

Gareebnawaz : Santosh Choubey's New Story Collection Unveiled in Delhi



The Sahitya Akademi auditorium in Delhi recently hosted the grand launch of senior poet, storyteller, and Chancellor of Rabindranath Tagore University **Santosh Choubey's** much-awaited short story collection "*Gareebnawaz*". Jointly organized by Vanmali Srijan Peeth, Delhi, and Rajkamal Prakashan Group, the event drew the participation of many noted writers, critics, and literature enthusiasts. Prior to this collection, Choubey had already published six widely acclaimed volumes including *Halkey Rang Ki Kameez*, *Restaurant Mein Dopahar*, *Nau Binduon Ka Khel*, *Beech Prem Mein Gandhi*, *Magar Shakespeare Ko Yaad Rakhna*, and *Pratinidhi Kahaniyan*. The new book was released in the presence of celebrated author Mamata Kalia and senior writer Janki **Prasad Sharma**, who presided over the ceremony. Choubey himself read the title story "*Gareebnawaz*" and shared insights into his creative journey, emphasizing that readability, innocence, and visual intensity remain central to his craft.

Mamata Kalia praised Choubey for his commitment to social realities, describing "*Gareebnawaz*" as a powerful portrayal of class conflict and human resilience. Presiding guest Janki Prasad Sharma remarked that Choubey's greatest strength lies in his extraordinary readability, noting that his stories sweep readers along while raising urgent questions of contemporary life and weaving memory and critique into their very fabric. Noted critic Akhilesh highlighted the originality of Choubey's storytelling, pointing out how his works resist conventional forms while engaging with the distortions of capital, technology, and power, ultimately defending the beauty of life. Senior critic **Vinod Tiwari** observed that the long stories in this collection will be remembered in the history of Hindi fiction, as they carry recurring motifs of love, compassion, humanity, and sensitivity while also transcending genres.

Writer **Alpana Mishra** admired the intimate pace of Choubey's stories that culminate in profound realizations, while young author **Ashutosh** noted how Choubey begins and ends his stories with curiosity, keeping them firmly in narrative control and marked by a scientific and humanistic outlook. The event began with a welcome address by senior poet **Leeladhar Mandloi**, Chairman of **Vanmali Srijan Peeth**, and greetings from **Jyoti Raghuvanshi**. It was skillfully anchored by young writer **Pranjal Dhar** and **Kunal Singh**, with **Ashok Maheshwari** of Rajkamal Prakashan extending a heartfelt vote of thanks. With the presence of distinguished writers, critics, and literature lovers from across Delhi NCR, the launch of "*Gareebnawaz*" became not just a book release but a vibrant celebration of Santosh Choubey's enduring contribution to contemporary Hindi literature.

Reflecting Society Through Playwriting: A Mirror to Social Challenges



New Delhi, August 31

The monthly symposium at the Central Office of *Sanskar Bharati* once again emerged as a vibrant confluence of art, literature, and culture. This gathering witnessed a rare harmony of music and theatrical literature, leaving the audience deeply moved and inspired.

The evening commenced with a soulful performance by young vocalist **Suhani Kaushik** and flutist **Sumit Sharma**, whose melodious notes transported the audience into a realm of devotion and artistic grace, setting the perfect tone for the sessions ahead.

The highlight of the symposium was the intellectual discourse

on “*Playwriting from a Social Perspective: Possibilities and Challenges*”, led by **Prof. Rajnish Kumar Mishra** of Jawaharlal Nehru University and **Prof. Chandan Chaubey** of Delhi University.

Prof. Mishra emphasized that no art can achieve true meaning without immersing itself in the life of the people. He observed that even today, society often feels uneasy when confronted with literature that dares to mirror its realities. Prof. Chaubey, on the other hand, highlighted how devotional traditions found their widest expression through performing arts, which have carried culture directly into the hearts of the masses. He further reflected on the responsibility of playwrights, noting that their craft contributes to shaping the cultural and historical dimensions of character creation.

The thought-provoking addresses inspired the audience towards deeper reflection and dialogue. The session was skillfully moderated by **Raj Upadhyay**, Stage Arts Coordinator of Delhi Province.

