

Study on Employment Support for Single-Female Parent

Summary

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1. Study Period

Fiscal year of 2007

2. Objectives of Study

This report is the outcome for the research project of “Study on Employment Support for Mother-Child Families, which is commissioned by Family Welfare Division Equal Employment, Children and Families Bureau of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2007.

Along with the amendment of the “Act on Welfare of Mothers with Dependents and Widows” in April 2003, support measures for mother-child families have been transferred from “economic support (Child-care allowance) mainly” to the “comprehensive support for employment and self-reliance.” Those wide range of support measures mainly consist of (i) child-rearing and living support, (ii) employment support, (iii) securing financial support for children and (iv) economic support. Among these measures, employment support is given special priority, based on the “Special Act on Employment Support for Single-Female Parent 2003.” In order to promote these comprehensive support measures, it is of particular importance to coordinate effectively between welfare agencies and job placement agencies.

However, it has become a critical challenge to identify in what way welfare measures and employment measures can be coordinated effectively and what factors prevent the effective coordination in order to secure effectiveness of each of the measures in local governments since the level of coordination differs from one local government to another. In addition, implementation of employment support for single-female parents and its achievements are also different from one local government to another. It seems that such differences among local governments may be caused mainly by different employment conditions in each local community, but each local government’s initiative in designing employment support measures in response to the actual situation in the local community may result in such differences.

With this background, we conducted research and study to clarify in what way employment support for single-female parents can effectively and efficiently function and in what way welfare measures and employment measures can effectively be coordinated. We also intended to present materials for future study on employment support measures for single-female parents.

3. Overview of Analysis Results

(1) Chapter 1: “Contemporary Situation of Mother-Child Families and Employment

Supports'

In this chapter, we surveyed mainly existing compiled data in order to understand the actual situation of mother-child families and employment support systems.

We found that actual situation of mother-child families is as follows (please refer to Section 2 of the main report):

- 1) The number of mother-child households has significantly increased (the number of mother-child households is 1,225 thousand as of 2003, which increased by 28.3% compared to that of 5 years ago (955 thousand households in 1998). ("National Survey on Mother-Child Households, etc." conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2003.)
- 2) The number of mother-child households has increased mainly because of an increase of divorce. (In 1985, the mother-child households by reason of divorce was about half of all mother-child households, and it increased to about 80% of the total in 2006.)
- 3) Low income is a main issue of mother-child households. (Although the employment rate of single-female parents is as high as over 80%, the average income of an independent mother-child household is 2,334 thousand yen, which is about 30% of the annual income of a normal household with children (i.e. 7,149 thousand yen). ("National Livelihood Survey" conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2005)

On the other hand, the employment support policy for mother-child households has considerably been reinforced since the Act on Welfare of Mothers with Dependents and Widows was amended in 2002. Policy achievements are as follows (please refer to Section 3 of the main report):

- 1) Among five projects of employment support policy for mother-child households, the "Project of Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center for Mother-Child Families, etc." has increasingly been implemented most steadily by local governments and has been contributing to increasing the number of employment of single-female parents. The "Project Establishing Support Program for Self-Reliance of Mother-Child Families" has also successfully been increasing the number of support cases.
- 2) The "Project Subsidizing Training of Highly Specialized Skills" and "Project Providing Allowance for Education and Training for Self-Support," both of which are intended to support single-female parents to improve their professional skills, are well appreciated. The former project is appreciated in terms of its quality (more than 85% of beneficiaries of the subsidy are employed as regular workers), and the latter is appreciated in terms of its availability (more than 8,000 applicants in total are provided the allowance).
- 3) Among the five projects, only one project, i.e. the "Project Providing Financial

Incentive for Converting to Regular Employees,” was poorly implemented in terms of the rate of local governments implementing the project and the number of applications, and was abolished at the end of FY2007 with certain transitional measures.

- 4) The Public Employment Security Office (Offices of Hello Work) also provide single-female parents with specific support in addition to their usual job-placement services, such as financial incentive for probationary employment, employment support navigators, public vocational training, private sector’s education and training courses utilizing livelihood allowance, etc. These specific supports used to be provided mainly to welfare recipients, but are recently utilized by more beneficiaries of child-care allowance.

