



# **Research on Condition of Employment of Persons with Visual Disabilities and Grasping of Model Cases**

## **(Research Report No.149) Summary**

### **[Keywords]**

Visual disability, acquired visual disability, occupation, accommodation, support tools, employer support, public employment security office, school for the blind, collaboration, printed text

### **[Points for Practical Purpose]**

This report allows us to check the real condition of employment of persons with visual disabilities, and the following is expected.

- To Managers of Companies, the study provide employment management notes in the case of they hire persons with visual disabilities, and need to know other companies' cases.
- To Persons with Visual Disabilities, for checking in advance the trend of employment referral for other persons in the same position in public employment security offices, in the case of job hunting, career change, return to work, sustained employment contract.
- For professional institution, included public employment security offices, employment support agencies, welfare institutions, medical institutions, etc., to consider employment issues of persons with visual disabilities and main points of employment referral, employment support, vocational evaluation, etc.

April 2019

Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers. (JEED)

National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation (NIVR)

## **1. Authors (in writing order)**

Takao Yoda (Senior Researcher, Research Group on Support for Employers, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

Chuji Sashida (Fellow Researcher, Research Group on Support for Employers, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

Takehito Ito (Researcher, Research Group on Support for Employers, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

Yoshihiko Nonaka (Fellow Researcher, Research Group on Support for Employers, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

## **2. Research Period**

FY2017 to 2018

## **3. Composition of the Research Report**

Introduction: Problem Awareness

Chapter 1: Some Employment Issues of Persons with Visual Disabilities and preceding Studies

Chapter 2: The Actual Condition of Employment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (Companies Survey)

Chapter 3: Current Trend of Job Seekers with Visual Disabilities (Public Employment Security Offices Survey)

Chapter 4: How to Face with Job and Visual Disabilities (Visually Disabled Persons Survey)

Chapter 5: Measures for Support

Chapter 6: Conclusion: The Real Condition of Employment of Persons with Visual Disabilities and Model Cases

## **4. Background and Purpose**

The purpose of study is to contribute to the expansion of employment of persons with visual disabilities, and is the promotion of reemployment and return to work, relevant to persons with acquired visual disabilities. For this purpose, the researchers investigated the actual condition of employment of persons with visual disabilities through business site surveys, the status of job searching registration and vocational counseling for persons with visual disabilities through public employment security office surveys, and extraction of model cases related to finding employment, reemployment and sustained employment, through the surveys to persons with visual disabilities, and analyzed.

As a background for study, there was recognition that there is a certain degree of progress in

the number of employment cases for the employment situation of the three medical treatments (massage, acupuncture, moxibustion) and clerical work type at the public employment security office, there are cases where persons with acquired visual disabilities are returning to work without leaving their job, and in addition, there is an urgent need to grasp the actual condition of employment of persons with visual disabilities more systematically in order to expand employment for the persons with visual disabilities and to promote reemployment and reinstatement for persons with acquired visual disabilities.

## **5. Method**

We investigated the actual condition of employment of persons with visual disabilities by the following (1) to (3), and exchanged opinions and information with relevant organizations and experts related to the employment of persons with visual disabilities.

### **(1) Survey to Business Establishments Employing Persons with Visual Disabilities**

We conducted a mail survey and an interview survey to the 262 business establishments that hired persons with visual disabilities through being introduced by the public employment security offices nationwide, regarding the characteristics of the disability, occupation, accommodated matters, and procedures and processes for which the accommodation was implemented for the 376 people (of which 364 people of which their hired date is known, and 260 recent hires) of persons with visual disabilities from 19 to 72 years old which were hired in these establishments, in order to obtain understanding and analysis for each business establishment site.

### **(2) Survey to Public Employment Security Offices**

In order to understand and analyze the characteristics of the disorder, careers, coordination with related organizations, and difficulty in support, etc., of 1,174 job-seekers with visual disabilities through their registered public employment security offices, we made requests for responses to 134 out of 544 public employment security offices across the country by email survey and interview survey. At the same time, we also surveyed and analyzed situations such as job introduction and vocational counseling of the said public employment security offices for persons with visual disabilities.

### **(3) Survey to Persons with Visual Disabilities**

We conducted a face-to-face interview with four persons with visual disabilities in their 20s to 70s who currently work as employees or civil servants of private companies or who have worked in those sectors in the past, and grasped and carried out analysis regarding how they

are facing their disabilities, the occupation and challenges faced while continuing work, relationships with the people around them, and things they are making efforts and working hard on to cope with the various challenges and problems in working life.

