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Child care support programs for double income families in Korea

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Introduction

The birth rate in Korea in 2005 was 1.08 children per woman, the lowest in the world. This is a clear indication of the prevailing trend in Korea of 'a family without a child', and mirrors the burdens and difficulties of child care. It is particularly applicable to women in the paid workforce with children: since the gendered division of labour remains solid, these women face double responsibilities, at work and home.

In March 2005, 52.3 per cent of the working population of Korea were full time employees working under contract for a period of over one year; 33.3 per cent were temporary workers who were hired for periods between one month and one year; and 13.4 per cent were daily workers, reflecting overall low levels of job security (KNSO, 2005). Despite the low levels of job security, the increased burden of bringing up children is forcing a growing number of Korean households to become double income families.

This chapter reviews the status of child care arrangements in Korea and the difficulties faced by women in the paid workforce with children. It also puts forward suggestions as to how to address some of these difficulties. Government policies at the national level that support child care for double income families are comprehensive in nature and are also linked to tax exemption, education and other policies.

Although it is acknowledged that bringing up children requires broad social and national support, this chapter focuses specifically on maternity leave, parental leave, childcare services and family participation in child care. It is based on an analysis

of literature concerning women in the paid workforce and their use of and access to child care in Korea; in particular, it draws on the national survey on child care conducted by Seo Mun-hee et al (2005) through the sponsorship of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Families and further material from related ministries on women's issues (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005).

Maternity leave and parental leave

Since liberation from Japanese rule in 1945 and up until recently, maternity leave was the equivalent of 60 days of unpaid leave. 'Protection of motherhood' was the most important issue for the women's movement in Korea in the 1990s and, as a result, three national government bills relating to motherhood protection passed in July 2001. Ninety days *paid* maternity leave became the standard in November 2001. The costs associated with the additional 30 days were funded through employment insurance and the national budget.

As shown in Table 7.1 (below), the percentage of working women who had a child and were given paid maternity leave was 25.1 in 2003 and 31.2 in 2004. In other words, only two to three out of ten women in the paid workforce who gave birth received paid maternity leave.

Since November 2001, when the Motherhood Protection Laws were revised in Korea, any male or female worker with a child under one year of age could take paid parental leave and was entitled to receive W200,000 (equivalent of US \$200) per month for 10.5 months in addition to 90 days paid maternity leave. From 2003, the monthly allowance for parental leave was increased to W400,000 (US \$400) but still fell short of the minimum monthly wage of W567,260. Table 7.1 (following) shows that only an estimated 25.1 per cent of all women workers in 2003 and 31.2 per cent in 2004 took maternity leave after they gave birth. Such a low rate can be attributed to the fact that maternity leave was granted only to employment insurance beneficiaries.

Table 7.1. Statistics of maternity & parental leave of women workers (2003, 2004) unit: persons, %

Numbers	2003	2004
Newborns (a)	493,471	476,052
Women workers who gave birth (estimates) (b)*	127,809	123,297
Women workers who took maternity leave (c)	32,133	38,541
Women workers who took the parental leave (d)	6816	9303
Rate of maternity leave among women workers (c/b x 100)	25.1	31.2
Rate of parental leave among women workers (c/d x 100)	5.3	7.5

Source: Korea National Statistical Office, 2003. (2004a)

(* b= (a) x 25.9(%))¹

As at the end of 2004, more than 9.5 million women were economically active. However, the number of women insured was only 1.5 million, or 16 per cent of the economically active female population (Ministry of Labour, 2004; KNSO, 2004c). As stated above, maternity leave is granted only to employment

¹ According to Hwang Su-kyong's analysis of the 5th Korea Labour Panel (2002) survey data, 54.5% of married women, from newly married to before first childbirth, hold jobs. But during the peak of their child care period, which is usually after the first childbirth until the youngest child becomes two years old, only 25.9% of women held jobs (2004: 111–12). 4411 women were selected for the sample analysis. Supposing the sample analysis represents a general picture, 25.9% is believed to be the rate of women working after they gave birth.

insurance beneficiaries, and 61.3 per cent of women workers as of December 2005 were temporary workers with employment contracts for less than one year (KNSO, 2005). Therefore, the institutionalisation of maternity leave has little impact on the lives of most working mothers.

