

3. Use of the Elderly's Ability in Depopulating Society

1. Employment at Companies

(1) Impact of Retirement of "Postwar Baby Boomers"

- The Cabinet Office conducted the "Survey on the Promotion of Social Participation by the Elderly" for companies. With regard to the impact of retiring "postwar baby boomers" on production, sales, and other corporate activities, 43.8% of surveyed companies reported "no particular impact," while 49.0% reported "moderate impact" or "substantial impact."

- Many companies consider the impact of retiring "postwar baby boomers" on corporate activities to be positive in terms of cost reduction and organizational revitalization. Some of the reasons for this trend may be that the number of "postwar baby boomers" is large and that the system for wages and working conditions is often based on seniority.

On the other hand, a number of companies have a negative impression on their retirement in terms of preservation of managers and leaders, securing of experts and engineers, and transfer of techniques and skills to the next generation. One of the reasons for this trend may be that the severe economic situation in recent years did not allow companies to increase new employment as well as to take measures for successfully transferring skills and techniques to the next generation, such as assigning employees to appropriate tasks and providing suitable skill-development opportunities for employees. The successful transfer of techniques and skills from old to younger generations is an important issue to be addressed. (Chart 1-3-2)

(2) Attitudes of companies towards “society with a shrinking workforce”

- With regard to “the level of difficulties in securing human resources” in the future society where the workforce will shrink, “no remarkable change” was reported by the highest percentage of surveyed companies, or 40.2%, while “will be higher” was reported by about one in three companies, or 34.9%. By company size, the larger the company is, the more likely it is to report “will be higher.” (Chart 1-3-3)

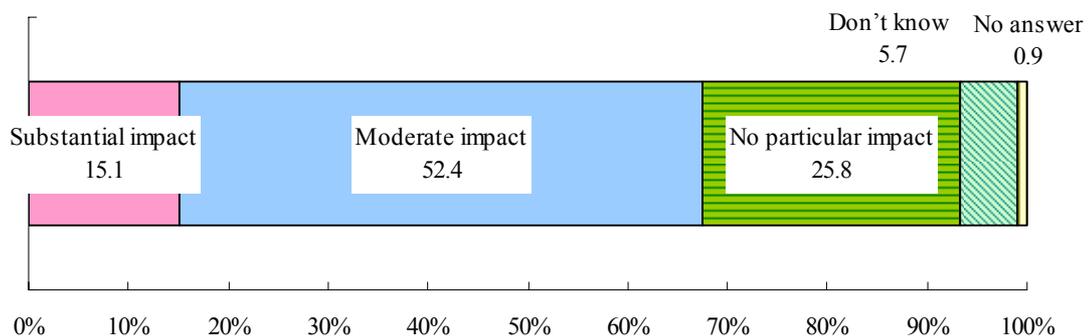
- With regard to both the “utilization of the elderly” and “utilization of females,” “no remarkable change” was reported by the highest percentages of surveyed companies (59.1%, 63.1%), while “will be accelerated” was reported by about one in four companies (24.0%, 27.4%). (Table 1-3-4)

- According to these survey results, many companies are concerned about the preservation of the workforce in the future society where the population will decrease, but their concern has not necessarily encouraged them to take measures such as expanding the employment of the elderly and reviewing the compulsory retirement plan.

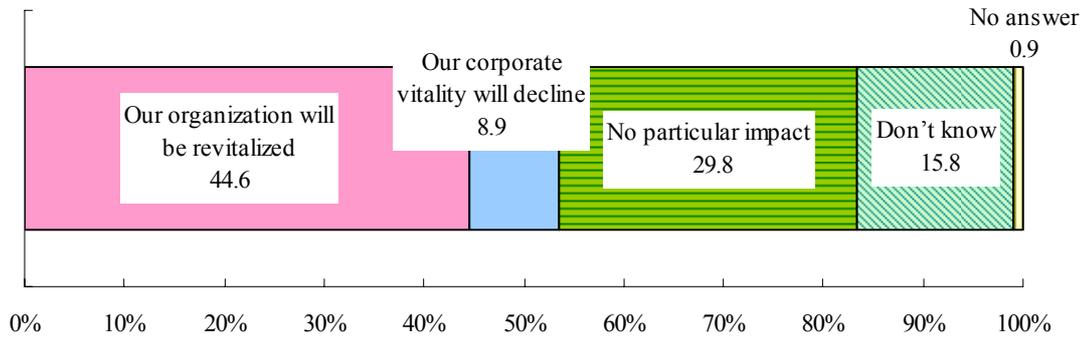
Despite these circumstances, the larger the company is, the more likely it is to report that the level of difficulties in securing human resources “will be higher” and that the utilization of the elderly and females “will be accelerated” in their companies. These trends suggest the possibility that companies, especially large companies, are required to change the current system for utilizing human resources.

