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Development Process and the Actual Situation of Social Business in JapanHong-Gi KIM ¹⁾

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ABSTRACT

Even though social business or social entrepreneur has gained the interest recently, the discussions in the academic world have been still in progress. Therefore, various discussions about social business need to be fulfilled including the requirements, concept, related laws and domestic and foreign cases of social business and the fields that social business involves.

This study aims to identify the development process and the actual condition of social business and to provide the basic information for the studies of social business. The literature review was employed for the research method of this study.

Before the appearance of the social business in Japan from 1950's to 1990's, social contribution was fulfilled based on the Corporate Social Responsibility. Since 2000's, social business has been introduced in the world, the ways of carrying out the corporate social responsibility have been varied and the interest in social entrepreneur has grown. At that time, the success and failure of social business seemed to be deeply related with the rearing of social entrepreneur, how to rear social entrepreneur and how to support them began to be discussed about.

The various alternative types of social business need to be advertised widely and specifically and the organization of social business can be evaluated and trusted. Because NPOs have played major roles of social business, the level of dependence on NPOs is high and, therefore, other types of entities need to be included to the fields of social business. The institutionalized support system for social business that should be considered as the solution for social problems has not been established, the social business-friendly environments for social entrepreneurs needs to be formed. To make the social business-friendly environment, successful cases need to be selected, evaluation methods

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need to be reviewed and the ways of raising funds needs to be made ease.

<Key-words>

Social Business, Social Entrepreneur, Corporate Social Responsibility
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I . Introduction

Recently the social business or social entrepreneur has gained the interest from mass media including TV and newspapers. The discussions about this in the academic world are still in progress. To keep up with the global trend, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan established the Social Business Research Council in 2007. The Social Business Research Council appointed Kanji TANIMOTO as the chairman and has supported social business. It also aims for the independent business to pursue both the public interest and profitability of NPOs and companies.

Considering the quantitative expansion of social business, the increase of workforce engaging in it and the possibility of the expansion of related areas and services, social business seems to require the more theoretically elaborated discussions.

However, the researches on social business have been rarely conducted in Japan with the short history of social business. It is very difficult to find the studies to solely deal with social business in Japan. Even though some studies dealt with social business, they simply mentioned the concept of social business or community business that is just part of social business, and they researched the NPOs in the aspect of civic movements.

In this context, reviewing the development process and the actual condition of social business in Japan has a significant meaning. Therefore, this study intends to understand the development process and the actual condition of social business and to provide the basic resources for the comparative studies on social business in Japan.

II . The Concept and Types of Social Business and Definition in Japan

1. The Definition of Social Business

Social business is a term that is difficult to be defined, because it is a relatively new concept, the fields that it is involved in are diverse and the responsible departments in government are various. Moreover, even though the organizations that are named as social business are in operation, there is not a consensus for the definition of social business organization due to the different condition of each country. Borzaga and Santuaauri(1998) defined that social business is the company to produce merit goods or collective goods to emphasize the social purposes with private-sector legal forms and managerial models in order to accomplish the social purposes of the organization (Dae-Seok PARK et al 2009).

Cattell(2000) mentioned that social business is not a legally defined term and it began to be commonly used in recent years and described that social business is the organizations to focus on the fulfillment of social purpose rather than the commercial interest simultaneously making a profit of the level that is necessary for the viability and growth of organizations in a broad sense. (Dae-Seok PARK et al., 2009).

M. Bull & h. Crompton(2006) defined based on the survey in a broad sense that social business is one of the ordinary business activities supplying goods or services for money, generating more than 25 percent of its income from trading goods and services, pursuing mainly social and environmental aims and principally reinvesting its surpluses in the business or the community.

In-Tae KIM(2009) prescribed that social business is the organization to fulfill the social purposes to provide social services for under-served people recommended by government based on the financial sustainability of management combining with the financial, physical and human resources.

DOI (2004) defined the social business as the activity to combine performing social purposes with making a profit concerning the broad fields of social affairs.

Kanji TANIMOTO (2006) described the three characteristics of social business as follows:

- ① Sociality: The mission of the business shall be to address social problems that need to be solved.
- ② Viability: The entity shall convert the mission into a form of business and continuously run such a business.
- ③ Innovativeness: The entity shall develop new social goods or services as well as mechanisms to provide them, and shall create new social values through the spread of its activities across society.

