

# **Analysis of Current Policies and Services for Overcoming Korea's Low Fertility Rate Measures to Enhance Childbirth Encouragement Policy**

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## **Abstract**

*The Korea government has enforced the policies by spending a lot of money into measures of low birthrate problems for the past 10 years. However, the birth rate was 1.19 in 2014, and Korea has remained a country with an extremely low birthrate for the last 10 years. Women's fertility rates in 2013 are: 1.0 children in Seoul, and 1.05 in Busan, making Busan with the lowest fertility rate in the 7 metropolitan cities.*

*Korea's typical population policy executing the organization "Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea" was established in 1961 and led the "Have 3 kids movement". In the 1980's, the government launched "One kid Family", the suppressing of childbirth policies that have been consistent for 40 years ultimately changed to supporting childbirth policies in 2004 and after.*

*The purpose of this investigation is to seek a political proposal and a plan to solve the problem of the extremely low fertility rate in the Korean society. For this, we should firstly analyze the change in Korea's population policy, and secondly, we should compare the progress of change of birthrate and the present situation of local birthrate. Thirdly, we should analyze the various childbirth support policies propelled by local governments and service conditions from the perspective of coexistence of work and family.*

*To strengthen the supportive policies, and to create a society where the coexistence of work and family are both possible, not only the central government, but also the local governments should consider 'population policy including the increase of birthrate' as a primary assignment and should establish and enforce a long-term plan that is practical for the next 20 years. If not, the low fertility rate will always be an obstacle when it comes to economic and societal development of Korea.*

**Keywords:** *Childbirth Encouragement policy, Childbirth Policies and Service, Creating a Society of Work-Life Balance, Lowest-Low Fertility State*

## **1. Purpose of the Investigation**

The purpose of this investigation is to seek a political proposal and a plan to solve the problem of the extremely low fertility rate in the Korean society. For this, we should firstly analyze the change in Korea's population policy, and secondly, we should compare the progress of change of birthrate and the present situation of local birthrate. Thirdly, we should analyze the various childbirth support policies propelled by local governments and service conditions from the perspective of coexistence of work and family.

The government has enforced the policies by spending 130 billion dollars into measures of low birthrate and aging problems for the past 10 years. However, the birth rate was 1.12 in 2006 and 1.19 in 2014, and Korea has remained a country with an extremely low birthrate for the last 10 years. Korea has a lower birthrate than the 'top 3 oldest countries', Japan, Germany, and Italy. The ratio of unmarried people above the age

of 15 is 38.6%, and is 11.5% higher than the OECD average, 27.1%. The birthrate in Busan is the lowest out of all metropolitan cities, with the rate of 1.06 children in 2014, and the marriage rate decreased by 7.7%, compared to the former year [1].

Although problem of low fertility rate is a problem that correlates directly to our future, the socio-economic problems such as the change in the values of marriage and family, youth employment, the expense of raising and educating the children are all related, and a certain policy will not be able to solve the problem in a short time. However, considering the time difference of the population policy is 20 years, the next few years are the "Golden Time of population policy." Therefore, useful and powerful policies for overcome the low fertility rate are need right at this moment.

## **2. Methods of Study**

This investigation is an investigation that analyzed the statistical data of existing government department, policy, and service. To analyze the change in population policy, we analyzed a chronological list of the main events of 'Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea'. That has been accomplishing all of the typical population policies in Korea since in 1960's, and have analyzed the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Ministry of Employment and Labor, and the Birth Encouragement Policies and services of Busan Metropolitan City to overcome the low fertility rate.