## 6. Summarized Results of the Study

### (1) Survey to Business Establishments Employing Persons with Visual Disabilities

Of the employed persons with visual disabilities, 54.8% commuted by walking alone without a white cane or a guide dog (Figure 1). In addition, 20.5% of the persons with visual disabilities employed commuted to work by transportation provided by the business enterprise site, of which 60% of them were employees of three medical treatment locations.

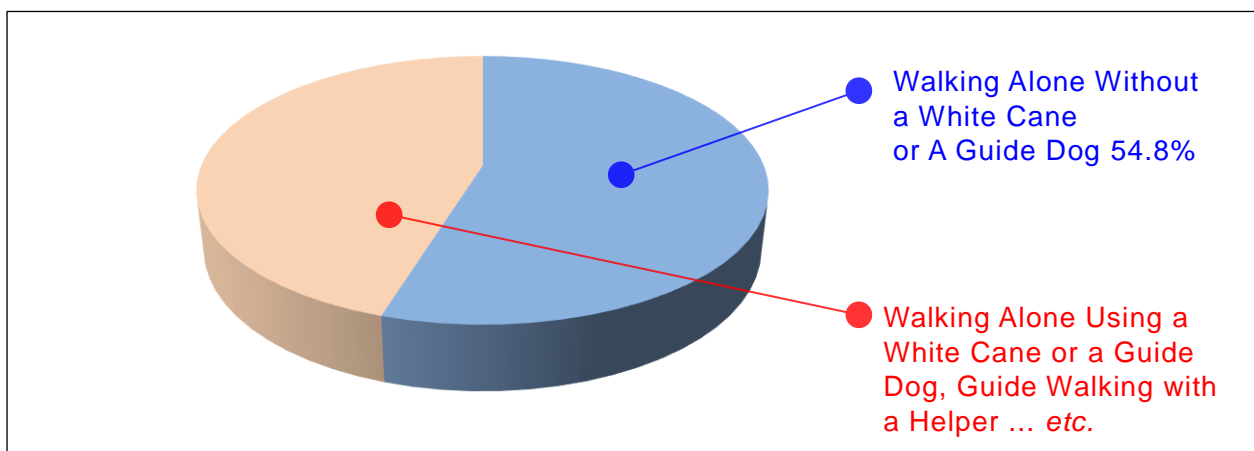


Figure 1: Walking Method of Employed Persons with Visual Disabilities

In addition, 43.6% can read and write printed text (printed and/or handwritten) (Figure 2).

Of these employed persons with visual disabilities capable of reading printed text, it is known that there are cases where some become unable to read the letters halfway along with the progression of their eye disease. Even in such cases, the use of the leaflet made based on the results of research that clearly explains cases in which employment is continued by alternative means such as electronic media, "For Continued Employment of Employees who have Become Blind (to Human Resource Personnel and Managers of Companies)", is expected.