More than just a platform for artistic expression, *Sanskar Bharati*’s monthly symposium reaffirmed its role as a forum for meaningful intellectual engagement on art, society, and culture. Once again, the event underscored the timeless truth that art, literature, and society together shape the cultural personality of the nation.

The program was graced by eminent Mohan Veena artist **Ajay Kumar**, Sanskar Bharati Delhi Province Minister **Dr. Prashant Upadhyay**, along with distinguished professors, research scholars, and students of Delhi University.

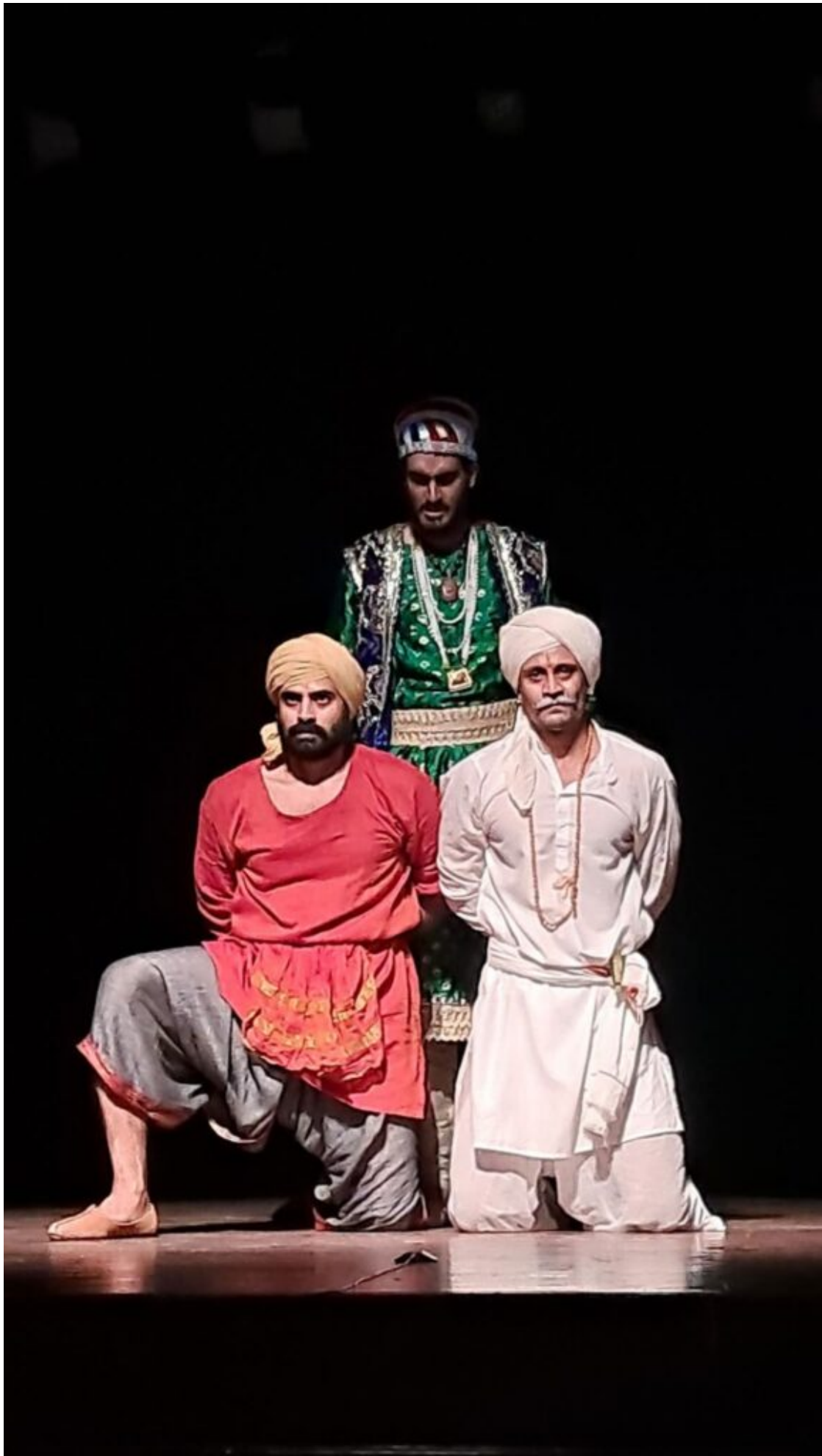
The success of the symposium was made possible through the dedicated efforts of Program Coordinator **Kuldeep Sharma**, Symposium Coordinators **Shruti Sinha**, **Bharti Dang**, **Garima Rani**, **Sneha Mukherjee**, **Harshit Goyal**, **Saurabh Tripathi**, **Vijender Kumar**, **Sushank**, **Brijesh** and team members. A special