## **3. Study Results**

### **3.1. The Change in Population Policies in Korea**

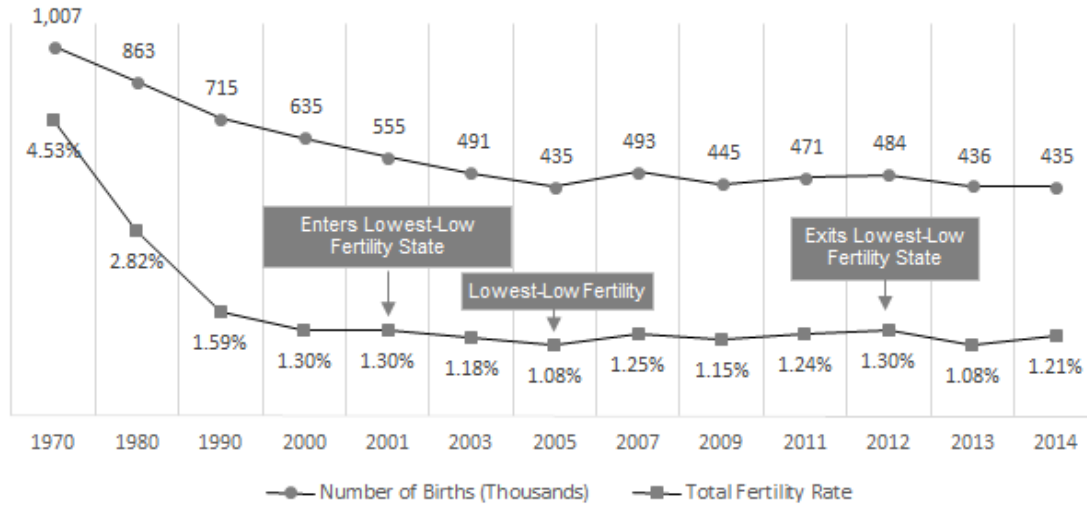
Korea's typical population policy executing the organization "Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea" was established in 1961 and led the "Have 3 kids movement" in the 1960s and executed the business on contraception propagation focused on local society with the "Have 2 kids movement." In the 1980s, the government announced the "Resolution conference Prevention of population outburst and signature campaign" as population curb policy and launched "One kid Family".

In 1988, the government formally announced the over fulfillment of 1% of population increase rate, and accomplished constant suppressing of childbirth policies by launching 'propelling of demonstration business of family plans for 21C' and other various policies of "one child." The business organization formally changed its name to "Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea" in 1999. It accomplishments in 2000 was focused on sex education, sex clinic, and the breastfeeding movement. In 2004, they changed its function from suppressing childbirth into supporting childbirth, by starting the low fertility rate promotion, and hosted a national meeting to overcome the society of advanced age and low birthrate. It formally changed its name to "Population Health Social Welfare Association" and executed the business of improving the health of childbearing women, a business to create an environment for healthy labor, and a business to support an infertile couple [2]. Likewise, the suppressing of childbirth policies that have been consistent for 40 years ultimately changed to supporting childbirth policies in 2004 and after.

### **3.2. The Situation of Low Birth Rate in Korea**

Women's total birth rates in 2013 are: 2.01 children in USA, 1.88 in France, 1.73 in England, 1.40 in Germany, 1.29 in Japan, whereas 1.19 in Korea, being the lowest of the OECD countries. In Figure1, Korea entered into the "low birth rate society" in 1982 with 2.05 which is below population replacement level of 2.1, and became an 'extremely low fertility rate society' in 1998 with 1.25 children. Korea instantly lost its title of being an 'extremely low fertility rate country' in 2012 with 1.30, but re-obtained it again in 2013 with 1.19[3]. According to the National Assembly Research Service's report, Busan is

going to be the first city to disappear due to its low birth rate and advanced age society. Oxford population research institute also states that if the low birth rate and rapid speed of advanced age, Korea will be the first country to disappear on Earth.



