

Annual Report on the Declining Birthrate 2019 (Summary)

June 2019
Cabinet Office

This document is based on the provisions of Article 9 of the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Act No. 133 of 2003), and it is intended to make a report on the general situation of the declining birthrate and an overview of the measures taken to address the declining birthrate.

This report is submitted to the Diet each year in line with the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate. This is the 16th edition.

The Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Act No. 133 of 2003)

Article 9 The government must submit to the Diet each year a report concerning the state of the declining birthrate and an outline of measures it has taken to deal with the declining birthrate.

Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- 1 Trends and projections of Japan's total population and demographic structure
- 2 Trends in the number of live births and birthrate
- 3 Trends in marriage and childbirth
- 4 Attitudes towards marriage
- 5 Attitudes towards childbirth and childrearing
- 6 Attitudes towards marriage and childrearing - focusing on "the opinion poll for measurement for the declining birthrate" - (Special Topic)
- 7 Prefectural comparison

Chapter 2 Efforts to Deal with the Declining Birthrate

Section 1 Past efforts

Section 2 Mitigation of the burden of childrearing – initiatives to introduce free access to education - (Special Topic)

Part 2 Implementation Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Further enhancement of child care support measures.

Section 2 Development of an environment in which hopes for marriage and childbirth can be realized

Section 3 Creating an environment in which it is easier to have three children

Section 4 Promotion of work style reform for men and women

Section 5 Strengthening of initiatives tailored to actual regional circumstances

Chapter 2 Promotion of Precise Measures against the Declining Birthrate

Section 1 Support for each different stage of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing

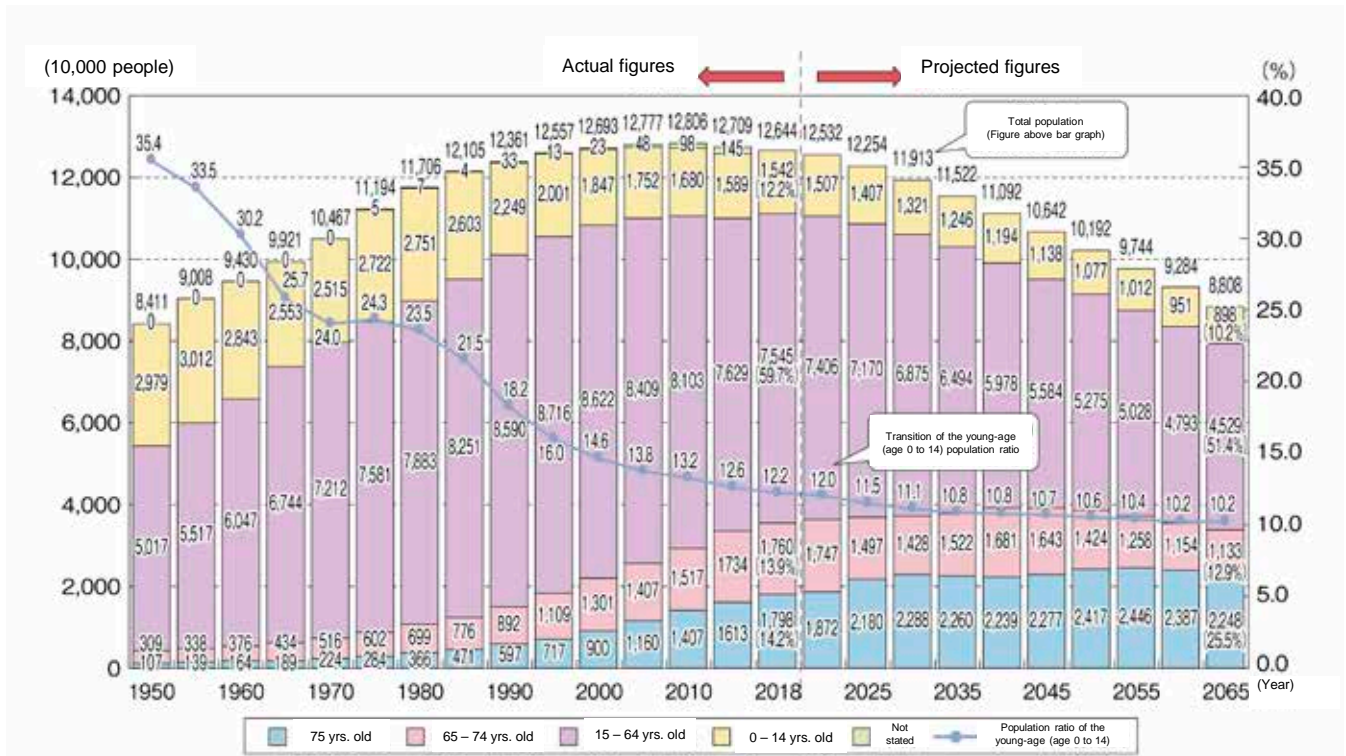
Section 2 Promotion of measures against the declining birthrate through actions by society as a whole

Topics

- Countermeasures against the declining birthrate in Germany
- Regarding gift tax exemption on lump-sum gifts for education and for marriage and childcare
- Support for marriage and childrearing utilizing AI
- Thanks Dad Project
- Declining birthrate initiatives conducted in tandem by several local authorities
- Experience-based life design programs
- Childrearing Support Consortium