appreciation goes to **Vishwadeep**, who not only played a vital role as co-coordinator but also skillfully conducted the stage proceedings with grace and excellence.

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Yugpurush: The Soul of the Guru-Disciple Tradition and the Splendour of the Stage



On 18th August, the historic Kamani Auditorium in New Delhi witnessed a theatrical evening that transcended performance and turned into a soulful experience. “**Yugpurush**”, written and directed by **Jayvardhan (J.P. Singh)**, offered precisely such a rare journey. Through this play, the director dared to bring to the stage the confluence of the guru–disciple tradition, spirituality, and human inquiry—and this daring vision succeeded on every level.

The performance began with the grand worship of Goddess Kali. The resounding beats of the dhak, the echo of conch shells, and the chanting of priests transformed the stage into a sacred temple. This was not just a religious tableau, but a conscious theatrical choice, transporting the audience to the spiritual ground where the journeys of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna began. Here, the culture of Bengal does not remain a mere backdrop but emerges as an inseparable part of the narrative. Costumes, music, and dance brought the stage alive—red-bordered saris, traditional dhotis, the melodic flow of kirtans, and classical gestures combined to transcend time

and space, carrying the audience to nineteenth-century Calcutta.

One of J.P. Singh's greatest strengths lies in his ability to balance tradition with modern theatrical technique. Stage design and lighting were not confined to creating atmosphere; they actively deepened the play's philosophical resonance. Whether it was the steps of the Dakshineswar temple or the historic moment of the Chicago Parliament of Religions, projections and scene transitions provided not only dramatic flair but also symbolic depth. Light at times expressed Vivekananda's inner turbulence, and at other times lingered on the compassionate smile of Ramakrishna.

The soul of the production was carried by its performances. **Vipin Kumar**, as Ramakrishna Paramhansa, infused the role with simplicity and spiritual radiance, making the presence of divinity palpable on stage. His compassionate gaze and subtle smile did not merely represent the character—they embodied it. **Sudheer Rikhari**, as Swami Vivekananda, brought to life the disciple's inquisitive, logical, and energetic spirit. His voice and body language rekindled the memory of that historic moment when Vivekananda introduced Indian philosophy and spirituality to the world in Chicago. Together, their performances created the heartbeat of the play—the tender assurance of the guru alongside the restless questioning of the disciple, ultimately merging into a profound philosophy of life.

The greatest strength of Yugpurush is that it is not a simple dramatic recreation of historical or mythological figures. It is, at its core, a philosophical journey. Vivekananda's scientific rationality and Ramakrishna's devotional fervor converge to remind us that even today the true path of life lies in balancing these two poles.

A special note must be made of Jayvardhan (J.P. Singh). As both playwright and director, he proves that theatre for him

is not merely an art form but a medium to bring life-philosophy to society. His writing lends depth to the dialogues, while his direction renders them alive both visually and aurally. For him, theatre is not simply “entertainment” but a path to “self-realization”—and this is the play’s greatest achievement.

In the end, **“Yugpurush”** is not just a stage production; it is a call of the soul. It demonstrates that the union of devotion and reason is the true essence of life. Even after the curtain falls, the experience resonates within the mind for long—and that is the hallmark of truly great theatre.

