

Baapya: A tale of acceptance

A dramatic comedy film about a transman starring Girish Kulkarni is featured at PIFF 2026

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“Baapya is about accepting someone as they are irrespective of their gender and social background,” expressed director Sameer Tewari at the 24th Pune International Film Festival (PIFF). He was speaking after the screening of his Marathi film Baapya. The film has been selected at PIFF in Marathi competition category.

Baapya is a film that fearlessly explores the sensitive journey of a mother who undergoes a sex change and returns to her son after a decade-long absence. It is a tale of Shailaja played by Rajashri Deshpande, ex-wife of the protagonist Anyaa played by Girish Kulkarni and mother of a son, who returns after a decade as Dr Shailesh Patil, a man. A series of dramatic yet comic events follow suit, making it a film that speaks an important issues around gender and transmen as well as entertains the audience at the same time.

Lead actor Rajshri Deshpande, while speaking about the film and the charecters said, “I met several transmen as part of the prepartion for the film and understood the pain and suffering they experience. I salute their courage and resilience. I also wanted to portray the happiness that they get after they achieve the full transition. It was demanding yet a very satysying experience.”

Girish Kulkarni while speaking about his lead character Anyaa, said, “He is sensitive, yet confused, he is a normal person with a big heart and takes on journey towards acceptance of a transman as his family member. It was truly an emotional rollercoaster to play this character.”

Sohla: A story of inherited struggles

Along with Bapya, another story that portrays transition in a most humae way is titled Sohla. Filmmaker Saaikat Bagbaan’s debut Marathi film has been featured in the category of Marathi Cinema Today.

The film has dealt with creative depiction of journey of lower middle class farmer family that centers on a school-going boy, an ardent Salman Khan admirer, who lives within a carefree world of innocence and fleeting joys. Unaware of life’s deeper cruelties, his days are shaped by imagination and youthful optimism. A sudden disruption forces him to confront adulthood prematurely, shouldering responsibilities meant for a grown man. At its heart, the film reflects a poignant shift from innocence to quiet resilience.

Directed Bagbaan said, “The real struggles are silent, and go unnoticed in the everyday life. A transition from a boy to a man with responsibilities is one such struggle.” He further added that his film symbolized how responsibilities are often inherited too early, how dreams are postponed, and how survival becomes instinctive rather than aspirational.