Table 7.1 also shows that 5.3 per cent of women in the paid workforce in 2003 and 7.5 per cent in 2004 were assumed to have taken *parental* leave, which is much lower than the take up of *maternity* leave. The first possible reason for this is that parental leave, like maternity leave, is granted only to employment insurance beneficiaries. The second reason is that resignation due to childbirth is still dominant in Korea's entrepreneurial culture. As explained by the woman in the example quoted below, as long as parental leave is not made compulsory as it is for national defence commitments, it is unlikely to be practised effectively:

I am working for a finance company that has relatively good welfare programs, however, thus far only one person has taken parental leave. Everyone said she was very bold. Not to mention how unprecedented it was to take paid leave, everyone wonders if she would be allowed to come back to work after the one-year leave. I am pregnant. I should be happy about it but concerns outweigh the joy, when it is not certain if my desk would still be there even after the 90 day maternity leave. How can I be audacious enough to think about one year's paid parental leave? Unless the leave is made compulsory like the duty for national defence and liability to tax, no one could take the leave with any peace of mind. (Ministry of Labour, homepage, id 'moron') ("I am scared that I would hear 'why don't you take the parental leave?'" hani.co.kr 6 Oct 2002)

According to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 39.4 per cent of Korean women gave up their jobs after marriage and 12.6 per cent of them said they quit because of

disadvantages at work over pregnancy and childbirth (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005: 92–93).

In 2004 the parental leave rate increased by only two per cent over the previous year (Table 7.1). Accordingly, in 2005, the government sought various means to make parental leave for child care a viable option. Proposals included: relaxing the requirement for subsidy payment for replacement personnel and increasing the unit price of the subsidy for parental leave; implementing guidance and supervision of the parental leave system for child care; in the case of civil servants, increasing the parental leave period from the current three years to five years, (while at the same time raising the eligible child age from three years to five for mothers to apply for parental leave); and initiating active programs to encourage paternal leave (Joint Response by related Ministries and Organisations, 2005). However, positive results cannot be expected if these proposals are not supported by concrete measures.

In order for the proposal to relax requirements for subsidy payments for replacement personnel and to increase the unit price of the subsidy for parental leave to work effectively, the employer has to be able to replace the worker on leave at more or less an equal level of productivity (in terms of skills and professional qualities). When such conditions are met, the prospective mother can take parental leave without having to worry that her absence would create an extra burden for her co-workers. In March 2005, the Civil Service Commission, a government agency, established a new allowance system for paying 30,000-50,000 *won* per month to co-workers who take on extra work for those who take parental leave (Collecting opinions on running a bank for replacement manpower, 2005). It is highly questionable whether such an allowance, which amounts only to one or two per cent of the monthly salary of the employee taking leave, could effectively replace that employee. Similar problems exist with the 200,000 *won* the government pays to private companies for the leave subsidy and 100,000–150,000 *won* as a replacement subsidy.

As for the guidance and supervision plans to implement the parental leave system and the publicity plans for paternity leave, one could expect positive effects if they are implemented in parallel with subsidy programs that guarantee to meet real costs of living. If the cost of living condition is met, then the guidance and supervision and publicity programs would contribute to creating a child care-friendly culture in companies. It would also give assurance to workers that when they are ready to return to work, their job will still be there.

Further, in order to overcome the limitations of maternity and parental leave, of which the benefits are limited to those receiving employment insurance, a family allowance system should be introduced. Family allowance should apply to every child, and the payment level should be realistic enough to actually alleviate the cost burden of child care. Ways to support direct and indirect costs for women who choose to stay at home to raise children should also be considered (Lee Jae-gyeong et al, 2005). Finland, for example, began building family support systems in 1948, including the introduction of a child allowance system. Child allowance alone reached four per cent of GDP by the 1950s in Finland, and the figure has been increasing continuously since then (Park Hyon-sok, 2005).

Strong regulations at both national and international levels are also required in order to bring about changes to the practice of forcing women to quit jobs after childbirth. A female workers quota system, or the introduction of tax disincentives for enterprises with low maternity leave rates, could be part of a set of national measures. International regulations could also be considered, including regulations banning resignation due to childbirth in international agreements such as the International Standard of Corporate Social Responsibility

(ISCSR). The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is planning to finalise a draft of the International Standard of Corporate Social Responsibility to come into force by 2008. While international agreements are not binding, non-

adherence to them would place an employer organisation at a disadvantage in the international context. Women activists should therefore be forming international alliances to take advantage of such agreements.

Problems with childcare services

A survey conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Families found a clear set of priorities regarding childcare support policies for preschool children. Support for such initiatives emerged in the following order of priority: subsidies (44.7 per cent), diversity of services (18.2 per cent), expansion of public day care centres (17.8 per cent), enforcement and expansion of parental leave (8.7 per cent), better qualified teachers (5.9 per cent), better quality service (3.5 per cent), and improved childcare information (1.1 per cent) (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005: 387).

As of 2005, only 42.8 per cent of working mothers, 20.1 per cent of unemployed mothers, and 37 per cent of single fathers (or families without a mother) sent their children to day care centres, as reflected in Table 7.2 (below). Further, 40.9 per cent of working mothers sent their children to other educational institutions. Alternately, 44.5 per cent of working mothers' children were placed in the care of blood relatives, 4.7 per cent in the care of parents-in-law, and 27.6 per cent received private tutoring. It was also found that there is a general practice for the parents of children in day care centres to make use of other services as well.

Table 7.2. Status of child care¹ (unit: %, persons)

Division	Infants and kids		
	Working mothers	Non-working mothers	Children without mother
Organisations/ childcare givers	71.1	48.9	77.4
Day care centres	42.8	20.1	37.0
Other childcare service organisation (kindergarten, church kindergarten, half day institute, other institutes, study room, and others)	40.9	31.6	52.6
Relatives by blood (residing/non-residing grandparents or relatives)	44.5	6.9	79.6
Relatives-in-law (baby sitters, neighbourhood baby sitters, part-time house keepers)	4.7	0.2	3.7
Private tutoring (home visit tutoring, group tutoring, daily tutor paper)	27.6	31.2	11.3
	(984)	(1917)	(53)

Note 1: figures represent duplicate answers.
(Source: Seo Mun-hee et al (2005) (simplified of the Table 3-3-17) p 117)

In summary, problems with childcare services in Korea are to do with the lack of availability of places, the level of program quality of day care centres, and the affordability of childcare fees.

Availability of places at day care centres

In Korea working hours are long, and so for parents the distance between their home and a childcare facility presents another obstacle to child care. This issue emerged in parents' responses to a survey question that asked: "What is the most important reason for choosing a childcare/child education facility?" In the

case of day care centres, 25.6 per cent nominated the distance between home and the facility as the most important reason; in the case of preschools, this was the most important reason for 18.1 per cent of respondents.

Most pre-school programs provide transport, so the distance can take a backseat to educational programs. In the case of day care centres, it is the parents who need to take the children to the facility so the distance is more important to the working parents who have to go to work after dropping the children at the facility. (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005: 152).

About half the Korean population lives in apartment buildings, and almost every large apartment complex has an 'elderly pavilion' (a facility for the elderly) next to the children's playground; however, there are only a few day care centres for children in the apartment complexes. Every morning, in energy-scarce Korea, children are shuffled in a van from one neighbourhood to another. Nationwide, the number of day care centres within apartment complexes makes up around 2.8 per cent of the total 670 centres (Joint Response by related Ministries and Organisations, 2005: 31–32). In 2005 the government reviewed the possibility for making childcare facilities² mandatory in large apartment complexes, however, the realisation of such a policy is still an open question.

A further problem is that there are insufficient caring hours available at existing centres thus affecting availability of appropriate places. Koreans work longer hours compared with other countries in the world. In 2004, for example, the average annual working hours per person in employment was 1357 hours in the Netherlands, 1363 in Norway, 1585 in Sweden, 1669 in the UK, 1808 in the US and 1816 in Australia. In Korea, it was 2394 hours, making it the highest amongst OECD member

² Child care facilities include day care centres, pre-schools and other facilities for child care.

countries (OECD, 2006: 265). Working mothers were the subject of a Ministry of Gender Equality and Families survey in 2004 which found that they were working an average 8.4 hours a day (standard deviation 2.5 hours), 48.4 hours a week (standard deviation 18.2 hours) (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005: 444). Taking the standard deviation into consideration, this equates to 5.9 to 10.9 hours a day, and 36.2 to 60.6 hours a week. This implies that there are working mothers who work longer than 10 hours a day. Considering the daily commuting time, approximately one hour each way, a 12- to 13-hour a day nursery care service is required for double income families.

Table 7.3 (below) clearly shows the need for night time childcare services. A study done by Kim Jeong-hee and others (2004) found that mothers working as nurses, railway station workers, factory workers, journalists, social welfare specialists, bankers, public servants and others, need extra care service beyond that of regular day nurseries (whose standard hours are 7:30 am to 7:30 pm) at least twice a week, either so that they can work overtime or for other job-related activities. The breakdown of the survey data on additional needs was as follows: extra hours service, 27.9 per cent; 24-hour care, 25.8 per cent; and night-time care, 18.4 per cent.

Table 7.3. Night care needs for preschool children (unit: %, persons)

division	yes				No.	total	No. of children
	always	1-2 times a week	1-2 times a month	1-2 times a year			
구분					58.7	100.0	(2962)
	10.1~14.0	11.8~13.2	10.6~17.7	2.3~4.0	58.7	100.0	(358)

(Source: Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005. (Simplified of the Additional-Table 4-75) p 482).

There is a risk, however, that further availability of night-time child care in day care centres, will reinforce the culture of long working hours for both parents, which in turn would further decrease the potential birth rate if fathers' participation in child care is not increased. While the immediate need for night time care in day care centres should not be ignored, it is more desirable to have fathers' participation in child care increased and overall working hours reduced.

Program quality and affordability in day care centres

The shortage of day care centres does not appear to be the only reason why only 42.8 per cent of working mothers (as shown in Table 7.2) send their children to day care centres. It appears also to relate to the lack of quality services at the centres. Survey results indicate that 36 per cent of working mothers either do not want to send their children to day care centres or were undecided. Of non-working mothers, 23 per cent stated that they would prefer to have a job but felt there was no service to which they could entrust their children (Seo Mun-he et al, 2005: 230, 295).

High quality care and education are composed of various aspects, however, in Korea, the teacher is considered as most important. According to Lee Mihwa et al (2005: 110), 25.7 per cent of nursery school teachers were paid under 790,000 *won* (US\$790) monthly; 27.7 per cent were paid 800,000-999,000 *won*; 22.7 per cent were paid 1-1.19 million *won*; 17.1 per cent were paid 1.2-1.39 million *won*; and 6.8 per cent were paid more than 1.4 million *won*. Compared to the average monthly wage of Korean workers, which is 1,750,421 *won*, nursery school teaching is a low paying job (Ministry of Labour, 2005). Such poor working conditions are directly linked to very limited work experience in the field. In 2004, teachers with less than one year's work experience accounted for the highest percentage (32.2 per cent) of those employed in the field; those with 1-2 years' experience made up 21.6 per cent; and those with 2-3 years' experience, 18.4 per cent. Therefore, teachers with less

than three years' experience constituted 72.2 per cent of working nursery teachers (Lee Mihwa et al, 2005: 108). This highlights the fact that due to poor conditions it is unlikely that childcare workers will be highly trained professionals with long-term work experience.

In Korean society, teaching at a day care centre is considered a '3D' (difficult, dirty, dangerous) occupation with low wages and poor working conditions. Day care centre teachers are mostly high school graduates who have completed only a one-year course at 'nursing teacher' training centres, rather than a four-year college education majoring in early childhood development or kindergarten education, a further factor in the lack of quality care or education in child care.

Despite dissatisfaction with the quality of child care, there has been no policy response from the government apart from the introduction in 2005 of a childcare facilities certification program. The government's intention in introducing this system was to induce childcare facilities to provide high quality services. However, no specific compensation plans were made for certified childcare facilities. More recently, a discussion has begun on developing a standard childcare procedure. This standard procedure, which is still in the development stage at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, distinguishes six areas of development and life activities for children: social relations, communication, physical development, artistic experience, and exploration of natural science (Kim Jeong-won & Kim Il-ok, 2005). A key concern of bio-feminism (the Korean version of eco-feminism) is that children should grow up healthy in body and mind (Kim Jeong-hee, 1998, 2005a,b,c). From this perspective, it is of great concern that current standard procedures do not specify outdoor play, which is essential for children's physical development.

According to research conducted outside Korea on outdoor play, children who grew up playing outdoors developed faster physically, were able to concentrate better, and were less

frequently sick; also, their play was more diverse, imaginary and creative (Moore, 2000, cited in Lee Boo-mi, 2001: 86). In studies conducted in Korea, it was also revealed that children who engage in outdoor activities almost everyday were more sociable than children in childcare who did not have such programs (Woo Namhee & Koo Hyuna, 2000).