Kanji TANIMOTO(2006) suggested that the fields of social business include ① the fields beyond the areas of government and administration, i.e., welfare, education, environment, health, poverty, rediscovery of community, the supports for developing countries, etc., and the fields that government has not dealt with due to the vertical response and ② the fields beyond the activities of market

2. The Concept and Types of Social Business

Social business in Japan is categorized to five types. According to Table 1, Type A is the social business through the commercialization of NPOs. Type B is the social business that is separated from existing NPOs; the subsidiaries of NPOs become to have the independent ownership. Type C that is derived from cooperatives is the social business that cooperatives, i.e., consumers' cooperative, involve community business or social business. Type D is the social business that is derived from private companies. It can be divided into two types; private companies with social missions start up social business from the beginning or are converted into social business in the process of the

development of business. Finally Type E is the social business that is separated from private companies; private companies establish subsidiary or independent social business (Mi-Youn YOON 2011).

Table1. The Concept and Types of Social Business in Japan

Types	Description
Type A	Social Business through the commercialization of NPOs
Type B	Social Business separated from existing NPOs
Type C	Social Business derived from cooperatives
Type D	Social Business derived from private companies
Type E	Social Business separated from private companies

Source: Janelle A. Kerlin (2010)

3. The Case of Social Business

The Social Business Research Council of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry selected four successful cases of social business; ① Big Issue aiming for supporting the rehabilitation of homeless people, ② E-elda for supporting the social participation of the young elderly, elderly and the disabled by utilizing intellectual assets, i.e., IT, ③ Pro Lesson proving non-institutionalized childcare services and ④ Making smile aiming for making symbiotic community network of rural areas.

Among these cases, Big Issue will be looked at more. Big Issue has been distributed into the world centering on U.K. and Scotland. Big Issue intends to support the social rehabilitation of homeless people by offering homeless people the opportunity to earn a legitimate income. In addition, Big Issue in Japan has been operated as a private company not as a NPO.

In Japan, there is the Social Business Award that was established in order to facilitate the activities of social entrepreneurs who attempt to solve social problems. This award is hosted by Social Innovation Japan, which is the NPO aiming for sympathizing and supporting social entrepreneurs and future social entrepreneurs who work for social innovation. It has been sponsored by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Among the award winners, there are three organizations working for the promotion of employment of the disabled; ① Felissimo, ② the Home of Sun and ③ Stiftung YAMATO (See Table-2).

Table2. The Case Social Business in Japan

Winner	Description
Felissimo (The winner of 2006)	It supports the activities for the rehabilitation of the disabled. Among those activities, there is Challenged

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	Creative Project, which includes the meaning that the disabled are the people who challenge. Through this project, the disabled make handicraft to deliver their thoughts and personality.
Home of Sun (The winner of 2007)	It aims to realize the economic and social rehabilitation and the symbiotic society for the disabled by jobs and sports through the employment of the disabled in cooperation with large companies. Starting with Omron, which is a joint investment in 1972, 8 companies including Sony and Honda have hired over 700 of the disabled for 40 years.
Stiftung YAMATO (The winner of 2008)	It intends to realize the economic and social rehabilitation and the symbiotic society for the disabled by jobs and sports through the activities for the disabled to deliver mails.

Source: Hitomi ENDO(2009), The Development of Social Business in Japan

III. The Development of Social Business in Japan

As the social business and corporate social responsibility of European countries, which appeared since 1970's, was introduced to Japan, the social business began to emerge as the alternative methods to solve social problems. Namely social business, social entrepreneur, social innovation and social innovation cluster in the diverse fields including social work have come out in Japanese society (Jae-Wook CHUNG 2010). Of course, there were the attempts to solve social problems by organizing business in the fields of social welfare even before the appearance of social business. Social business that appeared in Europe since 2000 seems to be partially similar with the existing system of Japan. In this context, the background and development of social business in Japan is going to be explored in this section. The development of social business in Japan can be divided into two period; 1995's to 1990's and 2000 to present.

