



National film archive of india

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

Interview of film distributor, producer, director, writer and journalist, Shri V.V. Bapat alias Anna by Bapu Watve

Bapu Watve : Anna , When and where were you born?

Bapat : I was born on 18th March, 1914.

Bapu Watve : That means now, you are about 75 years old.

Bapat : Right

Bapu Watve : And where were you born?

Bapat : I was born at Rawate, near Chiplun.

Bapu Watve : Ok and How was your family condition at that time? What was your father doing?

Bapat : My father died when I was two years old. So I don't remember my father much.

Bapu Watve : Ok.

Bapat : I did my primary education at my uncle's place. That is at Sankeshwar, Belgaum district. Then I came to Poona for further studies. To learn English I came to Pune to my maternal uncle (mama). I completed my matriculation and had taken part in the movement in 1932.

Bapu Watve : Movement means?

Bapat : Movement means National movement. It was the Congress movement. It was

ntai

in Belgaum and had done it on the road and for that, I was beaten by police. At that time my age was only 19 and half years old, so there was no case registered against me. For 2/3 days I was in police custody and then they released me. Because of this, some arguments had taken place in my house. My uncle was not in favour of this kind of movements. He didn't like it. He was under impression that because of this kind of movements, we may face some difficulties. So in 1934, in January, around 5th/6th January, I left Sankeshwar and came down to Pune. I had not fixed any aim. Every day, I used to go through newspaper advertisements and check whether there is any suitable job for me. Then, I found the advertisement for Kelkar. They wanted a clerk who was ready to go to North Gujrat. I applied there. My handwriting was very good so when he saw my application, he liked my handwriting. He called me for an interview and offered me the job. I stayed with him at Jamnagar for a month. He explained in detail. From there I went to Palampur. There was a railway station (name not audible), from that railway station I travelled by bullock cart and camel to Campaign Hospital. I worked there as a clerk in that hospital. Dr. Kelkar was an expert and very intelligent Ophthalmologist. He was an expert in eye operations. I remember he had done 58 eye operations in a month. All the operations were successful except one. It is because that lady had rubbed her eyes. At that time there were not many medicines available, so he had taught me how to give anesthesia. I used to help him by giving the patient an injection.

Bapu Watve : Then, what you did after that?

Bapat : Where I was staying, that place was near to the Kutch desert and there used to be a sandstorm. So my eyes started getting affected. Secondly, this was not my favourite job. This job was paying me a good salary so I did it. I left that place,

travelled 17 km on Camel and came to Patan. From Patan, I came down to Mumbai. I stayed there at Madhavashram for 5 to 6 days. Then I came down to Pune. At that same time, Dainik Prabhat had started in 1934. Pandurang Mahadev Bhagvat was the director and editor of that magazine. I joined there as a reporter and that was my first job as a reporter. He had given an advertisement. I replied to his advertisement. He had called 5/6 candidates more. I got selected and that was my job as a reporter.

Bapu Watve : That means your career started as a reporter.

Bapat : Yes. My career started as a reporter. There I used to write on drama and I came in contact with the film industry. Next, what happened, I am originally a Congressperson. I am still with Congress. There is a weekly magazine named, Lokshakti and they wanted to make it to a daily paper. So they had given advertisement. How, in the world of drama, they grab each other's artists. Similarly, they used to grab people from newspaper agencies. It was an overall situation. Accordingly, they called me and asked whether I would like to join them. I was Congress minded person, so I immediately accepted their offer. I left my current job and joined the Loksatta newspaper. At that time a car used to come to take me to the office. There was a well-known person who had written a book named Capital to Mars. He was my guru. He awakened the journalist in me. I have done all kinds of duties as a journalist. I have attended all congress sessions. I have seen many riots in Pune and have reported on them. I saw the 1946 movement and had written a report on that. There was no such work was left for me as a reporter. At that time, first Shankarrao Deo was the editor then Shankarrao Javdekar was Editor. I had worked under him. In 1948, it was decided to start the first evening newspaper of Congress. I was the first editor of that newspaper.

Bapu Watve : That means when you were with Loksatta, you came in contact with the film Industry.

Bapat : Yes. I came in contact with the film industry because I was writing reviews on films. That is one reason. A second reason is that I started my own weekly magazine. For some reason, it came out late. The name of that weekly was Chhaya. It had become very popular at that time. People of that time know it well. The sale of that magazine was 8000 copies. From 1944 to 1964, nearly 20 years, it ran very successfully. I was everything i.e. the owner, editor, writer and all. At that time, there were well-known review writers like Appa Pendse, Nirgudkar, Shitodkar, Sardesai. These people used to write in Chhaya magazine and I used to give them good remuneration. At that time, we all had decided that we will not peep into the private lives of any actors or actresses. If they have not acted well in the film then we were writing on their acting, but not on their private life. One mistake had taken place in my absence. A critical article was written on Sulochanabai. It was written by my friend Keluskar. I asked him to write an apology letter to her, but he refused. So, I sent her an apology letter. Afterwards, he stopped writing that column e, so I was writing that column for the next 13-14 years. It was Deomala Patralekhan correspondence. This correspondence was very popular at that time. It was so famous that in case if there is no correspondence in the magazine then people would not buy that magazine. People used to hesitate to buy the magazine. That is the reason, I never stopped that article.

Bapu Watve : When you were with Loksatta or you were editor of Chhaya magazine, did you come in contact with Film Industry people or can you tell me any specific incident?

Bapat : Yes, yes

Bapu Watve : Do you remember any incident about it?

Bapat : As my principle was not to peep into anyone's personal life, the famous people of the film industry, were my friends. I had no enemies in the film industry. I was not in contact with the Hindi film industry except Rajendra Kumar and Devendra Ugale. I was very close to them. Even if I went there, I could easily meet them. I purposely didn't make any attempt to enter the Hindi film industry.

Bapu Watve : As a reporter, you must have got the chance to take interviews with the actors/actress.

Bapat : Yes. I got the chance to take interviews with the actors. Even I received letters from them appreciating me. I will tell you one example of my reporter profession. There was a person named Kannaiyala Munshi who became Home Minister. He won the election from the Hyderabad constituency. After he won the election, they had kept his lecture at Law College Road. This lecture was completely in English. I translated it in good Marathi and published it in Loksatta. For that, he had sent me a letter of appreciation. That letter is still with me.