- Busan Social Welfare Development Institute, Busan Social Welfare Statistics(2014), 92-98

**Figure 1. Trends of Number of Birth and Total Fertility Rate (1970 – 2014)**

Women's total birth rates of All States was 1.15 in 2009, 1.23 in 2010, 1.24 in 2011, 1.30 in 2012, 1.19 in 2013. In Seoul, also 0.96 in 2009, 0.97 in 2013, and Busan, 0.94 in 2009, 1.05 in 2013, making Busan with the lowest fertility rate in the 7 metropolitan cities in table1[3]. Daegu, 1.03 in 2009, 1.13 in 2013, Incheon 1.14 in 2009, 1.20 in 2013, Kwangju 1.14 in 2009, 1.17 in 2013, Daejeon 1.16 in 2009, 1.23 in 2013, Ulsan 1.31 in 2009, 1.39 in 2013 and Sejong 1.60 in 2012, 1.44 in 2013 in Table 1[4].

Within Busan, in Table 2, there is a significant difference within the regions as well, for Seo-Gu being 0.82, Yeongdo-Gu being 0.88, Jung-gu 0.89, Suyeong-gu 0.9, Dongnae-gu 0.94, Dong-gu 0.95, Yeonje-gu 0.99, Nam-gu 1.02, Busanjin-gu 1.03, Haeundae-gu 1.06, Buk-gu 1.15, Saha-gu 1.15, Sasang-gu 1.15, Gangseo-gu 1.42, Gijang-gun 1.61. Even In Busan Metropolitan city, Women's total birth rates of old region was extremely low, new region(sea side, river side, firms) was higher than old region in Table 2. Seo-gu(0.82) was the lowest fertility rate in the 16 regions, Gijang-gun(1.61) was double fertility rate[1].

**Table 1. Total Fertility Rate of Metropolitan Cities in Korea (2009-2013)**

Division	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All States	1.15	1.23	1.24	1.30	1.19
Seoul	0.96	1.02	1.01	1.06	0.97
Busan	0.94	1.05	1.08	1.14	1.05
Daegu	1.03	1.11	1.15	1.22	1.13
Incheon	1.14	1.21	1.23	1.30	1.20
Kwangju	1.14	1.22	1.23	1.30	1.17
Daejeon	1.16	1.21	1.26	1.32	1.23
Ulsan	1.31	1.37	1.39	1.48	1.39
Sejong	-	-	-	1.60	1.44

- National Statistical Office, Demography Investigation (2009-2013)

**Table 2. Total Fertility Rate in Busan Metropolitan City by Region**

Region	The number of the birth	Total fertility rate	Region	The number of the birth	Total fertility rate
Seo-gu	584	0.82	Nam-gu	2,051	1.02
Yeongdo-gu	684	0.84	Busanjin-gu	3,070	1.03
Jung-gu	266	0.89	Haeundae-gu	3,148	1.06
Suyeong-gu	1,180	0.9	Buk-gu	2,405	1.15
Geumjeong-gu	1,548	0.92	Saha-gu	2,851	1.15
Dongnae-gu	1,775	0.94	Sasang-gu	2,040	1.15
Dong-gu	552	0.95	Gangseo-gu	680	1.42
Yeonje-gu	1,494	0.99	Gijang-gun	1,503	1.61

- 2014 Busan Social Welfare Statistics

### 3.3. Direction of Government Supporting Childbirth Policies and Services

Various attempts are necessary to diffuse correctly the desirable marriage and family values since the problem of low fertility rate correlated directly to the change in values of marriage and family [5-7]. The problem of youth job shortage is the main factor of low fertility rate and be fixed primarily. In 2013's standard, 87.9% of female students and 81.3% of male students from academic high schools went to a university, and 49.3% of male students and 43.6% of female students from vocational high schools went to a university[10]. The youth generation in Korea is a group of highly educated people, and almost every youth desires a 'good' job. Financial stability is an essential prerequisite for marriage.

Therefore, to overcome the low fertility rate, job shortage should primarily fix in order for youth to get married. Both male and female are not even able to hope for marriage if they have not the chance of employment. Our society also needs to bring about supporting policies so that both male and female are able to work and raise their kid. Giving birth, nurturing, and taking care of the family were traditionally women's jobs, but responsibility of both men and women for such aspects is spreading wide[8]. Even in the 1980's, the theory that the employment rate and birth rate were inverse proportions dominated within the OECD countries.

