

Summer 2021

Analysis on Gender Inequalities in Film Production

Within the Japanese Film Industry



Introduction

Japanese Film Project (JFP) will analyze and make policy recommendations on issues around gender inequalities and labor practices in Japanese film production.

For our first survey, we investigated the following topics:

- Gender ratio of directors who directed live-action films with box-office revenues of one billion yen or more over the past 21 years.
- Gender ratio of directors, cinematographers, editors, and scriptwriters who worked on films released theatrically in 2019-2020.

Additionally, we have conducted interviews with people who work in the industry, including staff who work on set in order to examine the harmful effects of gender inequalities and to have various perspectives inform the direction that our future research projects will take.

We will continue to survey, analyze and share the results with a wider public to encourage discourse and raise issues.



Research Aims and Background

JFP will work to make clear the skewed gender ratios in the Japanese film industry through statistical data.

In recent years, various cultural support programs have been launched under the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. However, these support programs have not necessarily been useful or fulfilling for the people who are working in the cultural and arts sectors. One reason behind this was due to the film industry being unable to explain the situation that they are in to the public and to the government using statistical data to back their claims.

This project will aim to make visible the gender inequalities and the state of labor conditions through statistical data and analysis. We aim to accumulate research that can lead to designing systems for a new era.

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1

Gender Ratio of Film Directors Who Directed Films From 2000-2020

Research Method

For this analysis, we drew from the annual lists published by the Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan on “Live-action Films with Box Office Revenues of More Than One Billion Yen” to determine the gender ratio of each year.

*We used data published by the Asahi Shimbun in 2019 to conduct additional independent research.

Research Results

Of the 769 films theatrically released over 21 years, between 2000-2020, 25 (3.1% of the total) of the films were directed by women.

Total number of directors

796

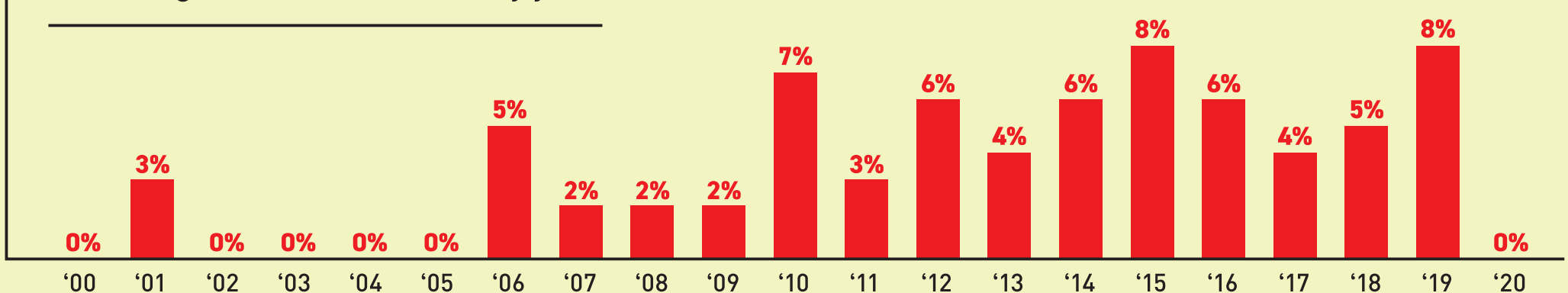
Number of female directors

25

Percentage of female directors

3.1%

Percentage of female directors by year





The ratio between male and female directors who directed large-scale commercial films in 2000-2020.

771 : 25

2

Gender Ratio of Directors, Cinematographers, Editors, and Scriptwriters Who Worked on Films Released Theatrically in 2019-2020

Research Method

We aggregated the male to female ratio of the directors, cinematographers, scriptwriters and editors who worked on films released theatrically between 2019-2020. All films that were released theatrically are included regardless of budget size.

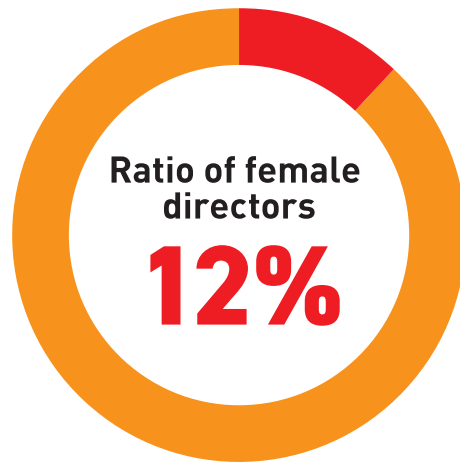
Sources: Eiga Nenkan (Film Almanac) 2020 and Eiga Nenkan 2021





