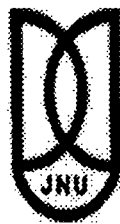


**THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT POLICIES  
TOWARDS ITS SENIOR CITIZENS**

**Dissertation submitted to  
Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation, entitled "**The Japanese Government Policies Towards its Senior Citizens**" submitted by **Mr. Manas Milind**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. This work is the result of his own research and to the best of my knowledge no part of it has earlier comprised any monograph, dissertation or book.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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***Dedicated to My Parents***

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*Manas Milind*  
**(Manas Milind)**

## PREFACE

One of the major social problems of present day Japan is the aging of its population. Japan has the longest life span in the world (about 80 years compared to 52 years in 1947). Over the years the proportion of elderly people is rapidly increasing in Japan while the birth rate is declining. In 1970, Japan was put on the United Nations' official list of 'old societies', as defined by the percentage of persons above 65 years old exceeding seven percent of the total population.<sup>1</sup> The present percentage of elderly people in developed countries is still a little higher than in Japan, but in absolute terms Japan is far ahead, there are approximately 18 million senior citizens in Japan, compared to about 10 million in each France Britain and Germany. According to current estimate by the beginning of the twenty-first century one in six Japanese will be aged over 65 and by 2020, one in four, this will make Japan an absolute leader amongst all old societies.

The aging of the population on a national level means, first and foremost, a considerable change in the balance in numbers between the aged and those of employable age, an increase in

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<sup>1</sup> . Irina Tikhotskaya, "The Problems of Japan's Aging Society and its Paradigm," *East Asian Review* , (The Asian Research Institute, Osaka), Vol. 13, March 1999, P.149

expenditure for social security, and the new problems of creating new aims on life and finding ways to spend a considerably extended retirement.

In 1995, for the first time, the Japanese employable population decreased, not in relative, but also in absolute terms. The so called co-efficient of aged dependence, or the ratio of elderly over 65 to employable people, had increased in Japan from 10 percent in 1970 to 17 percent in 1990, and it is estimated to reach 43 per cent in 2020. This means that every 2.3 workers will support one pensioner (instead of 10 workers as in 1970 and 5.9 workers as in 1990). In other words, the burden of the employed that is the rate of taxes and social security payment they have to pay will inevitably increase.

Thus we find that the rapidly increasing population of the aged is already putting a heavy burden on government expenditure. Size is not the only issue; the population structure is also an important factor. For example, a severe imbalance between the gender can threaten the stability of marriage and family in a monogamous society. We also find that in contrast to norms of care for elderly parents, expectations of old age support from children have declined steadily. People in their eighties and nineties are

often cared for by their children, who are themselves old. One of the important aspect in this respect is the role of women. As in the past it was women's duty to take care of the elderly in the family. In a survey in 1997 most of the approximately 100,000 people who quite their jobs to care for a member of their family were women. The most striking feature is that many care providers are forced to care for more than one person at a time. For example a married woman has to take care of her own parents and those of her husband. Taking all these things into consideration government role has become more important. The study of the government polices, its impact, on Japanese family its problems and management of the aging problems, will be the focus of this study.

The first chapter deals general description about the old age, different theories regarding old age and the definition of old age in Japan. Second Chapter deals with the government measures towards the senior citizens in Japan.

Third Chapters focuses on the family system and the impact of the growing number of old people on it . This chapter also deals with economic aspect of this problem. Chapter fourth is conclusion.



## Chapter I

*When I get Older, losing my hair,*

*Many years from now...*

*Will you still need me,*

*Will you still feed me,*

*When I'm sixty-four?*

*John Lennon and Paul Mc Cartney*

*"When I'm sixty-four", 1967*

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

At present one of the most important problem facing Japan is the rapid increase in aging of its population. Infact, no country in history has witnessed such rapid increase in its population. This was the reason, Japan has already been included in the list of "Old Societies" by the United Nations. However the percentage of elderly people in other developed countries is higher in comparison to Japan, it is expected to become the nation in the world with the highest ratio of aged

to general population.<sup>1</sup> This has caused discussion and debate not only in Japan but also among various countries of the world.

## **METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE**

Old age is a very widely discussed topic in world literature and social science. In the field of economics, sociology, psychology, and public Administration old age is an interesting subject of studies. Various scholars tried to discuss problems facing by old people in countries all over the World. There are several theories regarding the studies of old age. Among them following theories are common.

1. Functionalist Approach/Disengagement Theory
2. Interactionist Approach /Activity Theory
3. The Conflict Response
4. Modernization theory
5. Stratification Theory

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<sup>1</sup> Yasuhiko Yamasaki Japanese Social Security : Overview and Directions in Reform. Social Security in Japan. "About Japan" Series. 17. Foreign Press Centre Tokyo. pp.15

## 1. FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH / DISENGAGEMENT THEORY: -

Disengagement theory was introduced by Elaine Cumming and William Henry (1961)<sup>•</sup>. This theory discards the view of old age as an extension of middle age. According to this theory. Aging leads to a triple withdrawal from society: a loss of roles, a contraction of relationship, and a decline in commitment to norms and values. Thus the aging person becomes increasingly ajotistical relaxation, comfort, and self-gratification is his main preoccupation. Cumming and Henry argue that disengagement is an intrinsic developmental process, which is inherent in aging as such and not just a result of external social pressures. Withdrawal is seen as functional for the individual as well as for society that it prepares the aging person for his approaching final withdrawal and minimises the effect of his death on the social system.

This theory does not consider the possibility that older people may encounter encouragement from friends, relatives or former work associates to remain involved and engaged. But the studies of other age groups suggest that disengagement is not redusively associated with any particular age grade. In some instances, disengagement from a social role is gradual & minimal, while in others it may be rapid and complete. Now

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• Sati P.N. Needs and Problems of Aged, Himanshu Publication  
Udaipur - 1996 p - 6 3

most of the sociologists have rejected the theory of disengagement in explaining the aging.

## **2. INTERACTIONIST APPROACH /ACTIVITY THEORY:**

According to Activity theory the elderly person who remains active will be best adjusted. As the activities of one's life are constantly changing, the older persons like people at earlier stages of the life cycle should have the option of replacing earlier activities with new pursuits. Symbolic interaction theory is micro level theory, which holds that all behaviors are self-directed. Before reacting an individual interprets the facts and the likely reactions of others to his behavior. According to this theory elderly persons depending upon his view of the social situation, adjust him.

## **3. THE CONFLICT RESPONSE**

Conflict theorists have criticized both the above theories, engagement Theory and activity theory. According to this theory, transition from agricultural economies to industrialization and capitalism has not always been beneficial for the elderly. As a society's production methods change, the traditionally valued role of older people within the economy tends to erode. Although pension plans, retirement package, and insurance benefits may be developed to assist older

people, whose wealth allows them access to investment funds can generate the greatest income for their later years.

The privileged position of the upper class generally tend to enjoy better health and are less dependent on others in their old age. However affluence cannot postpone aging indefinitely. Nevertheless hardship faced in later years can lessen the problem. Working class people also depend more heavily on social security benefits and private pensions program. During inflationary times their relatively fixed income can hardly cope with rising living(Atchley)<sup>2</sup>

#### **4. MODERNIZATION THEORY**

In a consumerist society like Japan where ambition, achievement and one's self is a priority, the older people faces several problems. They find it difficult to adjust them to the changed environment. Fast development of knowledge and technology makes the knowledge of the senior citizens obsolete. They become somewhat misfits in the society. This theory has been criticized by many social scientists throughout the world, because for every person ability and expertise there is a place in the society.

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2. Richard T. Schaefer and Robert P. Lamm. SOCIOLOGY  
Mc Graw - Hill, Inc. New York. 1992. p - 363

## **5. STRATIFICATION THEORY**

According to this theory each age groups consist of different generation, They have their own belief system, values and behavior pattern. These things are reflected in their day to day life, behaviour, language etc. thus they are treated as superior or inferior; weak or strong and placed accordingly in the society

Thus different theory have been put forward by different social scientist while discussing the problems of the old in different countries. But no theory is complete or without any criticism. However these theories help in understanding the problems of old age and its impact on society. To understand resolve and make life comfortable for the senior citizens integration of all these theories would be ideal.

### **DEFINITION OF OLD AGE:**

Defining old age was not so problematic earlier as it is today. Perceptions of old differ from society to society and from time to time. It is also perceived differently by different persons. Hence it is worthwhile to mention some definition for the better understanding of old age.

One way of defining elderly is the characteristic found in an elderly subject.<sup>3</sup> Features, which are attributable to relatively distant events, are known as distal aging effects. Such as lack of <sup>4</sup>mobility illness in childhood . Those features, which are attributable to more immediate causes, are known as proximal aging<sup>effects</sup>. For example problem in movement due to broken limb. Aging can also be seen in terms of their characteristics shared by other elderly people. Thus all elderly people who shared the same characteristic are known as Universal aging (e.g. wrinkled skin), Very similar to prior concept is the concept of primary aging i.e. changes to the body and the secondary aging i.e. changes, which occur with greater frequency in old age.

More common and general way of defining aging is the age. It is still a not uniform criteria because it differs from society to society. In underdeveloped society where there is low expectancy rate, aging may be lower than the developing societies, where expectancy rate is high. Sometime in the same country there are different retirement age for different jobs. In

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<sup>3</sup> . Stuart-Hamilton. The Psychology of Ageing An Introduction, Jessica Kingsley Publication London 1994, pp.6

<sup>4</sup> . Ibid. p.6

spite of the prevalence of this practice is followed by the government or institutions.

Another approach of defining old age is by assessing the dependency of the senior citizen. There are two types of dependency i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic. Sometimes senior citizens cannot get support from their family member and others due to their own physical disability and economic weaknesses. The extrinsic dependency is the dependency, which is forced by the society. Here the old people are not disabled but still cannot participate in social and economic role because changes in the social and economic structure

The most common criteria of defining old age are in reference to their physical attributes, mental status, and societal relationship. These are popularly known as: -

- A. Biological aging,
- B. Psychological aging and
- C. Social aging.

As the people grow older, physical strength starts decline gradually. Biological aging considered from the viewpoint of changes in the physical life i.e. wrinkled skin, graying of hair, loss of teeth, weak eyesight etc. With these



attributes a person can be easily compared with another and said to be younger or older.

Psychological aging is defined by the general decline in the mental life. The thinking ability of old people gradually worsen. It is also about the perceptions of self. His attribute towards the self and others change subsequently. This can be seen in day to day life style and function. How people adapt to the changing circumstances and their attitude and behavior towards him determine the psychological age of a person in his respective age.

