



National Film Archive of India

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

Interview of film and theatre actor Sharad Talwalkar by Bapu Watve

- Bapu Watve** : Sharad, when were you born?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : 1st November 1918 is my birth date.
- Bapu Watve** : So, you will enter 69th year soon. Where were you born?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Bodhegaon. District Nagar.
- Bapu Watve** : Formal education?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : I have done an M.A. in Marathi and Sanskrit from Bombay University.
- Bapu Watve** : Did you have this funny bone from the beginning?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. A sense of humour has to be inborn to become a comedian. It cannot be taught. Right from birth, I had this trait. Even in my school days...
- Bapu Watve** : What was the funny incidence at the time of your birth?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Oh yes. There was one. See, bullock cart was the only mode of transport in those days. No other vehicles were available. My father was working in P.W.D. He was transferred to a different place. We were in our town, but my father had invited all of us to his place to celebrate Diwali. My mother was pregnant at that time. Her term was nearing completion.

So, my grandmother, elder brother and my mother were travelling to his place in a bullock cart. She felt labour pain near Bodhegaon.

Bapu Watve : Still she got ready to travel?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. She had to obey my father's orders. Under his pressure, the family started travelling. But the cart had to be stopped near Bodhegaon. My mother had to take a resort in a tribal shanty. There were only tribes staying in Bodhegaon at that time.

Bapu Watve : I See.

Sharad Talwalkar : I was born in that shanty of that Bhill. A Bhill woman carried out the delivery procedure for my birth. My grandmother was very traditional. She asked a Brahmin there about my birth time and the prediction for the future. He said this is a moonless night (अमावस्या). This is the Laxmi Poojan day of Diwali. This moonless night will be over after some time. A child born on a moonless night can be inauspicious for the parents. So, you take him from the tribes after the night gets over. So, I was kept at the tribe's house for some time and was taken home later. Now, I think it could have been better had I stayed there forever. I would have been entitled to the benefits Government gives to scheduled castes and tribes.

Bapu Watve : Was there any other loss for being born in a Bhill Community?

Sharad Talwalkar : No great loss as such. But this reference used to come quite often. I was always naughty from my childhood. People used to complain about my mischief. Then I used to get beaten. Both my mother and father used to comment that I still have

that tribal culture in me. These were the two instances from that tribal family.

Bapu Watve : When did you feel that you could become an actor? Or there were no such signs in your childhood?

Sharad Talwalkar : My father was routinely transferred in his job. My education suffered a lot because of it. I did my second standard in three towns and two years. When my elder brother Gopinath Talwalkar sensed this, he asked my father to put me up in Pune with my mother.

Bapu Watve : So that your education will not be suffered.

Sharad Talwalkar : Then we settled in Pune and started my education in Bhave School. I was very fond of sports. I used to represent my school in cricket and hockey. I was not a theatre enthusiast then. But the first play I watched when I was 8 was संशय कल्लोळ my maternal uncle was a famous actor from 'Kirloskar Company'. His name was Mr. Visubhau Bhadkamkar. He was acting in संशय कल्लोळ. One could say that I have inherited theatrical qualities from him.

Bapu Watve : Okay.

Sharad Talwalkar : He used to act in Raghuvir Savkar's play. My elder brother went to meet him. He took me along. When I saw संशय कल्लोळ I was highly impressed by Falgunrao's character. I found it funny.

Bapu Watve : You were just 8 then.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. But I did not feel like acting at that time. It chanced upon me when I was in fifth standard in school. That year रणदुंदुभी

was to be staged in the school annual gathering. In those days, good actors used to get prizes in school gatherings. For the first few years, a comedian was winning prizes regularly. So that year he put a condition. If you give me 10 passes, then only I will take part in the drama. Otherwise, I am not interested. The gathering was within a week. And he became a hindrance for the teacher. Our school superintendent was very strict. He told the actor firmly that at best, he would be given 2 passes. Or he should return the drama notebook. He returned the notebook. Now there was a discussion in the teacher's room as to who would enact that role. My class teacher, the famous literary critic Mr. S.K. Kshirsagar was in that room. He told the drama teacher about me. "That boy, Sharad Talwalkar is in my class. He mimics the teachers etc. I have watched him sneakily. You ask him whether he is ready."

Bapu Watve : So, Kshirsagar had an eye on you.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. He picked me up and I went to Drama once again. These is no exaggeration in this. The school superintendent called me and said, you have to do this. I said I have never acted before. Our Parchure Sir was the drama head then. He asked me to just learn by heart my script and he would teach me later. I learned the script by heart. I started attending practice sessions at night. I had to go slyly because my father was dead against my acting.

Bapu Watve : My God!

Sharad Talwalkar : My poor mother! she used to keep awake till late night and open the door for me. After finishing the day's rehearsals, I

used to come back home quietly so that my father would not notice me. I had to climb the waterpipe outside the building to enter my house. Because the door near the staircase would be closed. That was my first experience of performing something on stage.

Bapu Watve : Were you under pressure when you stood on the stage and faced the audience?

Sharad Talwalkar : No pressure as such. As a cricketer, whenever I represented my school in cricket, a huge crowd used to gather to watch it. We used to play in front of them. So, I was used to facing the crowd in some way.

Bapu Watve : Used to mob attention.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. So, I was okay with the crowd. My dialogues were memorized properly.

Bapu Watve : Which role did you play?

Sharad Talwalkar : Shishupal.

Bapu Watve : I See.

Sharad Talwalkar : There I experienced for the first time that after my dialogues, people were in peals of laughter. It gave me immense joy, which later attracted me to the theatre.

Bapu Watve : So, your stage fright, crowd consciousness were all vanished in your first play itself.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. And my confidence grew.

Bapu Watve : Both these results came at the same time.

Sharad Talwalkar : Even today, if someone or a student asks me about an acting workshop or some academy, I insist on taking practical experience instead of going to any academy and just listening to some advice. An actor is made by directly acting

in a play. This is my experience and I like to share it with them.

Bapu Watve : You mean, more practical knowledge is needed.

Sharad Talwalkar : True

Bapu Watve : the incidence you narrate is from which year?

Sharad Talwalkar : 1935.

Bapu Watve : So, 50 years are over.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. 50 or 52 perhaps.

Bapu Watve : When did you act next?

Sharad Talwalkar : After that year, I got comic roles every year in every gathering. Next year, we did 'सिंहासन'. I had a comic role in it.

Then came Lagnachi Bedi (लग्नाची बेडी). Then संशय कल्लोळ. All offered me comic roles. I started getting light roles one after the other and they got more applause. Then I realized, I had humour in me. It is better to amuse people than to disturb them. If this humorous trait is used for theatre art, I can earn a good name in this field.

Bapu Watve : That means your nature was beneficial for your acting.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. It was.

Bapu Watve : Then you continued acting till matriculation?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Then it became my passion. Once I was invited to a professional theatre group for acting. I was very happy about it.

Bapu Watve : That too, when you were still in school.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Keshavrao Date had started नाट्य विकास नाटक मंडळी. He had seen me acting in my school performance when I was in

matriculation class. He had come as a parent to some students.

Bapu Watve : Which role of yours did he watch?

Sharad Talwalkar : Gokarn from Lagnachi Bedi. And he invited me for professional assignment in Company.

Bapu Watve : That means you got due recognition.

Sharad Talwalkar : I did. I went to that company. Got a job for 12 Rs. a month as salary plus food etc.

Bapu Watve : When was this?

Sharad Talwalkar : 1938.

Bapu Watve : My god! 49 years ago.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yeah. 49 years. छापील संसार written by Mr. S.G. Sathe was in the making Keshavrao used to attend practice sessions. Sopana the servant was to be played by me. He used to be very practical in rehearsals. I had to say a few sentences after sweeping a hall. For an entire month of rehearsal, he made me sweep the hall and utter the words in shortness of breath caused by sweeping. He used to make me say the same sentence for 10 to 15 times to look realistic.

Bapu Watve : This shows the sincerity of Masters in those days. They wanted their disciples to be perfect in their work. Who were your co-artistes in this drama?

Sharad Talwalkar : There were many stalwarts of that period in this drama. Raja Paranjpe played a reporter of a newspaper, Mr. Mahabal, Indirabai Chitnis, Kaka Jogalekar, Tambe, Tarabai Dixit were few other artists in it.

Bapu Watve : Keshavrao Date was himself acting in it.

- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. Initially, he was there. But later he got a contract from Ranjit Company for Tulsidas. It was Mahavikas Natak Mandali. Later Keshavrao's role went to Mr. Vaishampayan.
- Bapu Watve :** Oh yes. Ranjit made the film Tulsidas, Leela Chitnis was the co-actress. How long did this Drama Company survive after this?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** It was a period around 1934. When Marathi films started coming in 1934, the Marathi audience was attracted to them. Theatre as a profession suffered a lot. Even big companies like Balawant Sangeet Mandali...
- Bapu Watve :** Of Master Deenannath?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. His Manapman (मानपमान) could also make only 39 Rs. for a show.
- Bapu Watve :** What a pity!
- Sharad Talwalkar :** This way theatre profession suffered from the film profession. Our drama shows would make 400, 500 Rs. profit per show before that. But by the end of 1940...
- Bapu Watve :** ...Yes. By then talking films had made a mark, a strong impact.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. The year I left Drama company, a drama show earned only Rs. 7. There were only 3 spectators in the hall. But the owner of the company used to be supreme then. Keshavrao Date told us that we will have to perform as if the show is Houseful! The show started at 9.30 PM and we presented it as if the theatre was full.
- Bapu Watve :** Where did this occur?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** At Wai. Our company was at Wai then. Only three spectators! My sense of humour worked then. I told the manager to let

them all sit in one row. Instead of all scattered in the hall, it would give us some encouragement.

Bapu Watve : If income was so poor, you would not be getting regular salary too.

Sharad Talwalkar : Salary was never given in lump sum.

Bapu Watve : Must have been difficult for you.

Sharad Talwalkar : Disastrous. Theatre companies stopped cooking food. They had no income. So, everyone had to arrange for food. Some of us could get money orders from our families.

Bapu Watve : That means they were from well-off families.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. But I had left my house. My father had thrown me out of the house because I chose theatre as a profession. I did not have money, no one was going to send me either. When the company stopped making food I had only 2 Rs. in my pocket. I was in Satara then. One Batatawada was available for 2 paise then and a lot of rice crispy for 1 paisa. I pulled on for one week like this. One-eighth day while working in 'Usana Navara' (उसना नवरा) my entry was in the last act. But I fell heavily on the stage.

Bapu Watve : Oh really? What did people think then?

Sharad Talwalkar : They were startled. Indirabai who was my co-artist asked me, what the matter is. Another colleague was Mr. Bhagwat. He

Bapu Watve : Indirabai must have thought it to be a part of acting.

Sharad Talwalkar : Perhaps. She even scolded me, "can't you walk properly?" So, Bhagwat, my colleague told her why I could not walk properly. I had not taken meals for 8 days. So Indirabai shouted, "Why did not you tell me that you have no money?"

