.8	7.8	5.6	15.5	19.3
	% Increase		19.4	13.5	38.1	34.5	-28.2	176.8	24.5
	Male	275,306	358,735	542,779	129,518	1,695,664	1,748,636	2,490,927	3,013,213
	Total	283,991	372,487	566,639	209,743	1,838,091	1,852,140	2,947,871	3,732,061

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 11

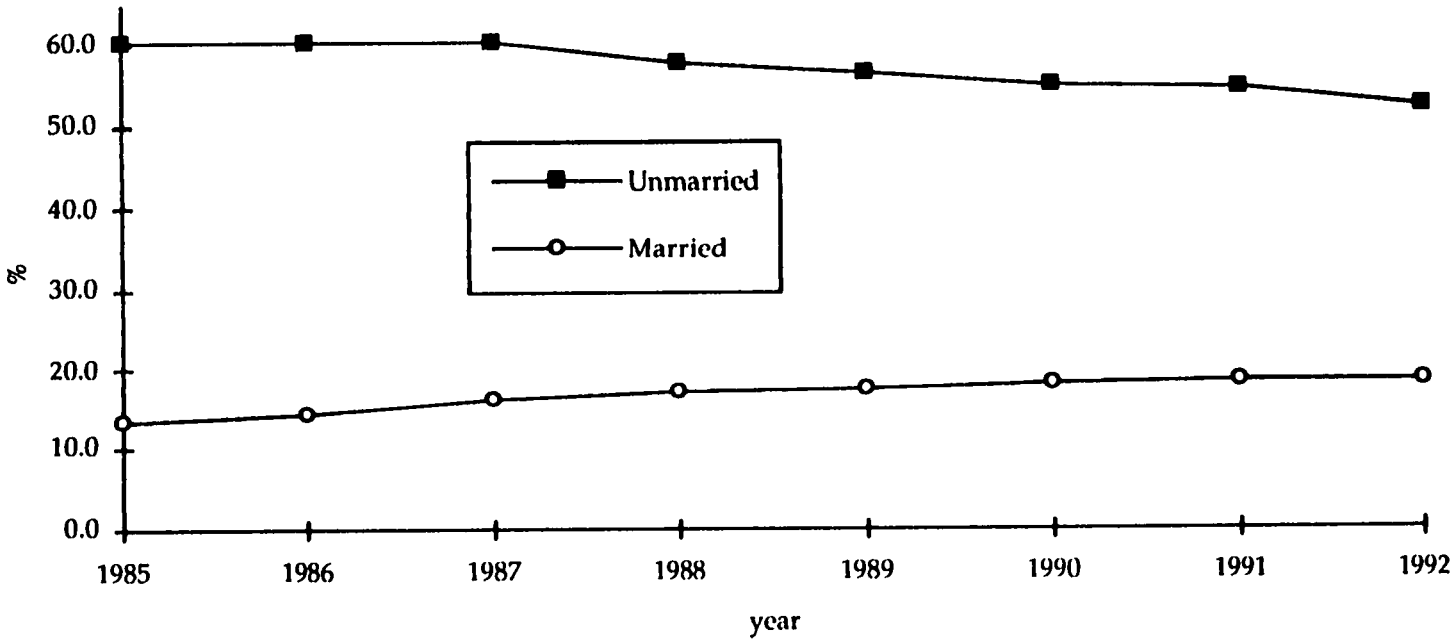
Labor Force by Marital Status

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Unmarried	Female	948,640	950,647	1,123,809	1,131,248	1,029,691	1,005,484	958,937	931,395
	Female %	60.4	60.3	60.2	57.6	56.5	54.7	54.5	52.1
	% Increase		-0.2	-0.2	-4.3	-1.9	-3.2	-0.4	-4.4
	Male	621,481	625,862	742,109	832,962	792,399	832,972	800,213	855,040
	Total	1,570,121	1,576,509	1,865,918	1,964,210	1,822,090	1,838,456	1,759,150	1,786,435
Married	Female	248,231	290,935	385,635	440,613	468,146	520,165	513,746	558,551
	Female %	13.4	14.2	16.1	17.1	17.5	18.3	18.4	18.5
	% Increase		6.0	13.4	6.2	2.3	4.6	0.5	0.5
	Male	1,600,211	1,751,518	2,016,479	2,139,536	2,211,913	2,318,092	2,285,736	2,459,790
	Total	1,848,442	2,042,453	2,402,114	2,580,149	2,680,059	2,838,257	2,799,482	3,018,341

