

Two-Day Intercollegiate Workshop on Playback Theatre

6 February 2020

The Department of English and Proscenium, Theatre society of MSSW, organised a two-day workshop on Playback Theatre on 31st January and 1st February 2020 at Madras School of Social Work. The training session was handled by an experienced playback theatre professional Ms. Meenakshi Sivalingam, who also works as a radio jockey besides running her own community theatre venture 'Mei Kalaikoodal,' the motto of which is 'Make art, make revolution!' (*Kalai sei, kalagam sei!*). Ms. P.K. Vathani, Head of the UG Department of Social Work formally inaugurated the workshop and Dr. Manjula, Assistant Professor of Tamil, honoured the guest with a memento. Mikhail Juan Luker of II BSW presented a brief profile of the guest, outlining how she had reached out to over a thousand orphaned children and troubled juveniles through her theatre in the past one year. Ms. Iswarya V, the staff co-ordinator of Proscenium, offered a snapshot of all the activities of the theatre society in the past year. She explained the importance of playback theatre and wished the participants luck.

Ten students from MSSW and eleven from other city colleges such as Ethiraj, Stella Maris, MOP Vaishnav and Bharathi Women's College took part in the workshop. The students initially had a warm-up exercise to grow comfortable in the new environment. The trainer Ms. Meenakshi introduced them to different acting techniques and directed a number of small improvised plays. Some of the activities in the workshop included portraying various basic emotions using facial expressions and dialogue with the help of multi-coloured fabrics and music. Ms. Meenakshi also trained the participants in the different forms of acting involved in playback theatre such as fluid sculpture, echo, formation of a story and repression.

The second day of workshop began with a revision of everything taught on the previous day. By the end of the second day, the students were trained to perform play-lets in front of the guests who were specially invited for the show. Ms. Madhuri A., Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, and Ms. Iswarya V., Assistant Professor, Department of English, who were part of the invited audience congratulated the performers and presented them with certificates of participation. In the end, students shared their feedback on their experiences during the workshop. The vote of thanks was presented by B. Naga Lakshmi of I B.Sc. and the workshop ended after group photo sessions.