

Gender

Gender equality is good example of the difficulties of realization of equality.

Gender equality is one of prime issue of feminism. (Another one is sexual harassment concerning to freedom or liberty.)

In order to build up constructive discussions about this issue, it is necessary to consider the events separately according to a woman's life. In ordinary modern society, the problems will be the five as following.

- 1、 Girls are forced to help with housework.
- 2、 Girls are forced to give up going on to higher education. Or, the schools are limited.
- 3、 Women can not get job with high wage.
- 4、 Women have to bear housework (especially care of family member).
- 5、 Women cannot inherit. Or, the inheritance is small.

Resently in Japan, 5 has been abolished and 1 is disappearing. 2 is also much less than before, and this is a problem derived from 3 and 4. In other words the allocation of work and money is remaining problem.

In Japan, the number of women in employment is increasing compared to before, and the number of husbands' housework is increasing. There are a few men who can earn enough to support their household alone, so women have to work.

However, compared to Northern Europe aiming for a society in which men and women work uniformly in corporation and house, women do less work with responsibility in business, and there is more housework for wives. Should this be regarded as unforgivable inequality?

Was American affirmative action, a typical model of substantial equality, was excessive to be ridiculed as "black schoolgirls can find employment in any recession", or not enough?

What kind of treatment is suitable for woman with \$100,000 annual incomes being prevented from advancing by "glass ceiling"?

In the issue of working conditions (including wages) and burden of housework for men and women, it is necessary to think about the specific purpose and counter interest (opposite profit) and their correlations.

If the issue of equality of opportunity at not-so-high level, the purpose, the counter interest and specific measures are clear.

The society where women are shut out of the corporate activity, and can not live without relying on men is distorted. For example, children of divorced couples are often taken over by their mothers and often they fall into poverty. It is clear that women need to be able to live on their own in society. In addition, even if they are not divorced, the majority of women now work for households. We should guarantee women employment opportunities.

Specifically, we need to enhance low-cost, safe and convenient daycare centers so that all women can use these facilities.

The counter interest is only increasing budget for it.

However, when high-level equality of opportunity (good income and status) becomes an issue, it is no longer an easy story.

Currently, some argue that a certain percentage of managerial seats should be allocated to women (quota system).

However, it is an illusion that "if women break down the glass ceiling one after another, men will change their recognition ('Women can do the same thing as men'), and will give other women more and more work and treatment equivalent to men's, and many women will start to shine at work and at home."

Even if it is a man, only a few elites can enter a large company or government office, and many of them are seconded to subsidiaries etc. when they become a certain age. Many women, like many men, only live hard at work and at home.

Even if a law that states that "more than a certain number of women must be promoted to the board" comes into force and makes it easier for some women to get chance, the independence of the economic status of single mothers and part time workers who are in real need of help will not be promoted. Rather, if directors are not selected by capacity, regardless of gender, the corporate efficiency will decline. If the quota system is thoroughly implemented, it might lead to the situation such as "she will succeed despite her short working hours". This is a terrible inequality for men and will not motivate them. If such a system is implemented, the economic status of ordinary men and women will eventually decrease because of decrease in the number of good companies. This is stupid populism.

Certainly, it is necessary to make the selection procedures of executives, employees, members, etc. transparent and rationalized. A procedure that is not taken care to eliminate unconscious bias may not be reasonable. However, this is not a story that should be limited to gender, but age, background, race, etc. should be treated in the same way.

If we think obediently from the competitive market view, high income and status are commensurate with hard and high-level work. It is desirable to ignore the differences in biological and social functions of men and women and treat them uniformly.

Mother-track should be banned, and women employee should not be able to refuse transfers according to her carrier position. Companies should not be forced to take care to ensure that work does not interfere with marriage or parenting.

However, there will be a lot of women who cannot work similar to man.

Then, there will be an opinion that "Men should take care of their children as well as women, and companies should give childcare holidays to all employees including men. All employees should be provided with occupations that can avoid changing work locations and overtime. Work conditions should be improved so that men can increase domestic work."

But it reduces people's energy and time to work and reduces corporate efficiency more. There will be a risk of corporate competitiveness declining especially in competition with developing countries that have edge of low labor wages. Innovation or improvement of system is not so easy as to be completed without overtime work (study, reserch, thinking). Only a few men (and women) with multi-talented can do it under the charge of half of housework (washing, ironing, cleaning etc.) in the morning and evening. And all but them will be evaluated as not competent in society. Is this a society that values diversity?

It can be said that the United Kingdom and the United States expanded the international labor division instead of reducing the gender labor division. They have given up on strengthening the competitiveness of domestic industries to some extent and have tried to make their culture, language, and systems an international standard so that their citizens can work freely in other countries. Also they have rebuilt an economy that can earn foreign currency outside of manufacturing industry which requires time constraints rather strictly. However, this sacrifices domestic workers in other side. In addition, the United Kingdom and the United States were able to build a postwar regime as winning countries of World War. Their positions are very different from others.