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 6

Percentage of Female Labor Force to the Total Labor Force by Marital Status



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 12

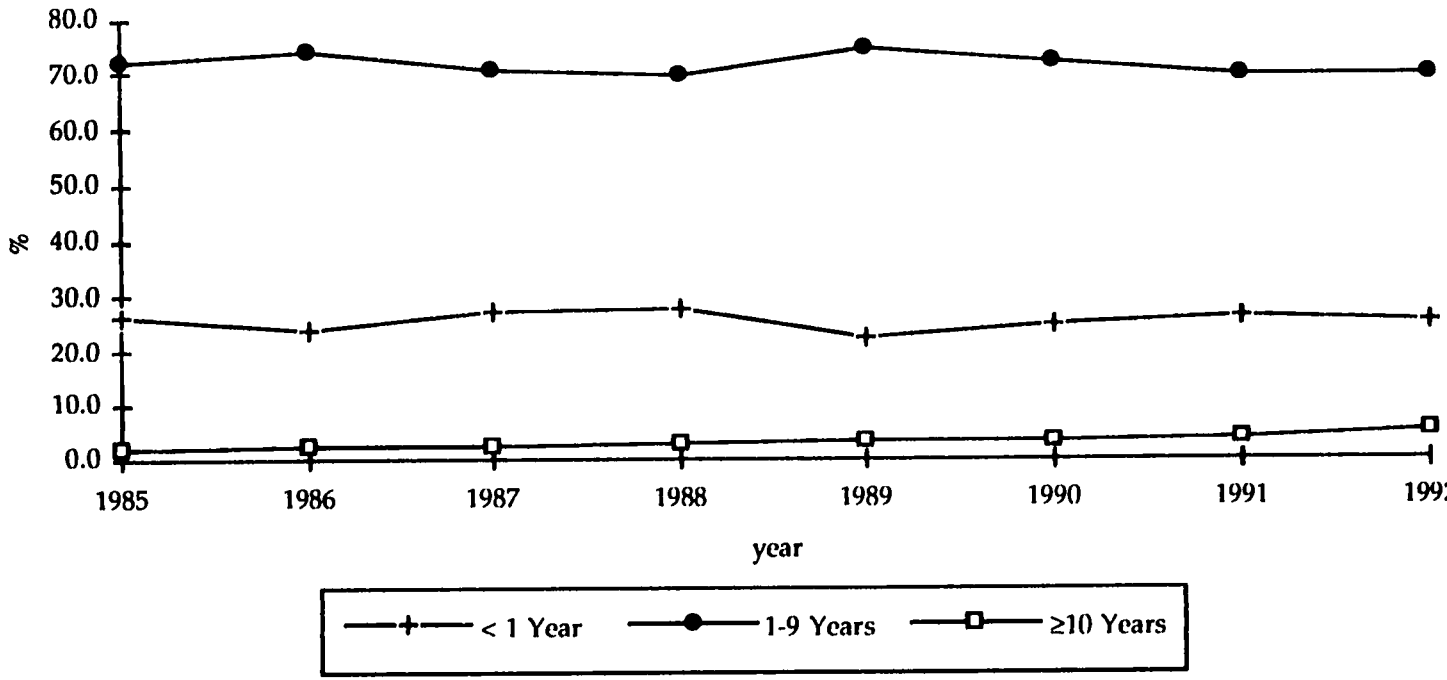
Female Labor Force by Experience

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
		315,561	299,118	408,990	411,215	333,944	377,034	386,640	376,498
< 1 Year	%	26.4	24.1	27.1	27.9	22.3	24.7	26.3	25.3
	Increase(%)		-5.2	36.7	0.5	-18.8	12.9	2.5	-2.6
		861,641	917,231	1,065,159	1,023,042	1,116,046	1,100,433	1,028,794	1,041,007
1-9 Years	%	72.0	73.9	70.6	69.5	74.5	72.1	69.9	69.9
	Increase(%)		6.5	16.1	-4.0	9.1	-1.4	-6.5	1.2
		19,669	25,233	35,296	37,604	47,847	48,182	57,249	72,441
≥10 Years	%	1.6	2.0	2.3	2.6	3.2	3.2	3.9	4.9
	Increase(%)		28	40	7	27	1	19	27
Total		1,196,871	1,241,582	1,509,445	1,471,861	1,497,837	1,525,649	1,472,683	1,489,946

