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Policies Needed to Realize the Desired Birth Rate

Aim to increase the income of child-rearing households by increasing dual-income regular employment for both husband and wife

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Summary

- Since the formulation of the Angel Plan in 1994, the government has recognized the decline in the birth rate as a problem, and since 2015 has been implementing measures against the declining birthrate with the goal of a desired birth rate of 1.8. However, the total fertility rate has remained at a low level of around 1.3 since 2001, and has recently been on a declining trend.
- The total fertility rate in 2001 and 2020 was the same at 1.33, but during this period the environment surrounding women's balancing work and parenting has changed dramatically. Since around 2010, the crude birth rate of insured women has increased as support measures for balancing work and parenting have been strengthened, such as the development of day-care centers and childcare leave systems. It has become easier to continue working even after having children, especially for women in regular employment, and the situation has improved in comparison to the situation where women were once forced to choose between work and children. On the other hand, the crude birth rate in the case of women who have become dependents (households with dependents) is also declining, and it is necessary to face the reality that it is becoming difficult to have children.
- In order to achieve the "desired birth rate of 1.8," it is necessary to eliminate economic factors that prevent marriage and childbirth. There are two possible measures: (1) expansion of cash or in-kind benefits, and (2) raising the income of households wishing to marry and raise children. The relatively high priority for (1) would be support for "home-care children under the age of three," which is currently lacking in support. Regarding the issue (2), it is important to increase "dual-income regular employment with a husband and wife" including women who left the work force temporarily after marriage and childbirth. In addition to promoting male family activities, it is necessary to promote flexible working styles, equal pay for equal work, and enhance vocational training. If these policies can be implemented as a package, the total fertility rate could rise to around 1.82.

Attention

This report is a summary translation. The official document is only in Japanese.

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