

## **LGBTQ and Gender-related Employment Issues**

### 1. Motivation behind Research Paper

In the midst of globalisation, can the world come to grips with each other to resolve various issues? The United Nations has identified a variety of issues facing the international community, including conflict, terrorism, poverty, refugees, climate change, and infectious diseases. Today, in response to Japan's growing international standing, the international community is calling for Japan to participate more actively in international efforts to ensure peace and stability in the world. My interest in Japan-centred international cooperation led me to narrow my focus to one issue from all fields and to explore ways to improve the rate of achievement or resolution.

### 2. Introduction

In order to learn about the challenges in all areas, we studied the SDG report, which publicly announces the degree to which countries have achieved their goals in 2022. In 2015, international goals from 2016 to 2030 were adopted at the United Nations summit on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These goals called The SDGs have 17 goals to achieve in order to create a more sustainable world. The program spans a variety of fields, including human rights, economic and social affairs, and the global environment, and was established based on the belief that it will create a better world for all people. Countries began aligning their efforts in 2016 with the goal of achieving 17 goals by 2030. As can be seen from the table in

the SDG report, Japan was rated as a major issue that has not yet been achieved in the five goals of “5 Achieve Gender Equality,” “13 Take Concrete Action on Climate Change,” “14 Protect the Abundance of the Oceans,” “15 Protect the Abundance of Land,” and “17 Achieve the Goals through Partnership”.The World Economic Forum also released the Gender Gap Index 2022, which measures the gender gap in each country. The index is based on data across four areas: -economy,-politics,-education,-and -health-. Japan was found to be at the lowest level among developed countries, and among Asian countries, lower than South Korea, China, and ASEAN countries. Our family, which was interested in international cooperation, decided to focus on “5 Achieving Gender Equality” among these five issues and explore ways to improve or resolve the achievement rate. However, inseparable from the goal of gender equality and women's advancement in community-society is the existence of sexual minorities, such as those who identify as members of the LGBTQ, who are finally coming into the light of day in today's Japanese society. In a Japanese society where discrimination and prejudice against sexual minorities still persist, I have decided to focus on members of the LGBTQ because I believe that their advancement in society should be treated equally with that of women. In my exploration of LGBTQ issues, I initially sought to explore the problems that high school students face in their school life from the perspective of high school students. However, we felt that rather than focusing on a relatively short period of time, such as school life, it would be more beneficial to our future to explore the problems faced by those involved in the “work” that will occupy the majority of our lives. Therefore, in a society where men are protected with many privileges and lack diversity, we decided to take a deeper look into the -employment issues- common to women and people in the LGBTQ community.

### 3. Results and Analysis

I decided to explore the steps involved in confronting “employment issues” for people in the LGBTQ community.: We thought that the first step would be to learn about the circumstances of the people involved. The term LGBTQ, which everyone often hears, is an acronym for L: lesbian (female homosexual), G: gay (male homosexual), B: bisexual (bisexual), T: transgender (a person whose gender identity and gender identity differ), and Q: questioning (a person whose gender identity and gender orientation are not defined). It is also used as a generic term for sexual minorities. Using books, we investigated the differences between sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as the difficulties and obstacles that these people experience in their daily lives in terms of partner relationships and health. On the educational side, the staff members who teach lack knowledge about LGBTQ issues, so by participating in seminars and actively learning about LGBTQ issues, they will contribute to creating a more tolerant atmosphere for LGBTQ people in schools. On the social side, the provision on same-sex marriage in Article 24 of the Constitution does not envision allowing same-sex couples to enter into marriage. Whether or not to consider amending the Constitution to recognize same-sex marriage is an issue that is fundamental to the nature of the family in Japan and requires extremely careful consideration.

After understanding the current situation in the LGBTQ community-in Japan from various perspectives, the main topic, "employment issues" in LGBTQ, was further explored. In the book, many of the issues that LGBTQ people face as workers were described. First of all, LGBTQ people have faced a lot of difficulties when looking for a job, and are often unable to disclose their sexual orientation or gender

identity when entering the job market, as coming out before a hiring decision is made is a major disadvantage. In some cases, companies may only allow two types of clothing, one for men and one for women, which can be very harsh to transgender people. Discriminatory practices known as SOGI harassment have also recently become an issue, with SOGI being an acronym for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Harassment means "to harass" or "to annoy. Like sexual harassment and power harassment, which are typical types of harassment, it is a type of harassment that should not be done to others. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's guidelines are helpful in determining what specific conduct constitutes SOGI harassment. SOGI harassment includes making insulting remarks or actions concerning the sexual orientation or gender identity of the other worker, or revealing such remarks or actions to other workers without the consent of the worker in question. And it is also common to create an atmosphere in the workplace that would discourage the parties concerned from continuing to work if they were to come out to the company. Same-sex partners are not treated as spouses in the same way as in male-female relationships, and are not entitled to benefits and social security such as family allowances, wedding gifts, and parental leave. There are also a variety of other disincentives, but there are few examples of same-sex partners playing an active role or contributing to the company, and there are few role models, so it is difficult to formulate a vision for the future. Through these investigations, we were once again faced with the difficulty of finding out what we, as high school students, can do and how we should approach something that we are not directly involved in.