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 7

Proportion of Female Laborers by Experience



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 13

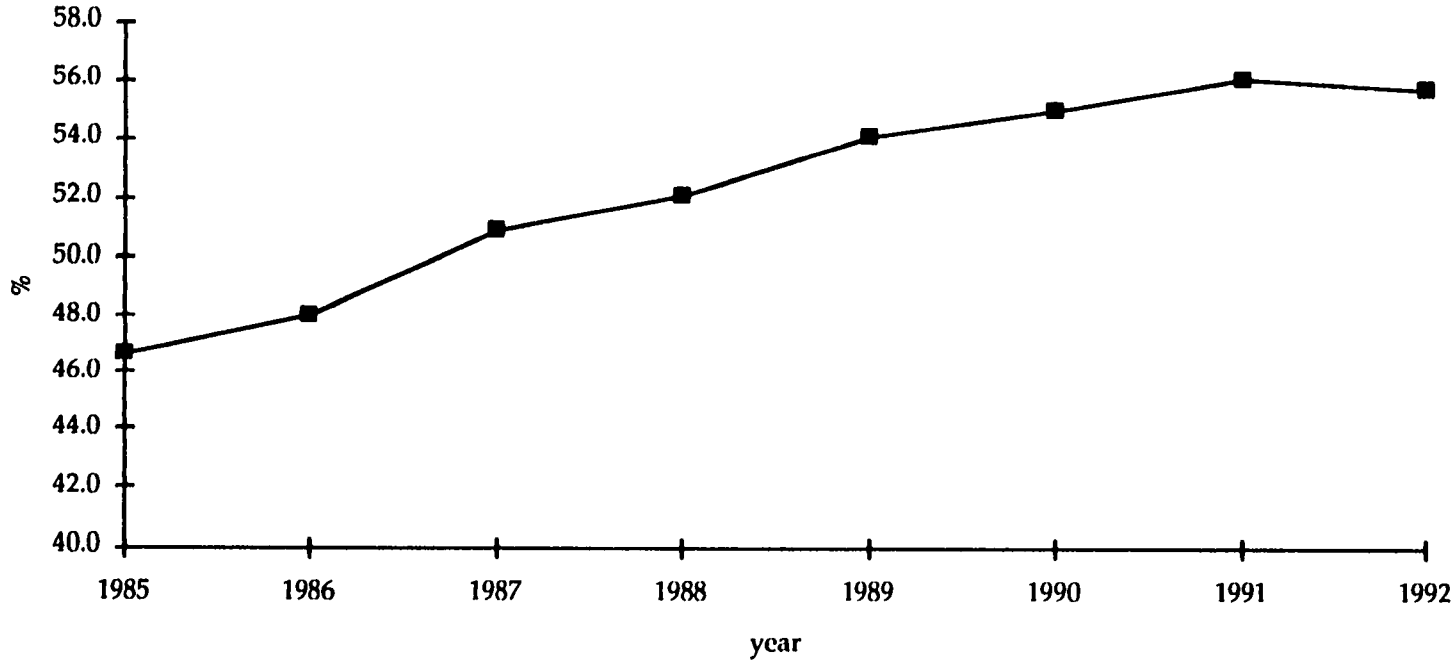
Average Wage by Gender ($1=800 won)

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Female (in Won)	180,319	201,771	198,734	233,638	277,610	323,691	385,064	446,717
Female to Male (%)	46.7	48.0	50.9	52.0	54.1	55.0	56.0	55.7
Male (in Won)	386,346	420,168	390,139	448,895	512,931	588,320	687,125	801,723