(2) Chapter 2: “Interview survey: activities of local governments and actions of mothers”

In this chapter, activities carried out by eight local governments are introduced as examples that achieve relatively successful results of employment support for single-female parents. We intend to clarify the reasons for success and the issues that remain to be solved in these activities, and to introduce some of their activities, if any, for other local governments’ reference.

First of all, through the interview survey, we find that local governments carry out distinctive activities of employment support in accordance with the actual conditions of local communities (please refer to Tables 1-1 and 1-2 for the background information of interviews with each of the local governments and their main activities). These activities are as follows:

- 1) Yokohama City has established a self-support program after it conducted the fact-finding survey. It has prepared the “Manual of Project Employment Support for Mother-Child Families,” according to which the employment support officers provide detailed employment support to single-female parents.
- 2) Kaizuka City has established a one-stop service center in its Child Welfare Division for all of its employment support projects. The Division also receives applications for child-care allowance and for licensed child-care centers, and therefore a common point of contact is provided for both employment support services and welfare services.
- 3) Chiba City provides only one example among local governments interviewed by us that operates the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center by itself. The City takes initiative to strengthen cooperation between the Center and the offices of Hello Work. One of the concrete instruments for such cooperation is the “Communication Slip of Support Center Project for Employment and Self-Reliance for Mother-Child

Families,” which was designed by the City to transfer information of consultation for employment in the Center smoothly to the offices of Hello Work. Another instrument is the “Review Meeting on Employment and Self-Reliance Support for Mother-Child Families in Chiba City,” which is a communication meeting held on a quarterly basis, in which the City’s officials in charge of the Project, employment counselors and officials of the offices of Hello Work participate.

- 4) In the cities of Sapporo and Kushiro, livelihood support and other supports are provided through private entities, such as an incorporated association “Sapporo Joint Association of Welfare for Mothers, Children and Widows” (Satsu-Bo-Ren) and an incorporated nonprofit organization “Refuge Shelter Kushiro.” Satsu-Bo-Ren provides mental health consultation, legal aid services, assistance in household work, child-care services on holidays (“Holiday-Mam”), etc. in order to reduce impediments to employment of single-female parents. In particular, in the “Holiday-Mam” services, a child-care service is provided on holiday for a nominal fee of 400 yen per hour for a baby and 340 yen per hour for an elementary student. “Refuge Shelter Kushiro,” which utilizes their experience and know-how in assisting the economic independence of women who suffer from domestic violence, organizes employment support seminars jointly with the City.
- 5) With regard to the method of employment support covering the whole area of a prefecture, some of the local governments design their employment support to fit to the actual conditions of the prefecture. In Shizuoka Prefecture, employment support for single-female parents is provided through the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center established jointly by the prefectural government and municipalities of government-designated cities (Shizuoka City and Hamamatsu City) in four locations of the prefecture. The government of Akita Prefecture provides employment support through multiple channels including the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center, utilization of mobile phones, websites, etc. and through the welfare offices, etc. In Oita prefecture, PR activities are actively undertaken which are addressed both to single-female parents and to employers.
- 6) In Yokohama City and Shizuoka Prefecture/Hamamatsu City where employment situation is favorable, staff specialized in employment support for mother-child families, who are assigned on a full-time basis for five days a week, make efforts to provide qualitative services. Taking advantage of its dense population, Yokohama City secures a budget to maintain four regular staff (about 3.6 million yen per person which is payable by the central government) so that each employment support officer (which is a popular name for officials assigned under the Project Establishing Support Program for Self-Reliance of Mother-Child Families) can take care of four to

five wards. Shizuoka Prefecture employs six regular workers as it has established the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center jointly with two of the government-designated cities.

- 7) In Oita Prefecture as well as Osaka Prefecture/Kaizuka City, one and the same officer has been in charge of employment support for single-female parents for a long time, and originates and innovates support activities. In Oita Prefecture, an employment support officer has been playing a leading role since the establishment of the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center. The Officer innovates support activities, e.g. searching job offers by directly contacting the companies with which he/she has a personal network. In Kaizuka City, one self-reliance support staff for mother-child families, who is employed as a contracting worker on a full-time basis, has been in charge of support activities since April 2003, right after the Act on Welfare of Mothers with Dependents and Widows was amended. The officer is carrying out unique activities, such as issuance of a handmade guide of potential local job offers and publication of an information magazine, "Single-Mother Press."

