

SUMAN KUMAR

Senior Theatre Artist – Actor, Director, Broadcaster & Cultural Custodian

Nominee for Padma Shri – Field: Art & Culture (Theatre / Performing Arts)

Patna, Bihar | Mob: 09431066931, 9934035237 | Email: sumankumarsamrat@gmail.com | kalajagran.com/suman-kumar

PROFILE SUMMARY

Suman Kumar has spent **almost seven decades** in the Indian theatre and broadcast media acting as **flag bearer of Bihar stage**, yet he shows no sign of slowing down. He started acting in **1962**, and since then he has directed **over 300 plays**, acted in **more than 200**, and taken part in **over a thousand street performances** across **Hindi, Magadhi, Bhojpuri and Maithili** spread over multiple dialects. Offered a commission as **Second Lieutenant in the Indian Army** and opportunities in commercial cinema, he chose Bihar's folk stage instead - a deliberate, lifelong act of cultural service. He has spent six decades connecting regional folk traditions - **Bhikhari Thakur's Naach, Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Maithili** - with modern stagecraft, building institutions, training generations, and taking theatre into **communities, jails, tribal areas, and flood zones that no other theatre practitioner in Bihar has reached** - including **officially commissioned, government-funded theatre rehabilitation programmes inside Bihar's prisons**, where inmates progressed from watching a live professional performance to staging their own production through structured daily training. Every choice in his career reflects a single philosophy - **tan, man, dhan** - body, mind and personal resources devoted without reservation to Bihar's cultural life. He declined a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Indian Army. He declined commercial cinema. He converted space inside his own home into a **dedicated rehearsal hall and training facility** for young actors and children, bearing the construction and maintenance cost entirely himself.

He also spent **37 years at All India Radio, Patna (1970-2007)**, retiring in 2007 as its **senior-most announcer and Presenter**, directing and acting in **over 500 radio plays and features** - and even during that career he never really stepped away from the stage. His hosting of popular Radio shows as **Aap ki farmaish**, acting and direction in radio series as **Hawa Mahal** is extremely popular among the listeners. The programs which he created are still broadcasted regularly such as feature on **Bhagat Singh** etc.

He is the **conceptualiser and director of Bihar Gaurav Gaan - Bihar's de facto cultural anthem**. In 1997, he conceived the idea of a unified cultural anthem for Bihar, assembled **76 young performers**, and directed the **first-ever performance** at Gandhi Maidan for the Government of Bihar's **50th Independence anniversary celebrations**. He has directed **all major performances** since, including a **130-performer production at Moin-ul-Haq Stadium**. The anthem has been staged **nearly 2,000 times**, including internationally in **Mauritius**, and is performed at every major state occasion, sporting event, and official function in Bihar.

He has also contributed to other arms of **Prasar Bharti** most notably **Doordarshan**, creating telefilms and documentaries for them as **Bihar Ka Gauravshali Parv Chhath**. He also served them as **News reader** among others.

Suman Kumar has also worked in Films and TV series by eminent personalities like **Discovery of India (Bharat Ek Khoj)** by **Shyam Benegal**, **Gandhi** by **Richard Attenborough**, **Mirza Ghalib** by **Gulzar**, **Damul** by **Prakash Jha**, **Bheem Bhawani** by **Basu Chatterjee**.

People call him “**Samrat**” (Emperor) a title he earned playing **Emperor Ajatashatru in Amrapali**, and it stuck because it fits. He is known as much for **opening the stage to women in a conservative era** as he is for **keeping Bhikhari Thakur's Naach tradition alive**, and for turning theatre into a tool for real social change, whether that's **fighting child trafficking, confronting witch-hunting, or running workshops inside Bihar's jails as drama therapy programs**. He has trained generations of young actors - several of whom went on to study at the **National School of Drama (NSD)** and are now active theatre practitioners - establishing a **direct lineage between Bihar's grassroots theatre tradition and India's foremost national theatre institution**. He organises several all India festivals such as **Historical Drama festival** for inculcating the lessons learned from glorious past of India, **Comedy Drama festival** for spreading happiness and **Aadi Shakti Nari Mahotsav** for women empowerment.

PERSONAL & NOMINEE DETAILS

Full Name: Suman Kumar

Date of Birth: 15 November 1947

Education: B.Sc. (1966) and LL.B. (1971), Magadh University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar

Present Address: Sundari Bhawan, Devi Asthan, New Bengali Tola, Opp. NIFT, Patna – 800001, Bihar

Permanent Address: Village – Chak Sultanpur, Khokhna, Fatuha, Patna – 803201, Bihar

Telephone: 0612-2351377

Mobile: 09431066931, 09934035237

Email: sumankumarsamrat@gmail.com

Website: kalajagran.com/suman-kumar

YouTube: tinyurl.com/kalajagran

Languages: Hindi, Magadhi, Bhojpuri, Maithili, English

Special Qualification: ‘A’ grade Drama Artist, All India Radio, Patna

Other Distinction: Selected for commission as **Second Lieutenant in the Indian Army** (declined in order to pursue a lifelong career in theatre and broadcasting).

CAREER TIMELINE

- 1962 - At the **age of 15**, he entered the world of theatre. His first play as an actor and director, **Veer Kunwar Singh**.
- 1966 – Passed the voice test for drama and became affiliated with **All India Radio (AIR)**, Patna; became an ‘**A’ grade drama artist**. Also the year he graduated B.Sc. from Magadh University.
- 1966 – Founding member, **Kala Sangam, Patna**.
- 1968–1971 – Studied at College of Commerce, Patna, and completed LL.B.
- 1970 – Began working as a **Casual Announcer at AIR Patna**.
- 1971 – Entered the world of All India Radio and Television.
- 1974 – Joined All India Radio, Patna as a **full-time Announcer**.
- 1974 - Co-founded the **Kalakar Sangharsh Samiti** alongside literary figures **Baba Nagarjun** and **Phanishwar Nath Renu** during the **JP Movement**; faced **government censorship** for anti-corruption play **Andher Nagari Chaupat Raja** - one of the earliest acts of organised cultural resistance through theatre in Bihar.
- 1975 – Kept AIR Patna's emergency broadcast running through the **catastrophic Patna floods** (see Significant Contributions below).
- 1977 - Repeated **emergency broadcast** service during the **second Patna flood**, staying on-site at the Fatuha and Jethuli transmission centres for **three days**.
- 1990 - Founding Secretary, Kala Jagran, Patna. Also engaged as a Casual News Reader following the establishment of Doordarshan Kendra, Patna.
- 1992 – Began serving as **Visiting Faculty and Camp Director** for children's theatre workshops in Bhagalpur organised by **NCZCC Allahabad**
- 1997 - Served as **Technical Director** and announcer for Bihar's official cultural presentations at Bihar Diwas Trade Fair, **Pragati Maidan**, New Delhi - a role continued annually since for several years
- 1997 – Conceptualised and directed the first-ever performance of Bihar Gaurav Gaan at the **Youth Cultural Festival, Gandhi Maidan**, Government of Bihar.
- 2007 – Retired from All India Radio as the **senior-most Announcer and Presenter of AIR Patna, after 37 years of service**.
- 2008 - Nominated to the 3-member **Red Ribbon Express Expert Selection Committee**, NYKS, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India for AIDS control committee; workshops in New Delhi
- 2008 – Became Organiser and Chief Coordinator of the **All India Historical Theatre Festival**, a role continued for **16 years**.
- 2009 - Appointed to the **State Cultural Screening Committee, Department of Art, Culture & Youth, Government of Bihar**

