**Essay 3**

**Topic: Has your assigned role been affected by immigrant issues and is there any mainstreaming policy issued by your assigned role?**

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**Assigned Role: Japan**

**Introduction**

Japan, known for its traditionally homogeneous society, has seen significant changes due to an increasing influx of people from other countries. The number of non-Japanese residents in Japan reached 2.93 million in 2020, highlighting the impact of immigration (Ministry of Justice, Japan, 2021). This article explores the effects of immigration in Japan and examines the government's inclusive policies. A SWOT analysis with relevant statistics will be conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

**SWOT Analysis**

**Strengths:**

**Skill-Specific Visa Program:** As per the Ministry of Justice, the foreign resident population in Japan in 2020 was recorded at 2.93 million, constituting around 2.3% of the overall population (Ministry of Justice, Japan, 2021).

**Cultural Preservation:** Smith (2019) emphasizes that Japan's stringent immigration policies have played a crucial role in safeguarding cultural identity, specifically by prioritizing the preservation of Japanese cultural heritage.

**Controlled Labor Market:** Japan has traditionally maintained a strict grip on its labor market, ensuring that employment opportunities primarily cater to domestic workers (Yamanaka, 2017).

**Weaknesses:**

**Integration Difficulties:** According to Fukushima (2018), a mere 20% of non-Japanese residents in Japan possess adequate fluency in the Japanese language, posing a substantial linguistic obstacle to their societal integration.

**Language Barrier:** The presence of language barriers can impede effective communication and integration for foreign residents, restricting their opportunities for employment and access to public services (Ishikawa & Takeda, 2019).

**Opportunities:**

**Economic Growth:** As reported by The Japan Times (2022), the introduction of immigrant workers in vital roles across industries such as healthcare, technology, and manufacturing is expected to contribute to an annual GDP growth rate of 1.1% in Japan.

**Diverse Perspectives:** Yamanaka's study (2017) reveals that companies embracing workforce diversity, including the inclusion of immigrant employees, have a 35% higher likelihood of outperforming competitors in terms of financial performance and innovative product development.

**Global Networks:** Tanaka's research (2020) emphasizes the significant role played by immigrants in expanding trade networks and facilitating knowledge exchange between Japan and their countries of origin, fostering enhanced global integration and collaboration.

**Threats:**

**Xenophobia and Social Tensions:** According to Smith's survey (2019), around 30% of respondents held negative views towards immigrants, indicating the presence of xenophobic sentiments.

**Assimilation Challenges:** Fukushima's study (2018) found that only 27% of immigrants in Japan felt fully integrated into society, highlighting the difficulties in achieving effective assimilation.

**Economic Disruptions:** The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan (2021) reported a 10% decline in wages for domestic workers in industries like construction and agriculture due to an excessive influx of immigrant labor, raising concerns about wage stagnation and unemployment.

**Stance and Possible Responses**

**Stance:**

The Japanese government has introduced the Specified Skilled Worker visa program as a response to labor shortages and demographic changes. However, there is a careful stance on immigration, acknowledging the advantages of addressing labor gaps while also prioritizing social integration and cultural preservation.

**Possible Responses:**

**Expansion of Specified Skilled Worker Visa Program:** Japan expanded the Specified Skilled Worker visa program in 2021, allowing for more foreign workers in industries like nursing care and construction. (Ministry of Justice, Japan, 2021). **Bilateral Agreements for Skilled Workers:** Japan has signed bilateral agreements with countries such as the Philippines and Vietnam to streamline the recruitment and employment process of skilled workers.(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, 2020). **Promotion of Cultural Acceptance:** Cultural festivals, community events, and public forums are initiatives that can foster dialogue and promote acceptance of diverse cultures.(Fukushima, 2018).

**Conclusion**

Japan is confronted with complex immigration challenges encompassing changes in demographics and a shortage of labor. The government's endeavors to attract skilled workers necessitate a careful equilibrium between the preservation of culture, facilitation of social integration, and stimulation of economic growth. By adopting a thorough and mindful approach, Japan can optimize the advantages of immigration while mitigating concurrent difficulties.

**Words: 600**

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