A social aging, is another important concept. Here aging is seen from the view point of a person's changed role in his family community and society. It involves changes in his authority. People behaves differently towards him, and the kind of behaviour people expect from him.

Thus the aging is a combination of the concept of the biological capacity of survival with the changing physical condition, the psychological capacity for adaptation in changing circumstances and the sociological capacity with the changing roles in Society. The government for all practical purpose like pension follows chronicle age. However, with nuclear family system becomes the norm in the industrialized

society like Japan where often the immediate kith and kin cannot take care of the old, the government responsibility of taking care of the senior citizens increases.

#### **DEFINITION OLD AGE IN JAPAN:**

While discussing any problem of a particular country, it is important to understand the people of that country. Different cultures perceive a problem differently. It is manifested in their socio cultural and historical background .

In Japan, old age means the people of 60 years old and above. Japan which been influenced by Chinese culture follows China's system of determining old age. In ancient China, the calendar year was named with the combination of two sets of Chinese characters -one consisted of twelve characters and the other five characters.<sup>5</sup> whenever a person turned sixty-one years old, the name of that year would be the same as the year of his/her birth. This is called Kanreki (return of the calendar). Kanreki has got special meaning in Japanese life. This custom is also common in some of the South East Asian Countries.

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<sup>5</sup> . Daisaku Maeda, Ageing in Eastern Society, The Social Challenge of Aging, edited by David Hobman, Croom Helm, London- 1978, p. 47.

KANREKI is regarded as the beginning of second childhood. Some Japanese also perform some ceremony to celebrate a person sixty first birthday. During the ceremony a red vest is presented to him by their children and relatives to signify the second childhood. This ceremony means that the people are allowed to be depended on others. They are not expected to work any more. Thus KANREKI signified the social sanction permitting entry into INKYO (retired life). However the people still work even after retirement. The reason for working is not only to earn money but to keep themselves busy and also to contribute to the society. But in present day Japanese society the concept of old age is changing so is the attitude towards it. In a survey on life in an Aging Society where birth rate is declining about fifty percent respondents told that old age starts at 70 years and above. About 25% of respondent told it starts at 65 years old and over. It was interesting that about 16% of respondent said “ 75 years old and over”.This change in the attitude of public is probably due to the longer life expectancy, which have pushed this age to more than 75 years and over.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> . Kudu Keilichi, Public life on life in an aging society with fewer births, Home research no 15,2001

According to the definition of the United Nations an “aging society” is one, where number of people’s age is more than 65 years and above than 7% of the total population of that country. In the same way an aged society is one in where this percentage is 14% of the total population. At present in Japan, about 16 percent of total population are above 65 years. Thus Japan has already entered the aged society category.

#### **1. STATUS OF THE POPULATION OF AGED PERSONS.**

In Japan, as of 1 October, 1999 presently there were 21.98 million people, whose age was 65 and above and the percentage of senior citizen of total population was 16.7% Population. Projection for future trends in the aging of population 1996-2000 (Ministry of Health a Welfare, April 1997), shows that the percentage of the aged is increasing, reflecting the prolongation of the average life expectancy and low fertility rates. It is expected that in 2015, the number of aged persons will be 31.88 million with the aging ratio exceeding 25% and that a full –scale-aging society with more than one out of four nationals being old persons aged 65 or older will arrive.

## **2. STATUS OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AGED PERSONS:**

The number of households with persons aged 65 or older was 14.82 million, accounting for 33.3% of the total number of household (44.50 million) in Japan. The number of households comprising a single old person is 2.72 million (18.4 percents). Households comprising an old married couple 3.96 million (26.7%) households comprising an old person or old persons and his/ her or their married child (ren) is 2.03 million (13.7%). Again three generation households to the total number of households with persons aged 65 or older was decreasing while the percentage of households comprising a single old person or an old of married couple was increasing. (Ministry of Health & welfare 1998).<sup>7</sup>

## **(3) ECONOMIC LIFE OF AGED PERSONS :**

Economic conditions are one of the most important aspects while considering the status of the aged people. The economic condition is directly related to their well being and self-sufficiency, which also determines their status at home and helps them to pursue their interests pensions and their savings

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<sup>7</sup> . The Status of the Aging of the Population and Measure for an Aged Society in Various Countries, Directors- General's Secretariat of the Management and Coordination Agency -Japan March -2000, pp95.

According to a survey done by Ministry of Health & Welfare, the annual income of households comprising aged persons in 1997 was 3,231,000 yen, of which 63.6% money came from public and other pension benefits. The annual income of households comprising aged persons just half of the total annual income of any single Japanese family, but there is no major difference between the two in terms of annual income per household member.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4. STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR AGED PERSONS.**

Many senior citizens also aspire to work not only for financial reasons but also to keep themselves gainfully occupied. According the report of Ministry of Labour, in the case old men, 70% of persons aged 60 to 64 and 53.4% of persons aged 65 to 69 were employed.

In case of unemployment also more than 60% men age between 60 to 64 (30.0%) and nearly 40% of unemployed men age between 65 to 69 (46.6%) wished to be employed.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of women the picture was something different. Around 41.1% of person's age between 60 to 64 and 28.1% of person's age between 65 to 69 are employed. Even if

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pp-95.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. pp-97.

they were not employed more than 30% of unemployed women age between 60 to 64 (58.9%) and more than 20% of unemployed women age between 65 to 69 (71.9%) wished to be employed. This shows that, the double burden on women is because she has to care not only to herself but to her husband and her family also. In this field Human resources center are providing opportunity for temporary and short-term work, which closely related to their daily lives in the local community. With the revision of law in 1996 concerning stabilisation of Employment of Older persons, a system for creating a federation of Silver Human Resources Centers was established. Now the aged person has given opportunities to work by Silver Human Resources Centers at any place in the country. By the end of the year 1998, 34 federation of Silver Human Resources Centers had been established.

## **5.HEALTH CONDITION OF AGED PERSONS.**

Health is one of the most important problems related to old age. It is directly related to the physical development of old person and it is also related to the living environment and other support. The picture of the Health condition of the aged person in Japan is clear from the following facts.

The proportion of persons aged 65 or older per 1,000 person living at home who requires care is 49.0, persons who live in special care homes for old persons is 12.4, and persons who stay at health centers for old persons is 6.9. Those persons, who are in a hospital or general Clinic for more than six month, is 15.6.

As in Japan family norms is still strong, most of the aged peoples are taken care by their family. In a survey published by Ministry of Health and welfare in 1995 indicates that the percentage of household member who took care of aged person were 66.8%. 5.5% were relatives other than household members and 16.4% were personnel at hospitals and clinics.

Therefore aging in Japan is a major problem now a day. Japanese Government has taken various measures for solving the problems facing by these elderly people who needs utmost care, respects, strong health and an independent life.



## Chapter-2

### **JAPANESE GOVERNMENT POLICIES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

A well-developed Social Security system is an important component of a welfare society. Most of the nations provide Social Security to its citizens. They have various plans for the poor, women, children, minority people etc. In recent year, there is a growing concern to the old people. Most of the countries of the world have witnessed the growing number of old people due to rise in medical facility, living standard etc. Particularly the developed countries are facing the worst situation, as on the one hand their life expectancy has increased and on the other there is a sharp decline in the birth rate. No doubt, industrialization and urbanization has put more burdens on the elderly people.

Thus, due to the increasing percentage of old peoples in comparison to the total world population, United Nations has taken up the issue as an important problem. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Plan of Action of Aging in 1982.<sup>1</sup> The General Assembly also adopted the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (resolution 46/91) in 1991. Again, the year 1991 was declared International year of older persons by the United Nations. This

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<sup>1</sup> Internation Plan of Action and United Nations Principles for Older Persons, United Nations, New York, 1988 pp.7

shows the growing concern about the older people by an apex organization, which is the representative of almost all the countries of the world. It also provides guidelines for countries of the world to cope up this problem.

The highlight of the principles adopted by the United Nation for older person is as follows:<sup>2</sup>

### **INDEPENDENCE**

#### **OLDER PERSONS SHOULD:**

- Have access to adequate food, water, and shelter. Clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
- Have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income – generating opportunities;
- Be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force take place;
- Have access to appropriate educational training programmes;
- Be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities;
- Be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pg.53-54.

## **PARTICIPATION**

### **OLDER PERSON SHOULD:**

- Remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of and implementation of policies that directly affect their well being, and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations;

- Be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in position appropriate to their interests and capabilities;

## **CARE**

### **OLDER PERSON SHOULD:**

- benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values;

- have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness;

- have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care;

- be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humans and secure environment.

## **SELF FULFILLMENT**

### **OLDER PERSON SHOULD:**

- be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential;
- have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

## **DIGNITY**

### **OLDER PERSON SHOULD:**

- be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse;
- be treated fairly regardless of age, gender racial or ethnic background, disability or other states, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

Japanese government has also adopted comprehensive social securities measures. This phenomenon has been mentioned in Article 25, section 2 of the 1947 constitution, where it is referred together with social welfare and public health.

Since social security is primarily concerned with the social and economic aspect of a human life and requires huge investment and a comprehensive policy. This can not be left entirely in the hands of private sector whose primary motive is profit making. Even when private sector provide social security to its employees, government guidelines are important to safeguard the interest of a general people.

United Nations also provides for a role of the government of a particular country while implementing the 'Plan of Action' As it says: -

".... Government are urged to devote more attention to the question of aging and to utilize fully the support provided by inter governmental and non-governmental organizations, including retirees' and elderly people's organizations".<sup>3</sup>

The role of the government has been accepted in coordinating and managing organizations in implementing any plan for the elderly people. The United Nations guidelines clearly say that a country should formulate it's own social security policies in keeping with it requirement, culture etc. It says: -

"Since wide divergences exists with respect to the situation of aging in various societies, Cultures and regions -as reflected in different needs and problems - each country should decide upon its own national strategy and identity its own targets and priorities within the plan. A clear commitment should be made at all levels of Government to take appropriate action to achieve those targets and give effect to those priorities."<sup>4</sup>

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As it happen with other disadvantageous or minority groups the problems of the older people are not the same. Taking this view into account, the following guidelines have been recommended by the United Nations.