1. The Background of Social Business

Since 1970's, the term of social business began to be used for the first time. The overall economic crisis including the fall of economic growth rate and the increase of unemployment triggered the appearance of social business. At that time, oil shock caused economic depression and then, economic recession, which brought the restructuring. Continuous increase of unemployment rate and economic recession along with other factors were considered as serious social problems. These social problems were not able to be solved by existing macro-economic policies and labor policy. The limitation of state-centered labor policy and the social polarization caused by the flexibilization of

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labor market provoked the appearance of social business.

In addition, these economic crises caused welfare state to come to a crisis and in this situation, social business appeared; as the severe competition has deepened and the community spirit has been destroyed in the polarization caused by the collapse of welfare system, social business has appeared. To prepare measures for under-served people in our society, the social consensus has been formed that the physical and psychological resources as well as the financial resources of state are required. These all factors are regarded as the ones to support the appearance of the third sector centering on the civil society (Han-Pyo KIM 2010).

Japan has also gone through the similar process of changes. Diverse social problems have appeared including the cares and welfare for the elderly and the disabled, the education for children, the improvement of local environment, the preservation of natural environment, poverty and employment caused by the progress of low birth rate and aging society, rural-urban migration and the changes of life styles and employment environments; public sector, that is administration, used to take the responsibilities of these social problems. However, because of the quantitative increase of social problem and their diversity and seriousness, the administrative agencies of state became to be difficult to handle them by themselves.

In this situation, NPOs of volunteers and charity also came forward to deal with social problems; the activities of entrepreneurs such as employing the disabled have been actively performed. These activities of entrepreneurs became to be called as the activities of social entrepreneur or social business and began to play major roles of solving social problems regardless of regions, which has caused to increase social business continuously (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry 2008)

2.1950's to 1990's

Japan established the foundation for the great economic growth in 1950's. At that time, Japan society became the company-centered society and the daily life of people was greatly affected by the affairs related with company. Therefore, since 1960's, the company welfare has been a major issue and people have highly committed the organization and goals of company. In results, start-ups of business or performance of social activities separated from company became unfamiliar to people. People assumed that they could enjoy wealthy life as they work hard, company grows and finally society develops (Nobuyoshi OMURO 2004; Yuichiro NAKAGAWA 2008).

In the early of 1970's, the civil society movement that had appeared in the U.S.A affected Japan society greatly. After war, as Dankai generation¹ whose population is the largest group in the entire population grew up and entered universities in 1970's, they

¹ Dankai generation is the age group who was born around 1950's during the period of economic revival is considered as the generation to tow the development of Japan society.

began to participate in social movements actively.

Since 1980's, Japan society got worse economically because of slow economic growth caused by the oil shock of the early 1970's. Moreover, as the trend of policy has changed to small government due to the criticism against big government that has been provoked from western countries, the Japan society also has confronted great challenges. The decrease in tax revenue that was derived of slow economic growth made government decrease annual expenditure. In this context, the expenditure for social welfare also has greatly decreased.

Since the late 1980's, the fee-charging of social welfare services, delegation to the private sector, encouragement of the services by private sector and commercialization of social welfare services have gained the interests of Japan society; it means that the neo-liberalism became strengthened prevalently, which is represented with the privatization of social welfare services. At that time, Japan government created the regulation to protect the disadvantaged and reinforced safety net for them along with diverse deregulations and the concept of social responsibility made an appearance at society. In this process, social groups who got out of company and accumulated social experience rapidly increased. Since the late 1980's, then, the activities that citizens attempted to deal with social tasks for themselves has appeared gradually, which can be regarded as the beginning of social business that had appeared from western societies (Kanji TANIMOTO 2004; 2008).

3. Introduction Stage: Early 2000's

Since 2000, the discussions about social business have been actively made through gathering studies and information of social business and the contacts among researchers.

For example, 'Soft Management Center' established the study group for rearing social entrepreneurs in April, 2000. This study group became one of the pioneering study groups based on the participation of entrepreneur, staff of local autonomous entities and researchers. Based on the activities of these kinds of study groups, social entrepreneurs and social business spirit have been networked beyond the region and fields in Japan.