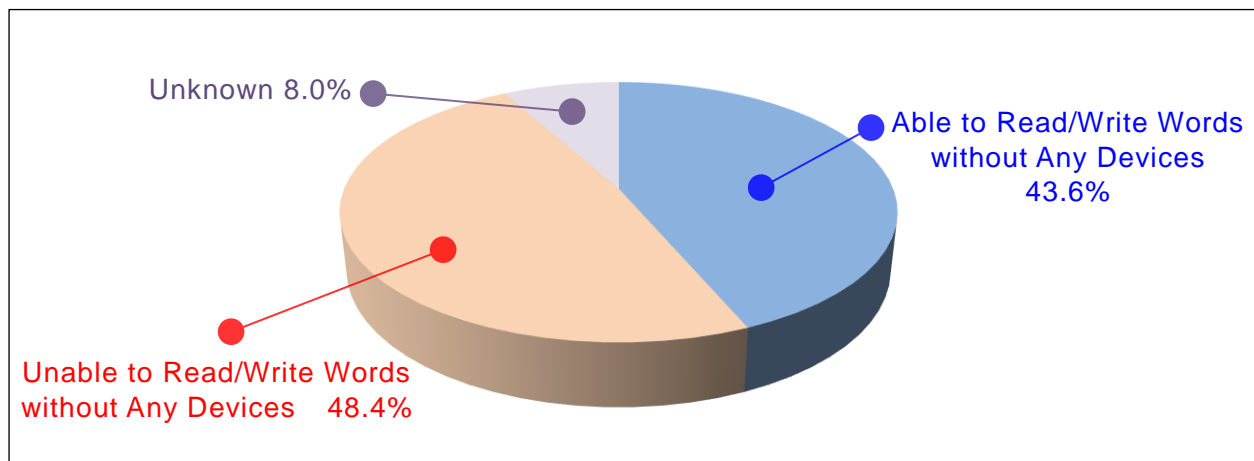


Figure 2: Reading and Writing Ability of Printed Text and Handwritten Text for Employed Persons with Visual Disabilities

The most employed job for persons with visual disabilities is Licensed Masseurs and Masseuses (32.4%), followed by building cleaning staff (7.3%), general office clerks (6.3%), factory labor workers (4.0%), and facility care workers (3.3%), and others included a wide range including cooking and food processors, programmers, pharmaceutical assistants, etc. (Figure 3).

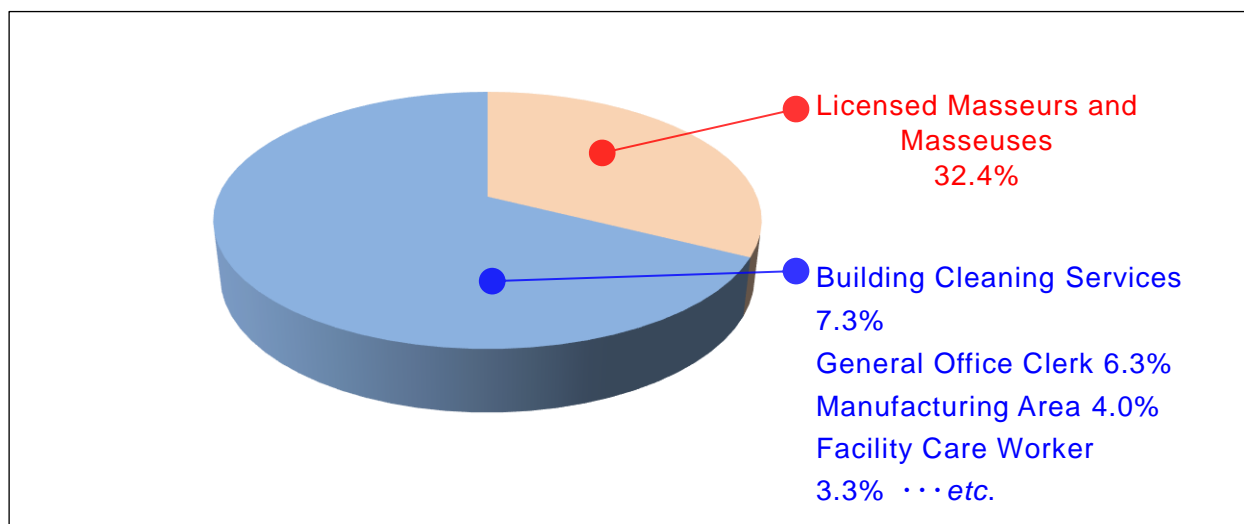


Figure 3: Occupations of the Employed Persons with Visual Disabilities

As a background for persons with visual disabilities being engaged in various occupations as seen above, the development of establishments for special needs schools for persons with visual disabilities including persons with acquired visual disabilities (schools for the blind) and job transition support for graduates, company briefing opportunities and support to schools utilizing general job offers done by public employment security offices play a major role, and additionally, in few cases with high individuality, support was provided in cooperation with public employment security offices for the employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities, the local vocational centers for persons with disabilities, and the community center for the disabled.

During the process throughout the time of recruitment applications, recruitment, and the post-recruitment process, persons with visual disabilities received various accommodations in consideration of visual disabilities. Regarding the circumstances that became obstacles during the process of recruitment application and recruitment, the ratio of persons with visual disabilities who made requests to the employer was 1 in 4 people (65 out of 260 most recent hires (25.0%)) Figure 4). During the recruitment application and recruitment process, the most frequent accommodation provided was actions such as "providing audio information with regard to recruitment content" (6.9%) and "allowing of helpers to attend the interview" (6.2%), and as seen, even the relatively large number of actions did not amount to 10% of the whole.

