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Interview of Cine Artist Dada Salvi of Marathi Cinema

Interviewer : You have completed 75 years of your life. You will be entering the 76th year this December.

Dada Salvi : Yes

Interviewer : So, 3/4th of a Century is over

Dada Salvi : Yes

Interviewer : You started your career in silent films

Dada Salvi : Yes

Interviewer : But before considering your film career, please tell us about your family background. Your birth, your education, etc.

Dada Salvi : My father was a head clerk in Forest Department. He was well educated. He wanted his children to be well educated too. I was good in all other subjects. But very weak in Maths. So weak that I could make errors in the same problems which were taught to me a month ago. Hence, I could never pass Matric. Had I passed it; I would have joined the police force as most of my seniors did. Joining police training school, becoming a police officer were my ideas. But I had to drop them because I could not clear Matric. I enjoyed taking part in dramas presented in school gathering or in

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our village. Whenever any drama company toured Ratnagiri, I used to watch their plays discretely although my father scolded me for that. I used to have many relatives in the police force. Using their connection, calling them uncles, naming myself as their nephew could let me watch those dramas. So, I developed a huge fascination for that world. Then I went to Bombay to get an entry into the theatre world. I failed in the tenth standard for three times. So, I abandoned education. By chance, I met an old theatre wizard Mr Yashwant Narayan Tipnis. He was known as Appa Tipnis. He is still remembered by many. I happened to meet him. I begged for an entry in any theatre company with his influence. I gave him my reference. He praised me and said, "I am an actor, an owner of a theatre company which is closed now. I have experienced this theatre world. Still, I think the film world will supersede theatre in near future. You possess some important characteristics which are required for the film world. An impressive face, good height, strong body, which is called 'figure' in filmy parlance. With this equipment, you should try for entry into the film world. I don't have any influence in it. If you can't make it there, my theatre group will always be there for you. Let's see." I met a few people after this dialogue. I met one Maharashtrian person, Mr Athawale.

Interviewer : How did you meet Mr Athawale?

Dada Salvi : One Mr. Baburao Sansari hailed from our Ratnagiri. Whenever we go to an unknown place, we like to meet someone from our old acquaintance. One Mr Vishwanath Gopal Shetty, who was a playwright, was from Ratnagiri. He was a Vaishya by caste. He mentioned Baburao Sansari's name to me "Baburao Sansari is an actor in Imperial Company you go and meet him" he said. I did accordingly. He also tried as much as he could do. He told me about me to few people. I don't blame him

because an actor cannot push someone in the theatre company unless he is a real Big Star or has an influence on the owner or the director. But Mr Sansari was not of that calibre. So... (he was not of much help to me). During those times, theatre companies had seasonal sessions. They used to run for 8 summer months and used to be closed in the rainy season. I happened to go to Bombay in the rainy season. So everywhere I was asked to come after rains get over. "Barish Ke Bad Aao". I started to learn Hindi after going to Bombay. I could guess what people were saying in Hindi there. I was jobless for four months in Bombay. So, I was mingling with many people. Mr Athawale whom I met was in the process of closing his company. "If you come after the rainy season, I will employ you," he said to me. So, after winter, around October, I came to Bombay. I had to face a lot of opposition. Because I belonged to the Maratha community. Now whatever I am narrating is a 50 / 55 years old story. Working with a drama group or cinema company was not considered to be a respectable job. There was a misunderstanding that only the destitute would do it. So, I had to face a lot of opposition. After my father's demise, my maternal uncle supported my family. He was a Police Officer, an inspector. When he learnt that I was thinking of taking up a job in a Cinema company, he scolded me right, left and centre. "You will end up begging. You come with me in a couple of days and I will get you a good job in Railways" I was scared. Mr Athawale had asked me to join after the rains. Although my maternal uncle was a loving, caring person he was rather strict. He could never digest my joining films. So, I decided that there was no point in staying over. I had to cheat my maternal uncle. I knew that Mr Dada Athawale was a punter and it was a racing season in Pune then. I did not know the meaning of 'Punter' then. But I knew what racing was like. Athawale had told me that I would meet him in Pune sometime when he is in Pune. So, I lied with

my maternal uncle saying, "I met that man at Railway station and he has asked me to join from Monday." Sometimes one has to resort to lying in life. Can't help. This way I reached Bombay. Spent another two jobless months in my cousin's house. Finally, from November 15 or 20, I started working with the company. This is how my film career began.