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 8

Ratio of the Female Wage to Male Wage



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 14

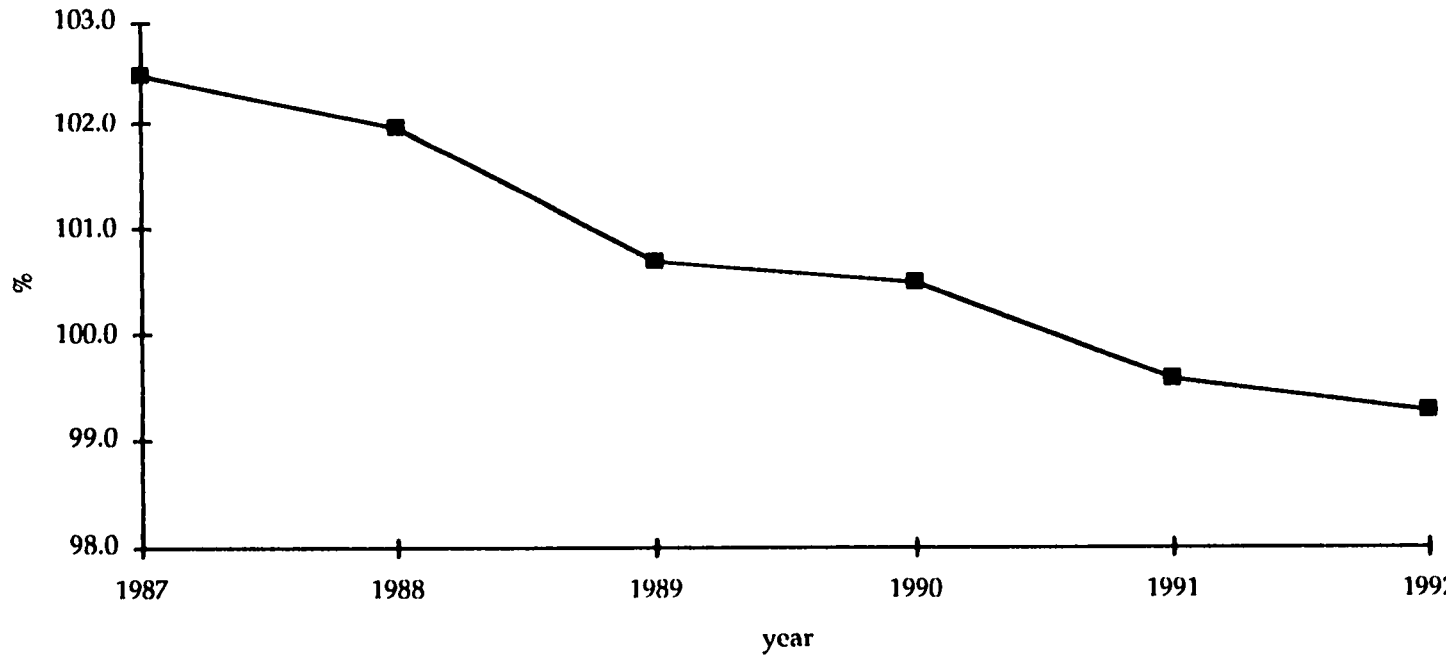
Working Hours by Gender per Month

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Female (Hours)	233.9	228.4	220.4	210.2	207.6	205.5
Female to Male (%)	102.5	102.0	100.7	100.5	99.6	99.3
Male (Hours)	228.2	224.0	218.9	209.2	208.5	207.0