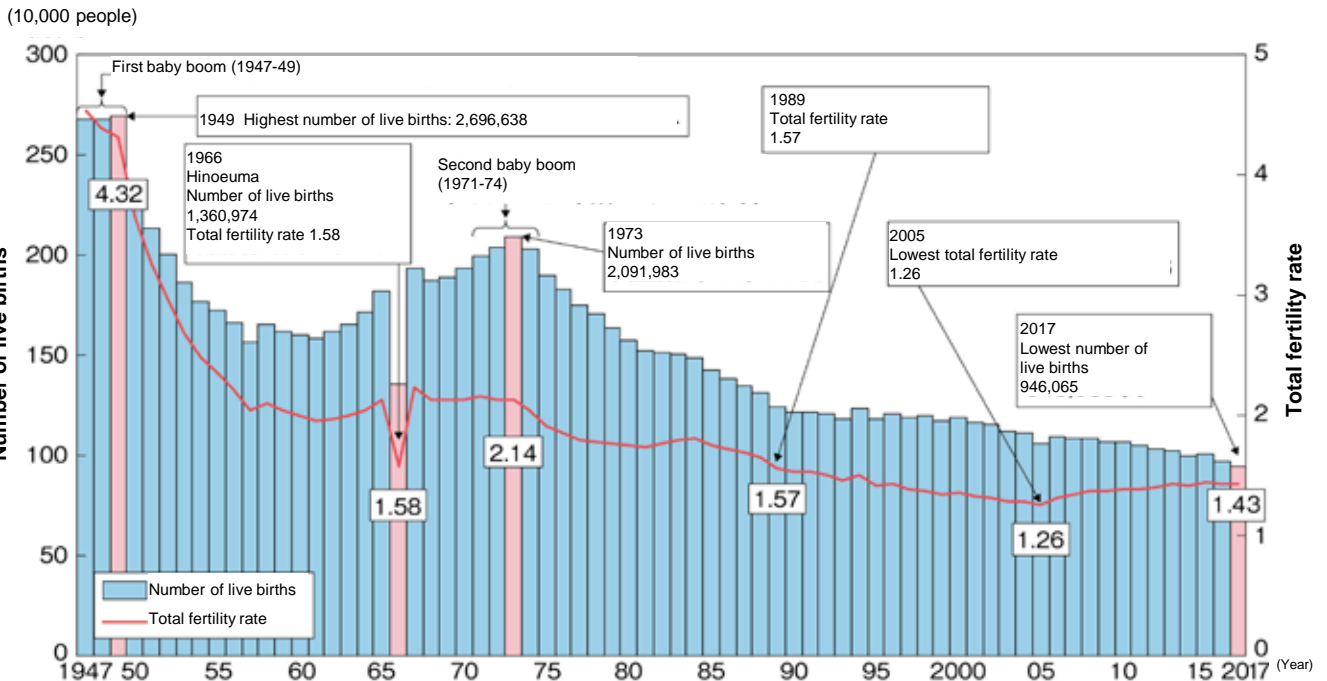
Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- Japan's total population was 126.71 mil. as of 2018.
- The young-age (age 0 to 14), working-age (age 15 to 64), and old-age (65 or older) populations are 15.42 mil., 75.45 mil. and 35.58 mil., respectively, being equivalent to 12.2%, 59.7%, and 28.1% of the total population.



Source: The results are based on MIC's Population Census up to 2015; as for 2018, MIC's "Population Estimates" (Final estimates as of October 1, 2018); and as for 2020 onward, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan (the 2017 estimate) for the medium-fertility and medium-mortality projections."

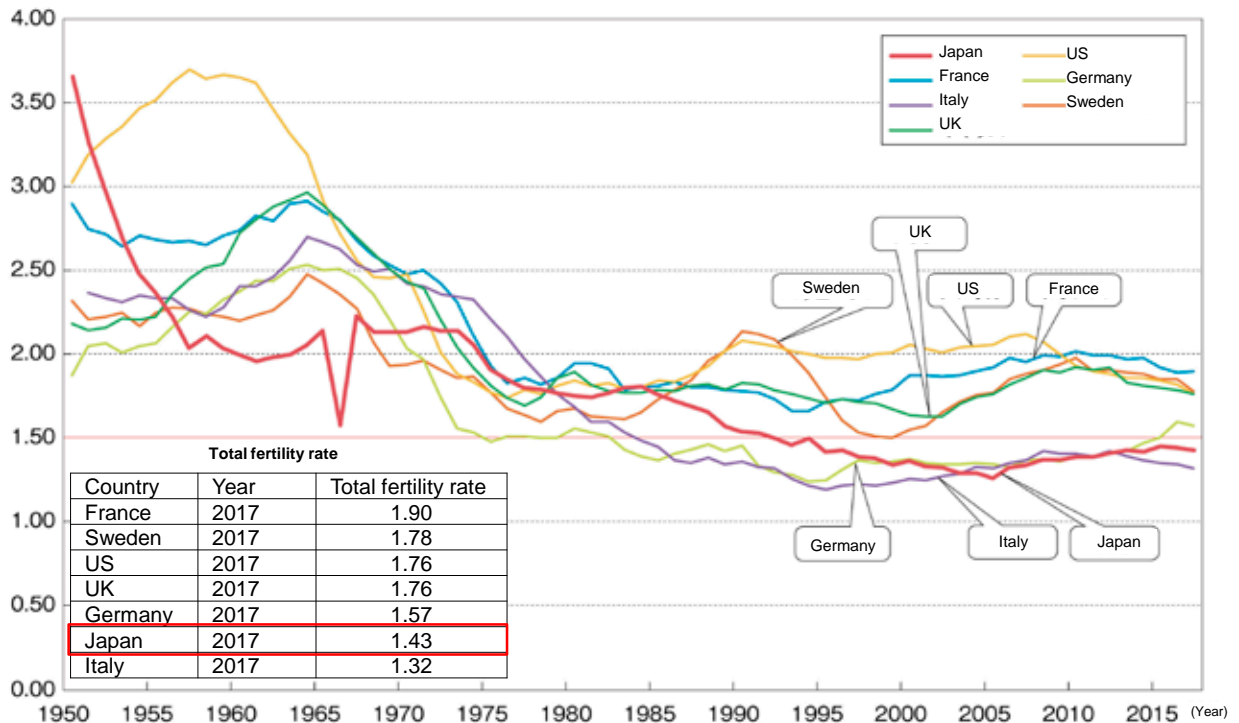
- The number of births in 2017, which was 946,065, fell below one mil., as was the case in the previous year.
- Looking at the total fertility rate, recent years had witnessed a very minor rise but it was down by 0.01% in 2017 compared to 2016.



