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Women want to work after kids

Kyodo News

Most Japanese women in their 30s and 40s hope to work once their children reach school age, but in reality fewer than half do, according to a Cabinet Office survey released Tuesday.

The survey, conducted in December over the Internet, covered 3,100 women in that age category regardless of whether they have children. It also found that one-third of women gave up their careers after getting married.

Almost 91 percent of the respondents with kids said they wish to work after their children reach elementary school age, but only 44.1 percent currently have a job.

There was no further breakdown on the number of mothers among the women who responded to the poll.

Those who wish to work when their children are 3 or younger amounted to 42.4 percent, compared with 72.3 percent who would like to work when their kids turn 4 and 95.1 percent when they reach at least junior high school age.

Only 25.1 percent of the responding mothers with children age 3 or younger have a job, compared with 37.4 percent of those whose kids are under elementary school age, and 54.7 percent whose children are at least in junior high school.

An official at the Cabinet Office's Gender Equality Bureau said the findings signal a gap between the ideal and reality and added women should be offered more information to better formulate their life plans.

The survey found that 32.3 percent of women gave up their career because of marriage. Many cited physical and time constraints as well as the country's traditional custom of women quitting jobs upon marriage.

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