

## *Discussion on the Reasons for the Decline of the Marriage Rate in China*

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**Abstract:** In Chinese tradition, marriage plays an important role. But with the development of society, people's ideas have also changed, some people don't marry, dare not get married, and want to get married but can't find a partner. A total of 2.107 million couples registered for marriage in the first quarter of 2022, down 1.17 percent year-on-year, according to data. If this trend continues, it is expected that the marriage rate will continue to decline in the future. The reasons for this phenomenon are linked to sky-high bride prices, a skewed male-to-female ratio, women's increasing independence, changing attitudes towards marriage, the high cost of marriage and childbearing, and high pressure at work. Young people who are not married and have children will accelerate the aging process of our country, the imbalanced age structure of the population, and will eventually cause the demographic dividend of our country to disappear.

### 1. Sky-High Bride Price

(1) The cause of the sky-high bride price

① The imbalance of male to female ratio is an important reason for the appearance of the sky-high bride price. With more men and fewer women, women have more choices in the marriage market, while men are in a passive position. To get married, they have to pay the high cost of marriage, which leads to the sky-high bride price[1].

② Compare with each other. In some rural areas. The face is very important and many villagers believe that the more the bride price they pay, the more valuable their daughter will be and the more face they will have. In this kind of comparison, vanity faces competition, resulting in the wind of sky-high bride prices being more serious.

③ Trading psychology. Some parents with strong roots in traditional thinking think that "the married daughter will throw water" and treat the daughter as a "commodity to be traded". After the daughter gets married, the family will be less, and the husband can only use money as a reward.

(2) The consequences of the sky-high bride price

① Young people can't afford to marry. The bride price and dowry are originally a beautiful thing for two families to support a new family, but now the bride price has changed. The appearance of the

sky-high bride price makes many young men shy away from marriage and want to get married. However, because the bride price is too expensive, they cannot afford to get married, which directly leads to the decline of the marriage rate in China[2].

② It has worsened the ethos of the countryside. In many rural areas, the bride price is more than 100,000 yuan, 200,000 yuan, or even more than 300,000 yuan. Many people regard it as a custom. Under blind comparison and following the trend, it has become a bad habit, which has worsened the atmosphere in rural areas.

③ It has caused social instability, To afford the high price of bride price, some families choose to use usurious loans, and some even turn to crimes. As a result, many families are broken because of the bride price, which has seriously affected them. Social harmony and stability.

## 2. Gender Imbalance

(1) The reason for the imbalance of male to female ratio

① There is a preference for sons in some areas. The old feudal thought, the son can carry on the family line, the daughter is domesticated for others. In ancient times, it was men who stood up and believed that if they did not give birth to a son. They would have no future, and if they did not give birth to a daughter, they would have nothing to do with their family. Even in modern times, people in some areas still have this idea, because of this abnormal concept, some places have more men than women.

② Fertility policy, fertility desire, and other factors will also cause gender imbalance to a certain extent.

(2) The consequences caused by the imbalance of male to female ratio

① The imbalance of the ratio of men and women will increase the age gap between men and women spouses, which will cause a huge impact on the stable operation of society and social ethics and moral system, and even cause some illegal and criminal situations.

② In an environment with a gender imbalance, as same-sex communication becomes more and more difficult with age, and there is a lack of opportunities to communicate with the opposite sex, the possibility of introversion increases.

③ In this environment, easy to produce a reversal. The reversal of sexuality is the cause of homosexuality. Because of the sex ratio imbalance, it is difficult to find opposite-sex partners, which is bound to produce a sexual reversal.

(3) The imbalance of male to female ratio is an important reason for the decline in the marriage rate in our country.