Flexibility in the labor market may help solve problems. Companies can easily dismiss employees and replace them with people who fit the post, while enhancing public re-educational institutions to support reemployment. This will also

correct the asymmetry of information about worker productivity.

However, it should be remembered that simply replacing employees can create difficulties in inheriting skills and reduce competitiveness.

Companies that don't require much efficiency or competition, and allow employees to take long vacations or shorter working hours, will rarely suffer from this dilemma. A woman who takes five years of parental leave in total or a man who takes a five-year leave to challenge a solo climb in the Himalayas may not be considered in promotion assessment in such companies. However, there are not many companies in such a stable position. Only monopoly companies and companies with special technologies can be candidates.

If the roles of men and women in homes and communities are to be standardized in order to enable uniform treatment of men and women in companies, the effectiveness of the survival strategy of labor division by gender must be considered as a counter interest that cannot be overlooked.

Labor division by gender has been efficient in living and enriched lives with less resources in history.

Human economic activities consist of mutual complements between "corporate" activities that use the labor force to produce goods and "household" activities that use goods to re-produce labor, and for thousands of years the former has been mainly charged by men and the latter mainly by women.

In general, men prefer to do one type work, so it is easy to develop skills in that field. And they are physically suitable for outdoor activities.

On the other hand, women are highly capable of simultaneously progressing many tasks, so they exert great power in "household" activities that require detailed responses to many things at the same time.

We should not overestimate this, but it's a mistake to ignore this.

Since the Industrial Revolution, some countries have made the Labor division by gender more thorough. Men in western Europe, North America, Japan, and other countries were forced to do painstakingly complex jobs and long hours of work instead of receiving a fair wage. This can't last long without a woman to support him at home. These countries became "developed country" early.

On the other hand, in some countries women work hard but men usually spend the day chatting and gambling. Those countries' economies are tend to be pushed by imports from overseas in the industrial field where it is easy to increase efficiency and profits, and remain "developing countries" for a long time.

Such division of labor is not something achieved easily. It depends on the ethnicity, in other words, historical skill of women to make men work. Once it lost, it won't recover easily.

However, as described later, modern production forms have a side that lowers the barrier of gender in labor.

There will be a counter interest of the development of sympathy for the standardization of social role of men and women.

Goodness and justice are norms for as many lives as possible to live. To realize goodness and justice, understanding, cooperation with others is necessary. And lives include wide variety.

Empathy is important to cooperate with others who take different actions from different attributes.

Empathy is not equal to sympathy. For example, LGBT people should be empathized. Unreasonable discrimination against them should not be tolerated, and same-sex marriage may be allowed for inheritance. But it would be odd society in which all of us are forced to sympathize with them, for example, be blamed if we don't attend their wedding.

Empathy is earned through training. Can we say suddenly "Let's cooperate now" when we meet people very different from us? Wouldn't it be impossible if there was no training through contact with different person? And for many, the

most familiar difference is another sex and gender.

There are animals who have clear differences by sex other than human beings, but it is undeniable that gender difference as culture has contributed to the development of human intelligence. How can ordinary people have training to work with different people without gender? Can men who don't respect women respect LGBT people?

The society including the place of training in which men and women take on different social roles, do not seek easy sympathy, and find respect and empathy little by little is resilient to difference and change, isn't it?

It shall be possible to make it is easy for women to work without treating men and women uniformly and without explicit preferential treatment for women."

But even in this, there is a concern that we will overlook another inequality in society. Another type of equality can be violated in the opposite.

There are different types of equality, and the welfare that each can achieve is limited, and they often restrain each other and cannot substitute for each other.

For example, it is a mistake to think that "the amount of equality in society as a whole will increase if equality between men and women is pursued more severely, even if inequalities in tax system is left unimproved at all (because it seems difficult)."

For example, it is said that the equal employment law widened the economic gap between women in Japan.

The prohibition of the distinction of "men are professional, women are assistant" greatly opened up the way to take high positions for excellent (or simply highly educated) women, but on the other hand, the same number of men were excluded from their careers.

And because Japanese women are likely to avoid marrying men who are paid less than them, marriages between men and women with higher salaries increase.

In such a family, the salary of the wife can be used for a little luxury, travel, and a high lesson fee, because household expenses are covered by husband's income. On the other hand, more women (and men) cannot marry for financial reasons, and even if they get married, their children in that family grow in poverty.

Moreover, the disparities between rich and poor are passed down through generations.

The woman born to a rich family is advantageous compared to the woman born to a poor family, because a large amount of educational expenses is necessary to get a high-income work.

For example, gender equality in developed countries is partly stand on the sacrifice of developing countries.

There are countries where both husband and wife can leave the office on time to pick up children at 5:00 p.m. They are also difficult to go on business travel, but can still get not small salaries. To take care of them, low-wage and labor-intensive works by developing countries is needed. In that country, there is an example that both of parents have to go out away to work apart from their infants.

