

Gender Equality and Labor Market in Korea *Focusing* *on the Working Hours*

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Contents

1. Gender Equality and Korean Society

2. Gender Gap in the Labor Market

3. Working Hours and Gender Inequality: 5 Issues

4. Conclusion: Challenges for Gender Equality



01 Gender Equality and Korean Society

- Over the past 30 years, South Korea's labor market slowly shifted toward gender equality.

- Gender equality in the labor market results from the Women's Movement, legislation, gender equality policy, etc.
- Women's labor movement since 1980
Womenlink(1987), Korean Women Workers Association(1987), Korea Women's Association United(1987), etc
- Gender equality legislation after 1990
Gender Equal Employment Act(1988), Framework Act on Women's Development(1995), Act on the Prohibition and Remedy for Sexual Discrimination(1999), The Ministry of Gender Equality(2001), Act on the Promotion of Creation on Family-Friendly Social Environment(2007), Act on Promotion of Economic Activities of Career-Interrupted Women(2008), Framework Act on Gender Equality(2015)
- But despite many changes, gender inequality and challenges in the labor market still exist

02 Gender Gap in the Labor Market

✓ Women's Employment and Education

- The female employment rate increased from 47.0% in 2000 to 52.9% in 2022

- The female employment rate is 52.9%, lower than the male rate of 71.5% (2022)
- Women(77.4%) are more likely than men(70.3%) to go on to higher education(2021)

[Employment Rate by

Gender]

[Employment-to-population ratio (2022)



52.9
60.0 40.0 20.0 0.0
6.5
50.2
73.9
40.9

100.0 80.0
69.187.0 91.2 90.8 91.2 89.285.3 68.9
70.8 71.9 70.3 71.4 69.8 71.5
47.0 48.6 47.9 50.1 50.7

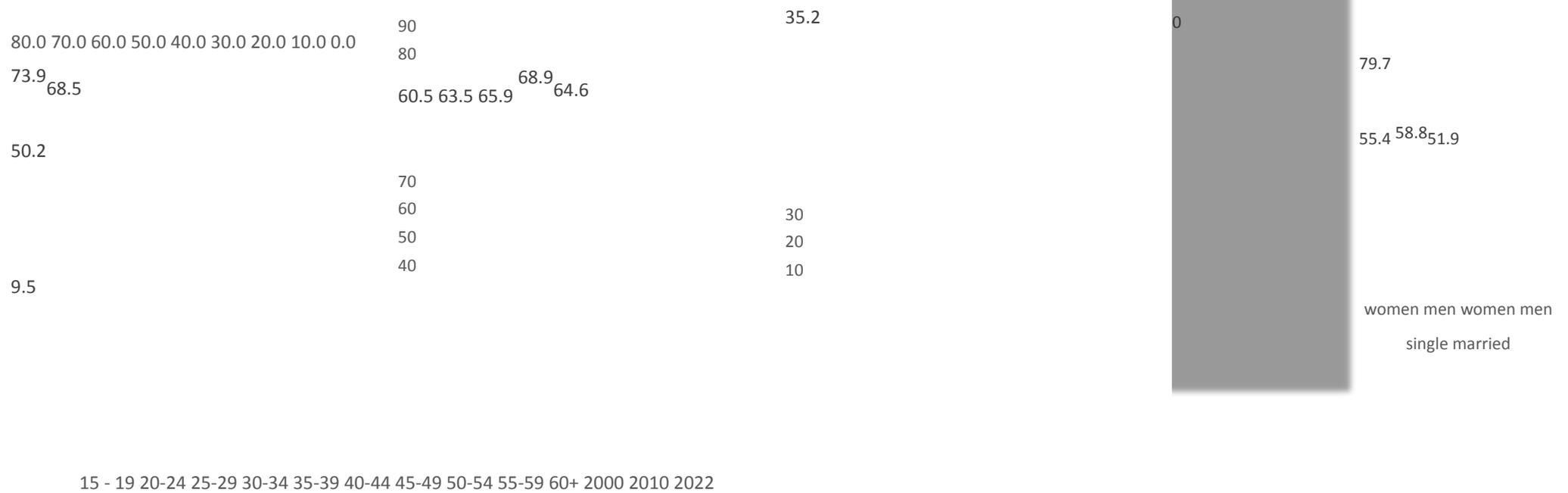


source: <http://kosis.kr>, Economic Activity Census

02 Gender Gap in the Korean Labor Market (cont.)

✓ Changing M-shaped Curve

- Over the past 20 years, Increased employment in the 20s and 50s for women
- The economic activity participation rate by marital status is 51.9% for married women, 79.7% for married men, 55.4% for single women, and 58.8% for single men(2020)
- The average age at first marriage: Women 31.3years, Men 33.7years(2022)



source: <http://kosis.kr>, Economic Activity Census

02 Gender Gap in the Korean Labor Market (cont.)

✓ Gender Wage Gap and Minimum Wage in Korea

- Female- to-male wage ratio decreased slightly from 61.3%(2012) to 64.6%(2021)
- Korea's Gender Wage Gap: 31.3%(OECD average 12.0%)