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 9

Ratio of the Female Working Hours to Male Working Hours



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Table 15

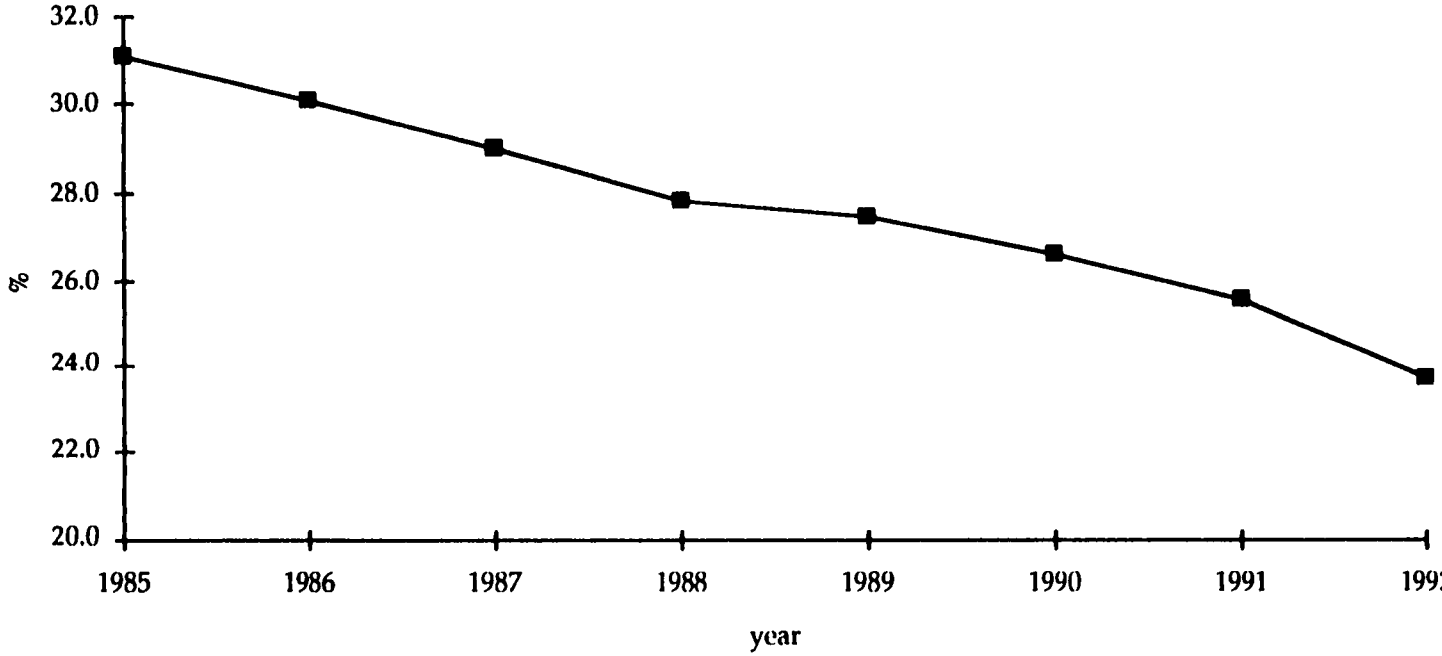
Number of Labor Union Members by Gender

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Female Member	312,487	311,324	367,328	475,056	530,309	502,154	461,663	411,077
% Female Member to Total	31.1	30.1	29.0	27.8	27.4	26.6	25.6	23.7
Male Member	691,911	724,566	900,129	1,232,400	1,402,106	1,384,730	1,341,745	1,323,521

Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Figure 10

Percentage of the Female Labor Union Members to the Total Union Members



Sources: Computed from Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and employment], 1990,1991,1992, and 1993.

Notes

1. The contemporary official name of South Korea is the Republic of Korea. In this study, although Korea means the whole Korean peninsula until 1945, henceforth, Korea refers only to South Korea for post-World War II era when the nation was divide into South and North.

2. Nodongbu, Yosungwa Cheeup [Women and Employment] (Seoul, Korea: Chungbu Kanhangmul, 1991), 166-173.

3. Sheila Lewenhak, Women and Work (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 198.

4. Ibid., 235.

5. Minji Choi, "Hankuk Yosungwundong Sosa [Brief History of Korean Women's Movement]," in Yosunghaebangui Eeronkwa Hyunsil, ed. Hyo-jae Lee (Seoul, Korea: Chanjakwa Beepyong, 1979), 239.

6. Insoon Cha et al., "Hankuk Yosung Nodongjaui Chabyoljok Joimkum Shiltaewa Kukbokbangan [Korea's Discriminatory Low Wage Situation for Female Laborers and Suggestions]," Yosung 3 (April 1989): 70.

7. Ibid., 69.

8. Mattielli (1977) researched the Confucian transformation of Korea and the influence of Confucianism on Korean women in family. Kendall and Peterson (1983) examined relations of Confucianism and Korean women's traditional roles.

9. Sandra Mattielli, Virtues in Conflict (Seoul, Korea: Samhwa Publishing Co., 1977), 1-47, 113-151.

10. C. Andrew Nahm, A History of Korean People-Tradition and Transformation (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Western Michigan University Press, 1988), 29-59, 94-114, 150-160.

11. Three principles of clarifying the paternal line of descent, establishing the male head of the descent group, and the institutionalizing ancestor worship endorsed by Chu Hsi.

12. Martina Deuchler, The Confucian Transformation of Korea-A Study of Society and Ideology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 130.

13. Robert F. Spencer, Yogong: Factory Girl (Seoul, Korea: Seoul Computer Press, 1988), 13.

14. Dongsoo Kim, "Korean Women in a Struggle for Humanization," The Korean Christian Scholars Publication 3, (1978, Spring): 11-21.

15. Hujeong Yoon, "The Nature and Directions of Korean Women's Issues," in Challenges for Women: Women's Studies in Korea, ed. and trans. Sei-wha Chung (Seoul, Korea: Ewha Womans University Press, 1986), 41.

16. Deuchler, 283-284.

17. Haejoang Cho, "Kabujangjeui Byunhyungwa Kukbok [Transformation and Overcoming over Patriarchy]," in Hankuk Yosungyunku 1, ed. Hankuk Yosunghakhe (Seoul, Korea: Chungha Publishing Co., 1988), 263.

18. Hyoung Cho, "Labor Force Participation of Woman in Korea," in Challenges for Women: Women's Studies in Korea, ed. and trans. Sei-wha Chung (Seoul, Korea: Ewha Womans University Press, 1986), 152.

19. Okra Cho, "Kabujangjeui Kwanhan Ironjok Kochal [Theoretical Study on the Patriarchy]," in Hankuk Yosungyunku 1, ed. Hankuk Yosunghakhe (Seoul, Korea: Chungha Publishing Co., 1988), 136.