Source: "Vital Statistics," by the MHLW

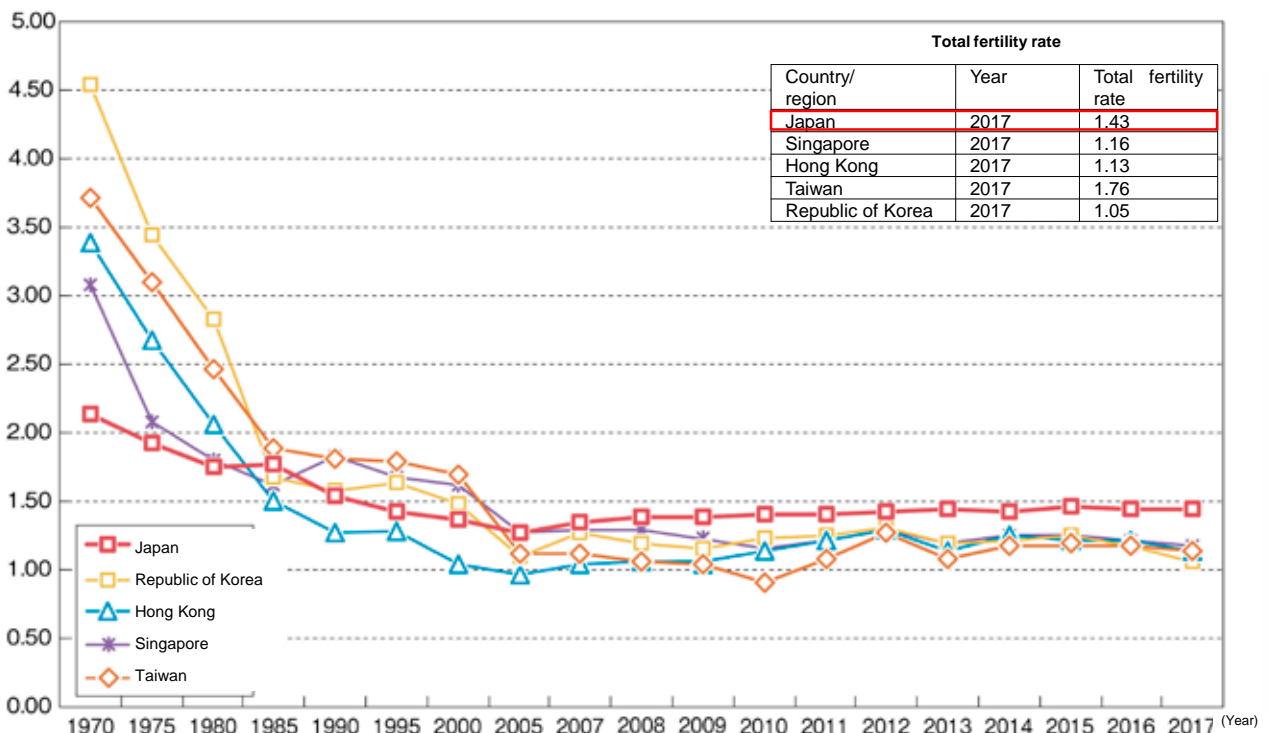
Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- The total fertility rate in some countries (France, Sweden, the US, the UK, Germany and Italy) declined from 1970 to around 1980 as a whole. In some countries, however, the rate has recovered since around 1990.



Source: The numbers regarding countries other than Japan were from sources including “Demographic Yearbook” by United Nations for the years up to 1959, OECD Family database for the years between 1960 and 2016, and the statistics in each country for the year 2017. The numbers regarding Japan are based on “Vital Statistics” by the MHLW.