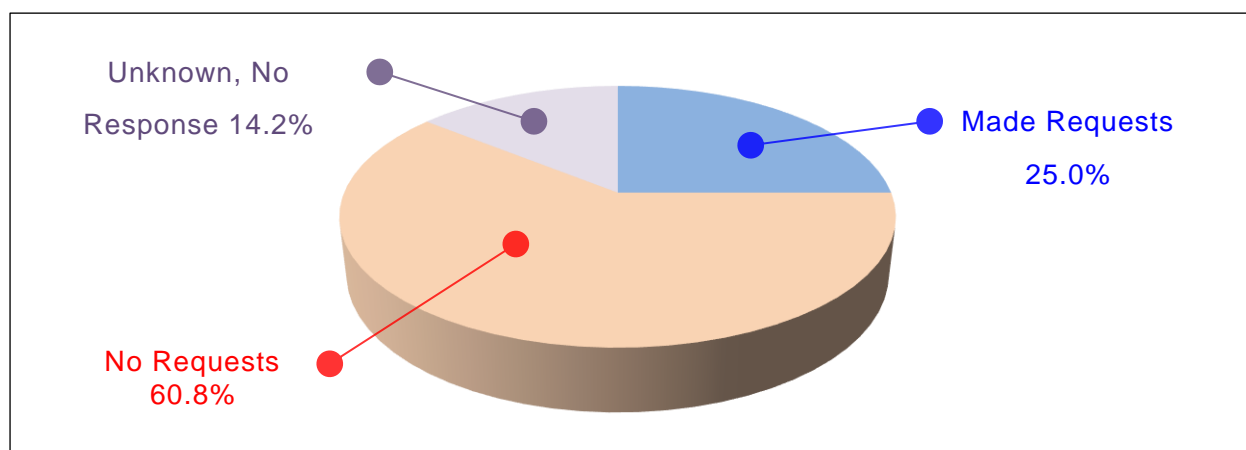


Figure 4: Whether There were Requests Made from a Person with Visual Disability

On the other hand, for 3 of 4 persons with visual disabilities (292 (77.7%) of 376 persons with visual disabilities), the employer has confirmed whether there are any obstacles in the post-employment workplace (Figure 5).

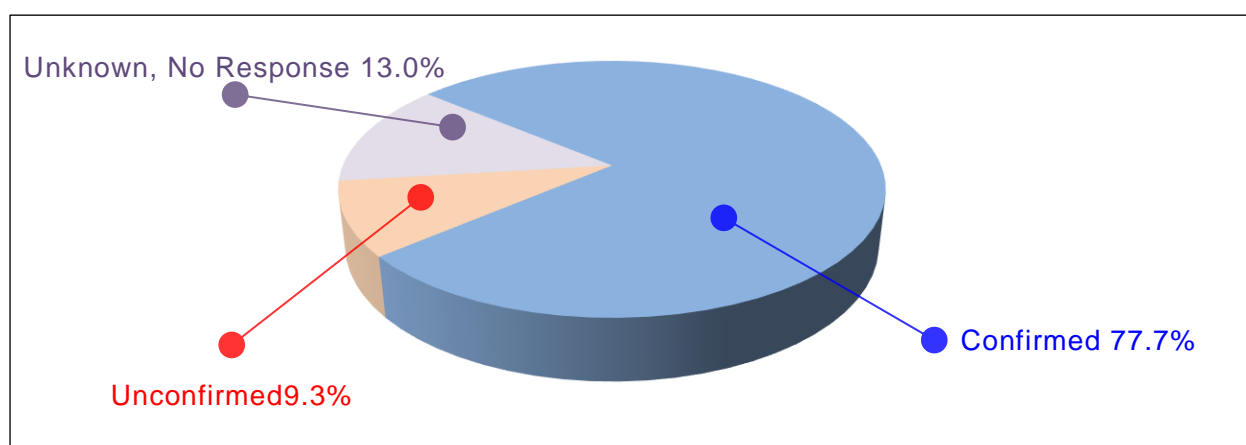


Figure 5: Confirmation by Business Owners Regarding the Presence or Absence of Obstacles

Of the contents proposed by persons with visual disabilities about improvement measures (subjects for accommodation) after employment, the most common issue was "I want to be accommodated hospital visits and physical conditions regarding work hours, vacations and breaks" (19.2%), followed by "I want other employees to be explained the details of my disability and necessary accommodations, etc." (11.8%), "I want to confirm in advance the placement of desks, etc. and the cautionary areas in the workplace" (11.3%), and "I want to be made able to carry out the work with enlarged characters, voice software, etc." (10.7%) (Figure 6).