Therefore, we informed the people at Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE, which we visited during our study tour in January 2022, of the progress of our exploration to date. In addition to its gender equality efforts, MOVE

holds transgender-themed film screenings, lectures, and other events to promote understanding of LGBTQ in society. From the perspective of gender equality, they cited a solution called *parité*, which represents equal numbers of men and women in decision-making positions, including a quota system in politics that defines a certain number of parliamentary candidates as women and equal ratios of men and women in the legislature. In France, where the *parité* law is well known, the percentage of women in the National Assembly was 10.9% in 1997, one of the lowest in Europe before the *parité* law, but by 2021, with the mandate to have equal numbers of men and women and equal 50% of candidates each, the percentage of ministers reached 50% of women in each ministry, ranking 9th in the world. In these two policies that have contributed significantly to the advancement of women in society, the *Parité* Law in particular obliges political parties to have an equal number of male and female candidates for elections, and although it is mandatory, it has certainly yielded results since then. Through discussions with members of the Kitakyushu Gender Equality Center MOVE, I learned that in order to solve the current LGBTQ employment problem, it is important, as in the case of women, to impose a certain level of force on the corporate side, and from what standpoint within the company, to publicize and persuade the company to act on its initiatives. The key is to have a certain level of power in imposing the initiatives on the corporate side. Therefore, we thought that the improvement would be achieved by making presidents, managers, and other so-called upper management in companies aware of the problem and changing their awareness of the issue. The first thing that upper management should know is the significance of the existence of allies. The word "ally" is a word that means a friend or an ally, which in turn means a person who sympathises with and wants to be close to LGBTQ people. Anyone can express this as long as they are

willing to confront the values of all people. We also found that having allies in the company tended to increase the psychological safety of LGBTQ persons. The second is the use of the Pride Index. This was accomplished with the goal of creating a workplace in which LGBTQ people can be proud to work. The Pride Index is a list of LGBTQ initiatives in Japanese workplaces compiled by the voluntary organisation "work with pride," and companies that apply for the Pride Index are scored based on the list, evaluated, and awarded. PRIDE is an acronym for each of the following words: Policy: whether the company understands that this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the entire company, not just a few people within the company; Representation: whether the company understands that this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the entire company; and Inspiration: Do you understand LGBTQ people and do you treat them in a discriminatory manner? Engagement: Are they taking action not only internally, but also in cooperation with other companies, government agencies, and other external parties? Based on these indicators, successful examples of overseas companies and organisations will be cited, and the top management of Japanese companies will take the lead in following their lead. The certification will be based on the five criteria, and the top management of Japanese firms will follow their lead. As LGBTQ awareness grows and companies begin to take more serious steps to address LGBTQ issues, there has been a gap between companies, as many are unsure of where to start. The LGBTQ is a very important issue for companies. The PRIDE indicator can support such ambitious companies and raise the overall level of their efforts.

#### 4. Conclusion and Future Problems

I am in the process of preparing a brochure to preserve the results of my research and to make as many people as possible aware of the employment situation of LGBTQ and gender issues. The booklet will be available at the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, which I mentioned earlier, and will include everything from basic knowledge about LGBTQ and gender issues to employment solutions. Foreign and foreign-affiliated companies are committed to implementing gender and LGBTQ regulations and creating a comfortable work environment. In a global society, the ability to respond to the needs of Japanese companies in order to win the competition for human resources will also come into play in this issue. Gender and LGBTQ considerations are essential for Japanese companies to survive and grow further. While we can expect to see more LGBTQ labor issues in the future, consideration for diverse human resources, including sexual minorities, will increase the work ethic of employees, which in turn will lead to higher productivity and the retention of superior human resources. One factor may be that the theme of inquiry is "employment," but it is certainly a somewhat distant problem that we, as high school students, are not directly involved in, as discussed in this paper. Although we have proposed solutions to these problems, they are beyond the scope of those of us in high school to tackle right now. Therefore, the first task for the future is to take direct action to solve the problem with our own hands, as in the creation of the booklet.

## 5. Reflection

Even though LGBTQ is becoming more widely recognized, it must be said that prejudice against sexual minorities still exists. Because the existence of sexual minorities is often invisible, discriminatory language and sexual harassment may go

unnoticed. I had some knowledge and understanding of LGBTQ issues before I began my research, but looking back, I am not sure that I have been able to respond to them perfectly. I am now looking back on my past activities and words, and I am not so sure that I was perfect in my response to the LGBTQ community. In the future, when I get a job, I will probably have to deal with people with employment problems, so I will try my best to create a comfortable environment for people with employment problems by making use of the experience I gained through this research. I hope for a bright future where diverse people can work together in friendly competition, recognizing each other's individuality and accepting each person's individuality as a diverse set of values.

## 6. Work Cited

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