However, in the case of Sweden, the employment rate of female was 72.5%, the birth rate was 1.91 children, in the case of USA, the female employment rate was 62.3%, and the birth rate was 1.88 children. Therefore, countries such as North European countries, Australia, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Great Britain, where ⅔ of female are employed, and where birth rate per female exceeded 1.7 children, show a high employment rate and a high birth rate contradict the former hypothesis[9]. (Jeon Hye Sook, 2015) The primary figure in childbirth is female. Therefore, a society where work and family are both possible to manage need so that women will not avoid giving birth due to societal, psychological, and financial disputes.

Ministry of Gender Equality and Family certificated Family Friendly certificated firms and institutions by measuring Family-friendly Index. In table 3(2008-2015) Family

friendly certificated firms and institutions were 9 in 2008, increased every year after) [10] [11].

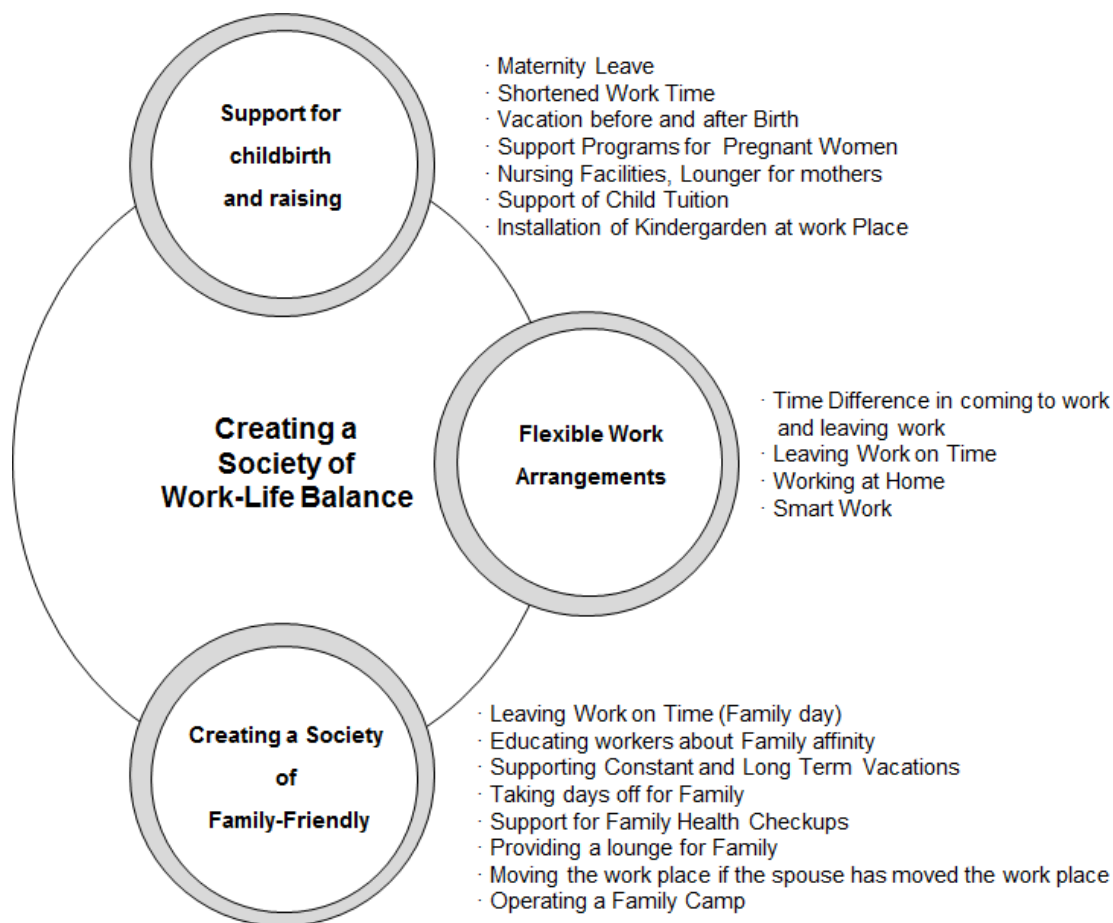
**Table 3. Family Friendly Certified Firms and Institutions**