In the meantime, Japan JC included social entrepreneurship as the basic principle from 2000 to 2004 and seriously discussed how to rear and support social entrepreneurs; Japan JC held seminars and forums of social entrepreneurs in each regions. However, in spite of those efforts, it was criticized that its supports and the direction of activities were not concrete. However, thanks to its activities, the term of social entrepreneur was able to be spread nationwide; the studies and diverse seminars on social entrepreneurs have been carried out and the rearing of entrepreneurship and the supports for start-up preparation around young people became a new social trend. To develop these activities in the level of movements to social business, the entrepreneurship certainly needs to be expanded and Social Innovation Japan (SIJ) was established aiming for networking of social entrepreneurs in Japan in 2005. SIJ has held various programs for social

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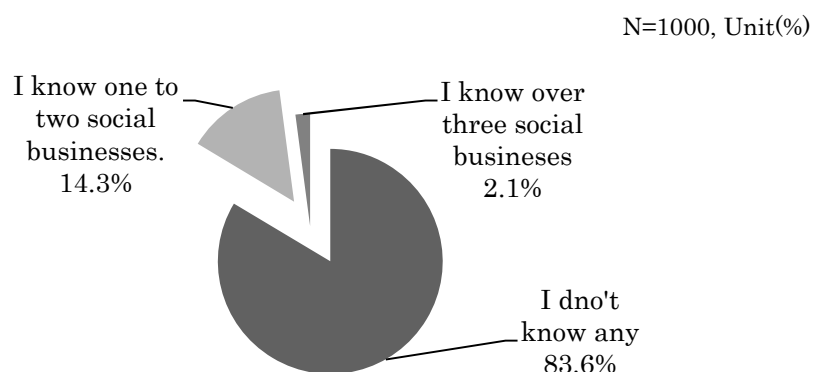
entrepreneurs from diverse fields; the offering of venues for the gatherings of social entrepreneurs, rearing of social entrepreneurs by education and workshops and related projects to promote social business by fund-raising and consulting (Kanji TANIMOTO 2004; 2008; Yuichiro NAKAGAWA 2008). As mentioned above, in Japan the interests and activities for dealing with social problems have been reinforced and the activities of social entrepreneurs took a growing interest as time went. At that time, the success and failure of social business seemed to be deeply related with the rearing of social entrepreneur, how to rear social entrepreneur and how to support them began to be discussed about (Jae-Wook CHUNG 2010).

IV. The Actual Condition of Social Business in Japan

Social Business Research Council aims to study independent business to pursue both public interest and profitability of NPOs and private companies. It surveyed the actual condition of social business in 2008. The results of the survey can be summarized as follows:

1. The Level of Awareness of Social Business

According to the survey by the Social Business Research Council, comparing with the number of social business, the awareness of social business seems to be significantly low; 83.6% of respondents answered that they didn't know any social business; 14.3% knew one to two social businesses; and only 2.1% knew over three social businesses (See Figure1). Furthermore, 31% of respondents answered that they barely used the goods or services of social business and among them, only 7% spent 10,000 yen per month and most of them spent less than 10,000 yen per month (See Figure2). In addition, among the respondents who didn't use the goods and services of social business, 61.5% answered that they didn't use them because they couldn't trust them; the reason they couldn't trust them was mostly because they were not certified in formal way (See Figure3).



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

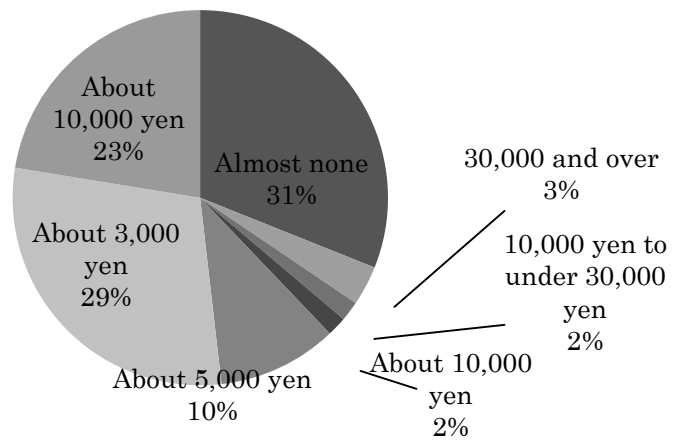
Figure1. The Awareness of the Cases of Social Business