## 3. Women are Increasingly Independent and Powerful

(1) Reasons why women are becoming increasingly independent and powerful

① The promotion of academic qualifications. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, female students accounted for more than male students in all types of higher education. In 2020, the number of female graduate students in higher education was 1.599 million, accounting for 50.9% of all graduate students, and the number of female students in general college and adult college was 16.742 million and respectively 4.506 million. Accounting for 51.0% and 58.0% respectively. Women are more and more educated and have the same employability as men, which is enough to support themselves, so they no longer take marriage as their only destination, but put more time and energy into improving themselves. [3]

② The status of women is gradually rising. As the saying goes, "rare things are expensive", and so are human beings. The number of women decreases, but the reproduction instinct of men will not decrease. In this case, there will be an imbalance between supply and demand. In the same way, when

the ratio of men to women is not balanced, the status of women will naturally rise.

③ Independence of spirit. All human activities are governed by the spirit, female independence, first of all, consciousness to know themselves, understand themselves, and can achieve a real sense of independence.

(2) The consequences of women's growing independence and power

① The single rate is increasing, Many girls are becoming more and more independent, and no longer need—marriage and love, the heart just wants to make money. And many women do not feel that a relationship can bring them a sense of security, rather than the emptiness of love, they are more willing to get a sense of security through their efforts. Especially those born in the 1990s and 2000s. It's like for them, a house and money are more secure. If so, there will be more unmarried women. [3]

② The strong rise of women. A symbol of equal treatment between men and women. Maybe in economically more developed cities, it was generally supposed that women's independence is very normal, so there is a strong woman, but the ideas, not in the remote area and the feudal conservative thought deeply rooted, think this is a kind of disrespect for men, because men don't women need efforts, more some people think that ancient innocence is the virtue for women. So it's a symbolic thing that women are becoming more independent.

#### 4. High cost of marriage and childbearing

(1) The reason for the high cost of marriage and childbearing

① Housing prices are high. In the past 20 years since the housing reform, the housing price has increased by ten or even dozens of times, while people's wages have only increased by several times, and prices are on the rise. It is not easy for young people to pay enough to support themselves. Therefore, it is not an easy thing for ordinary families to buy a house. Hollowed all, most people are again to accept higher interest on loans in two hundred and thirty to have their housing, this isn't one thousand prices fell to watching if family assets, the house abandoned me neither housing have to on time according to the original loan amount on the contract the various risks of reimbursement. And in this era, buying a house seems to have become a necessity for marriage, so the high housing price makes many young people shy away from getting married.

② High bride price.

③ The cost of raising children is high. According to the China ChildBearing Cost Report, the average cost of raising a child until the age of 18 is 485,000 yuan, and parents still pay most of the cost of living after the child goes to university. In China, the average cost of raising a child in college for four years is 142,000 yuan, from birth to College graduates, raising a child needs at least 600,000. (As shown in table 1)These are just some of the basic expenses. The specific costs of raising a child are as follows:

(2) First of all, the money a newborn baby needs to spend, such on milk powder, baby's clothes, toys, etc., because it is a small baby, so eating, wearing, use and other aspects have extra attention, especially milk powder, most of them are 200-300 yuan/can, a little more expensive 400-600 yuan/can have. Many parents want to give their children good, so the baby is born, it will cost a lot of money. [1]

(3)Time cost. The most direct time cost is maternity leave. Most enterprises pay for maternity leave as usual. Recently, some provinces have revised the regulations of the freshmen plan, and some regions have extended maternity leave and added childcare leave. Although the extension of maternity leave will help women have more time to look after children, which is conducive to family child-rearing, if all the costs brought by the extension of maternity leave are borne by enterprises, it will inevitably lead to enterprises trying to avoid hiring women of childbearing age, thus exacerbating gender discrimination among women in the job market.

(4) Opportunity cost. Although the provision of maternity leave, a very practical problem is that if the maternity leave is too long, it will lead to a long-term disconnect between female workers and the workplace, return to work, will encounter a variety of difficulties and discrimination, their ability may also be reduced, affecting their competitiveness in the work. At present, the time and opportunity costs of raising children in Chinese families are mainly borne by women, who find it difficult to raise children while juggling heavy work in the workplace. At present, the social environment in China is not friendly to women's childbearing. The time cost and opportunity cost for women to bear children is very high.