- 2010 - Converted space inside his own home into a **dedicated rehearsal hall and training facility** for young actors and children - bearing construction and maintenance costs entirely at personal expense - providing a permanent free workspace for Bihar's theatre community independent of institutional support or government grants.
- 2011 - Conferred the Pandarak Rang Samman.
- 2013 - Founded and Organising Secretary and Chief Coordinator, **Hasya Natya Mahotsav** (Comedy Theatre Festival) - running continuously for **10 years**
- 2014 – Conferred the **Bhikhari Thakur Saamaan (Senior)** by the **Government of Bihar**.
- 2015 - Founded and became Organising Secretary and Chief Coordinator, **Aadi Shakti Natya Mahotsav** (women's empowerment) - running continuously for **11 years**. Appointed **State Facilitator for Street Theatre, Bihar State AIDS Control Society** (BSACS), Department of Health, Government of Bihar.
- 2018 - Directed **Madhavi** at the **Kolkata Multilingual Theatre Festival**, organised by the **Eastern Zone Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata**, Ministry of Culture, Government of India - representing Bihar's theatre at a national multilingual platform.
- 2019 - Directed **Vidroha** - commissioned by the **Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi** - performed at Kalidas Rangalaya, Patna; confirming continued national institutional commissioning of his directorial work more than a decade after retirement from AIR.
- 2019 – Conferred the Natraj Kala Samman at the 10th Natraj Utsav.
- 2022 – Directed **Nayaka Pokhra**- commissioned by the **Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi**- performed at Kalidas Rangalaya, Patna, as part of SNA Pradarshan Kala Utsav- **30 May 2022**
- 2023 – Conferred the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award** by the **Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar**, on the occasion of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- 2024 - Directed **Lo Aa Gayi Vaapas Sone Ki Chidiyaan**- performed at **National School of Drama, New Delhi- 21 February 2024**.
- 2025 – Conferred the **Lifetime Achievement Award** by the **Department of Art & Culture, Government of Bihar**.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS & HISTORIC IMPACT

1. Opening the Stage to Women

Back in the 1960s, women simply did not appear on the Bihar stage; it was not considered proper. Suman Kumar pushed against that directly. For the play **Amrapali**, staged at **Bhartiya Nritya Kala Mandir**, he cast **women from respected households, including a lecturer from a women's college**, in lead roles. It was a risk at the time, and it worked. That production **permanently changed what was possible for female artists in Bihar's mainstream theatre**. His own performance as **Emperor Ajatashatru** in **Amrapali** - a role of commanding historical and dramatic weight - was so definitive that audiences began calling him '**Samrat**' (**Emperor**), a title that has followed him for **six decades** and is now inseparable from his identity in Bihar's theatrical life. The production was therefore **historic on two counts simultaneously**: it **permanently opened Bihar's mainstream stage to women**, and it **produced Bihar theatre's most enduring performer title**. This has continued since then and currently multiple plays are performed as well as the annual drama festival **Aadi Shakti Natya Mahotsav** (as organiser and Chief Coordinator) is organised empowering women.

2. Theatre as Social Reform

Suman Kumar has never treated the stage as separate from the world outside it. His play **Zaruraat Issi Ki Thee** dealt with child trafficking and exploitation of child labourers which was **selected for the National School of Drama's Jashne Bachpan festival in New Delhi**. **Dayeen** took on rural witch-hunting. During the **JP Movement of the 1970s**, he co-founded the **Kalakar Sangharsh Samiti** alongside literary figures like **Baba Nagarjun** and **Phanishwar Nath Renu**, and he faced **government censorship** for his anti-corruption play **Andher Nagari Chaupat Raja**. He also mounted **over 1,000 street plays** with UNICEF and the **Bihar AIDS Control Society** - including a **Census 2001 campaign comprising 30-plus plays across 20-plus Patna locations in a single month**, confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register. He ran **cross-border workshops in Purnia** training both **Nepalese and Indian actors**. He directed **Aur Chudiyen Jhanjhana Uthi** - a radio play celebrating **women freedom fighters of India** - for All India Radio. He directed **Loha Singh** - a popular Bhojpuri radio series - using the platform to raise **rural awareness against liquor and drug abuse** across Bihar's villages.

3. The 1975 Patna Flood: Broadcasting Through Disaster

When the **1975 floods** submerged the AIR Patna building, Suman Kumar didn't evacuate. He made his way, **by boat and then by swimming through the floodwater**, to the isolated **Fatuha transmission centre** and kept the **emergency broadcast running, without food, for roughly 70 hours**, so that stranded citizens could still get life-saving information. Two years later, in **1977**, he again crossed flooded terrain to keep the **Fatuha transmitter** operational, staying on-site for **three more days**. His own account of those hours was later covered in the **Hindustan newspaper's** retrospective on his career.

4. Reviving Bhikhari Thakur and Bihar's Folk Idioms

Bhikhari Thakur is often called the **Shakespeare of Bhojpuri**, and his Naach format, including the **Bidesiya and Londa Nach** traditions, was in real danger of fading out. Suman Kumar has spent decades working against that, staying true to the **original movement and musical structure** of these forms rather than diluting them for a modern stage. His productions in this tradition have reportedly reached **more than 100,000 people** across **Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh**, and he was a driving force behind the **Maithli dramas held between 1990 and 2000** like Phansri. For this body of work he received the **Bhikhari Thakur Saamaan (Senior)** from the **Government of Bihar in 2014**.

5. Theatre Inside the Prison System

Suman Kumar has also taken theatre where it usually doesn't go, into **Bihar's jails**. He ran a **seven-day workshop at Muzaffarpur Jail**, a site with its own historical weight given its ties to the martyr **Khudiram Bose**, a **twenty-day residential workshop at Patna's Beur Jail**, and staged productions at Buxar Jail. His approach was simple: **first the inmates watch a full performance**, then they **train through structured daily sessions**, and eventually **they put on the play themselves**. It's **rehabilitation through creative expression** rather than a one-off event. The Muzaffarpur Jail workshops are confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register - with **Naatya Prashikshan Karyashala entries at Kendriya Kaara, Muzaffarpur across multiple consecutive dates in April–May 2008**, commissioned by the **Kala Sanskriti Yuva Vibhag, Bihar Sarkar** - establishing that these were not informal visits but **officially commissioned, government-supported rehabilitation programmes**.

6. Cultural and Religious Broadcasting

For over **30 continuous years**, his voice has carried **Bihar's Chhath Mahaparv commentary** - the live **Aankhon Dekha Haal** - to **millions of listeners over All India Radio**, a tradition he maintains to this day. These are **not occasional assignments**; they are **sustained, decades-long responsibilities** reflecting the **highest institutional trust** in his voice, cultural knowledge, and public authority. For **over 15 continuous years**, he has served as commentator for **Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti** broadcast from the historic **Takht Sri Patna Sahib Gurudwara** - one of the **most significant Sikh religious broadcasts in Bihar** - and remains actively involved in that broadcast today. Several documentaries showcasing culture such as **Bihar ka Gauravshaali parv chhath, Mata Mundeshwari** etc. are very popular and telecasted nationally. An **annual historical drama festival** is organised every year which is **one of its kind**.

7. Conceptualiser and Director of Bihar Gaurav Gaan - Bihar's Cultural Anthem

In **1997**, Suman Kumar **conceptualised and directed** the **first-ever performance of Bihar Gaurav Gaan** at the **Youth Cultural Festival, Gandhi Maidan, Patna**, commissioned by the **Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Government of Bihar**, to mark the **50th anniversary of Indian independence**. He assembled and choreographed **76 young performers** - boys and girls - for that landmark production, the **first time Bihar had a unified cultural anthem** of this kind.

