

News and Notes

Workshop in Voice and Speech

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The need for an intensive and methodical training programme in speech is generally and keenly felt in India. A recent and serious attempt to meet the requirement in theatric speech was the 30-session Workshop in Voice and Speech organized by the National Centre for the Performing Arts and conducted by Ashok D. Ranade (Asst. Director, Research & Ethnomusicology, NCPA) from July 12 to September 6, 1985 at the Centre.

Each session of the Workshop was divided into three parts dealing with theoretical problems, voice and speech exercises and asana-s. The thirty participants in the Workshop (selected from among the eighty who had applied) included in the main-persons working in areas which give prominence to the spoken word. Two of the lectures, on Introduction to Voice Culture and Disorders of Voice, were open to members of the Performing Arts Circle.

Among the important theoretical themes discussed were: Male and Female Voices, Respiration, Pitch-Disorders, Intensity-Disorders, Voice-Disorders, Punctuation and Delivery, Speech Disorders, Voice Types, Microphone and Voice, Voice and Diet, Voice and Culture and Voice and Yoga.

The Voice and Speech exercises were related to monotone, breathing, pitch, alphabet projection, speech-pacing, varieties of prose and poetry, speech-improvisation, speech-modulation etc.

The medium of instruction of the Workshop was English with the exercise material drawn from the Hindi and Marathi theatre traditions.

In the discussions that followed the general lectures and in the Workshop sessions, it became apparent that individuals from different professions were interested in voice and speech training. Teachers, lawyers, programme presenters, and students 'voiced' a desire for a shorter course conducted specially for them. The upper age-limit

(of forty) stipulated for the course aroused some disapproval! It was also pointed out that the course needs to be conducted in other areas of the city for the convenience and benefit of more people. The use of material from regional theatre-traditions met with theoretical approval from all the participants. However, rather surprisingly, the material posed difficulties for them in terms of comprehension and the actual work on it. The participants also expressed the opinion that there should be provision in the course for follow-up action.
