

Katharang Gracefully 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.