Interviewer : So, Dada Athawale was the director in whose film you acted for the first time. Was he the owner of the company too? Where was the studio? How did the work go? Can you throw some light on this?

Dada Salvi : See. Dada Athawale's name came to me from Baburao Sansari. These were Maharashtrian managers at that time. I was relieved by this. After all, one Maharashtrian can comfort another Maharashtrian. They know each other. Whatever may be the case, but this is my experience. I met that manager. He spoke to me gently. Otherwise, in my previous wandering, I used to get only one answer at every place. "Barish Ke Bad Aao" Come after the rainy season. It is around the corner now. You try after that. But no one promised me a job as such. Athawale being Maharashtrian or due to some affinity told me that he would certainly employ me. I met him on this assurance. And the man behind was Baburao Sansari.

Interviewer : Who was the owner of the company? Where was the studio located?

Dada Salvi : Excelsior Film Company was the name of the studio where Athawale was manager. The owner was Mr Sheth Vajeer Haji. Originally a building contractor who later came to this profession. Mr Athawale was merely a manager still he had fairly good authority and he was a director too. When the company grew, few other directors were appointed from the Gujrathi Community.

Interviewer : So you started after the rainy season, by November 15 or 20. Which was your first film? You started as an extra or got a good, significant role at the firm instance?

Dada Salvi : Good Question. Athawale was a very practical person. 5- or 6-years senior to me in this profession. Film Industry, to my knowledge, has started in 1920. Hindustan Film Company was in Nasik (1913). Could be! But Athawale was my senior and experienced in this profession. In this capacity, he told me, "I am employing you as an actor in the company. But I will take another help from you. You are a Matric. You know English to some extent. So, you can be useful to me for office work. You will have to sit in the office and do some manual work like marking the staff's attendance etc. But I can guarantee you that you will not be stranded in the office as a typist or timekeeper for the rest of your life. You want to become an actor. You want to live an actor's life. So, you have to mingle with them. So, you will spend your time in the next 15, 20 days in their area". During those days, heroes and heroines had a different space than the small actors, called extras. I don't feel sorry for all this because I could brave out all these stages. The film business has developed a lot by now. Now there is a glamour to the extras too. It was not like that during the olden days. Any jobless person hunting for a job would say, "Chalo Bhai Cinema Company main Jayenge" (I will go to some film company now.) Now I won't describe those people in detail. But they used to be all sorts of people. If one knows Bombay, they were from Pila House (A notorious place) Gangsters, hooligans, barbaric. Athawale wanted me to learn their way of life. Hence, he kept me in their company. After spending three weeks with them, he let me sit in the office. But this proved beneficial for me. Because I knew, that finally, I had to interact with them. Even if I perused an acting career, if I had to do a fighting scene, I had to

portray an aggressive character, I could imitate the people I had watched in this underworld. I developed this trait of winning over a person by calling him my elder brother, Dada, Bhai etc. Had I become an officegoer from the beginning, I could have developed wrong notions about myself being someone superior or highbrow. "I am a clerk in the office, and these are extras". Actors were not esteemed during those times. Today they get more respect and nothing wrong with that. But the tips Mr Athawale gave me 55 years ago prove fruitful even today. How to gauge people, how to interact with them, mix with them were the points made by Mr Athawale which I am still practising in my life.

Interviewer : You have given good information Dada. But my query was about the roles. Were you offered good roles right from the beginning or had to work as an extra? Can you name the films?