"She used to get a money order from her husband. So, she fed me for 15 days until the company started paying me again.

Bapu Watve : Nice. In Wai the collection was 7 Rs. you said. They must have gone in a quandary whether to run the company further or not.

Sharad Talwalkar : Maybe. But I left the company and took an oath in front of Wai Ganesha that I won't apply grease point afterwards. 12 annas were the bus ticket then.

Bapu Watve : From Wai to Pune?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. And I felt really sorry for a person. Mr. Keshavrao Gore was a famous singer and actor in Balgandharv's company.

Bapu Watve : Yes.

Sharad Talwalkar : I went to a lodge for lunch in Wai when I was leaving the drama company. I saw Mr. Krishnrao Gore serving food to people there. I was determined not to get in such a situation myself. So, after my matriculation, I would go to Pune and find a job for me.

Bapu Watve : You said your father did not want you to go to a theatre company. Still, you went as per your wish. How did your father react when he learnt this?

Sharad Talwalkar : I had enrolled myself in S.P. College. Actually, my father did it. I got a scholarship that was specifically for Karhade Brahmin students. But I never attended college. So, the principal sent a letter in July. It mentioned that I had never attended college so what was to be done with that scholarship? My father asked me about it. "If you are not going to college what do you do?" "I have taken up a job" I said. "Good. As I am getting old, you don't want to add to my

burden". Father said. "Where are you working?" In a Theatre company. "Okay then. Tonight, you won't get dinner in this house. You leave it."

Bapu Watve : My God!

Sharad Talwalkar : So, I had to leave the house and I shifted to a theatre company's camp. I used to sleep at night in their Appa Balwant Chowk base.

Bapu Watve : Did you work only as an actor in the theatre company or you were made to attend to all menial work too?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. All types of work had to be done by us. Make-up, drapery was not specialized departments then. Lower-grade actors had to do all that work. Arranging the makeup set, folding clothes was also done by me. In our homes, we never folded saris of women. We had to do that also in a theatre company.

Bapu Watve : Once I was told an incidence. When you were a newcomer, Indira Chitnis did not know that you are an actor. She asked Raja Paranjpe about you.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. It was my first day. Indirabai came late when Keshavrao was teaching. I was sweeping the hall in Sopan's role. I was quite fair and good-looking then. So, she commented to Raja Paranjpe, "such a fair boy... appears to be from a good family. And he has to sweep the hall!" Then Rajabhau told her that I was not a servant, I had joined as an actor. This was a funny incident then.

Bapu Watve : So, theatre company was not for you. Did you try for any movie then?

Sharad Talwalkar : I did try. When I returned to Pune, my brother Mr. Gopinath Talwalkar was quite close to Acharya Atre.

Atre was quite influenced by Hans Pictures then.

Bapu Watve : Hans Pictures From Kolhapur?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. I took a recommendation from Atre and went to Kolhapur to enter the film world. Baburao Pendharkar was there at that time. He was looking after management. I showed him that letter. He said he was getting short-time help easily without providing lodging to them. Why should he employ me and spend 40 / 50 Rs. extra on my lodging?

Bapu Watve : Such blunt comment?

Sharad Talwalkar : he said, "You are a matriculate. Go to Pune. Join college. Get some qualifications on which you can get a decent job and manage your livelihood. First, you establish yourself this way and then join show business as a hobby."

Bapu Watve : Show business meaning theatre and films?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. I liked his advice and I came to Pune. That was wartime then. One of my friends was in Military Accounts Department.

Bapu Watve : Did you try in Prabhat Film Company?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. I did not get a job immediately after coming to Pune. I used to spend time at Rajabhau Pranjpe's house. He used to play harmonium.

Bapu Watve : Yes. I know.

Sharad Talwalkar : Because I had left the house, I had to kill time somewhere. At some friends' house or so. Once while we were whiling away our afternoon time, our friend Vasant Thengadi (वसंत ठेंगडी) came there.

Bapu Watve : The famous Prabhat actor?

- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. The company was closed then. Raja Paranjpe was jobless.
- Bapu Watve :** Which company was closed?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Natyavikas Natak Company. We were killing our time playing harmonium, singing etc. Thengadi asked us. "Why are you so vacant? Come to Prabhat, mob scenes are going on there. I can give you work". The film 'Maza Mulga' (माझा मुलगा) was in the making in Prabhat then. The next day, me and Rajabhau packed our Tiffin's, hung them to our bicycles and went to Prabhat and worked in a mob scene. The heroine was Shanta Jogalekar. She is a candidate for the election. Vasant Thengadi is campaigning for her. We were made volunteers in his meeting. We held the placards saying, 'Vote for Nalinibai'. We were asked to give the same slogan. This was my first film role as an actor.
- Bapu Watve :** That means you started in Prabhat as an extra.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. I got 2 Rs. And I could start from a well-known company like Prabhat.
- Bapu Watve :** Was it the first role of Rajabhau Paranjpe too? Or had he acted before?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** No. It was his first role too.
- Bapu Watve :** So, you did not get a good role in Prabhat. What did you do next? Found some job?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Then my friend fixed me up at Military Accounts in a job. Salary was 34 Rs. a month. Then I decided to complete my graduation. So as per Baburao Pendharkar's advice, I started saving from my salary and enrolled myself in a college. I started learning plus job both at that time. College gathering

days came. There used to be an Altekhar Trophy in Pune then for the best drama in intercollegiate drama competition. Wadia College, Fergusson College had won it. But S.P. College could not get it. They wanted to make a mark on it at least once. Vasant Bapat was a very enthusiastic student of S.P. College then. He heard that a boy from a theatre company is in our college. He came to Military Accounts in my search. He asked me to act in 'Khadastak' (खडाष्टक). I refused saying that I have sworn in Wai that I won't be acting in the future. He said, "Don't do commercial theatre. But you can act in college gatherings as an amateur. I was asked to do Karkashrao in Khadastak. One Mr. S.P. Joshi from Maharashtra Natak Mandali...

Bapu Watve : Shankarrao Joshi!

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. He approved me. I used to have thick long hair in those days. But I shaved them totally for the role. Karkashrao was a Brahmin from Konkan and an old person too. He must have been totally bareheaded. So, I opted for it. Luckily my acting was excellent that year and I got first prize for acting in an intercollegiate competition. Our college won Altekhar trophy for Khadastak.

Bapu Watve : Great! Your next venture?

Sharad Talwalkar : I started working in college plays after this.

Bapu Watve : Name the dramas you acted in.

Sharad Talwalkar : I did Vande Maataram, Lagnachi Bedi, Bhavbandhan until my graduation.

Bapu Watve : When did you turn to the professional theatre?

Sharad Talwalkar : In 1955 I returned to professional theatre. Before accepting professional theatre, I worked in Jayaram Shiledar's drama company. I played Phalgunrao in संशयकल्लोळ, लक्ष्मीधर in मानापमान.

Bapu Watve : You had to work in Zunzarrao all of a sudden.

Sharad Talwalkar : See. The character of Roderigo in Othello is named Rambhajirao in Zunzarrao. Raja Praranjpe used to play that role.

Bapu Watve : I see.

Sharad Talwalkar : Baburao Pendharkar owned that company. He used to play Othello. Once Zunzarrao's show was in Pune but Rajabhau was shooting in Bombay. He sent me a telegram saying he can't act in this show. Baburao was perplexed as to how the next day's show could run. He asked Dhumal.

Bapu Watve : Our actor..... Anand Dhumal? Was he working on it?

Sharad Talwalkar : Dhumal was playing आयागो who was named Jadhav in Zunzarrao. He told Baburao that he has a friend who can replace Rambhaji the day after. I had not seen Zunzarrao before. I was working as vice-chancellor's P.A. in University then. Dhumal came to me. I had completed M.A then. He asked me to perform the next day. I declined saying that I have not seen it. But he took me to Baburao Pendharkar and told him, this chap, **Sharad Talwalkar** will work for you. Then Baburao gave me the drama copy and said, I am giving you work only on Dhumal's recommendation

Bapu Watve : Really?

Sharad Talwalkar : Then I came home and learnt my dialogues by heart in the entire nighttime. Then Dhumal took my rehearsal in the theatre in the morning. And I performed in my own style.

Bapu Watve : So, you directed the play in a day? Entire role in a day? That's too much

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. I managed it. Baburao Pendahrkar was watching me perform from the wings.

He liked my performance immensely. He said here afterwards, Raja Paranjpe won't enact this character, you will do it. And I did 60 shows of it. Then once I reminded him that we were meeting after 12 years. I had met him in 1940 "That time you advised me to complete my education, get a degree, get a job and later pursue acting as a hobby. I am the same man, **Sharad Talwalkar**". I said and he hugged me tightly.

Bapu Watve : Okay but what was the difference between Raja Paranjpe style of working and your style of working?

Sharad Talwalkar : See, I had studied Othello as a textbook for my exam. I had studied the character of Roderigo. Raja Paranjpe used to portray him as an impotent man. But I knew that he was not an effeminate man. He is a fruit merchant, a clumsy, incompetent man. He trusts anybody. Naturally, Iago takes his advantage. These are the main characteristics of Rambhajirao. I played him this way and took many a laughs. Perhaps Baburao liked my interpretation more than Raja Paranjpe's interpretation hence I got that character to do.

- Bapu Watve** : Your transit to the commercial theatre then...
- Sharad Talwalkar** : In 1955, Baburao Gokhale started a cooperative theatre company
- Bapu Watve** : Co-operative? Meaning...
- Sharad Talwalkar** : That means the total profit to be divided among all members. We were 8 partners on this basis. We used to deduct all the expenses from the income of the show. Then came करायला गेलो एक.
- Bapu Watve** : This drama was very popular then
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Oh yes. Broadway was showing a farce viz. 'The whole town is talking. 'करायला गेलो एक' was based on it. Translated with many changes. There is a reporter's character in it. called शंखनाद. I did it very well and was applauded by newspapers for it. Raja Gosavi used to do Haribhau Harshe's main role. He is a dowdy joint editor. He did 50 shows and all of a sudden told Baburao that he would not act the next day. The next day we had a show in Nagar. Baburao had a dilemma. I rehearsed that role in Railway first-class compartment the previous night when I was travelling by passenger train from Pune to Nagar. Prabhakar Muzumdar was travelling with me. The train used to leave Pune at night. The role model I had in mind was that of one Mr. Gholap who was working in Chitrashala press. He used to get seizures. He had developed some morbidity in his knees due to his habit of sitting at one place for 8 hours constantly. His walking had become strange and funny because of it. He used to make many mis-synchronized gestures because of epilepsy. I used to spend

days together with him watching his gestures. I copied them in Haribhau Harshe's character. So, it became hugely popular. I performed it in 550 shows. I got stamped as a comedian in Maharashtra because of it.

Bapu Watve : Did you move to film after Haribhau Harshe's role?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. I had made a move even earlier. I was always attracted to movies as a medium.