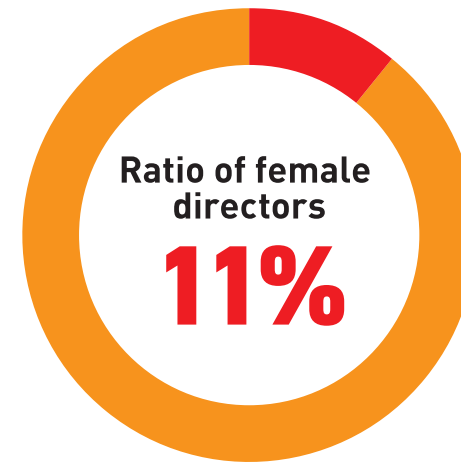
Directors

2020



	Total number of directors	Total number of women	Percentage of women
All films	526	63	12%
Fiction feature films	396	43	11%
Documentaries	71	16	23%
Animations	59	4	7%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	92	7	8%
Films from other companies	434	56	13%

2019

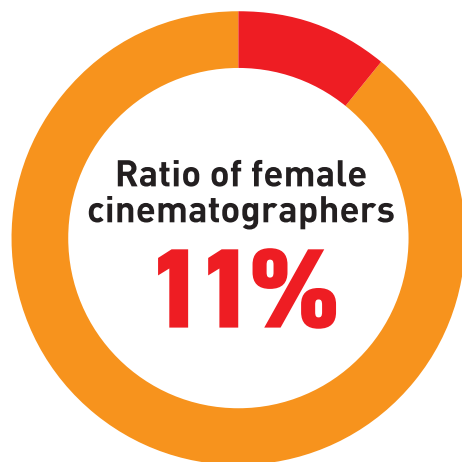


	Total number of directors	Total number of women	Percentage of women
All films	665	73	11%
Fiction feature films	472	55	12%
Documentaries	90	11	12%
Animations	103	7	7%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	138	10	7%
Films from other companies	527	63	12%



Cinematographers

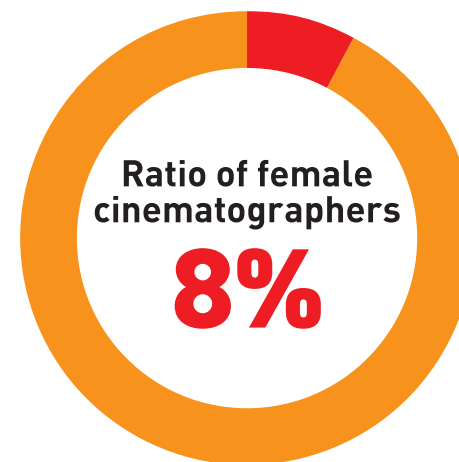
2020



Total number of Cinematographers Total number of women Percentage of women

All films	512	57	11%
Fiction feature films	394	35	9%
Documentaries	83	19	23%
Animations	35	3	9%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	68	6	9%
Films from other companies	444	51	11%

2019



Total number of Cinematographers Total number of women Percentage of women

All films	629	48	8%
Fiction feature films	441	28	6%
Documentaries	110	15	14%
Animations	78	5	6%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	120	4	3%
Films from other companies	509	44	9%



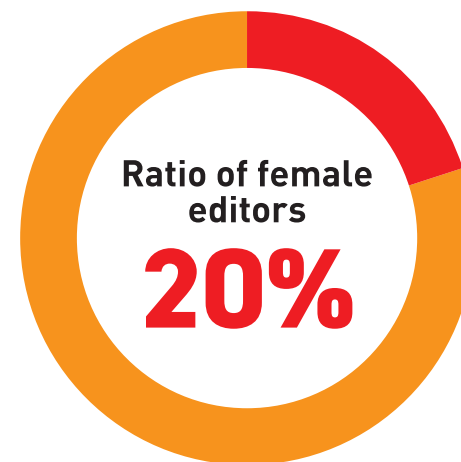
Editors

2020



	Total number of Editors	Total number of women	Percentage of women
All films	396	81	20%
Fiction feature films	314	58	18%
Documentaries	53	16	30%
Animations	29	7	24%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	66	19	29%
Films from other companies	330	62	19%

2019



	Total number of Editors	Total number of women	Percentage of women
All films	491	99	20%
Fiction feature films	364	73	20%
Documentaries	71	14	20%
Animations	56	12	21%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	106	21	20%
Films from other companies	385	78	20%



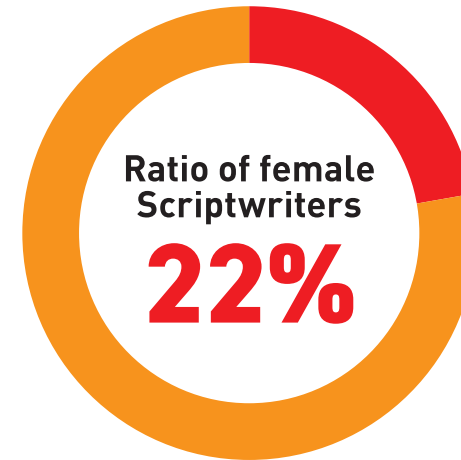
Scriptwriters

2020



	Total number of Scriptwriters	Total number of women	Percentage of women
All films	548	104	19%
Fiction feature films	477	89	19%
Documentaries	13	3	23%
Animations	58	12	21%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	109	29	27%
Films from other companies	439	75	17%

