

F-02: Probing into primary science education in Japan : a first hand experience

M V Vithanapathirana *

(National Institute of Education, Maharagama)

Japan is referred to as the 'world's greatest miracle' with its radical social changes and rapid economic development. It is worthwhile for a developing country like ours in the same region to look into the salient features of its science education at the basic level, which would enable us to analyze our own situation with a view to contribute to the educational reforms taking place at present. The study revealed that courses of study have been prepared based on their social needs, research, student capacities and assessing the type of knowledge skills and attitudes required for the future. A special feature of science education in Japan is its emphasis through community-based educational facilities. An indepth study of one such facility revealed that it provides training in scientific

and cultural activities in order to encourage children to develop an interest in science and nature and also to promote life-long learning so that citizens can gain knowledge and skills to improve themselves throughout their lives. Based on this study it could be inferred that other measures are required to supplement school education, especially to promote science education in Sri Lanka. Use of low cost material and self-made teaching materials are key factors in the implementation of primary science curriculum in Japan, which should be adopted by teachers and teacher educators of our context. A recommendation is made for the establishment of science museums to be used by our future generation to develop interest and to facilitate concept formation in science and technology.

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**Present address: Faculty of Education, University of Colombo.*