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Photo: Neeraj Goswami

Review By: Dr. Durga Prasad Agrwal

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Theatrical Brilliance at Rabindranath Tagore University: A Journey from

Chekhov's Irony to Bhasa's Tragedy



On **June 14 and 16, 2025**, the Faculty of Humanities and Liberal Arts at Rabindranath Tagore University, Bhopal, witnessed the powerful staging of two stylistically diverse plays – “Chekhov Ki Duniya” and “Urubhanga”. These productions were presented by the students of the MPA (Drama) and PG Diploma in Natyashastra as part of a national theatre workshop held from May 7 to 16, marking the culmination of their second semester curriculum. Through these performances, the students skillfully bridged classical Indian theatrical traditions with modern experimental aesthetics.

The two productions stood as compelling contrasts. While one portrayed the ironic absurdities of modern Western society through humour, the other breathed life into the deep emotional undercurrents of Indian mythology through poignant tragedy.

“Chekhov Ki Duniya” – A Humorous Reflection of Social Irony

Staged on June 14, “Chekhov Ki Duniya” was based on three comic one-act plays by Russian literary master Anton Chekhov –

Cheenk, The Bank Manager, and Surgery. Under the seasoned direction of Shyam Kumar and co-direction of Shraboni Saha, the play brought forth the complexities hidden in seemingly trivial incidents. From the social awkwardness triggered by a simple sneeze, to the oppressive nature of bureaucratic banking systems, and the cold commercialization of healthcare – each vignette was rendered with biting humour and subtle irony.

The ensemble cast brought these stories to life with remarkable authenticity. Sehej Harjai served as the narrator, with Ankit Chaudhary (Pyare Mohan), Tanshree Rane (Pyare Mohan's wife), Sainand Valvaikar (General), and Oindrila Goswami (General's wife) portraying Chekhovian characters with flair. Supporting roles by Santosh Rajput (Bank Manager), Saptik Bhattacharya (Assistant Manager), Pooja Kewat (Woman), Praveen Namdev (Compounder), Davinder Singh Grover (Patient), and Deepak Bhardwaj (Audience Member) were met with hearty applause from both guests and viewers.

The backstage team worked with admirable precision. Stage management was handled by Davinder Singh Grover and Sehej Harjai. Costumes were designed by Deepak Bhardwaj, Santosh Grover coordinated props, lighting by Praveen Namdev, and musical direction was led by Vansh Rathore.

“Urubhanga” – A Mythological Tragedy That Stirred the Soul

Performed on June 16, “Urubhanga” is a poignant classical tragedy written by the Sanskrit playwright Bhasa. The play explores the psychological turmoil, remorse, and transformation of a wounded Duryodhana on the eighteenth day of the Mahabharata war. Under the direction of Dr. Sheetanshu Tripathi, the production delved into the devastating aftermath of war and internal conflict, deeply moving the audience.

Shubham Srivastava's sensitive and intense portrayal of Duryodhana left an indelible mark. As the narrator, Pankaj

Diwan effectively connected the audience with both the intellectual and emotional threads of the narrative. Supporting roles were performed by Adeeb Ansari, Sanjay Singh Negi (Ashwatthama), Prateek Chauhan (Dhritarashtra), Neeraj (Krishna), Richa Kalra (Gandhari), Shikha (Pauravi), Nisha Kudaikar (Malavi), Shubham Shivalikar (Durjaya), Unnish Pratap Singh (Baladeva), and the younger characters – Rahul Gupta, Prashant Kumar (Harshit), and Kartik Namdev – all delivering memorable performances.

The scenic design and costuming, supervised by Deepak Bhardwaj with active involvement from Kartik Namdev, enriched the stage with symbolic depth and aesthetic elegance.

Both performances were graced by distinguished guests – Chancellor Shri Santosh Choubey, Vice-Chancellor Prof. R. P. Dubey, and Dr. Prasad Bhide from Central Sanskrit University, Bhopal. After witnessing “Chekhov Ki Duniya”, the Chancellor lauded it as a sharp portrayal of social reality and commended both cast and crew. Regarding “Urubhanga”, Dr. Bhide praised its seamless fusion of ancient dramaturgy with modern theatrical techniques. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dubey described both plays as commendable and emphasized the importance of sustaining such creative academic endeavours at the university.

The entire event was coordinated under the guidance of Dr. Sanjay Kumar Dubey, Dr. Savitri Singh Parihar, and Sh. Abhishek Deshmukh, whose leadership transformed this semester-end production into a rich academic and cultural experience.