"...The aging are not a homogeneous groups and...be sensitive (The architects of nationals policies and strategies) to the wide differences and needs of the aging at various stages of their lives. Government should pay

<sup>3</sup>. The Status of The Ageing of the Population and Measures for an Aged Society in Various Countries, Directors-General's Secretariat of Management Agency Japan - March - 2000, p -47

<sup>4</sup>. Ibid. p.47

special attention to improving the lot of elderly woman who are often at a severe disadvantage.”<sup>5</sup>

Under the social security system, provision for the senior citizen is important. The Japanese government has legislated number of reforms to cope up with the problems confronting the senior citizens.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY AND CHANGING SCENARIO**

Though, Japan has a long history of Social Security but after the Second World War the Japanese society has seen remarkable changes, which calls for changes in the social security system accordingly. The most visible and important change is fast increase in the percentage of old people. Important among them are as follows:-

### **RAPID INCREASE OF AGING POPULATION:**

No other countries in the world have seen such a rapid increase in its aging population as Japan has seen in recent years. As it mentioned earlier the main reason for this is rapid decline in total fertility rate and increase in average life expectancy. The total fertility rate which was around 4-5 before the war and during the post war ‘baby boom’, has decreased to 1.46 by 1993. Apart from this, the average life expectancy, which was around 40 years, has increased to 76.3 years for

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<sup>5</sup>. Ibid. . . p 47.

male and 82.5 years for females in 1993. Thus this composition has made Japan the most aged nation.

It is expected that by 2025 the percentage of aged people will reach 25.8% Thus Japan will have the highest percentage of older people in the world.

So the government have to consider the demand of the aged people at various age groups. For the people who are between 65-75 age groups; income, maintenance, health care and security is more important. But the people of 75 and older, home care are important aspects.<sup>6</sup> Government support to the elderly is very important because of the drastic changes in the social values and social structure in Japan.

#### **CHILDREN'S DECREASING SUPPORT TO THE ELDERLY**

There is a gradual decline in the percentage of elderly people who live with their children. Earlier mostly old people lived with their family. But after the Second World War Japan has seen tremendous growth in industrialization urbanization. Consequently there has been a migration of population towards cities. This had a negative impact on the percentage of elderly people living with their children. In 1960 the percentage of elders who lived with their family was dropped to 55.3% in 1994. A further decline is expected in the coming year . This trend has compelled the government to adopt policies to support the elderly who are alone. The government has also

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<sup>6</sup> .Yasuhiko Yamasaki, , *Japanese Social Security: Over view and Directions in Reforms*. In "About Japan Series 17" social security in Japan, foreign press center Tokayo,1995 p.15

adopted family policies and taken other steps to cop with this problem. However, a great deal of improvement is needed here.

### **INCREASING NUMBER OF WOMEN IN WORK FORCE**

At present more and more women are joining the work force. The reason is not only the women's aspiration for economic independence but also to establish her identity. The positive changes in the work place due to enforcement of some laws further encouraged her to work. Enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity law, the child Rearing law and other legislation the working condition for women has improved<sup>7</sup>

The percentage of women workers which was 31.1% in 1960 has increased to 38.6% in 1992. The increase in the number of women opting for a career is undoubtedly a positive development but at the same time ramification of this development are also tremendous. Women increasingly are marrying late and either decides to have just one child or no children at all. The Japanese government is very much concerned about the fast falling rate of birth. Another problem emerging from this development is of taking care of elderly at home, the burden of which was generally fell on the women. In order to help the women to work outside the government has to implement such policies, which reduces the responsibility at home like taking care of the elderly people. Japanese Government has implemented Various Social Security plans.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.17.



The KODANSA<sup>h</sup> ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAPAN<sup>8</sup> states that social security, is the responsibility of the government to ensure a minimum standard of living for its citizens. The twin pillars of social insurance and social aid support social security.

Measures taken by Japanese Government to tackle this problem will be discussed later. It is important to briefly mention and understand the government policy regarding the old people, which was prevalent earlier.

#### **HISTORY OF PUBLIC PENSION SYSTEM:**

History of public pension dates back to 1875-76 soon after the Meiji Restoration. Since then so many public pension schemes has been adopted. The enactment of the Seamen's Insurance Law in 1939 also covered the private sector. General Employee's Pension Insurance law of 1941 (amendment in 1944) was a landmark. By the end of World War II this scheme covered almost all private sector. Later enforcement of a National Pension law in 1961 for the self-employed and their adult dependents under 60 years old covered the entire work force of the nation. Since then till recently various changes has been made in the pension system.

However, by late 1970s there was a lot debate on the pension schemes which many felt need great improvement. Some of these were a widening benefit gap between different pension plans, inadequate pension schemes for employees'

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<sup>8</sup> Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, Kodansha Ltd. Tokyo, 1983. p 20

spouses, and an increasingly precarious financial base for pension plans with the rising number of the aged population<sup>9</sup> (Social Security in Japan Foreign Press Center Tokyo-1995)

In 1985 reforms were introduced in pension system. The reform was unification of pension schemes and formulation of a basic pension system.

## **1. PENSIONS SYSTEM IN JAPAN:**

The Japanese government has adopted pension system which is three -tiered: -

- **The Basic Pension/ National Pension**
- **Employee's Pension Insurance**
- **Corporate pension & retirement allowance**

### **1. National Pension.**

National Pension is for the unemployed Japanese. All Japanese whose age is between 20 to 60 are eligible for this pension. The subscribers have to pay a fixed amount as a premium. But, some people like, low-income persons and the spouses of employees who are not working are exempted from paying the premiums.

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<sup>9</sup> Yasuhiko Yamasaki, Income Maintenance Systems, Social Security in Japan, "About Japan Series" 17, Foreign Press Centre Tokyo.. pp.25

At present around 96% of the older people aged 60 and over receiving this pension. Though a minor percentage of older people fail to participate, this pension may be described as a successful pension system.

## **2. EMPLOYEES' PENSION INSURANCE**

Employees' Pension is for those people who are employees somewhere or other in Japan. All the firms where more than 5 employees are working both employees and employers are required to participate in this system. The premiums are 8.68% of employee's salary, which is contributed by both employees and employers. However, the government has not given any discount to those persons or household who have a low income.

## **3. CORPORATE PENSION AND RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE-**

A large numbers of Japanese firms offer a retirement packages. This is provided in two ways, a one-time lump sum retirement allowance and a life -long pension. It can also be a mixture of the two. Taking a lump -sum allowance is a traditional style.

### **THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF PRIVATE PENSION SCHEMES:**

1. Employees' Pension Fund
2. Tax (Exempt) Qualified pension and
3. Each company's individual pension scheme.

## **1. EMPLOYEES' PENSION FUND**

Employees' Pension Fund is closely related to Employees' Pension Insurance. An Employees Pension Fund can be set up in a firm where there are more than 500 employees. About one third of all employees. Mostly about one third of all employees participate in this scheme. This pension scheme provides a higher level of benefits. Both, the employers and employees are required to contribute.

However, this fund is a private pension scheme but the government regulations have to be followed.

## **2. TAX (EXEMPT) QUALIFIED PENSION:**

This is the second most popular form of retirement package after Lump-Sum retirement allowance. In contrast to the Employees' Pension Fund in this scheme government cannot impose any guidelines.

This scheme enables the employers to be exempted from paying corporate tax. About one- third of all employees are member of this scheme which has a fix term pensions rather than a life-long term like other pension scheme. Thus this scheme provides incentives to the employers but is also beneficial to the retirees.

## **3. ONE-TIME LUMP –SUM RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE**

This is the most popular scheme among the employees and employers. About 42% of total work places have adopted only this type of retirement benefits.

The level of benefit under this scheme is different at different work places. However, this amount may vary from 40 to 46 months' salary of the employees for those who worked for a full term.

Thus, we find that in Japan pension system well developed and covers all most all the Japanese citizens under different schemes. Though the aim of all pension system is the same but they differ in terms of their management regulation premiums paid by the employees and subsidy by the government.

Taking into consideration that is the insurer of all these schemes, we see that this is the mixture of both public and private scheme. As National Pension and Employees' Pension rise insured by the government the others schemes are private schemes.

In the same way, employees pay the premiums for public pensions and their employers for all employed persons and for the self employed farmers, students' etc. Premium is paid by the insured only but it is also supported by a substantial government subsidy. For the spouses of employees the premium is not collected. The premiums for private pension are different under different scheme.

Government subsidy is also provided to various pension plans. This subsidy is a great asset for a successful running of the scheme. About, one third of benefits and all of administrative costs of Basic Pension are paid by the general budget of the government. The administrative cost of Employees' Pension Insurance and mutual and association

pension for central and local civil servants are paid by the central government. But, for the Private pensions including Employees Pension fund and National Pension Fund, the government does not provide any subsidy.

### **DEBATE ON PENSION SCHEMES**

Though, Japan has adopted a wide range of Pension system to provide a better healthy and independent life there are some important issues, which the government can not, overlooked.

The most important problem faced by the National Pension and Employees' Pension Insurance is the financial crisis. The reason is the increasing numbers of aged people with the low rate of growth. It has become a debatable issue. The burden on the government is tremendous. It does not want to put the burden on the future generation. At the same time government subsidy also cannot be stopped. The government also cannot mobilize more funds by increasing the consumption tax for it is politically not advantageous.

The other problems confronting the National Pension system are administrative with the number pensioners increasing. It is difficult to manage. However the problem is not so much increase in number but the increase in the numbers of those people who have not become participants or have not paid their full premium. The government is trying to tackle this problem at the central prefecture and municipal levels.

In this regard Government measures for the Aging Society adopted in 1995 shows that: -

“With regard to the public pension system appropriate benefit levels, as well as employment levels, will be maintained so that public pensions will continue to play a core role in assuring incomes for the elderly. In view of the reforms that took place in 1985 and 1994, measures, such as balancing the benefits and burdens, should be taken into consideration to assure long-term and smooth functioning of the pension system without excessive burdens on future generations. In addition to stabilize and justify the system in response to the change in employment structures and reorganization of the public pension system should be facilitated.<sup>10</sup>

#### **HEALTH CARE SYSTEM:**

Health is the most important problems.

Old people suffer from some different types of disease and other health problems in comparison to general people, when he become older. In this way older people needs more care and facilities. Japanese government has adopted various kinds of health insurance program for the old.

#### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

Enactment of Health Insurance law in 1922 to cover private sector employees was starting point of Health insurance in Japan. A National Health Insurance Law was

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<sup>10</sup> : The status of the Aging of the Population and Measures for an Aged Society in various countries. Director –General’s Secretariat of the Management and Coordination Agency, Japan. pp.121.

enacted in 1938 for self-employed and other non-employee inhabitants of municipalities. In 1973, all Japanese aged 70 and above were guaranteed free medical care, and coverage for dependents or principals covered by employees' insurance was also raised from 50 to 70% of costs.