However, the interview survey also sheds light on the following problems:

Firstly, there is a discrepancy between the services of the Project Establishing Support Program for Self-Reliance of Mother-Child Families and the needs of single-female parents. It sometimes takes some months between the establishment of the self-support program and the actual employment. It puts a heavy burden on single-female parents since they need to be employed as quickly as possible.

Secondly, most of the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Centers in the local governments cannot employ special staff dedicated to job search for single-female parents. This is mainly due to constraints on budget and human resources of local governments and also because the staff have to exploit job offers in broad areas.

Thirdly, sharing of roles and cooperation between Employment and Self-Reliance Support Centers and the offices of Hello Work are yet to be established.

Fourthly, there are still very few local governments that provide a one-stop service facility to single-female parents. It is urgently necessary to establish a single contact window that exclusively deals with all menus of support for mother-child families.

Finally, it is also an issue that no system has been established to secure good human resources who undertake employment support for mother-child families and to transfereed know-how of support from one staff to another.

Table 1-1: Overview of the local governments covered by the interview survey

| Local government covered by the survey | Active job opening ratio in 2006 | Achievement of employment support for single-female parents and main features | Are the activities taken up in the White Paper on Single Mother Household |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Yokohama City | 1.86 | Yokohama City realized the largest number of employment in the country in FY2005 through its Project Providing Allowance for Education and Training for Self-Support and Project Subsidizing Training of Highly Specialized Skills. | No |
| Shizuoka Prefecture and Hamamatsu City | 1.24 (1.34) | Prefecture and two government-designated cities jointly establish the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Centers. There are four Centers in the prefecture that provide public employment support services widely in the prefecture. | Yes, in FY 2005 |
| (Nationwide average: 1.06) | | | |
| Chiba City | 1.03 | It is exceptional that the City operates the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center by itself. In the "Project Establishing Support Program for Self-Reliance of Mother-Child Families" started in 2005, the City actively cooperates with the offices of Hello Work in a unique manner. | No |
| Oita Prefecture | 1.01 | The support rate of the Oita Prefecture's Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center is 2.47% in FY2005 (148 persons are supported and 5,990 persons are paid child-care allowance), which is the fourth highest in the country, indicating that the Center provides active support. | No |
| Osaka Prefecture and Kaizuka City | 0.65 | The Project Establishing Support Program for Self-Reliance of Mother-Child Families has been implemented since July 2005 as a pilot project. A handmade guide of potential local employers prepared by a self-reliance support staff and an information magazine called "Single-Mother Press," which provides relevant information quickly, have attracted public attention. | Yes, in FY 2006 |
| Akita Prefecture | 0.6 | In FY2005, counseling is provided by the Akita Prefecture's Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center in 8,434 cases and the support rate of the Center is 142%, both of which are the highest in the country. There is a company called Akita Sindengen Co., Ltd. in the prefecture, which was awarded a prize for "Excellent Company Promoting Employment of Single-Female Parent" in 2006. | Yes, in FY 2006 |
| Sapporo City | 0.6 | Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center achieves successful results for support. A total of 381 sessions of employment support lectures were held in FY2005, in which 7,632 persons participated (which is the highest number of sessions and participants among the government-designated cities). | Yes, in FY 2006 |
| Kushiro City | 0.45 | City's Children and Family Division organizes unique employment support seminars. An incorporated nonprofit organization other than the Joint Association of Welfare for Mothers, Children and Widows plays an active role in providing employment support, e.g. organizing employment support seminars jointly with the City's Children and Family Division. | No |

Table 1-2: Major activities of the local governments covered by the interview survey

| | Major activities |
|--|--|
| Yokohama City | (1) Employs employment support officers as regular workers. (2) Prepares the Project Manual for Employment and Self-Reliance Support for Mother-Child Families. (3) Provides single-female parents with consultation services at a single point in a ward office. (4) Utilizes a social welfare corporation “Tasukeai Yui,” which is providing diversified services including support for at-home nursing care. |
| Shizuoka Prefecture and Hamamatsu City | (1) Provides all menus of support at a single point of Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center located in four sites of the prefecture. (2) Employs officials of the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center as regular workers. (3) Allocates main support agencies close together so that various service agencies can cooperate with each other. |
| Chiba City | (1) Operates the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center by itself. (2) Provides all menus of support at a single point of Welfare Services Division of Welfare Office of the City and the Wards (3) Cooperates with the offices of Hello Work by means of the “Communication Slip of Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center Project” and “Review Meeting on Employment and Self-Reliance Support for Mother-Child Families in Chiba City.” |
| Oita Prefecture | (1) The prefectural government distributes to all business owners in the prefecture leaflets that solicit job offers for single-female parents from them. (2) There is a key person (an employment support officer) who has been playing a leading role since the establishment of the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center. (3) The officer is engaged in searching job offers by directly contacting the companies with which he has a personal network. |
| Osaka Prefecture and Kaizuka City | (1) Child Welfare Division of the City provides a single point of contact for users and connects each of the relevant services to employment support projects. (2) Employs a full time self-reliance support staff who is autonomous and highly motivated for mother-child families as contracting worker. (3) The Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center actively provides job-search services taking advantage of cooperation with the offices of “Hello Work”. |
| Akita Prefecture | (1) Establishes a system whereby single mothers are approached by the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center (located in one site of the prefecture) as well as other multiple agencies. (2) Employment support lectures clearly aiming to obtain a qualification are organized in multiple locations in the prefecture so that single mothers can access them easily. |
| Sapporo City | (1) Assigned a counselor specialized in employment (ex-official of offices of Hello Work) in the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center. (2) Businesses of the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center are contracted out to the “Sapporo Joint Association of Welfare for Mothers, Children and Widows,” which provides assistance in household work, child-care services on holidays (“Holiday-Mam”), etc. in order to reduce impediments to employment of single-female parents. |
| Kushiro City | (1) Organizes employment support seminars jointly with an incorporated nonprofit organization “Refuge Shelter Kushiro.” (2) City’s Children and Family Division organizes unique “Employment Support Seminars” with child-care services since FY2006 in order to give opportunities of entering the workforce to single mothers who have difficulty to go to the offices of Hello Work for job search or who have no experience in employment. |

At the same time, an interview survey was conducted with nine single-female parents who live in the areas of said local governments with which the other interview survey was conducted. Among the nine women, eight are working as a full-timer or in a similar status. However, only one woman (called Ms. E) is economically independent. One of the key factors of Ms. E's financial independence is her qualification in Judo-orthopaedics.

Although there are menus of employment support aiming to develop professional skills, namely, the "Project Providing Allowance for Education and Training for Self-Support" and "Project Subsidizing Training of Highly Specialized Skills," and the number of users of these systems has been increasing, more than a half of the interviewed women said that they did not know about these systems. In addition, there are not a few women who gave up the training since they had to earn income for living expenses during the period of training.

Therefore, important policy issues for the future are (i) how to inform the support systems and the use of the systems to single-female parents in an easily understandable way, and (ii) how to give financial support to them during their training period. For issue (i), local governments' proactive PR activities are required, such as a house-to-house posting of leaflets on the support systems and verbal explanation about the systems to be given at Civil Registration Office when it handles divorce proceedings. Regarding issue (ii), it can be realized by utilizing the current system of "Loan of Fund for Mother-Child Welfare."

(3) Chapter 3: "Questionnaire survey with single mothers: work, life, and support for work-life balance"

In Chapter 3, the results of the questionnaire survey are presented in order to provide base materials for study on policy effect of employment support for single-female parents. The survey covers 6,226 households that are registered at the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center and other agencies in 20 local governments. The number of valid response is 1,311 (valid response rate is 21.1%). Following is the summary of the result of survey:

1) Current job

- Employment rate: Employment rate of single mothers is very high (86.8%).
- Ratio of regular workers: 31.2% among working mothers
- Working hours: An average of 37.4 hours a week among working mothers. However, women who have a side business are working 44.4 hours a week on average.
- Earned annual income: An average of 1,857 thousand yen among working mothers. Among them, regular workers earn 2,611 thousand yen on average.

