



Learning from Japan's 'womenomics'

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Abenomics was the economic revival strategy put forth by Prime Minister of Japan.
- It projects that womenomics as one of the ways to revive the ailing Japanese economy and also getting more women into the workforce and in positions of leadership.
- Other components of abenomics are expansionary monetary and fiscal policies, structural and economic reform and also consist of deregulation, trade liberalization, tax reform and industrial restructuring.

\n

\n\n

Why womenomics is necessary for Japan?

\n\n

\n

- Japanese women are highly educated on average have a higher college enrolment than men.
- Yet female labour force participation rate in Japan has been among the lowest among OECD countries.
- Following Abenomics, female labour force participation rate rose to 67% in 2015 from 63%.
- But their pay for similar jobs is only 72% of what men are paid.
- So around 60% of women quit their jobs disappointed by their career

prospects.

\n

\n\n

\n

- Female participation is crucial for Japan, since its population is declining and also ageing rapidly.

\n

- The elderly will make up 40% of the total population by 2060.

\n

- The ratio of working to retired persons will be 1:1 by 2050.

\n

- The pension and tax burden will be crushing and will affect economic growth.

\n

- If female labour participation is on a par with other industrial nations, Japan's per capita output would be higher by 4%.

\n

- If female participation were on parity with males Japan would gain 8 million workers and its GDP would be risen by 14%.

\n

\n\n

What are the strategies employed in womenomics?

\n\n

\n

- Womenomics initially aimed to have 30% of leadership positions for women in government and business.

\n

- The availability of day-care is a big hurdle to young mothers rejoining the workforce. Thus it also aims to increase 400,000 new centres by the end of 2017.

\n

- The government asked the business establishment to double their childcare leave.

\n

- It calls for greater participation of women on company boards.

\n

- It also contains reforms like removing the tax penalty for working mothers, and introducing new training subsidies to help them return to the workplace.

\n

\n\n

What is the Indian scenario?

\n\n

- \n
 - In recent years, the female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India has been falling.
 - \n
 - It fell by 11% between 1987 and 2011.
 - \n
 - Only one-third of the female labour force describes itself as “working”.
 - \n
 - Presumably, the remaining does unpaid work.
 - \n
 - Even among those who are working, the pay gap for similar work is substantial.
 - \n
 - Only in programmes like MGNREGA there is low gender gap.
 - \n

\n\n

What should be done in India?

\n\n

- \n
 - The LFPR pattern shows a U-shaped relationship with women’s education attainment.
 - \n
 - As women’s average education achievement crosses eighth or tenth grade schooling, it results in higher LFPR as well as lower fertility.
 - \n
 - e.g The total fertility rate in many southern states, with relatively higher female education attainment, has fallen to replacement levels. Those states also exhibit higher LFPR.
 - \n
 - Beyond education, skilling, pay parity and board positions, India’s agenda also includes providing women leadership positions in political life
 - \n
 - But there is as much a cultural hurdle as an economic policy hurdle to achieving progress for women. e.g [Protests in Nagaland](#) against 33% reservation in local governments.
 - \n

- But as Japan's "womenomics" shows, numerical targets do help us get started.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Live Mint

\n\n

\n



IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative