Let your child be what he wants to be this summer / Gouri Nilakantan



Platform for Action in Creative Theatre(PACT) and KINDERPLUME has initiated a new summer theatre workshop, Abhivyakti in the regions of Delhi and NCR. It is uniquely designed theatre workshop as it involves all the aspects of theatre namely creative writing, puppetry, face painting, theatre craft acting and improvisation and poetry reading and recitation. According to Neeraj Kumar Mehta, the business head of PACT, a child becomes truly empowered through theatre as Abhivyakti is not a forced activity by parents who just want to get rid of their children during summer. Abhivyakti truly believes in free expression and that is being done through the powerful medium of theatre.

Many theatre workshops are going on in the capital but Abhivyakti does not believe in flocking the children like sheep in a class so the class sizes are not more than 13 children in each batch. Many parents of the Abhivyakti children are well informed and wish to continue with these classes beyond the summer which is a heartening start. No activity is repeated more than thrice and the children's consent is taken by instructors from time to time. Sheel Kalia a regular instructor at Abhivyakti has himself undergone an intensive theatre workshop and certification program. Pact believes that all instructors teaching the skill of theatre need to be not only well equipped but equipped way beyond ordinary expectations. As the children have a strong voice they should be heard by the teacher who should be capable of making quick changes in his approach if his activity is not liked for any reason.

The course has been designed in two folds, namely both the process and the product of theatre are given equal importance. Many theatre companies emphasize only on the product or the final performance is given upmost importance while others totally neglect the product and only pay attention to the process. Here at Abhivyakti both the process and the product are given significant amount of attention. Out of the 24 sessions 12 sessions involve the process while the rest of the 12 pay attention to the product.

By the end of the workshop a feeling of comradeship, confidence and enhancement of the communication skill is hoped to be achieved in the children. The program has been designed in such manner that the age difference between the children does not impede the classes in any manner. A child as small as 4 fit in well with a 12 year old! It is surprising to see how well a small kindergarten child enjoys himself along with a 12 year old. PACT and KINDERPLUME has truly designed an innovative and path changing program in the area of theatre workshops. One hopes to continue with such

further activities in the times to come.