

MEDIA SYNOPSIS

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Huffington Post, Japan

Gender parity crucial to unlock economic growth in Japan

Japanese women are increasingly pursuing professional aspirations but are being held back by rigid social norms that discourage mothers from working. However, as Japan realizes the important contribution that women can make to employment and innovation, social norms may be slowly changing. Is there a pathway to gender parity in Japan's workplace? Leon Perera, Chief Executive Officer of Spire Research and Consulting, shared his thoughts on Huffington Post, Japan – a globally acclaimed news portal.

Only 10% of senior managerial positions are occupied by women, which is low when compared to comparable figures for the United States (42%) and France (38%). As in many other countries, women in Japan are often made to choose between their professional and personal lives in a way that men are not. Work-life balance is hard to sustain when they single-handedly take care of household responsibilities.

Perera opined that Japan needs to overcome its societal norms about gender so as to better pursue economic progress and improvements in quality of life. Women should have equal access to career development. In general, companies still prefer men for senior managerial positions as they are more likely to continue work till retirement. In comparison, women tend to

have a shorter work lifespan – most quit their jobs post marriage especially after having a child. This shrinks the size of the labour pool. Greater labour force participation by women would increase the size of the employee base from which innovation and productivity enhancement can be generated.

So what needs to change? Japan is in dire need of a better working environment which offers gender equality. Furthermore, flexible working hours and developing childcare facilities will enable women to better combine household and career responsibilities.

Click [here](#) for official coverage on Huffington post's Website.

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