Dada Salvi : Maybe the film was 'Detective Kumar' it was directed by Mr Athawale. I started acting as an extra. Nowadays, they are called 'Bhai log' in Bombay. But in olden times they were known as extras. They were not given shooting dates as such. When I faced the camera for the first time, I was dressed up as a Pathan. Because I had a huge, strong body. After all, a hooligan can be either a Pathan or a Maharashtrian, or a Muslim or a Punjabi or anybody. He has to look fierce, so I was made up as a Pathan. The scene was somewhat like this. The chief of the gang is drunk and tries to kidnap the heroine. The director explained the scene to all of us. We are seated drinking and eating groundnuts and some savouries. The villain is trying to kidnap the lady. Mr Rai was the actor playing Villain. So the lady jumps into the sea when the hero, her lover makes a gesture. The noise made thereby startles us. You are supposed to stumble. This is how acting was taught to us. And after this, we had to jump into the water and try to

rescue the lady. The camera started rolling. The lady jumped as designed. We followed her leaving the glasses in our hands. The cameramen shouted "catch them Because I was a newcomer, I did not realize that I have to safeguard myself even while acting. I knew a little bit about swimming. The shooting went on in a sea. I jumped near that lady. She was an Anglo Indian, named Mrs Mitchel. She had a short Bob cut. But she had to wear a wig to suit the makeup of an Indian Woman. I tried to hold her by the wig. She did not know much about swimming. She was used to swimming in a swimming pool in Bombay. So, she got scared to in the sea. She was wearing a Sari. Its 'pallu' or the loose end was rolled around her face. She started drowning in water. She clenched my feet to save herself from drowning. I was in a fix whether I should push her away and save myself or I should pick her up first. But Mr Athawale kept his presence of mind. He threw away the cigarette he was holding and jumped in the water to save us. I swallowed some water in the meantime, but life was saved. Athawale was a mischievous man. European ladies were called 'Madam' in those days. So Athawale teased me, "Did you enjoy Madam's hug, Mr Salvi? I said "Yes. I felt as if I had gone to heaven. Nice that you brought me back on earth."

Interviewer : You narrated all these memories about Detective Kumar. Your next role was in which film?

Dada Salvi : I did not have to hunt for a long time. Athawale began his next picture immediately. It was 'Hamlet' I had a small role in it. May be of the length of a close-up. I had read 'Hamlet'. In our film, 'Hamlet' was named 'Chandra Sen'. And his beloved who was a princess was named 'Malika. I was asked to play her brothers character viz. Rutujawa "

Interviewer : What did you have to do to enact this role? How was the director explained to you? Shakespeare's plays had beautiful linguistic flair. But you had no dialogues in the silent movies. So how did you perform the Rutu jaw " role?

Dada Salvi : Mr Kinikar, you are too much into Ofilia and Shakespeare's writing style. See, Athawale knew 'Hamlet' but he was not a highly educated person as such. True, he was like an elder brother to me. I came into films because of him. But he did not have great calibre. I think most of the directors in those days lacked that calibre. I became aware of a director's special skills a little later. Here they used to narrate a scene and ask us to react to a situation as one would do in reality. This is a brother's character, if something goes against his wish, what would he do? No one went into the depth of the scene.

Interviewer : After Hamlet, did you work with Excelsior company further? Or you shifted to another company?

Dada Salvi : As I told you earlier. I used to sit in the office after Hamlet. If any new director or person visiting the office, I could meet him. They used to chat with Mr Athawale if he was in office. He was fond of me, a well-wisher. So, he used to introduce me to everyone saying", Here is a good chap having a good figure. Can you give him some good work?" Once a Gujarathi Director Mr Manilal Joshi had visited us. His film

Interviewer : Which company he belonged to?

Dada Salvi : Excelsior.

Interviewer : Mr Manilal's Company?

Dada Salvi : No. He was employed there as a director Dada Athawale was Manager. Naturally, he told to Manilal in Gujarathi, "Can you give this man some work? See his figure is good." Manilal said "Yes. He possesses a good figure. I will assign him the

Hero's role." which means a widowed woman despite her husband being alive. Something like this. I don't remember the whole story now. But I did act in that film. After completing that film...

Interviewer : Who was the heroine in that film? Who were the other actors?

Dada Salvi : I think the heroine was Mehatab bai. Later she became well-known as Mehatab...

Interviewer : Sohrab Modi's Wife?