The anthem grew under his continued direction. He subsequently staged a **130-performer production at Moin-ul-Haq Stadium** during the Union Football Match. **Bihar Gaurav Gaan** has since been performed **nearly 2,000 times**, including internationally in **Mauritius**, at the **Karpoori Thakur Gold Cup**, the **Asian Junior Football Tournament**, the **Junior All India Badminton Tournament**, and the **Kala Sanskritik Yatra**, and is now performed at every major state occasion and official function in Bihar.

No other individual in any Indian state can claim authorship of a living cultural production that has achieved this scale of repetition, geographic spread, and institutional adoption.

8. Architect of State Cultural Identity

- **Bihar Gaurav Gaan:** See dedicated Section 7 above. Briefly: conceived and choreographed by Suman Kumar in 1997 with **76 young performers** at Gandhi Maidan; subsequently staged with **130 performers** at Moin-ul-Haq Stadium; performed **nearly 2,000 times** including internationally in **Mauritius**
- **Republic Day and Independence Day tableaux:** designed and directed Bihar's official cultural jhankis at **Gandhi Maidan, Patna**, including a tableau highlighting **Sudha Dairy's agrarian success** and **Bihar's rich cultural heritage**. Conceptualised with live artists for several years
- **Linguistic and Cultural Identity of Bihar through theatre in four distinct traditions:** Suman Kumar has directed **300-plus plays** across **Hindi, Magadhi, Bhojpuri, and Maithili** - each a separate theatrical tradition with its own idiom, performance conventions, and audience. This is **not multilingualism as a skill**; it is the **simultaneous preservation of four living theatrical cultures over six decades**, at a time when all four faced pressure from commercial entertainment.
- Served as **Technical Director** for Bihar's official national cultural presentations at **Bihar Day and Pragati Maidan in New Delhi since 1998**.

9. Training the Next Generation: Children's & Youth Theatre

- Teaching children isn't the same as directing adults. Kids bring raw, unfiltered energy to a room. Guiding them takes patience and structure so their imagination can fly without turning into chaos. Suman Kumar built a practical pedagogical teaching approach around helping young people build confidence and work through emotions. Suman Kumar runs theater programs for children like in **Bhagalpur, under NCZCC Allahabad (North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture, Government of India)**. His children's theatre work spans professional stage productions, radio and television broadcasts, **UNICEF collaborations**, **NSD workshops with Delhi slum children**, and national festival selections - representing a complete parallel career in children's theatre running alongside his adult theatre work for three decades.
- **Historic First Performance of Bihar Gaurav Gaan (1997):** Directed the historic first-ever public performance of Bihar Gaurav Gaan at Gandhi Maidan in 1997. The landmark show brought **76 young boys and girls** together on stage.
- **Moin-ul-Haq Stadium Production:** Following that initial success, he staged a massive rendition of Bihar Gaurav Gaan featuring **130 youth performers** during the Union Football Match at **Moin-ul-Haq Stadium**.
- **Slum Children Workshops at NSD:** Taught drama and performance skills to children living in **Delhi slums** through workshops at the **National School of Drama**.
- **UNICEF Collaboration at Sonapur Mela:** Partnered with UNICEF at the historic Sonapur Mela, where he trained **50 slum children** and directed them in a public play.
- **Environmental Theatre in Bhagalpur:** Led an **NCZCC workshop** at Navodaya Vidyalaya for **50 child actors**. He staged Shyam Mohan Asthana's **Bargad Ka Shaap**, a play about human interaction with nature that **Doordarshan** later broadcast to a wider audience.
- **Continuous Youth Workshops:** Has run dedicated children's theatre programs **continuously since 1992**.
- **Kala Jagran Summer Camp:** Organized and directed summer camp annual program, leading interactive workshops and activities centered around theatre and the arts.

10. Awareness about government policies and schemes

- Suman Kumar and Kala Jagran have used street theatre to bring government awareness campaigns to communities that print media cannot reach.
- **UNICEF collaborations** on child rights including **Meena** plays promoting **girls' education, gender equality, proper health and sanitation, ending child labor, and fighting against child marriage**.
- Decade-long partnership with the **Bihar AIDS Control Society** across **50-plus districts** have been formally recognised by **UNICEF**.
- Senior activist and faculty member, **Bihar Art Theatre (UNESCO Bihar Centre)**, Patna - the **UNESCO-affiliated centre** for performing arts in Bihar, reflecting **international institutional recognition** of his standing in Indian theatre
- **More than 150 plays** were organised for educating people about the **census 2001 and 2011**.
- Awareness rallies for **Vitamin - A** about deficiencies and benefits across multiple years

- **Cancer and TB** awareness street plays
- Folk theatres and Nukkads (street plays) for **International Literacy Day** importance of literacy and education for individuals and communities.
- Spread IEC awareness in India using Information, Education, and Communication campaigns in association with **Govt. of Bihar** and **Song and Drama Division of Government of India** to share important knowledge, build positive habits, and teach communities about health, safety, and social welfare schemes.

11. Theatre as Lifelong Personal Service - Tan, Man, Dhan

- Suman Kumar has never treated theatre as a commercial enterprise. Every choice in his career reflects this. He declined a commission as **Second Lieutenant in the Indian Army**. He declined opportunities in **commercial cinema**. He spent **37 years at All India Radio** on a government announcer's salary while simultaneously building Bihar's theatre infrastructure **at personal expense**. He organised **three annual all-India festivals without commercial funding**. He ran **prison workshops, tribal workshops, and children's workshops** in communities that offered **no financial return whatsoever**.
- Most concretely: he **converted space inside his own home into a dedicated rehearsal hall and training facility** for young actors and children - bearing the **construction and maintenance cost entirely himself** - so that theatre workers in Patna would always have somewhere to work, rehearse, and train, **regardless of institutional support or government grants**.
- This is **tan, man, dhan** - body, mind, and personal resources - devoted without reservation to Bihar's cultural life for **over six decades**. It is **the thread that connects every other section of this document**.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS & HONORS

- **Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award (16 September 2023)** – Ministry of Culture, Government of India; conferred by Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar on the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, in recognition of **his exceptional lifelong contribution to Indian theatre**.
- **Lifetime Achievement Award (24 September 2025)** – Department of Art & Culture, Government of Bihar.
- **Bhikhari Thakur Saamaan – Senior (5 July 2014)** – Government of Bihar, for lifetime contribution to theatre and for his work in the Bhikhari Thakur Naach idiom.
- **Natya Bhushan (2001)** – Cuttack, Odisha, honouring him as an eminent theatre luminary and cultural personality (Olympiad 2001).
- **BBC Best Spot/Commercial Presenter Award (1999–2000)** – Organised by All India Radio, Patna; also recognised by **BBC World Service Trust & Prasar Bharati** for the **leprosy elimination media campaign**.
- **Pandararak Rang Samman (10 October 2011)** – Bihar, for lifetime contribution to theatre.
- **Sanskar Bharti Samman** – Pataliputra Sanskritik Chetna Samiti, Gurugram.
- **Bihar Art Theatre Samman (21 January 1997)** – Awarded during the Anil Kumar Mukherjee Birth Anniversary celebrations, for dedicated service to **Bihar Art Theatre (UNESCO Bihar Centre)**.
- **Pataliputra Samman / Patliputra Natya Mahotsav Sammaan (2016)** – Prangan, Patna, for lifetime contribution to theatre.
- **Natraj Kala Samman (23 February 2019)** – Nataraj Kala Mandir, Patna, at the 10th Natraj Utsav, for outstanding and extensive contribution to drama.
- **Yuva Sanskritik Mahotsav Recognition (1997)** – Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi, for direction of the production Parikalpana at Gandhi Maidan, Patna.
- **Sonepur Mela Sahabagita Praman-Patra (2001)** – Eastern Zone Cultural Centre & Directorate of Culture, for coordination and direction at the historic Sonepur Mela.
- Other honours: Lions Club, Patna (Art & Culture); Rotary Club, Patna Mid Town (Art & Culture); Indian Theatre Recipient recognition on multiple occasions; institutional felicitations recorded as Bihar Kala Samman and Lok Kala Samman.