(5) High cost of education. Although it is now nine-year compulsory education, nominally it is saving a lot of money it is not so. With the change of The Times, the education competition is very fierce, many parents in order not to let their children lose at the starting line, the children have not been to kindergarten began to attend a variety of early education or interest classes, of course, these cost money and very expensive, some one-to-one tutoring is hundreds of yuan an hour. It's fine to go to a public school, but if you go to a private school, it's a lot of money, so the cost of raising a child is very, very high.

(6) Usually food, clothing, housing, and transportation are expenses. From the birth of children to their stable work, the parents have to bear the food, clothing, housing, and transportation for more than ten or even twenty years. Some parents insist that they would rather suffer for themselves than their children, and give the best to their children, which is undoubtedly a high cost.

(7) Children get married, another expensive cost. If the family is a girl pressure is OK, if it is a boy, and to car house, and bride price is a very large expenditure

Table 1: National Parenting Costs from age 0 to college graduation

Child-bearing costs at different stages	Total (yuan)
Child-rearing costs for a child 0-17 years of age	485218
The cost of raising a child for four years of college	142000
Parenting costs from age 0 to college graduation	627218

## 5. High Work Pressure

(1) The cause of great work pressure

① Economic downward pressure, business difficulties, job offers, and salaries are not high. Due to the influence of the outbreak, as well as the global economic downturn, our country is in the process of economic operation and also is to have a lot of difficulties, and development of the economy, the number of college graduates is increasing year by year, the employment will face more severe tests than ever before, especially when we are in and their predecessors, we'll find that when we are in the same age and predecessors At times, we have the same skills but have trouble finding the same jobs, mainly because the current employment environment is not very good. As the country transformed its manufacturing sector, it was not able to create enough well-paying jobs for graduates.

② Young people have high employment expectations and structural employment difficulties. Although it is difficult to get a job now, also comparatively speaking, the current employment environment is most of the time, their ability to see their work does not match, and they look down on a lot of work. So in the face of the current employment pressure of young people, structural employment difficulties are another important reason, many young people when are looking for a job. Their employment expectations are relatively high, so when they step out of school and find that the real salary is only half of their ideal salary or even less, they will have the idea of employment pressure. And many young people, just work, because of a lack of experience, lack of professional skills, and

other reasons, enterprises are difficult to offer high wages, so in this case, the employment of young people themselves is more difficult.

③ Young people's internal volume is serious, the social competition is fierce. In today's society, high education, and high ability of young people everywhere. Many highly educated, highly capable young people, even if very excellent, may still can't find a satisfactory job. At present, the employment pressure of young people is mainly from the competition of peers. Because there are too many peers, and peers are very excellent, so many young people feel that they are not competitive in employment, only not to improve themselves, constantly hone their own, it is possible to have their place in such a volume of society. [5]

(2) The consequences of young people's high work pressure

① The divorce rate is rising. In today's society. Everyone's everyday life pressure big, traffic, tedious work, it's easy to let people irritable, especially now work competition, large load, a lot of people will power has run out on the job, at home have no more energy to tolerate their partner's nagging and bad habits, and in the long run, both man's patience was exhausted, and finally to the divorce[6].

② The marriage rate is declining. Now society is different from before the young people's work and life pressure are especially big. Not only the work is hard, but the income is not too high. Rent, utilities, and daily expenses have to be paid on such a small salary. It's hard enough to feed yourself, let alone a family. In addition, the expensive housing price also makes many young people have no dream. No matter how hard they work, they can't afford to buy a house. If you can't afford a house, you can't get married. It's a vicious cycle. Always work hard but can't see the hope, will feel very tired and want to give up. Then came the living conditions of lying flat and Buddha. It's not that I don't want to work hard, but the goal of buying a house and getting married is too far away to reach on tiptoe.

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