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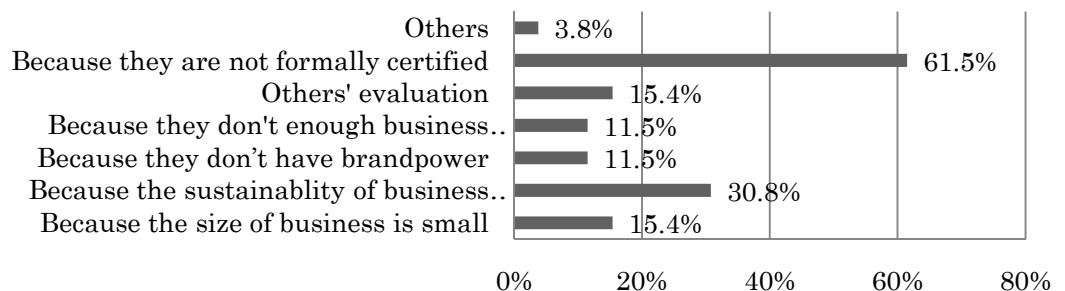
N=58, Unit (%)



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure2. Monthly expense for the goods and services of Social Business

N=26, Unit (%)



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure3. The Reason to trust Social Business

2. The Fields of Involvement of Social Business

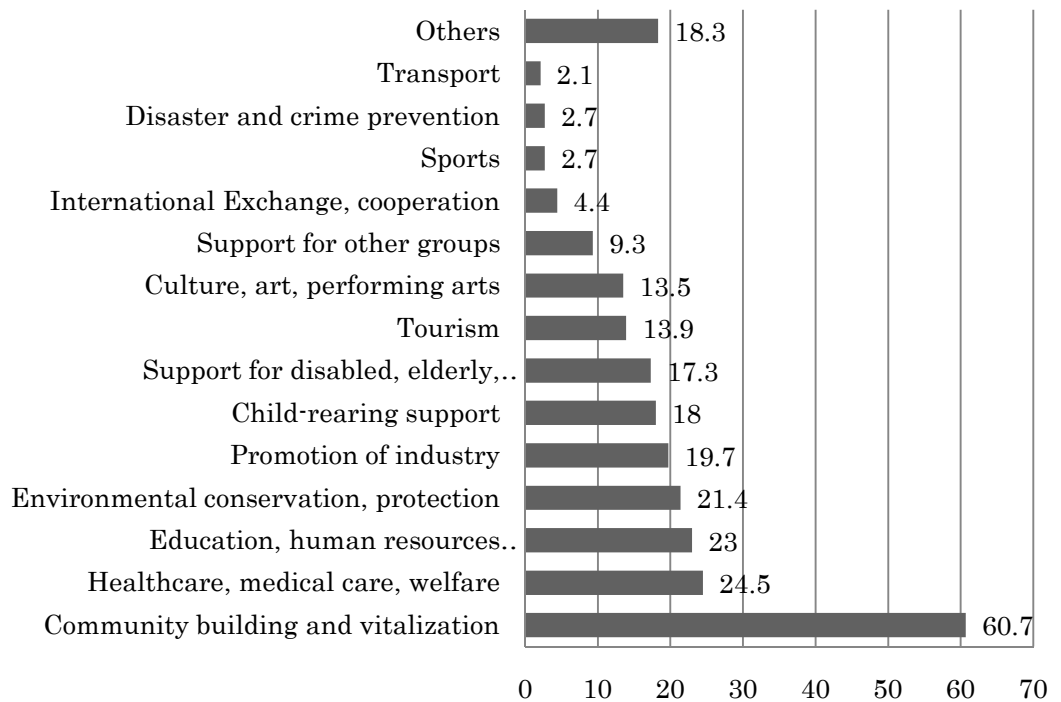
The results of survey illustrates that social business are more likely to be employed in the fields of community building and vitalization, support for disabled, elderly and homeless people, education, human resources development and environmental conservation, protection (See Figure4 and 5). Furthermore, the fields of disaster and crime prevention and fair trade are expected to be more frequently used.