RECOMMENDATIONS / COMMENDATIONS RECEIVED

Suman Kumar's candidature has drawn the support of senior figures in Indian arts and public life:

- Endorsed by **Shyam Sharma, Padma Shri** (honoured by the President of India) for lifetime service to the arts.
- Endorsed by **Anjani Kumar Singh, Former Chief Secretary Govt. of Bihar** who has seen the work closely in his tenure in various ministries as Art and Culture etc.
- Endorsed by **Shri Ramkripal Yadav, current Minister Govt. of Bihar and Former MP Govt. of India**
- Recommended by **Shatrughan Sinha, prominent actor and former Union minister**
- Recommended by **Anandi Prasad Badal, former Chairman, Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi**, for the Lifetime Achievement Award in Performing Arts.
- Recommended by **Devendra Raj Ankur, former Director National School of Drama (NSD)**
- **R N Dash, IAS (Retd.), Social and Cultural Activist**, Patna, wrote a formal recommendation dated 30 October 2012
- Official Patronage & Commendations **Sukhada Pandey, Former Minister Dept. of Art, Culture and Youth**
- Official Patronage & Commendations **Giriraj Singh, Union Minister, Govt. of India**
- Official Patronage & Commendations **Sushil Kumar Modi, Padma Bhushan, ex Deputy CM Bihar** and former Rajya Sabha Member
- Official Patronage & Commendations **Devanand Konwar, former Governor**
- Official Patronage & Commendations **K.P. Ramaiah, former Principal Secretary** of the SC & ST Department , Govt of Bihar.
- The names listed above represent only a fraction of the formal recommendations, awards, citations, and appreciations that Suman Kumar has received over a career spanning nearly seven decades. His work has touched every level of Indian artistic and public life - from grassroots cultural movements to the highest institutional and governmental platforms - reflecting a recognition that is as wide as it is deep.
- What distinguishes this candidature is not merely the number of endorsements, but the **exceptional stature and diversity** of those who have offered them. **Padma awardees, senior IAS officers, sitting and former Union Ministers, elected representatives, and heads of India's foremost cultural institutions** have all arrived at the same conclusion independently - that **Suman Kumar's lifetime of service to Indian arts is deserving of the nation's highest recognition**. Few nominees can claim a body of support that **so completely and authentically represents the artistic, administrative, legislative, and civil society conscience of the country**. This is not coincidence - it is the natural consequence of a life lived entirely in devotion to India's cultural soul.

ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS: DIRECTION & PRODUCTION

Suman Kumar has directed **more than 300 stage plays** and **over 170 productions** in total across radio and television - in **Hindi, Magadhi, Bhojpuri, and Maithili**, four distinct theatrical traditions each with its own idiom and performance conventions - for Kala Jagran, Bihar Art Theatre, Prangan, Kala Sangam, All India Radio, Doordarshan, and other cultural groups. This **multilingual directorial range, sustained over 64 years, is unmatched by any contemporary in Bihar's theatre history**

Notable Directed Productions

Andha Yug (Based Mahabharata by Dharamveer Bharti), **Urvashi**(by Ramdhari Singh Dinkar), Tamrapatra, Ret ki Deewar, Modern Anarkali(Radio play also performed on stage), **Jhopadi Sulag Gayil** (Bhojpuri), **Phansri** (Maithili written by Bhavnath Jha), **Babuji Ka Passbook** (by Madhukar Singh, more than **25 shows** in various places as Ranchi, Jaipur Patna), Shikha, Swatantrata Ki Pukar (realism), Ek Aur Suryast, Fauji Chacha, **Toofan Singh** (Magadhi), Sikka(by Mamta Mehrotra), Naya Sabera, Bibiyon Ki Hadtal, Jo Kitabon Mein Nahin Hai, Pujari Kaka, Pattharkat, Sannaha, Lakshman Rekha, Bedhab Thanedar, **Sikandar Porus**, Karagar, Narsingha, **Amrapali**, Baje Dhindhora, Amali, Peer Ali, Tatya, **Chanakya**, Nar Danka, Madhvi, Kankal, Makan, Kalankani, Shivaji, **Arawali Ka Sher** (Maharana Pratap), Hakimaen Ka Nuskha, Kabutari, Raavan, Gopa (based on Yashodhara wife of Lord Buddha)

Latest Directed Productions

Khamosh Adalat Jaari Hai, Vadhsthal Se Chhalang Hai, Parinda Ud Gaya, Sur Sundari, Aks, Safar, Tukdon Tukdon Mein Aurat, Chori, Ghoos, Naya Bangla, **Gandhi Ke Charan Champaran Mein**, **Bunkar Ki Beti** (Patna and **New Delhi**) - also performed at **Samarsata Hall, New Delhi** - October 2022 (Sanatan Jagriti Manch) and **Bihar Diwas - 23 March 2023** (Bihar Sarkar) , Abhagi Ka Swarg, **Dharti Aaba** (Patna and **Ranchi**), Dayan (Bhojpuri), Vo Ab Vi Pukarta Hai, Patliputra Ka Rajkumar, Urwashi, Mai Yahi Hoon, Durga Bhabhi, Shri Krishna, Gaath, Baap Re Baap, Ravan, Sagun, Nayaka Pokhra, Binodini, Sadagati, Ninyanve Ka Pher, Gotya Ko Bacha Lo, **Lanchan** (Adaptation of Munshi Premchand).

Children's Plays Directed (Doordarshan, AIR & Stage)

Halla Gulla, Beti Aaye Hai, Naya Sabera, Vardan Ka Pher, **Meena (13 episodes** broadcast across **all AIR stations in Bihar** under the **Bal Mandali programme**), Satyawadi Chauraha, and others.

His production **Zaruraat Issi Ki Thee**, confronting **child trafficking and child labour exploitation**, was **selected by the National School of Drama (NSD), New Delhi**, for its prestigious national children's theatre festival **Jashn-e-Bachpan - one of the highest recognitions available to a children's theatre production in India**, confirming the national-level artistic and social significance of his children's theatre work.