“Chekhov Ki Duniya” and “Urubhanga” stand as testaments to the theatrical acumen, emotional insight, and creative potential of the students at Rabindranath Tagore University. These productions point towards a promising future – where tradition meets innovation, theory meets experience, and Indian roots engage meaningfully with global perspectives.

Natsamrat's Theatrical Showcase: A Vibrant Tapestry of Emotion, Satire, and Humour



On May 24, 31, and June 1, Delhi's L.T.G. Auditorium at Mandi House came alive with a rich blend of theatre as Natsamrat, a prominent performing arts group, presented a trio of compelling plays. Each piece offered a distinct flavour—ranging from heartfelt drama to sharp satire and uproarious comedy—beautifully reflecting the artistic breadth and emotional depth of contemporary Indian theatre.

Tender Reflections: Kambakht Ishq

Staged on May 31 at 3:00 PM, Kambakht Ishq, penned by Satyaprakash, offered a poignant look into the emotional needs of the elderly. Through the lives of two aging individuals coping with loneliness, the play delicately unraveled themes of companionship, vulnerability, and the quiet ache of growing

old. With subtle dialogue and restrained yet powerful performances, the production struck a deep emotional chord with its audience, rendering it one of the most moving performances of the festival.

Comic Wit and Social Satire: The Proposal

Staged twice—on May 24 at 11:30 AM and again on June 1 at 3:00 PM—Anton Chekhov’s iconic one-act play *The Proposal* was brought to life with remarkable flair. What begins as a simple marriage proposal spirals hilariously into a heated argument over land and pets. The actors’ crisp comic timing, expressive body language, and fluid stage presence transformed the absurdity into biting social satire. It was a delightful reminder that laughter, when layered with irony, becomes a powerful mirror to societal quirks.

Laughter with a Message: Kallu Nai MBBS

Inspired by Molière’s classic farce and performed on May 24 at 12:30 PM, May 31 and June 1 at 4:15 PM, *Kallu Nai MBBS* followed the misadventures of a drunk barber who is forcibly made to act as a doctor. Behind the laugh-out-loud moments lay darker undertones of domestic abuse and the systemic marginalization of women. The fast-paced narrative, witty dialogues, and exaggerated characters created a comic spectacle that managed to entertain while prompting deeper thought.

Direction and Technical Excellence

All three plays were skillfully directed by **Shyam Kumar**, whose vision and theatrical sensibility were evident in the seamless staging. The ensemble cast—Vishwajeet, Munmun, Shivangi, Aman Kumar, Dhananjay, Raman Kumar, Rajan, and Saumya—delivered heartfelt and dynamic performances. Behind the scenes, the production team added immense value: Sunil Rathore and Suraj Singh (stage management), Himanshu and Nisha (assistant stage managers), Payal and Raj Rani (makeup), Rohit Prasad and Rekha

Devi (costumes), and Vansh Rathore (music coordination).

Natsamrat's theatrical offering was more than a cultural event—it was a celebration of theatre's power to evoke, provoke, and connect. Through humour, emotion, and satire, the festival reminded us that the stage is not just a space for performance, but a living, breathing dialogue with society itself.

Katharang Gracefully Concludes with Tagore's "Samapti"



A Poetic Finale to a Festival of Stories

New Delhi | April 30, 2025 – The *Katharang* theatre series at the National School of Drama's Sammukh Auditorium concluded on a touching and emotionally rich note with the stage adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's classic story "**Samapti**". Presented by **Mailorang** and performed by the **Sambhav Theatre Group**, the production was directed by the eminent **Professor Devendra Raj Ankur**, who brought to the stage his trademark sensitivity and refined theatrical sensibility.

"Samapti" (The Completion) is a gentle yet powerful tale of emotional maturity and the freedom to grow into love. At the heart of the story is **Mrinmoyee**, a free-spirited village girl who is unready for the responsibilities of marriage and dismisses romantic expectations with the careless abandon of youth. When **Apurva**, a kind-hearted law student from Kolkata, falls in love with her and marries her against his mother's wishes, Mrinmoyee struggles to accept the union. Apurva, instead of pressuring her, quietly returns to Kolkata. Left alone, Mrinmoyee begins to reflect, mature, and discover the true meaning of love. When she later visits him in Kolkata, their love story finds its quiet, heartfelt completion—not in dramatic reunion, but in the soft, mutual understanding that comes with time and growth.

The performances were deeply evocative and nuanced. **Amit Saxena** portrayed Apurva with admirable restraint and tenderness, embodying the patience and dignity of a man in love. **Gouri Dewal** brought youthful vibrance and infectious energy to the role of young Mrinmoyee, while **Hema Bisht**, portraying her matured counterpart, captured the inner transformation of the character with great poise and depth. **Durga Sharma**, as Apurva's conservative mother, delivered a layered performance filled with conviction and emotional tension, while **Amitabh Srivastava**, as Mrinmoyee's father, offered a sincere and grounded portrayal of a man caught between tradition and his daughter's spirited nature. The ensemble of **Prakash Jha**, **Nidhi Mishra**, **Tripti Jauhari**, and

Sahej Harjai supported the narrative with subtle and committed performances that helped bring the world of the play vividly to life.

Aesthetically, the play was a visual and auditory delight. The lighting design by **Raghav Prakash Mishra** added emotional texture to every scene, blending poetic softness with narrative clarity. The carefully curated music by **Rajesh Singh**, operated live by **Unis Yadav**, underscored key moments with sensitivity and restraint, enhancing the atmosphere without overpowering the dialogue or mood.

“Samapti” proved to be the perfect culmination to *Katharang*, bringing the series to a meaningful and emotionally satisfying close. Following the performance, a special segment took place on stage in which the **writers of the plays featured during the festival—Vijay Pandit** (writer of *Jogiya Raag*), **Priyadarshan** (*Betiyan Mannu Ki*), and **Umashanker Choudhary** (*Ayodhya Babu Sanak Gaye Hain*)—shared with the audience the inspirations behind their stories. Their reflections revealed not only their literary intentions but also the personal and cultural resonances that shaped their writing.

Adding a warm and personal touch to the evening, **artists Nidhi Mishra, Amit Saxena, and Gouri Dewal** came forward to share their experiences during the preparation of these productions. They spoke fondly about the collaborative process, the challenges of inhabiting complex characters, and the enriching journey of working under the mentorship of **Professor Devendra Raj Ankur**. Their heartfelt memories underscored the deep sense of community, artistic discipline, and emotional investment that fueled the spirit of *Katharang*.

As the curtains fell on this moving performance, it was clear that *Katharang* had concluded not just with a play, but with a celebration of storytelling, shared experiences, and the quiet power of theatre to transform hearts. “Samapti” lived up to its name—a beautiful completion, both of a love story and of a

remarkable festival.

Ayodhya Babu Sanak Gaye Hain— A Mirror to Modern Madness



On April 29, 2025, the Sammukh auditorium of the National School of Drama, New Delhi, witnessed a deeply moving theatrical experience as part of the '**Katharang**' series. The play "**Ayodhya Babu Sanak Gaye Hain**", presented by Mailorang (Maithili Lok Rang) and staged by Sambhav Theatre Group, resonated profoundly with the audience. Based on a powerful short story of the same name by noted writer Umashankar Chaudhary, the production explored the contradictions and emotional fragmentation in contemporary society through an

impactful dramatic interpretation.

Directed by Professor Devendra Raj Ankur, the play reflected a sharp eye for detail and a deep sense of social sensitivity. He intricately wove the essence of the original story into the dramatic structure, using characters as instruments to deliver a scathing commentary on present-day societal realities.

Amit Saxena delivered a layered and sensitive portrayal of the son. His internal conflict, the clash between duty and emotion, and the discomfort arising from Ayodhya Babu's supposed madness were brought out with striking realism.

Hema Bisht, as the mother, left an unforgettable impression – especially in the final scene where her silent, broken presence on the deathbed conveyed volumes. Her performance evoked quiet grief and emotional depth.

