

JAPAN'S FOUR-DAY WEEK



Issue

The government of Japan has plans for urging employers to adopt four-day week instead of the existing five-day.

Background

Japan is one of the countries where extreme work has become part of culture. There are many concerns that have arrived due to this practice.

Details

- The new guidelines will encourage workers to adopt new skills during their off-time along with taking care of their family and personal life.
- The government feels that such a work schedule will increase the productivity of workers and the extra day off will be compensated. This is however, is not believed by employers.
- Employers are also contemplating pay cut for employees as they will be working one day less due to the new schedule.

Over-work culture in Japan

- The word 'Karoshi' is synonymous with Japan's work culture. It translates to death due to stress and other work-load.
- The average working hours of a Japanese employee is 1598 hours per year. This is more than other large economies such as UK, Germany, France or Italy.

Four-day week concept

- The idea of four-day week has gained traction due to the pandemic induced lockdown that allowed people to spend more time with their families.
- Some companies have recognised its importance and announced that they will allow their workers to work from home permanently.
- Countries like New Zealand and Spain have started experiments to see if four-day week will help in increasing productivity and employee mental health.
- The idea of implementing the concept in India looks bleak due to the nature of its employment sector, which is majorly unorganised in nature.
- Only about 14 percent of Indian working population have a fixed job and related perks. More than 80 percent of the sector is still over-dependent on informal work.

NOTES

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