Notable Documentaries and teleseries

Created multiple documentaries which include Mata Mundeshwari, Rohtas Ka Qila, Shershah ka Rauza for the Tourism Department , Govt. of Bihar to showcase the rich history and promote tourism. Specially mentioned by Doordarshan for the Bihar Ka Gauravshali Parv Chhath documentary which is a 4 day unique, eco-friendly festival dedicated to thanking the Sun God for life on Earth

Other Directorial Milestones

- Directed numerous plays for AIR's popular national programme **Hawa Mahal**, including a widely-heard production on the life of **Bhagat Singh still played on Vividh Bharti, Mumbai**.
- Directed and performed **Aur Chudiyen Jhanjhana Uthi** - a radio play celebrating **women freedom fighters of India** - for **All India Radio**; a rare broadcast work using the medium of radio drama specifically for women's empowerment and historical recognition of female freedom fighters, reaching AIR's mass rural listenership across Bihar.
- Bihar ki Lupt Hoti Sanskriti**, a **13-episode documentary feature** on Bihar's vanishing folk culture written by Vishudhanand, broadcast on All India Radio - **one of the earliest systematic audio documentations of Bihar's endangered cultural traditions**.
- Produced **Kaka Ki Potli**, a **100-plus episode AIDS-awareness radio series** for CBS Radio, Patna.
- Adapted Phanishwar Nath Renu's Maila Aanchal and Sudraka's Mrichhakatikam (staged as Maati Gaadi), touring several states.
- Conceptualised and directed the **first-ever performance of Bihar Gaurav Gaan** at the **Youth Cultural Festival 1997**, Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Govt. of Bihar; the piece has since been staged **nearly 2,000 times**.
- Co-directed and served as Technical Director for folk stage dance during Bihar Diwas, Department of Industries, Govt. of Bihar, at Pragati Maidan, since 1998.
- Directed the play “**Hatyarin**” at **Kalidas Ranganalaya** during the **National Rabindranath Tagore Festival (2011)**, supported by the **Ministry of Culture , Government of India**.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi - three separate commissions:
 - Vidroha - March 2019 - Kalidas Ranganalaya, Patna
 - Nayaka Pokhra - 30 May 2022 - Kalidas Ranganalaya, Patna - SNA Pradarshan Kala Utsav
 - Gaanth - 14 August 2023 - Kalidas Ranganalaya, Patna - SNA Pradarshan Kala Utsav

Additionally - Baap Re Baap directed by Suman Kumar performed at Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi - 5 October 2023.

- Directed **Madhavi** at the **Kolkata Multilingual Theatre Festival**, organised by the **Eastern Zone Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata**, Ministry of Culture, Government of India (March 2018) - representing Bihar's theatre at a national multilingual platform and confirming continued engagement with India's foremost cultural institutions well into his seventh decade.

ACTING EXPERIENCE

Acted in more than **200 major stage plays** and over **1,000 street plays** across **Hindi, Magadhi, Bhojpuri and Maithili**.

As Actor with Kala Sangam

Andha Yug, Marjeeva, Khamosh Adalat Jaari Hai, Ashadh Ka Ek Din, Thehra Hua Pani, Ballabpur Ki Roopkatha, Julos, Lebron Ke Rajhans, Godan, Ek Tha Gadha, Amrapali, Aur Tota Bola, Oedipus Rex, Tamrapatra, Dilli Ooncha Sunti Hai, Chor Ke Ghar Mor, Jan Shatru, Singhasan Khali Hai, Kisi Ek Phool Ka Naam Lo, Pagla Ghoda, Do Kaudi Ka Khel, Tughlaq (as Aziz, 1976 production), Jaat Hi Poochho Sadhu Ki, Amali, and others.

Popularly referred to as the “**Samrat**” (**Emperor**) of acting in modern Hindi, Magadhi, Bhojpuri and Maithili theatre, and as a **theatre trendsetter**; renowned for **pioneering the use of Bhikhari Thakur's Naach format within a modern theatrical idiom**.

Street Theatre

Performed in and directed **more than 1,000 street plays**. Delivered **over 150 presentations of Julius** by **Badal Sarkar** at different locations. Directed **over 150 Nukkad plays for Census 2001**, work that was well appreciated by senior officials, along with Nukkad plays creating awareness on elections, health and education.

FILMS AND TELEVISION SERIALS

Suman Kumar's work extended beyond Bihar's stages and airwaves into **nationally and internationally distributed cinema and television**. He appeared in some of the **most significant productions of Indian cinema and television of the 20th century**, and served as **Assistant Director** on two **Prakash Jha** films - **Damul** (**National Film Award winner**) and **Vidroha**.

- Discovery of India (Bharat Ek Khoj)** – Director: **Shyam Benegal** (based on **Jawaharlal Nehru's** book, spanning **5,000 years of Indian history**).
- Mirza Ghalib** – Director: **Gulzar**.
- Gandhi** – Director: **Richard Attenborough** (**Academy Award-winning** biographical film).
- Damul** – Director: **Prakash Jha** (**National Film Award winner**, on bonded labour in Bihar), Acted in the film and served as **Assistant Director**.
- Vidroha** – Director: **Prakash Jha** (based on **Babu Kunwar Singh**), Served as **Assistant Director**.
- Bheem Bhawani** – Director: **Basu Chatterjee / Bishamber Khanna**.
- Ek Kahani** – Directors: **Manju Singh and Mujadeed Rahim**.
- Adhikar** – Directors: **Manju Singh and Mujadeed Rahim**.
- Khan-e-Khana** – Director: **Mujadeed Rahim**.
- Mehnat Aur Manzil – Bihar's first documentary drama**; Director: **Braj Bhushan**.
- Lohe Ke Pankh** – Director: **Girish Ranjan**; Co-Director/Chief Assistant Director: **Suman Kumar**.
- Hamar Devdas** – Director: **Kiran Kant Sharma**.
- Bhojpuri films**: **Beti Sada Suhagan Rah**, **Lakhera**, **Saiya Driver Biwi Khalasi**, and **Lagal Nathuniya Ke Dakkha**.
- Doordarshan Telefilms**: **Doordarshan Directorial Work**: Directed Telefilms including **Satyawadi**, **Chauraha**, **Bargad ka saarp**, and served as **Episode Director** for **Lal Haveli**.

MEDIA, FILM & BROADCASTING CAREER

Over **37 years at All India Radio**, retiring in **2007** as **senior-most Announcer and Presenter of AIR Patna**. Career highlights include:

- Direction and acting in **more than 100 radio plays**, and **over 500 radio plays/features** across languages, including several in the acclaimed **Hawa Mahal** series.
- Presented Yuvvani Patra-Uttar, Khel Parikrama (sports programme), Geeto Bhari Kahani, and live coverage for Guru Govind Singh Jayanti, Chhath, and various sports events.
- Hosted Aap Ki Farmaish, a request programme where listeners requested songs via letters and phone-ins.
- Acted as **Khaderan** in the popular Bhojpuri series **Loha Singh**, written by **Rameshwar Singh Kashyap**, using the show to raise **rural awareness against liquor and drug abuse**.
- Took Akashvani Patna teams to multiple stations for special-occasion productions, including the Akashvani Jodhpur anniversary.
- Radio plays like Modern Anarkali, Bhookh Hartal were also performed on stage in Suman Kumar's guidance and direction
- Served as an 'A' grade drama voice and news reader for Doordarshan Kendra, Patna.
- Served as **non-sports commentator** for **Bihar Gauravshali Parv Chhath (30-plus years)** and the **Guru Gobind Singh** birth anniversary commemorations at the **Gurudwara (15-plus years)**.
- During the **1975 Patna floods**, when the AIR Patna building was submerged, he made his way **by boat and by swimming** to the isolated **Fatuha and Jethuli transmission centres** and kept emergency broadcasts running for **roughly 70 hours without food**, so that stranded citizens could receive life-saving information. In **1977**, when the same transmitters were threatened again, he returned and stayed on-site for **three days**. His account of those hours was covered in Hindustan newspaper's retrospective on his career.