Dada Salvi : Yes. She was the heroine in that film. After completing that film our Excelsior company went into financial difficulty. The imperial film company was big then, it got into the partnership of Excelsior Company. The owner of our company, Mr Sheth Vajeerji decided to run the business with the cooperation of Imperial Company. So, a director from Imperial Company, Mr Nagendra Mazumdar joined us. He wanted to start a film for our company. Even he was impressed by my figure. He had seen Both Manilal Joshi and Nagendra Bhai were Gujarati. The fun of life is, Mr Kinikar, if something is destined to happen, it happens. Even Manubhai told him that I was a good actor. But he disagreed. He thought that I would be more suitable for a villain's role. So, in his next film Jayant he cast me as a Villain. I loved that role immensely. This does not mean that I disliked my role as a hero. But somehow, right from the beginning, I had a feeling that a villain's role is more challenging. This could be my misconception too. But it stands even today. Not because my majority roles were of a Villain. Later I got stability in life due to Mr Madan Rai Vakil. I can never forget this name, Madan Rai Vakil. He was the hero of that film. So, while acting as a villain with him, we had spent 4 months together. We had developed a good rappo. Excelsior Company stopped shooting thereafter. The company was closed. Mr Sheth Vajeer Haji, the owner of

Excelsior Company arranged for a job for me. Our Excelsior company was in Tardeo. Just across the road, there was Sharada Film Company. Our compounds were facing each other. He had asked the owner of Sharada Film Company to help me. The director of Jayant, Mr Nagendra Mujumdar had a fairly good opinion about me. He told me, "Mr Salvi, we want to employ a few people in Imperial, your name is in the list of probable", so you come there. I am in Imperial and I will give you some work there. The company was called "Kaisar-a-Hind") then. * (This reference is unclear and doubtful)

Interviewer : Excelsior name was changed?

Dada Salvi : Yes, Partnership of Excelsior and management by Imperial. In that way, I came from Imperial to "Kaisar-a-Hind". As my ill-luck would have it, Mujumdar finalized the Muhurta of the film but himself fell ill. His illness prolonged for six months or so. So, his film and my career kept on dragging. Once again, I reverted back to being an extra. Imperial was a very big company having seven sets of hero's, heroines and directors. Only Nagendra Mujumdar, Manilal Joshi or Dada Athawale knew me. I was a stranger to others. I was frustrated. I worked as an extra for 7 or 8 months, either a Rajput or a Muslim or a vagabond or some social character. Finally, I went to Madan Rai Vakil (the actor who was with me in 'Jayant' as a hero) and requested him in Gujarathi. "Please take me in your project. You know me for 7-8 months. I have worked with you as a villain. You know how I work. But I am jobless now. I am fed up. I can't remain in extras for all my life. I have enough energy. I can do any work. If nothing materializes, I can definitely join the police department." He said, "Don't get impatient. I will talk to Mr Ram Shankar Chaudhary about you". Mr Chaudhary was a famous director in Imperial Company in those days. But he was whimsical. "You are talented. You are a good actor. You will certainly go ahead. Don't

be hasty." So, he introduced me to Mr Chaudhary. Maybe I was lucky then. But Chaudhary made a passing remark, "I will give you a chance in my next film." He stuck to his words. He offered me a role against the opposition of many people. The story writer was against casting me. The owner of the company, Mr Ardeshir Irani was also in opposition. Because Sulochana Mayer's (Ruby Myers) was the heroine of that film. Because Chaudhary had a good name, she could become his heroine. A newcomer like me could not work as a villain with the hero. This was not digestible to many. I was not an established actor then. But Chaudhary was not only whimsical, he was hot-headed too. The story of this film was written by Mr Desai. Chaudhary threw the screenplay of that film - Indira - and shouted "I am the director. I know who will deliver goods. Who will act well? I am confident about this man. I think he will act well. I have seen his film 'Jayant'. I will get the work done. I will write another story; I will postpone the 'Mahurat and give work to this man." A man of Chaudhary's stature says this! Even an owner like Mr Ardeshir Irani could not defy him. Ardeshir agreed and my career in Imperial Company took a real take-off.

Interviewer : Dada, you mentioned your work in Indira B.A. You played a villain in it for the first time. Later you established as a villain. You remained a villain in your entire career. Can you describe your films after this?