Bapu Watve : In the movie, Sant Tukaram, there is last scene. Tukaram sits on the eagle vehicle and leaves for heaven. At that shooting scene, Eagle Vehicle had met with a big accident. Were you were there and did you write about it?

Bapat : At that time, I was in Loksatta. We got the news of the accident. The accident had happened and the injured were admitted to Sassoon Hospital. At that time, we had a cycle. There was no other vehicle than cycle. So my colleague and I went to Sassoon Hospital by cycle. After enquiring, we got all the information. At the same time, Damle Mama, one of the great directors had come there.

Bapu Watve : Damlemama! He was the director of Sant Tukaram film.

Bapat : Yes. He had come there. He did not want us to publish this accident in the newspaper. We just asked him what happened? He said nothing. If there is anything happened, I will let you know. We asked whether we can go home. He immediately told us to go home. He just wanted us to leave. As a journalist, we sensed something. We felt that he was hiding something. So, we pretended to go home and hide behind one of the doors. As he sat in the car and left, we came out. There was one matron, Mrs. Deo, who was a relative of Bapurao Rajgurukar. She told us all about the accident. The next day, we published that information in the newspaper. Since I had great respect for Prabhat Organization, while giving that news in the paper, I made sure that their name will not get spoiled. We could not hide the news of the accident as a reporter. But without spoiling their name, we mentioned it as an accident. For that, Damle mama thanked me.

Bapu Watve : Did you visit the place of an accident?

Bapat : Yes, I visited. But there was nothing left to see. Whoever was wounded had brought to the hospital. It was not a big accident as such. Maybe whoever met in that accident, it was their luck or maybe because of God's grace it was not that big.

Bapu Watve : As a reporter, you must be going to the film studio in Pune or Mumbai.

Bapat : Yes. I used to go to Deccan Studio in Pune, even at Navneet studio, Kolhapur Film studio at Kolhapur as I had good contacts there.

Bapu Watve : That was of Bhalji Pendharkar studio..

Bapat : Yes. Of Bhalji Pendharkar. I had good contact with everyone.

Bapu Watve : Have you visited Prabhat Studio?

Bapat : Yes. I used to go to Prabhat Studio very often. There was a person by the name

of Balasaheb Phatak, he was my good friend. So I used to go there very often. Referring to that, I will tell you about one accident. The ITO who was handling my income tax case told my chartered accountant that they would like to meet Bapat (i.e.me). He said that they would like to meet me in person and till that time, he will not release the order. I got scared. I went to meet him. He welcomed me and told me that they have kept my order pending because he wanted to see the shooting at Prabhat studio. He was expecting me to show it.

Bapu Watve : That means it was a rare thing to see the shooting at Prabhat studio.

Bapat : Yes. I told them that there is no issue. I will arrange it.

Bapu Watve : Which year this happened?

Bapat : It was in the year, 1947-48. I think it was a Gokul movie. I don't remember exactly which film was it but, I made arrangements for them to see the shooting and arranged tea for them. Afterwards, he thanked me by saying that because of you I and my wife could see the shooting. And then, he released my order also. To see shooting at Prabhat, was a great thing at that time. They were much disciplined at Prabhat studio.

Bapu Watve : From the reporter's point of view, what difference did you find in today's shooting and of that time.

Bapat : At that time, whoever it may be, whether small actor or big, whether small technician or big, they were intimate with each other. They were so attached to the studio that they worked there as if their own studio. Today people work for money. If they are getting Rs.100/-, they will work but will not think about tomorrow. They don't have affection for each other. It is not that at that time, people didn't want money, but they had an attachment for the studio. Even at that time, owners used to

treat workers with kindness. I don't remember anyone had uttered any bad words about owners.

Bapu Watve : Do you think, as compared to other studios, Prabhat studio had a different atmosphere?

Bapat : Yes. I think it's different. The reason is that I have seen Prabhat's almost all movies. Even I have seen some of their silent movies. One of them was (inaudible) movie. Even I had seen the silent movie Sairandri.

Bapu Watve : No, but I think that movie was of Maharashtra Film Company.

Bapat : yes, of Maharashtra Film Company.

Bapu Watve : It was in the year, 1919.

Bapat : Yes, the year 1919. But I have seen 1 or 2 silent movies of Prabhat.

Bapu Watve : you must have seen Gopalkrishna.

Bapat : Yes, I have seen Gopalkrishna.

Interviewer You must have seen Khuni Khanjir.

Bapat : Yes, I have seen Khuni Khanjir.

Bapu Watve : Bajarbattu?

Bapat : No, I have not seen Bajarbattu.

Bapu Watve : You must have seen Udaybhan.

Bapat : Yes, I have seen.

Bapu Watve : Shantaram Bapu has acted in that.

Bapat : Yes. I have seen that. After that, 'Ayodhyecha Raja', 'Agnikankan' and 'Maya Machhindra', these three pictures of Prabhat, I have seen at Kolhapur.

Bapu Watve : I think they were produced in one year.

Bapat : Yes. There was Venus Talkies at Kolhapur. It was pretty far from Mahatma

Road. At that time, there was no proper transportation. The tickets of the movie were sold at the shop near Ambabai Temple for six annas and transportation was free. I used to go to Venus and while coming, used to take benefit of free transportation. This is how I watched those three movies in six annas.

Bapu Watve : After that, Prabhat produced two more films, Sinhagad and Sairandri.

Bapat : I have seen both of them.

Bapu Watve : The first Indian colour movie was Sairandhri. It was produced in the year, 1933. Have you seen it?

Bapat : Yes. We were very curious as Shantaram Bapu had done big publicity. What I feel, if they would not have done unwanted publicity then how this Sairandhri would not have gone flop. The same thing happened with the movie Shejari. That was my favourite movie. Even for that movie, they had done lots of publicity, resulting in raising the expectations of the public. The result was that film also failed. If they had not done such publicity, then probably it would not have failed. I have experienced this even with Hindi movies also.

Bapu Watve : Same had happened with Sairandhri?

Bapat : Yes. The same happened with Sairandhri also.

Bapu Watve : Ok. I was young at that time and I came to know that because of some technical problem.

Bapat : I don't think it was because of the technical problem. The story was good, the actors had acted well, photography was also good. So I don't think any other problem with going it flop.