Bapu Watve : Was it because of your theatre sojourn?

Sharad Talwalkar : Could be. I used to visit theatre companies of Dharmadhikari, Raja Thakur et al. Once Dharmadhikari was in the process of making अखेर जमलं.

Bapu Watve : I see. But before that, you made a small appearance in 'Lakhachi Gosta'. Is it true?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Raja Paranjpe was my 'Guru' from the theatre company. 'Lakhachi Gosta' लाखाची गोष्ट was made before अखेर जमलं. It was 1952. Raja Pranjape was directing it. So, he wanted me to do a small role in it.

Bapu Watve : Okay.

Sharad Talwalkar : While doing 'Lakhachi Gosta' लाखाची गोष्ट, I realized that if you are really keen to work in films, camera or atmosphere do not dampen your spirits.

Bapu Watve : There could be another reason too. You had developed confidence and lost reservations after having worked so long in theatre. The presence or absence of the camera was not the only issue. It does not make any difference to a born actor. You had only one scene there?

- Sharad Talwalkar** : No. Two scenes. But I had a specific independent role in अखेर जमलं. I was a poet in it.
- Bapu Watve** : Even Raja Gosawi entered that film company at that time ?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. I started getting offers quickly after that. Then Rajabhau gave me a role in तुळस तुझ्या अंगणी.
- Bapu Watve** : Rajabhau means Raja Thakur?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. He gave me a role of a Tamasha contractor. My experience says that an actor must have good observation.
- Bapu Watve** : True. Particularly for a character actor and a comedian, it is a must.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Because I was to portray a Tamasha Contractor, Rajabhau took me to a Tamasha theatre in Ganesh Peth twice or thrice. Mr. Ambad Sheth was there.
- Bapu Watve** : Yes..... The owner of Ibrahim Theatre.
- Sharad Talwalkar:** I was asked to observe him. He used to wear a long coat... loose Pajamas chewing Paan... The juice spilling from both sides..... Talking and responding to music at the same time..... I watched him carefully many times.
- Bapu Watve** : This role was offered to someone before you, I suppose.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : It was tried but could not come to the expected one. Then I was called. My role became very successful. There was a show of करायला गेलो एक in Kolhapur. We were put up near the stage. A film actor, Mr. Vasant Pahelwan was staying there. He had come for acting in Bhalaji Pendharkar's film. He had huge strength. He had seen' तुळस तुझ्या अंगणी in Kohinoor theatre. He had loved my role in ti. He found it very natural.

Once we had lunch in the noon. He did not have shooting thereafter. He was sitting in a room. Vasantrao Shinde asked me whether I had met Vasantrao Pahelwan before. I said, 'No'. He took me to his place. He was seated on a cot chewing paan. Vasantrao introduced me by saying, meet Mr. **Sharad Talwalkar**, who is acting in our drama. I was playing a reporter.

Bapu Watve : शंखनाद?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes, He said I feel I have seen you somewhere

Bapu Watve : Vasantrao Pahelwan said this?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Vasantrao Panelwan said. I replied I have acted in a film."

"Which role?"

"That of a Tamasha Contractor."

He was so excited. He lifted me bodily and make me sit next to him on his cot.

Bapu Watve : I remember Raja Thakur had told this incidence once. "The Tamasha Contractor could not shape up the way I wanted. I expressed this dissatisfaction to Sharad. Sharad thought for a while and entered the stage in exactly the way I wanted the Tamasha contractor to look. Sharad acted in his own style but gave full justice to that role. I got desired effect in his first attempt." Next important role you got?

Sharad Talwalkar : Then Rajabhau started getting confidence in me. He was sure I could do character roles ... रंगल्या रात्री अशा... The year it was made...

Bapu Watve : 1962

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. 1962. He gave me a very significant role of a Muslim Sarangi player.

Bapu Watve : Dadoomiyān?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Dadoomiyān... About 60,70 years old. Sarangi player. Even the company owner respects him. I got that role.

Part 2

- Bapu Watve** : Sharad, in how many Dada Kondake films have you acted?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Three Films.
- Bapu Watve** : Which ones?
- Sharad Talwalkar** :
1) Ekata Jeev Sadashiv
2) Hyoch Navara Pahije
3) Aali Angawar
- Bapu Watve** : Okay. Did you have vulgar dialogues in any of them?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Not vulgar. Good ones. I did roles of someone rich, educated like engineer etc.
- Bapu Watve** : The whole world knows Dada's uniqueness. He gave 8, 9 silver jubilees one after the other. It gave him a place in Guineas Book of World Records. He made huge money out of it. But can you name his creative success in cinema?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : As far as his creative success goes, his acting style was that of a Songadya (सोंगाड्या) in a Tamasha. Normally a songadya makes small additions in dialogues and gets laughter. This was Dada's usual practice and he was a good-natured person too. I can name an incidence. A theatre group announced 'Bhavbandhan' (भावबंधन) and gave an advertisement to that effect. Dada Kondke was going to play 'Kamanna' (कामण्णा) in it. I have done hundreds of shows in that role. Once, while film shooting was on, he came to me and asked "Such and such group wants me to perform Kamanna. Should I go ahead?" I replied, "I do this role quite often. If I stop you from

doing it, you may think I have a vested interest. But that is not the case. Gadkari has penned lengthy, complicated, sentences for Kamanna's character. You will not be able to deliver them. Your style is different. Think over this. If you fail as Kamanna, the success, fame achieved so far will be tarnished. You will be criticized. I quoted some sentences from the drama and made him say them. He could not say in an instance.

Bapu Watve : Do you remember some of them now?

Sharad Talwalkar : Oh Yes. You two are real sisters. What can we ordinary mortals decide for you? The Mughal Emperors used to keep their beautiful daughters unmarried thinking that they are too beautiful to get a match. Because you are very ugly you may meet with the same lot. Such long winding sentences. We have to emphasize the last word to get laughter. Will you be able to manage this? He said, 'No'. And he gave a firm 'NO' to that drama producer.

Bapu Watve : One thing is there. Had Dada played Kamanna's role the play would have run to full houses?

Sharad Talwalkar : There could be a crowd of viewers...Huge crowd. But if his work was not liked, it could have been criticized. His image would have suffered.

Bapu Watve : What is the secret of Dada's unprecedented success?

Sharad Talwalkar : I think, it is 'Viccha Mazhi Puri Kara' (विच्छा माझी पुरी करा). It was in folk theatre form. He did thousands of shows and developed his own audience.

Bapu Watve : Oh yes. He created his own viewership.

- Sharad Talwalkar :** His fans started to expect to see the same 'Dada' in all his movies. Fulfilling this expectation gave him 9 silver Jubilees in a row.
- Bapu Watve :** His film 'Songadya' was a huge hit. This film was not vulgar. Later on, vulgar and double-meaning sentences were used more frequently.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** In Ekata Jeev Sadashiv, I worked with him. That film was also fairly sober. Later on, his obsession with vulgarity grew more and more.
- Bapu Watve :** hmmm... an addiction!
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Exactly. He got addicted to vulgarity. The audience was from lower social strata. The film audience has a bigger segment of slum dwellers compared to the middle class or high society spectators. This segment is increasing in Bombay - Pune. I think Dada decided to cater to this class.
- Bapu Watve :** Instead of making cheap, vulgar films, if Dada makes emotional films like 'Songadya' or 'Ekata Jeev Sadashiv' will they run?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Definitely they will be successful.
- Bapu Watve :** But Dada himself told me once that he has to make comedies only. "If there are some sentimental scenes, and I am shown weeping, people may laugh."
- Sharad Talwalkar :** I am typecast.
- Bapu Watve :** Yes.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** But he could not manage serious acting. In Ekata Jeev Sadashiv, he has to leave the house. His brothers and their wives are against him. He had a very long scene in which he

goes away from them. But he got it shortened. He was not sure of doing such an emotion-packed scene. He vanished after saying this.

Bapu Watve : I am sure people want him in his patent image. Bhalaji Pendharkar made one historical on 'Bhairji Naik' (बहिर्जी नाईक). Dada acted in it. But his name was not useful for that film. His acting was also not liked by people. Dada can't act in a different style. Or, he may act but people will not like it. Did you enjoy working with him?

Sharad Talwalkar : I enjoyed it.

Bapu Watve : Does he give some acting tips? Such a fine comedian he is ... Does he tell you something?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. He does not. But you have to be prepared to take his impromptu dialogues in a shot or scene.

Bapu Watve : A comedian has to be of that caliber. Being a writer he can say anything.

Sharad Talwalkar : He does not follow verbatim the words written by script writer / dialogue writer. He may say anything coming to his mind on the spur of the moment, one should be able to answer back.

Bapu Watve : hmm... one should be ready. In all, you have respect for Dada Kondke.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. High esteem.

Bapu Watve : We blundered a bit in our earlier chat. I think, there was some confusion in Lakhachi Gosht, and Akher Zamal. Lakhachi Gosht came probably later than Akher Zamal.

Sharad Talwalkar : Oh yes. Akher Jamal was made in 1951.

- Bapu Watve** : Akher Zamal was Raja Gosavi's first film, Lakhachi Goshta being second.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : It was indeed his second film.
- Bapu Watve** : Can we put it this way? You essayed a big role in Akher Zamal. Lakhachi Goshta came later. Then, how did you accept a small role of an Engineer in Lakhachi Goshta?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : We used to honour our Guru's i.e. master's word in our times. I looked up at Raja Paranjpe as my Guru. He could handle humour and pathos with equal expertise while acting. I could not disregard his wish being his ardent disciple. Furthermore, in Pedgaoche Shahane I portrayed a policeman who did not have a single dialogue. But that was my master's order!
- Bapu Watve** : Okay, and you wanted to work with a competent film director like Raja Paranjpe. Isn't it?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Exactly. That was the reason for accepting that role
- Bapu Watve** : Sharad, it was problematic for film or theatre actors to get married in decent families in your times. Did you face this problem?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. I faced the same problem.
- Bapu Watve** : Even after doing your master's degree?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. After completing my M.A. too! People used to hesitate to give their daughters in matrimony to people associated with films or theatre. By 1950, times had changed a little. Still, my wife faced initial negativity when she expressed her wish to marry me. She spoke to her father i.e. my father in law Dr. K.N. Vatve who taught me from the First year to M.A. in

college. He knew my nature and mischievousness in classroom. Hence, he advised his daughter to think 10 times before taking the plunge with me.

Bapu Watve : I see.

Sharad Talwalkar : Because I was acting in dramas.

Bapu Watve : But how did you meet her?

Sharad Talwalkar : I used to direct plays in our S.P. College. Mr. S.P. Joshi would start the initial process and I used to take charge later.

Bapu Watve : Okay.

Sharad Talwalkar : When my wife joined the college as a first-year student in our college, I had started working in the university after completing my master's degree.

Bapu Watve : I see.

Sharad Talwalkar : She got elected as secretary for a college gathering. Since she was a well-known singer, her friends and all students decided to stage a musical play.