2019



	Total number of Scriptwriters	Total number of women	Percentage of women
All films	583	129	22%
Fiction feature films	481	112	23%
Documentaries	17	2	12%
Animations	85	15	18%
Films from the top 5 film companies <small>Toho, Toei, Shochiku, Kadokawa, Nikkatsu</small>	141	32	23%
Films from other companies	442	97	22%

Research Results

- The percentage of women who work inside rooms (editors and scriptwriters) tend to be twice the percentage of women who work on set (directors and cinematographers).
 - For the years 2019 and 2020, the percentage of female directors who worked on “Live-Action Films with Box-Office Revenues of More than One Billion Yen” is less than the percentage of women who directed all films that were made during these years.
 - In the year 2020, under the state of emergency in the pandemic, the number of theatrically released films declined by 100+ films compared to previous years.
-

3

Statements from the Field on Harassment

Source: Report by the *Eiga Seisaku no Mirai no Tame no Kentokai* (Investigative Meeting for the Future of Film Production). "Findings on the Conditions of Film Production Sets."

*JFP plans to conduct own independent surveys from next year.

"The sets are full of male staff members and are male-dominated but there are some departments that have an even male-to-female ratio. As a result, I have the impression that the types of sexual and power harassments are different depending on set roles."

"There are many people being used for the fact that they want to do what they like as a job and are being forced to work in a way that exploits them."

"There are staff members that get shouted at unfairly. I have also experienced similar things."

"There are people in the industry who have quit as a result of psychological pain. As a result, I work with an attitude of 'I'll quit this place soon.' I often hear about things that are close to power or sexual harassments. The industry is small and there are people who try to make it hard for you to work by spreading bad rumors."

"People who have been accused of sexual harassment and/or power harassment in the past have come back to work because of a lack of workers in the industry."

4

Interviews

*The full version of the interviews are available in Japanese at https://note.com/jpfilm_project

Keiko Araki Director of Pia Film Festival (PFF)

“The true pleasure of the cinema is learning about perspectives and worlds that you had not known before and becoming a little richer for it. A foundational theme of PFF is, “to discover new film talent,” which means that a slate of films from diverse perspectives is expected and it’s better to have a diverse group of selectors. For this reason, we make sure that there is an equal number of women and men in the first round of the selection process of the PFF Award and that there is at least one woman in the final jury.”



Keiko Araki has been in her current position at PFF since 1992. She has been a jury member in many film festivals in Japan and abroad and has organized film events for them. She has been working on international exchange and nurturing new talent through films. The PFF Award is a film competition open to all independent films made within the past year regardless of age, gender, nationality, length and genre. It has discovered and produced many talents who have gone on to lead the Japanese film industry.

Chiharu Ishii Freelance Assistant Director

“There are a handful of young female crew members in the direction team but very few veteran female staff. Young and talented people who have worked hard for 5-10 years to develop their skills end up leaving due to very poor working conditions. This is terrible for the film industry as a whole. The repetition of such things is degrading the film industry in ways that are not visible. I would like to say to the people in the film industry: ‘Are you sure you want to continue like this?’”



Chiharu Ishii began her career as a freelance assistant director in 2006. She is currently 38 years old and is a mother of three children ranging between the ages of one-and-a-half years old and elementary-school-aged. She has taken extended time off during her pregnancies and to raise her children and has actively been working for a total of nearly 10 years. In her role as assistant director, she has been supporting various film industry sets ranging from large-scale commercial films to independent films.

Mari Miura Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, Sophia University

“Many of the people who leave because of long hours and very poor working conditions are women. Irregular and long working hours have become the norm in the world of politics as well. If we want to increase the number of women entering the workforce, we need to improve the working conditions. Improving gender equality and improving working conditions are two sides of the same coin. It is necessary to logically parse out the situations that cause gender disparities and long working hours, and to verify them as structural issues by using statistical data.”



Mari Miura is Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law at Sophia University. She is also deputy director of the Promotion of Gender Equality Office at Sophia University and academic advisor to the working team of the All-partisan Caucus for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Politics. She received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. She specializes in gender and politics as well as theories on welfare states. She is the author of books such as *Daihyosei Minshushugi no Saisei* (Making Our Voices Heard: The Revival of Representative Democracy) and is the editor of *Japan's Women Representatives* (in Japanese, Asahi Shimbun Shuppansha, 2016). She actively organizes events such as “Parité Campaigns” and “Parité Cafés” that seek to increase and nurture female politicians.

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