Bapu Watve : Now there is no copy of that film.

Bapat : Yes, there is no copy of that film.

Bapu Watve : Since it was of Prabhat studio, it must be of excellent quality. I heard that color combination was not proper.

Bapat : For some part, the colour combination was not proper but otherwise the entire film was proper. According to me, it was not noticeable to the public. It was brought to the notice by critics.

Bapu Watve : I think that had affected the film.

Bapat : Yes, and the second reason was that of the expectations had raised of the audience.

Bapu Watve : After that, Prabhat studio came to Ghoda in the year, 1933 and produced a film “Amrut Manthan”. It was coincidental that at that same time, you became a reporter. Then when did you come in contact with the film industry?

Bapat : I started a weekly magazine named “Chhaya”, I came in contact with the film industry. I started writing articles on actors, sometimes about the film, by taking interviews of the actors and for that, I started meeting actors, directors. This is the way I came in contact with them. I had good contacts with all of them specially, with Marathi film Industry. Before that in 1938, they had started a system that the theatre in which the film is released, has to do the promotion of the film.

Bapu Watve : Yes, I remember.

Bapat : That time, I started working with Vasant Talkies as their publicity manager. This was in the year, 1938.

Bapu Watve : That means it was 50 years ago.

Bapat : This way I got the publicity work on a monthly basis. Previously, there were two theatres in Pune, one was Alka Talkies and (Inaudible). I got the publicity work of these two theatres on a monthly salary of Rs. 175/-. Afterwards, I must have done

publicity for almost 10 films. All together 300 to 350 films publicity I must have done including Hindi films. One or two films were Gujrathi.

Bapu Watve : Do you remember any special publicity you have done?

Bapat : I remember, I had done publicity of the film, Aple Ghar in the year 1942 wherein Shanta Apte and Chandramohan had acted.

Bapu Watve : Yes. It was written by actors of Prabhat and songs were written by Shantaram Athavale of Prabhat.

Bapat : Yes. For that audience had given a good response. It was the time of the 1942 movement. I had lost my job at Loksatta as Government had barred my license. At Rahul Talkies, there used to be a huge crowd for advance booking. I had done publicity and also advance bookings of the films. At that time, we came out with the idea that the first page of the Dainik newspaper of Pune. We used to write full articles on that movie. We created news on the basis of the events of the film. We were writing the name of the village where the event that was suitable to the event of the film, had taken place. This is the way we were advertising for the film. Afterwards, it was copied by the other newspapers but before that, no one had done such kind of advertisement. To the advertisement of the film, we used to have competition between Directors. We had asked for write-ups from the Directors and had given them the prices. I will tell you about one incident about our publicity. I had done publicity for the movies “Shyam chi Aai” of Acharya Atre.

Bapu Watve : That is in the year 1953.

Bapat : Yes It was in the year,1953. I told him, “Saheb!” I used to call Acharya Atre “Saheb”. I told him that we will do the advertisement for this film in a different manner. He asked me, “how? I told him that we will have a gathering in front of

Shaniwar Wada. We will not call it a gathering for the film, but we will say it is a discussion on the film. At that time, Nanasaheb Gode, who was mayor of Pune, invited him as Chief Guest. We had arranged it nicely, in front of Shaniwar Wada. The actor Madhav Vaze, was staying nearby. What happened at that time, we had given 6.30 pm timing and to our surprise, Atre arrived at 6 o'clock. He saw only 25/30 people had gathered so he got angry at me. He said, "how can I speak in front of only 25/30 people?" I said, "Saheb, what is the time now? It is only 6 pm and we have given the timing of 6.30 pm. You have come early. There is still half an hour left, till that time you be with Vaze. Come down at 6.30 pm and I am sure, you will definitely see a different picture." You will not believe, at that time, more than 25000 people had gathered for that function.

Bapu Watve : That means, 30 years ago.

Bapat : Yes, 25/30 years back. At that time, the first time in my life, I got the chance to address the crowd and I used it nicely. After my speech, he addressed the crowd for nearly one and half hours. Keeping in mind the story of 'Shyamchi Aai' movie and also with some humorous stories he addressed the crowd. Because of this kind of publicity, 'Shyamchi Aai' movie was a great hit.

Bapu Watve : That means, for the publicity of this movie, you had used many tricks. You must have taken great efforts. You must have given a big thought to how and what kind of technique can be used for the publicity and after that, you implemented that technique.

Bapat : Yes.

Bapu Watve : Did it help in the success of the film?

Bapat : Yes, sometimes it was useful. It is not necessary that the technique will work

every time.

Bapu Watve : I don't think it would have worked with the film which was basically weak.

Bapat : With the times, the audience has become very clever. In this connection, I will give you one example. If the movie runs for 10/12 weeks in Pune that means people from outstation used to think it as a good movie. Now, it is different. If the 3 O'clock movie over, at 8 O'clock the report on that movie, whether it is good or bad, immediately goes to the outstation. So now, these techniques are of no use. That time, we had given grades to the movie, like A class, B class, C class, D class.

Bapu Watve : Have you ever worked as a Representative of the Movie?

Bapat : Yes. I have worked with 2-3 companies.

Bapu Watve : In which year?

Bapat : When Baail Veda was released, I had worked as a representative.

Bapu Watve : But you were a reporter..

Bapat : This was additional work. It was like, where I was working, they got more advertisements comparing to other people. That is the reason; they had not taken any objection to me doing any other work.

Bapu Watve : What was your experience while working as a representative.

Bapat : As a representative, I used to make sure that they are not allowing people without a ticket or they are not sending extra people more than capacity. Since I was a reporter, I used to call prestigious people, whose feedback will give good publicity. I was giving their feedback in the newspaper which was a kind of publicity.

Bapu Watve : What was the remuneration you were getting for this as a representative?

Bapat : Rs.3/- per day.

Bapu Watve : Only Rs.3/- per day?

Bapat : Yes. At that time Rs.3/- per day means Rs.90/-per month.

Bapu Watve : It was enough I believe.

Bapat : yes. More than sufficient.

Bapu Watve : You must have noticed a difference between today's representative and the representative of that time.