Amitabh Srivastava brought the complex and multi-dimensional character of Ayodhya Babu alive on stage. His portrayal transcended mere eccentricity, revealing a soul tormented by truth and resistance against social hypocrisy. His 'madness' became a metaphor for the courage to speak truth in a world of convenient lies.

The lighting design by Raghav Prakash Mishra played a vital role in enhancing the emotional gravity of the scenes. Particularly in the strained moments between mother and son, the lighting subtly underlined the unspoken pain and tension.

With its naturalistic language, piercing dialogues, and emotionally resonant characters, the play captivated the audience from beginning to end. It was not merely a source of entertainment, but an invitation to introspect.

“Ayodhya Babu Sanak Gaye Hain” compels us to ask: who is truly mad – the one who dares to speak the truth, or the one who comfortably lives with lies? This remarkable production by Maithili Lok Rang and Sambhav Theatre Group stood out as a

shining example of theatrical depth, creativity, and social commitment. By the final scene, the audience was not only emotionally moved but left with lingering questions and reflections.

‘Katharang’: A Stirring Theatrical Tribute to the Inner Worlds of Women



On April 28, 2025, the **Sammukh Auditorium** of the **National School of Drama**, New Delhi, transformed into a space of introspection and intensity as part of the *Katharang* series presented by *Mailorang* (Maithili Lok Rang). The evening featured two poignant theatrical presentations—**“Ek Stree Ke**

Kaarname" by Suryabala and **"Betiyaan Mannu Ki"**, based on selected short stories of Mannu Bhandari. Both productions were helmed by acclaimed theatre director **Prof. Devendra Raj Ankur**, known for his ability to breathe theatrical life into literary works with sharp insight and emotional precision.

"Ek Stree Ke Kaarname" – A Satirical Soliloquy of the Self

The first play, *"Ek Stree Ke Kaarname"*, dived deep into the psyche of a seemingly balanced and educated woman whose exterior composure masks an inner churning of suppressed emotions, quiet frustrations, and the desperate quest for identity. Suryabala's acerbic wit and psychological depth were beautifully translated on stage through a tight script and layered performances.

Durga Sharma, portraying the central character, delivered a finely tuned performance—her expressive control and emotional nuance navigating the character's journey from repression to quiet self-awareness. **Amitabh Srivastava** lent strength to the performance with his presence, bringing balance and rhythm to the narrative's unfolding. The interplay of speech, silence, and irony kept the audience deeply engaged, holding a mirror to the everyday contradictions of womanhood.

"Betiyaan Mannu Ki" – Fragments of Feminine Reality

The second presentation, *"Betiyaan Mannu Ki"*, was an ensemble performance based on several short stories by **Mannu Bhandari**, one of Hindi literature's most powerful voices on gender and identity. The play explored multiple dimensions of womanhood across varied roles and stages of life, offering moments of tenderness, conflict, vulnerability, and resistance.

The cast—**Amit Saxena**, **Gauri Deval**, **Aditi**, and **Rachita Verma**—brought these diverse female experiences to life with empathy and skill. Each transition between characters and narratives was handled with clarity and emotional depth. Whether as daughters, lovers, mothers, or rebels, the female characters emerged with raw honesty, making the stories

resonate deeply with the audience.

The production's lighting, designed by **Raghav Prakash Mishra**, subtly enhanced each scene's emotional tone without overpowering the narrative. His use of soft transitions, warm shadows, and isolated highlights helped build the psychological landscapes of both plays. The minimalist set and gentle pacing allowed the performances and text to breathe, focusing the audience's attention squarely on the characters and their journeys. The **music selection**, curated by **Rajesh Singh**, provided an evocative auditory backdrop, enhancing each emotional transition. **Sahaj Harjai** and **Unis Yadav** skillfully operated the music during the performances, ensuring smooth and expressive sonic flow that deepened audience immersion.

Katharang's theatrical evening was a thoughtful confluence of literature and performance—a celebration of women's stories told with dignity, irony, and emotional truth. Prof. **Devendra Raj Ankur** once again demonstrated his profound sensitivity as a director, translating literary narratives into stage experiences that speak directly to the conscience. The evening left the audience moved, provoked, and awakened reminding us that theatre, at its best, does more than entertain; it opens conversations and illuminates' silences.