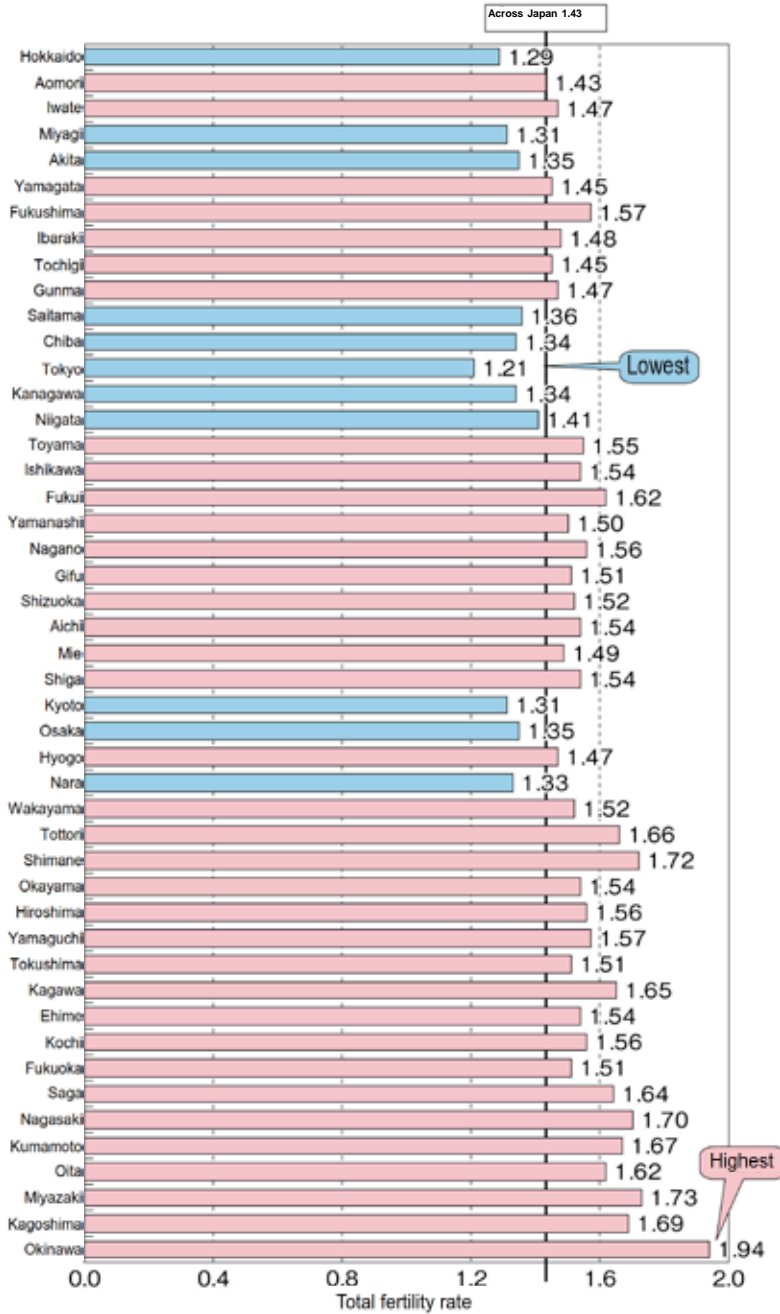
- Looking at the transition of the total fertility rate in Singapore, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan among the countries and regions in Asia, all maintained a level higher than Japan as of the year 1970. However, they have shown a declining trend, and today the total fertility rate in these countries and regions falls below the replacement-level fertility rate.



Source: The numbers are cited from statistics in each country and city. As for Japan the numbers are based on “Vital Statistics” by the MHLW.

Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

• The total fertility rate of Japan was 1.43 in 2017. Among the 47 prefectures, 35 prefectures exceeded this rate. Okinawa had the highest total fertility rate (1.94), followed by Miyazaki (1.73). The lowest was Tokyo (1.21), followed by Hokkaido (1.29).



Prefecture	2017 (Final) (a)	2016 (Final)	2005 (Final) (b)	Change (a)-(b)
Hokkaido	1.29	1.29	1.15	0.14
Aomori	1.43	1.48	1.29	0.14
Iwate	1.47	1.45	1.41	0.06
Miyagi	1.31	1.34	1.24	0.07
Akita	1.35	1.39	1.34	0.01
Yamagata	1.45	1.47	1.45	0.00
Fukushima	1.57	1.59	1.49	0.08
Ibaraki	1.48	1.47	1.32	0.16
Tochigi	1.45	1.46	1.40	0.05
Gunma	1.47	1.48	1.39	0.08
Saitama	1.36	1.37	1.22	0.14
Chiba	1.34	1.35	1.22	0.12
Tokyo	1.21	1.24	1.00	0.21
Kanagawa	1.34	1.36	1.19	0.15
Niigata	1.41	1.43	1.34	0.07
Toyama	1.55	1.50	1.37	0.18
Ishikawa	1.54	1.53	1.35	0.19
Fukui	1.62	1.65	1.50	0.12
Yamanashi	1.50	1.51	1.38	0.12
Nagano	1.56	1.59	1.46	0.10
Gifu	1.51	1.54	1.37	0.14
Shizuoka	1.52	1.55	1.39	0.13
Aichi	1.54	1.56	1.34	0.20
Mie	1.49	1.51	1.36	0.13
Shiga	1.54	1.56	1.39	0.15
Kyoto	1.31	1.34	1.18	0.13
Osaka	1.35	1.37	1.21	0.14
Hyogo	1.47	1.49	1.25	0.22
Nara	1.33	1.36	1.19	0.14
Wakayama	1.52	1.50	1.32	0.20
Tottori	1.66	1.60	1.47	0.19
Shimane	1.72	1.75	1.50	0.22
Okayama	1.54	1.56	1.37	0.17
Hiroshima	1.56	1.57	1.34	0.22
Yamaguchi	1.57	1.58	1.38	0.19
Tokushima	1.51	1.51	1.26	0.25
Kagawa	1.65	1.64	1.43	0.22
Ehime	1.54	1.54	1.35	0.19
Kochi	1.56	1.47	1.32	0.24
Fukuoka	1.51	1.50	1.26	0.25
Saga	1.64	1.63	1.48	0.16
Nagasaki	1.70	1.71	1.45	0.25
Kumamoto	1.67	1.66	1.46	0.21
Oita	1.62	1.65	1.40	0.22
Miyazaki	1.73	1.71	1.48	0.25
Kagoshima	1.69	1.68	1.49	0.20
Okinawa	1.94	1.95	1.72	0.22
Across Japan	1.43	1.44	1.26	0.17

