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## **Support Measures for Unwed Mothers during Pregnancy and after Childbirth**

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Research on unwed mothers over the past 10 years has pointed out the increasing trend of unwed mothers rearing their children, highlighted the presence of these children in communities, and focused on showing unwed mothers' difficulties in self-reliance. Due to social prejudice, many unwed mothers are still in the blind spot of protection and support during pregnancy and after childbirth. Therefore, amid the recently changed social circumstances, this study seeks to examine the difficulties faced by unwed mothers in pregnancy and after childbirth, as well as public services and benefits. Despite the government's positive will to alleviate the burdens of pregnancy and childbirth, it is still necessary to examine why many unwed mothers are still experiencing extreme difficulties at those times.

The purpose of this study is to concretely examine welfare services and

accessibility during the stages of pregnancy and childbirth, and to identify the main obstacles to the smooth delivery of policy services. To this end, we reviewed the current status of support policies for unwed mothers, recent changes in support policies, and conducted surveys and in-depth interviews with unwed mothers.

Through surveys and in-depth interviews, the difficulties of unwed mothers that were seen in this study included economic difficulties, difficulties in raising children, and difficulties in familial and social relationships. These difficulties begin in pregnancy and affect the rest of the life cycle, including childbirth and childrearing.

From the time unwed mothers find out that they are pregnant, it is difficult for them to inform their acquaintances or workplaces of their pregnancies because of fear of social discrimination and exclusion. In fact, abortion or adoption is advised after they are informed of the fact that they are pregnant. They also experience emotional pressure due to the severing of the relationship with the child's father. Most unwed mothers who have jobs also face economic difficulties because they stop working due to health reasons or fear of discrimination. Also, in cases where the relationship with the family is severed, they have no appropriate place to live, so they live in tiny rooms designed for studying or small, one-room apartments. Unwed mothers who enter institutional facilities experience excessive control in the facility and difficulties in communal life. In addition, they experience discrimination at hospitals and public offices, which are the places most visited in pregnancy and after childbirth. On one hand, unwed mothers have to prepare for self-reliance through employment after childbirth, but they still experience economic difficulties due to the problem of childcare and the difficulty of re-employment after a break in employment.

In order for unwed mothers to give birth safely and support their children, it is necessary to strengthen health support for the mother and baby during

pregnancy and after childbirth. In addition, it is necessary to improve early support projects for unmarried parents and for facility support services to reflect the desires of unwed mothers. In addition, it is necessary to construct a system that delivers accurate information about support projects for unwed mothers so that they can find information on their own, and to strengthen the information transfer function of the district offices.