Outdoor activity is viewed as an integrated sphere in which all six areas of development listed in the standard childcare procedure can take place. As shown in Table 7.4 (below), many day care centres in Korea do not have an adequate number of teachers and assistants, often limiting the capacity for children to have outdoor activities. However, there are around 300 childcare facilities that are part of Children's Houses for Cooperative Childcare or the Eco-Infant Cooperative, both of which have major programs that include outdoor field trips, walks, and growing vegetables, in contrast to all other childcare facilities, where such outdoor activities do not take place.

Day care centres in private homes or shopping malls that are licensed have fewer than 20 children, but do not necessarily have a garden. In larger facilities, the situation is not much different because there is no law stipulating that there have to be outdoor play areas. Consequently a child may stay inside all day, and in some cases into the night too, giving rise to a serious policy issue about the quality of child care. The standard childcare procedures currently under development should clearly specify the percentage of outdoor activities that should be compulsory or should specifically nominate compulsory outdoor activities. If outdoor activities are included as a daily requirement, the teacher-child ratio must be reduced, which means the number of teachers in day care centres must be increased.

Table 7.4 (following) shows child-teacher ratios in the three types of cooperative day care centres where high quality education takes place. These centres are part of a work-based consortium with extensive support from companies and from existing day care centres.

Table 7.4. Child vs. Teacher ratio

Age (month)	Existing day care centre	Cooperative childcare	Consortium type day care centre at work	Paedology (age x 3)
1~12	1:3	1: 2~3	1:3	1: 2~3
12~24	1:5	1: 3	1:4	1: 3~6
24~36	1:7	1: 5~7	1:6	1: 6~9
36~48	1:15	1: 7~10	1:11	1: 9~12
48~60	1:20	1: 10~13	1:14	1: 12~15
After school hours	1:20	1: 13		

(Sources: Ministry of Gender Equality & Families (2004), Cooperative childcare and Communitarian Education (2000), Statistics about the consortium type at work are from telephone interviews.)

Low quality services in day care centres, as discussed above, encourage parents to turn to additional educational institutions. Stay-at-home mothers collect their children from day care centres at around 2 to 3 pm and send them to other educational institutions. Children of working mothers also leave day nurseries before closing hour and go to other institutions. For example, 46.5 per cent of children of working mothers and 30.1 per cent of children of non-working mothers attend more than two nursery/educational services (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005: 101). Stay-at-home mothers certainly have more time to look after children's study by themselves than working mothers, which drives the latter to have their children engaged in more educational programs.

Considering that Korea is a highly educated society where almost half the high school graduates enter college (45.4 per cent in 2004), a key policy consideration should be to improve the educational skill of nursery teachers. Investment in retraining teachers and in increasing their numbers is required. This in turn requires an increase in the government's childcare support

budget. As mentioned in the above Ministry of Gender Equality and Family research, childcare costs would need to increase by 2.5 to 3.5 times to improve the quality of childcare (Park Gi-baek et al, 2005).

Increased costs would place pressure on parents. In 2004, average monthly nursery and education expenses for preschool children were W235,000 (US\$235), with the lowest being W3000 (US\$3) and the highest W1,440,000 (US\$1440). Average monthly nursery and education expenses for one child were W172,580 (US\$173) (the expenses includes that for children who received a fee waiver or discount), and for two children, twice the amount, at W344,840 (US\$345.) Average monthly nursery and education expenses for children in the care of in-law relatives was W445,200 (US\$445), with a standard deviation of W250,500 (US\$250) (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005: 118, 121, 313). Among additional expenses for extra education programs, childcare subsidies (44.7 per cent) takes the highest priority, followed by diversity of available programs (18.2%), by those surveyed (Seo Mun-hee et al, 2005: 387).

