

## **CHAPTER III: MARITAL STATUS**

### **1. Proportion by Marital Status**

#### **The never-married rate is high among men.**

According to the population aged 15 years of age and over (53.09 million men and 56.68 million women) by marital status that is reported in the 2005 Population Census, the number of married men is 32.26 million and that of married women is 32.32 million, accounting for 60.8% and 57.0% of the population aged 15 years of age and over, respectively (married rate).

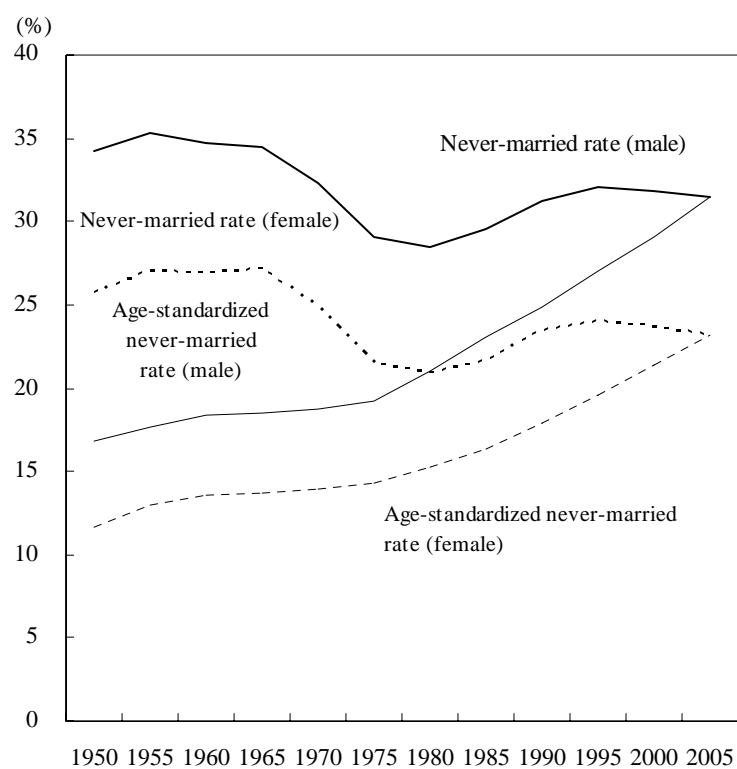
The proportion of the never-married population (never-married rate) is 31.4% among men and 23.2% among women, showing a higher rate among men. This is mainly because the age at which men first marry is higher than that of women, leading to a large proportion of never-married younger men. (Table 3.1)

#### **Divorce rate is rising in both men and women while never-married rate and married rate are falling.**

The trends in the proportion of the population 15 years of age and over by marital status indicate that in both men and women, the never-married rate started declining in 2000 and so did the married rate from 1985 as the widowed rate, which had leveled off in recent years, started rising again in 1995. The divorce rate showed little fluctuation until 1975, but started rising in 1980 in both men and women as a result of an increase in divorce cases in recent years.

In the proportion by marital status that is standardized on the assumption that the age composition of the population of Japan for each year is the same as that of 2005, in both men and women, the never-married rate and divorce rate show an upward trend, while the married rate and widowed rate show a downward trend. (Tables 3.1 and 3.2, Figure 3.1)

**Figure 3.1 Trends in the Never-Married Rate by Sex: 1950 to 2005**



**Table 3.1 Trends in the Proportion of the Population 15 Years of Age and Over by Marital Status: 1920 to 2005**

(%)