Bapu Watve : Yes.

Sharad Talwalkar : In the 1950s even in 1948, we never had mixed dramas in our college. Girls had to perform both female and male characters. My wife's group had decided to present 'Sanshaykallol'. Our principal was Prof. Dandekar.

Bapu Watve : Sonopant Dandekar?

Sharad Talwalkar : Correct. Sonopant Dandekar. He was a staunch traditionalist. He would not allow any outside director for girl's drama. He said, our past student, Mr. **Sharad Talwalkar** is working at the University. He directs plays.

Next time, when I will go there for a meeting, I will talk to him. Only if he takes up direction, I will let you perform a drama. Not otherwise. He allowed me to take rehearsals in the evening, six to nine. After returning from the university job, I used to conduct practice sessions. This is how I directed the 'girls only' Sanshaykallol play. My dedication to theatre and sincerity in my work probably impressed my wife to be. She conveyed it to her brother, Madhav Watve that she was keen on marrying his friend me. Subsequently, the issue was taken to her father. Her father was apprehensive about my acting career and uncertainty therein. You give serious thought to the unstable nature of this profession in which there is no security of future, he told her.

Bapu Watve : hmmm....

Sharad Talwalkar : Particularly of income. He advised her to rethink. But she was determined to marry me, come what may.

Bapu Watve : You were working then? Married in which year?

Sharad Talwalkar : Married on 20th Oct. 1950.

Bapu Watve : OKAY You had a job then?

Sharad Talwalkar : Oh yes. In University.

Bapu Watve : Superintendent?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. P.A. to Vice-Chancellor I left the job in 1957 from Superintendent's post. Pune University's first Vice-Chancellor was Dr. Jaykar. He created a post for me and offered it.

Bapu Watve : I see.

- Sharad Talwalkar :** Slowly I realized that my office commitments and passion for theatre activities can't go hand in hand.
- Bapu Watve :** Can't jell properly?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Maybe I could not be honest about both works at the same time.
- Bapu Watve :** May be.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** When I realized this, I faced some clashes with Barrister Jaykar. Finally, I decided to leave the job to pursue my artistic inclination. I decided to plunge into the acting career, ready to face whatever consequences may appear. I left my job on 26th April 1957 to give my 100% to theatre and films.
- Bapu Watve :** Okay but leaving a good job on a good post with handsome salary was risky. You were not sure of getting enough work in films or plays. Still, you were prepared to gamble?
- I remember an incident during those days when I had advised you to refrain from leaving the job.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** I remember too.
- Bapu Watve :** Because I had a few bitter experiences from the cinema world. Now I think it was good you did not follow my advice.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes.
- Bapu Watve :** You made a good career as an artist because of that. Otherwise you might have prospered in the job. Maybe Registrar ship etc.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Secondly, I will narrate to you an incident. After completing my master's degree, I realized how one should be true to one's nature and inclination.

Bapu Watve : Go on.

Sharad Talwalkar : I finished M.A. Course with good performance. I had 'Humour' as a topic in the curriculum. Hence, my father-in-law, Dr. Watve suggested that I should pursue Ph.D. with a critical study of Humour. I filled the entrance form for Ph.D. I sent a letter to Prof. P.K. Atre for his guidance. Of course, Atre was a renowned humourist in Marathi literature.

Bapu Watve : No doubt. A huge name then.

Sharad Talwalkar : He had studied humour in detail. He had a huge library in his Khandala Residence. He possessed a good collection of well-known volumes written by stalwarts like Aristotle, Macdowell on theory of Humour. I knew that he had studied them thoroughly. Because I had seen many marks in those books made by him. I asked for those books. He called me to Khandala to discuss. 'Why do you want these books?' he asked. "To write a thesis on humour." I replied.

Bapu Watve : Your Ph.D. work, you meant.

Sharad Talwalkar : He had a hearty laugh. He said, 'you are a good actor. I have seen your performances. We have even worked together. If you write a thesis on Humour to get a Doctorate, the comedian in you may die.

Bapu Watve : Oh...

Sharad Talwalkar : Later on, you will be able to write about or discuss humour. But you won't be able to laugh easily at other's humour.

Bapu Watve : that way.... ha...ha...

Sharad Talwalkar : You don't write a thesis. You will start dissecting any humour into wordy jokes or situational comedy etc. I dropped the

idea to writing a thesis on humour from that day. These were Atre's views.

Bapu Watve : Atre's advice turned out to be a blessing to Marathi theatre. Sharad, after leaving the job, you did not have any source of income. They must have been difficult times for you.

Sharad Talwalkar : Very difficult times. The atmosphere in the house got spoiled totally. My wife and her parents were not on talking terms with me. This unpleasantness continued almost for two & half years.

Bapu Watve : Oh no!

Sharad Talwalkar : After seeing the tense atmosphere in the house, I went to Bombay and started working in Usha Kiran's theatre group for Rs. 40 per night.

Bapu Watve : Usha Kiran? Film actress? She had a theatre group?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. She had one. I started working for it. They presented drama shows on some nights. Once I was scheduled for a show in Damodar Hall. My wife was taking music lessons from Jagannath Buwa Purohit.

Bapu Watve : The famous vocalist?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. He was in Mahim. Because I could not afford to stay in a lodge, I used to reside in his house.

Bapu Watve : You stayed in Jagannathbuwa's house?

Sharad Talwalkar : I did. During those days, he used to spend half a month in Kolhapur, and the remaining days of the month in Bombay. Once, I did not have money but was due to get my usual show-fee after the Damodar Hall show was finished.

Bapu Watve : Oh dear...

Sharad Talwalkar : Before every show, I performed my usual 'Pooja'. After praying I walked down from Mahim to Paral. After the show, I was paid my 'night' of Rs. 40. I made a practice of sending 10 Rs. to my wife by money order and keeping the remaining amount for my expenses.

Bapu Watve : For how long did you pull on like this?

Sharad Talwalkar : Almost two and half years. After that, I started getting film offers. I used to get something like 400/500 Rs. per film as honorarium.

Bapu Watve : What an 'honour'!

Sharad Talwalkar : Famous writer Ranjeet Desai liked my acting in 'Rangailya Ratri Ashya' (रंगल्या रात्री अशा). Although we had not met before, he almost fell in love with me. His novel Swami (स्वामी) was published then. It was super hit. He came to Pune to meet me. Because I was workless for two months or so, I was idle at home. He teased my wife that her love for me was being shared by him.

Bapu Watve : Oh really?

Sharad Talwalkar : But women are women. Practical! Desai was praising my acting in 'Rangalya Ratri Asha'. But she said that he is workless for the last few months. Sitting idle at home. When will he get some work? Desai stopped her from saying this. He told her; I am a 'Jahagirdar'. You will come to stay with me at 'Kowad! I will look after your child's education. People who want Sharad for acting will come to Kowad to meet him.

Bapu Watve : Great. So, somebody somewhere takes a note of good work.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Particularly in the olden days, good deeds were noted. One such incidence. Rajaram Maharaj was an athletic person. Gandharv company was in the financial doldrums.

Bapu Watve : Gandharv Co.? was it Shahu Maharaj?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. Rajaram Maharaj for sure. Gandharv Co was in huge debts. Balgandharva used to play men's part and Goharbai donned female roles. Mrucchakatic (मृच्छकटिक) was to be performed, Rajaram Maharaj wanted to see the show. Many royals went along with him. Show started. The curtains were torn. At the end of the first act, Vasantsena's jewellery gets stolen. Maitreya comes to convey this. Charudatta says, 'Okay'. At least the robbers did not return empty-handed from my house'. Then comes his song. 'जन सारे मजला म्हणतील' Narayanrao started to sing this song but got emotional remembering his entire predicament. He started weeping.

Bapu Watve : Achha...

Sharad Talwalkar : Maharaj was overwhelmed. As soon as the curtain dropped, he went backstage, embraced Narayanrao and said, " Please don't cry. You tell me the amount you need.

Bapu Watve : Okay.... This is how artists were taken care of. Sharad, you did not contribute much to rural films after that. You portrayed a villain in which film?

Sharad Talwalkar : Laxmi Ali Ghara (लक्ष्मी आली घरा). I played the villain in this film who was the hero's maternal uncle.

Bapu Watve : Whose film was it?

Sharad Talwalkar : Madhavrao Shinde's.

- Bapu Watve** : Directed by him?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Both, produced and directed by him.
- Bapu Watve** : I see.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : The maternal uncle of the hero is from a theatre background. He is a villain. But there is no direct reference of this connection.
- Bapu Watve** : No reference?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : No. A theatre person can be a womanizer to some extent.
- Bapu Watve** : Quite possible.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Some scenes were to that effect. Even the maid frowns at him. I thought, will it be apt to sing a few popular songs from plays at every entry on stage?
- Bapu Watve** : Yes... theatre is in his blood.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : The director nodded. I sang appropriate songs from (संशयकल्लोळ) while entering the stage every time. They enhanced the villain's character.
- Bapu Watve** : How was this villain? Vicious-looking? Or having a plain face with bad intentions?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : A rogue. Having some scope for humour. But not a villainise face as such.
- Bapu Watve** : That must be the reason for you to accept that role. Who were the other star-cast in his movie?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Kashinath Ghanekar was there. I think Uma was also there.
- Bapu Watve** : What was the viewer's reaction to your playing that villain? How was the response?

- Sharad Talwalkar :** People loved that role.
- Bapu Watve :** Adored it!
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. According to the newspaper reviews. Viewers told me that I appear a scoundrel. But I can make people laugh while talking to the hero or heroine. So, the desired effect of the character is achieved.
- Bapu Watve :** True. But similar roles did not come to you.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Never.
- Bapu Watve :** Did you get a chance to act in a historical?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Never.
- Bapu Watve :** Mythological?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. That was offered once. But because I tend to think a lot about my roles....
- Bapu Watve :** Why not? An artiste should be choosy about his roles. Then only his image is maintained.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Wadia Movietone had announced the film 'Subhadraharan' (सुभद्राहरण) Datta Dharmadhikari was the director. He decided that I should enact Narad's role in the film.
- Bapu Watve :** You had a huge fan following. Hence Narad's role?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. They wanted to give it a lighter touch. I repeatedly pleaded that I won't fit into it. Narad in the popular image is a bachelor, having sharp features and a lean physique.
- Bapu Watve :** Most of the Narads we saw till then were of this type.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. Most of them. Be it Vedpathak or Jeevan. Vedpathak was truly acknowledged. So, I could not make a good Narad. But they made a wig for me. Called me in the studio. The makeup

and the costume were done. I was kept ready to play Narad. Jayashree Gadkar was also there.

Bapu Watve : She was cast as Subhadra.

Sharad Talwalkar : Oh yes. Subhadra. But I was sceptical I told Dharmadhikari that I won't fit in Narad's image.

Bapu Watve : Even with competent acting?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Howsoever an actor may strive, the common image of Narad in people's minds will have to be honoured.