Dada Salvi : After Indira, I was stamped as a villain. Salvi can depict a villain really well, people said. I did good work in three or four more films of Imperial. One film was Khuda Ki Shan It had an English title. Then came 'Eye for an eye'. Sagar films production ` The secret of the Night from Imperial films. I could show different shades of acting as a character artist. I played a butcher in it.

Interviewer : Which film?

Dada Salvi : Secret of the Night. Sulochana was the heroine. Jal Merchant hero. Dada Ilahi was another actor. Wherever I went, I could work with top class people and I could make a distinct mark. I treat this as my good luck.

Interviewer : I think, Prithviraj Kapoor was there in Imperial. Mubarak Merchant, Jagdish Sethi, heroine Sulochana.... Such bigwigs were there. Can you say something about their work? When did you work with Prithviraj, Mubarak, Sulochana?

Dada Salvi : I did not too much work with Prithviraj. Even he did not have much to do in some films, nor did I have. I worked more with Mubarak. Even with Sulochana, I think I had good roles in 3 or 4 films. I have worked with all the topmost heroines of silent films. I acted as a villain with Zubeida, Sultana, Madhuri, et all.

Interviewer : Can you name the films?

Dada Salvi : Zubeida was in 'Eye for an eye'. In Zubeida's elder sister Sultana acted. She was very beautiful. Baburao Painter specially invited her to Kolhapur to play the daughter in law of the minister of Kalyan in 'Kalyan khajina she played that role.

Interviewer : You mentioned a film causally as 'Cinema Girl'. You had Prithviraj along with you. Was the film related to the film world? Although you were an established villain by then, you did not have a significant role you said. Why?

Dada Salvi : I don't remember some things. I can't explain them. But I had a minor role. Chaudhary asked me, "why did you accept such a small role?" I said, "I was offered it, so I did it. We have an agreement with the company that we can't reject a particular role. We can't select one role over other. That's it."

Interviewer : Was this film based on the film world?

Dada Salvi : Because I had a small role, I do not know much about the story. I did not see the film too.

Interviewer : You acted in another Imperial Film in those days. It was 'Father India' was the title I suppose. Can you throw some light on it?

Dada Salvi : It's a long time ago. I don't remember Hamara Hindustan, which role I played, what was its length etc. Had I done a major role; I would have remembered the film.

Interviewer : Which were the important films you did after this? Important career-wise or for your personal life?

Dada Salvi : As I told you earlier, my career started with Indira. Then followed Mr Chaudhary's films, Khuda Ki Shan, Raat. Rat ki bat was Mr K.P. Bhave's film. I played a different kind of character in it. It was a butcher's role that was added to my career. Then came a few films in which I came across my future wife. She was Sakhubai. She came for the first time to act in Jayant, an Excelsior film. We did not know each other then. We were just actors working in a company. In those days' villains had to just overpower the women. She had to do some such scenes. Later she acted in Sindbad serial in small roles. But I remembered her well only in 'Jayant'. I used to watch her in various acts. And I started liking her. Frankly speaking, cine actors in those days were rejected by marriageable girls of their cast. So, I was disgusted I had asked my mother to point-blank not to interfere in my marriage. I had chosen this profession and I was going to stick to it. So, I would resolve the issue of my marriage. In 1931 I proposed to Sakhubai and she accepted it on my terms. I am a traditional person. I still hold some old values. But I could never accept my wife's working in films. She also agreed and our relationship started.

Interviewer : Dada, 'Alam Aara' came in 1931. But silent films continued till 1933/34.

Dada Salvi : Yes.

Interviewer : Did you work in silent films after the advent of talking films?

Dada Salvi : When talking films came, our owner had a misconception that I will not be able to speak Hindi or Urdu properly. Urdu was more sought after in those days. Later Urdu was diluted to Hindi. During those days theatre artists could be available at cheaper rates. At one point I got a reduction notice. Reduction meaning an actor is asked to resign. They offered me to accept work at a lower salary because I was quite senior there. I refused. I said, "I will work anywhere else, I will come back when I get roles in talkies." My wife Sakhubai got a chance to work in Hindi Films at that time. She played a small role in 'Alam Ara'. Then I started freelancing in silent moves. Some memorable silent films of that time are White Devil -, (safed Daku) Black Ghost (Kala Bhoot): I had Ruby, Madhuri, Noor Jahan as my heroines in those films. I don't remember much about that period. But I acted in silent films till 1933. Although talking films started coming from 1931. I pulled on with silent films till 1933. After all, every film needs a villain, whosoever may be the producer. This way I kept on working. In 1933 Saraswathi Cinetone made Bhakta Pralhad My career in talking films started from there.