2) Attitude of non-workers

- Wish to work: 85.9% of non-workers wish to work.
- Reason for non-working: Most common answer is that “there is no job with suitable working hours.” (43.0%)
- Support program in which they want to participate to prepare for a job: Most common answer is “practical work experience.” (33.3%)

3) Skills and qualifications

- Licenses that many single mothers have: Driving license, bookkeeping, home-care worker and PC qualifications
- Qualification that helps them to do their current job: Qualification of nursing care worker or clinical nurse
- Whether or not they utilized any employment support programs to be qualified after they became single-female parents?
 - How did they pay for it? (Most common answer is that “they paid from their savings or their income.” (62.4%)) “Education and Training Allowance of Employment Insurance” (17.8%), “Allowance for Education and Training for Self-Support” (13.6%), etc.
 - How were they qualified? “Through skill development courses organized by mother-child welfare organizations” (22.3%), “By entering into public vocational training facilities, such as vocational training schools” (16.5%), etc.

4) Are employment support programs of four projects known to, or utilized by, single-female parents?

- Project of Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center for Single-Mother Families, etc.
 - Utilization rate: 64.4% of the surveyed women utilized the service.
 - Support programs utilized by them: “Employment counseling” (71.7%) and “consultation for job information” (51.5%)
 - Reason why they did not utilize any programs: Most common answer is that “they did not know any programs of the project.” (45.8%)
- Project Establishing Support Program for Self-Reliance of Mother-Child Families
 - Utilization rate: 15.0% of the surveyed women utilized the service.
 - Impression after utilization: “Very helpful” (43.0%) and “Somewhat helpful” (37.4%)
 - Reason why they did not utilize any programs: Most common answer is that “they did not know any programs of the project.” (78.0%)
- Project Subsidizing Training of Highly Specialized Skills
 - Utilization rate: 2.3% of the surveyed women utilized the service.

- Impression after utilization: “Very helpful” (81.0%) and “Somewhat helpful” (14.3%)
- Reason why they did not utilize any programs: Most common answer is that “they did not know any programs of the project.” (64.7%)
- Project Providing Allowance for Education and Training for Self-Support
 - Utilization rate: 11.8% of the surveyed women utilized the service.
 - Impression after utilization: “Very helpful” (58.0%) and “Somewhat helpful” (33.6%)
 - Reason why they did not utilize any programs: Most common answer is that “they did not know any programs of the project.” (57.3%)
- Desirable employment support policy
 - “Financial support for participation in a training course.” (60.7%)
 - “Increase of training opportunity in the vicinity.” (50.6%)
 - “Easier access to a training course (in terms of date and time).” (40.6%)

It should be noted that, regarding the reason why they did not utilize the programs of the support projects, the highest number of respondents stated that “they did not know any programs of the project.” An issue remains that employment support systems should be made known to all single-female parents.

(4) Chapter 4: “For effective utilization of self-support program”

In this chapter, we compare both Self-Support Program for Welfare Recipients and Self-Support Program for Mother-Child Families, and on the basis of the interview survey conducted in this study and other materials, we would like to suggest what is required for effective utilization of the Self-Support Program for Mother-Child Families.

1) Coordination and organization of counseling systems of local governments

One-stop service is available for welfare recipients at the welfare office. On the other hand, such service is not available for beneficiaries of child-care allowance as a number of support agencies are involved, such as local government’s employment support offices, the Employment and Self-Reliance Support Center, etc. Therefore, the local governments should keep in mind to take urgent action to establish a one-stop service center or strengthen coordination among relevant agencies.

2) Establishment of systematic program of local governments: organizing all available social resources

All relevant services including education and training, welfare, housing, health care, employment support, child-care support, scholarship, etc. that are available to single mothers, regardless of whether they are provided by administration services, local voluntary bodies or non-profit organizations, should be organized and

systemized to promptly establish a support program. On the basis of this, a manual or counseling flowchart should be prepared so that everybody can be provided administrative services of the same quality.

- 3) Employment support in cooperation with the offices of Hello Work: establishing a system not to keep single mothers waiting for counseling

Although cooperation with the offices of Hello Work has achieved a certain level of success in providing employment support, it is pointed out by single mothers that they suffer from a financial burden as they have to earn income for living expenses when they are treated as a beneficiary of child-care allowance in the same process of welfare recipients. Online meeting or team meeting with support members may reduce the waiting time of persons who need support, and may realize quick services.