As a percentage of GDP, child care/child education costs per child in 2001 in Korea were low at \$US1913 compared to the OECD average of US\$41871. The percentage of GDP for providing support to childcare/child education facilities for children over three years of age was 0.1 per cent in Korea compared to the OECD average of 0.4 per cent (OECD, 2004a, b). If the absence of family allowances in Korea is also taken into account, the gap becomes even bigger. In European countries that have successfully avoided low birth rates, the family allowance alone is 1.5 per cent (Grant J et al, 2004, cited by Lee Jae-gyeong, 2004). However, in Korea, despite the government's recognising the low birth rate as a national strategic crisis and despite its major policy initiative to combat this low reproductive rate, the total budget for the government's 'comprehensive measure to combat low birth rate' for 2005 and 2006 came to a mere 0.2 per cent of GDP (Table 7.6). This is only seven to 13 per cent of what European governments pay in family allowances

alone. By 2009, Korean families will receive up to 130 per cent of the average urban working class income in childcare subsidies, and 80 per cent of all children in Korea will receive government subsidies for their care. However, the budget ratio in terms of GDP is unlikely to change. In comparison to 2006, the total budget will have only doubled to 4.662 trillion (Joint Response by related Ministries and Organisations, 2005). If, in the process, the childcare fee structure is deregulated in order to normalise the quality of childcare services, and if the parents' share of the costs increases, it may render government efforts to combat the low birth rate meaningless.

Table 7.5 National government budget for combating low birth rate in GDP percentage (unit : a hundred million won, %)

	Total budget for combating low birth rate (a)	Forecasted GDP (KDI) (b)	The GDP rate of total budget for combating low birth rate (a/b x 100)
2005	16,912	831,3788	0.20
2006	23,351	898,7205	0.26

(Source: Joint Response by related Ministries and Organisations (2005), KDI(2005), Hyundai Economic Research Institute (2005).

Family participation in child care

In a survey on low birthrate, conducted amongst 1054 married and unmarried young people (male 467, female 587), 3.2 out of every 10 adults aged between 20 and 40 said that women avoid childbirth because 'childbirth and child care all fall on women', and 2.7 said that 'no help is available for child care' (Reasons why we do not bear children, <http://www.womennews.co.kr/news/view.asp?num=26288>). Also, out of 9303 people who took parental leave in 2005, only 181 were male workers (Ministry of Labour, 2005). Furthermore, women in paid work continue to have similar responsibilities for housekeeping as non-working women: average housekeeping

per day for women is three hours and 18 minutes, while for men it is 26 minutes (KNSO, 2004b). This demonstrates that female workers cannot expect much from their husbands when it comes to sharing the housework. Thus, for full-time female workers, the total daily work hours on average, including housework, is 12–13 hours. Women find it very hard to cope with such a heavy 'double' workload, as is clear from the following statements:

"It was physically very challenging, which led to severe depression."

"Having no personal life, it feels like three years had passed when it's only been three months."

"With my first child, I had a difficult time with my mother (who was taking care of it) and the baby was ill all the time. I really wanted to quit my job, wondered what on earth I was doing..."

"Being a reporter is practically impossible. To spend more time with kids, I'm thinking of moving to a job with regular working hours"

(Kim Jeong-hee et al, 2004: 73–74)

Table 7.2 (above) showed that 44.5 per cent of working mothers received help from blood relatives and 4.7 per cent from non-related people. Women who received support from their own mothers or mothers-in-law expressed guilt about being a bad daughter by burdening their parents with the care of their own children (Kim Jeong-hee et al, 2004: 69-79). For the older generation of carers, the situation is also unsatisfactory. It seems to me that older people do not take comfort in taking care of their grandchildren. Given the conflicts that arise, child care by relatives is often not a desirable alternative.

In 2006, the Korea Youth Corps (KYC), whose members are workers, housewives and college students mainly in their 20s and 30s, held a press conference asking for the introduction of a

'Papa Quota', under which fathers would be automatically given a certain period of leave for child care, and declared they would wage a 'baby strike' until the end of the year (to reclaim fatherly love, <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/labor/153919.html>). The press conference is testimony to evolved, younger generations in Korea who are willing to share the responsibility of child-rearing. It is government policies that are lagging behind.

Programs such as 'Daddy Month' in Sweden and 'Papa Quota' in Norway pay fathers to take paternity leave. Those fathers who developed a primary bonding relationship with their child by helping their wives immediately after childbirth continued to participate voluntarily in child care activities (Kim, Mihwa, 1990). Feminist psychologists observe that parentally gender-segregated child care tends to regenerate gender stereotype: girls to have relation oriented ego and boys more individual and atomistic or chauvinistic ego, which reinforces patriarchy (Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1989.) If it is urgent to combat the low birth rate in Korea, it is also necessary to introduce paternity leave options similar to those in Sweden and Norway as soon as possible. Compulsory paternity leave may have a revolutionary effect by transforming men who say that they agree with participating in child care in principle but who do not practise what they believe.