Source: "Vital Statistics," by the MHLW

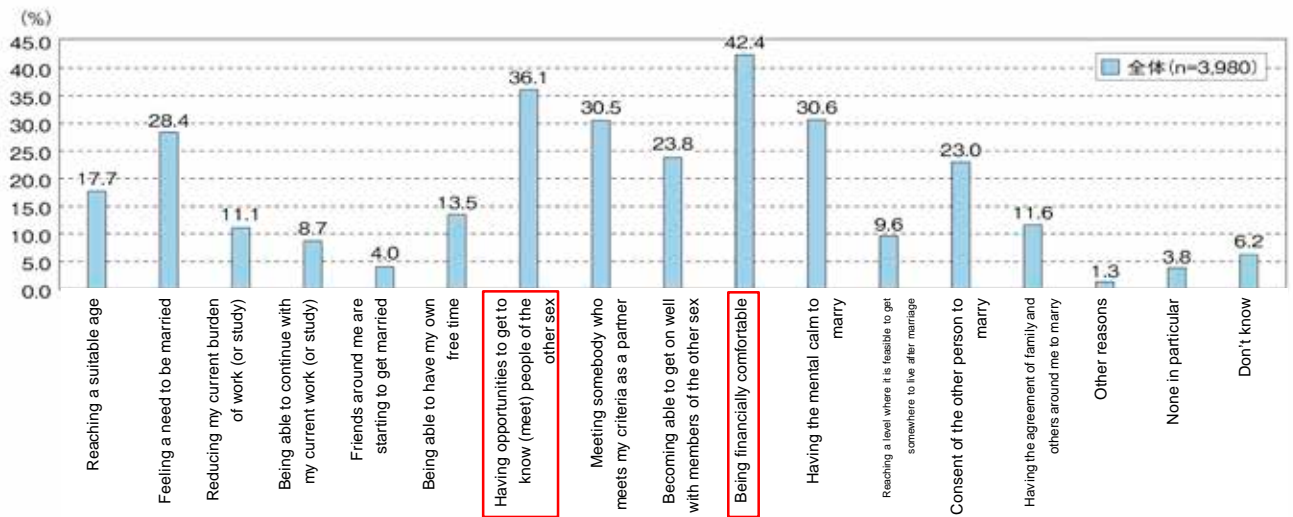
Special Topic 1 Attitudes towards marriage and childrearing - focusing on “the opinion poll for measurement for the declining birthrate”

1 Attitudes towards marriage: Survey on the requisite conditions for marriage

- The obstacles to realizing the wish to marry include financial burden and decline in opportunities to meet potential partners, and the difficulty of finding a match due to the disparity between the ideal demanded of marriage partners and their reality. In addition, there are many people who would like to marry but are not taking any concrete steps to look for a partner.
- There is a need to further enrich support for those who want to marry but cannot achieve that goal or are not taking any concrete steps towards achieving it by preparing an economic bedrock in which the young generation can foresee married life, supporting their life (career) planning, an increasing opportunities for participation in varied activities inside and outside the workplace.

(1) What sort of conditions are needed for you to consider marriage?

The highest response (42.4%) was “being financially comfortable”, followed by “having opportunities to get to know (meet) people of the other sex”(36.1%).



(2) Specific content of those who responded that they want to marry but “haven’t encountered the right sort of person”

42.6% respondents said “as there are few (or no) unmarried people around me who are in the same generation, there are hardly any opportunities for me to meet someone.”

(3) Specific action to search for a partner taken by those who responded “haven’t encountered the right sort of person”

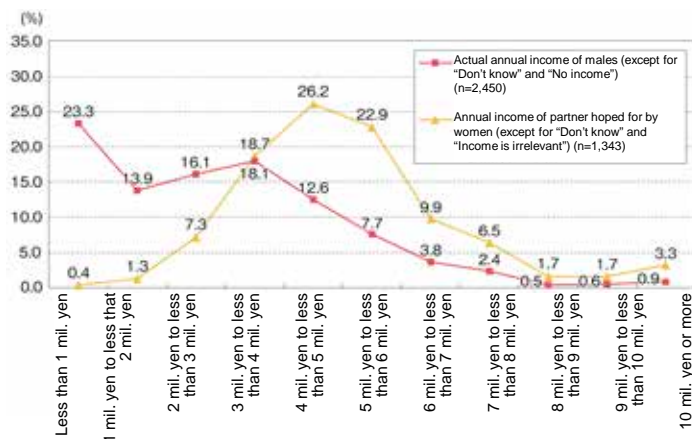
Around 60% responded “I haven’t taken any particular action.” This rate was comparatively higher among men than women, regardless of age group.

(4) Ideal opportunity to meet marriage partner

“I don’t mind where” and “in the workplace or through work” drew large numbers of responses, with and “in the workplace or through work” particularly high among women in their 20s.

(5) Ideal annual income of marriage partner

Compared to women the responses of “Under 3 mil. yen” and “income is irrelevant” were high, whilst among women the response of “4 mil. yen or more” was higher than among men. When the actual distribution of income among men and women is compared, there is a particular gap between what women regard as the ideal income and the actual state of men’s income.



