

year 2090, people aged over 65 will account for 29.7% of the total population; but if the fertility policy of the 1990s is continued, the same ratio will be as high as 40.3% in 2090. The difference can clearly be shown by an age pyramid. The policy of "late marriage, late childbearing, and the spacing of births" will only lead to mild changes in the age structure and a gradual leveling of the very uneven age pyramid. However, the continued implementation of the fertility policy of the 1990s will cause large-scale changes in the age pyramid, turning the composition of the population by age in 2090 into an upside-down pyramid. Moreover, the enforcement of the former policy will enable the PRC to achieve zero population growth around 2032, but with the implementation of the latter policy, zero population growth will be achieved in 2025.

In fact, if the fertility rate remains too low—lower than the replacement level—for a long time, the population will undergo a dying-out process. If the fertility rate is higher than the replacement level for a long time, the unrestricted growth of the population will also be disadvantageous to survival and development. If the fertility rate fluctuates up and down around the replacement level, the population will be affected by structural problems. Therefore, for a society with an adequate population size, stabilization of the fertility rate at the replacement level is a relatively ideal situation. However, for the PRC with a very large population, the best policy should be to keep the fertility rate under the replacement level for a long period and then allow it to grow slowly for a certain period before restoring it to the replacement level.

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