Business organizations where 700 or more workers are employed are permitted to have their own health schemes. But in the case of any group of business organizations employing a total of 3,000 or more workers may act jointly, on behalf of the Government.<sup>11</sup> Thus on the one hand employees of big corporations tend to be covered by society-managed health insurance while on the other employees of smaller businesses are normally covered by Government managed health insurance. But in the case of self-employed persons in a specific business sector they sometimes also organize a national health insurance society functioning on behalf of the municipality in maintaining national health insurance. Generally the cost of the health insurance scheme is borne by the contributors but the government also supplements financially weak schemes with funds from National Treasury.

The important measures adopted by the Government are follows:

#### **1. EMPLOYEES' HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM.**

This is run on occupational basis. All the employees in a firm where five or more people are employed spouses are

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<sup>11</sup> . The Status of the Aging of the Population and Measures for an Aged Society in various countries, Director General's Secretariat of the Management and Coordination Agency, March, 2000, p.46



covered by this scheme. Important programs under this scheme are: -

#### **1.A. ASSOCIATION- MANAGED HEALTH INSURANCE**

Generally a large firms forms the association for their employees. But more than one firms also forms the association. There are around 1,815 such associations (1988).

#### **1.b. Government managed health Insurance.**

The problem with the employees of small and medium firms is that they can not form the association. So, the government helps them in forming health insurance association. The Government provides it on collective bases and the contribution is taken from both the employers and employees.

#### **1.C. DAILY- LABORERS HEALTH INSURANCE:**

Daily-laborer's job is very unstable in nature. So, the government provides a collective health insurance for them. All those who are employed on a day -to-day basis or for a fixed term of less than two months are covered by this scheme. Those workers who are employed for the seasonal work or for temporary work also comes under this scheme. Contributions for this scheme are collected on a day-to-day basis from both employers and the employees.

#### **1.D. OTHER OCCUPATION-BASED HEALTH INSURANCE**

There are some other health insurances systems for the people employed in different work place. These are as follows.

- I. Seamen's Insurance
- II. National Government Employees' mutual Aid Association.
- III. Local Government Employees mutual Aid Association
- IV. Private School Teachers and Employees' Mutual Aid Association.
- V. National Health Insurance :

All those people who are self-employed farmers, students etc. are covered by the National Health insurance programs. The legal foreign residents are also included in this scheme. The retired people who have already subscribed the Employees' Health Insurance are insured under the National Health Insurance.

#### **2. HEALTH SERVICE SYSTEM FOR THE ELDERLY:**

This system was introduced due to the burden caused by increasing number of old people on the National health insurance. Special financial arrangement was made for the old people of 70 and over. The elderly people have to pay a nominal fee per visit or per day. The central and local government provides subsidy for this purpose. Contributions are also transferred from the National Health insurance.

Thus a wide range of medical facilities has been provided to Japanese people with the help of central and local government. Since, Japanese health insurance system is universal and no distinction is made between public and private hospitals people are free to choose any medical services without any restrictions. Senior citizens also gets the same medical facility at equal cost. The reason for this equal treatment is that services are standardized by law.

Apart from all these facilities the Japanese government has adopted some measure for the aged to promote life long health improvement. It says.

“Through the dissemination of health related information, lifelong improvement through well balanced nutrition, exercise and recreation will be promoted. People should become aware of their health, thereby improving their health, preventing diseases and encouraging early diagnosis and detection of illness. Moreover, eating habits, which contribute to health improvement, will also be encouraged.

With respect to health improvement for the people in the prime of their lives or in their old age, a system, in which regional health services will be provided at municipal levels with the support of prefectural governments, will be developed, which will be complemented and enhanced by the used of private services and communication technology.”<sup>12</sup>

This program may be beneficial for the elderly because it makes them aware of the problem at an early stage and they are well informed about places where can get better treatment and is affordable. To take care of the psychological problem home help, short-stay, day services and home visit nursing

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.122.

programs are being improved upon. The home help services round the clock including holidays are being visualized.

No doubt, giving care services is an important aspect of elderly care, but providing quality care services is also important. The Japanese government is planning to take steps to train nurses and home-helpers.

For securing long-term care expenses through social solidarity the General Principles Concerning Measures for the Aging Society been formulated as follows.

“In order to establish a mechanism with which necessary financial resources can be secured toward the future based on the principle of solidarity between the elderly and cooperation among the people, positive effort will be made to establish a new long-term adequate public money and social insurance system.”<sup>13</sup>

Implementation of these measures will ensure better treatment for the elderly. To meet the cost, the government has also accepted the help of private service providers.

### **3. WELFARE SERVICES FOR THE AGED:**

The Law for the welfare of the Aged was enacted in 1963. The services provided under this scheme are as follows: -

(i) Old citizens club activities.

These clubs are formed voluntarily. All the old citizens' aged 60 and older can form the club. Through this they organize various social activity. These clubs also get assistance

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<sup>13</sup> .      *ibid.* p.125

from the government. In 1993, 37% of all Japanese aged 60 and older were members of such clubs. The clubs are formed at the regional; and national levels.

(ii) Skill development and information centers for the aged.

The main objectives of these centers are to provide jobs to the aged citizens and to help in earning their incomes. Counseling, research and information services are also providing by these centers. In 1992 there were 101 such centers operating nationwide.

(iii) Domiciliary services:

Home-helpers are provided to families who have bed ridden aged members, but can not take care of them. Earlier these services were available only to the families with low income. But now it is available to all the families at nominal cost. Some beds in nursing homes are also reserved for a short period of time for those whose families cannot take care of them for short period.

The handicapped aged person can get day care. This service includes rehabilitation, guidance for family care takers, bathing and feeding.

Ministry of construction also provides housing for the aged persons on part of its public housing supply program. The main objective of the Ministry of Health and welfare is to encourage families to live with aged members. For this purpose they also provide funds for adequate housing:

Residential facilities are also provided to the aged. This has been divided into three types:

- a) Home for the aged with low income
- b) Nursing homes for the aged
- c) Low cost homes for the aged which accommodate low-income people at low cost.

In 1993 the numbers of old people living in nursing homes were around 27,7,000. These homes are great in demand and the increasing day by day. But for the Government it is very difficult to fulfill the demand because of its cost burden.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF THE LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE :-**

Since the burden on the government to provide for the has increased due to the rapid increase in the percentage of the old people the Japanese government introduced the Long-Term Care Insurance, replacing the existing long term care portion of medical service for the elderly. The new system grew out of the realization that the care of the senior citizens had become a huge financial burden on the health insurance system and such arrangement would sure be unsustainable in the future. Apart from this there were other reasons responsible for a seperate and new program for the aging society. These were the outcome of changing Japanese society such as weakened communities increase in small sized families and increase in working women, financial and

psychological burden of family while taking care for the elderly had become very difficult. Thus, the new “long term care insurance” was designed to share the burden of caring for elderly among all members of society and reducing the burden of the concerned family.

**Feature of Long Term Care Insurance System <sup>14</sup>: -**

(a) In the Long Term Care Insurance system, the insured persons are those who are aged 65 and over. People aged between 40 to 64 are subscribers of health insurance. For the self-employed, students and formers (i.e. Category I), the premium is collected through municipality and deducted from pensions. For the employed people (ie. Category II), the premium is collected through additional premium to be paid to health insurance. Premium amount is determined by each municipality and thus differs depending on available facilities and demand for care service. The Premium is income-related and there will be moderating measures for low-income insured.

(b) Service Provided: - In the new system, the services are provided both at home and at Institutions depending on the care required by the user. The user is free to choose the kind of care and its providers, which can be either public or private. The degree of required care must be assessed beforehand by the municipality of user’s residence.

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<sup>14</sup> Long Term Care [http. // www.mofa.go.jp /-info/Japan/socsec](http://www.mofa.go.jp/-info/Japan/socsec).

(c) Financing the system: - The cost incurred in the Long-Term care Insurance is financed 50% by premium (17% by category I, 33% by Category II) and 50% by government subsidy. Within this framework, the municipality can determine the rate of premium for the insured category I i.e. for the self employed, farmers and students. It is estimated that it will cost around 3000 yen per month on average. For the category II i.e. employed people, in the Government managed Health insurance, the rate will be 0.95% of salary and in the Association managed health Insurance, the rate will be 0.88% of the salary.

**CONTEMPORARY DEBATE: -**

(1) Shortage of care providing facilities:-

The uneven distribution of care facilities throughout Japan is the cause of great concern. It is not surprising that one often hears some derogatory remarks about insurance schemes. Effort are being made to resolve this problem, support from private sector is also encouraged.

Apart from this, concern over the quality of care provided by the private sector is also a much discussed subject.

(2) Response to the Rise of Insurance premium :

Another problem associated with this scheme is the amount of Premium. For self employed, farmers and students, the Premium is deducted from pensions or collected separately by the municipality and for employed people, the amount of health insurance premium will be increased. Apart from this,



there is also a considerable variation in the premium among municipalities. At the end of 1999, the govt. had formulated a plan to reduce the amount of premium by 100% for the first 6 months and by 50% for the next year for the self employed people, and for the employed people, the govt. had decided to provide subsidy worth 1 years of increased amount.

### **(3) CASH ALLOWANCE FOR CARING FAMILY :-**

This is another serious issue. There are pros and cons based on the evaluation of the traditional family care. In 1999, the government had decided to provide some amount per elderly to a municipality as a temporary two year measure, which decides to given assistance to those who choose to take care of the elder.

However the government has also adopted the measures for the active participation and life long learning for the senior citizenship. The provision regarding this says :-

“In an aging society where people’s value increasingly diversify, it is vital to provide people with opprotunities to seek fulfillment in their mind and daily life and continuously learn new knowledge and technology. It is our aim to create a lifelong learning system in which people can freely choose their learning opportunities and their efforts can be appropriately evaluated.

In addition, to help the elderly have something to live for as important members of the society, their social involvement, including volunteer activities, should be facilitated and environments in which the elderly can make the most of their free time and live fulfilling lives should be developed.

Furthermore, since volunteer activities help the elderly to achieve their own goals, participate in local communities, contribute to enhancing community welfare and promote a spirit of social solidarity and mutual support, social

foundations need to be developed so that anyone can freely participate in volunteer activities while their own initiatives are respected".<sup>15</sup>

Apart from all these measures, government is also supporting the research, related to the problems of elderly people and extending her hands to help other research organizations already working in this field.

## **PROBLEMS FACED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE JAPANESE Economy.**

### **1. INCREASING BURDEN OF EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL SECURITIES:**

The total amount that was spent on social security in Japan in fiscal year 1994 was about 60 trillion-yen, or around 500 billion dollars. If measured in per Capita terms it comes to 480, 000 yen, or around 4,000 dollars. In percentage term more than half or 51% expenditure was on public pensions and public health insurance system accounted for around 38 percent. These two i.e. pensions and medical expenses alone account for 59% of social security spending. The rest of It was spent on all other types of Social securities which includes care for elderly, welfare for people with disabilities welfare services for children and unemployment insurance.