- The Minimum Wage increased of 23.6%, Female-to-male Wage Rate slightly increased(2018)

4500 4000 3500 3000 2500 2000 1500 1000 500
0

[Gender Wage Gap]

63.3

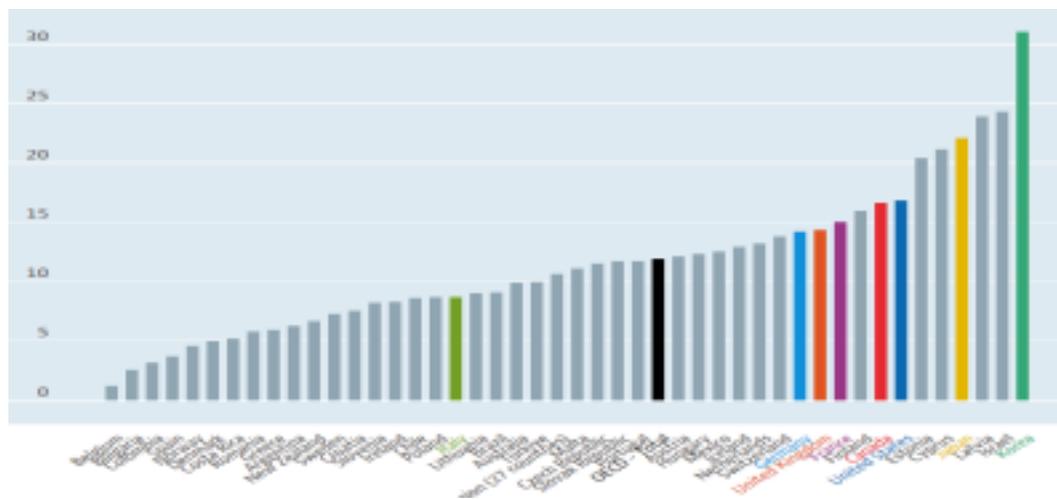
61

59.5

64.6

65 64 63 62 61 60 59 58 57 56

[Gender



Wage Gap OECD]

2012 2015 2018 2021

Women wage Men wage Gender wage gap

source: <http://kosis.kr>, Economic Activity Census

source: <http://data.oecd.org>

03 Working Hours and Gender Inequality : 5 issues

- Working Hours not only vary by Country but also by Gender
- The Gendered division of labor based on male breadwinner norms reproduces gender inequality in the labor market through long working hours

- Long working hours make work-life balance difficult and are a major contributor to gender inequality in the labor market
- Equal opportunities in the labor market require an equal and balanced allocation of time in paid and unpaid work.
- To analyze gender inequality in the labor market regarding working hours and discuss the direction of change.

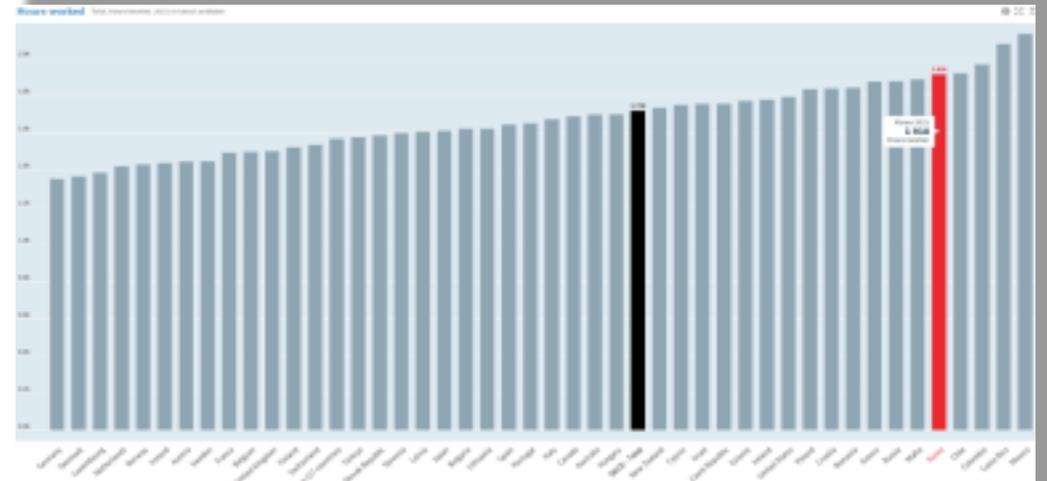
03 Working Hours and Gender Inequality : 5 issues (cont.)