Chart 1-3-2. Impact of Retirement of “Postwar Baby Boomers” (Details)

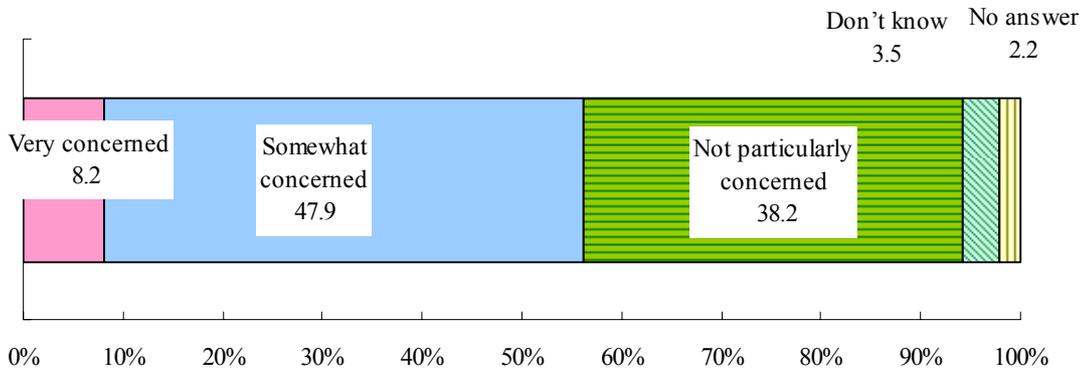
(1) Labour cost reduction



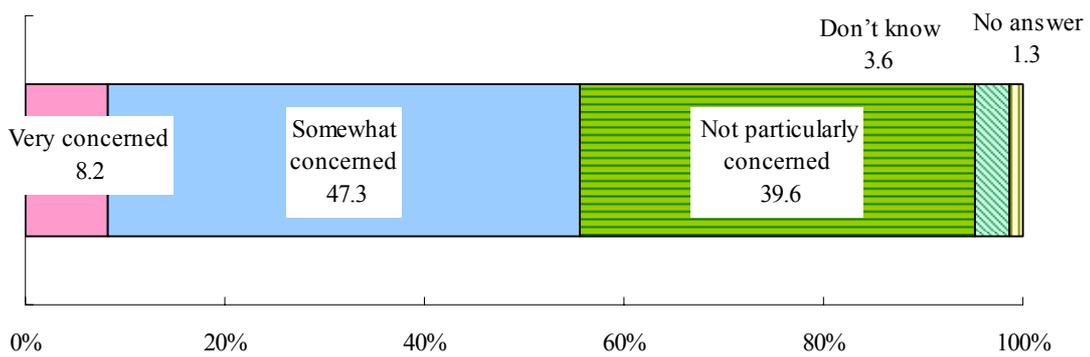
(2) Impact of rejuvenation of the age composition



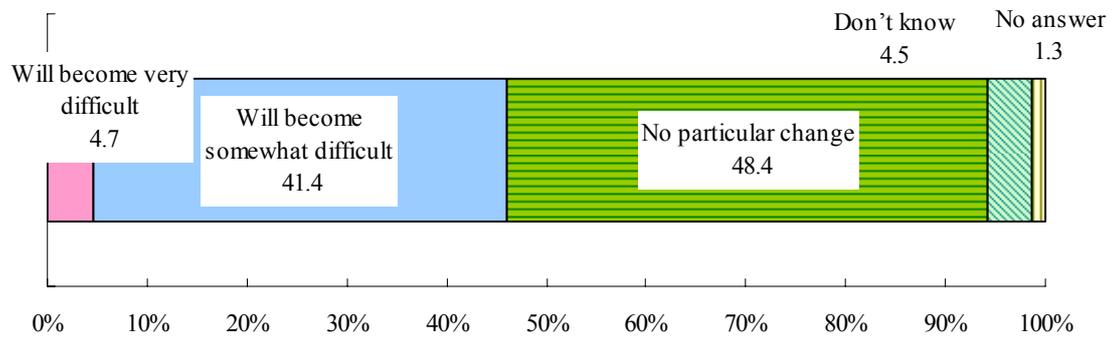
(3) Concerns about the preservation of managers and leaders