Bapat : Yes. Of course. Today's representatives will criticize someone for the sake Rs.25/-. The manager and the representative have a connection with each other. They will come only just to sign and take the money. In our times, someone used to make sure we are there. Now, they are not bothered whether any representative is there or not. They are just bothered about money. I remember one film company, Royal Film company. They never sent any representative to any theatre. They believed if anyone wants to do cheating, he can do it anyhow. Let him do. So why to keep an extra person?

Bapu Watve : Did you become Distributors first or producer first.

Bapat : I became a Distributor first. 'Paydali Padleli Phule' and the other day I told you the name, 'Saubhagya', these two we brought it for District.

Bapu Watve : I think this happened 34 years back.

Bapat : Yes, it was 34 to 35 years back. Saubhagya was beneficial to me but 'Paydali Padleli Phule' was a big flop. It was a big loss for me. Afterwards, (Inaudible) Name of the film was 'Ganget Ghode Nhale'.

Bapu Watve : I think 'Aai Kona Mhanu Mi' was also...

Bapat : Yes. 'Aai Kona Mhanu Mi' was just finished. Mr. Gaikwad was the producer

of that film.

Bapu Watve : That is Dattaram Gaikwad.

Bapat : Yes. Dattaram Gaikwad. He had come to see whether he can get the theatre for that movie. I told that I wanted the distribution of that film. He also wanted some distributors. We had a meeting in the evening. Immediately, he agreed on my terms. I accepted that film. It was half completed. Because of 'To Mee Nhavech', Actor Prabhakar Panshikar had become very famous in Mumbai. He was the hero and Jayashree Gadkar was the heroine of this movie. Film selection box we had done at Mumbai. We had given playback of (Inaudible) and added the song "Nach Sundari Karu Kopa" in that film. The reason to add this song was to suit the story.

Bapu Watve : Was this your idea to add this song?

Bapat : Yes. It was my idea. We had paid Rs.1 000/- at that time. We recorded this song in Mumbai. That song was not much effective in other places but at Belgaon, that song gave us success more than expectations. Like how the name of Prabhakar Panshikar helps us to succeed in Mumbai, similarly, this song gave us success at Belgaum. Whatever I had invested, I got the returns on it.

Bapu Watve : So you have a different kind of experience with him.

Bapat : In the year 1959, Datta Dharmadhikari's movie Pativrata, I had asked Bhimsen Joshi to give playback. The title song and 2/3 more songs are sung by him.

Bapu Watve : Was it the first playback of Bhimsen Joshi?

Bapat : No, before this he had sung for other movies, but was not noticed by the people.

Bapu Watve : The song which you have mentioned just now is still famous.

Bapat : It was famous and also recorded.

Bapu Watve : And when was it released?

Bapat : First 'Aai Kuna Mhanu Mi' was released. I had distributed 5-6 pictures of Gaikwad in Maharashtra. One movie was distributed in Goa. All the movies of Gaikwad had given me good returns. Leaving 'Aai Kuna Mhanu Mi' movie aside, 'Satiche Van' and all movies it was like I had given stories to him. Amongst them, 'Thamb Laxmi Kunku Lawte' had become very famous.

Bapu Watve : The story was very good of that film.

Bapat : The story rights of that movie were with me.

Bapu Watve : The story was written by Pandit Mahadeorao Shashtri.

Bapat : Yes, I was having rights to that story. He had asked me which story should I take for the film then I gave him this story. He liked it. Then we went to Mahadeo Shastri. I had explained the story so we gave him Rs. 5,000/-. Gaikwad told me that at the most we can give him Rs. 3,000/-. I explained to him that I have examined the story and I guarantee you of its success and even if you liked it, don't think much about the money. Give Mahadeo Shastri Rs. 5,000/- so he agreed to my point and gave him Rs. 5,000/-. The same happened to what I had predicted. The film was a super hit and also got a Government grant of Rs. 2,50,000/-. At that time there was no concession but was getting government grants. Even I also got success with this film. I got good monetary gain.

Bapu Watve : Now I am going to ask you two questions. First is, what is the difference between when you started the distribution of film business that time and present business of distribution ship. Secondly, what difference did you find with the audience? I would like you to answer first, my first question. I would appreciate it if you could speak about when you started the distribution ship at that time, the middle

period, present time and future?

Bapat : Alright. Comparing to the present time, the number of films was less at that time.

Bapu Watve : That means when you started distribution..

Bapat : Yes. At that time even demand for films was more than present time by the theatres. When the advertisement of film used to release in the newspapers, then exhibitors used to come to us. Two, three exhibitors from the same village used to come and used to ask us for films after agreeing to our terms. These were conditions of exhibitors at that time. At that time, one can say, the audience was alert, or you can say it was not. To date, nobody could gauge the audience. Even Hollywood could not gauge them, then how can we? The movies were so good that is the reason we had no trouble in distribution. I had good contacts with producers, so I was getting preference for good movies. If you are asking about the audience...

Bapu Watve : That you tell me later. Tell me, when you started facing the problem to get the theatre?

Bapat : In the year, 1968/69/70, the number of movies had increased and the number of theatres were less. So there was a shortage of theatres. It is like a demand and supply ratio. At that time, pictures were used to release on the basis of percentages. This system stopped and they started taking theatres on rent. Rent was like 30% to 35% of the collection. This is the way film distribution had started. I would like to tell you that this idea to take the theatre on rental, I had implemented first.

Bapu Watve : This is very important.

Bapat : Some gained out of this system, some suffered loss. There was a Hindi movie named "Gaurishankar". It was really appreciable.

Bapu Watve : Ok

Bapat : One of my reporter friends had teased me..

Bapu Watve : Gaurishankar or Gajgauri?

Bapat : No, No. Gaurishankar. It was a Hindi movie.

Bapu Watve : of Wadia?

Bapat : No, not of Wadia. It was produced by Suniti Shroff. My friend teased me by saying that Bapat must have given him his Chhaya magazine for 2 Ana. They had teased me like this.

Bapu Watve : This renting out the theatre system, did it reach the small villages?

Bapat : Almost many villages adopted this system. The reason is that if the movie is good then it is beneficial to rent out the theatre. For example, we have kept the ticket price 50 paise, and if the capacity of the theatre is 30,00 or 35,00 then at the rate of 50%, he gets Rs.6,000/- and if he rents the theatre at Rs.12,000/- then he will get Rs.20,000 to 25,000/-. It is again depending on the movie. If the movie is good then It is beneficial but if it is not good then the distributor does not get anything. Sometimes he has to shell out from his pocket. This is a vicious circle and it will continue.