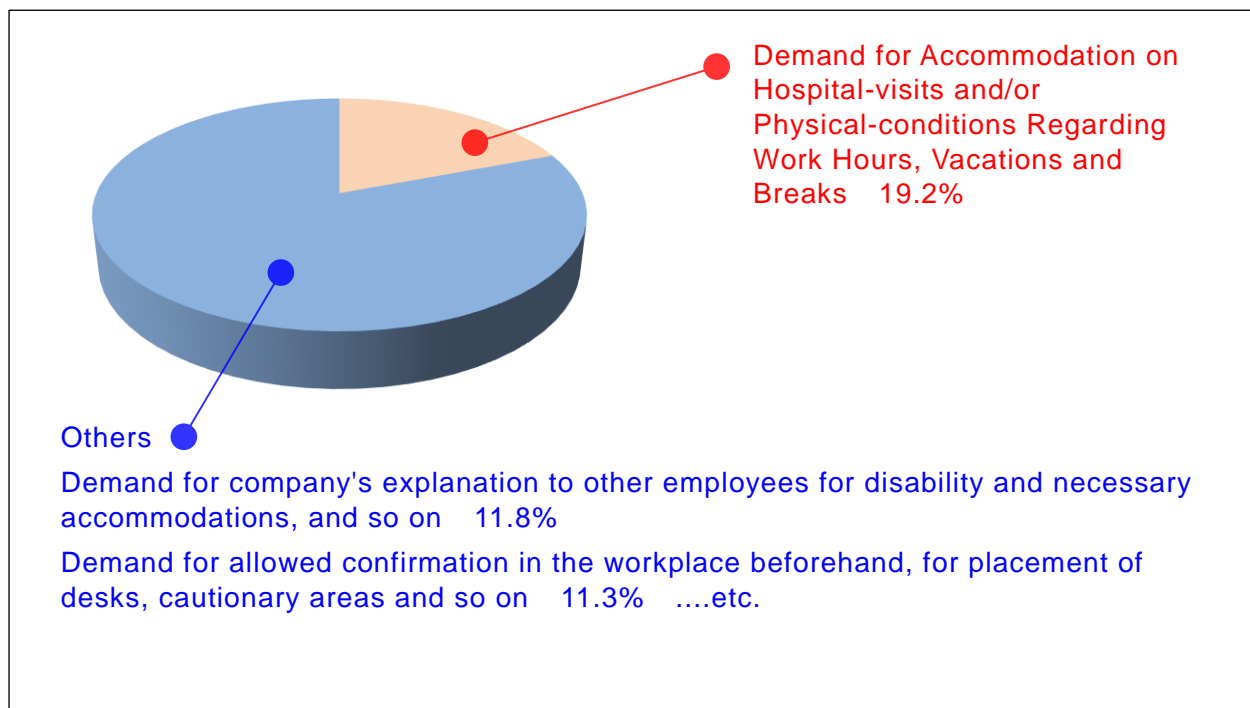


Figure 6: Requests Made from Persons with Visual Disabilities About Matters to be Accommodated

Among the actual improvement measures (regarding accommodation) conducted after recruitment, the most frequent ones included "with the consent of the concerned person, the personnel in charge of human resources explained the details of the disability (such as visibility) and necessary accommodations, etc. to the direct supervisor or the colleagues who directly work together" (61.8%), "we have accommodated hospital visits, physical condition, safety, etc. regarding working hours, vacations, breaks, etc." (52.7%), "we had the concerned person confirm in advance the placement of desks and cautionary areas in the work place" (26.6%), "In order to ensure the safety of transportation in the work place, we did not put things that would be an obstacle to movement in the aisle, and devised the arrangement of desks and meeting places, etc." (24.5%), "we accommodated working hours, such as short-time work" (22.5%), and "we read paper documents and notices out loud as needed" (20.9%). The accommodations such as the installation of supporting devices and software such as computer screen reader software (9.3%) and magnifying readers (6.3%) were less than 10%.

## (2) Survey to Public Employment Security Offices

The diseases caused by blindness for job seekers who are registered in public employment security offices are in descending order, retinal pigmentary degeneration (17.2%), glaucoma (8.8%), optic atrophy (4.8%), diabetic retinopathy (4.4%) and so on (Figure 7).

