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EMPLOYMENT FOR THE ELDERLY IN MALAYSIA: SHARING EXPERIENCES FROM JAPAN

The life span of Malaysian in year 1950 was only 50 years old, 74 years old in year 2006 and projected to be 80 years old in 2050. The number of senior citizen in 40 years is projected to be four times bigger as compared to now. The current number of senior citizen who is aged 60 and above is recorded at 2.1 million but imagine it increased four times to be 8.8 million in year 2050. Thus, this research project conducted intensive field research to examine the employment of senior citizens in Malaysia by drawing some lessons from Japan's experiences.

This research project employs both qualitative and quantitative method. For qualitative method we used face-to-face interview to identify issues and challenges for the employment of senior citizen in Japan and Malaysia. On the other hand, for quantitative method we used secondary data to analyze employment of elderly in Japan. Two related sites were identified for this research. The following two field researches have been conducted: The first field research was conducted in KL in March, 2010 by Professor Kato, Dr. Balakrishnan and Dr. Balan. The second field research was conducted in Tokyo in June 2010 by Ms. Beatrice and Ms. Hanim

The main finding from our field research is that, from the Japan's experience in coping with aging society, basically, trying to provide for the aging society is very important, and with the growing numbers. Without positive and affirmative policies to assist them, then this will cause a greater social problem. Thus, we would like to recommend that the Malaysian government should learn to reduce or even try to eliminate using foreign workers, which will help solve most of the employment problems in the country.

At the same time, we may suggest that Japanese may have attractive and suitable model of high elderly employment for Malaysia but study must be done and comparison on the types of jobs offered to the Japanese elderly must be investigated. Only then can we know the suitability of the Japanese model for Malaysia.