

Discussion

Dr. Takuro Furusawa from the Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS) of Kyoto University is the chair of the fieldworker family care support group of ASAFAS.

Thank you very much for your presentation. I am here because I am the chair of fieldworker family care support group and on the gender quality steering committee of ASAFAS. I would like to introduce some activities of ASAFAS. Our group is trying to provide necessary supports—including financial assistance—for female researchers and researchers who are caring for children. For example, we recently created a childcare room in ASAFAS **and we have a budget to pay for childcare services during workshops and symposiums.**

Actually ASAFAS, as you know, does not have many female professors. I think we have 29 faculty members; only four of them are women. There is no female full professor in ASAFAS. You may think ASAFAS forms such statistics because ASAFAS is not willing to have gender equality. It is true that ASAFAS represents such gender inequality. However, as I said, we started this fieldworker family care support group, three or four years ago. At that time, our dean and many male professors were very willing to help us. Actually in Japan I think middle-aged men, called *ojisan*, are seen as the enemy of females and young researchers, but when we started to conceptualize this support group, all these top members of ASAFAS were *ojisan*, but they were very willing to support us.

And also in my personal case, I took paternity leave every time I had a child. In Japan, paternity leave is not so common, so I thought it would not be so easy to take paternity leave. However, when I consulted our department head and dean, they said they were very glad to give me the permission for the leave, and they encouraged me to do so. So, in the statistics, we ASAFAS do not represent gender equality, but all members are willing to support gender equality. Then I think there is some problem in promotion and taking further steps so that we have a balanced number of female researchers and female professors.

The second point is that a few weeks ago I read some news about the latest report of the World Economic Forum, which every year publishes a gender equality ranking or gender gap ranking among member countries. In this year Japan was ranked 117, three ranks lower than in previous years. I checked the report, and Indonesia was ranked 84, much better than Japan. However in 2007, 10 years ago, Indonesia and Japan held a very similar rank. Indonesia was ranked 90-something, and Japan was ranked just 100. During 10 years, Indonesia has become better and better and Japan has gotten worse and worse. I think Japan and we have to study or learn from Indonesia.

I am also frequently visiting Indonesia and I found in Indonesia many females are in good positions. For example, I frequently visit Hasanuddin University, and the Rector of Hasanuddin University is now female. There are many other female directors in Indonesia too. But in Japan that is not common, especially in national universities.

In your presentation, there is one photo of a conference. In that photo, many researchers are sitting at the table, but they have children or a child with them in the meeting.

Yes, yes.

Actually my wife is also a researcher, and I and my wife and my children visited Indonesia together once or twice for academic purposes. At that time I tried to make an appointment with the vice

rector of one university. The day of the appointment was the only opportunity to meet him, but on that day I was with my children with no child sitter. I decided to go with the children because there was no other option, nobody could take care of them. The vice rector was glad to accept us, for me to meet him with the children. I think this is not, can not, be done in Japan. But I think this is not very uncommon to meet with such an executive person with children in Indonesia. During the meeting my children were very noisy, but the meeting was successful.

Today you mentioned gender inequality in Indonesia is bad, but when compared to Japan, the gender situation in Indonesia is much better. So if you can give us some positive advice from the Indonesian case, please I want to hear some good points from Indonesia and how we can in Japan develop.

The third point is, I think that most important element of your activities was creating a network. The functions of the networks was finally linked to the publication and many other academic achievements in addition to 'just a network'. I want to hear more about your future plan of how you plan to further develop this network. For example, to expand the networks to Japan too.

This is my comment.

Dr. Liulan Wang-Kanda is an Associate Professor of the Faculty of Global and Regional Studies at Doshisha University. She used to be a research associate at ASAFAS.

Before my comments I want to introduce my activity. I am not specializing in gender in academic fields; I am more of an activist. I want to change the relationship between men and women, especially in academia, because after having three children, I have faced many problems and have had to struggle with many difficulties. Due to my experience, I tried to build a network among female researchers. Today I will share some of my activities. In the future I want to collaborate with female researchers abroad in order to conduct comparative research and share the situation to change women's status, in Japan and other Asian countries.

