Are Market Conditions Better in Achieving Gender Equality than Politics? 
Abe’s ‘Womenomics’ and Beyond

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Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has initiated a progressive plan since 2013 to boost the employment and the empowerment of women. The policy is innovatively called ‘womenomics’ and is the mainstay of Abe’s economic growth strategy. An important part of this policy is to improve women’s participation in the labour market as well as in political leadership.

In recent years, the government has implemented measures for gender equality in the workplace as part of Japan’s Basic Law for Gender Equality. Yet, the rate of participation of Japanese women in the labour force is still low compared to that in other OECD nations. Japanese mothers, especially, find it difficult to balance a professional career and childrearing. It is obvious that the family policy measures of the Gender Equality Law have had little impact on the labour market, so far. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) government is therefore working on framing a policy aimed at improving Japan’s diversity and gender equality scores. The basis of this policy is to develop a highly qualified female workforce. However, the question remains whether the business sector will provide an environment flexible enough and attractive enough for women to pursue their careers, while balancing a family and childrearing.

This seminar explores why empowering women is considered an economic advantage and whether market conditions are providing better incentives to achieving gender equality than state politics.

Please visit IGS website for a pre-reading material list. http://www2.igs.ocha.ac.jp/

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 Organizer: Institute for Gender Studies (IGS), Ochanomizu University