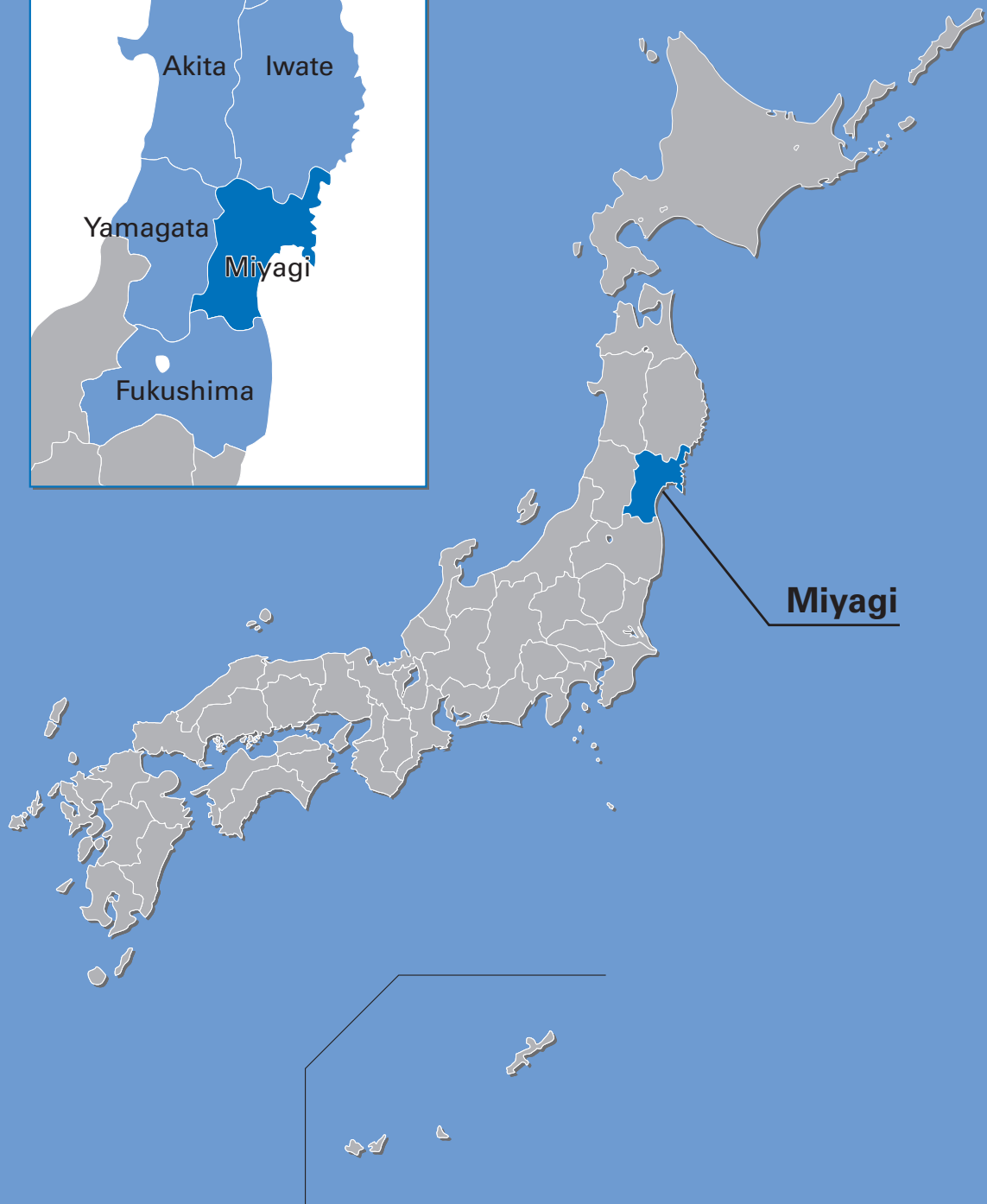
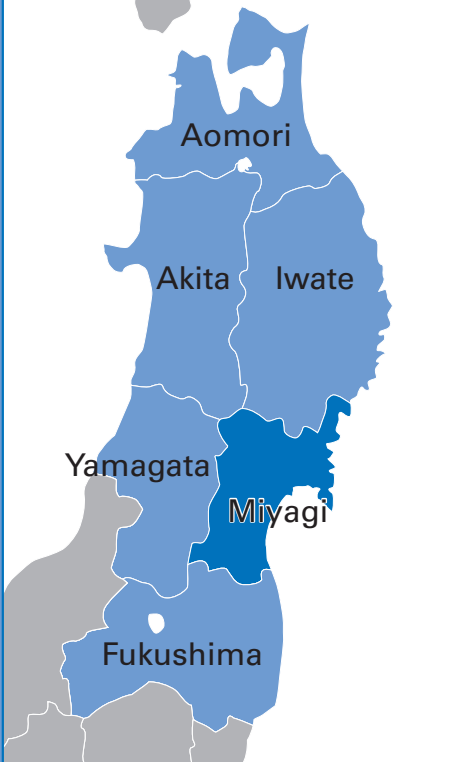


