

Section
2

Further Promotion of Work-Life Balance and Women's Participation

Chapter
1

The security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe, and both the number and the duration of situations requiring the MOD/SDF's response are increasing. On the other hand, it is anticipated that a number of MOD staff, both male and female, will face time and commuting constraints for childcare, nursing care and other reasons due to big changes in social structure.

Amid such challenging circumstances, ensuring preparedness to consistently respond to various situations requires creating an environment that enables staff to be sound both mentally and physically, maintain high morale, and fully demonstrate their abilities. On the basis of this view, the MOD/SDF promotes initiatives to achieve work-life balance of its staff members.

Also, the MOD/SDF has been proactively encouraging

the active participation of female personnel, and the number of female personnel is on the rise.

The MOD/SDF has been conducting a variety of initiatives in order to promote work-life balance and the further expansion of the recruitment and promotion of female personnel in a unified manner, such as formulating various plans¹ that include three reforms: (1) working style reform; (2) reform to combine a successful career with childrearing and nursing care; and (3) reform for promoting active engagement of female personnel. In addition, the Committee to Promote Working Style Reform of the Internal Bureau Staff has been discussing and implementing initiatives to promote working style reform and reviewing the process of work under the leadership of the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense.

1 Working Style Reform

(1) Value and Mentality Reform

In order to implement working style reform, focus needs to be placed especially on reforming the values and mentality of staff in managerial positions regarding working style. Since FY2017, the MOD/SDF has been implementing educational initiatives, such as message given by the MOD/SDF leaders, seminars, and lecture meetings aimed at raising awareness concerning working style reform and the concept of work-life balance. With the increase of personnel facing time/commuting constraints for child/family care, the MOD/SDF is also promoting correction of long working hours and encouraging taking leave to ensure proper work-life balance so that every member can exert his/her full potential.

(2) Work Reform in the Workplace

It is important that initiatives for the promotion of work-life balance are implemented in a way which fits the individual workplaces, and that staff members themselves consider specific measures for improving their workplace environment. This approach will lead to developing effective initiatives and workplace climate. Based on this perspective, since 2016, the annual "Competition for initiatives to promote Working Style Reform at the Ministry of Defense" has been held during the campaign period for enhancing work-life balance,

etc. The Minister of Defense and the State Minister of Defense honored particularly excellent initiatives, out of the applications received from various organizations and others, and used them to help achieve work reform at each workplace.

(3) Flexible Working Hours and Location

Realizing more flexible working hours and work locations is necessary in light of factors such as workload fluctuations and time constraints faced by individuals. For this reason, the MOD/SDF introduced the flextime system in 2016 and enabled its staff to choose Flexible Working Hours by dividing early/late shifts into multiple stages. In addition, telework, a work style that allows working at home, has started in the Internal Bureau of



An SDF member working at home using remote-work terminal

1 (1) "Action Plan for Promoting the Active Participation of Female Employees and Work-Life Balance at the MOD" (January 2015), (2) "Action Plan of the MOD Based on the Law to Promote the Role of Women in the Workforce (FY2016-FY2020)" (April 2016), and (3) "Action Plan to Support a Good Work-Life Balance of the Personnel of the MOD based on the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children (FY2015-FY2020)" (March 2015).

VOICE Voice of a Father Enjoying Child Rearing

Major KAIGI Hajime,
Commander of the 4th Company, the 26th Infantry Regiment,
GSD (Asahikawa City, Hokkaido)

The SDF has a system in which both the mothers and fathers of a child can take child care leave until the child reaches the age of 3. In addition, male personnel can take paid leave up to 7 days before and after the delivery.

The Kaigi family was blessed with our second child in December 2018. Due to my wife's job on this occasion, I was able to have the precious experience of devoting myself to child rearing for about two months from January to March 2019 by taking child care leave. I had some concerns because I did not take child care leave upon the birth of our first child

and most of the child rearing tasks were done by my wife. However, I was able to successfully complete my child rearing mission during the period thanks to the understanding of my superior and coworkers and the guidance of my wife.

In FY2018, the rate of male SDF personnel taking child care leave was only about 3.5% and the rate of male national civil servants doing so was about 12%. The environment may not be friendly for males to take child care leave. However, the SDF will also change in response to the social trend in this regard. As a person who took child care leave, I will cooperate in developing an environment that is friendly for male SDF personnel to take child care leave and actively help coworkers who take child care leave.



Photograph of the Kaigi Family (the author is to the right)



The author working at his workplace

the MOD in FY2017 and it has been expanded to other organizations such as individual Staff Offices, Inspector General's Office of Legal Compliance, and South Kanto

Defense Bureau. Other organizations that have not started telework are also working to make this work system available by FY2020.