Bapu Watve : Previously, to get the theatre was difficult. Now how is it? Is it difficult or not?

Bapat : Now it is not difficult to get to the theatre.

Bapu Watve : What is the reason behind it?

Bapat : The number of movies has increased. Leave the quality aside but the number of movies have increased. Average 400 to 500 films are produced. Hindi you can say 200 to 300 and Marathi 30 to 35 are on the floor this year. There are so many Marathi

theatres. At Kolhapur, all theatres are with Maharashtrian owners, but they prefer to release Hindi movies and the remaining time they utilize for Marathi films. Now, the situation is totally different. Last 2/3 years, Marathi theatres have survived due to Marathi films. At one time, theatre owners were not happy to release Marathi films. In case if there is no movie to release then they used to give preference to Marathi films. Now, they, go to distributors asking them to release the Marathi movies.

Bapu Watve : Oh, this is new to me. Now, I have realized what you are saying. Previously, Marathi films were in problems. In India, nearly 900 Marathi movies were in line to get released and Hindi was around 150. Theatres used to feel proud to release Hindi films rather than Marathi.

Bapat : In Maharashtra, leaving aside princely states as they are originally Hindi speakers, non-Hindi districts, the Hindi language is aggressive. That is the reason, Maharashtra is a big market for Hindi movies.

Bapu Watve : Even theatres of villages and interior parts of villages are giving preference to Hindi movies.

Bapat : But last 2/3 years, the scene has completely changed. If it would not have happened, then Marathi distributors would have faced heavy losses. It is our pride that the last three years; Marathi pictures have given great support to the film industry.

Bapu Watve : Today what is the condition of theatres?

Bapat : It is like there is always a demand for a good product in the market. From the point of monetary gains, if the film is good then it will not go flop. This was a general experience. Earlier also good movies made good business.

Bapu Watve : I think, now the problems for theatres have increased.

Bapat : The reason for this is videos. More than videos, television is the biggest enemy of the theatre. This is what I think. Previously, senior people who are above 60 years, used to go to buy the ticket and go to the theatre at least once a month. Now that is stopped. When they can see 8 to 10 movies sitting at home, why would they spend money on theatre? If they bring video for Rs.10 to 15 and a family of 8 to 10 people can see together then why will go to the theatre. By this they are avoiding the nuisance of going to the theatre, avoiding the risk of not getting tickets. For general people, television has become God's gift but if you think from the point of the film industry, it is a curse. That is the biggest enemy of the people more than video. Video is popular in the lower class rather than the middle and upper class. Upper and middle-class people are not keen to watch the video at home.

Bapu Watve : If they are (Upper and middle-class people), numbers are not much.

Bapat : I doubt whether 2 to 3 percent. If the movie is good and you see it on video then automatically that movie gets publicity.

Bapu Watve : Yes, sometimes, after watching that film on video, they may feel it worth watching. So, they tend to go to the theatre.

Bapat : Yes and they really enjoyed it. I have noticed it many times. In this connection, I can even narrate the names of films.

Bapu Watve : I have read that the cities have developed from all directions but theatres are at the center of the city. That is the reason why people staying away from the center of the city and away from the city are not willing to come for a night show.

Bapat : In earlier days, people used to come from far to see night shows. Since this video came in the system, they have stopped coming for night shows.

Bapu Watve : So distance is not the reason for not coming for night shows.

Bapat : The reason is that they got the facility to sit at home and see the film. As I remember, people used to come from 4/5 km, just for night shows. Even people staying at Chinchwad were coming to Pune to see the film. They must be lying that they have come from Chinchwad, give us six tickets but my experience was that distance does not matter to them.

Bapu Watve : It is observed that the last show is always houseful.

Bapat : Yes and 3 O'clock and 9 O'clock. 6 O'clock was not suitable for ladies. 3 and 9 o'clock shows are more convenient for ladies. The children are at school, the husband had gone to the office, so they can return home by 5.30/5.45 pm. Similarly, for the night show, they can finish their dinner and go for the night show.

Bapu Watve : That is why if a show is not super hit then the 9 O'clock show does not go houseful. This is a possibility.

Bapat : There are two reasons, video and Television. Even for any ordinary picture, people used to come to the theatre.

Bapu Watve : Anna, are theatres facing any other difficulties?

Bapat : One of the theatre difficulties is that Government Tax is the oppressor.

Bapu Watve : Oppressor means?

Bapat : Oppressor in the sense to pay the tax, theatres have to increase the rates of film. It was ok before video and television came into a routine. Instead of paying for rikshaw to go to the theatre and even spend money on eatables, they prefer to buy the video and 10 people can watch the film. So we always demand to Government to reduce the taxes. Less the taxes, lower the ticket prices which result in demand for film at the theatre. But Government does not understand this. I will tell you, in

between Government had removed the surcharge of the film. They thought they will suffer a loss. But on the contrary, the government was benefiting as expected. When the surcharge was removed, automatically the rates of the tickets were reduced. So a reduction in ticket prices was a great relief to the people. If the Government will remain at 40% then I am sure it will be beneficial to all. We all are trying our best but Government is not agreeing to it. Secondly, the rates of MSEB have gone very high. Since that has put in under commercial usages, the rates have gone up. The reason behind theatres in Mumbai are suffering is Electricity Bill. These theatres are facing difficulties since they are air-conditioned. They are getting high electricity bills. It was not previously. This is the main important reason. Secondly, the quality of the film has gone down.

Bapu Watve : Yes. The level of the films is going down.

Bapat : This is especially with Hindi movies. The main reason behind this is, the film industry is now in the hands of smugglers and builders. The type of movies are shown in foreign countries especially, in Arab counties, are copied to Hindi Films. Financers are also left with no choice. People don't like when the same types of movies are released. They believe that why should we see the same fight scenes. They don't feel excited to watch the fighting scenes as there is nothing new in that. If there is something new style of fighting in the movie then people will rush to watch.

Bapu Watve : So how do theatres affect by this?

Bapat : Yes, it is affecting the theatre as films do not run smoothly.

Bapu Watve : Anna, you have mentioned that if the movies are of low quality or not liked by the people then it affects the theatre. Can you give clarification since you have vast experience and are running Bhanuvilas theatre for the last 35 years?

