

## Current situation and future challenges of diversity and inclusion in Japan

The study discusses current situation and future challenges of diversity and inclusion in Japan. Diversity represents all the ways people are unlike and alike; differences and similarities in age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, capabilities, and socioeconomic background. Gardenswartz and Rowe (2003) develop the concept of diversity and identify a 'diversity wheel'. It includes dimensions that exist as internal, external and organizational layers around personality. Shore et al. (2011) define inclusion as the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness.

First, the study focuses on female researchers in Japan from the perspective of diversity and inclusion. The ratio of female researchers in Japan, at 16.9%, is the lowest among OECD countries and the ratio of female professors, at 17.8%, is also very low. Based on the analysis of the data obtained through the survey, the study discusses the reasons for the low ratio of female researchers and the low ratio of female researchers in leading positions in Japanese academia. It then considers what remedial action should be taken to improve the situation. The study suggests that academia should be able to introduce more creative perspectives, increase flexibility, and achieve inclusive growth leading to more sustainable development by promoting female researcher advancement from the perspective of diversity and inclusion.

Second, the study focuses on employment of people with disabilities in Japan from the perspective of diversity and inclusion. The number of people with disabilities in Japan is 9,635,000, which is 7.6% of the population. However, the number of people with disabilities in regular employment who are working in regular firms in Japan is only 597,786 in 2021, which means that their actual employment rate is 2.2 %. The number with physical disabilities in regular employment is 359,067.5, the number of with intellectual disabilities is 140,665 and the number with mental disabilities is 98,053.5. As such, only 47.0 % of regular firms in Japan attained the 2.3 % disabled employment quota required by law in 2021. Therefore, the employment challenges of the disabled are very severe, even though a quota system for the employment of people with disabilities exists in Japan.

Finally, current situation and future challenges of diversity and inclusion in Japan are examined and considered. To conclude, best practices of the collaboration among companies, university and government are suggested in order to actualize diversity and inclusion in Japan.



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