Tohoku Region





From *SDGs and Japan* to the *SDGs Miyagi Model*

Issues Facing the Tohoku Region and Miyagi Prefecture, as Seen in *SDGs and Japan*

1 Human Security Indicators for the Six Prefectures in the Tohoku Region

Prefectures in the Tohoku (North East) region tend to appear toward the bottom of the prefectural Human Security Index rankings. With the exception of Yamagata Prefecture, these prefectures rank very low nationally in the Overall Index and face many challenges (Yamagata 18th, Iwate 37th, Akita 38th, Fukushima 41st, Miyagi 45th, and Aomori 47th, out of 47 prefectures in Japan). The reason for the low human security scores in the prefectures of the Tohoku region is that their Life and Dignity indices are generally very low.

Table 2-1: Human security index scores for the six prefectures in the Tohoku region (national ranking)

	Overall Index	Life Index	Livelihood Index	Dignity Index
Yamagata	18 th	26 th	6 th	41 st
Iwate	37 th	46 th	8 th	35 th
Akita	38 th	43 rd	11 th	45 th
Fukushima	41 st	44 th	25 th	30 th
Miyagi	45 th	32 nd	45 th	47 th
Aomori	47 th	47 th	37 th	46 th

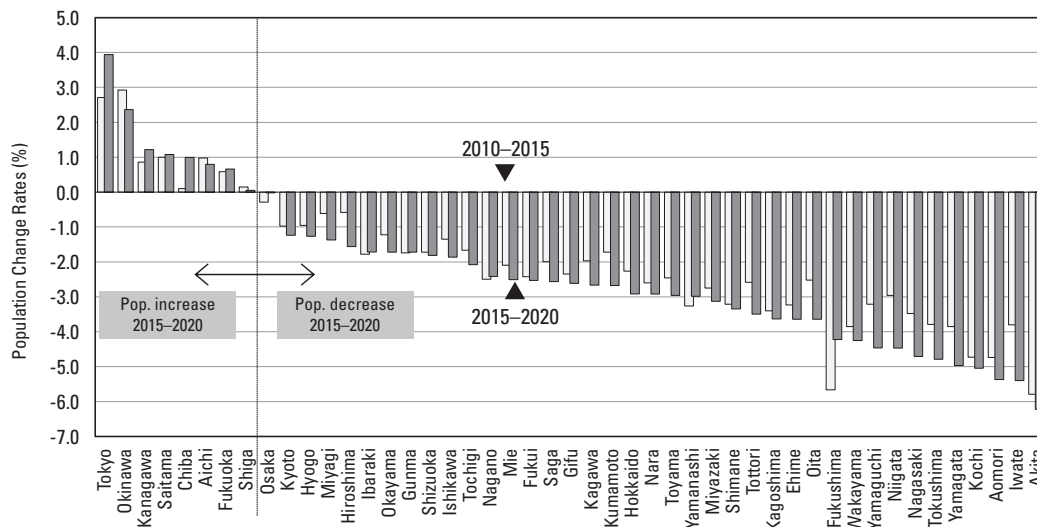
(1) Life Index

Damage from natural disasters: The three prefectures that had the most deaths and missing persons from natural disasters between 1995 and 2016 were Miyagi (508 per 100,000 people), Iwate (499 per 100,000 people), and Fukushima (217 per 100,000 people), in that order. The Great East Japan Earthquake inflicted extremely extensive damage, resulting in significant challenges in terms of rebuilding livelihoods and the social environment throughout the Tohoku region, especially for the prefectures along the Pacific coast.

Population/medical care: While the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake are certainly significant, the biggest challenge facing the Tohoku region is population decline (Figure 2-1). According to the national census, the rates of population decline for 2015–2020 followed the 2010–2015 trend, with Akita (6.2%), Iwate (5.4%), Aomori (5.4%), Kochi (5.0%), and Yamagata (5.0%) prefectures showing the steepest population declines (the corresponding rates of decline for Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures were 4.2% and 1.4%, respectively).

In addition, the prefectures in the Tohoku region share challenges in medical care and health awareness. Life expectancy and fertility rates are low, the number of doctors per person is low, and the rates of unmarried and elderly people are high. In addition, high rates of tooth decay and smoking, coupled with low rates of sports activity and average number of steps walked, are common characteristics of the region.

Figure 2-1: Rates of population change at the prefecture level (2010–2015, 2015–2020)



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2020 National Census, Figure I-2-2

(2) Dignity Index

Children: The prefectures of the Tohoku region share many challenges regarding children and their welfare, as suggested by the relatively high figures for bullying cases (excluding Fukushima Prefecture), children in temporary child protection facilities, foster care placement rates, and deaths by suicide among children.

