

The 1st PRI/KIPF Seminar

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< Comment > Low Fertility in Japan: Issues in Recent Years

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Factors Contributing to Low Fertility

【Marriage】

- Increasing academic achievement
- Increase in female employment (career-oriented)
- Changes in the Paths of Finding a Marriage Partner

【Childbirth】

- The heavy financial and emotional burden of raising and educating children
- The difficulty of balancing work and child-rearing
- Childcare anxiety

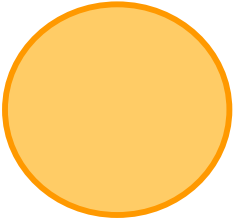
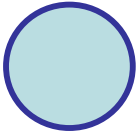
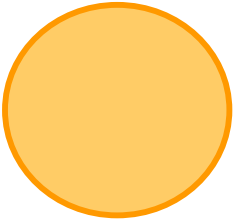
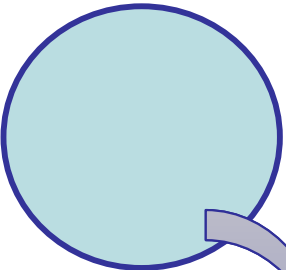
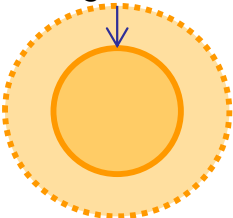
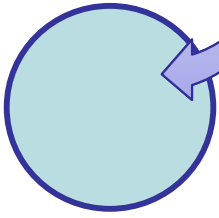
【Common factors in marriage and birth】

Deteriorating employment environment, declining income,
low labor flexibility, long working hours

Persistent gender role division of labor, retreat of traditional
marriage, childbirth and family norms

High living costs (particularly in urban areas)

Cost-Benefit Balance of Family Formation

Benefit	Cost		
		Benefits of marriage and childbirth: labor force at home, old-age security, mental benefits, traditional norms Costs of marriage and childbirth: financial burden (food, clothing, housing, education), opportunity cost (especially for women)	Traditional society Strong gender role division of labor
		Rising costs of family formation → Decline in fertility • Worsening employment and income for young people • Difficulties with work-life balance • High child-rearing costs (particularly education costs)	Economic development and Increase in employment opportunities for women Heightened awareness of gender equality, retreat of traditional norms
declining value of marriage and children? 		Family Policy Measures to reduce costs Although policies to reduce the cost of marriage and child-rearing have been enhanced, have marriage and children become less valuable to young people?	Low economic growth Increase in dual-income households among younger generation Diversification of values

The “value” of marriage and having children may be changing

- Even with the introduction of policies to reduce the cost factors that prevent marriage and childbirth, the declining birthrate has not stopped.
- Retreat of traditional norms (acceptance of diverse ways of life)
- It is difficult to form a concrete image of pregnancy or life with children because there are few opportunities to interact with pregnant women and babies.
- On SNS, there is a lot of negative information about marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and child-rearing.
- It is necessary to understand the attitudes and opinions of the younger generation and re-examine the factors contributing to the low fertility.