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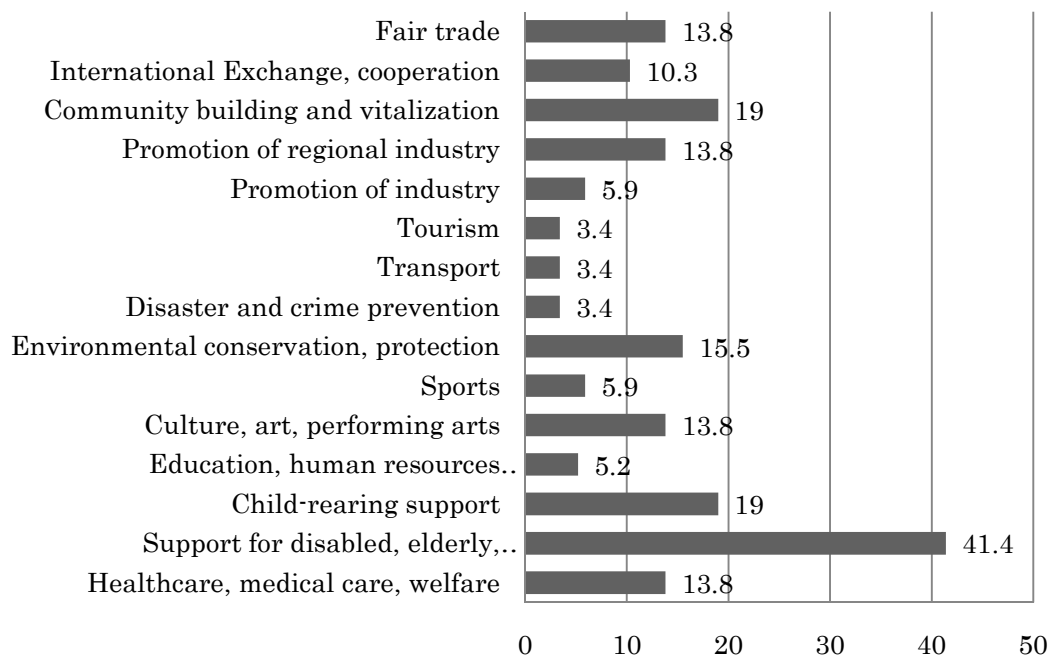
N=473, Unit (%)



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure4. Fields of Involvement of Social Business

N=58, Unit (%)



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure5. Fields Where More Social Businesses Are Sought

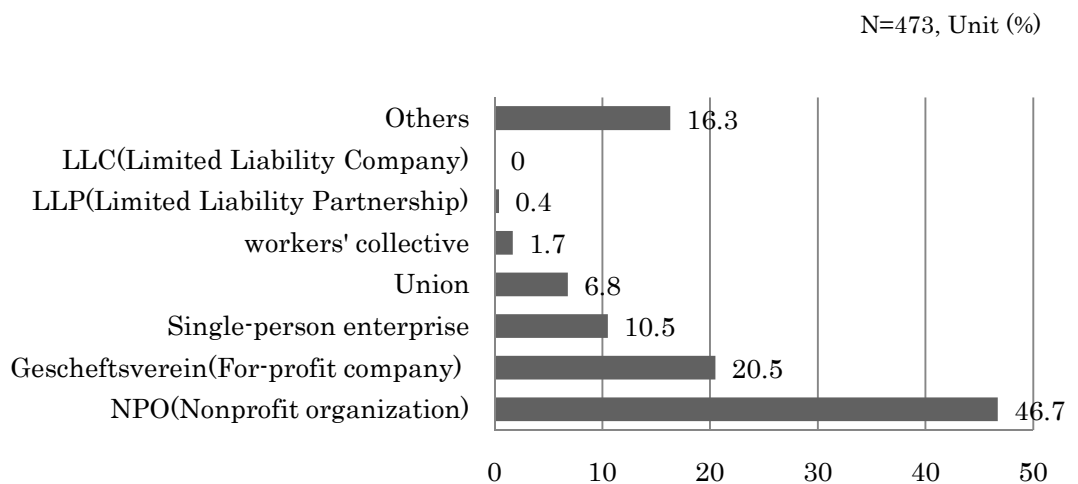
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3. The Organizational Format of Social Business

As for the organizational format of social businesses, 46.7% of social businesses have NPOs as the organizational format; geschäftsverein (company limited by shares · private company) 20.5%, others 16.3%, single-person enterprise 10.5%, union 6.8%, workers' collective 1.7% and LLP 0.4% in descending order (See Figure6). This figure demonstrates how important roles NPOs are playing in the fields of social business.



