

Dobojo

Sakura Sagawa (NIT (KOSEN), Fukushima College)

Have you ever heard of the term “dobojo”? This is the nickname of female civil engineers. One of my dreams is to pursue a career as a female civil engineer. So, I'd like to talk about gender equality in the civil engineering and construction industries.

Actually, I have another dream. I'd like to become a mother. Recently, I met a female relative. She was a civil engineer. However, she was forced to quit her job because she had a baby. I worry whether I can keep a good balance between my career and my family responsibilities in the future. To learn more in order to develop strategies to resolve this problem, I decided to interview two female civil engineers.

The first person I interviewed works at the Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. She told me that the number of female managers in her workplace is only one as far as she knows.

What do you think this number refers to? According to “The Global Gender Gap Report 2022”, Japan is ranked 116th out of 146 countries with regards to gender equality. Compared with other countries, we can find that the proportion of female managers in Japan is very low. Japanese companies need to increase the number of female managers. Then, their successful experiences will play an important role in encouraging other young women to strive to carve out successful careers for themselves. As a result, Japanese females will have more choices for their future.

The second female I interviewed works for a construction company. She told me that many female site supervisors changed from working on construction sites to working in an office after the birth of their children.

Please look at this graph. It shows how much time mothers and fathers in Japan spend doing housework and taking care of children per day. The difference between them is about six hours. Talk about inequality! This could be related to gender-based assumptions that women are responsible for housework and childrearing and men must go out to earn money for their families. If we didn't have these biases, we would not wonder if a site foreman took parental leave and consequently female site supervisors could easily return to work.

Luckily, the interviewees both said, “my coworkers or bosses easily accept my opinions.” Although the majority of workers in the civil engineering and construction industries are male, nowadays women are treated equally. However, most of us still have to face gender-based discrimination. I think more dobojos should gain strength and courage to express their opinions freely because equality has no gender.

Finally, Emma Watson, who was appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women in 2014, made a speech about gender fairly. To bring about gender equality, she said, “If not me, who? If not now, when.” To realize my dream, I'd like to keep expressing my opinions on gender-based assumptions proudly. I promise to become a mother and build a career as a dobojo in the future. When you are suffering from gender-based biases, please remember these words and state your opinion loudly. “If not me, who? If not now,

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(NIT (KOSEN), Fukushima College)

when?" Thank you very much.