According to the government the Social Security expenses which is now 16% of national income, will rise to 30% by 2025. Taking together other public services the total burden will be equivalent to 60% which is today 37%. If the burden goes up to 60% individuals and companies can spent

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<sup>15</sup> The Status of The Ageing of the Population and Measures For an Aged Society in Various Countries, Directors General's Secretariat of Management Agency Japan, March - 2000, p.125

only 40% of their income. Thus both the private sector and the people will face severe problem.

The social security is not the only areas financed by the government. It has spend on country's diplomatic services and defenses; public education, new roads and railways etc. The money collected for these non-socials –security services was 78 trillion-yen in 1994, which was 21% of national income. Thus, the burden all together on non-social security and social security on Japanese people was 37% of their income. This burden is commonly known as the “national burden rate” in Japan.

The government has announced that this burden rate will not come down in future but it is likely to increase. However it has also been announced that this burden to not go higher than 50%.

Increase in social security payment will not be a problem if the economy strengthens. However even the most optimistic economist in Japan holds the view that the economy will not grow by more than 2%. Another reason of worry is growing fiscal deficit of Japan. Both the national and local government have debts totaling more than 450 trillion yen (around 4 trillion dollars). No doubt, to clear this debt, the government has to raise the amount of taxes. It may not be thus possible for the government to keep the “national burden rate” low.

Thus the expenditure on social securities have put a heavy burden on the government and indirectly on the general public.

## **2. PROBLEM OF SUPPORTING THE PENSION SYSTEM :**

According to the Health and welfare Minister the pension premium will have to be raised to 43.3% of a worker's monthly income in 2025, if the government wants the senior citizen to be well looked after. The giant Japanese business organization Keidanren says that currently there is a shortage of fund reserve of around 490 billion yen for the public pension system, due to the difference in frequently raised benefit levels without corresponding hike in contribution levels. The Employees' Pension program is also facing a severe financial crunch. According to Naohiro Yashiro, Professor of Economics and the Institute of International Relations at Sophia University, if necessary action is not taken in the near future 60% of the national income will have to be spent only on social security, which will be a great burden on the whole society.

## **3. DECREASING SAVING RATES:**

Saving is an important source of investment. The Japanese government feels that the total amount of saving will be affected by the increasing aged population. Though there is no single opinion about the effect of saving on the Japanese economy. According to Charles Horioka, Professor of Economics at Osaka University, the saving rate will start showing a negative trend after the year 2010, which is 13% at present. This decreasing saving rate will affect the amount invested in its own economy and overseas. On the other hand, he also says that the need for saving amount will be adjusted by the decreasing numbers of people. The reason is that

because of decreasing population the need of investment will also go down.

But the other researchers have different views. As Robert Feldman, the Chief Economist for Japan at Morgan & Stanley<sup>16</sup> has pointed out in his report, "The Golden Goose and the Silver fox," that the decreasing saving rate will affect the investment sources and the sources of current account surpluses. Rising pension benefits for both workers' households and households in general are partly responsible for declining saving rate.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4. DECLINING PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH**

Production is a very important aspect of economic growth, living standard etc. Production needs investment and investment needs saving. As the saving rate has started showing the negative sign, this will lead to another problem i.e. the productivity growth will also decrease.

To increase the productivity growth, there is a need of more and more investment. But the productivity growth is already declining because of decrease in working age population. This has been slowing from about 3% in 1975 to 0.6% at present. As it has been estimated that the labour force participation will decline from 66 to 55 million over the next 30 years. I.e. the labour force will go down by 11 million.

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<sup>16</sup> . Charis fordyce, Economics and Ageing Japan Land of the Graying Sun Jan 1999. [www.Japn-magazine.com/1999/Jan/insight story](http://www.Japn-magazine.com/1999/Jan/insight%20story)

<sup>17</sup> . Ogura Seiritsu, A proposal for Phasing out Public Pensions, Japan Echo, Tokyo, Vol.XII,no.1, 1995, pp-61.

Therefore the people remaining in work force have to work hard and produce more.

Thus, the Japanese government has adopted a comprehensive programme. But the problems created by the rapid increasing number of old people has put both the government at the economy at the crossroads.

## Chapter 3

### **SENIOR CITIZENS IN JAPAN: FAMILY AND THE ECONOMY**

As we discussed in the earlier chapter the Japanese government has adopted several policies for the welfare of the old age people but there are numerous problems in successfully implementing them. Earlier family was the sole responsible for taking care of older family member. However, now due to the industrialization and urbanization in Japan after the world war migration towards the city is increasing. Nuclear family system is becoming the norm. In the nuclear family there is less people so it is difficult to take care of the old age people. The burden mostly falls on the women of the family. Now sometimes even the women find it difficult to look after elderly at home since they are also employed. Japanese Government has to take this changing situation into consideration while formulating any policies. It is hence necessary to assess the changes in the family system.

#### **OLDER PEOPLE IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL JAPAN: -**

In the Pre-Industrial societies, domestic group or family itself carried out production activities. Therefore, work place

and home were the same In such societies, older people enjoyed an important position in the family and social life. they were the head of the family and also the owner of the land, property etc. which was the sources of income The young were completely depended on the older people for the acquisition of rights in the basic means of production. This assured that the elders in the family would enjoy power and support.

'Extended or joint family' was the Common feature of many societies, in which older people enjoying important position. Advice was sought from the elders who were more experienced. The elders were regarded as the nearest to the ancestors and the God in genealogical terms. Many rituals were performed only by the old people. In ancestor worship older people occupied a central place in the ritual ceremony.

#### **ELDERLY PEOPLE IN MEIJI PERIOD.**

The Japanese system was based on the concept of 'ie' (house or family) from the Tokugawa period until the end of World War II. It was based on the Samurai families model. Confucian ideology was the essence of this system.



The 'ie' was inherited by the oldest son, They used to live in the same house after the marriage, However, those who were working far away from their birth place had to live at home and thus, two or three generations were living in the same household.<sup>1</sup>

The younger members of the house were seen as indebted to the older members for their upbringing, and in return they were expected to look after the older people. Thus the family was the main caregiver to the elderly.

When the intellectuals of Japan were reassessing the whole structure of the Japanese family system and preparing for the establishment of the new Civil Code, 'family system' was much in their debate. Some of them saw it essential for the maintenance of order in social life. Others saw it as an obstacle in the process of modernization and internationalization of Japan. However the Civil Code of 1898 made a compromise between the two.

But when the Allied Occupation drew the Civil Code. The 'ie' was no more a legal unit and it was registered as a nuclear family after the marriage. Earlier about 1881, it was registered with the authorities and they were registered as

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<sup>1</sup> Tadashi Fukutake, Japanese Society Today, University of Tokyo Press – Japan 1974 p.30

continuing units. Now, all the Children are supposed to have equal rights to inheritance; and they share responsibility for the care of their parents<sup>2</sup> The laws are drawn up according to the Constitution of 1947 which states : with regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, laws shall be enacted from the stand point of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes (Article -24).<sup>3</sup>

Due to rapid growth of industrialization and urban-centric growth, large number of migration from rural areas to urban areas and from one place to another have been taking place which has had an impact on the family system. Younger people often are compelled to move to the cities in search of employment and good life. Housing settled in the cities and away from the family, distances do creep in into the relations with family members living in rural and other parts of the countries.

Life in cities is also very hectic and though which leaves very little time for an individual to be too much concerned about other. Beside shortage of housing accommodation in

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<sup>2</sup> Joy Hendry The House and Family System, Understanding Japanese Society Routledge, London - 1987 p. - 27

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.27.

cities in Japan. Infact apartments in Tokyo are likened to rabbit hutches. Rents are too high to rent bigger houses. Besides education and knowledge reduces the reliance of the younger on elders. Legal advice can be sought by paying a lawyer. Therefore the rapid emergence of technological and other knowledge has diminished the significance and role of older people in the family. Thus the erosion of the authority of the aged in family decision making, isolation from children or peers coupled with abundance of leisure time and without much work creates problem for the elderly<sup>4</sup> Ultimately it has diminished their prestige and the relationship with youngsters. Thus younger members have increasingly started considering older family members as burden.

In traditional families, individual was seen to be part of whole which gave primacy to group over individual but this is not so in modern times; In individualism an outcome of modernization, has given birth to the new concept of the individual responsibilities and identity. It has also downgraded the power and authority of the older people in the family. Victor S.D.Sonza (1982)<sup>•</sup> notes that one of the fundamental differences between the pre industrial and industrial society is

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<sup>4</sup> Choudhary, D.Paul, Aging and the Aged, Inter - India Publication, New Delhi p-88.

• Koblí A. S. Social Situation of the Aged in India. Anmol Publication, New Delhi 1996; p-2/51

that in the formal social interaction is group oriented whereas in the later it is individually centered.

### **CHANGE IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF JAPAN**

Before discussing about the family system and old age it is important to have a look on the demographic structure of Japan. The demographic structure of Japan is also changing rapidly this is having an effect on the family's structure. Due to young people opting for late marriage or no marriage at all, there is a decline in the birth rate. Most married people have one or at the most two children.

This because today in Japan the cost of child rearing has become so costly. Also it is very difficult for a couple especially when both are working and ambitious to devote too much time to the home and children house -keeping and bringing up children is a full time job. This is the reason why most of the women leave their jobs after getting married and involve themselves in child rearing and family life. It is hence not surprising that the percentage of young women with career avoid marriage.

In traditional family system women are the symbol of affection and caring. They are homemakers and so taking care of the old and young is their job. this tradition to a great extent continuous upto today even though time have changed. It is often the women who take care of elderly parents in -law. Japan is basically a male dominated society. Japanese women consequently have started emphasizing less on marriage and family.

There is sharp decline in the living arrangement of the old people in today's family system. The proportion of elderly people living with their off spring has declined to 52.2% in 1997 in comparison to 80% in 1960. The proportion of people living alone is around 6% in the case of men, and which is comparatively very high in the women i.e. 20% particularly in the age group of 70-74.

Traditionally elders live with their sons but now changes is perceived, there is no taboo on living with the daughters. The number of the old people living with their daughter was 12.8% in 1994 of the total population of the senior citizens. This pattern is known as the "*Masuo-sanphenomenon*"<sup>5</sup> which

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.9

is named after a well-known comic –book character who lives together with his wife and her parents.

Another arrangement is of parents living separately but in the same area. This will enable both the young and the old be independent and live life according to their wish but still be near enough to support each other in times of crisis.