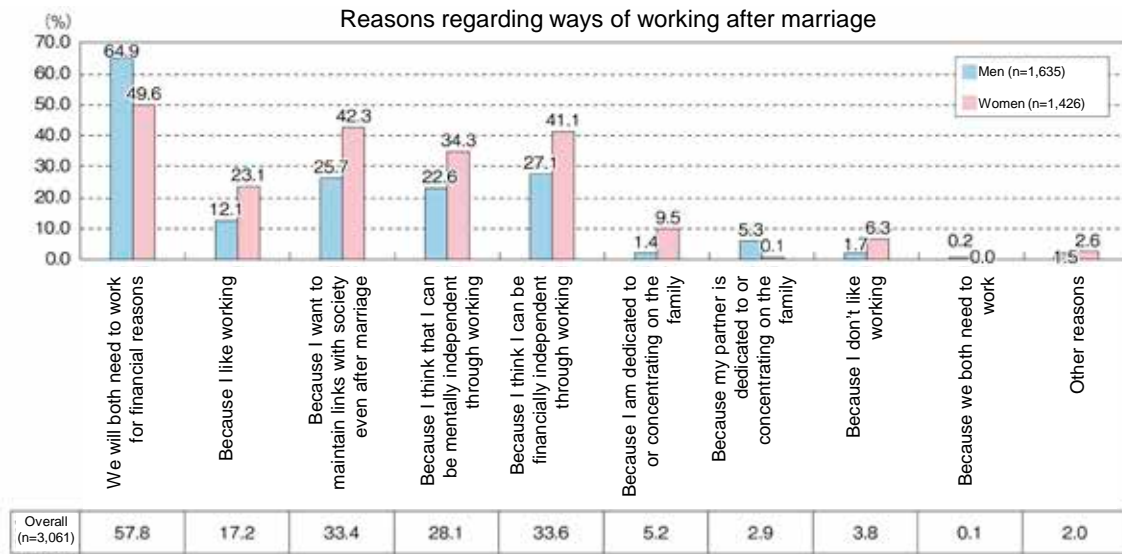
Special Topic 1 Attitudes towards marriage and childrearing - focusing on “the opinion poll for measurement for the declining birthrate”

2 Attitudes to the ways couples work, and housework and childrearing

- The volition of men towards participating in housework and childrearing is not in fact low. Based on the fact that the time spent on housework and childrearing by Japanese husbands with children under six years of age is at the lowest level among advanced nations, and the fact that there is a positive correlation between the state of the birth of second or later children and time spent by husbands on housework and childrearing during days off work, it is essential that a workplace environment that enables the enthusiastic participation of men in housework and childrearing is created.
- In addition to improved governmental support, in order to aim for the realization of a friendly society in which childrearing parents do not become isolated, and feel that they are being supported by a diversity of people, it is vital that there is a common awareness across the whole of society about the importance of marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing.

(1) Ways of working after marriage

Over 60% of respondents said that they expected to “Work simultaneously with their spouses” after marriage. The most commonly cited response for this (57.8%) was that “We will both need to work for financial reasons.”



(2) Whose role do you think that housework and childrearing in the home is?

The largest response (44.6%) was “wife and husband should do an equal amount,” followed by “basically it is the wife’s role, with the husband just offering support,” and “whichever one is able to do it” accounting for 18.7%.

(3) Regarding time spent by yourself on housework and childrearing

The largest response overall was that the time spent was “just right.” When comparing married couples with children the responses “short” and “too short” were high among men while among women the responses “long” and “too long” were high among women. With regard to increases in free time more men than women responded “I think it will increase,” while more women than men responded that either it would “stay the same” or “decrease.”

(4) Why do you think that the rate of taking childcare leave among Japanese men is so low?

“Those around me are too busy and the atmosphere makes it difficult to ask for leave” accounted for 49.4% of responses. A higher proportion of women than men responded that “I don’t particularly feel taking leave is necessary for men” and “Because of fears that taking childcare leave will affect subsequent career.”

(5) Intention to take childcare leave of those who are pregnant or wish to have children

“Certainly want to take” and “On the whole would like to take” amounted to a combined total of around 70% of responses.

(6) People or places around respondents that can help with the physical and mental burden of childrearing

The highest response was “Spouse/partner” (67.3%), followed on 54.8% by “Own parents or spouse/partners’ parents.” Those responding “Public childcare services provided by local authorities” accounted for only 6.8% of responses.

(7) Evaluation of current countermeasures against the declining birthrate (marriage/pregnancy/childbirth/childrearing support etc.)

“Inadequate in qualitatively and quantitatively” accounted for 61.7% of responses. Details of responses were high in the following order: “Reduction of the number of children on waiting lists (pre-school and school age children),” “Mitigation of financial burden of education” and “Mitigation of financial burden of marriage.”

(8) Is Japan heading towards a society friendly to marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing?

An overall of 45.2% responded either that they “think so” or “on the whole think so.”

Special Topic 2 Mitigation of the burden of childrearing – initiatives to introduce free access to education –

1 Overview of the introduction of free early childhood education and care

Main purpose –Countermeasures against the declining birthrate to mitigate the financial burden of households, and the importance of early childhood education as a basis for the lifelong formation of one's character

1 Kindergartens, day care centers, and centers for early childhood education and care, etc.

For 3-to-5-year-olds: Introducing free of charge use of kindergartens, day care centers, centers for early childhood education and care, municipal-level childcare services, corporate childcare(standard usage fees)

- * With regard to kindergartens that are not eligible for the new system, free care will be provided up to the amount of 25,700 yen (8,700 yen for kindergartens attached to national universities and 400 yen for national school for special needs education).
- * The introduction of free early childhood education and care will not cover expenses directly paid by guardians (transportation expenses, meal expenses and event fees, etc.) The stance that guardians will pay for meal expenses remains unchanged, and those for 3-to-5-year-olds will in principle be charged by the facilities. Exemption of fees for non-staple foods for those from low-income households will be continued, and the range of those eligible expanded to include households with annual income of less than 3.6 million yen.

