

Strategies for Regional Retention & Exchange of Population via Tourism Promotion amid Declining Population Era

Cha Misook, KRIHS Research Fellow

Summary

- ③ A recent meeting of economy-related ministers (July 5, 2016) discussed the need and plans for creating a base for coastal development as part of a blueprint to improve the economic vitality of regions plagued by low competitiveness due to a declining and rapidly aging population.

- If no separate policy intervention is made, the decline and rapid aging of the population will continue, and this could lead to the collapse of provincial regions.

- Seoul (78.7 percent) and Jeju Island (18.3 percent) attract the majority of foreign tourists in Korea, and to get them to visit provincial regions, a new basis for development (using tourism) and regional development strategies are needed to create new growth engines.

- ③ Japan, to prevent the vicious cycle of population decrease and rapid aging that cause low consumption and economic depression, has adopted strategies to offset drops in fixed population through efforts to promote population retention and exchange, and is pushing for a plan for “formation of metropolitan tourism refueling routes” to implement such efforts.

- Average per capita consumption among fixed population of 1.25 million yen → consumption amount of 25 domestic travelers needing lodging → Based on the consumption value of 80 domestic same-day travelers, devise policy to focus on encouraging more foreign tourists to provincial areas for longer stays

- Pushing for formation of metropolitan tourism refueling routes since 2015 to promote equal consumption stimulation and effects of raising economic vitality through encouraging retention and exchange of population in regions, given realistic limits of existing policy toward declining population

- ③ By designating multiple metropolitan tourism refueling routes with local governments and jointly pushing for related policies, a region’s existing resources can be applied and value maximized, and successful cases can be created and nearby regions can be connected and expanded

- At the central government level, a network-type regional development strategy is being pushed to coincide with the era of population decline and low growth by applying existing resources and reestablishing value through designation of metropolitan tourism refueling routes and overseas PR and marketing and relations and cooperation among Korea’s provincial regions.

| Issues |

① [Increasing regional retention and exchange of population via tourism promotion] To prepare for the era of population decline, a development base must be formed and nearby regions should solidify and expand relations to attract foreign tourists, who mainly go to Seoul or Jeju Island, to provincial regions to encourage longer stays and raise population exchange.

② [Boost development base and network for expanding and spreading inter-regional connections] To promote regional tourism, metropolitan tourism routes connecting nearby regions to the development base should be designated, existing tourism resources should be discovered and applied, and consolidated brands should be fostered and receive joint and expanded PR and marketing

③ [Form cooperative system between government authorities and central-local governments] On the government level, central government institutions should promote a variety of regional tourism and related policies in an integrated manner under a governance system set up and run by the central and local governments and tourism promotion cooperation conference.