- 4) Establishment of workflow of support team in the offices of Hello Work and an improvement in quality

In this survey, we are unable to firmly examine the actual situation of support teams in the offices of Hello Work. We expect that the number of support cases for single-female parents provided by the offices of Hello Work will increase and that they will accumulate their know-how. In addition, employment support navigators and employment support coordinators of the offices of Hello Work should improve their quality, particularly by understanding more about the purpose of the Support Program for Self-Reliance of Mother-Child Families.

- 5) Extension of counseling hours and offer of counseling through multiple channels

With regard to the services for beneficiaries of child-care allowance, it is important to provide many of mothers with support for job change since they are working as a part-time worker, etc. It is difficult for those who want to change their job to utilize services that are provided during office hours of the local governments, i.e. between 9 am and 5 pm and on Monday to Friday. Some of the local governments had opened their counseling office on the weekend and during the evening, and more local governments, Employment and Self-Reliance Support Centers and offices of Hello Work are expected to follow the same practice in the future.

- 6) To conduct the survey for policy evaluation

Follow-up surveys of persons who utilized employment support will have to be conducted in some way in order to evaluate the employment support policy. For example, in Kushiro where the local government commissions the Prefectural Technology College to provide three-month training with preparatory lectures, the college is obliged to submit to the local government the data of students who are employed after the training, and the system is implemented whereby an additional subsidy is granted to the college if the data is actually submitted. It should be

considered to give education and training facilities or individual single mothers an incentive to make follow-up reports.

(5) Chapter 5: “How to provide better employment support in welfare administration for mother-child families”

In this chapter, on the basis of the results of the interview survey conducted to the local governments, we consider what the employment support for mother-child families should be from the viewpoint of the welfare administration, and summarize the points that the local and central governments should pay attention to or take into account in their employment support.

1) Points that the local governments should take into account in their administrative management

(i) Establishment of self-reliance support plan for mother-child families

In order to advance appropriate employment support for mother-child families, each local government should know what support single-female parents actually need. For that purpose, it is necessary to conduct a fact-finding survey covering single-female parents, and to understand their living conditions and their demand for employment support.

On the basis of the results of such survey, the local government should establish a self-reliance support plan for mother-child families as its medium- to long-term policy, in which all relevant information including the survey results, functions of private organizations and administrative agencies located in the area of the local government, etc. are taken into consideration.

(ii) Strengthening of cooperation between welfare administration for mother-child families and the offices of Hello Work

Cooperation between welfare administration for mother-child families and the offices of Hello Work is definitely necessary to provide employment support for mother-child families effectively. It is expected to make effective use of communication tools between them, e.g. “communication slip” or “liaison meeting” as adopted in Chiba City. In addition, both the welfare administration and the offices of Hello Work should make continuous efforts to understand each other’s services through their daily work.

(iii) Preparation of office manuals for employment support

Welfare administration for mother-child families has not familiarized itself with employment support services at the moment. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare office manuals in each local government so that roles of each relevant official are clearly documented and they can make reference to such manuals in their daily

business. Yokohama City has prepared an excellent manual, to which other local governments can refer for preparing their own manuals.

(iv) Employment conditions of officials in charge of employment support services

Officials who are assigned in the welfare administration for mother-child families, such as “self-reliance support officers” or “employment support officers,” are in most cases employed as non-regular workers. Due to their employment status as such, they may have a restriction on working hours, or there may be different expected levels of quality of hireable workers. To improve this situation, it seems effective to provide the officials of “self-reliance support officers” or “employment support officers” with conditions of employment and authorities which are appropriate to their positions and which are equivalent to regular workers.

2) Points that the central government should take into account

(i) Collection and introduction of policy information of each local government

In order to enable each local government to promote its policy appropriately, it is a common practice that the local government studies the examples of policies actually adopted by other local governments. If the information on excellent policy examples is readily available throughout the country, such policy can be disseminated in the country very quickly. It seems to be effective that the national government collects the policy information of each local government and takes a role to introduce excellent policy examples to other local governments.