2 Reform to Combine a Successful Career with Childrearing and Nursing Care.....

In order for MOD/SDF staff, both male and female, to be successful in their careers while realizing work-life balance, it is necessary to establish a system that enables balancing work with childrearing/nursing care, and to ensure childcare services tailored to the irregular working patterns unique to the SDF.

(1) Development of an Environment that Enables Staff to Realize a Successful Career While Engaging in Childrearing and Nursing Care

The MOD/SDF has developed various schemes, which enable staff to balance work with childrearing/nursing care, such as ensuring substitute personnel for staff who take childcare leave and other leave. In particular, the

ministry is encouraging its male staff to take childcare leave to promote their participation in family settings. Since FY2020, the ministry is strongly working to enable all male staff with a newborn child to take childcare leave or time off work for a total of one month or more. Also the target rate of childcare leave acquisition by male staff is set at 13% by FY2020.

The MOD/SDF is also developing an environment that enables staff to balance work life with their family life by distributing e-mail newsletters to help its staff to return to work smoothly after childcare leave and encouraging staff to use a "childcare form" to facilitate managers' and the human resources department's thorough and detailed

understanding of the situation regarding childcare.

The MOD/SDF has a system to rehire SDF personnel who have previously resigned mid-career. It reassessed the system so that former SDF personnel who had resigned in their mid-career due to childrearing and nursing care could be reemployed from January 2017. The MOD/SDF started recruitment based on this system in January 2018.

(2) Ensuring Childcare Services

To allow SDF personnel who are rearing children to concentrate on their duties, it is important to ensure childcare services tailored to the irregular working patterns

unique to the SDF. Since April 2007, the MOD/SDF has set up workplace nurseries at GSDF Camp Mishuku, GSDF Camp Kumamoto, GSDF Camp Makomanai, GSDF Asaka Camp housing district, MSDF Yokosuka Naval Base district, ASDF Iruma Air Base, Ichigaya district, where the MOD is located, and National Defense Medical College.

In addition, in the event of emergency operations such as disaster relief, the MOD promotes measures to provide temporary childcare in SDF camps and bases for children of SDF personnel who have no alternative but to attend to duties with their children.

3 Reform for Promoting the Careers of Female Personnel

For the further expansion of the recruitment and promotion of female personnel, the MOD/SDF has been making various efforts to advance the careers of motivated and qualified female personnel by setting up specific goals with regard to the recruitment and promotion of female personnel under the “Action Plan for Promoting the Active Participation of Female Employees and Work-Life Balance.” Moreover, the MOD formulated the “Initiative to Promote Active Engagement of Female SDF Personnel – Aiming for Attractive SDF that Adapts to the Times and Environment” (the “Initiative”) in April 2017 to specify its conceptual policy for promoting the active participation of female SDF personnel.

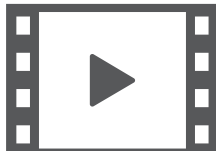
(1) Significance of Promoting Active Engagement of Female SDF Personnel and Personnel Management Policy

The “Initiative” outlines the significance of promoting the active participation of female personnel and the MOD/SDF personnel management policy. Specifically, with SDF duties becoming increasingly diverse and

complex, SDF personnel are required, more than ever, to have multifaceted capabilities including higher levels of knowledge, decision-making ability, and skills. In addition, under a severe recruitment environment due to the declining birthrate and continuing trend of higher education, it is anticipated that the number of SDF personnel with time and location restraints, including those involved in childcare, nursing care, and other responsibilities, will significantly increase.

In light of these changes, the SDF is required to evolve from a conventional organization with an emphasis on homogeneity among the members, into an organization that is capable of incorporating diverse human resources in a flexible manner.

At present, the largest human resource that the SDF has not been able to fully utilize is women, who account for half of the population targeted for recruitment. Promoting the active engagement of female SDF personnel has the following significance: (1) securing useful human resources; (2) utilizing diverse perspectives; and (3)



Video : First female paratrooper in the GSDF
URL : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjTaHfAuvMo>



Video : Female MSDF personnel performing duties while having enough personal time
URL : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsk6VAV6LP4>



Video : Female ASDF personnel performing duties while raising kids
URL : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUKHaUQkeXM>



Captain Otani was appointed as the first female commanding officer of an Aegis destroyer (December 2019)

reflecting values of the nation. For this reason, the MOD/SDF has decided to open up a path for female personnel with motivation, ability, and aptitude to have opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in various fields, and aim for doubling the ratio of female SDF personnel.