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure6. Organizational Format of Social Businesses

4. Income and Number of Employees of Social Business

On the basis of the settlement of 2008, each organization is mostly likely to earn less than 10~50 million yen annually (See Figure7) 52.6% of social business organizations are hiring four or less number of full-time employees (See Figure8). Over 60% of social business organizations forecast that the income is going to increase for next three years and about 50% of them expect that their income is going to increase over 20%(See Figure9). About 40% of social business organization answered that they will maintain the current level of employment.

5. Support System for Social Business

1) Financial Support

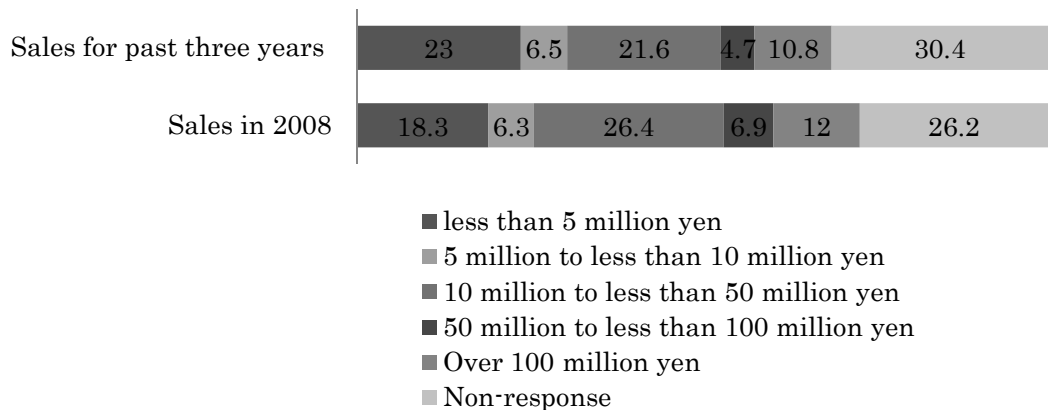
- (1) Subsidy for community start-up: It is given to the businesses that have contributed to community and hired two people among the applicants for business start-up assistance who are going to establish corporate or private company
- (2) Comprehensive support programs for civic groups: To revitalize community by dealing with various needs of community, programs to cultivate human resources and to build and facilitate network are carried out in each region.

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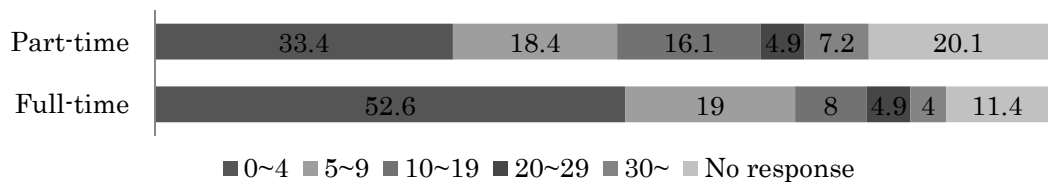
N=473, Unit (%)



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure7. Sales of Social Business Organizations

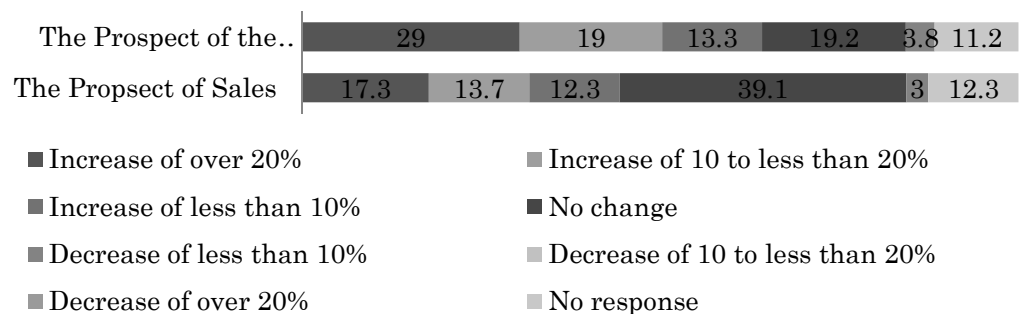
N=473, Unit (%)



