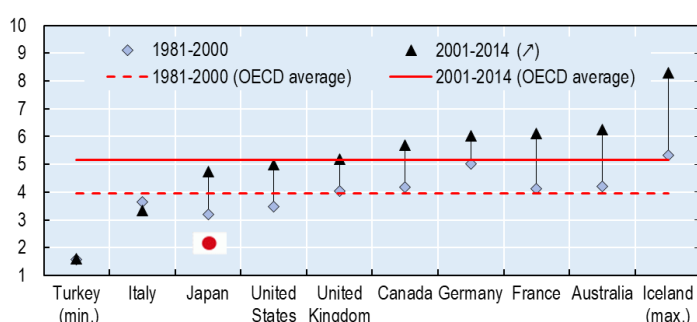




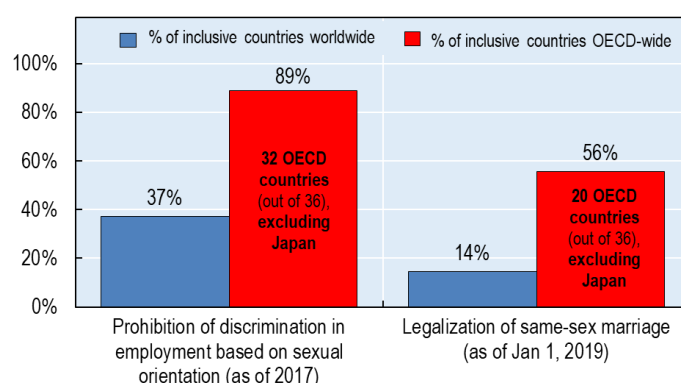
The 2019 edition of *Society at a Glance* examines trends in social well-being across the OECD. It features a special chapter on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people: their numbers, how they fare in terms of their economic situation and well-being, and what policies can improve LGBT inclusivity. It also includes a special chapter based on the 2018 OECD Risks That Matter Survey on people's perceptions of social and economic risks and the extent to which they think governments address those risks. The publication also presents 25 indicators on general context, self-sufficiency, equity, health and social cohesion.

Fig.1. Despite improvements, acceptance of homosexuality remains limited



Note: Acceptance of homosexuality is measured on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that homosexuality is never justifiable and 10 means that it is always justifiable. Source: [Figure 1.6 of OECD Society at a Glance 2019].

Fig.2. There is still a long way before sexual and gender minorities meet full-fledged legal recognition, and Japan is no exception



Source: [Figure 1.18 of OECD Society at a Glance 2019].

A SPOTLIGHT ON LGBT PEOPLE

Japan does not have any nationally representative survey that includes a question on self-identification as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, nor does it collect information on the share of transgender people among the adult population. In the 14 OECD countries where estimates are available, the share of LGB people is significant (2.7% of the adult population), and on the rise [Figure 1.4 of the OECD publication *Society at a Glance 2019*]. Increasing disclosure of an LGB identity is likely to continue in the future since it is driven by younger cohorts.

Attitudes toward LGBT people are improving worldwide and have consistently been more positive in OECD countries than elsewhere. However, there remains substantial room for progress. Japan is no exception: Japanese citizens are only halfway to full social acceptance of homosexuality, scoring about five on a 1-to-10 acceptance scale (in line with the average OECD score) [Figure 1 above]. Moreover, only a minority of Japanese respondents (45%) would accept that a child dresses and expresses herself/himself as a child of the other gender [Figure 1.8, Panel B].

Low acceptance of LGBT people puts them at risk of discrimination. Representative survey data (that do not cover Japan) reveal that LGBT people are penalised with respect to employment status and labour earnings [Figure 1.12]. Experimental data confirm that this penalty at least partly reflects labour market discrimination: with the same curriculum vitae, homosexual applicants are 1.5 times less likely to be invited to a job interview than heterosexual applicants when their sexual orientation is conveyed through their volunteer engagement or work experience in a gay and lesbian organisation [Figure 1.13].

A range of policies can help improve LGBT inclusivity. Making LGBT individuals and the penalties they face visible in national statistics is a prerequisite for their inclusion, suggesting that Japan could start collecting information on sexual orientation and gender identity on a regular basis.