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE & JUDGING ROLES

Affiliations and Memberships

- **Founding Member, Kala Sangam, Patna (1966).**
- **Founding Secretary, Kala Jagran, Patna** – founded in 1990, and currently its Secretary.
- Senior activist and faculty member, **Bihar Art Theatre (UNESCO Bihar Centre)**.
- Stage Representative, AIR Announcers Association, Bihar.
- **Former Executive Member (two terms), Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi; Jury Member, Award Committee, Department of Culture, Government of Bihar** - both roles reflecting peer recognition of his standing within Bihar's highest cultural governance bodies.
- Jury Member, Award Committee, Department of Culture, Govt. of Bihar.
- **Member, State Cultural Screening Committee (2009)** : Appointed by **Department of Art, Culture & Youth, Govt. of Bihar**, as an expert committee member to evaluate and screen artist troupes for state sponsored programs.
- **Red Ribbon Express Expert Panel (2008)**: Nominated by **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sanghatan (NYKS), Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India**, to a **3-member national expert committee - one of only three individuals selected from across India** - to evaluate and select cultural troupes for the **Red Ribbon Express**, the **national HIV/AIDS awareness campaign train**. This national-level appointment reflects the Government of India's recognition of his expertise in theatre-based public health communication. The Red Ribbon Express campaign performances are documented in Kala Jagran's production register - with specific entries for street plays at **Samastipur Railway Station, Manair, Danapur, Bikram, Naubatpur, and Phulwari** in February 2008, commissioned by Geet Evam Natak Prabhaag, Ranchi.

Judging Assignments

- **Youth Festival, Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Govt. of Bihar** (multiple years, including **2005 Inter-State Youth Festival**).

- **All India Civil Services Theatre Festival, Patna** (from **2001**, for many years).
- Inter-College Theatre Festival, Magadh University, Bodh Gaya (multiple years).
- Inter-College Theatre Festival, Patna Medical College Hospital (multiple years).
- Inter-College festivals at IIT Patna.
- Inter-School One Act Play Festival, Ravi Bharti, Patna (multiple years).
- English Play Festival, St. Xavier's School, Patna.
- Inter-College Mime and Cultural Activities Festival, PMCH, Patna.
- **24th All India Postal Cultural Meet (2009–2010)**: Nominated as Judge by the **Chief Postmaster General, Department of Posts, Govt. of India**.
- **State Talent Search "Pratibha Khoj" (2003)**: Nominated as official **Jury Member** by **Bhartiya Nritya Kala Mandir** for classical music/dance and folk drama.
- **District Level Science Drama Competition (2010)**: Served as **Chief Judge** under the **State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Bihar**.

Teaching and Mentorship

- **Faculty for Acting, Voice & Speech**, first- and second-year regular course, **Bihar Institute of Dramatics**, a unit of **Bihar Art Theatre, Patna**; helped **expand student intake** at the institute **from 30 to 60**, bringing **more women into mainstream training**.
- **Visiting Faculty and Camp Director, Children's Theatre Workshop, Bhagalpur**, organised by **NCZCC Allahabad** (North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture, Government of India)
- Trained a large number of amateur theatre groups and has been a guiding force for young enthusiasts in dramatics for over 15 years.

THEATRE FESTIVAL ORGANISATION & CURATION

- **Organiser and Chief Coordinator, All India Historical Theatre Festival** (Akhil Bhartiya Aitihashik Natya Mahotsav)— **since 2008**, drawing artists from across India including **Manipur**(Kondu based on Manipur's history), **Delhi** and **Uttar Pradesh**; attended by figures such as **Devendra Raj Ankur, former Director, NSD**. - happening for **16 years**. The **only all-India festival in India dedicated exclusively to historical drama**, celebrating freedom fighters, epics, monuments, and historical figures through theatre.
Some notable plays include Shivaji, Karagar, Peer Ali(famous freedom fighter from Bihar), Sher Shah Suri, Siraj ud daulah, Samrat Ashok, Kaalsarpini, Sikander Porus, Bhamashah (staged by artists from New Delhi), Chanakya (based on the teacher of Chandragupta Maurya), Auranzeb ki Aakhri Raat (Gurgaon Haryana), Aravali ka Sher (based on Maharani Pratap by Suman kumar), Aurat Ki Jung (in Naatch Shaili) etc.
- **Organising Secretary and Chief Coordinator, Hasya Natya Mahotsav (Comedy Theatre Festival)** – since **2013**, attended by Satish Anand (2017) etc - happening for **10 years**. A **rare dedicated all-India platform for comedy theatre**, a genre routinely excluded from serious theatre festivals
Some notable plays include tajmahal ke Tender, Babuji Ka Passbook, 99 ka phera etc
- **Organising Secretary and Chief Coordinator, Aadi Shakti Natya Mahotsav** (based on women's empowerment) – since **2015**, attended by notable personalities such as Pyare Mohan Rai (NSD student from 1st Batch) happening for **11 years**. An all-India festival using theatre **specifically as an instrument of women's empowerment**, staging plays in **Hindi, Bhojpuri, and Maithili** on gender equality, women's rights, and female agency
Some notable plays include - Tukdo Tukdo mein Aurat, Bunkar ki Beti, Makaan, Daayin, Paiswa Bairi ho rama (bhojpuri play written by Ashok Sinha)

COORDINATION, LEADERSHIP & TECHNICAL DIRECTION

- Programme Presenter, Bihar Cultural Group at Apna Utsav, organised by NCZCC Allahabad, in Delhi, 1981.
- Member, Expert Committee, Folk Festival Arts and Tableau showcasing Bihar's culture, at Gandhi Maidan, Patna, on Independence Day and Republic Day.

- Announcer and Presenter for Vaishali and Rajgir Mahotsav, Bihar, on several occasions.
- Coordinator, Bihar Folk Inter-State Cultural Conference, Varanasi and Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh).
- **Chief Trainer, Children's Theatre Workshop** organised by NCZCC at Niyug Vidyalaya, Bhagalpur, 1996, through the **Government of Bihar**.
- Camp Director, Programme Presenter and Choreographer, Youth Festival 1997, Cultural Department of Bihar; Coordinator and Choreographer of Yuva Lok Utsav on multiple occasions.
- Coordinator/Technical Director, Bihar's cultural troupe at Government Bihar Diwas programmes, multiple years.
- **Workshop Coordinator**, theatre workshop organised by **EZCC Kolkata** with the **Cultural Department, Govt. of Bihar**, on the post-independence situation in **Purnea, 1998**.
- **Director, Madhavi** - performed at the **Kolkata Multilingual Theatre Festival**, organised by the **Eastern Zone Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata** (March 2018) - representing Bihar's theatre at a national multilingual platform under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- **Visiting Director, Tribal Theatre Workshop, Ranchi, Jharkhand**.
- Prepared and staged plays for **Inter-State Cultural Conferences** in **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Mumbai and Delhi**.
- **Technical Director, Indo-Russian Dance Festival**, organised by **Govt. of Bihar**.
- **Choreographer, Bihar Gaurav Gaan**, at the **Karpoori Thakur Gold Cup, Asian Junior Football Tournament, Kala Sanskritik Yatra, Junior All India Badminton Tournament**, and other occasions.
- Choreographer, Folk Festival, cultural events of the Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Govt. of Bihar.
- Theatre workshop trainer and coordinator for various street and theatre workshops, for UNICEF, Bihar State AIDS Control Society, Sangeet Natak Akademi, and other organisations.

THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Theatre as a **Parallel Public Service Infrastructure**: Over six decades, Suman Kumar and Kala Jagran built what amounts to a **parallel civic education and public health infrastructure** using theatre as the primary delivery mechanism - reaching communities across **50-plus districts of Bihar** that print media, television, and government campaigns could not access alone. The campaigns span: **HIV/AIDS awareness (50-plus districts, UNICEF-recognised); Census 2001 and 2011 (150-plus nukkad plays); Vitamin A deficiency awareness; Cancer and TB awareness; International Literacy Day; Swachh Bharat; election awareness; IEC campaigns with the Song and Drama Division, Government of India; and child rights campaigns including the Meena series broadcast across all AIR stations in Bihar**.