Sex and year	Proportion by marital status				Proportion by marital status after age-standardization			
	Never-married	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Never-married	Married	Widowed	Divorced
<b>Male</b>								
1920	29.3	62.9	6.0	1.9	15.5	69.8	12.7	2.0
1925	30.0	62.6	5.7	1.8	15.1	70.3	12.7	2.0
1930	32.3	60.9	5.4	1.4	16.1	69.7	12.5	1.6
1935	33.2	60.1	5.4	1.4	17.0	69.1	12.3	1.6
1940	35.0	58.7	6.3 <sup>1)</sup>		18.3	68.3	13.5 <sup>1)</sup>	
1950	34.3	60.3	4.5	0.9	16.8	71.1	11.0	1.0
1955	35.3	59.7	4.1	0.9	17.7	71.0	10.2	1.1
1960	34.8	60.8	3.5	0.9	18.4	71.6	8.8	1.1
1965	34.5	61.7	3.0	0.8	18.5	72.8	7.6	1.0
1970	32.4	64.1	2.7	0.8	18.7	73.7	6.5	1.0
1975	29.1	67.4	2.6	0.9	19.2	73.9	5.7	1.1
1980	28.5	67.6	2.4	1.2	21.0	72.6	4.9	1.3
1985	29.6	66.2	2.4	1.6	23.1	70.8	4.3	1.6
1990	31.2	63.8	2.4	1.8	24.9	68.9	3.7	1.9
1995	32.1	62.6	2.5	2.2	27.0	66.7	3.4	2.2
2000	31.8	61.8	2.7	2.7	29.0	64.0	3.1	2.7
2005	31.4	60.8	2.9	3.3	31.4	60.8	2.9	3.3
<b>Female</b>								
1920	18.7	63.1	15.8	2.4	8.9	56.8	32.1	2.3
1925	19.1	63.0	15.6	2.3	8.4	56.9	32.4	2.2
1930	21.2	61.4	15.5	1.9	9.3	56.3	32.6	1.9
1935	22.6	60.2	15.4	1.8	10.1	55.6	32.4	1.8
1940	24.9	58.2	17.0 <sup>1)</sup>		11.2	54.6	34.1 <sup>1)</sup>	
1950	25.7	56.2	16.1	1.9	11.6	53.4	33.1	1.9
1955	27.1	55.7	15.2	2.0	12.9	53.3	31.8	2.0
1960	26.9	56.7	14.2	2.1	13.6	54.1	29.9	2.3
1965	27.1	57.9	13.1	1.9	13.7	55.8	28.3	2.1
1970	24.9	60.2	12.8	2.1	13.9	57.1	26.8	2.3
1975	21.5	63.7	12.7	2.1	14.3	58.7	24.8	2.2
1980	20.9	64.0	12.4	2.5	15.2	59.5	22.4	2.6
1985	21.7	62.5	12.7	3.0	16.4	59.7	20.7	3.0
1990	23.4	60.4	12.3	3.2	17.9	59.8	18.4	3.3
1995	24.0	59.1	12.7	3.7	19.6	59.3	16.9	3.7
2000	23.7	58.2	13.0	4.4	21.3	58.4	15.1	4.4
2005	23.2	57.0	13.5	5.2	23.2	57.0	13.5	5.2

1) Total of "Widowed" and "Divorced".

Note: The calculation for the standardization was conducted by considering the nationwide population 15 years of age and over by sex and age (five-year groups) as of 2005 to be standard population. In short, the purpose of calculation is to observe how the proportions by marital status would change if the age composition of the population 15 years of age and over is assumed to be identical to that of 2005.

**Table 3.2 Trends in the Number of Marriages and Divorces: 1950 to 2005**

(thousands)

Item	1950	1960	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Number of marriages	715	866	1,029	942	775	736	722	792	798	714
Number of divorces	84	69	96	119	142	167	158	199	264	262