For 0-2-year-olds: Introduction of free use of the above facilities for those from households exempted from municipal resident tax

2 Extended childcare services at kindergartens

In case of "Need for childcare" is recognized, in addition to the financial support provided for the use of kindergartens, free extended childcare services at kindergartens for up to 11,300 yen per month will be introduced according to state of usage.

3 Unlicensed childcare institutions etc.

For 3-to-5-year-olds: In case of "Need for childcare" is recognized free usage will be introduced up to a ceiling of the national monthly average for day care fees at unlicensed childcare institutions (37,000 per month)

For 0-to-2-year-olds: In case of "Need for childcare" is recognized free usage will be introduced up to a ceiling of 42,000 yen per month for children from households exempted from municipal resident tax

In order to secure and improve quality at unlicensed childcare institutions, initiatives aimed at better instruction and monitoring and support for their transition to day care centers will be implemented.

4 Proportion of burdens

The government will bear half the burden, the prefectures one quarter, and cities, towns and villages one quarter. However, the entire cost of public facilities will be borne by cities, towns and villages for public facilities (kindergartens, day care centers, and center for ECEC).

*During the first year (2019) the entire expenses required will be paid for by the national government. In addition, a degree of discretionary measures will be taken with regard to administrative and systems costs.

5 Others

The usage costs for free development support for pre-school aged children with disabilities from 3-to 5-years of age will also become free, including when kindergartens or day care centers, etc. are used alongside.

Period of implementation: from October 1, 2019

2 Outline of the system to introduce free access to higher education

Types of schools eligible for support: universities, junior colleges, higher professional schools, and vocational schools ("universities etc.")

Support details: (1) [creation of a system for tuition fee etc. reduction/exemption](#) and (2) [expanded payment of grant-type scholarship program](#).

Eligible students: Those from households with exemptions from residence tax or households with semi-exemptions (will apply to students attending school (including those already at school) from 2020.)

Financing source: the financial resources from the rise in the consumption tax will be used as countermeasures to address the declining birthrate. The portion paid for by the government will be included in the Cabinet Office budget as social insurance costs, and the executing party shall be the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Schedule for the next couple of years

2019 around July: Reserved acceptance procedures start

2019 Summer or later: Announcement of eligible universities

April 2020 onwards: student support starts

Tuition fee etc. reduction/exemption

The universities, etc. shall implement reductions/exemptions to tuition fees, etc. up to the ceiling amounts shown below. Expenses required for reduction/exemption will be borne by the national government

(Ceiling amount for tuition fee reductions/exemptions (annual amount) (households with exemptions from residence tax))

	National universities		Private universities	
	Enrollment fee	Tuition fee	Enrollment fee	Tuition fee
Universities	Approx. 280,000 yen	Approx. 540,000 yen	Approx. 260,000 yen	Approx. 700,000 yen
Junior Colleges	Approx. 170,000 yen	Approx. 390,000 yen	Approx. 250,000 yen	Approx. 620,000 yen
Higher Professional Schools	Approx. 80,000 yen	Approx. 230,000 yen	Approx. 130,000 yen	Approx. 700,000 yen
Vocational Schools	Approx. 70,000 yen	Approx. 170,000 yen	Approx. 160,000 yen	Approx. 590,000 yen

Grant-type scholarships

Paid to each student by Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)

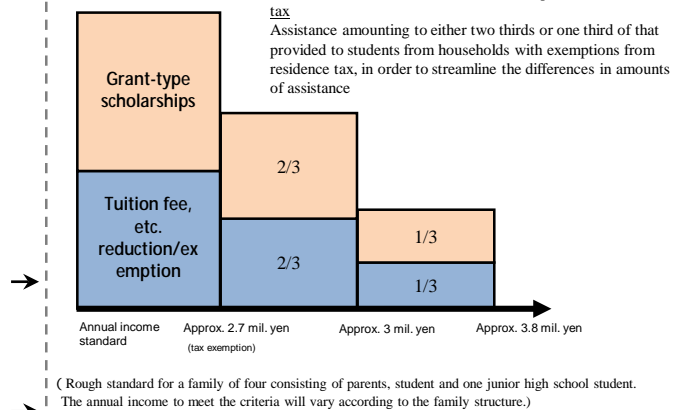
A measure to ensure students can cover the essential costs of student life and devote themselves to their studies.

(Amount of grant-type scholarships (annual) (households with exemptions from residence tax))

National and public universities, junior colleges, vocational colleges	Living at home: approx. 350,000 yen Not living at home: approx. 800,000 yen
National and public higher professional schools	Living at home: approx. 210,000 yen Not living at home: approx. 410,000 yen
Private universities, junior colleges, vocational colleges	Living at home: approx. 460,000 yen Not living at home: approx. 910,000 yen
Private higher professional colleges	Living at home: approx. 320,000 yen Not living at home: approx. 520,000 yen

Students from households with semi-exemptions from residence tax

Assistance amounting to either two thirds or one third of that provided to students from households with exemptions from residence tax, in order to streamline the differences in amounts of assistance



Conditions for recipients of assistance

Before proceeding to further education students will not be judged negatively solely on the basis of their academic achievement, and their volition to learn will be checked through reports etc.