Government has adopted some measures to improve the relationship between the family and the older people. As general principle concerning measures for the aging society describes: -

"Measures to help working people cope with both their professional career and family life will be promoted comprehensively and systematically.

Employment and working environment will be improved so that working people can cope with their jobs and child care and care for the elderly by creating an atmosphere where it is easy to take leave for nursing and elderly care and return to work, or continue to work while caring children and elderly alike. The popularization of child - care leave system will continue to be to be promoted and the early introduction of care leave for the elderly systems. ..."<sup>6</sup>

Apart from this government has also adopted the measures to improve the housing styles so that the elderly people can live comfortable. For this government measures says: -

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<sup>6</sup>. The Status of the Aging of the Population and Measures for an Aged Society in Various Countries, Director General's Secretariat of the Management and Coordination Agency, Japan March 2000 p.120

"The constructions and extension of houses will be facilitated by the use of loan systems to allow people to live with their parents in their own homes.

Moreover, public rented houses or apartments will be supplied, giving priority to households with the elderly as well as meeting the needs for living together with, neighboring and group homes which do not involve blood relations."<sup>7</sup>

"Through the propagation of the Design Guidelines for the Aging Society and loan systems, the construction and renovation houses suitable for self-support and care for the elderly will provided. In particular, new public rented house of apartments will be constructed in accordance with certain specifications, giving consideration to the functional deterioration associated with aging.

In addition, by coordinating housing and welfare measures, the supply of residential buildings which are equipped with daily assistance and care systems for the elderly, and the development housing complexes with life-support systems will be promoted."<sup>8</sup>

Thus in this way government measures are trying to include not only the relatives of older people but also their neighbors and those who are not their blood relatives. This program is expected to improve the environment in the family as well as in neighborhood.

The government has also accepted the role of family in health care. Thus the measures has also been adopted, as it says:-

"In view of the importance of homes/families in living and Psychological terms, in-home services will be improved so that the elderly can live at their own homes or in their communities as long as they want even when they require care.

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<sup>7</sup>. Ibid p.128

<sup>8</sup>. Ibid. p-128

To support such elderly people and families, home help, short-stay and day services and home-visit nursing programs will be improved. In addition, the development of in-home care support centers will be promoted.

With regard to home help services, 24-hour service systems, including holidays, will be established.

Furthermore, comprehensive in-home health and medical care will be promoted through the enhancement of the functions of family doctors, in home terminal care and day-care.<sup>9</sup>

Other problems like labor shortage around 1990, declining trend of fertility rates and the promotion of equal opportunity and equal treatment for female workers compelled the government to implement another programme. Thus the government adopted the "Angel Plan" to support working women who have child or children.

However, the measures adopted by the government are insufficient and thus there is a need of implementation of some more programmes to cope with the problems of the family and elderly people.

### **SENIOR CITIZENS AND ECONOMY: IMPACT AND SUGGESTIONS**

In this part solutions will be suggested to the problems of Japanese economy, which are related to the changes in the family. These are as follows: -

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. pp-123



## **INCREASE OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION RATE IN WORK FORCE**

One of the best solutions to increase the work force participation can be to bring more & more women in job market. As seen earlier the ratio of working population to the total population has decreased to 102million in 1991. This is adversely effecting the economy.

Some steps have been taken by the Japanese government to encourage women to work. Some support system is provided to those women who have Children and old people at home . It is clear that the age of marriage is directly related to the employment of women. In the same way the age of marriage is negatively related to the total fertility rate. It is very necessary to strengthen the family system. The Japanese government is making some efforts in this direction and adopted plans such as "Angel Plan" described earlier.

The experience of other Countries like Sweden shows that if a government adopts on active family policy it helps not only in increasing labor participation rate but also the improving fertility rate.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> . Social Security in Japan , The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan  
[http://www.mofa.go.jp/\\_info/japan/socsec/maruo](http://www.mofa.go.jp/_info/japan/socsec/maruo)

Government for example, adopted the Equal Employment Opportunity Bill in 1985 and maternity leave with income compensation for female employees in 1990s. Apart from this, day care facilities for children also improved to reduce the burden of the working women.

However, the employers do not necessarily adopt government policies. Compensation during maternity leave is still low i.e. 20% of wages from employment insurance funds and social insurance contribution from employers.

#### **RAISING THE ELIGIBILITY AGE FOR PENSION AND THE AGE FOR RETIREMENT.**

At present a person is eligible for the full pension benefit at the age of 65 according the revision of the pension system in 1994. But the arrangement has also been made to for those people who are between 60 to 64 and are unable to find suitable job or those whose wages are low. They can receive partial pensions.

But debate to raise the pension eligibility age and the age of retirement According to Professor Naohiro Yashiro<sup>11</sup> (Professor of Economics in the Institute of International

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<sup>11</sup>. Chris Fordyce: Economics and Ageing Japan , Land of Graying Sun ,January, 1999  
[www.jpainmagazine.com/1999/jan/insightstory](http://www.jpainmagazine.com/1999/jan/insightstory)

Relations at Sophia University) the pension eligibility should begin at 70 and the retirement age should be extend beyond 65. This will not only solve the problem of decreasing work force participation but also the increasing amount of pension burden to the national income ratio. It will also contribute to the economic independence of the elderly.

### **JAPANESE ECONOMY AND MARKET FOR THE ELDERLY.**

#### **SAVING**

One area where attention needs to be given is the creation of a market of goods and services for the elderly. According to an estimate, Japanese people who work very hard through out their life and accumulate a lot of money are relatively <sup>wealthy</sup> by international standard. A recent survey done by Central Council for saving Information shows that they have the saving of around 24 million yen (\$200, 000) per household and the annual income is 4.5 million yen (\$37,500). The expenditure of the elders' compare to youngsters is less.

Thus the amount of saving by elderly people can be a great asset for boosting of the economy. It is important that ways and means are found to make the elders spend. There is some area where emphasis can be given.

## **NURSING CARE SERVICE**

One important area where maximum money by elders is spent is in nursing care service. According to the Long-term Care Insurance law passed by the government, elderly people who are eligible for benefit can have access to services which also includes help with meals, housework and bathing, as well as access to equipment such as wheel chairs etc. Providing such services to the elderly can be great market for the companies. According to a prediction by Japanese companies who is providing services and products for the aged for decades; the special care industry will be worth 42 trillion yen (\$ 35 billion) by the year 2000. <sup>12</sup>

According to the Ministry of Health and welfare there is need of around 10,000 nursing care Centers. The private sector can take advantage of this demand. There is also a need of around 170,000 trained caregivers to meet the health and nursing needs of the aged. Though, at present the government still tightly regulates this industry but the market forces are compelling to include private sector in greater numbers.

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<sup>12</sup> Chris Fordyce: Economics and Ageing Japan , Land of Graying Sun , January, 1999  
[www.jpan\\_magazine.com/1999/jan/insightstory](http://www.jpan_magazine.com/1999/jan/insightstory)

But while giving more space to the private sector the government should be careful about their motives. The private sector should not become a mere profit making companies and push caring and serving of the elderly in the background.

### **LEISURE TIME UTILISATION**

Post retirement is the period of leisure and also loneliness. Some enterprising businessmen are taking advantage of this and organizing pleasure tours and other leisure activities to entertain the senior citizens. One company is offering tours to Hawaii and other tourist destination. Figures shows that the elderly people are going abroad in large numbers. If the government provides some incentives to these companies who are organizing tours for elderly it will not only contribute toward improving the Japanese economy but also help in resolving the socio-psychological problems of elderly.

### **PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT**

Some products or equipment which are useful daily for the elders can also be marketed. According to a report of some companies, there is already double-digit increase in the sale of some products like adult paper diapers and other health related items. Some companies already in the market are improving and redesigning these products.

## **HOUSING**

Other area where greater attention needs to be given is the housing sector. This is more so in urban areas, because of shortage of land and the large number of nuclear families houses are not designed to meet the requirements of the elderly people. The government is already providing loan and preferential interest rate for houses according to the needs of the elderly. Houses with room lay outs that increase accessibility for the elderly to bed rooms, kitchens etc. Products like bath and beds suitable to the need of elderly people are becoming very popular.

The Japanese government however, must monitor private companies who are dealing with services & products provided to the elderly people. United Nation has also recommended some guidelines for the government to protect the elderly consumers these recommendations are as follows: -

## **Recommendation 18<sup>13</sup>**

### **Government should:**

- Ensure that food and household products, installation and equipment conform to standards of safety that take into account the vulnerability of the aged;
- Encourage the safe use of medication, household Chemicals and other products by requiring manufacturers to indicate necessary warnings and instructions for use;
- Facilitate the availability of medications, hearing aids, dentures, glasses and other prosthetics to the elderly so that they can prolong their activities and independence;
- Restrain the intensive promotion and other marketing techniques primarily aimed at exploiting the meager of resources of the elderly.
- Government bodies should cooperate with non-governmental organizations on consumer educating programs. The international organizations concerned are urged to promote collective efforts by their member states to protect elderly people.

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<sup>13</sup> International Plan of Action and UN Principles for Older Persons, United Nations, New York, 1988 p.31.

Thus changes in the structure and function of the family has altered the status of the older people. The Government is planning to cope this situation and measures has been adopted. However, some more measures will be required with the changing situation in the family and the economy.



## CONCLUSION

Japan as mentioned in the chapters has already entered into the group of aged society as its total number of elderly people reached to 7 percent of its total population as earlier as in 1970. The future trends of the Japanese population indicate that this trend will continue in the future, and Japan will attain the status of a country with the highest number of elderly people in the world.

Aging of the population of a country is not a peculiar problem. Western countries are also facing the same problem. Increase in medical facilities, rapid industrialization, urbanization, increasing in the number of women joining the work force has an adverse effect on the status of the elderly people. Urgent steps need to be taken to tackle this problem or else it will have an adverse impact on the social, political and economic life of the Japanese.

However, various measures have been taken by the Japanese government for the care of the senior citizens, the public pension programme and health care system is very important among them. Japan's public pension program is a very comprehensive and covers almost all the citizens of Japan. It is one of the great post war social security achievements. However, the most important issue is the rising cost of keeping the pension system going. As

already stated that this may cause to economics slowdown, thus government has to think of alternatives. Continuance of the pension system is very important for it is the main sources of income and independence for the aged people.