20. Hyoung Cho, p.151.

21. Jungmi Soh, "Sungwa Nodong [Sex and Labor]," in Yosunghaebangui Eeronkwa Hyunsil, ed. Hyo-jae Lee (Seoul, Korea: Chanjakwa Beepyong, 1979), 313.

22. Hyo-chae Lee, Hankukui Yosungwundong: Ojaewa Onul [Korea Women's Movement: History and the Present] (Seoul, Korea: Jungwoosa, 1989), 73.

23. Eun Cho, "Kabujangjewa Kyungje [Patriarchy and Economy]," in Hankuk Yosungyunku 1, ed. Hankuk Yosunghakhe (Seoul, Korea: Chungha Publishing Co., 1988), p. 208.

24. Hankuk Yosungyunkuhe, Hankuk Yosungsa [Korea women's history] (Seoul, Korea: Pulbit, 1992), 47.

25. Soh, 314.

26. Ibid., 315.

27. Hankuk Yosungyunkuhe, 110.

28. Soh, 318.

29. Mattielli, 116

30. Hankuk Yosungyunkuhe, 47.

31. Spencer, 61

32. Soh, 320.

33. Ibid., 321.

34. As the Korea's economic structure changed from labor-intensive to capital-and-technology-intensive, the proportion in the early industries decreased, while the proportion of the late industries became larger. As the proportion in the early industries decreased, the majority of female laborforce which eangaged in the early industries moved from manufacturing industry to tertiary industry.

35. Soh, 321.

36. Inryoung Shin, "Hankukui chojikkunlojawa yosung [Korean Union Laborers and Women]," in Hankuk Yosungwa Il, ed. Hankuk Yosung Yunkuso (Seoul, Korea: Ewha Womans University Press, 1985), 182.

37. Hankuk Yosung Yunkuso, "Yosungwa Cheeupmunje [Women and Employment Problems]," in Yosungwa Jikup (Seoul, Korea: Ewha Womans University Press, 1988), 142.

38. Cha et al., p. 72.

39. The service sector and tertiary industry includes commercial and trading business, transportation business, communication business, financial

business, and public service as classified by Colin Clark. According to his definition the service and tertiary industry excludes clerical work because it does not produce value added at all.

40. Isu Kang and Kinam Park, "Yosungwa Nodong [Women and Labor]," in Lectures on Women's Studies ed. Hankuk Yosungyunkuhe (Seoul, Korea: Dongnyuk, 1991), 139.

41. Spencer, 133.

42. Cha et al., 72.

43. Ibid., 73.

44. Hankuk Yosungnodongjahe, 94.

45. Spencer, 56.

46. Kang and Park, 142.

47. Shin, 181.

48. Ibid., 182.

49. Nodongbu, 99.

50. Shin, 161.

51. Hankuk Yosungnodongjahe, 63.

52. Ibid., 120.

53. Ibid., 31.

54. The reference did not identify the US corporation.

55. Hankuk Yosungnodongjahe, 64.

56. Seunghee Lee, "Hankuk Hyundae Yosung Wundongsa [Modern Women's Movement of Korea]," Lectures on Women's Studies ed. Hankuk Yosungyunkuhe (Seoul, Korea: Dongnyuk, 1991), 314.

57. Cha et al., 89.

58. S. Lee, 315.

59. Ibid., 316-317.

60. Women's International Network, News-Women's International Network (Lexington, Mass.: Women's International Network, 1992, Autumn), 187.

61. S. Lee, 319.

62. See Appendix.

63. From table 2, late industries are 6, 7, and 8, and early industries are 1 and 2.

64. Shin, 174.

65. Fuchs, Women's Quest for Economic Equality (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 27.

Korean titles in footnotes 1, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 32, 33, 36, and 49 are translated by Jeamin Seung.

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Appendix A

Gender-Equal Employment Act

Law No. 3989, Dec. 4, 1987

Amended by Law No. 4126, Apr. 1, 1989

Translated by Korean Ministry of Labour

CHAPTER I
General Provisions

Article 1 (Purpose)

The Purpose of this Act is to secure equal opportunity and treatment for workers, regardless of their gender, in accordance with the ideal of equality in the Constitution, to protect the maternal role of women, and to develop the capabilities of women workers and, thus, to enhance the status of women workers and to promote their welfare.

Article 2 (Basic Idea)

Women workers shall be secured the opportunity to do their best in the working place without discrimination due to gender, and to protect the maternal role the women play in the development of economy and society and for the birth and the nurture of the coming generation.