Bapu Watve : I agree.

Sharad Talwalkar : My scenes were damaging to it. So, I told them that this role should not be offered to me. They did not agree. Finally, when the actual shooting date came and I got a call letter, I sent them a notice.

Bapu Watve : Notice?

Sharad Talwalkar : Saying that because of ill health, I cannot accept this assignment. Actually, my drama shows were running in Satara area. They knew it and sent me a notice saying I was avoiding work due to false reasons.

Bapu Watve : Oh...

Sharad Talwalkar : Then another actor was made Narada. I convinced them that an actor has to himself think whether he will bear some resemblance to the character he portrays? They could sue me if they wished. But my point was valid. They also agreed.

Bapu Watve : Sharad, particularly in Historical or Mythological presentations, appearance does matter.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. It is very important.

- Bapu Watve** : Your acting comes next. But a Shivaji, Ram or Krishna should look like the originals.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Chandrakant looked Ram. Shahu Modak was identified with Krishna.
- Bapu Watve** : Or Vishnupant Pagnis 'appeared' Tukaram. That similarity makes the story convincing, realistic. Even 'social' films need to select visually convincing artists in various roles. If one is not suitable, the artiste should himself deny the role.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : I would not take up an unsuitable role for monetary consideration. Money keeps on coming.
- Bapu Watve** : True. Even for Narad's role, you were offered good money I am told. Sometimes it so happens that an actor fumbles in front of the camera. The producer or the film director who has never faced a camera as an actor laugh at him. "How can he make mistakes in such small shot?" they wonder. But he can fail miserably in front of the camera. Have you witnessed any such incidence? Where a producer or director attempts acting and turns a disaster?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. Film producer Vishwas Sarpotdar always felt that we actors demand huge money, live a luxurious life for saying a few lines written by dialogue writer. We don't have to exert ourselves in anyway.
- Bapu Watve** : On really?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Asla Navra Nuko Ga Bai (असला नवरा नको ग बाई) was the film in which I and Raja Gosavi were acting. There was a court scene. We needed someone as a judge. Sarpotdar offered to do the role and say few lines.

- Bapu Watve** : He tried his hand at that?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. He was made up as a judge wearing the gown etc. He sat on the judge's chair. Some audience had gathered outside the court to hear the court proceedings. When these spectators made noise, the judge had to shout 'order order' thrice hitting the hammer hard on the table. That would quieten the crowd. He needed 5 shots for this scene.
- Bapu Watve** : 5 shots for just saying order... order?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. He could not synchronise both these actions. He would either shout first or hit the hammer first
- Bapu Watve** : ha.... ha... ha...
- Sharad Talwalkar** : He took 5 or 6 retakes to okay the shot. Then I said, Balasaheb, do you realise now why we charge heavily for our job?
- Bapu Watve** : He must have realized the challenge of facing the camera. Sharad, you have been acting in theatre for almost 50 years now. You have done 115 films too. What is the difference between the two? You like to act in both media or you prefer theatre?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : One has to do theatre with a lot of concentration. The brain has to be alerted all the time. If a mistake is made on stage by a theatre actor, it cannot be corrected. If a dialogue is miffed while shooting, the whole scene can be cancelled and reshot. Theatre demands alertness, continuity.
- Bapu Watve** : Theatre is a living art, is it?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. Living art. We get live responses from the viewers while performing on stage. In fact, the actor is encouraged by this response to give a better performance.

- Bapu Watve** : What about film acting?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : No live audience, no instant response. The same set of people is around us while shooting. They are not allowed to respond; laugh at the jokes we crack in the shoot. Because total silence is to be maintained. Only film dialogues are to be recorded. Such dead silence proves very hazardous for a comedian.
- Bapu Watve** : hmm.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Nowadays they shoot in the evening and dub later.
- Bapu Watve** : Yes.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : While dubbing, responding to a joke becomes rather tedious. Your mood may be different at that time.
- Bapu Watve** : Correct. You don't get natural or expected laughter at the time of dubbing. It could be much lower.
- There could be another plus point of acting in theatre. If you excel in acting, if you get a higher response, you are boosted up to do better. Film acting has no such opportunity.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : No chance.
- Bapu Watve** : If you are applauded for a good shot, this encouragement may not be useful for the next shot.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : May not be.
- Bapu Watve** : There could be a gap in two shots. But theatre acting has a disadvantage too. If an audience does not like a performance, they can shoot out the actor.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes.

- Bapu Watve** : So, the theatre has both, plus and minus points. Can these two be treated as different arts? Theatre and Cinema?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Theatre has yet another advantage. The story, the performance and the viewer's response are continual. We are in the same mood for a long time. While filming, we have some serious scenes and comedy shots on the same set. We have to use the set for maximum scenes. So, we have to bring the desired mood forcefully. In dramas, once you get into a character, you have to be in it all the time.
- Bapu Watve** : You have to learn by heart all your dialogues.... That is another challenge. If you forget your words, you are laughed at. Another question I would like to raise. Does film acting skill prove helpful for theatre acting? Or vice versa?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : It helps. Theatre acting helps more in film acting. The only point is we gesticulate more on the stage. Cinema restricts all that. If there is a close-up of 75.... facial expressions will matter the most. If there is a long shot, you can make hand movements freely.
- Bapu Watve** : Who is your favourite film director?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : My favourite...
- Bapu Watve** : You had done 115-116 films you said. So, you have worked with many directors.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : I have worked with almost all Marathi Film directors other than Mr. Bhalajee Pendharkar.... I have acted in a film made by V. Shantaram. But Mr. Anant Mane directed it. For me, The Best Director is Mr. Raja Thakur. Equally impressive was Raja Paranjpe. Raja Thakur was editing films too. Combination of editor + director.

Bapu Watve : I see.

Sharad Talwalkar : Raja Thakur watched many English movies. The characters, the actors, Charles Lotton, Charlie Chaplin in English movies were studied by him. I think h was great because he chose the actors for appropriate roles. He gave vintage roles to me, Arun Sarnaik and he could extract quality acting from us.

Bapu Watve : How was the Raja Paranjpe school of acting?

Sharad Talwalkar : He used to teach every shot, scene.

Bapu Watve : Like theatre acting?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Theatrical acting lessons. Raja Thakur never taught us how to enact. I did one film with him. He had a good literary acumen.

Bapu Watve : True. He knew exactly what he wanted from the actor. Now a days many directors are so naive that they can't figure out what they want from the actor. Whatever the actor offers or manages is accepted. Raja Thakur was not of this type.

Sharad Talwalkar : He did not like excess acting or overacting. "Not to this extent, tone down, tone down" he would say and take out exactly what he wanted to be shown on screen. I have great respect for Raja Thakur. Being a good editor, he could finalise the script which would fit into that 13,500 feet length of the film. He used to manage with lesser film stock and lesser shooting because of this clarity. He could manage maximum impact with minimal shooting.

Bapu Watve : Yes. This was his strength. If we see Raja Thakur films, we notice a strong story element in them.

- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. Powerful stories.
- Bapu Watve :** Meaningful stories. Stories worth telling. I respect Raja Thakur for his story sense and the effort he put into story-telling. What about your impressions of other directors? Have something to say?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** There was Dinkar Patil. But he used to assist Master Vinayak. So, his style of direction was similar.
- Bapu Watve :** Had a chance to work with Rajdatta?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Rajdatta! Raja Paranjape's assistant.
- Bapu Watve :** Or disciple, if you may say so.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** His lineage. For example, Raja Paranjape's style of presenting children in films. When I worked with him for Astavinayak (अष्टविनायक), Mumbaicha Faujdar (मुंबईचा फौजदार), I sensed this prowess of him.
- Bapu Watve :** Okay. You have shared the screen with so many actors and actresses. Who were your preferred actors or actresses? To whom could your wavelength really match?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** In actresses, they could be Sulochanabai, Jayashree Gadkar and Ranjana. All very gifted artists. Of course, everyone had a different style. Pathos was Sulochanabai's forte. Once she started the dialogue and if I had to respond to the tragic mood, I did not have to struggle to create pathos. It would come naturally looking at her facial expressions.
- Bapu Watve :** What about Jayashree?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Same.

- Bapu Watve** : I think Jayashree could handle both tragedy and comedy with equal ease.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Oh yes. She was proficient in both. So was Ranjana.
- Bapu Watve** : So, according to you, all three are competent actresses perhaps from three generations! You must have enjoyed working with them. Can you name a few actors on these lines?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : As far as we comedians go, every comedian tries to outdo the other or opposite comedian.
- Bapu Watve** : Trying to keep an upper hand?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : So, to say. Raja Gosavi was one of them. Always taking additions etc. Finally, I had to request him to let me know beforehand what additions he is going to take on stage.
- Bapu Watve** : hmmm...
- Sharad Talwalkar** : As far as serious actors go, I liked Lagoo the most. He asked me to discuss before the performance whatever extra sentences I had in mind. Because his role was serious. He would not like the role to suffer because of my pranks. Nor should my comedy role suffer. Hence, he came out with this plan of prior discussion.
- Bapu Watve** : Which comedian did you like to work with?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : I liked Ashok Saraf the most.
- Bapu Watve** : In films?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes, in films. Baban Prabhu for theatre. He and me made a good team. In दिवा जळू दे सारी रात, there were only two of us. Father and son. The son is a vagabond. The father is

generally light-hearted. But I had many pathetic scenes too. Somehow, we could manage to jell it all together. The female characters kept on changing from time to time. But the play went on up to some 800 - 850 shows because of our teamwork.

Bapu Watve : Great. Did you act with Vasant Shinde too?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. I loved to face his 'bowling'. Sometimes he used to baffle me with his unexpected throws. It used to be a challenge to face him and give an apt answer.

Bapu Watve : So, you like to face challenging comedians.

Sharad Talwalkar : Definitely. But there should not be any vulgar or cheap undertones.

Bapu Watve : Understandable.

Sharad Talwalkar : There was one incidence with Vasant Shinde. We were presenting संशयकल्लोळ I was फाल्गुनराव and Shinde was playing भावड्या. We did hundreds of shows. Falgunrao is asked to meet a woman in the evening when it's too dark to recognize the faces. Shinde said the sentences as per the text. Then had his addition, "Sir, are you fit enough for this meeting?".

Bapu Watve : Ha... Ha... Ha...

Sharad Talwalkar : Naturally huge laughter came from the theatre, and I myself could not stop laughing.

Bapu Watve : So Shinde was intelligent enough.

Sharad Talwalkar : Intelligent. He was useful to co-artistes like me because we had to be on our toes all the time.

