RISINGBD, DHAKA: A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) has been providing support to instructors at a Primary Training Institutes (PTI) in Bangladesh to build the skills and efficiencies of primary teachers in teaching their students effectively.

In an exclusive interview with www.risingbd.com, Ms. Kozue Akatsuka, a primary school teacher from Gifu prefecture in central Japan, says that she tries her best to show the instructors how to train primary school teachers to take classes using available teaching materials and allowing students to take part in learning activities effectively.

The interview was taken by Syed Zahirul Abedin, Special Correspondent of www.risingbd.com in Dhaka.

Ms. Akatsuka came to Bangladesh as a JOCV for two years at the end of June last year. Immediately after her arrival, she was sent to the Primary Training Institute (PTI) in Jessore by the
JICA Bangladesh Office in cooperation with the relevant government department of Bangladesh. Since then she has been assisting the instructors there on training of mathematics and science subjects as well as improving the teaching skills of primary school teachers.

`With the objective of children-centred education in mind, I show my colleagues how to prepare curriculum and use teaching materials in classrooms so that students can understand and learn their lessons easily,` she says.

Ms. Akatsuka, who taught at a primary school in Japan for long ten years after completing her higher education in Home Economics from a Japanese university, says that she trains the instructors through role-play. `I tell the instructors that you are my students and I am your teacher. Now, pay attention to how I am going to teach you."

In the past, the Japanese volunteer says that teaching inside a classroom was mostly teacher-centered. At that time, only teachers used to talk while delivering lessons inside classrooms and students had no scope of thinking or speaking. As a result, students used to remain deprived of proper education.

`But things have changed a lot nowadays. Teaching has now become learner-centered. For example, teachers in Japan don`t say much to make the students think about the problems. Rather, they encourage the students to think and solve the problems by themselves by asking a few questions and using teaching materials which are helpful to think, understand and visible. Students are allowed to speak so that teachers can easily identify their deficiencies in learning and address those properly.`

According to Ms. Akatsuka, students should be given opportunities to think and speak inside classrooms for better and effective understanding of their lessons.

`I often think how to introduce my experiences in Japan to the primary schools in Bangladesh. I always suggest the teachers to give students enough time inside classrooms and allow them to talk about their lessons freely, because it brings immense benefits to learners subsequently,` she says.

Narrating her experiences with the local community in Jessore, the Japanese volunteer says that people of Bangladesh are very simple and cooperative. `Local people helped me a lot when I first went to Jessore. Their behaviours are so good that I never feel any kind of isolation there. Even,
the instructors at Jessore PTI always take care of me. They are very sincere and affectionate. I`ll never forget them,` she says.

Ms Akatsuka, who has her parents and an elder brother living in Japan, says that she will go back to her country after six months. `I will start working as a primary school teacher after returning to Japan,` she says.

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