(ii) Cooperation between labor administration and welfare administration

In a city (which is a basic local government), welfare administration and labor administration are usually very much separated from each other. This is proven again in this study. Effective cooperation between labor administration and welfare administration at the level of basic local government may contribute to promoting effective and efficient employment support services, by utilizing “communication slip” or “liaison meeting”, etc. like in Chiba City,

3) Necessity of policy evaluation

With regard to policy evaluation of employment support for mother-child families, statistical data have not been well provided to understand whether employment support actually resulted in employment. One reason for this is that, due to the requirement of protection of personal information, the welfare administration and other agencies have difficulty in assessing the performance of the results of its employment support activities from individuals to whom employment support is provided. It may be necessary to establish a system whereby information on the outcomes of employment support can be collected. A good example is given by Chiba City in its “communication slip,” in which relevant information on data collection are printed and approval of

single-female parents who utilize the employment support services can be given with the slip.

(6) Chapter 6: “Factors preventing single-female parents’ regular employment”

In this chapter, we try to identify factors which have an influence on the regular employment of single-female parents by using the results of the “Survey on Employment Support for Single-Female Parent” (Survey in 2008).

- 1) According to an estimate covering all single-female parents, it is indicated that qualifications of assistant nurse, cook, care worker, bookkeeping certificate and document preparation capability by personal computer increase the employment rate of single-female parents as regular workers.
- 2) The fact that they have a child four to six years old lowers their employment rate as regular workers and raises their employment rate as non-regular workers.
- 3) The fact that they live together with their family members does not influence their choice of employment.
- 4) Unearned income lowers the employment rate of single-female parents as non-regular workers, but its influence is small.
- 5) More of the single-female parents whose youngest child is seven years of age or older have qualifications to be employed as a regular worker if compared to an estimate covering all single-female parents.
- 6) It is made clear that the qualifications that they obtain after they become a single-female parent have larger marginal effect on employment as a regular worker. All mentioned above indicate that factors concerning child-care and skills have a decisive influence on employment of single-female parents.

From the policy viewpoint, support for single-female parents to obtain qualifications, particularly those which are helpful for regular employment, is effective to promote their regular employment. However, it should be noted that the analysis in this chapter is based on cross-section data and may involve any effect of single-female parents’ innate capabilities that cannot be observed in this analysis. Enhancement of child-care services can represent effective policy measures to promote their regular employment as well as acquisition of qualifications.

(7) Chapter 7: “Does personal computer skill increase single-female parents’ capability to work?”

Many local governments provide free personal computer seminars in their Employment and Self-Reliance Support Centers or other facilities as one of their employment supports for single-female parents, and recently the number of such local

governments has been increasing. In this chapter, we make an empirical analysis to know to what extent PC skills actually raise the wage of single-female parents. Following are the results of the analysis:

- 1) It is proven by the estimated result by means of normal OLS (ordinary least squares) model that “ability to utilize a PC” has an effect of increasing wage by 6.1% (on the basis of the data of Survey in 2008) to 15.5% (on the basis of the data of Survey in 2001). However, the estimated result by means of IV (instrumental variable) model, which statistically excludes the effect of individual’s ability that cannot be observed, does not indicate such effect.
- 2) “Acquisition of PC qualification” does not indicate any effect of increasing wage in either of the statistic models.
- 3) With regard to the specific PC skills, e.g. ability to utilize Word, an estimate by means of OLS model indicates that the abilities of “information search,” “computer graphics” and “operation and control of data” have a certain effect of increasing wage. However, an estimate of these effects by means of IV model does not show any statistical significance, and indicates that any of these specific PC skills do not have any significant effect on income.
- 4) We study the wage-increasing effect of PC skills by certain groups of single-female parents, such as a group segregated by educational background. An estimate by OLS model indicates that the wage-increasing effect exists in a group of people whose educational background is specialized vocational high schools, colleges or higher, but an estimate by IV model also does not indicate any effect.

On the basis of the results of analysis mentioned above, it can be stated that employment support of free PC seminars for single-female parents has a certain level of wage-increasing effect, conditional upon the factor of individual ability not being taken into account. In particular, it is interesting to find that “ability to utilize a PC” accompanies a premium wage. It may be necessary not only to provide free PC seminars but also to develop conditions in which single-female parents can use a PC.

However, we are not sure whether our above-mentioned assumption that utilizing a PC has a wage-increasing effect can withstand the criticism that single mothers who can actively utilize a PC themselves have in general higher ability and therefore it is quite natural that they can earn higher wages, because the wage-increasing effect is not necessarily proven by the estimated result by means of IV model which takes the factor of individual ability into account. Further verification is required.