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(1) 2

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II

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III

問 1

- (1) 1
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IV

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V

There is no doubt that the decline in Japan's population is being caused largely by the modern lifestyle. Although the working conditions are still not quite equal between men and women, it is obvious that women are given even more opportunities in their careers compared with a few decades ago. As they are promoted in society, it naturally becomes more difficult for them to quit their jobs, and that is one of the main reasons for the increase of working couples.

In a way, the situation may be regarded as a positive change for women as their status in the society has certainly improved. However, the price for that, unfortunately, is that they now have less of a chance to have a family. It is simply difficult for women to have a family and keep their positions, and clearly that is one of the major reasons for the decline in Japan's population.

If Japan is to improve the situation, it is essential that it develop systems to support working couples, mainly by providing financial support for couples who are planning a family. The idea has been there and has been implemented to some extent so far, but it has never been enough, as is reflected in the still continuing population decline. It is high time Japan reinforced systems to support working couples.