- Bapu Watve** : About Raja Gosavi now. Some of his additions could spoil the fun or mood of the play.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Spoil he did. At times.
- Bapu Watve** : Sometimes he uses inappropriate words or sentences.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Inappropriate. There was a discussion on this in Kolhapur Theatre conference (नाट्यसंमेलन). The topic was, are actors supposed to give additions to the plays' text. There were many renowned drama artists such as Vasant Kanetkar, Vasant Sabnis, Suresh Khare who participated in the discussion. Both Sabnis and Khare had no objection to the actor's additions. But whatever is added should be well synchronized with the author's text? There said that **Sharad Talwalkar**'s additions are of this type. I was very happy for this pat on my back.
- Bapu Watve** : Naturally.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : घरोघरी हीच बॉब and मामला चोरीचा were two Sabnis plays which I did. Whatever additions I took in these plays went so well that people thought they were written by Sabnis himself. Sabnis himself told this. Another instance was with Rajkaran Gele Chulit (राजकारण गेलं चुलीत) by Mr. Atmaram Sawant. First few shows, I stuck to the original script. Later on, I made pun on two Marathi words. One, Paksh, meaning political party and Pakshi, meaning bird. The second word was फळं meaning edible fruits and fruits of one's efforts. The additions I made with these words were later incorporated in the printed copy of the play.
- Bapu Watve** : What did Suresh Khare say?

Sharad Talwalkar : I did his 'Sakhi Shejarini'. I am still doing it. A few sentences in it are added by me. I play a doctor's role in it. Now my additions are accepted by all in 'Sakhi Shejarini'.

Bapu Watve : Raja Gosavi was a bit notorious for such additions. Not that we are criticizing him. Sometimes his additions are acceptable. But sometimes they can become unrealistic and vulgar. Did you experience this?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. During the show of Langanchi Bedi (लग्नाची बेडी) in Birla Matoshree Sabhagruh. I was playing Gokarn, Raja Gosavi: Audhoot, Prasad Savkar: Pargag. In the second act all the characters i.e. Ramanna, Parag, Ghadge, Gokaran, Avdhoot come together to find out a way in Kanchan's problem.

Parag says, "Let her come my way. Then I will catch hold of her like a kitten and will pack her off to Bombay directly by Deccan Queen." This is what the playwright has written. The reference to Deccan Queen is from the past. Because Parag meets Rashmi in the Deccan Queen and gets so mad after her that he breaks into a song. "ती पाहताच बाला..."

Bapu Watve : I remember.

Sharad Talwalkar : Now the mention of Deccan Queen always evokes laughter. But Raja Gosavi was a star then. So, he got up from his seat and started to act like a child driving a toy train in circles and chanting झुक झुक झुक... This also got some applause."

Bapu Watve : Naturally.

Sharad Talwalkar : But when two comedians are facing each other on stage, if one of them throws a loose ball kind of phrase, the other 'batsman' has to hit its hand.

Bapu Watve : Ha... ha...ha...

Sharad Talwalkar : When I got this Deccan Queen act from Raja Gosavi as loose ball, I hit a sixer. I said, "Mr. Avdhoot, why are you uttering झुक झुक... झुक झुक...? Deccan Queen has electric engines. So, it won't make that noise." Here Raja Gosavi did not consider this reality. A comedian has to think of reality first before he adds something.

Bapu Watve : True. Some roles of which you are fond of? If you remember some from your huge career? Is it possible?

Sharad Talwalkar : Daduminya from 'Rangalya Ratri Ashya' (रंगल्या रात्री अशा). Appa from (मुंबईचा जावई)". The old man from (जावई विकत घेणे आहे)" for this old man's role, I got a special jury's award as a hero in the film festival organized by 'Govt of Maharashtra' in that year.

Bapu Watve : Interesting.

Sharad Talwalkar : Although I was playing an old man, I was nominated as a Hero.

Bapu Watve : What was really noteworthy in these roles?

Sharad Talwalkar : In 'Rangalya Ratri Ashya', I had to evoke both, humour and pathos. I was an old man in this film too. In जावई विकत घेणे आहे, I had lot to do and show variety of emotions.

Bapu Watve : What was the storyline like?

Sharad Talwalkar : The old man wants his daughter to marry. But if she marries a particular boy, the old man is going to die within six months. This is his predicament. Various shades to the character, I tried to portray all. He sits idle for six months. He is committed to his family also... very complex emotions.

- Bapu Watve** : Can you narrate a few shooting incidences where you had to handle difficult situations or threats to your life?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : No threat to life as such. But as I started getting typecast as a comedian, I tried to get rid of that 'Stamp'. From 'Rangalya Ratri Ashya' I started accepting serious roles. Lek Chalali Sasarla (लेक चालली सासरला) and Dhakti Soon (धाकटी सून) were two films in which there was no scope for humour. They were tragedies.
- Bapu Watve** : Before we come to this point, I wanted to know challenging, stressful moments during your shootings.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : No. Never.
- Bapu Watve** : The audience still responds positively to your roles.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Oh yes. Their applause is still the same.
- Bapu Watve** : You got tremendous affection from the people.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : I am running in my 70th year now. Still, I have 3, 4 films on hand. After all, films run on audience's applause. Some producers want only me in some roles. This shows their confidence in me.
- Bapu Watve** : Your sense of humour works in some serious situations also. Can you name few instances of this type?
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Surely. I was studying in college. The period was around 1942-1943 and I used to take meals in Badshahi Boarding. The manager there was a local leader of Tilak Road. Always ready to help people.
- Bapu Watve** : hmmm.....

Sharad Talwalkar : You know, we middle-class people don't go to funeral procession easily. So, the manager used to 'book' us for night funeral processions if required, sometimes two processions in one night could also take place. He had made two batches of us lodgers. A time came when two teams had to be sent to two funeral processions.

Bapu Watve : Really?

Sharad Talwalkar : My team was particularly weak because we did not know the 'science' of fixing a bier etc. A woman had passed away. We brought the dead body in the open and tied it on the bier. It was 12 in the night. We started the body's last journey. Badshahi's manager was with another group. He realized the nerviness of our team. He was worried whether we could manage it. So, he carved running I held the bier the side where the corpse's head was resting. It was not properly tied. The manager enquired whether we had done the job properly I said, yes. But while we were walking the corpse's head started moving in such a fashion as if the corpse was negating. I said that the woman does not want to go. Even her husband had a peel of laughter at that moment. He was curious to know who was the person making this comment. He also had a trait of humour.

Bapu Watve : You could be funny even in serious illness, is it?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes, once I got typhoid fever when I was on a tour

Bapu Watve : Really?

Sharad Talwalkar : We had shown every night at a different place, and I used to get a low-grade fever during it.

Bapu Watve : Which was the play?

Sharad Talwalkar : 'Sakhi Shejarini' (सखी शेजारीणी). The shows could not be cancelled. I did 6 shows in this condition. In every town, the local doctor would give me some tablets, I used to sweat and perform. The 7th show was in Solapur. A lady doctor there suspected that this could be some other ailment. I should be taken to Pune. After coming to Pune, I had severe pain in my stomach our doctor called an intestine specialist to examine me. He said this is typhoid only but has affected the intestine. He needs immediate surgery.

Bapu Watve : Oh.....

Sharad Talwalkar : It was to be operated in Jahangir Hospital. Everything was finalized. An ambulance arrived. They took one on the stretcher. People gathered all around as they would for my show. My wife was shedding tears; I said ' don't cry' And tell all these spectators, that I am going to return.

Bapu Watve : This is not the last time you would me see

Sharad Talwalkar : During those days one of my films was running in Pune. Dada Kondke was co-actor. Once I reached the hospital, doctors wanted to take my x-ray. So, the staff took me to the x-ray room.

Bapu Watve : Poor you!

Sharad Talwalkar : After taking my X-ray I would be taken to my room

Bapu Watve : Okay.

Sharad Talwalkar : The ward boys and doctors had seen that film. They welcomed me heartily while taking X-Ray, they asked, "which is your next film? I said, the one you are taking now is my last film."

Bapu Watve : Ha...ha...ha...

Sharad Talwalkar : I have got a feeling that if a man can take all things light heartedly, his tension of others also. His life span may increase because of this.

Bapu Watve : And he is welcomed by all.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes, People love his company.

Bapu Watve : What was that incidence when there was a robbery in your house?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. Robbery. After my marriage. While doing my M.A, I was staying alone in a bungalow in a small Room Later. The owner had renovated the outhouse and given it on rent to me. The owner stayed in Bombay and used to come here occasionally.

It so happened once that I shifted all my stuff to this outhouse in the evening and went for my drama show at night. My wife was sleeping in that room. I returned after the show and checked the lock of that outhouse. It was intact. Then I went to sleep in that small room Next morning my milkman came to deliver milk as usual. He noticed that the outhouse lock was broken. He woke me up hurriedly to inform this.

Bapu Watve : Oh no.

Sharad Talwalkar : When I checked, I found all our belongings, Jewellery, clothes, etc had vanished. My wife started weeping. I too was upset but tried to comfort my wife saying, " Pl. stop crying. It seems the robber wants to marry and set up his home. She asked, is this the time to crack a joke? Then I asked if I could

sit next to her and start crying. This remark raised even more laughter.

Bapu Watve : Oh really?

Sharad Talwalkar : See. The lock was intact till 2 a.m. and by 5'o clock in the morning when the milkman came, it was broken. The whole episode took place in three hours flat. I went to Deccan police station immediately and lodged my complaint.

Bapu Watve : Next?

Sharad Talwalkar : They noted the complaint. I requested them to hurry up because it had taken place a few hours ago and there was a good chance of finding the culprit. The Havaladar' on duty said, " we will do our Best Sir, but first you bring the culprit here and I will immediately handcuff him.

Bapu Watve : ha.... ha...ha.... This scene was worthy of adding to any film

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes, could be added.

Bapu Watve : If an actor is married, people are always suspicious of his behaviour. Did you come across any such incidence?

Sharad Talwalkar : True. I remember an incidence when my film 'याला जीवन ऐसे नाव' was running in theatres. Kalekar was the producer and Raja Nene was the director of this film it had two heroes and two heroines - Raja Gosavi and Jayshree Gadkar Myself and Nalini Chonkar.

Bapu Watve : So, there were two couples

Sharad Talwalkar : We had a love song on screen. One stanza each. We were roaming in rains, love birds that we were..... The scene very

well pictured. The film was a huge success and run for many days.

Bapu Watve : 'याला जीवन ऐसे नाव'?

Sharad Talwalkar : My wife used to come to Pune for her music lesson then. She had come at that time. She said," you don't have a shooting schedule today. Let's go to the market for shopping. I agreed we went out with an umbrella since it was the rainy season. As soon as we started, it started to drizzle near Mahim. Naturally, I opened my umbrella we both shared it. Some 15-20 people were following us. Two of them could not resist a prank. They came forward and shouted looking at my wife," This is not that woman. This one is different."

Bapu Watve : Ha.... ha...ha... The picture must be running here in Pune at that time

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes, it was running in Bombay too But I had to cajole my wife for this prank. She had misunderstood.

Bapu Watve : You had a similar experience with AIR too.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes, Similar instance. My wife was a radio singer from 1948. She used to sing on Bombay radio station. Her maiden name was miss Usha Watve AIR Pune Station from 1953. The list of Radio artists staying in Pune was directly sent to Pune AIR station by Bombay AIR. It had their Pune residential addresses too.