As for my research, I am doing research in Thailand. Most of my informants are male, but now I started to interview female informants, because after I had a baby I gradually I changed my mind and now I focus more on interviewing female informants. Now I would like to show you my activities by using power points

Firstly, in 2012, with Hirano san, an associate professor at ASAFAS, who also has one child, I started a kind of network among female fieldworkers. Female researchers usually face problems whenever they want to take their kids with them to any research field site. We need much more information and efforts to tackle the problems women face in this situation. We therefore prepared small seminars and invited female scholars so that we could share experiences and hardships of fieldwork among female researchers. We invite female researchers—those who had children and those who did not—to share and discuss problems they face while doing fieldwork. Besides that, we exchange opinions about career and life, focusing on female researchers who have children and what kind of problem they face after having children. We also have activities to give advice to young researchers. As you know, in Japan, we have a grant from JSPS called RPD (Restart Postdoctoral Fellowship). This is a grant only for researchers—men or women—who have children. I started to give academic advice to young researchers who have children and want to continue their careers. This is the main objective of our activities.

Secondly, from 2004 to 2006, I belonged to a Hakubi project at Kyoto University. There also I found some colleagues and peer groups interested in activities to support female researchers. In 2014, we held a workshop and table discussion on female researchers' hardships in their careers. The workshop was named いきづらさ学 (Ikizurasa-gaku), meaning, "Study of Hardships". In this case, the hardships include not only those in academic fields, but also everyday matters that women face. This was the first opportunity we had to discuss what kind of difficulties we face once we have children. Another unique point is that this activity is an interdisciplinary project. The organizers and participants of this workshop were not limited to researchers from social science fields, but also included natural scientists, mostly from Kyoto University. We shared comments on the hardships of senior researchers in academia, too. We collected comments from all the participants by using small paper stickers. In Japanese, we call this method the "KJ method." We separated all the participants into small groups and each participant wrote down what they felt and what type of problems they faced as female researchers on the stickers. After that, we held a roundtable session. The following are some of the results, voices from the female researchers. The original was in Japanese, but I will rewrite them in English:

- it is difficult to attend meetings or academic workshops when they have kids, especially in the evening time, after 5 pm
- after 5 PM, it is hard to join drinking parties
- it is not easy to arrange the fieldwork with kids, especially for those doing research in Africa. If the field is very far, we have to change the field.
- there is not enough of a system to take care of schoolchildren after Grade 4, we don't have a place to take care
- when kids are sick we also get sick or stressed
- in male-dominated environments, it is difficult to share challenges related to childcare with colleagues.

These are only some of our opinions and voices, but actually there are many. We have not finished analyzing this data, but we tried to combine what kind of problems they face.

Thirdly, this summer, we held a workshop on the diversity of female researchers at Shiran Kaikan near Kyoto University. This workshop included not only participants from the social sciences, but also from natural sciences. The speakers were from biology, mathematics, and so on. The purpose of this workshop was to create interdisciplinary networks, especially among female researchers, but we also tried to tackle intergenerational communication. So the participants at the workshop ranged from 20s to 90s years old.

This is the photo—about 40 or 50 researchers came to this workshop. Now we also share information via the internet, not only about academic matters, but also everyday activities, what kind of problems we face—we just talk with each other on the Internet.

The unique point of this workshop is to share the diversity of careers that females have, and their flexibility in a good sense. That means, although one person wants to be a scientist, but in the process they could not become a scientist, but they could change to be a translator. We have many chances we can create if we cannot be successful in one point, but can change the career and develop our minds. We tried to share resources and ideas among different ages and academic groups through face-to-face discussions.

The leader of this group is Bando Masako san. She is specializing in physics, and is about 80 years old. She set up a community nursery (later became as an "AKAIMI HOIKUEN" in Kyoto University) about 50 years ago. She has raised two children. To advance her career, she faced many problems. She tried to gather female researchers, not only in physics, but from many fields in Kyoto

University to make a network. She pointed out in the meeting that even though women have difficulties in advancing their careers, she showed us one paper from *Scientific America* titled "Marriage and motherhood and research performance in science." She cited this paper and showed us that married women scientists with children show good productivity in the late stage of their career [see PPT p.11]. According to the graph, a woman born in 1921 was productive in the early stage of her career, but the number of publications was not high while she was raising children. However, in the late stage of career, her activity and academic performance became very high. Using the scientific data of this study, Bando Masako san gave us an inspiring comment that we, as female researchers, do not need to worry about our future too seriously. We do not need to compete with male researchers, because our lifestyle is different from men.