Being a mixture of both private and public pension systems it helps in maintaining and sharing the burden of government. However, it is increasingly become difficult for the government to ensure the continuance of the pension in the long term perspective because of the swelling numbers of those who donate and contribute to the pension system. According to the social insurance agency estimation as of March 1999 about 2.65 million people were behind in there premium payments and 900,000 who not paying at all.<sup>1</sup>

Health is another important area on which the government is concentrating. The cost of medical benefit for elderly people is rising rapidly, a separate system i.e. Health Service System for the Elderly is expected to be adopted to meet the needs of the elders and cut the burden on National Health Insurance. One important

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<sup>1</sup> Asahi Shimbun, "National Pension Plan needs fundamental Review of System," 17 May,2001.

advantage in Japan is that there is no difference between public and private hospitals, and elders can opt for any one of them.

A guideline adopted in 1995 is also very comprehensive and covers almost all the dimensions of the problems related to the senior citizens. It even covers areas like working and income, living environment and promotion of research work. Certainly Japanese government initiatives can be considered as landmark in the field of the welfare of the old people of Japan. It is not only comprehensive but the recognition of the fact that the elder should be encouraged active participation in the society is commendable. These measures also tries to bring harmony among various generations of the society. It is necessary in the context of rising burdens on the younger generation.

The Basic Law on Measures for the Aging Society (Law No.129, 1995) itself visualizes a role for not only the central government but also for the local government one of the important provision of this law is that the government is accountable to the National Diet on the state of the senior citizens. This will give opportunity to the public and everyone concerning to review the situation from time to time and make amends accordingly.

The government adopted policies for the welfare of the people even before the war but they were scattered and there was lack of coordination. The problem of elderly people was not so visible earlier, so a separate plan for the elderly people was lacking. It was only in 1995 that the Japanese government adopted comprehensive and separate programs for the aged people. Thus it can be said that seriousness of the problem of aging of the population was realized very late. It was only when it started showing its negative effect on the economy that the government started giving a very serious thought towards it.

The measures adopted by the government are undoubtedly very broad and comprehensive but still there are some issues, which need immediate attention. Increase in the amount of social security cost, raising the age of retirement and pension schemes, decreasing fertility rate, increase of women work force etc. are some issues which need to be addressed urgently.

Further strengthening of the support system for women who have a career is needed so that they can fulfill their ambition as well as take of the children and elders at home. In spite of modernization, 100% literacy etc. still Japan is by and large a male dominated society and it is the women's responsibility to look after the home

and all the members of the family. If the government does not provide encouragement and support to the women, working women will increasingly opt for late marriage or no marriage and if they marry they will not bear children and definitely not more than one child. This development will have and is already started having a negative impact on the society there is already an imbalance between the aged and the young in the total population of Japan. According to the 2000 census in Japan for the first time since National census was launched in 1920 the number of old people aged 65 or above are more than the youngest age bracket.<sup>2</sup>

The government needs to formulate policies keeping in mind the following points

- (1) Rapid implementation of programs to resolve increase in aged people ;
- (2) Implementation of programs so that the burden on the family particularly on women is considerably reduced.
- (3) Government should encourage the private sector to invest in the field of care services and items relevant for the old at the same time prevent them from becoming mere a profit-making

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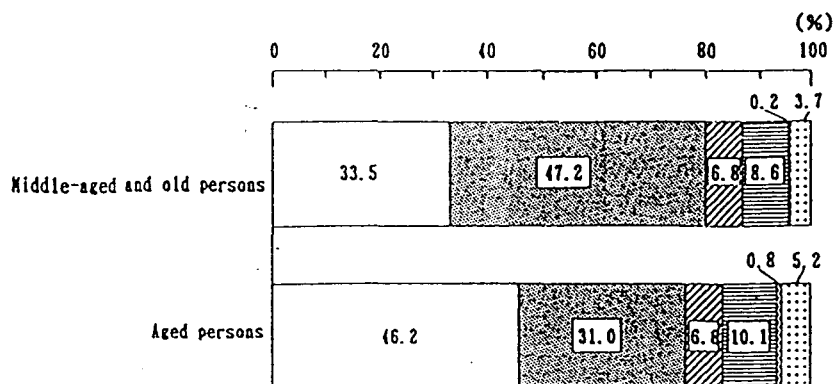
<sup>2</sup> Japan Times, 30 June,2001.

agency. In this regard comprehensive regard should be framed.

- (4) There should be a coordinating agency, which can interact and communicate with government, municipalities, private organizations and research organizations. Through this government can give directions and determine priority areas which need more attention.
- (5) More and more seminar should be organized to promote interaction between different international organizations and government agencies. This will help in sharing their experiences and help them in making improvements in the policies for the senior citizens.

In this way the Japanese government for its senior citizens can establish a more better and healthy environment.

Caregiving for Parents or Spouse



- Family members and relatives should take care of their parents or spouse.
- Family members and relatives should take care of their parents or spouse, and should utilize welfare facilities to complement what lacks in home care.
- Parents and spouse should be taken care of under the welfare policy.
- Family members may reduce their burden by putting their parents and spouse into welfare or other facilities.
- Other
- I do not know.

Source: A Survey of Middle-Aged and Old Persons' Awareness of the Issue of Aging (1998), Policy Office on the Aging of Society, Director-General's Secretariat, Management and Coordination Agency

(Note) The subject of this survey was men and women aged 40 to 59 for the category of middle-aged and old persons and men and women aged 60 or older for the category of aged persons. These persons were chosen from throughout the country.

( THE STATUS OF THE AGEING OF THE POPULATION AND MEASURES FOR AN AGED SOCIETY IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES DIRECTORS- GENERAL'S SECRETHRIAT OF THE MANAGEMENT AGENCY - JAPAN , MARCH. 2000 p100)

Status of Employment and Unemployment for Aged Persons by Sex and Age Group

(Unit: %)

Status of employment for employed persons and the willingness/unwillingness of unemployed persons to be employed	Men							
	Total		Aged 55 to 59		Aged 60 to 64		Aged 65 to 69	
	1992	1996	1992	1996	1992	1996	1992	1996
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed persons	76.6	73.8	92.9	93.0	71.6	70.0	58.6	53.4
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Executives	(11.7)	(13.7)	(12.1)	(14.1)	(12.1)	(14.2)	(10.4)	(12.2)
Employers	(55.4)	(57.0)	(65.6)	(66.5)	(15.6)	(52.5)	(37.4)	(42.3)
Voluntary workers	(3.3)	(3.2)	(1.5)	(1.2)	(3.9)	(3.8)	(6.7)	(6.7)
Engaged in side jobs	(0.7)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.1)	(0.7)	(0.5)	(1.8)	(1.2)
Self-employed	(26.2)	(23.8)	(20.0)	(17.4)	(28.9)	(26.8)	(36.7)	(33.5)
Helping family business	(2.6)	(1.6)	(0.5)	(0.4)	(2.8)	(1.6)	(7.1)	(3.6)
Unemployed persons	23.4	26.2	7.1	7.0	28.4	30.0	41.4	46.6
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Wishing to be employed	(48.1)	(52.4)	(63.3)	(68.9)	(55.1)	(64.5)	(37.9)	(39.7)
Not wishing to be employed	(50.7)	(47.4)	(35.7)	(31.1)	(43.6)	(35.3)	(61.0)	(60.1)
Unknown	(1.2)	(0.2)	(1.0)	(-)	(1.3)	(0.2)	(1.1)	(0.2)
Status of employment for employed persons and the willingness/unwillingness of unemployed persons to be employed	Women							
	Total		Aged 55 to 59		Aged 60 to 64		Aged 65 to 69	
	1992	1996	1992	1996	1992	1996	1992	1996
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed persons	43.7	13.5	56.1	58.8	39.8	11.1	32.1	28.1
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Executives	(4.4)	(5.0)	(4.7)	(5.0)	(3.8)	(4.7)	(4.4)	(5.2)
Employers	(42.6)	(48.0)	(52.4)	(59.4)	(41.2)	(41.2)	(22.4)	(30.7)
Voluntary workers	(5.8)	(5.4)	(4.7)	(4.4)	(6.0)	(6.6)	(8.0)	(5.9)
Engaged in side jobs	(7.5)	(5.4)	(6.8)	(4.4)	(8.0)	(5.7)	(8.3)	(6.6)
Self-employed	(21.5)	(22.2)	(19.4)	(16.8)	(19.3)	(25.3)	(29.6)	(30.3)
Helping family business	(18.2)	(13.8)	(12.0)	(9.9)	(21.6)	(15.6)	(27.3)	(20.8)
Unemployed persons	56.3	56.5	13.9	11.2	60.2	58.9	67.9	74.9
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Wishing to be employed	(32.4)	(29.9)	(39.7)	(37.3)	(33.5)	(32.8)	(25.2)	(22.1)
Not wishing to be employed	(66.5)	(66.9)	(59.3)	(62.4)	(65.3)	(67.1)	(73.8)	(77.7)
Unknown	(1.1)	(0.2)	(1.0)	(0.4)	(1.2)	(0.1)	(1.0)	(0.2)

Source: General Survey of Working Condition on Advanced Aged Workers, Policy Planning & Research Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Labor

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Income of Households of Aged Persons

	Annual income(1997)	Annual income per household member (average number of household members)
Households of aged persons	¥3,231,000	¥2,070,000 (1.56 persons)
	Earned income 26.6%	
	Public and other pension benefits 63.6%	
	Income from property 6.3%	
	Other benefits 1.0%	
	Remittances and other incomes 2.5%	
All households	¥6,577,000	¥2,227,000 (2.95 persons)

Source: Comprehensive Survey of Living Condition of the People on Health and Welfare(1998),

Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health and Welfare

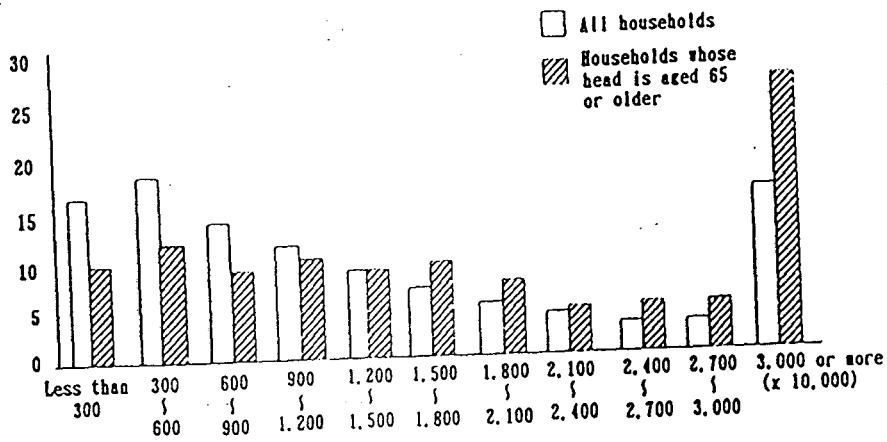
(Note 1) Households of aged persons refer to those which consist of a person or persons aged 65 or older alone or those which consist of a person or persons aged 65 or older plus an unmarried person or unmarried persons aged 17 or younger.

