

Countermeasures to Low Birth Rate / Aging Society in the Republic of Korea: Comprehensive Policy Frame in the Age of Double Responsibilities of Elderly Care and Childcare

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In this paper, I examine "countermeasures to low birth rate/aging society" adopted by the Republic of Korea as a case study in order to discuss the integration of policy related to aging society and falling birthrate in the age of double responsibilities of elderly care and childcare. Postponement of marriage has led to a delay in childbearing, which, in turn, has led to increased probability that the major life events of childcare and elderly care will overlap. In East Asia, the concurrent decline in birth rate and increase in elderly population have given rise to a new social risk known as "double responsibilities of elderly care and childcare" wherein households find themselves engaged in child rearing while simultaneously providing care for elderly relatives. Such households are the target of both policies related to low birth rate and policies related to aging. For such households, childcare support can also function as elderly care support; conversely, elderly care support can function as childcare support. The investigation in this paper suggests that, in the age of double responsibilities of elderly care and childcare, Japan should follow the example of the Republic of Korea and integrate the policy frames for low birth rate and aging society into a single, comprehensive frame and further strengthen connections to policies targeting elderly citizens as providers of childcare, which is currently undersupplied.