Bapat : The clarification is that if the quality of the movie is of low or if there is repetition in the scene then it does not stay in the theatre for a longer period. There are so many government restrictions that are oppressive that even air-conditioned theatres are facing difficulties in running the shows. They are getting very high electricity bills. Secondly, if the movie is good then we face the problem of black marketers. If we make a rule that one person will get only four tickets and if they make their 25 people stand in the queue, we cannot do anything. We will not be able to recognize them in the queue. We are forced to give them tickets. Other people misunderstand us, thinking we are giving them tickets. I am not completely refusing that it does not happen but in few cases. In the end, the booking clerk is a human being and they must be tempted to do it. But this is really a nuisance of black marketers for a good movie. Then instead of paying Rs.5 to 10 to black marketers, people prefer to watch on TV. They prefer to wait and watch till it releases on TV. Otherwise, bring a cassette and watch at home. Why waste money on buying tickets in the black market. Because of this, even black marketing of the tickets has reduced.

Bapu Watve : I think the wave of producing of low quality has even touched drama.

Bapat : Yes. It has reached to Marathi drama. These dramas are provoking violence. In these dramas, they are showing how to murder someone? Recently, these kinds of four dramas have come to the theatre. And if these dramas succeed then this pattern will be followed by movies.

Bapu Watve : Yes. These scenes will be added to the movie.

Bapat : Yes. Definitely

Bapu Watve : Funny thing is that plays are exempted from entertainment tax, but movies are not. So this is a kind of competition for movies.

Bapat : Yes, certainly. In 1961, Yashwantrao Chavan exempted drama from entertainment tax. Before that according to Morarjee Desai's policy, only good dramas will be tax-free. Afterwards, Yashwantrao Chavan had made dramas totally tax free. Even Dramas, Circus, Tamasha, Jalsa all were entertainment tax-free.

Bapu Watve : That means it leads to an increase in the competition.

Bapat : yes, competition increased.

Bapu Watve : On top of it, it is compulsory to show government documentaries with every movie.

Bapat : Yes. We have to show those documentary films and on top of it, we have to pay to government 1% of the collection. Suppose the total collection of the year is 4 lakh then, we have to pay 1% of those 4 lakhs. It is the condition of the license. If you don't have the receipt of this money then we don't get the license. The government holds the license of the cinema theatre.

Bapu Watve : Are there any other taxes?

Bapat : There is corporation tax in the name of show tax. Theatres have to pay tax on water, more than other people. It comes under commercial so water tax is more than others. Electricity rates are also more than others.

Bapu Watve : At present, what is the tax for every show in Pune?

Bapat : It depends on the rate of the ticket.

Bapu Watve : As the Corporation taking is its taxes from you, are they giving you any benefits in return?

Bapat : No, not at all. They are not giving us any facilities. In case, we feel that we should spray pesticides in the theatre, then they charge us.

Bapu Watve : This is really taxing for you.

Bapat : Yes, yes. It is taxing to us. Now, it has become legal.

Interviewer : Is it different in every state?

Bapat : Yes. It is different in every state.

Bapu Watve : it is more than Maharashtra?

Bapat : In some states, it is more than Maharashtra. Despite this, there is one more tax i.e. Octroi tax. When the film comes, on that this tax is implemented. It is very much less in Pune, compared to others. Suppose the film is of 16 reels then you have to pay only eight annas. But in other states, you have to pay Rs.80/- as Octroi. There is no uniformity.

Bapu Watve : I have heard all your problems to run the theatre. But even I have heard that by UNESCO report, there are only 1/3rd theatres of the actual requirement came out .

Bapat : This is the condition to date. I don't know when this UNESCO.

Bapu Watve : I will tell you. It was given 20 years ago.

Bapat : At that time, the condition was really like that but now it is not so. There is law in Maharashtra that you cannot demolish theatres. Now, they have given permission to build a commercial complex in the remaining plot but this permission was not there before. It is compulsory to build the theatre of the same capacity and in the remaining place, you can make a commercial complex. This law is not compulsory in many other states.

Bapu Watve : This law is not applicable in other states?

Bapat : No. That is why in Ahmedabad, in the last 5 years, 10 to 12 theatres were demolished and they made commercial complexes there. At Baroda also, 7 to 8 theatres were demolished. Even in Karnataka, they demolished some theatres.

According to Maharashtra Government, you can keep the theatres closed for 5 years even 10 years also but you cannot demolish and build a commercial complex at that place.

Bapu Watve : That means this law is only in Maharashtra and other states have different laws.

Bapat : Because this law is implemented by a particular state. We had requested Indian Government that they should make the same law for all the states. There should be uniformity in the law. Government is ready for this as they are losing state-wise income. Like uniform income tax in the country, they should implement entertainment tax, same for all. There should be one law for the entire country.

Bapu Watve : You are right.

Bapat : Government is not interested in taking any action on it. They will not get income out of the theatre. All our efforts have gone in vain.

Bapu Watve : I heard, you all exhibitors have requested the Government that these documentaries should be shown on TV at the same time. It is now happening that if these documentary films are shown in villages after six months when the importance of that documentary is over. Or documentary film pertaining to agriculture is of no use to show it at Pune or Mumbai. The exhibitors had requested the government that these kinds of documentary films or motivating short films should be shown at the right places and we should be relieved from paying for these films.

Bapat : Even we told them that we are ready to show these documentaries but you should not charge us. It is crime if we do not show these documentary films and even we have to pay a penalty for that. Even they can cancel the license of theatre.

Bapu Watve : That means the government is not at all ready to listen to your problems.

Bapat : Yes.

Bapu Watve : Because they are earning money in the form of tax. That is why they are thinking of your request.

Bapat : Yes. They see it as a golden egg-laying hen. This is from the Government's point of view. One more thing I want to tell you if this law is removed then 30 to 35 theatres will be demolished within 6 months in Mumbai itself. This is the condition of theatre owners. For the sake, they are just running the theatres.

Bapu Watve : What is the reason behind not building new theatres.

Bapat : Builders feel that from the construction point of, spending Rs.50 to 60 lacs on constructing theatre if I build a commercial complex then I will be benefited more and also there will not be a headache forever. Once the commercial complex is built and I will hand it over to them then I don't have to face any other problems.