The need for 'night nursing' should be reviewed as a key cultural transformation. Night nursing is the extension of child care beyond normal office hours, for example between 7 and 10 pm, for parents who work late. Night nursing facilities in Korea have increased from 600 in 2004 to 2000 in 2005, and the government plans to continue to increase this number. However if the government continues to support funding night-time childcare without changing the long-working hour culture, no changes will occur in the labour system or in fathers' participation in child care. It is possible, even with current long working hours, to decrease the demand for night-time child care if couples cooperate with each other and take turns in working

night hours, or if Korean society supports the development of such a culture.

The need for night nursing comes from the fact that mothers cannot expect fathers to take responsibility for feeding infants at night, and they also cannot expect any social support for such sentiments. The absence of campaigns to encourage fathers to leave work on time will further turn Korea into a work- and male-centred society, and women who are only now beginning to express their desires for social achievements, which had been denied to them before, will continue to avoid childbirth and child care.

Lastly, it may be worth reviewing the possibility of operating and co-locating childcare facilities with older people's day care centres (known as 'elderly pavilions'). However, at the individual household level, relying on older grandparents for child care, as discussed above, is not very promising as a sustainable child care plan.

Conclusion

Female workers with children are 'sandwiched' between their children's and their elderly parents' generations. Their effort to balance child care and education with their job is almost as if they are in a constant battle field. This chapter has attempted, through analysing a wide range of data, to demonstrate what the reality is for such women. We have argued that women's perception of child care as a burden, and education has led to unprecedented low birth rates in Korea. The government has only recently recognised that child care is a core national priority and that social reproduction requires economic investment. However, the child care and child education 'war' in Korea cannot be solved by economic investment alone (particularly given that the size of such investment in Korea is far below that of European countries, which are also fighting to counter low birth rates). The importance of changing the patriarchal culture, which is integral to the phenomenon of low

birth rates, has not been given due consideration in government policy. Fathers' parental leave and a system for fathers to leave work on time are two practices that must become mandatory up to a certain point if the government is genuinely seeking to promote a successful birth-friendly and family-friendly work culture. Otherwise, policies will remain ideological slogans rather than practical solutions.

The government must make efforts to introduce and stabilise a culture of gender-inclusive child care, where both mothers and fathers are actively involved, rather than allow the culture of gender-segregated child care to continue; otherwise the attitudes of young women workers, and men who agree with them, will not change. It is young Korean working women, who are fertile, who consider traditional family values to be anachronistic. Many such women have resolved that success or failure in life comes from their work outside the home. Government policy should make bi-parental child-rearing a basic practice. Equally important are single-parent households, remarriage households, and grandparent-grandchildren households. Government policies should consider these households as equally important when they develop any policy on child care. Government policies must also include programs for introducing gender-equal and multi-cultural child care. Also required are family allowances that could supplement the limitations of the current childbirth leave system, a realistic personnel replacement system, and the improvement of child care quality from an ecological perspective.

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8

Health, economic, and policy implications of an ageing Australia.

Hal Kendig and Ruth Phillips

Introduction

Lifespan, generational relationships, and the context of social change are key issues for policy on ageing in Australia. This chapter will examine how ageing has been addressed as a social policy issue in Australia as well as exploring, to some extent, how older people are constructed as a group for research and policy development in Australian society. First, the specific characteristics of the Australian context will be discussed. Second, key areas of ageing policy will be examined, including costs and economic futures, health and care futures. Third, some issues concerning attitudes towards ageing and ageing policy in Australia will be raised.

Australia in context

Australia is a comparatively stable society and population ageing has been relatively moderate, with the most notable change being the recent rapid increase in the number of people in Australia of 80 years of age and over (Kendig, 2000: 107–111). For example, the number of Australians over 85 years of age increased by 114 per cent over the past two decades, from under one per cent in 1984 to 1.5 per cent in 2004 (ABS, 2006d). As noted by McDonald in Chapter 2 in this book, the rate of population ageing in Australia will increase. This shift in Australia’s demography has resulted in a growth in both social policy responses and services development. However, many of Australia’s ageing policies are bound up in conflict and tensions between the national Commonwealth government and the various state governments over the implementation of policies. Negotiations between the Commonwealth and State