Source: "Vital Statistics", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

## 2. Never-Married Rate by Age Group

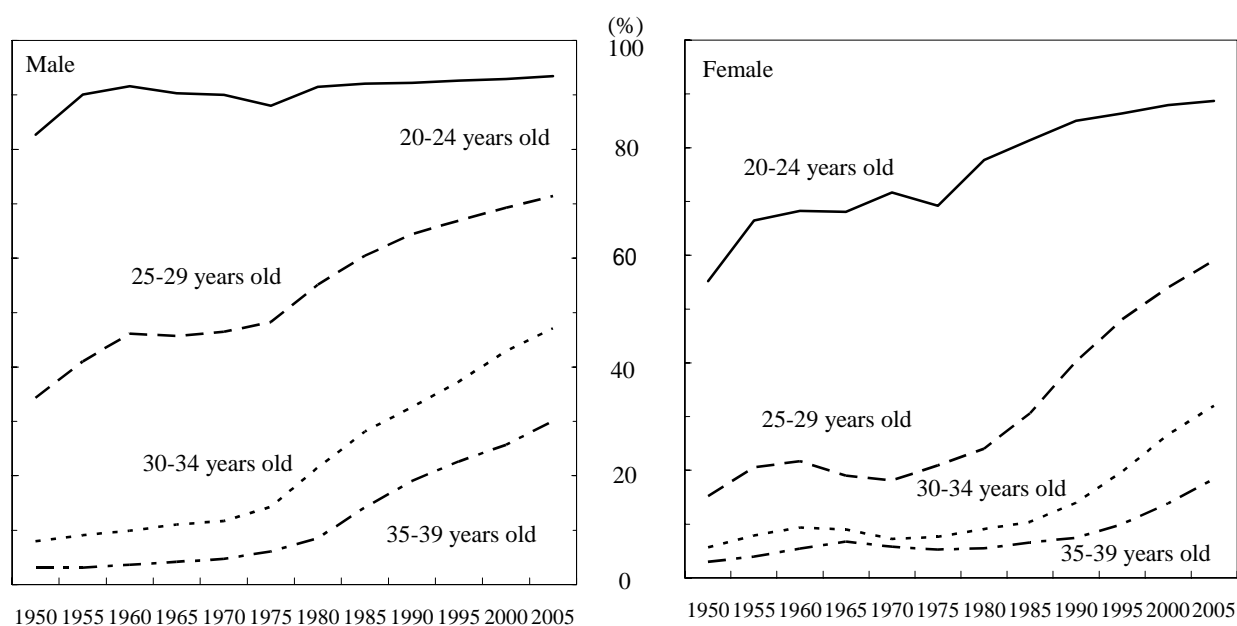
**The never-married rate among men is higher than that among women in every age group of people below 65 years of age.**

Observing the never-married rate by age group, in both men and women the never-married rate falls with increasing age. Among men, the never-married rate decreases from 93.4% in the 20 to 24 year-old age group to 71.4% in the 25 to 29 year-old age group, and drops to 47.1% in the 30 to 34 year-old age group. A similar tendency prevails among women, with the never-married rate falling from 88.7% in the 20 to 24 year-old age group to 59.0% in the 25 to 29 year-old age group, and to 32.0% in the 30 to 34 year-old age group. (Table 3.3)

**The never-married rate among women in the 25 to 29 year-old age group has increased significantly.**

Examining the trends in the never-married rate by age group, the never-married rate has been rising dramatically in recent years in the younger generation. In particular, the never-married rate among women in the 25 to 29 year-old age group has increased significantly, from 40.2% in 1990 to 59.0% in 2005. (Tables 3.3 and 3.4, Figure 3.2)

