

Problems and Solutions of Elderly Habitation in Depopulated Areas and Metropolitan Cities

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The Japanese population has rapidly aging in 1990's in local areas, especially mesomountainous regions. After 2010's, aging has become more conspicuous in the suburbs of metropolitan areas.

In mesomountainous regions, the aging has already peaked out and now they are facing the total number of population and households decline, which has caused a concern about how to take care of the elderly in the region by utilizing the limited economic and human resources available.

In the metropolitan areas, on the other hand, the number of the seniors over 75-year old are now expected to grow very fast. Therefore it is urgently required to renovate existing towns and housings which were initially developed targeting young families with children, so that the increasing elderly will be able to continue living the areas they are familiar with.

This article proposes a basic strategy for habitation and medical, nursing and welfare services for the elderly, taking up the Totsugawa Village, Nara Prefecture, as an example of severely depopulated and aging area in Japan. It focuses on measures to promote 1) health and preventive care 2) total living assistance service 3) provision of safe and comfortable residence for the elderly. It also proposes a comprehensive reformation of existing organizations responsible for welfare services, such as local government welfare offices and Council of Social Welfare.

In metropolitan suburbs, it is proposed to change the institutional care system of medical, nursing and welfare services to the community care system which is to meet the requirements of the elderly and the economic availability of each region. This shall be operated as a part of the total area management by a newly established community development corporation which is managed by residents while maintaining their autonomy.

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