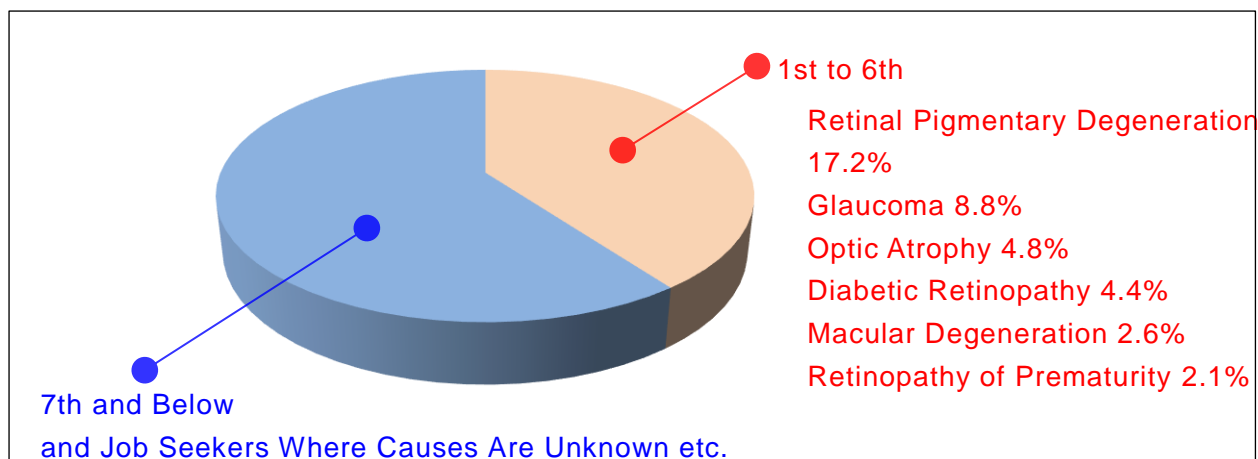


Figure 7: Causative Diseases of Visual Disability for Registered Job Seekers

Among the registered public employment security office job applicants who possess a physical disability certificate for visual disabilities, grade 1 and 2 severe disabled persons accounted for 56.7%, more than half of the total. 24.4% were able to read printed and handwritten text without using a magnifying reader or loupe, and the total of persons who were able to read printed and handwritten text using either a magnifying reader or loupe was 47.6%. In addition, the ratio of those who transported alone without using a white cane or a guide dog was 48.6%.

The related organizations (duplicate answers) with whom public employment security offices collaborated for things such as job introduction for registered job seekers included schools for the blind (5.2%), employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities (4.5%), local vocational centers for persons with disabilities (2.1%), welfare offices and other local entities (2.0%), work transition support providers other than the National Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled (1.9%), region-specific disability support organizations (1.7%), general ophthalmologists (0.8%), and low vision ophthalmologist (0.2%), and the relationship with schools for the blind was relatively high, and the relationship with medical institutions was low.

Some challenges mentioned for introducing jobs by public employment security offices for persons with visual disabilities included the difficulty in grasping the vocational ability, cases for persons with acquired visual disability where they also have challenges as middle-aged and elderly people, the expertise of support agencies, development and provisioning of effective tools for understanding the disability and explaining to business owners, securing commuting means in rural areas, lack of job offers for licensed masseurs and masseuses, and the expansion of employability.



### (3) Survey to Persons with Visual Disabilities

Regarding the occupational challenges of persons with visual disabilities, the cases were analyzed from the aspects of the situation of the visual disability and how they are facing it, acquisition of living skills and skills required in work life, how they are responding to changes in the situation at the company and the workplace and changes in the mental state, and the influence and involvement from the surrounding people.