Bapu Watve : Must be.

Sharad Talwalkar : I was also working in Pune radio plays frequently as an actor. So many officers there knew me. One day my wife had a music programme on Pune Radio at 10 in the night. She

asked me to take me back after the recited so that she did not need any Radio staffer to accompany here

Bapu Watve : Understandable

Sharad Talwalkar : I went late at night to pick her up. She was singing inside the studio. The artist chart displayed her name as Miss Usha Watve. A duty officer saw me and asked, "How come you are here now? Your radio play is not scheduled today. What made you come here"? I said, 'I have come to fetch my wife. He asked, "who is your wife?" "Miss Usha Watve" I replied. He could not believe it. He said, "Not possible. She is unmarried. How can a professor of Sanskrit, Mr. Watve's daughter be your wife? we are married for the last three years. I said. He would not agree. Then the comedian in me came up. I asked him to come aside and whispered, "I have an affair with her. I can't meet her at their house when her father is around. Hence, I have come here to meet her..... Now else could I convince him?"

Bapu Watve : ha..... ha.... ha....

Sharad Talwalkar : Look at the irony. If you tell the truth, people don't believe. People tend to believe your lies. Because they have some imagination working on them.

Bapu Watve : True. Now, what is the secret of your success as a comedian? Being a comedian is a tough job. And getting established is still more difficult when I analyse you, I think you had some tricks to make your words funnier? Did you have to gesticulate more?

Sharad Talwalkar : Not always.

Bapu Watve : Did you have to expert yourself to get desired comic effect? Acid inappropriate physical movements? Cheapness? Frivolity?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. Never.

Bapu Watve : You are still in demand as an actor. Is this the secret of your success as a comedian that you never went overboard? Or you can name something different?

Sharad Talwalkar : Must be this. I keep on observing and use some of the details from my observation.

Bapu Watve : Yes.

Sharad Talwalkar : I can retain the variety in my roles because of this. This could be another reason for my popularity.

Bapu Watve : Ease.... Realistic nature.... other factors?

Sharad Talwalkar : The actor must always maintain the ease and lucidity in acting. My current drama..... wherein my wife is very fat.... in one scene, she asks me to hurry up. She says, " I am going to take bath. You follow me in the bathroom."

Bapu Watve : Ha.... ha.... Ha...

Sharad Talwalkar : Considering her fatness, I add one sentence." No. The bathroom is too small you finish first. Then I will use it."

Bapu Watve : Nice.

Sharad Talwalkar : I hate overacting. I think a comedian should stick to the regimen of theatre you should not cross the line of decency to make people laugh. People may demand anything. But an artist should not succumb to it. In fact, he should compel people to watch whatever he is performing. He should rule over them.

- Bapu Watve** : I see. So, you should train the audience to respond to good acting.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Training! True.
- Bapu Watve** : Has any of your roles failed So far? Has anyone commented that you are repeating yourself as an actor? Not getting type cast is your biggest triumph I suppose.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : While portraying a comic character, It has to be studied analytically to find where the humour lies in it. Take Taliram's character for instance. I have played Tailram many a time He was a philosopher by heart. He thinks alcohol is beneficial in some way. This is his philosophy.
- Bapu Watve** : Interesting!
- Sharad Talwalkar** : The actors who treat him as a comic person don't get laughs. Whereas artists who seriously present his opinions about alcohol get more applause.
- Bapu Watve** : Possible.
- Sharad Talwalkar** : See, every spectator knows that alcohol is bad. But Taliram gives it a good twist by his intelligence. A drunkard never lies because he can't speak lies. He can't slander because he does not remember what people have said in the first place.
- Bapu Watve** : And the incidence he narrates...
- Sharad Talwalkar** : Yes. Once a friend in our group felt like stealing something. While we were busy drinking, he stole the ring from my finger and in that drunken phase, gave it to me to keep in custody, saying "This is Taliram's ring. Don't tell anyone.
- Bapu Watve** : ha.... ha...ha

- Sharad Talwalkar :** If this incidence is narrated in all seriousness it evokes laughter.
- Bapu Watve :** That means even serious talking can get laughter and an actor should be aware of it. You have to study the character.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** And portray it with ease, authenticity.
- Bapu Watve :** There should be no overtones and excessive physical movements.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Another incidence in that play-Taliram sells all the photo frames of gods and goddesses in the house to raise some money. Finally, he sells his father's photograph in the frame for 4 annas. How he justifies it? He says "Nowadays, not only gods and goddesses, but Shivaji and Bajirao are also sold @ two each. My father could be sold for four annas! His seriousness of narration gives huge laughter to the audience.
- Bapu Watve :** This is very important. Your role in 'अपराध मीच केला' was very famous. Gole master was his name.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes.
- Bapu Watve :** You really excelled in it. The play got synonymous with that character. A critic had commented that Gole master could carry the entire play in his pocket or wind up in his Dhoti! Did you suggest this character to the play-write?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. I conceived that character.
- Bapu Watve :** And yourself if portrayed it. Did you suggest any characters for films too?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** No. such occasions did not come.
- Bapu Watve :** But you may have added a different shade to any character.

- Sharad Talwalkar :** I did.
- Bapu Watve :** Either addition or some omission to the character may have increased its impact!
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. One must be well-read to do this for example P.L. Deshpande's characters in 'व्यक्ती आणि गल्ली'. I remember Chitale master from that collection. How he behaved? How did he speak? After studying his character, I could do justice to Gole Master's character.
- Bapu Watve :** So, an actor must be an avid reader.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Very essential.
- Bapu Watve :** Today's actors don't read much. After presenting many comic characters, when did you feel like shifting to serious roles? You have not done any serious role in a drama yet, I suppose..... or perhaps in only one drama. 'एक हट्टी मुलगी'.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Oh yes. 'एक हट्टी मुलगी' it was.
- Bapu Watve :** It is a play written by P.L. Deshpande your role was fantastic Sharad and your acting was superb in it. What was the character?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** See, the person is a fraud. He cheats people and makes money. Even his family is fed up with his tricks. His daughter-in-law is a very principled person. He gets exposed to her.
- Bapu Watve :** Which serious role you paid in a film for the first time?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Totally serious and tragic role was in 'लेक चालली सासरला'.
- Bapu Watve :** Even more serious than the 'Kawari' (कैवारी) role?

Sharad Talwalkar : Perhaps. In 'Kaiwari' the protagonist is a teacher who can reform society. This story was conceptualized and developed by Govind Ghanekar. Story of a social reformer.

Bapu Watve : I remember.

Sharad Talwalkar : His daughter is to be married in a very wealthy family. The teacher finds it tough to match the demands of the groom's family. Yet he does it and ultimately the girl is burnt alive by her in-laws. He collapses completely their entire film full of pathos.

Bapu Watve : The film was praised by the general audience and learned critics as well How did you feel while depicting this character?

Sharad Talwalkar : I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Bapu Watve : See, you were used to comedy. That style of acting was deep-rooted in you. Now you had to do the exact opposite. You must have worked hard on it, put in a lot of thinking and analysis.

Sharad Talwalkar : I had to do it. I know a few girls' fathers who have gone through a similar tragedy. One person stopped reading the daily newspaper after his daughter's marriage.

Bapu Watve : Hmm.

Sharad Talwalkar : Newspapers carried news items of such gory incidences. He was afraid that his own daughter may have to go thru such trauma.

Bapu Watve : One day, a piece of news might come about her too.

Sharad Talwalkar : Stopped reading the daily newspaper. I saw his devastated face. He never looked up at anyone. He always looked down.

Bapu Watve : Oh really?

Sharad Talwalkar : He was constantly thinking of his daughter. If you remember, in that film, I was never seated with an erect head. I would always sit with my neck down.

Bapu Watve : That means he is constantly helpless.

Sharad Talwalkar : Helpless. But the role was liked by all. While doing the last scene, I myself started weeping. The writer had written really very well. My younger son in the film tells me that my daughter's mother-in-law and husband are given capital punishment. Police come to take them in custody. The director had taken beautiful shots. Normally directors tend to focus on heroin's face. But not here. The camera was panned on my face. I was in close up and others were zoomed. My son says, "Baba, these people killed our Tai, hence they are punished." I had the last sentences on this. I said, "Actually I am the one who is really punished."

Bapu Watve : Oh..... So sorry to hear....

Sharad Talwalkar : I have lost my daughter forever. I will have to carry this burden of sorrow for the rest of my life.

Bapu Watve : Very tragic indeed. Your role in 'धाकटी सून' was also serious. But it had different shades.

Sharad Talwalkar : There I quarrel with Vasant Shinde. Then I want to leave that place. But Vasant Shinde keeps on talking. And I feel like laughing even in that angry mood.

Bapu Watve : Yes.

Sharad Talwalkar : 'लेक चालली सासरला' has also similar scenes. It has a happy ending. We have a विठ्ठल मंदिर (temple of Lord Vitthal) next to our house.

Bapu Watve : People sing Bhajans there.

Sharad Talwalkar : The people from that film unit made us listen to a devotional cassette. I knew it was a Bhajan. Every Monday, Thursday or on EKADASHI day people sing Bhajans in the temple. I started visiting the temple frequently. I observed the hand movement of the singers, the accompanists. Sudhir Phadke has sung the Bhajan in the film.

Bapu Watve : He is the composer also.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes, the film's director Vaidya asked me to remember who the singer is. So that I could enact convincingly. Sudhir Phadke loved my rendering of the Bhajan.

Bapu Watve : Great!

Sharad Talwalkar : At the premiere show of the film, Sudhir Babu took me aside and said, "Your lip-sync was very natural. Let's take a photograph of two of us together". He got our picture clicked.

Bapu Watve : This means an actor has to constantly think about his role in detail. He has to prepare a lot to give good results.

Sharad Talwalkar : No doubt.

Bapu Watve : For "Rangalya Ratri Ashya" you used to sit with Mohammad Husain Khan Sahib and observe him closely.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. I am a Sarangi player in it. I observed Khansahib high notes from the Sarangi by pulling the lower portion of the strings and vice versa. Low notes required plucking the

higher end of the strings. The fingers have to be perpendicular. This position hurts after some time. I studied the whole process for a week or so. Two songs were picturised on me but I looked very natural as a Sarangi player. Even Ram Narayan Praised it.

Bapu Watve : Ram Narayan? The famous Sarangi player of all India repute?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. He was friend of Ranjeet Desai. Desai affectionately called Ram Narayanjee to see our film. He came watched the movie. When the movie got over, he asked "From whom did you learn Sarangi playing?" Both Ranjeet Desai and Raja Thakur were in laughter.

Bapu Watve : Naturally.

Sharad Talwalkar : They said, Sharad does not play Sarangi. He cannot produce a single note from the instrument.

Bapu Watve : Ha...ha...ha.

Sharad Talwalkar : All this is his acting.

Bapu Watve : So good acting can be that effective if real hard work is put in. Did you get any State Govt. awards for acting?