In terms of employing and promoting female SDF personnel, the MOD/SDF sets out a personnel management policy to ensure equal opportunity between men and women and assign the right person to the right place based on the person's motivation and ability/ aptitude. In December 2019, a woman assumed the role of commanding officer of an Aegis destroyer for the first time, promoting active participation of female SDF personnel.

(2) Removal of the Assignment Restriction of Female SDF Personnel

The MOD/SDF has been reviewing the restriction of assignment of female personnel. With the removal of the restriction on female assignments in submarines in December 2018, assignment restriction against females was completely removed with the exception of the units where female personnel cannot be assigned for reasons of maternity protection (a part of the GSDF Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) Weapon Defense Unit [chemical] and Tunnel Company Units).

With the removal of the restriction on female assignments, in 2018, the first female fighter pilot appeared. Training of female submarine personnel was started in January 2020. Furthermore, in March 2020, a female SDF personnel completed a basic parachute training course of the Airborne Training Unit and was assigned to the GSDF 1st Airborne Brigade.

(3) Expansion of the Recruitment of Female Personnel

a. Female SDF Personnel

As of the end of March 2020, the number of female SDF personnel is about 17,000 (about 7.4% of total SDF personnel). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2010, about 5.2% of total SDF personnel), this is a rise of 2.2 percentage points, indicating that the ratio of female SDF personnel has been on the rise in recent years.

In order to increase the proportion of female SDF personnel among total SDF personnel to over 9% by FY2027, the MOD/SDF aims to ensure that women account for more than 10% of total newly employed SDF personnel in and after FY2017. Specifically, in order to increase the number of recruits through such measures as the elimination of the gender quota and the increase in the scheduled number of female recruits, the SDF will actively recruit women, promote their active participation, and improve education, living, and work environments for female SDF personnel.

In addition, with regard to promotion, MDO/SDF aims to increase the proportion of women among SDF personnel with a rank of field officer or higher to over 3.1%. As for the careers of the personnel anticipated to reach a rank of field officer or higher, emphasis is given on assigning them to a commander or assistant commander post at the rank of company officer, with the hope of allowing them to gain experience.

 See Fig. IV-1-2-1 (Changes in Incumbent Female SDF Personnel)

b. Female Administrative Officials, Technical and Engineering Officials, Instructors, and Others

As of the end of March 2020, the number of female civilian personnel—administrative officials, technical and engineering officials, and instructors, and others—is approximately 3,400 (about 25.2% of total civilian personnel). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2010 when females made up 23% of the total civilian personnel), this is a rise of 2.2 percentage points, indicating that the ratio of female civilian personnel is on a rising trend in recent years.

With regard to recruitment, in line with the overall government target, the MOD has set up its goal of ensuring that women account for over 30% of recruits in and after FY2016. Regarding promotion, as a goal to be achieved by the end of FY2020, the proportion of women of the Division-Director level at local organizations and Assistant-Division-Director level at the ministry proper or equivalent would be approximately 5%, and the proportion of women of the Division-Director level at the ministry proper or equivalent would be approximately 2%, and the proportion of women of the Unit-Chief level at the ministry proper or equivalent should be approximately 27%.

VOICE

Active Participation of Female Personnel

Sergeant HASHIBA Reina, 1st Airborne Brigade Headquarter Company, GSDF (Funabashi City, Chiba Prefecture)

I completed the 319th basic parachute training course held by the Airborne Training Unit and was assigned to the 1st Airborne Brigade, which was my heart's desire from my childhood.

For the promotion of a gender equal society, the limitation on the assignment of female SDF personnel was removed. I am happy that opportunities for women's participation are expanded as well as grateful for a warm welcome by members of the 1st Airborne Brigade and enthusiastic coaching by instructors of the Airborne Training Unit.

Now I am standing at the start line as a paratrooper, I will enhance my spirit, skills, and physical strength, and devote myself to giving my all every day.



The author on the aircraft in parachute training (front)

Lieutenant Commander TAKAKI Sayaka, Marine Staff Office (Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo)

The Ships and Weapons Division handles ship construction and maintenance. I am in charge of submarines and provide technical support, including checks of drawings and processes during construction, as well as trouble shooting.

I'm also a mother of two children. My superior, colleagues and family members are very sympathetic and helpful. For example, my husband is also SDF personnel and took child-care leave for half a year for each child. Thanks to his help, I was able to return to my workplace early. Also my husband takes care of our children when I am absent due to duty or an official trip.

My current goal is to work reasonably to create better ships. I will continue to value both family and work.