(The sentence is not audible)

Bapu Watve : So now only old theatres will run but no new theatre will be built.

Bapat : Yes, old theatres will continue but no new theatres will be built. You will notice that no new theatre is added in the big city. And if it is added then maybe one or two in the small village. Comparing to the entire Hindustan, the number of theatres in Maharashtra is less.

Bapu Watve : Ok and that is also not running properly.

Bapat : Second reason is that in Bangalore, Karnataka, four vernacular language pictures runs, like Kannada, Hindi, English and also Telugu, Tamil. On the contrary, in Maharashtra only Hindi and Marathi movies run.

Bapu Watve : yes

Bapat : Other language films does not run in Maharashtra. This is the difficulty in Maharashtra state. In Tamil Nadu, people are very proud of their language that is the reason there films runs houseful. Now, they have come out with new idea. They show different film to sensor board wherein they don't show objectionable scenes. Afterwards, while showing the same movie in the theatre, they used to show without censoring the film. To get away with this , they were involving police and other officers in this crime. This procedure is very common in Kerala. So, what happens in Kerala, they don't come to see the film, they see this reel of objectionable shot and come out.

Bapu Watve : Previously, the producer or owner had to go to distributor and publisher. Are you scared that now this system will come in Maharashtra?

Bapat : It has already come now to Maharashtra.

Bapu Watve : Is It already come in 1988?

Bapat : It has come in the year, 1988. It will be in future also.

Bapu Watve : That means the conditions of the theatres in Maharashtra has no great hopes.

Bapat : It is not at all hopeful but on the contrary hopeless.

Bapu Watve : I think in future it is more hopeless.

Bapat : It might improve if any miracle happens.

Bapu Watve : I think, now they are going to increase the program timings of television. If it really happens then it is going to affect theatre on a big scale.

Bapat : One more example I give you here. Now slowly, they are advertising cable networks. How it is in America, You pay the fees of \$200 or \$300 per month. If you

want to see the movie which is running at metro, they connect you to that to your network TV. So you can sit at home and watch. Similarly, it is happening in Mumbai. In Mumbai, all multistoried buildings with 200/300 flats are coming up. There they are advertising this system. Even the charges are very less. Yesterday, someone told me that with Rs.30/-, you can see nearly 30 movies.

Bapu Watve : Oh my God.

Bapat : Yes. So a family consisting of 5 or 10 members can watch very easily.

Bapu Watve : Even a few more also can watch along with them.

Bapat : This is affecting reducing the theatre audience.

Bapu Watve : If it really comes into existence then this will be a big problem the theatres will face.

Bapat : Yes, it is going to be a big problem.

Bapu Watve : Anna, you told me you had done publishing of three and three half movie. The procedure of publishing the film has to be done by the theatres when this was stopped.

Bapat : It must be in the year 1966-67. When distributors started taking the theatres on rent then the producers put the condition that all the expenses will be borne by theatres. Even they said that we will not pay for the glue to stick the posters of the film. They will not pay for the piece of thread. The expenses of bringing of film and sending it back will be borne by them. This is the procedure now. In this, if the film is beneficial from the business point of view then it is beneficial to the distributors to take the theatre on rent.

Bapu Watve : Now, advertisement has to be done by the producer or distributor?

Bapat : Yes, they inform their advertising agents about the film and when it is going

to release and also the budget. It is around Rs.2,000/- or Rs.4,000/- per week or according to the film and inform them to publish it in the newspapers. Sometimes, these agents don't know what the advertisement is of. Especially in Mumbai, in this business, most of them are Sindhi, Punjabi or the ones who do not understand Marathi. They only understand the name of the film, timing, actors and name of the theatre. They will not understand if the distributors have given bad words to them in that advertisement.

Bapu Watve : There is an art of creating advertisements for the film. You must know this, since you have done it. I think that is not existing now.

Bapat : Yes, it not existing now. It is like that.

Bapu Watve : I remember that some of them with that is not the case, they had done the advertisements with great imagination.

Bapat : Yes, it does not remain now. Previously, words of advertisement were like provoking the audience to come to the theatre. It was an advertisement technique. It was not to fool the audience but to attract them. Now it does not remain. Previously, when the movie used to get released in Pune theatre then it used to take a week or two to spread its' report out of Pune. Now, if the film is released in Pune or Mumbai at 3 O'clock then immediately the report goes out by 7 O'clock, whether it is a flop. Now life has become very fast.

Bapu Watve : With your great experience as a publisher, can you tell us the change that has taken place with the audience?

Bapat : Previously, the audience was quite choosy. If suppose, in case four films are good and fifth film of the same producer is not good or not up the mark and for some reason, if that producer is present there in the theatre then audience used to express

their views right on his face. They used to tell him that do not produce this kind of film. We have come here since you produce good films. Now the situation is not like that. Keeping aside the exceptions, there are no good producers left.

Bapu Watve : Previously, even films were running by the name of studios. Now, do not exist.

Bapat : Yes, now they are no more.

Bapu Watve : So this is the difference you have noticed. Do you think that previously only particular people like the middle class, upper class or educated class people used to come to see the film in theatres? Lower-class people were not coming to see the film.

Bapat : No, even lower class people were also coming to see the film. At that time and even now, upper-class people generally like to see English films more. Whatever may be the reason. Or even they prefer to watch Hindi films. At one time, five years back, watching Marathi was like untouchability. People used to feel that they are doing big crimes or doing some sin by seeing Marathi films. They used to feel it is below dignity. Now it is not more like that. I am not mentioning any particular name here. I think it is not proper.

Bapu Watve : I purposely mentioned here the name and would like to ask that Dada Kondke's movies were going to the silver jubilee hits and the strength of the success was the double meaning of sentences. Was there any such kind of movies at starting of the film industry when movies used to sober?

Bapat : Initially, Dada Kondke's films had good songs or had a different kinds of roles or even they were appealing to the general public. Previously, in Marathi films, they were showing the picture of higher class or poor class.

Bapu Watve : Or was of the middle class.

Bapat : Yes. Of middle class. That is the reason; the lower class was not attracted to Marathi films. I have seen films of Raja Paranjape and like other particular producers..