✓ Issues 1. Why does Working Long Hours Reinforce Gender Inequality?

- Annual working hours 1,910 hours(OECD average 1,716): “Overtime”, and “Life with dinner” •
Long Working Hours lead to Short Hours of Work and Precarious Employment

- Men Work Long Hours and Women Work Short Hours or Precarious work
- Reduced statutory working hours to 52 hours with the Labor Standards Act amendments(2018)

[Hours worked (OECD, 2021)] [Percentage of contingent workers by Gender]



03 Working Hours and Gender Inequality : 5 issues (cont.)

✓ Issues 2. Do Women Work Fewer Hours than Men?

- Women's Double Burden and 'Time Poverty', "One-and-a half earner model"
- Women's weekday Household Work is Four Times that of Men
- Need Policies that Enable Men to Participate in Care Work as well as Support Women **[Total**

working hours by gender] [Household working hours by Gender(2019)]

250.0 200.0 150.0 100.0
50.0 0.0

198.0 190.6 179.2 185.3 181.2
165.0 170.4
155.4

Women

Day average	Sunday 1hour 18min	3hour 18min
Weekday		
Saturday		

2006 2010 2015 2021 male female

Men

source: <http://kosis.kr>, Statistical Office Source: Time Use Survey, 2019

03 Working Hours and Gender Inequality : 5 issues (cont.)

- As Younger Generations Demand More Work-Life Balance(“워라벨”), Increased social focus on work-life balance, Corporate Culture is slowly changing.
- Since 2015, the Feminist Reboot has Expanded Awareness of Gender Inequality among Young women, but Widening the Gender Gap in Gender Equality Awareness



source:

<http://yes24.com> source: www.seoul.co.kr

03 *Working Hours and Gender Inequality : 5 issues (cont.)*

✓ Issues 3. Do women “prefer” to work part-time?

- Women do mere Part-Time work, As Part-time Work is On the Rise.
- Part-time Work Policy as a Alternative to increase female employment and promote work-life balance, Part-time work keeps women on the periphery of organizations(Shin, 2015) • While Many

Women appear to 'Choose' to Work part-time, the prevalence of long hours and lack of childcare support forces women to become part-time workers.

[Short-time workers by Gender]



2,000
1,405
1,170 1,184 1,589 1,194 1,511 1,564
1,500
332 468 653 768
1,000
862 846 250 332 406 449 731
500
0
2000 2005 2010 2015 2020 2022

source: <http://kosis.kr>, Statistical Office

femae(less than 36hours)

03 Working Hours and Gender Inequality : 5 issues (cont.)

✓ Issues 4. The Expectations and Concerns

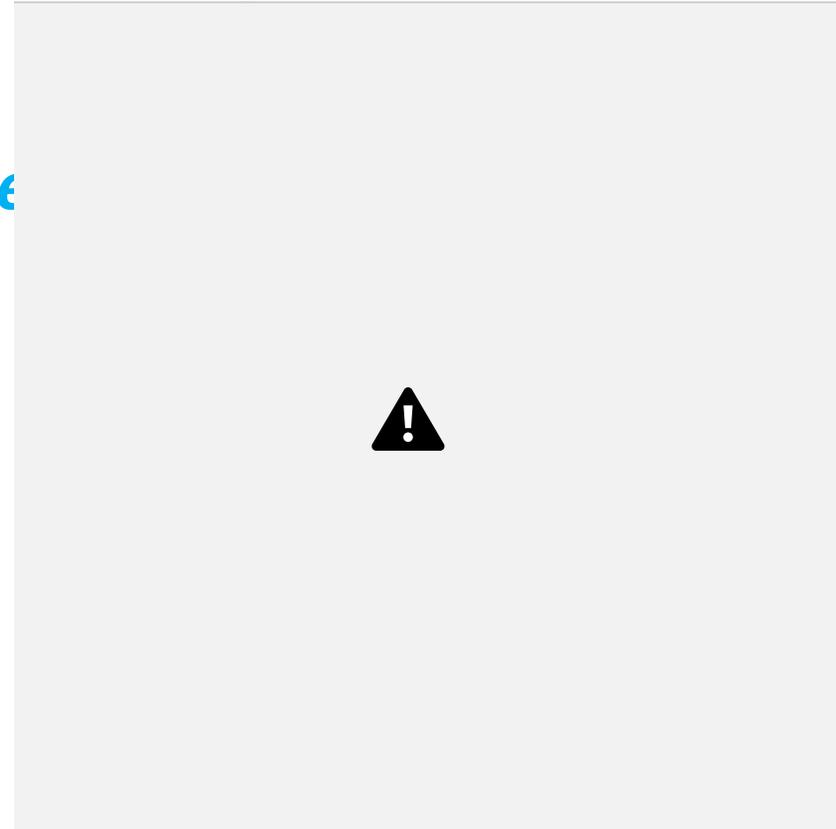
- Flexibility in Working Hours for a Better Work-Life Balance, but Not All Workers are Eligible
- Flexible working arrangements offer women the opportunity to combine work and care, but the more they are used, the less favorable their