Article 2-2 (Definition)

(1) The term "discrimination" in this Act shall be defined as what an employer unreasonably differentiates workers with respect to recruitment or conditions of employment or takes a disadvantageous action due to gender, marital status, rank in a family, or pregnancy.

(2) The protection of the maternity of a woman worker shall not be regarded as the discrimination defined in this Act.

(3) The State, the Local government or an employer may preferentially treat a specific gender tentatively to settle the existing discrimination problem, which shall not be regarded as the discrimination herein.

Article 3 (Scope of Application)

(1) This Act shall apply to all businesses or workplaces which are subject to the Labour Standards Act (hereinafter referred to as "businesses"). However, this shall not apply to business otherwise provided for in the Presidential Decree hereof.

(2) This Act shall apply to the enhancement of the status of women workers and promotion of their welfare except as is specifically provided n other statutes.

Article 4 (Responsibility of the Persons Concerned)

(1) Women workers shall develop and advance their capabilities and conscientiously endeavor to utilize them in their working life.

(2) Private employers and both State and local governments shall endeavour to enhance the status and promote the welfare of women workers.

(3) The State and local governments shall endeavour to promote the attention and understanding of all citizens with regard to the welfare of

women workers, for equipping of them with capabilities required as job holders and for the elimination of all factors which hinder women workers from utilizing their capabilities.

Article 5 (Establishment of a basic Plan on Welfare of Women Workers)

(1) The Minister of Labour shall establish a basic plan on the promotion of the welfare of women workers (hereinafter referred to as "basic plan").

(2) The basic plan referred to in Paragraph(1) shall include the following Subparagraphs:

1. Matters concerning promoting women employment;
2. Matters concerning the guarantee of equal employment opportunity for men and women;
3. Matters concerning development of the capabilities of women workers;
4. Matters concerning maternity protection of women workers;
5. Matters concerning establishment and operation of welfare facilities for women workers; and
6. Other matters which the Minister of Labour recognizes to be necessary for the enhancement of the status of women workers and the promotion of their welfare.

(3) A Woman Worker Committee shall be established in the Ministry of Labour on order to consider the basic plan referred to in Paragraph(1) of this Article and other important matters concerning the enhancement of the status of women workers and the promotion of their welfare.

(4) Matters necessary for the organization, function and operation of the Women Worker Committee to be established in accordance with Paragraph(3).

CHAPTER II

Equal Opportunity and Treatment for Men and Women in Employment

Article 6 (Recruitment and Employment)

Employers shall provide equal opportunity to women and men with regard to recruitment and employment.

Article 6-2 (Wage)

(1) An employer shall adhere to the principle of equal pay for value-equal work in the same business.

(2) The criteria on value-equal work are technique, endeavour, responsibility, working conditions or others which are required in the process of work.

(3) Any other business established by the same employer for the purpose of wage discrimination shall be considered identical with the original business.

Article 7 (Education, Placement and Promotion)

Employers shall not discriminate, on the basis of gender, with regard to the education, placement and promotion of workers.

Article 8 (Retirement Age, Retirement and Dismissal)

(1) The employer shall not discriminate, on the basis of gender, against workers with regard to retirement age or dismissal.

(2) The employer shall not enter into a labour contract which provides that marriage, pregnancy or child-birth of women workers will be a cause for retirement.

Article 9 (Vocational Guidance)

The employment security agencies shall take measures necessary (including supplying employment information and materials concerning job search and study) in order to enable women workers to choose and adapt themselves to their jobs in consideration of their personality, abilities, experiences and skills.

Article 10 (Vocational Training, etc.)

The State and local governments shall guarantee women workers equal opportunity vis-a-vis men workers with regard to every vocational training and take any other necessary steps such as securing facilities and equipment for vocational training of women workers for development and enhancement of their capabilities as women workers.

CHAPTER III

Maternity Protection and Establishment of Welfare Facilities

Article 11 (Suspension from Service for Childcare)

(1) An employer shall grants a suspension from service to woman worker with an infant under one year old, when she applies for suspension from service in rider to nurture the infant (hereinafter referred to as "suspension from service for childcare").

(2) The period of the suspension from service for childcare referred to in Paragraph(1) shall not exceed one year including the maternity leave with pay referred to in Article 60 of the Labour Standards Act, and that period shall be included in the length of service.

(3) An employer shall not treat women workers unfavorably on account of the suspension from service for childcare.

Article 12 (Nursing Facilities for Infants)

(1) Employers shall provide women workers with necessary facilities for lactation and nursing their children at the workplace in order to support the continuing employment of working mothers.