(Note 2) Income from property refers to the sum of income from house/land rents as well as interests and dividends. Other benefits refer to social security benefits other than public and other pensions.

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Fig. 3 Distribution of the Balance of Savings for Households Whose Head Is Aged 65 or Older

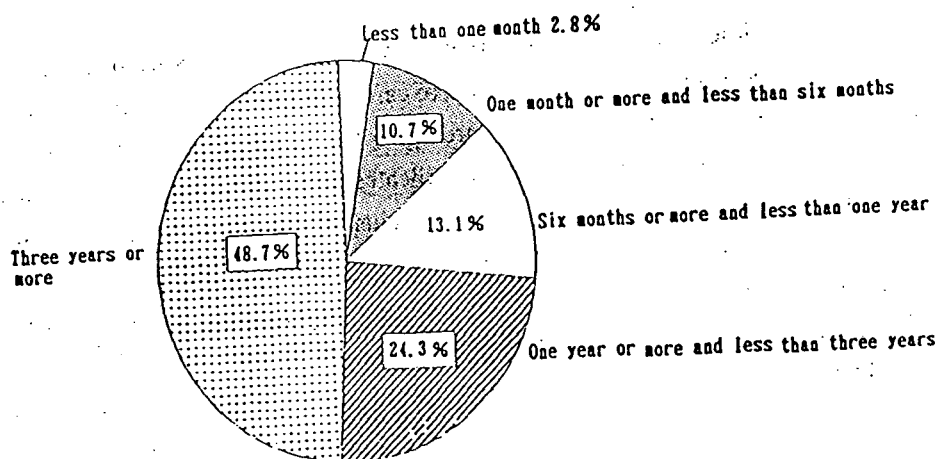


Source: The Family Savings Survey (1998), Statistics Bureau, Management and Coordination Agency

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# APPENDIX - 5.

Percentage of Bed-Ridden Persons Aged 65 or Older (by duration)



Source: Comprehensive Survey of Living Condition of the People on Health and Welfare (1998) by the Ministry of Health and Welfare

(Note) The portion of data on Hyogo Prefecture is excluded in this survey due to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

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Proportion of Aged Persons Who Require Care or Are in Similar Conditions

(per 1,000 persons)

	Aged 65 or older	Aged 70 to 69	Aged 70 to 74	Aged 75 to 79	Aged 80 to 84	Aged 85 or older
Persons living at home who require care	49.0	15.5	26.8	46.8	102.3	209.0
Entirely bed-ridden	( 7.6)	( 1.4)	( 4.5)	( 6.8)	( 15.3)	( 37.1)
Almost bed-ridden	( 8.7)	( 2.0)	( 4.1)	( 8.5)	( 16.5)	( 44.0)
Staying in bed for some time and rising from bed for some time	( 22.6)	( 8.0)	( 11.7)	( 20.7)	( 46.2)	( 96.3)
Other	( 10.5)	( 4.1)	( 6.5)	( 10.8)	( 24.3)	( 31.7)
Special care homes of old persons	12.4	2.1	4.8	11.2	24.0	59.1
Health facilities for old persons	6.9	0.5	2.3	6.8	15.5	32.6
Hospitals and general clinics	15.6	7.1	9.1	14.7	26.8	53.5

Source: Created using Comprehensive Survey of Living Condition of the People on Health and Welfare (1995), Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health and Welfare

Major Persons Who Take Care of Aged Persons

Category	Percentage	Sub-category	Percentage
Household members	66.8%	Household members or relatives other than household members	100.0%
Relatives other than Household members	5.5%	Husband	5.0
		Wife	31.6
		Eldest son	4.4
Personnel at hospitals and clinics	16.4%	Eldest son's wife	27.5
		Eldest daughter	15.5
		Eldest daughter's husband	0.3
Other	5.6%	Son(s) other than the eldest	1.2
		Daughter(s) other than the eldest	4.5
Unknown	5.7%	Other	9.3
		Unknown	0.5

Source: The Socioeconomic Survey of Vital Statistics (1995), Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health and Welfare

(Note) Major persons who took care of persons who died at the age of 65 or older

( THE STATUS OF THE AGEING OF THE POPULATION AND MEASURES FOR AN AGED SOCIETY IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES DIRECTORS- GENERAL'S SECRETARIAT OF THE MANAGEMENT AGENCY. JAPAN, MARCH. 2000. p.99)

## Framework for measures for an aging society

The Basic Law of Measures for the Aging Society  
(legislation by House members enacted in 1995)

Basic philosophy: To build a just, viable, and affluent society that is founded on the spirit of independence and solidarity

Promotion organization: 1. Establishing a Council for Measures for the Aging Society

2. The government develops general principles for measures for the aging society.
3. The government submits an annual report to the Diet.

Establish



Council for Measures for the Aging Society

President: Prime Minister

Members: Heads of related government agencies appointed by the Prime Minister

Secretaries: Administrative vice-ministers of related government agencies appointed by the Prime Minister

General affairs: Managed by the Management and Coordination Agency

Terms of reference: 1. Developing proposed general principles

2. Promoting coordination among related government agencies
3. Deliberating important matters concerning measures and promoting the measures

Developing proposed general principles



Cabinet meeting



General principles decided in July 1996

General Principles for Measures for the Aging Society

Character: Guidelines for basic and comprehensive measures for an aging society that should be promoted by the government

Objective: To build a affluent and viable society, filled with the spirit of friendship and solidarity, in which aged persons can really feel that it is worthwhile to live long

Basic policies: 1. Emphasizing the independence of, participation by, and choice by aged persons

2. Implementing in a systematic manner measures that cover the lifetime of people
3. Respecting the independence of local communities
4. Promoting measures in an effective manner
5. Promoting cooperation among related government agencies
6. Utilizing science and technology related to medical service and welfare as well as information and communications and other fields

Basic measures by category

1. Employment and income
2. Health and welfare
3. Learning and social participation
4. Living environment
5. Promotion of surveys and research and other projects

Promotion of measures for an aging society

1. Matters to be noted when promoting measures for an aging society
2. Organization for promotion of measures for an aging society
3. Review of the General Principles

( THE STATUS OF THE AGEING OF THE POPULATION AND MEASURES  
FOR AN AGED SOCIETY IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

DIRECTORS- GENERAL'S SECRETARIAT OF THE MANAGEMENT  
AGENCY - JAPAN, MARCH 2000, p.103)

## INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING

### PREAMBLE

**The countries gathered in the World Assembly on ageing,**

**Aware** that an increasing number of their populations is ageing,

**Having discussed** together their concern for the ageing, and in the light of this the achievement of longevity and the challenge and potential it entails,

Having determined the individually and collectively they will

- (I) develop and apply at the international, regional levels policies designed to enhance the lives of the ageing as individuals and to allow them to enjoy in mind and in body, fully and freely, their advancing years in peace, health and security; and.
  - (II) Study the impact of ageing populations on development and that of development on the ageing, with a view to enabling the potential of the ageing to be fully realized and to mitigating, by appropriate measures, any negative effects resulting from this impact.
1. **Do solemnly reaffirm** their belief that the fundamental and inalienable rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights apply fully and undiminishedly to the ageing; and
  2. **Do solemnly recognized** that quality of life is no less important than longevity, and that the ageing should therefore, as far as possible, be enabled to enjoy in their own families and communities a life of fulfillment, health, security and contentment, appreciated as an integral part of society.

**Source :** International Plan of Action on Ageing and United Nations Principles for Older Persons. United Nations New York, 1998, pp-5.

# APPENDIX - 9.

## A Brief Chronology of the Events Regarding Senior Citizens.

January 1, 1927	Universal application of the Health Insurance Law
January 1, 1932	Implementation of the Relief Law
January 11, 1938	Establishment of the Ministry of Health and Welfare
June 1, 1942	Universal application of the General Employees' Pension Insurance Law
1950	The average life expectancy in Japan exceeds 60 for the first time (58.0 for men, 61.4 for women).
September 1955	Establishment of a National federation of Senior citizens' clubs (forerunner to the Japan Federation of Senior Citizens' Clubs).
January 1, 1959	Implementation of the National Health insurance Law (to cover all citizens under a health insurance plan)
September 1, 1961	The Federation of Councils of Social Welfare in Kyushu drafts a provisional law for the welfare of the aged.
April 5, 1962	Establishment of the Japan Federation of Senior Citizens Clubs (an urgent appeal is made at the convention inaugurating the federation to create a law for the welfare of the aged).
April 1962	Ministry of Health and Welfare allocates funds for welfare centers for the aged and inaugurates domiciliary care services for the aged.
August 1, 1963	Implementation of the Law for the Welfare of the Aged.
1966	Establishment of a Respect-for-the Aged Day (September 15)
September 20-22, 1970	National Congress for a prosperous old age
April, 1972	Founding of the Tokyo Metropolitan institute of Gerontology
January 1, 1973	Introduction of a system to provide compensation for medical costs incurred by aged patients (an amendment of the Law for the Welfare of the Aged; medical costs are made free for persons aged 70 or over).
1977	The average life expectancy in Japan becomes the world's longest (72.69 for men, 77.95 for women)
July 26, 1982	U.N. sponsored World Assembly on Aging in Vienna
February 1, 1983	Implementation of the Health and Medical Services Law for the Aged (persons aged 70 or over are asked to pay a part of medical costs)
1985	The percentage of the population in 65-and-over age groups in Japan exceeds 10% for the first time (10.3%, 12.5 million).
April 1, 1986	Amendment of the National Pension Law (to introduce a

	system of common basic benefits for all pension schemes)
April 8, 1986	Issuance of a report by the Headquarters for the Aged, Ministry of Health and Welfare.
June 6, 1986	The Cabinet formulates a basic policy to cope with longer life spans.
February 25, 1986	Establishment of the Elderly Service Providers Association.
May 26, 1987	Passage of the Certified Social Worker and Certified Care Worker Law.
August 26, 1987	Issuance of a report by the Headquarters for Senile Dementia, Ministry of Health and Welfare.
September 4, 1987	Issuance of a report by the Committee for Gerontology Research Institutes, Ministry of Health and Welfare.
December 14, 1989	Issuance of a report by the Committee for Nursing Care, Ministry of Health and Welfare.
July 1996	The General Principles for Measures for the Aging Society were established.
2000	According to the 2000 census in Japan for the first time since national census was launched in 1920 the number of old people aged 65 or above is more than the youngest age bracket.



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