Equality can also inhibit other social values.

For example, in order to win market competition with gender equally, should we increase the use of side dishes for sale and disposable items to save housework time to concentrate on work, and should we give up resource saving and healthy eating habits? Isn't it an over-adaptation to a competitive market inviting difficulty of change of society?

When the similarities between racism and inequality in gender are emphasized, it is quite persuasive to say that

"there is still a lot of institutional discrimination for women." And some feminists say that "society is not keeping up to even the equality legislations that are not enough."

But while the root of racism is wrong awareness ("white people are better than colored people"), the root of issue of gender equality in recent years is not.

The issue of gender equality today is an inevitable consequence of the Industrial Revolution.

In a society where construction, transportation, and manufacturing machines are used, physical strength and high craftsmanship are no longer necessary. In other words, anyone can do it regardless of gender. In addition, household appliances and frozen or instant foods also shorten the time of housework. Many women participated in labor market, and the supply of labor increased. On the other hand, machines reduce the demand for labor.

In a market where labor is sluggish as a whole, women are newcomers in existing industries and are relatively disadvantaged because of the burden of traditional housework. (However, in new industries such as IT and the emotional labor market in service sectors where there is some growth, it can be equal or rather advantageous to women. So gender equality appears to be advancing in Western Europe, where those industries have developed.)

In short, most of this problem is fundamentally not caused by men's "wrong" consciousness, but by changes in the way of productions.

Certainly, there are some problems resulted by inconsidering about the changes in production forms.

For example, some women who want to work as hard as men should be treated the same as men.

On the contrary, there are many families where wives are mainly responsible for housework even if they work together. Housework contributes to the income of the household. Because of his wife's contributions, his husband can concentrate on his work and earn good income. But wife's promotion will be hindered because the company can't treat employees who leave early for housework the same as employees who don't leave early. In such situation (Illich's "Shadow work"), some of the income earned by the husband should be automatically transferred to the wife. (However, such opinion will be meaningless in a society where most of household income disappears into the cost of living and the gap between rich and not is neglected.)

However, production forms vary from company to company. "How to change" is not uniformly decided.

Just because 80% of salespersons in cosmetics companies are women, should construction companies increase the percentage of female sales positions as well? Just because 50% of school teachers are women, should 50% of members of the Diet be women?

We have to make a judgment based on the content of the work, the mission of the organization, and the situation in which the country is located.

Even if there are companies with different occupations and treatments for men and women, there can be rational reasons.

We should not stick to just one philosophy of gender equality. And We can not expand the uniform treatment in workplaces and the standardization of social roles of men and women without making specific and individual observations.

In addition, what is the optimal occupation is also depends on the motivation and qualities of individual.

Even a family with no division of housework will have no problem if the couple and children are satisfied with it.

Is a woman who thinks "I want my husband to work outside. I'm better off doing housework." a problem for society? Should we lead her, who may have various spaces in life, to give priority to status in cooperation? Should we strengthen

tangible and intangible social pressures saying that "to work is to stand at the forefront of market competition in a company"?

Is a man who thinks "I want my wife to do housework that I'm not good at. I'm better off working outside." a problem for society? Should we make the engineers (who have been maintaining their machines in good faith until late at night and reducing the defective product rate to less than half that of other companies) to go home early and share the housework?

Feminism may include the claim that "the modern society which has strengthened the gender division of labor for efficiency is sick. let's stop working too much and stop over-consuming and return to simple life."

Although it is a proposal to be listened to, as a concrete and on-the-front issue, for example, the enforcement of the childcare leave system is a heavy burden on small and medium-sized enterprises and impairs their productivity and management flexibility. The childcare leave system should be revised to force only large companies. (Under such a system, small and medium-sized enterprises will give childcare leave spontaneously to women who are strength of company.) For instead, social support should be expanded, such as vocational training system for women who have retired from childcare to obtain a new workplace.

If the applicants for medical school are chosen simply by poin of entrance examination, there will be a small number of successful male applicants remained, and there will be a concern about the shortage of surgeons and emergency lifesaving doctors. We have to discuss whether we should accept the decrease of hospitals that can respond to sudden illnesses and surgeries and decline in the quality of medical services, or we should increase the number of doctors as a whole admitting the increase of medical expenses and taxes more than now, or we should announce from the beginning the number of successful applicants by gender to secure a certain number of male doctors.

The issue of gender equality today is part of the search for new era.

People must continue to worry "which is more rational to focus on gender or other attributes" from time to time for each organization or place with different purposes and functions.

Social diversity and resilience will become weak if we forget to Judge each specific problem in proportion to other social interests, or politics forces reform of institution from abstract ideas and images. Even if we try to change individual consciousness by changing social norms and systems, many harmful effects will occur and it will not be a true solution.