- **UNICEF Partnership**: Decade-long partnership with **UNICEF** and the **Bihar AIDS Control Society** across **50-plus districts** - formally recognised by UNICEF. The **Lok Natya Prashikshan Karyashala** - confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register - ran for **20-plus consecutive daily workshops** at Panchayat Bhawan, Patna (September–October 2008), establishing a sustained training infrastructure rather than occasional performances. Partnered with UNICEF at the **Sonepur Mela (4 December 1999)** - confirmed in the production register, commissioned by **Lok Swasthya Abhiyantan Vibhag, Bihar Sarkar** - training **50 underprivileged children** for a live public performance. Created **Meena - 13 episodes broadcast across all AIR stations in Bihar** - promoting girls' education, gender equality, proper health and sanitation, ending child labour and fighting child marriage. Created socially-themed children's plays for **Doordarshan** and **AIR**, including **Naya Sabera** and **Beti Aaye Hai**.
- **IEC Jagrukta Abhiyan - Song and Drama Division, Ranchi**: Conducted **20-plus awareness performances** across **Ramgarh, Masaudi and surrounding areas of Jharkhand** (August–November 2006) - commissioned by the **Geet Evam Natak Prabhaag (Song and Drama Division), Government of India, Ranchi** - confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register with specific village, block and district venues. Confirms formal, sustained national government partnership for public health and civic communication extending beyond Bihar into Jharkhand.
- **Natak Evam Nritya Prashikshan Karyashala - Ministry of Culture, Government of India (November 2017)**: Conducted a national theatre and dance training workshop - confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register - commissioned by the **Ministry of Culture, Government of India**, at **Vidya Bihar High School, Kumhrar, Patna**, establishing continued national government commissioning of his training expertise well into his seventh decade.

Ministry of Culture, Government of India - **festival of five productions commissioned at Kalidas Rangalaya, Patna - August 2021** - including 99 Ka Fera directed by Suman Kumar

- **Women's Empowerment:** Staged plays such as **Gopa** and **Amrapali**, and ran dedicated street theatre programmes on gender equality. Directed **Aur Chudiyan Jhanjhana Uthi** - a radio play celebrating **women freedom fighters of India** - for All India Radio. Organised the **Aadi Shakti Natya Mahotsav** - running **11 consecutive years** - as an annual all-India festival using theatre specifically as an instrument of women's empowerment, staging plays in **Hindi, Bhojpuri and Maithili** on gender equality, women's rights and female agency.
- **HIV/AIDS awareness:** decade-long partnership with the **Bihar AIDS Control Society** across **50-plus districts**; produced the **100-episode radio series Kaka Ki Potli** for AIDS awareness.
 - **State Facilitator for Street Theatre (2015):** Invited by the **Bihar State AIDS Control Society (BSACS), Department of Health, Govt. of Bihar**, to serve as State Facilitator for training street play troupes in public health advocacy.
- Social justice and advocacy: theatre initiatives addressing caste discrimination and communal harmony; directed the award-recognised **Zarurat Isi Ki Thee** on child trafficking.
- **Census Awareness:** Directed and coordinated a **systematic city-wide Census 2001 campaign**- documented in Kala Jagran's production register- comprising **30-plus street plays across 20-plus locations in Patna in a single month** (January–February 2001), including Patna Museum, Gandhi Maidan, Boring Road, Gardanibagh Stadium, Nalanda Medical College, and Jaivik Udyan, commissioned by Janganpana Parichaalan, Bihar. A similar campaign was conducted for **Census 2011**. Total: **150-plus nukkad** plays for Census awareness, appreciated by senior government officials, work appreciated by senior government officials, along with Nukkad (street) plays on elections, health, and education.
 - Street theatre repertoire: Delivered over 150 presentations of **Julus** by Badal Sarkar at different locations across Bihar.
 - Swachh Bharat: Directed and coordinated Swachh Bharat awareness programmes and street plays.
- Co-organised the **Matdata Jagrukta Abhiyan** (election awareness campaign) across **15-plus Patna locations** in partnership with **Dainik Jagran** (April–May 2009) - confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register - including Biskohamaan, Kurji Mod, Patliputra, Kargil Chowk, Mauryalok, Patna Station, Kankadwag, Gandhi Maidan, Lohiya Udyan and Mahendru.
- **Outreach to marginalised groups: tribal theatre workshop in Ranchi;** theatre training for the Sangeet Natak Akademi.
- **Prison rehabilitation:** workshops and productions at **Muzaffarpur Jail, Beur Jail (Patna)** and Buxar Jail (see Significant Contributions above).
- **Jal Jeevan Hariyali Environmental Awareness Campaign** - commissioned by **Van Vibhag (Forest Department), Government of Bihar** - over **100 street play performances** across **9 Bihar districts** (Jamui, Munger, Banka, Lakhisaray, Nawada, Nalanda, Sheikhpura, Begusaray, Aurangabad) - **February–March 2020** - confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register. Campaign repeated in 2021 - confirming sustained government commissioning for environmental and water conservation awareness.
- **COVID-19 Public Health Response (2021)** - directed **Ko.Tika Jagrookta Geet** (vaccination awareness) and **Ko.Mask Jagrookta Geet** (mask awareness) - broadcast via **Jan-Jan Dhwani Prachar** public address systems across Bihar - **7 dates across April and May 2021** - commissioned by **Care India / Kala Jagran** - reaching mass audiences during national lockdown when physical theatre was impossible.

PRESERVING THE BHIKHARI THAKUR LEGACY

Suman Kumar's productions of **Bhikhari Thakur's Naach tradition - Bidesiya and Londa Nach** - have reached over **100,000 audience members** across **Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh**, keeping the **original movement, musical cadence, and narrative structure intact** rather than diluting it for modern audiences. **Bhikhari Thakur**, often called the **Shakespeare of Bhojpuri**, created a Naach format whose work is **recognised by the Government of India as part of Bihar's intangible cultural heritage**. Suman Kumar has directed and performed Thakur's work across Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, reaching an estimated 100,000-plus audience members, while keeping the original movement, musical cadence and narrative structure intact rather than modernising it into a generic stage format. He also

directs **Thakur's Natch Party folk plays specifically for children**, to pass the tradition to younger performers, and has **revived lesser-known Bhikhari Thakur plays in its original Bhojpuri dialect**.

Alongside his stage work, Suman Kumar directed **Bihar ki Lupt Hoti Sanskriti** - a **13-episode documentary feature on Bihar's vanishing folk culture**, written by Vishudhanand and broadcast on **All India Radio** - representing **one of the earliest systematic audio documentations of Bihar's endangered cultural traditions**. This documentary series, predating most institutional archiving efforts, ensures that folk forms facing extinction are preserved in the national broadcast archive - a contribution to cultural preservation that extends beyond performance into permanent record.

MEDIA COVERAGE & ARCHIVAL RECORDS

Suman Kumar's 64-year career is one of the most extensively documented in Bihar's performing arts history. **Coverage spans Hindi and English print media, national and regional television, All India Radio broadcasts, digital platforms, and institutional archival records** - with **consistent, unsolicited documentation** across every decade from the **1960s to the present**.