(4) Concerns about the securing of experts and engineers

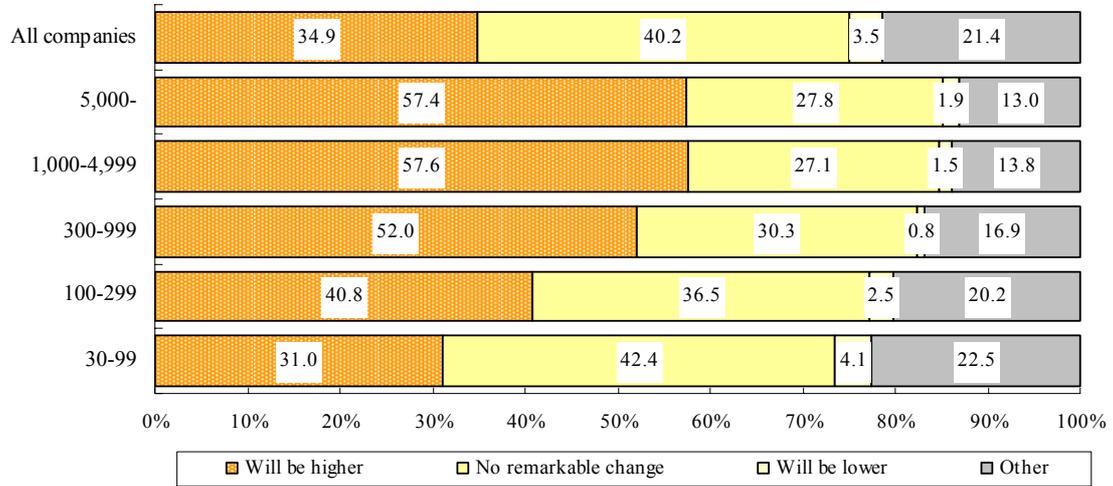


(5) Transfer of techniques and skills



Source: Cabinet Office, "Survey on the Promotion of Social Participation by the Elderly," company survey, 2005

Chart 1-3-3. Level of Difficulties in Securing Human Resources



Source: Cabinet Office, "Survey on the Promotion of Social Participation by the Elderly," company survey, 2005

Table 1-3-4. Future changes to the utilization of human resources (utilization of the elderly and females)

(3) Utilization of the elderly

(%)

Company size (person)	Total	Small companies	Medium companies		Large companies	
		30-99	100-299	300-999	1,000-4,999	5,000-
Will be accelerated	24.0	20.2	28.4	43.0	55.2	75.9
No remarkable change	59.1	61.6	57.5	43.3	33.5	14.8
Will be reduced	6.1	7.5	2.9	3.2	1.5	0.0
Other	10.8	10.7	11.2	10.6	9.9	9.3

(4) Utilization of females

(%)

Company size (person)	Total	Small companies	Medium companies		Large companies	
		30-99	100-299	300-999	1,000-4,999	5,000-
Will be accelerated	27.4	23.5	33.1	42.2	62.6	77.8
No remarkable change	63.1	66.5	58.1	50.9	31.0	16.7
Will be reduced	1.9	2.3	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.0
Other	7.7	7.7	7.9	6.1	5.9	5.6

Source: Cabinet Office, "Survey on the Promotion of Social Participation by the Elderly," company survey, 2005

The answers in colored areas are those most frequently chosen by companies by company size.

Note: "Other" is the total of "Other," "Don't know," and "No answer."