(2) Necessary matters concerning standards and operation of the nursing facilities referred to on Paragraph(1) shall be provided by the Minister of Labour.

Article 13 (Establishment of Welfare Facilities)

(1) The State and local governments may establish educational, nursing, housing and other public welfare facilities for women workers.

(2) necessary matters concerning the standards and operation of the welfare facilities for women workers referred to in Paragraph(1) shall be provided by the Minister of Labour.

CHAPTER IV
Mediation of Disputes

Article 14 (Autonomous Settlement of Disputes)

(1) If an employer receives a report of grievance from a woman worker with regard to the matters referred to on Articles 6, 6-2, 7, 8, 11 or 12, he shall entrust its settlement to the Grievance Handling Organ, in addition to which he shall make every effort lest the autonomous settlement of the grievance be interfered.

(2) The Grievance Handling Organ stipulated paragraph(1) shall consist of the equal number of members representing workers and an employer respectively in the workplace concerned. In case a trade union exists in the workplace concerned, the very woman workers representative of the trade union shall become the representative of workers.

Article 15 (Support of Dispute Settlement)

If the grievance filed by a woman worker according to Article 14 has not been settled and both or either of the two sides, one the employer, the other the woman worker or the trade union comprising her, (hereinafter referred to as "the parties concerned") requests assistance in solving the grievance, the head of the local labour administrative agency shall within ten days provide advises, guidances or recommendations to the parties concerned or refer the matter to mediation by Employment Problems Mediation Committee.

Article 16 (Establishment of Employment Problems Mediation Committee)

(1) An Employment Problems Mediation Committee (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") shall be established in local labour administrative agencies for mediation of disputes referred to in Article 15.

(2) The Committee shall mediate disputes within the jurisdiction of the pertinent local labour administrative agency.

Article 17 (Composition of the Committee)

(1) The Committee shall consist of fifteen commissioners, one of whom shall act as chairman, and shall include five representatives each from the workers employers, and the public interest. However, the commissioners representing the workers and the employers respectively shall be entrusted by the Minister of Labour, at the request of the Local Labour Administrator through the recommendation of trade union and employer organization each, and those representing the public interest shall be entrusted among men of knowledge and experience about woman worker's problem or among public

officials related with women workers by the Minister of Labour, at the request of the Local Labour Administrator.

(2) The Committee shall have full-time executive commissioner not exceeding two persons for the investigation of matters necessary for dispute mediation.

(3) Matters necessary for qualification and appointment of commissioner shall be provided by the Presidential Decree.

Article 18 (Mediation by the Committee)

(1) The committee shall be authorized to request the parties concerned or administrative agency concerned to appear, submit a report, or to cooperate with it.

(2) The committee shall prepare a draft mediation and may recommend the parties concerned to accept it.

(3) As the parties concerned have accepted the draft mediation, the committee shall prepare a decision on the mediation. Any part of a labour contract that stipulates conditions of employment below the standards of the decision on the mediation shall be null and void and that part shall be replaced by the standards established in the decision on the mediation.

(4) The committee shall notify the parties of the results from the mediation within thirty days after it receives a case.

(5) Matters concerning the procedures and operations of the dispute mediation by the committee shall be provided by the Ordinance of the Ministry of Labour.

CHAPTER V
Supplementary Provisions

Article 19 (Burden of Proof)

An employer shall bear the burden of proof in settling a dispute in relation to this Act.

Article 20 (Report and Guide)

The Minister of Labour may request employers to report on matters necessary for the enforcement of this Act and provide advice, guidance and recommendation to the employers.

Article 21 (Assistance of Government)

The State and local government may assist the whole or a part of expenses needed by juridical person performing services relevant to the employment of woman in the limit of the budget.

Article 22 (Enforcement Decree)

Matters necessary for the enforcement of this Act shall be provided by the Presidential Decree.

CHAPTER VI
Penal Provisions

Article 23 (penal Provision)

(1) Any employer who violates the provisions of Paragraph(1) of Article 6-2 or Article 8, shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than two years or a fine not exceeding five million *won*.

(2) Any employer who violates Article 6, 7, 11(1) or (3) shall be punished by a fine not exceeding two million and five hundred thousand *won*.

Article 24 (Joint Penal Provisions)

If a representative of a juridical person or an agent, employee or any other hired person of juridical person or individual has committed an offense as prescribed in Article 22 with respect to affairs of the juridical person or individual, the fine as prescribed in the same Article shall also be imposed on such juridical person or individual, in addition to punishment of the actual offender.

Addendum

this Act shall enter into force as of April 1, 1988.