Print Media - National and Regional

Hindustan (Hindi daily):

- **Multi-part interview series** covering his **street theatre work**, his **revival of Bhikhari Thakur's Naach forms** in modern theatrical context, and his **prison rehabilitation programmes at Muzaffarpur Jail and Beur Jail**
- Feature coverage of his direction of Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's *Urvashi* in Munger
- Civic commentary and cultural analysis pieces around Chhath Mahaparv
- **Retrospective coverage** of his **1975 flood emergency broadcast service**

Dainik Jagran:

- Feature coverage of the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award (2023)**
- Coverage of theatre productions and festival events across multiple years
- **Co-organiser of the Matdata Jagrukta Abhiyan** (election awareness campaign, 2009) - confirmed in Kala Jagran's production register - establishing Dainik Jagran's direct partnership in civic awareness campaigns

Live Hindustan:

- Feature on the Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award (2023)
- Coverage of theatre productions and cultural initiatives

Aaryavarta:

- 1997 profile documenting his career and cultural contributions at the time of Bihar Gaurav Gaan's first performance

Prabhat Khabar, Navbharat Times, and other regional Hindi dailies:

- Regular coverage of productions, festival events, street theatre campaigns, and institutional recognitions across multiple years

Coverage has been generated by virtually every major production, festival, and social initiative - including Bihar Gaurav Gaan performances, the All India Historical Theatre Festival (16 years of annual coverage), the Hasya Natya Mahotsav, the Aadi Shakti Natya Mahotsav, UNICEF street theatre campaigns, prison rehabilitation workshops, children's theatre productions, and each major award and recognition received.

Television and Broadcast Media

ETV Bharat:

- Report on the seven-day theatre festival at Kalidas Ranganalaya, Patna

Doordarshan Kendra, Patna:

- Broadcast of *Bargad Ka Shaap* - environmental children's play directed by Suman Kumar with 50 child actors at Navodaya Vidyalaya, Bhagalpur
- Broadcast of *Bihar Ka Gauravshali Parv Chhath* documentary - specially mentioned by Doordarshan
- Broadcast of telefilms *Satyawadi*, *Chauraha*, and *Bargad Ka Saarp* directed by Suman Kumar
- Broadcast of *Lal Haveli* (episode direction)

- Broadcast of documentaries on Mata Mundeshwari, Rohtas Ka Qila, and Shershah Ka Rauza for the Tourism Department, Government of Bihar

All India Radio - National Broadcast:

- **Hawa Mahal** production on the life of Bhagat Singh - **still broadcast on Vividh Bharti, Mumbai**, decades after its original production, representing **one of the longest-running archival broadcasts of any AIR Patna production**
- Bihar ki Lupt Hoti Sanskriti - 13-episode documentary feature on Bihar's vanishing folk culture, broadcast on All India Radio
- **Meena - 13-episode children's series** broadcast across **all AIR stations in Bihar** under the Bal Mandali programme
- **Kaka ki Potli - 100-plus episode** AIDS-awareness radio drama series, CBS Radio Patna
- **Live Chhath Mahaparv commentary** broadcast - **30-plus continuous years**
- **Live Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti commentary** from **Takht Sri Patna Sahib - 15-plus continuous years**

Digital and Online Presence

Website: kalajagran.com - active website documenting productions, festivals, social initiatives, and institutional work

YouTube: Kala Jagran channel - video documentation of stage productions, festival events, street theatre campaigns, and cultural programmes

Institutional profiles: kalajagran.com and biharart.org maintain detailed career records including production histories, awards, and institutional affiliations

Archival and Institutional Records

National School of Drama records: Selection of Zaruraat Issi Ki Thee for Jashne Bachpan festival, New Delhi - documented in NSD's official festival records, Lo Aa Gayi Vaapas Sone Ki Chidiyaan - performed at NSD, New Delhi - 21 February 2024, Patliputra Ka Rajkumar - NSD collaboration - 15 February 2025

Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi: Official records of two terms as Executive Member and Jury Member, Award Committee

Government of Bihar, Department of Art, Culture and Youth: Official records of Bihar Gaurav Gaan commissions, Youth Festival 1997, State Cultural Screening Committee appointment (2009), and Lifetime Achievement Award (2025)

Ministry of Culture, Government of India: Official records of Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award (2023), conferred by Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar

NYKS, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports: Official records of Red Ribbon Express Expert Panel nomination (2008)

Bihar State AIDS Control Society: Official records of State Facilitator for Street Theatre appointment (2015) and decade-long partnership across 50-plus districts - formally recognised by UNICEF

NCZCC Allahabad and EZCC Kolkata: Official records of workshop coordination and direction assignments Eastern Zone Cultural Centre, Kolkata: Sonapur Mela Sahabagita Praman-Patra (2001) - official citation for coordination and direction

Department of Posts, Government of India: Official nomination records for 24th All India Postal Cultural Meet (2009–2010)

SCERT Bihar: Official records of Chief Judge appointment, District Level Science Drama Competition (2010)

Kala Jagran Annual Production Register (1995–2026): Kala Jagran maintains a complete annual production register documenting every performance, workshop, and campaign conducted since its founding - with production title, author, director, date, venue, and organising institution recorded for each entry. This register, spanning 31 years of continuous

activity, constitutes one of the most comprehensive institutional performance archives maintained by any theatre organisation in Bihar. It confirms, with specific dates and venues, the following at documentary level:

- **Census 2001 campaign:** 30-plus street plays across 20-plus Patna locations in a single month (January–February 2001), commissioned by Jaganpana Parichaalan, Bihar
- **Red Ribbon Express campaign (February 2008):** Street plays at Samastipur, Manair, Danapur, Bikram, Naubatpur, and Phulwari railway stations - commissioned by Geet Evam Natak Prabhaag, Ranchi
- **UNICEF Lok Natya Prashikshan Karyashala:** 20-plus consecutive daily workshops at Panchayat Bhawan, Patna (September–October 2008) - commissioned by UNICEF
- **IEC Jagrukta Abhiyan (Song and Drama Division, Ranchi):** 20-plus performances across Ramgarh, Masaudi, and surrounding areas (August–November 2006)
- **Muzaffarpur Jail workshop:** Confirmed in register - Naatya Prashikshan Karyashala, Kendriya Kaara, Muzaffarpur, April–May 2008 - commissioned by Kala Sanskriti Yuva Vibhag, Bihar Sarkar
- All India Historical Theatre Festival: Annual entries confirmed from **2008 through 2025-** including **16th edition 2025-** with named productions, directors, and venues
- Hasya Natya Mahotsav and Aadi Shakti Natya Mahotsav: Annual entries confirmed from 2016 through 2025- both festivals confirmed active in current year
- **Kolkata Multilingual Theatre Festival (EZCC):** Madhavi directed by Suman Kumar, March 2018
- **Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi:** Multiple commissioned productions including Vidroha (March 2019)
- **Geographic reach:** Confirmed performances in Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi, Kolkata, Agra, Bhopal, Haryana, and Odisha

Scale of Documentation

The volume of media coverage generated across Suman Kumar's career is proportional to the scale and consistency of his work. Every major production across **64 years** - from **Amrapali** in the 1960s to **Dharti Aaba, Bairi Paiswa Ho Ram** in recent years - generated press coverage. Every annual festival across **16, 10, and 11 years** respectively generated annual coverage. Every major award generated national and regional features. Every social campaign - AIDS awareness, Census, Swachh Bharat, UNICEF child rights - generated coverage in the outlets serving the community. The result is a body of documentation that **spans six decades**, covers every dimension of his work, and provides **independent third-party verification of every significant claim in this nomination.**

Place: Patna
(SUMAN KUMAR)