In case studies, for each phase of job placement, training, reinstatement, etc., regarding computer operation, the importance of not only taking training courses at training institutes but to investigate and absorb new technology by yourself, the significance of interaction with people in various positions and mental preparation for increasing the range of work, remarks about persons with acquired visual disabilities accepting their identity as a blind person and overcoming their conflicts, were found. The four people used as case studies proactively became involved with various challenges, actively utilized provided support, found solutions, finally found a job and have pioneered their own life. The business owners supported the proactive problem solving done by persons with visual disabilities, taught useful information and work techniques while listening to their voices, and as with other non-disabled employees, they set up a place where they could grow as human resources desired by their respective professions. In addition, for business owners to easily accept such a human resource development, supporters conducted transportation assistance to accommodate the visual disability, presented basic problem-solving techniques for everyday life, and basic training such as for computer skills according to the needs of persons with visual disabilities. The four case study persons did not wait for the approaches to be provided by the business owner and supporters, but proactively became involved in order to make use of it for their own working life and career formation, and furthermore, by repeatedly thinking and speaking about their purpose of work and future prospects, they tried to draw out the cooperation of the surrounding people, and have achieved to do so as well.

## **7. Related Research Achievement Results**

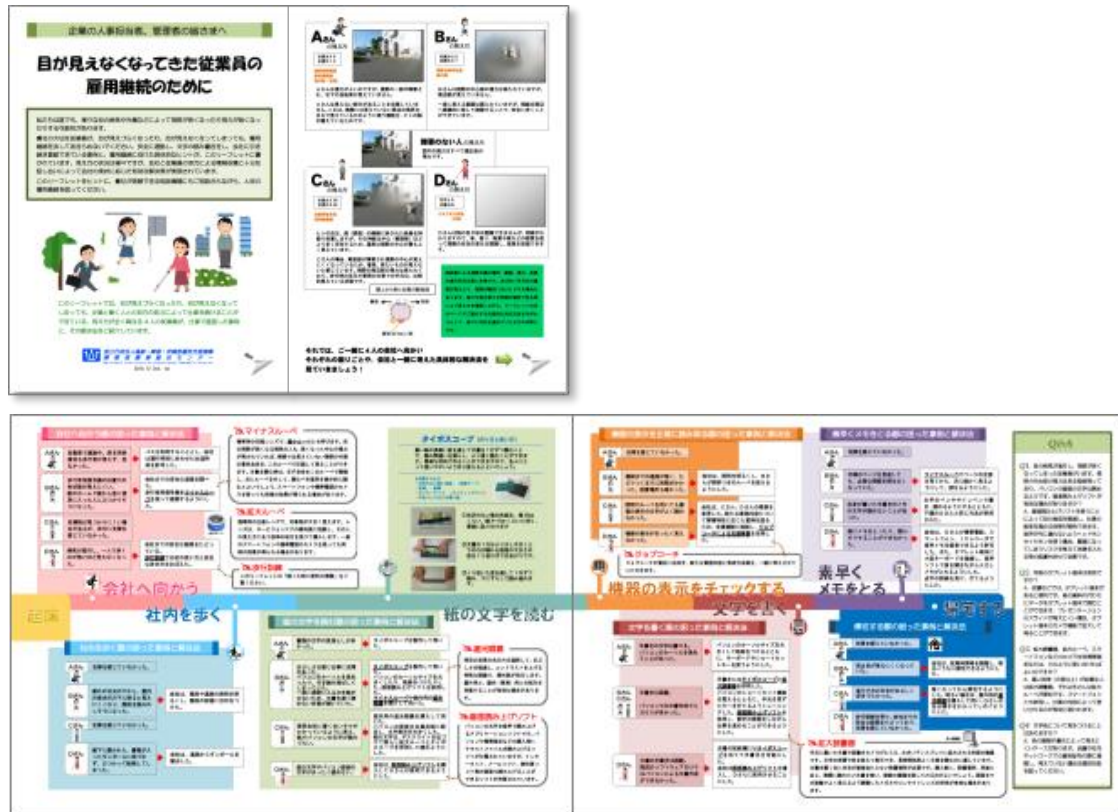
Brochure "For Sustained Employment of Employees who have gradually become Blind (The Brochure for Human Resource Personnel and Managers of Companies)" (2019)

Research Report No.138 "Research on Issues to Improve the Access to Jobs for Persons with Visual Disabilities" (2018)

Research Report No.127 "Research on Supports Given by Employers Regarding Career Development and Advancement of Persons with Visual Disabilities" (2015)

Research Report No.116 "A Study on Increasing the Employability of Office Workers with Visual Disabilities" (2013)

Research Report No.91 "A Study on the Countermeasures to Expand the Employment Opportunities for Blind and Visually Impaired Persons" (2009)



Brochure "For Sustained Employment of Employees who have gradually become Blind (The Brochure for Human Resource Personnel and Managers of Companies)" (2019.3. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.)