

The Fertility Decline and the Policy Measures against Its Trend in Taiwan

Shoichi ITO

The population of Taiwan was about 6.5 million in 1947 and has increased and became over 22.5 millions in 2003. On the other hand, its natural rate of increase was over 35 in the first half of 1950s and continued to decrease. The total fertility rate per woman was 4.81 in 1966, 3.08 in 1976, 1.68 in 1986, 1.47 in 1998, 1.34 in 2002, and, finally, declined to be 1.18 in 2004. The other various measures of fertility rate indicate the clear declining trend of fertility rate in Taiwan. These changes in population in Taiwan made the government consider the declining trend of total fertility rate as one of the most important issues in Taiwan.

The share of going on to university in female of the same age has rapidly expanded since the middle of 1990s, and the average age of first marriage for female has been getting higher and higher in Taiwan in the same period. The female age of her first birth is closely related with the age of her first marriage. The female age of her first marriage is considered to be one of the most important factors causing the declining trend of total fertility rate in Taiwan. The average births by educational level show that the higher the female educational level attained by them is, the lower their average births is, and that the female average births have kept on declining for each educational level.

Based on the fertility decline in Taiwan, in addition to the population policies such as campaigning 'marriage and giving birth at a proper age' and 'two children are just good', Executive Yuan, Republic of China has implemented policies such as reducing the housing cost for a young couple, increasing the number of preschools, reducing the child care costs and has made efforts to promote the marriages and births among young couples. Following '2005 Administrative Targets and Emphasis of the Ministry of Interior, Republic of China', the government implemented the policies such as medical subsidy for children with three years old and younger, increasing nursery school teachers for improving child care services, and supporting young couple to purchase their housing by housing loan with a low interest rate.