

Declining Fertility Rate and Its Coping Policy Measures in Taiwan

Shoichi Iro

The purposes of this article are to examine factors of declining fertility rate in Taiwan that is facing the lowest fertility rate in the world and to introduce the policy measures for coping that issue in Taiwan. The labor market situations for female have changed largely. The average income ratio between female and male workers has been shrinking, and the unemployment of female is lower than that of male. These changes have made it easier for female to participate in labor market than before. The female's labor force participation rate (LFPR) by age group was M shaped in Taiwan, but that shape has become that like a mountain, that is, the LFPR of 25-29 years old group is highest and after that, that is declining, as their age becomes older. In Taiwan, tertiary education has become dominant especially for female. This change has been affecting the age of females' first marriage. The high costs of child caring and housing discourages marriage and childbirth. Although the effect of Chinese zodiac is not statistically significant, if we observe the movement of birth rate in Taiwan year by year, it is clear that the Tiger year and the Dragon year affect birth rate in Taiwan.

The various policy measures have been implemented in Taiwan for coping with the lowest fertility rate in the world. Total Fertility Rate (TFR) rose slightly from 2010 to 2011 in Taiwan. ROC99 (2010) and ROC100 (2011) are considered as the lucky and memorial years, and ROC101 is the Dragon year. These years give young people more incentive to marry and as a result, fertility rate rose. This increase in fertility rate is transient. It is necessary to implement policy measures in order to improve the conditions against marriage and childbirth. The various policy measures have been implemented in Taiwan for coping with declining marriage and fertility rate. We should continue to examine the effects of those policy measures.

The marriage with foreign and mainland brides has increased in the second half of the 1990s. In general, it is believed that the fertility rate of foreign brides is higher than that of local brides. In the case of Taiwan, however, the number of childbirth of foreign and mainland brides is lower than that of local brides, which is not consistent with the general impression about fertility rate of foreign brides.