Sharad Talwalkar : Got it three times.

Bapu Watve : Name the films.

Sharad Talwalkar : The first award came for 'Ekati' (एकटी).

Bapu Watve : The film ran for several days. The story of Tatya was very interesting.

Sharad Talwalkar : I was selected the Best Actor as a Character artist. The second award was for 'Mumbaicha Jawai'. I played Appa's character in it. I had a very tragic scene there.

Bapu Watve : I remember. Your wife in the film comes to Bombay with you after marriage in a two-room tenement.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. She has a huge house in Belgaum. Once her father visits her and suggests to her to come to Belgaum leaving this shanty. I say, "This is our Taj mahal Sir" we will build Taj mahal on these pillars we will build tall buildings.

Although I was playing an old man in जावई विकत घेणे आहे' I got an award as a hero.

Bapu Watve : So, this was the third one. Now of question about your family life. You were mostly away from the house due to shooting schedules or theatre shows. In the meantime, your wife looked after the household. Did she learn any other art as a hobby?

Sharad Talwalkar : After our marriage, we had nobody in the house to help her. Cooking... sending my Tiffin to Pune University where I was working... kept her so occupied that she had to abandon formal education in the first year itself.

Bapu Watve : I see.

Sharad Talwalkar : As I got busier, 20-25 days in a month or 2 months at a stretch I would be away from home. I used to do 2 plays or four films simultaneously. Then I advised her to complete her education. She did her master's degree in Music. That's how her loneliness was utilized.

Bapu Watve : Very good.

- Sharad Talwalkar :** She has studied music from 2 masters. Jagannath buwa Purohit for the first 10 years was her Guru. Now she is under the tutelage of Pandit C.R. Vyas.
- Bapu Watve :** Commendable.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Because of her expertise she could perform in the Bombay Conference of Govt. of India. She sang in Calcutta, Chandigarh also.
- Bapu Watve :** She is a frequent contributor to All India Radio.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** Yes. She is in the B+ category of singers list there. She has given an audition for the A-class category now. I am always of the opinion, if one has some artistic trait, one must develop it.
- Bapu Watve :** Without wasting time, isn't it?
- Sharad Talwalkar :** I had the same feeling about my wife too. Artistic pursuit never goes waste.
- Bapu Watve :** Never. You are always contemplating your role. She should also be engrossed in her musical endeavour.
- Sharad Talwalkar :** People accuse me of not paying attention to them while I am walking on the streets. I am in my own trance.
- Bapu Watve :** Hmmm
- Sharad Talwalkar :** See. I keep on thinking about my current drama or film which is ongoing. I don't like to waste my walking time chatting with people. When in the house, one has to talk a lot. So, the time to ponder upon your work should be properly utilized by an artist.
- Bapu Watve :** You have two grown-up sons. Did you ever think of developing their careers in Cinema or Theatre?

Sharad Talwalkar : No. Leaving the house at an early age made me grow all alone. It also kindled an urge in me to prove myself. My sons are grown in comfort. I was not sure whether they would have that urge. In an insecure profession like this, would they be able to fend for themselves? Instead, they should pursue good education and get stable jobs. I encouraged them for this.

Bapu Watve : You encouraged them...

Sharad Talwalkar : I used to play cricket in my school and college days. I wanted to become a cricketer. I fulfilled this wish of mine thru my elder son. Whatever he needed for cricket excellence was provided by me... He played for Ranji Trophy for 3 years. Now he has become a cricket coach training young aspirants.

Bapu Watve : I see... your younger son has some acting trait I suppose.

Sharad Talwalkar : He has. In the film Asthavinayak (अष्टविनायक) he plays the hero childhood. Sachin's boyhood! He was to give a lengthy shot of some 175 feet. It was his first shot. But he could finish it at a stretch. The first shot okay! I was so happy.

Bapu Watve : He surely has acting in him. But you were not sure whether he would continue.

Sharad Talwalkar : Not sure. He got a good job also.

Bapu Watve : Another question. Should an artiste be fully devoted to his art-or he should accommodate it with some job?

Sharad Talwalkar : No.... I think...

Bapu Watve : The reason for asking this is, I have seen very few artistes making good money. Many don't earn enough so they have to

take up some job. Accommodating both together may be difficult. Your take on this...

Sharad Talwalkar : If you are a real art lover, you have to take a plunge into it. It's not possible otherwise. I have seen artists. Mohammad Husain Khan Sahib for example. Did not earn much. But such artists devoted their lives to Sarangi and Tabla. You cannot achieve great height without such devotion.

Bapu Watve : Can't reach the highest degree of success. If you are committed, you have to be ready to face the difficulties or problems that come your way. No point in cribbing, isn't it?

Sharad Talwalkar : Exactly.

Bapu Watve : If you are busy in a job, and turn to art after duty hours, you cannot give full justice to it.

Sharad Talwalkar : I have experienced this. That is why I left my job. Otherwise I could not give justice to acting.

Bapu Watve : Sharad, your journey of comedy is going from your birth for last 69 years. You must have amused many viewers, lessened their sorrow. Is there any incident where someone thanked you saying, "you ease my sorrow".

Sharad Talwalkar : I can narrate one instance.

Bapu Watve : About Dr. Sardesai?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. He never takes consultation fees from artists. I was not his regular patient. He had prescribed me some medicine when I was sick. He wanted to do my routine check-up every two months. And he would not take his consultation charges from me. I felt awkward. So, I stopped going to him.

Bapu Watve : Understandable.

Sharad Talwalkar : Once I requested him to come and watch my show. He said he may come on Sunday, afternoon time if he is free. We had (अप्पाजीची सेक्रेटरी) scheduled on Sunday noon. The show was houseful. I invited him. He came happily with his wife, both of them were in peals of laughter. The doctor came to greet me after the show was over and said, "Sharadrao, can you sense why I don't charge you my fees? You prove a stress buster to these 1000 spectators in a show. You are also a Doctor!"

Bapu Watve : Great! Any more instances...

Sharad Talwalkar : The infamous Abhyankar massacre in Pune! Prof. Abhyankar's elder Son Gajanan Rao and his wife were in Pune that day. They had gone for a party. When they returned home by 9.30 at night, they saw 5 dead bodies in the house. They were so devastated that they could not listen to Radio, could not watch T.V., No films, plays, music concerts, nothing for and half years.

Bapu Watve : Pitiabile!

Sharad Talwalkar : Someone gave them two tickets of my play, (अप्पाजीची सेक्रेटरी). They were reluctant. People pressed them to go out. How long could they suffer like this? They came for the drama. Saw it and the next day called me at 9 in the morning. He wanted to meet me. My wife thought that Sr. Mr. Abhyankar, who was a Sanskrit Scholar, could be having something to be discussed.

Bapu Watve : Yes. The father-in-law could be meeting with some purpose.

Sharad Talwalkar : Abhyankar came and said they could not thank me enough. I asked why. They said we laughed for the first time after 4 and a half years. So far, I have worked as an actor, I have earned good money, I could build my own house, but this reaction gave me the ultimate, almost out of this world joy. I think this can be the ultimate accomplishment of all actors.

Bapu Watve : How long can you work? For how many years will you be acting as per your thinking? How long you wish to work?

Sharad Talwalkar : I wish to continue for a long period.

Bapu Watve : Sure enough.

Sharad Talwalkar : I believe that making people laugh satisfies me the most. My nerves are also cleared by it. So, I think I can work for many more days. If an actor is housebound, he falls sick. He is used to facing crowd all the time.

Bapu Watve : Hmm...

Sharad Talwalkar : He sees his name appearing in advertisements every day. When I left my job and entered this field Dattarambapu said...

Bapu Watve : Master Dattaram?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. He asked me not to get over-ambitious. My 'Night' i.e. fee for each show should be affordable to the people.

Bapu Watve : Meaning?

Sharad Talwalkar : Because an actor's name has to appear in advertisements every day. If sometimes a show is poorly booked and your performance fee is very high, the organizer may hesitate to talk to you. If your fee is reduced by some amount, he may be

able to pay you. That day won't go without any income keep this in mind.

Bapu Watve : Good advice. What type of role would you wish to do here afterwards?

Sharad Talwalkar : Due to advancing age, I think I should go for more serious roles. I had seen 'cloud 9'. The protagonist's role therein is my dream role. He is very sad in his life. But gets immense pleasure in making people laugh. I would love to do a role of this kind someday.

Bapu Watve : You sometimes came up with bright ideas in dramas and films. I have the first-hand experience of it at the time of 'Dhakti Soon' (धाकटी सून).

Sharad Talwalkar : True.

Bapu Watve : The changes you suggested in the script have really added to the impact of the scenes. They have proved beneficial for the film too. That means your education, reading, observation helps you not only as an actor but also as a writer of the film. You have penned a play, I suppose.

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. 'नाटक झाले जन्माचे' was the first parody I wrote.

Bapu Watve : And what is 'शरदाचे हास्य'?

Sharad Talwalkar : It is शरद हास्य. From 1966 to 1974, I used to write a column in 'Rasrang' (रसरंग). (A famous film periodical) Readers used to ask questions and I used to give 'tongue in cheek' answers. I answered some 3200 questions in all for 'प्रश्न तुमचा : उत्तर शरद तळवलकरांचे'. My friend Mr. Anantrao Kulkarni came up with the idea to select good answers and compile them in a book

form. He selected questions and published 1500 Q-A-excerpts in this book. That column was very popular. Dinkar Patil once told me that he used to buy that periodical only for my column.

Bapu Watve : Do you intend to write an autobiography?

Sharad Talwalkar : No, no intention of autobiography.

Bapu Watve : I thought you could guide new actors; they could be benefited by your autobiography. Your take on this...

Sharad Talwalkar : I think, instead of writing a full autobiography, an actor should note down major events, instances of his life. The upcoming generation may take a lesson or two from them if they wish.

Bapu Watve : Some newcomers are really enthusiastic about learning the craft. You would like to teach them? In a workshop or coaching class maybe?

Sharad Talwalkar : I don't think actors can be made in such workshops.

Bapu Watve : An actor is to be born!

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. And he should take up acting directly by appearing on stage. It can't be taught.

Bapu Watve : Hmm...

Sharad Talwalkar : He starts thinking about where he stands and what he says on the stage. These thoughts come automatically to him. Over the time, he would speak on the stage with the same ease as he would speak in his home.

Bapu Watve : Both for theatre or films? Same principle?

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes.

Bapu Watve : You are a very senior and experienced actor now. If there is a newcomer in the film and is in your awe, can you get good work from him?

Sharad Talwalkar : Certainly... I can name Navare...

Bapu Watve : From Dhakti Soon....

Sharad Talwalkar : Yes. He asked me many questions. How should I deliver this? You find this okay? I told him, "Your voice is rather low here. Increase the volume a bit". I keep on giving suggestions like these from time to time. But nowadays, in our field, if a single film is successful, the actors in it become seasoned. It is very difficult to teach such people.