There are stringent conditions concerning the state of students' studies after entering universities etc.

Conditions for universities

Universities, etc. must have undergone the checking of conditions by the government or local authority.
Universities that strike a balance between pursuit of learning and practical education.
Universities, etc. run by foundations that have management problems are not eligible.

Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Further enhancement of child care support measures

- 1 Smooth implementation of the children and childrearing system
- 2 Reducing the number of children on waiting lists
- 3 Breaking “the barrier of elementary-school first-grade children”

Section 2 Development of environment in which hope for marriage and childbirth can be realized

1 Stable economic basis

(Stable employment of young people) (Promotion of economic support for the young generation by the older generation) (Mitigation of financial burdens of young and low-income people)

2 Support for marriage

(Governmental support for local governments and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which provides marriage support)

Section 3 Creating an environment in which it is easier to have three children

1 Mitigating burdens in various aspects of households with many children

Section 4 Promotion of work style reform for men and women

1 Reforming men’s attitudes and behavior

(Correction of long working hours) (review personnel evaluation systems etc., and reform the attitudes of business directors and managerial staff) (Promotion of men taking childcare leave immediately after their spouse giving birth)

2 Work-life balance and women’s advancement in the workplace

(Improving the environment toward work-life balance) (Promotion of female participation and advancement)

Section 5 Strengthening of initiatives tailored to actual regional circumstances

- 1 Support for regional measures by taking advantage of their strengths
- 2 Promotion of initiatives in tandem with regional revitalization

Detailing in main the measures taken in FY2018 regarding the specific state of implementation of measures relating to the declining birthrate in line with the framework of the Outline of Measures for Society with Decreasing Birthrate.

Chapter 2 Promotion of Precise Measures against the Declining Birthrate

Section 1 Support for each different stage of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing

1 Marriage

2 Pregnancy and childbirth

(Construction of seamless support systems from pregnancy to childrearing) (Prevention of harassment over pregnancy and childbirth etc.)

(Mitigation of the financial burden of pregnancy and childbirth, improvement of consultation support) (securing and improving medical care in perinatal period etc.) (support for infertility treatment etc.) (measures to promote healthy bodies and prevent the infection of mothers)

3 Childrearing

(Reduction of childrearing and the financial burden of education) (Support for various people who help raise children and grandchildren)

(Improvement of a house where children grow healthily and safely) (Enhancement of the healthcare system for children) (Children’s sound growth)

(Popularization and encouragement of food education, and promotion of various experience activities) (Improvement of communities’ safety) (Support for single parent families)

(Prevention of child abuse and enhancement of social care) (Efforts to support children with disabilities)

(Support for children and young people including those not in education, employment or training, or suffering from social withdrawal (“hikikomori”))

4 Child poverty

5 Education

Section 2 Promotion of measures against the declining birthrate through actions by society as a whole

1. Creation of a society friendly to marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing

(Popularization and diffusion of maternity badges and baby buggy signs) (Awarding exemplary cases and providing information)

(Improvement of facilities and environment to make it easier for pregnant women, mothers and children to go outdoors) (Preferential services for persons with children)

2. Corporate initiatives

(Improving the visibility of corporate countermeasures against the low birthrate society and support for balance) (Contributing to incentives regarding corporate initiatives to counter the declining birthrate)

Countermeasures against the declining birthrate in Germany

An introduction is provided regarding the government family policies that are said to have led to a recovery in contemporary Germany's birthrate, based on initiatives to close the gap between male and female paid and unpaid work, and the hints offered to Japan's policy on the declining birthrate.

Regarding gift tax exemption on lump-sum gifts for education and for marriage and childcare

An introduction is provided to the gift tax exemption on lump-sum gifts for educational funds and marriage and childrearing funds, the application of which was deferred to March 31, 2021 as a result of the FY2019 tax reforms.

Support for marriage and childrearing utilizing AI

An introduction is provided to the initiatives of regional public authorities to support marriage and childrearing using AI.

- (1) Effective and efficient marriage support using AI and systems in Ehime Prefecture.
- (2) Transmission of information to childrearing households in Shibuya Ward using AI



Automatic response service using AI

Thanks Dad Project

An introduction is provided to the Thanks Dad Project that seeks to promote the taking of leave by men on the day a child is born, when the baby comes home from the hospital and the date their birth is registered. A promotional event held on October 2, 2018 is also covered.



The event at Tamahiyo Family Park, Yokohama

Declining birthrate initiatives conducted in tandem by several local authorities

An introduction is provided to local authority initiatives aimed at highly effective countermeasures against the declining birthrate.

- (1) Case study from Niigata Prefecture: Shibata City, Tainai City and Seiro Town's joint settlement and independence area marriage support project.
- (2) Case studies from Tottori and Shimane Prefectures.
- (3) Case studies from Kanagawa Prefecture and Yokohama City.

Experience-based life design programs

An introduction is provided on examples of opportunities that have been provided for participants to make life designs through experience-based learning, to support the creation of career planning among young people.

- (1) The life design creation support curriculum of Saitama Prefecture.
- (2) The student idea proposal project in Shiga Prefecture.



During the filming of a program

Childrearing Support Consortium

An introduction is provided to the Childrearing Support Consortium that was launched in July 2018, combining members from various business organizations and headed by the Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, and serves as the keystone for a national movement towards the engendering of childrearing-friendly social opportunities.



Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, Mitsuhiro Miyakoshi, speaks about his resolution to face the future