The author and her superior and colleagues working at the Ships and Weapons Division

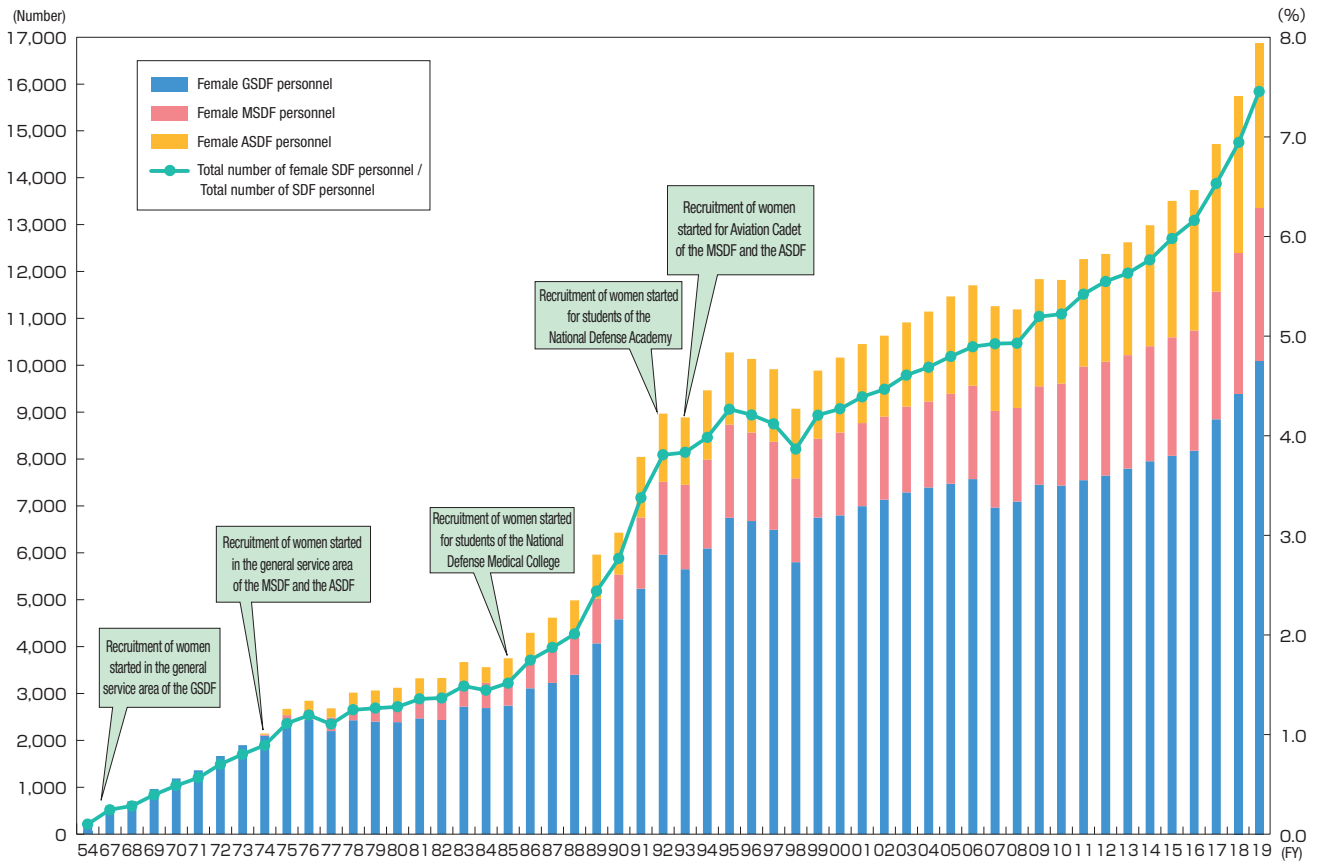
Captain SATO Saori, Special Airlift Group, ASDF (Chitose City, Hokkaido)

I work for the Special Airlift Group as a loadmaster officer (so-called cabin crew) of the B-777 government aircraft for overseas visits by dignitaries including the prime minister. Carrying dignitaries to their destinations safely and surely is an important task that plays a part in Japan's diplomacy and thereby contributes to the peace and safety of the country. To this purpose, I undergo hard training on a daily basis so that I can provide safe and comfortable travel and ensure operation on schedule in cooperation with other crew members. Attending dignitaries puts me under a lot of pressure but smiles and words of appreciations from the passengers are my reward. I am working with pride and motivation in this job, which has been my dream since childhood.



The author during training on serving in-flight meals.

Fig. IV-1-2-1 Changes in Incumbent Female SDF Personnel



Note: As of the end of March 2020, the total number of female SDF personnel is 16,863 (approximately 7.4% of the total number of the SDF personnel)