

# Policy Trends and Situation of Low Fertility and Population Ageing in Japan, China, and South Korea: A Comparative Perspective

HAYASHI Reiko

Japan, China, and South Korea are all experiencing fertility decline below replacement level, population ageing and decline. The three countries are currently implementing measures to mitigate low fertility and to cope with population ageing. Still, before arriving at this population phase, there was a history of population policy to lower fertility through family planning. The policy shift from reducing to raising fertility was a common path of the three countries, but the timing and speed differed.

The population ageing proceeded steadily due to lowering fertility and mortality, in other words, increasing life expectancy. However, even before the population started to age, elderly welfare and pension systems saw their development. Along with the proportion of older persons began to increase, universal health and pension coverage was established. These policies were constantly reformed, and the long-term care system was derived.

How to allocate limited resources is an issue in every country. In contrast to Japan, where the number of older persons will not increase much in the future, South Korea and China, where the number of older persons will increase dramatically in the near future, seem to shift the task from the public sector to the private sector, individuals, and families. Under the population decline, it is necessary to reconfigure the framework of existing population and social security policies, to create an environment where people feel easy to have and raise children, and constantly construct and reform measures to make the increasing number of older persons a new economic foundation.

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