Interviewer : Imperial film company started a new branch called Sagar Film Company and produced a few films under that banner. Did they make any silent movies in which you worked?

Dada Salvi : I think they made many silent films. But the one in which I worked was of Sagar Film Company. The alternate title was 'Eye for an eye'.

Interviewer : When the silent film era came to an end, you entered talkies in 1933 in Saraswathi Cinetone. Who were the people with you then? I think Daddsaheb Torane

had established that company while he was still in Imperial. Or, he left the old company and started the new one for making Talking Films?

Dada Salvi : I think Dadasaheb Torane had left it 2 years before starting a new venture. He was trying to make a few silent films. But he could not do that. Finally, he started with a talking film i.e. in 1933.

Interviewer : Dada you mentioned names of many films and film companies. You mentioned Excelsior, Imperial, Sagar, Kaiser-a-Hind As far as I know, you did one or two films with Royal Films too. Even when cinema had started talking, you worked in silent films. Was it 'Black Ghost' of Royal Film company? Who was the owner of it?

Dada Salvi : Yes. Royal Film company made two films. Shankar Bhai Bhat and Vijay Bhat were two brothers who started it. Later probably they made another silent film but I did not act in it. Then they set up 'Prakash Studio'. People know the name and money earned by this studio. It was in Bombay until recently.

Interviewer : Where was Royal Film company located? Black Ghost.... White Devil.... Burk hawala..... were these their initial films in which you acted?

Dada Salvi : They started with these two films. They did not own a studio. They used to hire studios and we used to work there. One of them was Jagdish studio at Dadar. Some shooting was done at Shree Sound studio. It is still known by that name. Chandra Art productions had a studio in Santacruz. Some shooting took place there. Wherever they could get space, sets were created, and shooting is done.

Interviewer : Dada, you had a huge career as a villain in silent movies. A hooligan.... a butcher..... or some such character. Did you have to take part in fighting scenes?

Dada Salvi : Oh yes, some fighting was mandatory. During those days, only heroes had duplicates. Villain did not get a duplicate as such. Still, I needed a duplicate. Why?

Because I didn't know horse riding. It would have proved beneficial if I knew riding. But every actor need not be a competent horse rider. So, I did not feel inferior because of that. I had many other assets which an actor need. So, after I finished my day's work, my clothes would be put on some good horse rider. He would give the riding shots and return my clothes and I would be shown just sitting on a horse wearing those clothes. This is how we worked.

Interviewer : You narrated an interesting event. Working as an extra, you faced a life-threatening situation once. Did you meet with some dreadful experience while portraying a villain in a fight scene?

Dada Salvi : Oh Yes. The film was Khuda ki shan My friend Jagtap was the hero of it. We had a fight sequence on a staircase in which the staircase breaks. We both were strong hefty people. So, Chaudhary thought of taking the actual scene. He had cut the staircase at the appropriate juncture. About 10 feet height was to be covered in our jumping. I was as heavy then as I am today. Jagtap was also largely built. One Mr Jal Merchant was a hero in the Imperial company then. A Parsi boy, very friendly with all of us. He warned Chaudhary against this shot. He said that we both were bulky people. And falling down from such height would be very injurious. Someone will fall on others chest. So at least a mattress should be laid on the floor. With the grace of God or my good luck, I was not hurt badly while shooting that scene. Had I fallen on my neck; my neck would have broken. Luckily, I fell on my shoulders. Of course, I was hit badly but no major injury came my way Jagtap fell from above on my body and bumped on the floor. His collar bone was fractured. He was plastered and kept in hospital for 4 months. Normally I used to take good care of myself while shooting fight scenes. It is better to take a lower position in the beginning. People may fall on your body, may hit

you, kick you. But if you have to fall from a good height, you have to develop a technique of saving yourself. This way I have done a number of fight sequences. We were all friends, so we used to take care of each other. There are bound to be some small injuries, bruises. But that much margin has to be there. You can't get out scot-free from a fight scene. Minor cuts and bruises were common.

