

A Society Free of Gender and Sexuality Discrimination

1. Motivation behind Research Paper

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was unanimously adopted at the United Nations Summit. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are written on it. This goal promises to achieve 17 goals and to not leave anyone behind who lives on the earth. The whole world should adopt these goals and Japan is working hard to make sure they come true. However, Japan has six issues that should be tackled actively in 2022. They are gender equality, responsible production and consumption, climate action, life below water, life on land and equal partnerships. Japan is slowly working on achieving these goals, but what can we do to improve the achievement rate of SDGs as Japanese citizens?

I was interested in learning about other cultures, so I attended the "Global Power" seminar. Then, we started to do research on international relationships. As a result, we found the country under the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has a lot of burden per citizen of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) tends to be in a high position in the achievement rate of SDGs such as Norway, Sweden and Denmark (according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2022). The DAC is an international forum and it was created to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development such as inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, improving living standards in developing countries and helping countries to become independent of assistance from other countries (Development

Assistance Committee, 2022). Moreover, it consists of 30 countries including Australia. However, it is difficult to inquire into other countries while in Japan and we think that we should make use of our group that consists of men and women. Therefore, we decided to do research on gender equality and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) related issues. The reason why we chose to do research on LGBTQ issues is because we wanted to help make people think more positively about them. As students ready to graduate and join the workforce, we felt it was also appropriate to do research on employment issues.

2. Introduction

In Japan, the problems in employment stem from two categories. First, is the ratio between male and female in managerial positions. The Cabinet Office says that the percentage of women in managerial posts is about 12% (Cabinet Office Gender Equal Bureau, 2019). Second, there is a lack of understanding about LGBTQ. Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) harassment continues to be a serious issue. In addition, people often discriminate without realizing the negative impact of their actions. As a result, sexual minorities hide in fear and anxiety in the workplace, because they cannot declare their sexuality. They cannot be true to themselves due to the possible harassment they might face and we have to solve these issues as soon as possible. Then, our group is aiming towards changing people's minds who hold board seats to solve these two problems. First of all, we will read books for each person and think of specific solutions based on the books. Additionally, we will interview people from the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women.

3. Results and Analysis

As previously stated, gender discrimination is one of the major employment problems, especially “SOGI harassment.” SOGI refers to unkind acts which create a difficult environment for people from the LGBT community to work in . Besides, this harassment falls into the category of sexual harassment and people will be subjected to this not only between different gender but also between same gender. Specifically, comments like “even though you are man”, “even though you are female”, “he is a homo” and “drag queen” are inappropriate comments to make at work. However, if you do not use direct discriminative terms, some words are relevant to SOGI harassment, such as “I feel nauseous because you are lovey-dovey even though you are two men”. Therefore, people have to be careful when making remarks about gender. I focused on two problems in spreading these harassments.

First, is unjust transfer and dismissal. For instance, when a transgender person gets a job offer from companies, but their offer of employment was rescinded because they came out during the interview process. Second, an insistence on living in an unwanted gender For example, a man wanted to transition genders and they grow hair, but their boss tells them, “you are making a fool of yourself and cut your hair right now.” Furthermore, their boss spreads rumours that they are transgender to other coworkers and they have no choice but to quit their job. To sum up, employees do not have a uniform and dress code, but they have rules about hairstyles and clothes. Therefore, they tend to be considered bad manners when they are against company rules. However, this way of thinking is discriminatory and falls under SOGI harassment. In an increasingly globalized world, to achieve gender equality and paying due considerations for LGBTQ are necessary for companies to develop. For example, if the company organizes a system to accept sexual minority employees, they will need to reconsider their company rules such as treating a same-sex

partners as spouses like heterosexual couples. A lack of understanding and knowledge for gender equality and LGBTQ are common issues to tackle. Above all, we concluded that it is required to change the managerial class mind and a revision of companies rules and regulations to achieve gender equality and promote understanding of LGBTQ in business. On the other hand, putting myself in the manager's shoes is difficult for us, because high school students simply do not have the experience to make such judgments. Additionally, we cannot imagine the manager's thinking and feelings, so we asked members of the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women to find out what we can do to change the managerial class mind. According to a KFAW talk, we should refer to "quota system" and "parite." As mentioned above, the quota system promotes a certain number of women to managerial posts and parite is French law that requires companies to adjust a gender ratio of men and females. There are 87 countries that are introducing the Quota system in 2011 (Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau, 2011). In contrast with that, there is a case where the quota system received an unconstitutional judgement in some countries (Miyoko Tsujimura, 2004). Therefore, the Japanese government has to discuss more about whether Japanese companies should introduce this system. Major enterprises have already enforced LGBTQ harassment measures since 2020 and small to medium enterprises have already enforced it starting 2022. Due to this, SOGI is personal information and privacy, so SOGI harassment can be regarded as power harassment too (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2020). All companies are obligated to implement SOGI harassment measures. If they are slow to act, they will get advice, guidance and a recommendation by the labour bureau in each prefecture. This measure is thought to affect a number of people who suffer from SOGI harassment at the workplace. In addition, groups such as Pride,

which advocate for LGBTQ rights developed the “Pride Index” that appreciates efforts of companies for sexual minorities. Furthermore, work with Pride selects three awards such as gold, silver and bronze from applied companies and groups once a year. The Pride Index evaluates a company based on Representation, Inspiration, Development and Engagement/Empowerment (Work with Pride, 2022). By receiving these awards, companies and groups can use certification logo marks. They can also emphasize their support for those who belong to the LGBTQ community, welcoming job applicants and clients despite their sexual orientation and gender. In 2021, about 300 companies and groups received this award (Work with Pride, 2022).

4. Conclusion and Future Problems

After finishing the interview with KFAW, we thought introducing new policies would not be easy and we need to posit how encouraging gender equality and acceptance of LGBTQ benefits the company. Furthermore, we have to propose a solution in consideration of funds. On the contrary, to interview managerial positions directly is the best way to develop a new solution specifically. However, approaching companies is difficult because we are high school students and it is a challenge for the future. At the same time, we thought developing new solutions would not lead to solving problems, so we decided to spread the current situation of employment and problems even high school students can do. To prepare for these activities, we thought just spreading our message verbally would not really have an impact on people and it is not easy to understand, so we decided to make a book about gender equality and LGBTQ for junior high-school students and high-school students. The reason why I targeted middle and high-school students is because of the closeness in age. Therefore, we can explain about those from the same point of view without

using difficult words. Furthermore, we think that people can realise the low number of women in managerial posts, SOGI harassment and take actions for improving them by learning about gender equality, LGBTQ and employment issues from a young age. We are not finished making a book, but we are going to check with KFAW and put them in many places to hold a lot of people's hands. On top of that, we are going to publish a QR code for the questionnaire and we want to work hard at making a better book based on their voice.

5. Reflection

When I first started studying about gender equality and LGBTQ of employment issues, I thought these issues were ones that we needed to worry about in the distant future and do not directly affect me, but now I realize this knowledge would be useful for company selection by investigating employment issues from a young age. Moreover, I realized the world is changing for better or for worse by thinking about world problems throughout my three years of high school. The most difficult thing is the ability to think about things from many angles, but it is the most important thing. I struggled to think of solutions about gender equality and LGBTQ in employment from other people's point of view especially. However, I was able to absorb ideas and broaden my horizons by tackling other people's standpoints. After graduating high school, I am going to go to university and study policy studies and business administration. Therefore, I want to continue to investigate problems that I could not solve in high school. In addition, I want to grapple with world problems by making use of my awareness with having a wide view, taking responsibility for my actions and being persistent about solving problems.

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