

UNIT 4 TOPIC 4 FAMILY PLANNING POLICY IN CHINA

Pre-knowledge

Before class, students should read Unit 4 Topic 4 and watch some videos on China's One-child policy to gain some basic understanding of the intention and execution of this policy and the issues surrounding it.

Aim and Objectives

The One-Child Policy was one of the most controversial policies instituted by the Chinese government. Many people, especially media from the West, hold a prejudice towards this policy. Despite the negative consequences, the policy did relieve China from the pressures it was facing in rapid population growth to a certain extent.

Topic 4 aims to provide students with some knowledge of the reasons why it was necessary to institute the One-Child Policy against the backdrop of the historical period during which it was executed. They will also learn about contemporary Chinese culture and politics related to this policy.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Activity 1

It is undeniable that the One-Child Policy had been a hugely controversial policy. Have your students discuss why it was considered controversial and why the Chinese government insisted on maintaining the policy amidst much domestic and international pressure against it. Help your students analyse the arguments both for and against the policy so they may gain a neutral and respectful understanding of the issue.

Activity 2

Ask your students to list the positive and negative effects of the One-Child Policy. Then have them imagine the consequence of not implementing it back then and discuss their views.

Activity 3

As a follow-up to Activity 2, have your students create some infographics about the positive and negative effects of the One-Child Policy.

Activity 4

Have your students research in groups of four or five (depending on the class size) the reasons for the Chinese government giving up on the One-Child Policy three decades after its implementation, as well as the problems that may arise from the Two-Child Policy. Then have each group present their findings to the class.

Activity 5

Print out the article *China's Two-Child Policy: What Next* written by Kim Kyung-Hoon and let your students read it. Then have them discuss the social issues related to the Two-Child Policy.

You may ask these questions:

- A. What are the obstacles in the implementation of the Two-Child Policy?
- B. What are the attitudes of the Chinese towards this policy?
- C. What did the Chinese government do to promote this policy?
- D. Do you think this policy will be implemented successfully? Why?

Activity 6

Have your students each write a 400-word report on the implementation of the One-Child Policy/Two-Child Policy in China and their attitude towards the issue.

Activity 7

Ask your students to do Exercise 4 of the Workbook according to your teaching needs and progress.

Resources/Materials

Apart from those listed in the activities, you may also consult these resources/materials:

1. Fong, Vanessa (2004), *Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One-Child Policy*. Stanford University Press.
2. Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Lithuania (1995), "*Family Planning in China*". Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. [Online]. August 1995. Section III, Paragraph 2.
3. Whyte, M.K., Wang, Feng & Cai, Yong (2015), "Challenging Myths about China's One-Child Policy". *The China Journal*. 2015. No. 74. pp. 144-159. Available at: https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/martinwhyte/files/challenging_myths_published_version.pdf
4. Jacobs, A. (2008), "One-Child Policy Lifted for Quake Victims' Parents". *The New York Times*. [Online]. 27 May, 2008. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/27/world/asia/27child.html>
5. Tan, Kenneth (2012), "Hong Kong to issue blanket ban on mothers from the mainland?". *Shanghaiist*. [Online]. 9 February, 2012. Available at: http://shanghaiist.com/2012/02/09/hong_kong_to_issue_blanket_ban_on_m.php

Assessment

1. Collect the notes taken by your students during all group and class discussions.
2. Prepare some questions and assess your students when they answer them verbally.
3. Prepare one or two quizzes.
4. Each student is required to write a review on a book on the One-Child policy/Two-Child policy that he has read.
5. Students are required to prepare an infographic to show their understanding of One-Child policy/Two-Child policy.
6. Each student is required to write a 500-word personal account of his reflections on the rationale and impact of the One-Child Policy.

Workbook Answer Key

1. What have been some of the negative social consequences of the One-Child Policy? Why are these consequences of concern?

Students should consider these points:

- Fertility rates that remain low
- A lingering gender imbalance
- A rapidly increasing ageing population
- Increasing pressure from parents
- Impact on family structure (no siblings)
- Child lacking in social or even survival skills ("Little Emperor Syndrome")
- Prevalence of forced abortions

2. Despite the many social negative consequences that resulted from the One-Child Policy, why has the Chinese government insisted on continuing with it for several decades?

Students should consider these points:

- The state of China's society and economy at that time
- The Chinese government's fear of another food shortage (such as the one in 1962 when millions of people died of hunger)
- Limited resources
- Increasing lifespan

3. India is the only other country in the world with a population of over one billion people. Do you think that the One-Child Policy could be applied in India if it were to try and control its population growth? Why?

Students should consider these points:

- Theoretically yes, but the different political system in India makes it harder to do so
- Different national conditions
- India's fears of the negative consequences of the One-Child Policy in China
- The influence of religion

4. Group Discussion

The majority of Western media view the One-Child Policy negatively. Many express concerns about discrimination against female babies. In a group of three or four, think of other ways that might ease the pressure on the population growth, addressing these concerns at the same time. Write down some key points for a class discussion.

Students should consider these points:

- Promotion of equal rights of men and women
- Government incentives to parents for having female babies
- Increasing the costs of having a third child
- Educating people

5. Class Discussion

We have learnt that the different generations in China have contrasting views on who should take care of the elderly. As a class, divide yourselves into two teams and hold a class debate. The first team will argue for the elderly to be taken care of by their own children, while the second team will argue for them to be taken care of by institutions. Write down the key points discussed during the debate.

Students should consider these points:

- The benefits of the elderly being taken care of by their own children to the elderly, the family and the society as a whole
- Some issues from children taking care of their own old parents
- Advantages and disadvantages of the elderly being taken care of by institutions
- Social and moral issues

6. Internet Search + Pair Work

We have learnt that many elderly people from the rural regions are left behind when their children migrate to urban areas for work. With a partner, read up on this issue. Write down the key problems arising from this issue and how local authorities are tackling it.

Students should consider these points:

- Establishing some institutions for the well-being of the elderly
- Regularly sending medical teams to the rural areas
- Local officials visiting the elderly regularly and especially during festivals

7. Why did the Chinese government abolish the One-Child Policy in 2016? What policy was it replaced with?

Students should consider these points:

- Due to alarming problems of fertility rate, gender imbalance, increasing pressure and burden for children to take care of their elderly parents, the ageing population
- Increasing international criticism of the policy
- To avoid potential social disorder

8. Will the Two-Child Policy lead to further problems such as economic inequality? Will it lead to a baby boom? Why?

Students should consider these points:

- Further problems may include more discrimination against women as women need more time off from work, continuing uneven fertility rates, ageing population and rural-urban economic inequality.
- No, it will not lead to a baby boom as the policy applies mainly to urban areas. Many people in urban areas cannot afford to have a second child due to rapidly rising costs of raising a child. Rural areas where people traditionally want more children were already allowed to have two children in 2013.

Note: All URLs listed herein were ascertained to be accessible on 10 September, 2020.