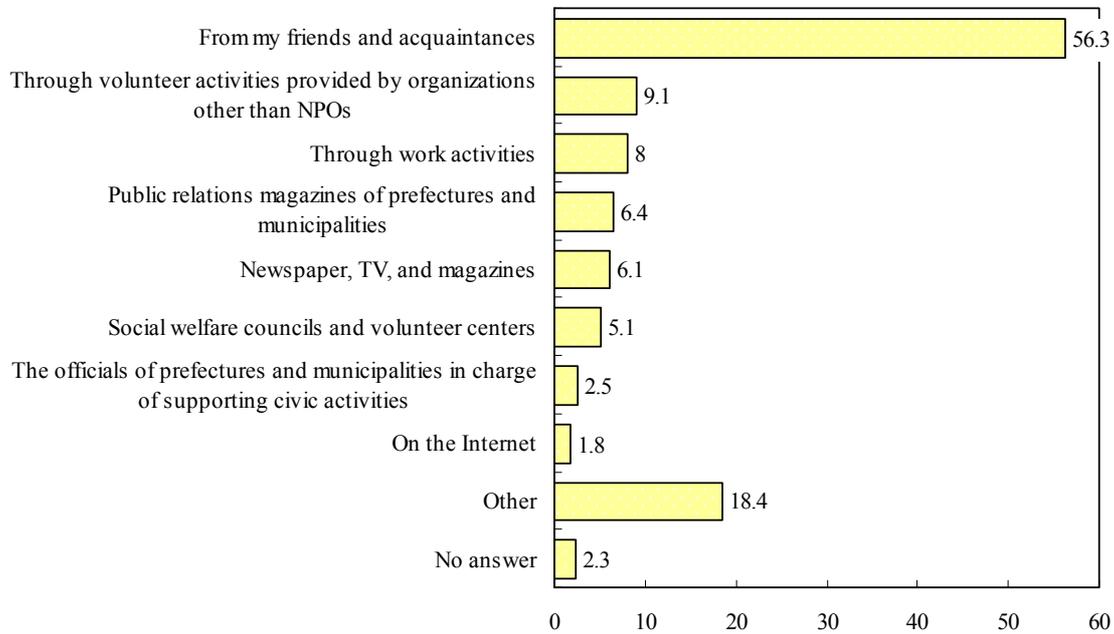
2. Volunteer Activities

- With regard to the attitudes of the elderly towards participation in NPO activities, 47.3% of the elderly are interested in NPO activities, while the percentage of actual participants is small, at 3.6%. These results suggest that many people hope to participate in society by using their knowledge and experience, but their aspirations have not necessarily connected themselves with specific activities.

As for reasons for their not having participated in NPO activities, "because I had no chance or motivation" ranked first, while "because I had no information about NPOs" also ranked high.

- The Cabinet Office conducted the "Survey on the Promotion of Social Participation by the Elderly" for NPOs. With regard to the information source that facilitated the elderly to participate in NPO activities, the survey results indicate that the percentage of those who obtained information regarding NPO activities from their friends or acquaintances is outstandingly high. In view of this, the government should provide the elderly with more diverse information sources and encourage NPOs to provide information more widely, in order to easily connect the needs of the elderly for social participation to the needs of NPOs for personnel. (Chart 1-3-14).

Chart 1-3-14. Information Resources that Facilitated the Elderly to Participate in NPO activities



Source: “Survey on the Promotion of Social Participation by the Elderly,” NPO survey, 2005
 Note: Multiple answers were allowed.

3. Elderly Activities in Local Communities - Child-care support by the elderly -

- The elderly are provided with opportunities for social participation through work, NPO volunteer activities, and various activities offered by silver human resources centers and senior citizens’ clubs.

Recently, child-care support by the elderly has become more common in local communities. For example, silver human resources centers have been promoting child-care support services involved by elderly members, such as care for infants, and transportation to and from daycare centers. In the midst of growing public concern about ensuring child safety while commuting to and from school, senior citizens’ clubs and silver human resources centers have been also promoting activities to ensure child safety in their communities.

- * Activities by senior citizens' clubs to ensure the safety of school routes (e.g. The Longevity Club Federation of Tokorozawa City)
- * Activities by silver human resources centers to ensure the safety of school routes (e.g. The Silver Human Resources Center of Arakawa Ward)
- * Child-care support activities by silver human resources centers (e.g. "*Oyako No Hiroba Nobi-suku*" (Open space for parents and children - towards healthy growth of children-) in Soka City.)

In order to keep and increase our national vitality, it is essential to realize a society that allows the elderly to become more active participants in aging society by using their ability and experience. To this end, the following measures need to be addressed.

- * To ensure that every worker in all age groups, including elderly workers, may select the working style of their choice and fully exert their ability under appropriate and fair working conditions
- * To promote measures for satisfying the aspirations of the elderly for social participation, such as offering more opportunities of good volunteer activities and enhancing information provision

<Topics>

“Activities by the Elderly to Ensure the Safety of School Routes”

(i) The Longevity Club Federation of Tokorozawa City

The Longevity Club Federation of Tokorozawa City, based in Tokorozawa City, Saitama, is made up of 94 senior citizens' clubs. Club members provide safety patrols and supervision to ensure child safety while commuting to and from school.

Specifically, they contribute to prevent crime and accidents by putting uniform hats on their heads and patrolling their neighborhood while taking a walk, going shopping, or going outside for any other purposes. They also provide elementary school students on the way home from school with supervision in the major places of school routes.

(ii) The Silver Human Resources Center of Arakawa Ward

The Silver Human Resources Center of Arakawa Ward, based in Tokyo, is commissioned by the Arakawa ward office and Arakawa Ward Education Committee to provide patrol services mainly on school routes.

Specifically, six members and four members are allocated to each school in 23 wards of Tokyo

and to each of 21 *Gakudo Hoiku* Clubs (schoolchildren's daycare clubs), respectively. They provide patrols for children on the way home from school and daycare clubs for two hours each weekday.

“Child-care Support Activities by the Elderly”

- “*Oyako No Hiroba Nobisuku* (Open space for parents and children - towards healthy growth of children-)

The silver human resources center in Soka City, Saitama is financed by the government and Soka City to operate the “*Oyako No Hiroba Nobisuku*” for the provision of child-care support services. The facility, which used to be a vacant store on a commercial street, operates with ten members, including two males.

Currently, on average, 30-40 couples of mothers and infants (aged 0-3) visit there each day at the time of their choice and spend time relaxing. At the facility, infants play with other infants, while mothers get to know and make friends with each other. The staff members play with infants, while providing counseling for mothers.