

Ami Takemura

Saitama University

SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN JAPANESE MARRIAGE SYSTEM

In this paper I will discuss modern Japanese social problems concerning marriage. In Japan, approximately, 98 percent of children were born between married men and women. From this data, we can say that there is a strong relationship between marriageable age or unmarried rate and the birth rate in Japan. In fact, the marriage and birth rates in Japan have declined significantly in recent years. I would like to discuss what the possible causes of the low birth rate in Japan, and how it could be improved by comparing to other countries' situation

It is said that most Nordic countries are maintaining a decline in divorce and fertility rates at a high level. One of the most successful countries with successful marriage statistics is Sweden.

On the other hand, in Japan, both marriage rate and birth rate have been declining for many years. There are several reasons why these rates are declining in Japan. In recent Japanese society, people's idea of marriage has changed. First, there is the tendency that people prefer to live an independent life. Because of punishment of patriarchal authority, people feel free to decide whether they get married or not. (They were released from pressure, and they now can make decision about marriage by themselves.)

Regarding having children, there are several facts which make people feel negative to having them in their life. First, in the past 30 years, more and more women have been accepted as social workers. In this regard, women who physically play a role in giving birth to a child want to concentrate on building their career without caring about marriage or having or caring for a child. In addition, there is not enough support for workers who are busy with parenting. It is difficult for workers to take a maternity leave or a parental leave in Japanese society. Another big factor is that raising children costs a huge amount of money in Japan. One example showing is the education fees. In Japan, the cost of going on to university is about 3 to 5 million yen (about 715000 UAH). This fee is far more expensive compared to countries which keep a high marriage and birth rate. The Japanese government and society do not give enough support for giving birth while they continue to be as a member of society.

Take Sweden as an example, there is the law which has helped to increase the birth rate. It is called "Sambolagen" (Official name: Lagen om sambors gemensamma hem) in Swedish, which treats couples as if they are in a common law marriage as the same as legal marriage couple. In addition, in Sweden, there are no educational costs borne by parents.

To sum up, Japanese government must build a legal system which is supportive and people living in Japanese society need to make an atmosphere that allows everyone to make various choices according to the times.

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