**Figure 3.2 Trends in the Never-Married Rate Aged between 20 and 39 by Sex: 1950 to 2005**



**Table 3.3 Trends in the Proportion by Marital Status by Sex and Age (Five-Year Groups)**  
: 1990 to 2005

Sex and age (five-year groups)	Never-married				Married				Widowed				Divorced			
	1990	1995	2000	2005	1990	1995	2000	2005	1990	1995	2000	2005	1990	1995	2000	2005
Male	31.2	32.1	31.8	31.4	63.8	62.6	61.8	60.8	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.9	1.8	2.2	2.7	3.3
15-19 years old	98.5	99.2	99.5	99.6	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	92.2	92.6	92.9	93.4	6.2	6.5	6.8	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3
25-29	64.4	66.9	69.3	71.4	33.9	31.6	29.6	27.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.1
30-34	32.6	37.3	42.9	47.1	65.2	60.4	54.9	50.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.4	1.6	2.0	2.2
35-39	19.0	22.6	25.7	30.0	78.1	74.3	69.2	62.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	2.2	2.4	3.0	3.5
40-44	11.7	16.4	18.4	22.0	84.3	79.4	76.1	70.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	3.0	3.2	3.6	4.5
45-49	6.7	11.2	14.6	17.1	88.5	83.4	78.8	74.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.5	3.4	4.0	4.3	5.0
50-54	4.3	6.7	10.1	14.0	90.4	87.0	82.2	77.2	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	3.3	4.2	4.9	5.5
55-59	2.9	4.3	6.0	9.8	91.3	88.8	85.6	80.5	2.4	2.3	2.2	1.9	2.8	3.7	4.7	5.7
60-64	2.0	2.9	3.8	5.8	91.4	89.5	87.2	83.9	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.2	2.2	3.0	4.0	5.1
65-69	1.4	1.9	2.5	3.7	90.2	89.1	87.4	85.3	6.3	6.0	5.6	5.0	1.8	2.2	3.1	4.2
70-74	1.0	1.4	1.7	2.4	87.4	87.3	86.1	85.0	9.8	9.4	8.7	7.9	1.4	1.7	2.1	3.0
75 and over	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.3	73.7	75.5	75.9	76.7	23.8	22.1	19.9	18.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.6
Female	23.4	24.0	23.7	23.2	60.4	59.1	58.2	57.0	12.3	12.7	13.0	13.5	3.2	3.7	4.4	5.2
15-19 years old	98.2	98.9	99.1	99.1	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
20-24	85.0	86.4	87.9	88.7	13.5	12.6	11.3	10.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.9
25-29	40.2	48.0	54.0	59.0	57.5	49.6	43.5	38.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.6	1.8	2.4	2.6
30-34	13.9	19.7	26.6	32.0	82.7	76.4	68.9	62.7	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	2.9	3.4	4.2	4.9
35-39	7.5	10.0	13.8	18.4	87.3	84.7	79.2	72.4	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5	4.2	4.4	5.6	6.9
40-44	5.8	6.7	8.6	12.1	87.1	86.1	83.3	77.5	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.0	5.2	5.6	6.3	8.0
45-49	4.6	5.6	6.3	8.2	86.4	85.0	83.7	80.5	3.4	2.6	2.3	2.0	5.3	6.4	7.0	8.1
50-54	4.1	4.5	5.3	6.1	84.2	83.8	82.4	80.9	6.5	5.3	4.2	3.7	4.8	6.0	7.3	8.2
55-59	4.2	4.1	4.3	5.2	79.9	80.6	80.3	79.2	11.1	9.8	8.1	6.5	4.3	5.1	6.4	8.0
60-64	4.2	4.1	3.8	4.2	73.0	74.7	75.7	76.1	18.1	16.4	14.3	11.9	4.2	4.3	5.2	6.7
65-69	3.4	4.2	3.9	3.8	61.0	65.6	67.8	69.6	31.0	25.7	23.0	20.1	3.9	4.0	4.3	5.3
70-74	2.3	3.4	4.0	3.9	45.1	50.7	56.1	59.3	48.6	41.8	34.9	31.3	3.1	3.7	3.9	4.2
75 and over	1.4	1.9	2.5	3.2	20.8	22.0	25.2	29.1	74.2	73.1	67.4	62.7	2.1	2.3	2.8	3.1

**Table 3.4 Trends in Average Age of Marriage and in Age Differences between Husbands and Wives: 1970 to 2005**

Year	All Marriages		First marriage		Age difference	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	All Marriages	First marriage
1970	27.6	24.6	26.9	24.2	3.0	2.7
1975	27.8	25.2	27.0	24.7	2.6	2.3
1980	28.7	25.9	27.8	25.2	2.8	2.6
1985	29.3	26.4	28.2	25.5	2.9	2.7
1990	29.7	26.9	28.4	25.9	2.8	2.5
1995	29.8	27.3	28.5	26.3	2.5	2.2
2000	30.4	28.2	28.8	27.0	2.2	1.8
2001	30.6	28.4	29.0	27.2	2.2	1.8
2002	30.8	28.6	29.1	27.4	2.2	1.8
2003	31.2	29.0	29.4	27.6	2.2	1.8
2004	31.5	29.2	29.6	27.8	2.3	1.8
2005	31.7	29.4	29.8	28.0	2.3	1.8

Source: "Vital Statistics", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.