Interviewer : So, from 1932-33, talking films started coming all over, not only in Bombay. Did you face any difficulty in this transition from silent films to talkies?

Dada Salvi : There was no reason why I should go thru hardship. I was acting in drama from Highschool gatherings. The film is different from a drama. A film is shot in bits and pieces. So, you have to learn the scene, memories the dialogue Marathi is my mother tongue. I was matric in that period. So, I think my Marathi would be better than any graduate's Marathi today. I could understand the nuances of a good writer's flowing Marathi sentence. So, it did not have an adverse effect on my work. There used to be quite a few illiterate people in our profession then. They could not speak proper Marathi I used to stand out in their crowd.

Interviewer : You worked with Master Vinayak in talking films. You worked with other people too. Do you remember any important roles from that period?

Dada Salvi : If my Marathi Films in talkies are to be considered, I can say that I have worked in every film of Master Vinayak. Different types of roles in each film. And I delivered the roles in the way either Vinayak Rao or Author Mr Khandekar wanted. The Master Vinayak phase of my life is an unforgettable period for me. There were many other directors too. Madhav Shinde, Dinkar Patil, Anantrao Mane, et all. In Anant Rao Mane's times, I was stamped as a 'Patil' in many films. I am grateful to these people because they utilized me properly. Specially Anant Rao Mane. Seeing me act as

a villain, the first role he offered me was in a film of Sangte Aika's stature. See, one wants a challenging role. There is an ambition to prove oneself. I did not care about my remuneration from 'Sangte Aika'. Had I insisted on good returns, I could have lost the job. God knows how the film would have shaped up! But I gauged the strength of the role. I decided not to stitch the remuneration part of it. And I got a span of nearly 25 years of rural films because of it. Until 'Ek Gao Bara Bhangadi', I could sustain on rural films. There were not many social films made during that period. Some social films were tried with me, but they did not succeed.

Interviewer : You came up with a good point while talking that you never bothered about money at the time of 'Sangte Aika' If I get a challenging role, a different shade in Villain's role, I am going to do it." you said. In this entire interview, you have never spoken about your monetary returns. Either in Imperial company or other companies, how much money did you make?

Dada Salvi : Prices were very low in those days. So even memories of that period can be funny. I started as an extra cum clerk. My salary was 40 Rs. But I could feed myself the way someone today may do in a salary of 1200 or 1500 Rs. And a man like me needs sumptuous food you know. From 40, I progressed to 100, 150, 2000 And the highest was in Kolhapur in 1942.....

Interviewer : What was the highest remuneration in a silent film?

Dada Salvi : We were offered contracts from 1200 to 1500 Rs. The contract period used to be of 3 months. So, on average, we would get about 350, 400, 500 Rs. A month. And in those cheaper times, a man could enjoy all luxuries in 500 Rs. a month. I am a frank person. I am old enough to make authoritative statements too. So, I am underlining this word "all luxuries." An established man can enjoy life the way he wants. I have also

indulged in many pleasures of life. So, in 500 Rs. I could get everything I wished. The other day, somebody, probably Birla Seth said that one rupee today is like 3 paise at that time. I read this in newspapers.

Interviewer : Dada, when did you stop working in films? Which was your last film?

Dada Salvi : I think I stopped acting in 1975. My last film was 'Gav Tas Baray'. I was probably 71 yrs. old by then. My birthdate is 04.12.1904. I worked regularly till I became 71. After that, I got some health issues. There was no point in working further. If you are working, you have to do whatever comes your way. People all the time asked me, why do you want to retire? We can still offer you work. But I was sceptical of continuing the same way as I did before. If the scene is of heated argument and if I can't get up fast to answer, it would destroy the entire scene. With my maturity, age and the respect I commanded, I could not make blunders like this. People could have accepted me to some extent, but I would not tolerate this. So, I decided to retire. Right from age of 27 till 71, I worked hard for films. Now I will enter into 76th year this December. So, it was better to retire.