[Flexible work arrangements usage rate]

Men Women

30.0

25.0



20.0

status and conditions as workers become (Kwon, 2016; Kuk, 2018; Chung,

15.9

15.0

2020; Himmelweit, 2007, Shin & Lee, 2021).

gender division of labor in the family and puts them at a disadvantage in

12.2
12.0
9.2
9.0
10.0
7.3

- Flexible work arrangements risk a "gender trap" that reinforces the

0.0
18.2 17.3 15.2 14.4

5.5
4.9
5.0

the workplace Unless reducing working hours(Hong, 2012)

2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 source: <http://kosis.kr>, Economic Activity Census

03 Working Hours and Gender Inequality : 5 issues (cont.)

✓ Issues 5. Is Platform Labor Gender-Neutral?

- The Expectation for Platform Labor, "Work When You Want, Work As Much As You Want"?
- Typical Experiences of Time Pressure, such as Being Overworked or being On Call
- The Separation of Occupations by Gender and the Gender Wage Gap Appeared in Platform Labor

[Platform workers by Gender(2021)]

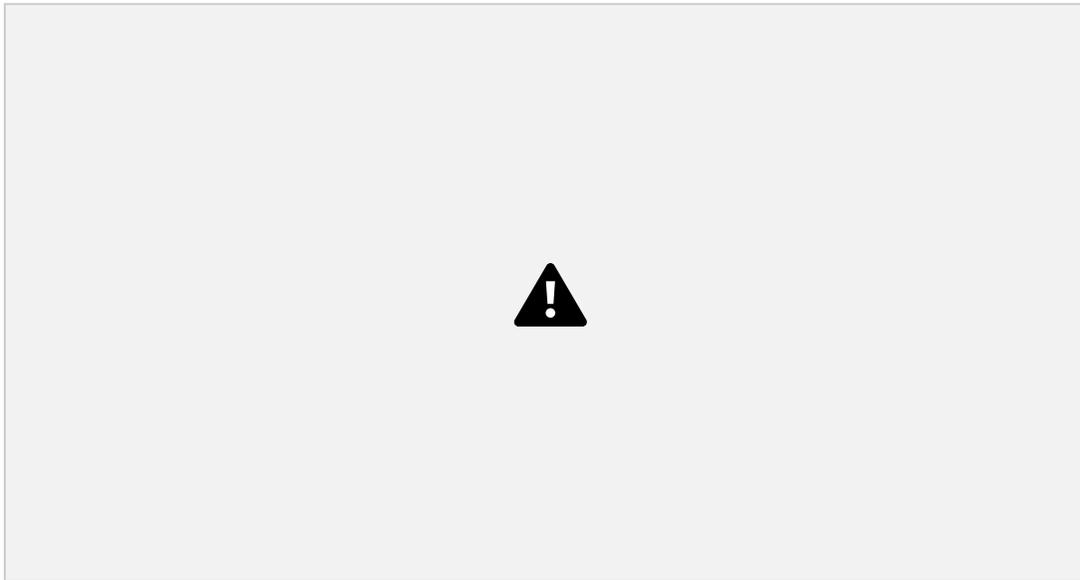
Men(%) Women(%)

Delivery -Ship	47.5	Food preparation -hospitality - sales -repair	33.1
Food preparation -hospitality - sales	15.5	Professional services	14.5

-repair			
Office Assistant -Security	8.5	Housekeeping-Cleaning-Care	10.1
Professional services	6.0	Delivery -Shipping -Driving	9.8

Simple tasks such as data entry 3.5 Office Assistant -Security 8.6

["Women in Platform Labor" (womenlink)]



source: Platform Worker Survey, KEIS Source: womenlink, ohmynews.com

* A person who has obtained work providing services to customers, and earned income through mediation or mediation of an online platform such as a smartphone app or website in the past 3 months

04 Conclusion: Challenges for Gender Equality

- **Gender Equality in Time Use:** Gender equality requires an equal gender distribution of working and caring time.
- **Reducing Working Hours:** Long working hours continue the male breadwinner norm. Reducing absolute working hours is necessary for self-care for all workers, not just parents with young children.
- **Flexible Working Hours:** The potential to benefit workers with caring responsibilities. Flexible working hours should be worker-centered, and need to be universally accessible.
- **New Technologies and Work** Technological advances can either reduce or increase working hours.



Gender inequality in new forms of platform labor needs attention and policy support.

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