In Japan we also now face the "M curve" problem in terms of the female labor force participation rate. The participation of females in their 20s in the labor force is high, but women in their 30s or 40s quit their jobs because they are busy raising children or because of marriage. The participation rate then rises again later in life. This is called the M curve [see PPT p.13]. For example, according to data from the Cabinet office in 2004, the sharp curve shows that female researchers face problems during their 30s and 40s. We have to take care of children and advance our careers, so we feel stressed and need to struggle with balance work and family. Since 2016, the situation has been improving, the sharpness of the curve is decreasing. This indicates that women do not need to quit their jobs due to the several reasons such as advancement of institutional improvement on company sides and increase of women who are willing to work after childbirth and so on.

For comments, firstly, I want to say that in order to improve female researchers' work/life balance, we need to enhance networking, not only among social scientists, but also among natural scientists. Because each field has a different culture and environment, we have to listen to what kind of problems women face in each academic field. Second, more and more young female researchers want academic careers, as the M curve pattern shows, at age about 30 or 40 sometimes they face problems or difficulties to continue their career. We therefore need academic and institutional support from universities and the government. Third, we need to share experiences to solve problems. I think female researchers in the Indonesian context may be different from those in the Japanese one, due to differences in the religious, cultural, ethnic, and national context. Yet it is still useful to share the dilemmas women face and solutions to those dilemmas from comparative perspectives and approaches. Moreover, inter-generational networking is also important to connect and share the experiences of female researchers of different ages. Fourth, we need more comparative studies and international collaboration among ASEAN and in Japan, and also China, because China is a socialist country, so the political context is different. In socialist countries, sometimes women's power and equality differ from Japan and other countries. In addition, we compare what kind of NGOs exist in different countries regarding work/life balance, and what kind of problems they have. I hope that in the future we will build networks and collaborate. Thank you.

Thank you very much for the informative comments. And now for the response.

Dr. Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi's Answer

I would like to say thank you to Furusawa sensei for sharing the experience of doing research with small kids. Yes, as you said, in the Indonesian experience, we do not have such relatively bad experiences of doing research while having children. This is probably because for us it is more culturally acceptable to bring children to meetings. Wang sensei has given me another idea to develop a similar workshop in my institution, which is really needed as well. During the lunch with Obiya sensei we shared a similar experience, about the difficulties of a female researcher who doesn't have a support system like me. I am quite lucky because I have the support system quite

enough so that I am able to travel abroad quite often. However, some of my female friends, many researchers do not have the support from their husbands for example. Of course they have difficulty, there are many. I think this kind of workshop will be useful at least as the first step—it will be an eye-opener workshop in the research institution, showing how important the issue is among female researchers and after this basic workshop we can try to develop a model to provide support for female researchers. Wang sensei sharing her experience is very important and gave me another idea how to develop it further in the institution.

Of course we will also like to expand our networking to Japan. I am networking with Ewha Women's University because I know that they have developed a good approach to gender and women's studies over a long time. They have a women's study center and they have bi-annual trainings that encourage new academics to have the basic training on women's rights in Asia. But if for example the Center for Southeast Asian Studies or ASAFAS gender equality section has a workshop or something like that of course we can develop further collaborations and definitely because I come from ASAFAS. And I also learned a lot from Hayami sensei and Carol sensei during writing my thesis, Okamoto sensei as well, so definitely it will be a very open option for us to develop further collaboration with Japan as well as with Wang sensei, the experience of doing and tackling difficulties among female researchers is a universal experience, so the one that Wang sensei and friends are doing we haven't done in Indonesia and especially in LIPI, so it would be a really very wonderful platform to bring that kind of workshop to my country. Some adjustments would be needed, but I really should conduct with Wang sensei and other sensei I need to develop further collaboration.

For the suggestion, I don't have any suggestions, because it depends on the situation in ASAFAS and in CSEAS. Because as I mentioned I was struggling, what I am trying to choose the other strategy, not mainstreaming, because in my opinion we need this [strategy of] 'culture shock' what I mean is a 'cultural statement,' because most of the researchers in my institution are mainly using an institutional approach. And by doing research [under the new gender and politics research team] during five years from 2015 to 2019 we tried to develop a new kind of knowledge with the new perspective [where women are the source of knowledge]. So although it is only five years, it is very good to give the conservative academics an 'eye opener moment' during the five years – that's another field of research that we have to cope with. Because ASAFAS has this approach called 'Humanosphere,' putting a gender perspective in humanosphere would be a good idea. I don't know if this would work or not. That's all.