

Fight against Gender Discrimination with Fashion

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A: Hello, everyone! I am Sato Rin.

B: I am Hayashida Miki.

C: And, I am Takemura Maki.

A: Today, we'd like to talk about gender problem and how we can fight against it.

C: Recently, I often think about gender.

B: What's wrong?

C: I feel big differences between men and women.

A: What kind of difference?

C: Well...For example, I was told "Even though you are a girl, why can't you cook? You should be able to cook if you are a girl." I felt sad.

B: Oh, I'm sorry for you. I have a similar experience. When I visited my grandmother's house with my family, my father told me to help housework. But he didn't tell it to my brother. I wonder why he told just me to do, not brother. He said,

C: "Because you are a girl. You should be able to do housework well, because girls must do it in the future".

B: I feel something is wrong with it.

A: Oh, I agree with you.

C: By the way, some jobs have few women workers. For example, engineers, pilots, doctors, and researchers. Look at this graph.

A: Oh...There is big difference between the number of men and women.

B: I'm surprised.

A: Similar to this example, there are few girls in Kosen. Don't you think so?

C: Yes. My class has 42 members. But the number of girls is only 5! People sometimes say to me, "Why did you choose Kosen? There are very few girls."

A: Why is there so big difference between the number of men and women? Is it because of the system of recruitment or the entrance exam?

B: No, it isn't. Many companies recently try to recruit men and women equally and the entrance exam of Kosen is the same. There are many systems to treat men and women equally. Nevertheless, the number of women who get these occupations has not increased.

C: Then, what is the cause of such gender difference and gender problems?

B: I think gender bias is the reason. The stereotype of what men and women should be is causing gender problems. There are many prejudices and almost people care about gender too much.

A: Really? Are there gender biases close by us?

B: Yes. They are always around us, even if we don't realize them.

C: I agree with you. I think we can find them in fashion. When I go to buy a cool jacket, my grandmother said, "I think it's for a boy. Don't buy it. You should wear a cuter one."

A: Oh, it is a gender bias certainly. Come to think of it, my friend had told me his thought. He said, "I am short. So, I want to wear high heels. But I can't put it on because I care what other people think about it."

B: Exactly. In addition, many people think girls wear skirts and boys wear slacks. And, nurses are women with skirts, doctors are men with pants. These are also a kind of gender bias.

C: Are there any ways to eliminate gender bias?

A: How about fashion? I think fashion is important. It is one of the big causes of gender prejudice according to these examples. Fashion stereotypes seem to affect gender prejudice greatly.

B: That's nice idea.

C: I think so too! If fashion were changed, gender biases would be decreasing. It is because fashion can change our mind.

A: But, does fashion really affect our consciousness? It's hard to believe.

B: It is true! There is a theory called "enclothed cognition". It shows us the relation between our mind and fashion.

A: I've never heard of it before! What is it?

B: The theory was established by Hajo Adam and Adam D. Galinsky. They did an experiment using white lab coats.

A: Doctors often wear it, right?

B: Yes! They divided 58 undergraduates with an average age of 20 into two groups randomly. The first team took the test for attention ability in plainclothes. The second team took the same test wearing white lab coats. Can you imagine what the result was?

A: I don't know.

C: I know the experiment too! Interestingly, they can get the result that participants wearing a lab coat made half as many errors as participants who wore their own clothing. Students' ability in the second team increased thanks to their clothes like doctor.

A: It's very interesting! Now I can believe that fashion affects our mind effectively. If we can remove fashion stereotypes, it will help us to eliminate gender bias!

B: Yes!

A: Then, how do we remove fashion stereotypes?

B: Umm...I can't think of anything right now. But I've found new type of school uniform on TV and it may be helpful. Do you know that many school begin to change school uniform?

A: Yes! Most of these are made with consideration for gender problem. All students can choose both of pants and skirts. They can wear what they want regardless of gender. My friend said she was glad to wear pants and tie!

C: I can get another example about fashion from opening ceremony of Tokyo Olympic 2020. All volunteer staffs wore various clothes at the ceremony. These were designed with liberal view of gender.

B: Also, I think it is better to wear clothes freely not only in official events such as Olympic, but also in our daily life.

A: How about 'gender neutral fashion'? Gender neutral fashion is a fashion style

characterized by gender neutrality. People can wear whatever they want without gender bias.

C: I know gender neutral fashion too! We could see them in Paris Fashion Week in 2020. Women wore a shirt and tie and both men and women wore same clothes there.

B: That's nice. I don't want to worry about being boyish or girly either when I dress myself. But how do we remove stereotype with the fashion style?

A: I have a suggestion. How about making 'gender neutral fashion' trendy as one of popular fashion styles?

C: That's nice idea! If this fashion spread, people will be able to wear clothes freely without stereotype. Nobody won't care gender specific. It will help us to remove gender biases!

A: Let's launch the campaign to make "gender-neutral fashion" known!

C: Fashion should not be divided between men and women!

B: Sounds good! Please join in gender neutral fashion campaign. Please recommend it when you go shopping with your friends and tell your family about it. When you wish to change our world and act in your own life, people around the world will change.

ABC: Let's fight against gender problem with fashion!