Gender: The prefectures also have common challenges regarding domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, as well as gender disparities, such as the relatively few hours that men spend on household chores, large gender wage gap, and paucity of female members in local assemblies, recovery planning councils and recovery promotion committees, and disaster prevention councils.

Access to the law: There is also room for improvement in terms of the number of inquiries to Japan Legal Support Centers, and the low number of lawyers relative to the population (with the exception of Miyagi Prefecture).

Self-affirmation: The extremely high number of negative questionnaire responses to questions on whether people are satisfied with their lives (Fukushima 33rd, Miyagi 40th, Akita 41st, Iwate 43rd, Yamagata 43rd, Aomori 46th), and whether they think the future of their lives will be better than the present (Iwate 32nd, Yamagata 35th, Aomori 37th,

Fukushima 38th, Akita 42nd, Miyagi 43rd) reflects feelings of low self-affirmation among the population.

Yamagata Prefecture was the only prefecture in the Tohoku region to achieve a high ranking in the Overall Index. This was because of its good scores in life expectancy, rate of unmarried people, smoking rate, and others, placing it around the middle of the Life Index (26th), as well as its good scores in disposable income, employment, and living environment-related indicators, leading to a high ranking (6th) in the Livelihood Index.

2 Reasons for Miyagi Prefecture’s Low Overall Score

Miyagi Prefecture ranked very low on the Livelihood Index (45th) and Dignity Index (47th), largely due to low scores on indices related to women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

Income and employment: Although the average income of residents is in the middle of the range, scores for disposable income, the Gini coefficient, overall unemployment rate, and employment rates of women, people with disabilities, and the elderly, are extremely low compared to the rest of the country, indicating significant challenges in terms of stimulating economic activity and expanding employment.

Children: The rate of students who are habitually absent from school is higher than the national average, as is the high school dropout rate, while indicators for academic achievement are low. There are also relatively high numbers

of bullying cases and consultations at Child Welfare Centers, indicating substantial issues in children’s welfare and education.

3 Radar Charts for the Six Prefectures in the Tohoku Region

Figure 2-2: Yamagata Prefecture’s Human Security Indicators (18th)

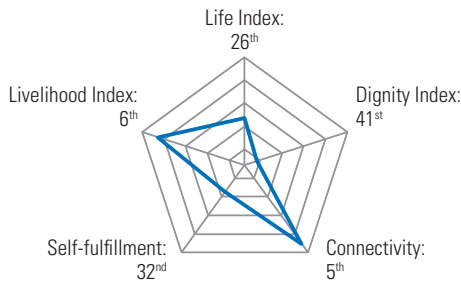


Figure 2-3: Iwate Prefecture’s Human Security Indicators (37th)

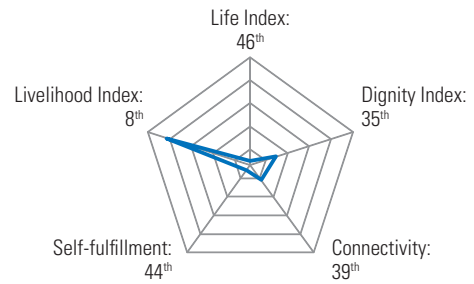


Figure 2-4: Akita Prefecture’s Human Security Indicators (38th)

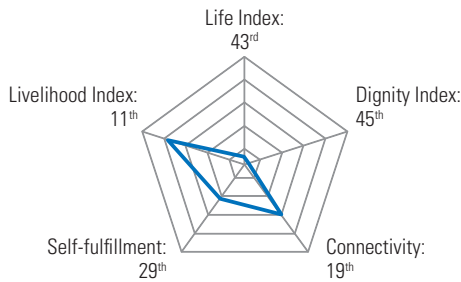


Figure 2-5: Fukushima Prefecture’s Human Security Indicators (41st)

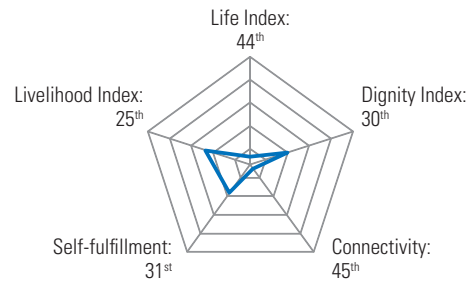


Figure 2-6: Miyagi Prefecture’s Human Security Indicators (45th)

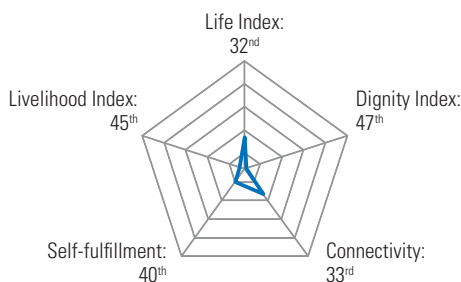


Figure 2-7: Aomori Prefecture’s Human Security Indicators (47th)