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure8. The Number of Employees (full-time and part-time)

N=473, Unit (%)



Source: Questionnaire survey conducted by the Social Business Research Council (2008)

Figure9. The Prospect of Next Three Years

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- (3) Programs to care about and activate network among companies and citizens: It supports the work preparation for networking and implementing the program of 'Environment Community and Business' based on the linkage between companies and citizens.
- (4) Pilot program for the agritourism and the preservation and revitalization of natural environment: It supports the NPOs that promote the tourism in rural areas and facilitate the preservation and revitalization of natural environment.
- (5) The establishment of subsidiary for the dreams of children: To help children's dreams realize, it supports various experience programs and reading programs of private organizations.
- (6) The promotion program for promoting the preservation activities of natural environment with community fund: It promotes the activities for the preservation of natural environment, i.e., the prevention of global warming, by utilizing the fund for the preservation of environment.

2) Supports for Collaboration and Entrust

- (1) Entrust to NPOs, etc.: Implementing the training to support persons who are unemployed or want to change job by entrusting to NPOs, etc.
- (2) Research Projects for children with disabilities by entrusting the implementation of research to NPOs, etc.: Entrusting the research on the needs of children with disabilities to NPOs that are playing leading roles in the activities for children with disabilities.
- (3) Loan for relief: To build safety net for the elderly, the disabled, foreigners, etc., it is implemented by equipping the registration system of mortgage and networking local public agencies, NPOs, real estate agents, etc.

3) Supports for Dissemination, Development and Information

- (1) The establishment of System to provide the information of activities of civic group: It provides the information on nationwide NPOs and the supports for them
- (2) Support Program of 'Multi Life' for Laborers: It links employees and retirees who want to participate in volunteer works with employers and voluntary organizations.

4) Others

Eco Japan Cup: Eco Japan Cup including Eco Business plan is held. In addition, Social Eco Business Award is conferred on social Entrepreneurs (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry 2007).

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V. Conclusion

As the measures to deal with social problems of diverse fields during recent several years, the interest in social business has greatly grown in Japan. Around 1990's when social business appeared, the interest in social problems has grown and the programs have been implemented. Moreover, existing social welfare foundations installed *Gesellschaft* to enter the social services business based on the autonomous system with self-determination and self-responsibility; they strongly want to contribute to dealing with social problems, which made them determine to participate in dealing with social problems by themselves.

In this context, social business appeared in the early 2000's and by that time, the measures to cultivate and support social entrepreneurs began to be discussed, for example, 'Soft Management Center' opened a study group for the cultivation of social entrepreneur in April, 2000; this study group that is composed of entrepreneur, staff of local autonomous bodies and related researchers became a leading study group for social entrepreneurs. Through this kind of study group, the spirit of social entrepreneurs and social business that had been scattered became enabled to be expanded to the whole country. SIJ carried out programs for providing venues, training and educating social entrepreneurs. At that time, Japan society was much interested in cultivating social entrepreneurs and supporting their activities based on the presumption that whether social business fails or successes depends on the cultivation of social entrepreneur.

According to the survey on the actual condition of social business, comparing with the number of social business, the awareness of social business is relatively low. Therefore, it is necessary to publicize social businesses more broadly and simultaneously to evaluate their services or goods and to help them gain trust.

As for the fields of social business, social business organizations mainly carried out the business closely related to community life including community revitalization, supports for the disabled and the elderly, supports for child care, health, medicine, welfare, education, the cultivation of human resources and preservation and protection of environment until now; from now on, the fields of social business are expected to be more diversely expanded.

As for the organizational format of social business, social business organizations are mostly run by NPOs, which shows how important roles NPOs are playing for social business.

Based on the settlement of 2008, the organizations that earn 10-50 million yen per income per year held the biggest portion and the ones that hire four or less employees were the majority, which represents that the size of organizations is relatively small. Moreover, as most of social business organizations are optimistic for the income of next three years and social business tends to be expanded, it is expected that this tendency is going to be continued in future.

However, the system to actively support social business regarding social business organizations as the principal body of solving social problems has not been established. Therefore, for the promotion of social business, desirable business environment for social entrepreneurs must be formed.

To form the desirable business environment for social entrepreneurs, it is necessary to select successful cases, to review the evaluation methods and to make funding easier.

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