1. Age Structure of Population

The population of Japan was 123,642,032 as of October 1, 1985. Classified into three groups: the population under 15 years of age (the youthful population) was 39,020,264 (32.0% of the total population); the population aged 15 to 64 years (the productive population) was 63,200,641 (50.8%); the population aged 65 years and over (the elderly population) was 21,421,127 (17.2%). There were also 41,306 others (0.4%) for which no information was available.

Classified by provinces according to the three age groups, Okayama had the highest proportion of youthful population with 27.4%, followed by Saitama with 25.2%, Sapporo with 24.0% and Tottori 22.3%. There were 22 provinces which exceeded the average ratio for the whole country. On the other hand, the lowest proportion of youthful population was that of Fukuoka with 18.6%, followed by Aichi with 20.9%, Niigata with 20.6% and Tottori with 20.5%.

Tottori Prefecture had the highest proportion of productive population with 71.0%, followed by Fukuoka Prefecture with 70.3%, Osaka Prefecture with 69.7%, Saitama Prefecture with 69.3%, Aichi Prefecture with 68.5% for Tohoku and Hokkaido Prefectures. There were 7 provinces which exceeded the average ratio for the whole country. On the other hand, the lowest ratio for this section of the population was that of Okayama Prefecture with 66.5%, followed by Gunma Prefecture with 64.2% for Tohoku and Kanagawa Prefectures.

Saitama Prefecture had the highest rate of elderly population with 15.3%, followed by Kure Prefecture with 14.9%, Aichi Prefecture with 14.7% and Tottori Prefecture with 13.7%. There were 12 provinces which exceeded the average rate for the whole country. On the other hand, Saitama Prefecture had the lowest rate with 7.2%, followed by Kanagawa Prefecture with 7.1%, Tochigi Prefecture with 7.0%, and Osaka Prefecture with 6.8%.

Considering the changes in the population in terms of the three age groups over the past 30 years, the youthful population increased slightly from 20,908,000 in 1955 to 30,000,000 in 1980, but decreased from 16.7% of the total population to 16.1%.

The productive population increased from 14,668,000 in 1955 to 21,630,000 in 1985, and increased from 18.4% of the total population in 1950 to 26.8% in 1980. It has shown no marked fluctuations since then.

2. Number of Household Members Per Household

The total number of households in Japan was 29,799,600 as of October 1, 1985. The average number of persons per household was 3.15. There were also 122,112 households consisting of institutions.

The percentage of private households classified by the number of members was as follows: 1-member household accounted for the largest ratio with 31.7%, followed by 2-member households with 20.7%, 3-member households with 17.8% and 4-member households with 12.1% and 5-member households with 12.5%.

Clasified by prefecture, the largest number of average members per household was that of Yamagata with 3.77, followed by Toyama with 3.76. Nippon and Hyogo with 3.50, and Ibaraki with 3.57. The lowest was 3.05 with 248 households, followed by Kagoshima with 2.76 and Yokohama with 2.81.

The average number of members per household was 4.28 in 1939 (3.89 for private households); but this decreased to 3.25 in 1970, 3.12 in 1980 and 3.14 in 1990, indicating a trend towards small and isolated households due to the increasing tendency to form one-person families, the increase in 1-person or 2-person households and a decrease in the birth rate.

[Sources]
1. Statistic Bureau, Management and Coordination Agency, 1985 Population Census of Japan