Legally prohibiting anti-LGBT discrimination and ensuring equal rights for LGBT individuals is also essential to improve their situation. Japan is lagging behind in this area, not having explicitly prohibited discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation or legalized same-sex marriage [Figure 2 above]. In the United States for instance, same-sex marriage policies caused a

reduction by nearly 15% of suicide attempts among adolescents who self-identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Finally, educating people in countering their unconscious bias is a key component of any policy package aiming to better LGBT inclusion. Evidence shows that these interventions can be highly effective, even when they are short.

OVERVIEW OF OTHER SOCIAL INDICATORS

High employment and low unemployment

Employment rates are high in Japan, 75% in 2017 compared with 69% on average in the OECD [Figure 5.1]. Japan also has the **third lowest unemployment rate across the OECD**, 3% in 2017 compared to 6.8% across the OECD [Figure 5.4].

Digitalisation is changing jobs radically

Digitalisation is reducing demand for routine and manual tasks and might radically transform around 40% of all jobs in Japan. These jobs will not be substituted entirely, but a large share of their tasks may be. An additional 15% of jobs is at high risk of complete automation. **The impact of digitalisation is stronger in Japan than in most OECD countries**, where on average 32% of jobs are at considerable risk of transformation and 14% are at high risk of complete automation [Figure 5.3].

Ageing population

Japan has a low fertility rate. At 1.4 children per woman, the fertility rate is not only below the OECD average of 1.7 but also substantially below the 2.1 rate needed to keep the population constant [Figure 4.4]. Meanwhile, the **average age of women at first birth has risen** substantially from 27.5 to 30.7 between 1995 and 2016 and is currently significantly above the OECD average of 28.9 [Figure 4.6]. Due to the ageing population and low birth rates Japan has the **highest old age dependency ratio** (i.e. number of people of retirement age per 100 of working age) across the OECD: just under 50% and expected to rise to 80% by 2060 [Figure 4.13]. In this context, policies that help young women to combine work and family responsibilities are of particular importance.

High life expectancy and suicide rates

Japan has the highest life expectancy across the OECD, with 84 years in 2016, a significant increase from 72 years in 1970 [Figure 7.1]. Life expectancy for Japanese women (87 year) is higher than for Japanese men (81 years). **Despite a significant decline in suicides rates in the past decade, they remain high in an OECD comparison.** With 16.6 suicides per 100 000 persons, Japan has the fifth highest suicide rate in the OECD, and significantly above the OECD average of 12 per 100 000 persons

[Figure 7.10]. Suicide is more common among Japanese men than among Japanese women.

Income and wealth inequality

In Japan, the richest 10% of income earners received 24% of all income in 2015, whereas the richest 10% of households owned 41% of all wealth [Figure 6.2]. While household wealth is more unequally distributed than income in all OECD countries, inequalities in household wealth are less pronounced in Japan. Japan ranks second lowest in the OECD in terms of wealth inequality.

Above-average poverty rates

Poverty rates are higher than average, – 16% of the total population, 18% of all young people aged 18-25 and 20% of the elderly (over 65) are below the poverty line compared to 12% overall, 14% for young and elderly people, across the OECD [Figure 6.6].

Affordable housing

Four in five Japanese households (80%) own their dwelling, either outright (52%) or with a mortgage (28%) [Figure 6.13]. This high ownership rate places Japan fifth in the OECD ranking, where on average 69% of households own their dwelling. About 40% of low-income households in Japan spent more than 40% of disposable income on their mortgage or rent in 2016 [Figure 6.14].

Violence against women

About 15% of Japanese women report having experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetimes. This rate is considerably below the OECD average of 22% [Figure 8.7]. Even so, 9% of Japanese women say that a husband may be justified in hitting or beating his wife, a share that is slightly above the OECD average of 7.7% [Figure 8.8]. Nearly 30% of Japanese women do not feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live, while only 16% of Japanese men feel unsafe [Figure 8.9].

Many Japanese men smoke, but few women

Around 30% of all Japanese men smoked on a daily basis in 2016, placing Japan eighth in the OECD ranking of male smoking rates [Figure 7.13]. In contrast, Japan is third lowest in the OECD ranking of female smoking rates, with only 8% of Japanese women smoking. The OECD average rates are 23% and 14% respectively. Smoking rates in Japan have gone down considerably in the past decade, as in most OECD countries.

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