	Public Institution	Large Firms	Small-Medium Firms	Total
2008	6	3	0	9
2009	6	5	3	14
2010	10	6	4	23
2011	40	24	22	86
2012	47	24	13	84
2013	84	84	111	279
2014	110	77	257	444
2015	100	35	292	427

- Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Family Friendly Certification Status (2008-2015)

The government proposed 8 core assignments in the ‘Third basic plan for low fertility rate and advanced age society’ [12].

1. Strengthening of residential support for newly married couples
2. support for pregnancy and childbirth
3. expansion of support for coexistence of work and family
4. legal guarantee for maternity leave
5. agreement of retirement age and supplied pension age
6. reestablishment of the standard of the elders
7. construction of general foreigner management system
8. establishment of charter system for the elders



**Figure 2. Family Affinity Program - Creating a Society of Work-Life Balance**

If the policies of the past 10 years focused on increasing the number of childbirth, the policies in the future will focus on eliminating factors causing a low birth rate and increase the birth rate to 1.5 children in 2020. Therefore, the direction of the governmental policies for supporting childbirth is focusing on late marriage and a dual-income, and concentrating on creating a society where giving birth and raising the child is an attainable goal, as shown by the Third Basic Plan.

### **3.4. Political Proposal on Overcoming the Low Birth Rate**

To strengthen the supportive policies, to create a society where the coexistence of work and family are both possible, not only the central government, but also the local governments should consider 'population policy including the increase of birthrate' as a primary assignment and should establish and enforce a long-term plan that is practical for the next 20 years. If not, the low fertility rate will always be an obstacle when it comes to economic and societal development of Korea.

The primary figure in childbirth is female. Females should therefore be able to give birth and raise children without having to worry. In order to create a stress-free environment, support throughout pregnancy, labor, and childhood should provide as well as residential aid. A society where both men and women are able to raise children and where both work and family can coexist is necessary. For this to be possible, first, it is necessary to combine the disconnected population policies by determining the

governmental ministry that supervises population policies. Second, the development of an educational population program is necessary. Low fertility is a problem that is impossible to solve using only the strength of the government. This generation should unite in an effort to solve the problem. The parent generation strongly desires for their children and their grandchildren to live a better life than their own. The low fertility rate directly correlates to the change in family and marriage values [13]. We have to make a great effort to promote the positive values of marriage and family. Third, a network connection between various organizations such as schools, religious groups, civil groups, and presses need to expand the movement of childbirth support in a local society.

#### Measures to enhance Childbirth Encouragement policy

(1) Currently the policy is fragmented through 3 different departments. Ministry of Employment and Labor(Parental Leaves), Ministry of Health and Welfare(Nurture policy, Workplace child care facilities), Ministry of Gender Equality and Family(Family Friendly Certification Program). Improving policy integrity by determining managing department for population policy will help achieve effective work-life balance.

(2) Developing and implementing population education program

(3) Encouraging “Childbirth Encouraging Movement” at local community level by organizing local network(Local government, Schools, Religious Organizations, NGO Groups, Media, Healthy Family Support Center, Multicultural Family Support Center, Local Community Welfare Centers, Health Care Facility, employment-welfare related agencies, *etc.*).

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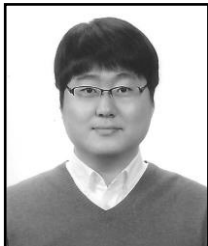
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