Bapu Watve : of Raja Thakur and Datta Dharmadhikari

Bapat : Yes, of Datta Dharmadhikar. I have seen the audience for their films. These films had a typical class of audience. I have observed it very closely. There is the psychology of the audience of the Pitta theatre (upper-class theatre) and Chapri theatre (low-class theatre). If the victim is killed or caught and then punished, people used to clap for it. In that Piitta theatre, all are not of good class. Some of them were robbers or thieves or thugs but they also used to enjoy that film and clap. They used to feel better as he got caught. Now, this kind of behaviour is not there with the audience.

Bapu Watve : This is the difference you have noticed.

Bapat : Yes. I feel it.

Bapu Watve : Do you think, amongst this audience, some of them have turned to drama.

Bapat : Suppose, a film is running at the theatre, leaving aside a really good one and at the same time also a drama and if you ask me what you would see then I will definitely prefer drama.

Bapu Watve : Ok..

Bapat : Now, middle-class people started getting attracted towards drama but the rates have really gone beyond the budget because of entertainment tax. Now it is not affordable to the general public. If the ticket rates are Rs.20/- to Rs.25/- then a family

consists of four people, you require at least Rs.100/- which is not at all affordable. Sitting in the last row, if you could not see the face of the actor properly then it is of no use. But the same is not with movies. You can see the same film sitting with Rs.2 ticket and also with Rs.5 ticket. This is the big difference in movies and drama.

Bapu Watve : Anna, You have become producer first or writer first?

Bapat : I was a distributor of one film and unwilling to become a producer of the same. I had taken (name not audible) film for distribution but one of the financer quit so I was left with two choices. One was to accept the loss of Rs.15 to 20 thousand and keep quiet or otherwise complete the film. I am happy to say that all the actors along with Chandrakant and Suryakant, supported me by giving their dates and keeping it. Even with the monetary part b.

Bapu Watve : Yes. They are not wrong in taking the money as Marathi actors do not get enough money.

Bapat : Then I called the meeting and told them that I cannot give you money the day it is decided.

Bapu Watve : Ok. You made them aware of the fact that you cannot pay in time.

Bapat : Yes. I called Chandrakant and Suryakant and all the actors for the meeting and told them that it is not possible to pay on a particular day. I promised them that they will receive their complete payment before the shoot of the last scene. And I kept my word. So I took the decision that instead of bearing the loss of Rs.15,000, let us take the trial. Because I had liked the story I was ready to take the risk. I will tell you the story of it. This is a true story and had happened at a village near Kolhapur. A daughter-in-law sacrifices her son for the sake of water. This is the last episode of the film. At that same time, in Rajashtan, they had given sacrifice for water. There

was a big debate on that. Public had become very violent and was blaming the government. Because of that, we were scared that the Censor board will ask us to remove that last part of the movie. So for two months, we did not show this film to the Censor board till the atmosphere cools down. After two months, we showed that movie. At that time, my friend, Mr. Sadashivrao Rajkhardi helped me a lot in this. My movie came out safely through the Censor board. Even it gave me a good monetary return. This was the only experience I got as a producer and then I decided not to take part in such kind of thing. I am having a different kind of temperament. Because, once I promise people then I make sure to fulfil that otherwise, I don't promise.

Bapu Watve : That means as a producer, you have worked on only one movie?

Bapat : Yes, only one movie.

Bapu Watve : How was your experience as a producer? Was it pleasurable or annoying?

Bapat : It gave me good monetary gain but it was a headache. I suffered a lot. I was under pressure that the movie will go flop. Second thing was that I told you before about Censor. I am not disclosing any names here but some of the people tried hard to make sure our movie should not release. Because of that, unwanted expenses came up. They wanted us to give another movie but unless and until our first movie is not released, how can we give another movie? These things really gave me a headache. From that time, I had decided not to take this headache again.

Bapu Watve : that means you realized that becoming a producer..

Bapat : It is beyond my reach.

Bapu Watve : it is not a common man's job.

Bapat : I would not say like that but at least not my job. So I just moved out of that work.

Bapu Watve : What incident just now you told me that you could do because you are a writer, on that, I feel producer and director need not be a writer but at least, he should be aware of literature.

Bapat : You are right.

Bapu Watve : That means in Marathi, (sentence not audible). Anna, how have you taken the responsibility of writing for films?

Bapat : It was like this...

Bapu Watve : You have written a story for the film, did you have any experience as a writer?

Bapat : Leaving aside Aai Kuna Mhanu Mi, I had given Gaikward stories of the film of Patlachi Sun, Thamb Laxmi Kunku Lawte, Murli Malhar, Satiche Van. I had written it and Gaikwad had liked it. And all these movies were a great success. An idea came in mind that there was a builder from Pune by the name, Apte. Along with him, I will produce the film. I will take the responsibility of distribution. At that time, I used to earn good money from distribution. I used to get somewhere around Rs.3 lakh.

Bapu Watve : How many years ago was this?

Bapat : It is before 1974.

Bapu Watve : That means 15 years back.

Bapat : My first story, Bayanno Navre Sambhala, came to the theatre, The story was mine but Kalalkar and I had taken efforts on film's plotting. We read that story at Apte's residence. There were 20/25 people and amongst them were women. They

did not like the story much. Even I was also not happy with the story. That time I told Apte that Kalelkar and I will again work on it and will make necessary changes. Accordingly, we worked on it and put it before people. They liked it very much. The title of it “Baikano Navre Sambhala” was quite attractive. At the same time, Apte had taken another story. I was telling him not to go for that story but he didn’t listen to me. I was requesting him again and again not to go for that story. You can just pay the writer. It is not necessary to do the picture on that story. But he did not listen to me. Ultimately, the picture was a flop. It did not run. That is the reason, even our plan failed. Our conversational story for the film was ready. Even I had paid agreement money of Rs.1,000/- as token money to actress, Jayashree T. One day, Raja Nene visited me and told me that Narayanrao Datar wants the story. He wanted a ready story for the film.

Bapu Watve : That means Na Go Datar?

Bapat : Yes. I asked him that who told him my name? So he told me that Kalelkar has given me your name. He told him that there is a story and Bapat has made a script of it. He further asked me whether I can give him that story to read. I had a very good relation with Kalelkar. I told him I am ready to give you that story on one condition. The condition is that you will be directing this film otherwise I am not interested in giving the story. He promised me that he will be directing. Datar liked that story very much. Unfortunately, I came to know very late that this film was taken from Raja Nene and given to some other director. I had done an agreement but in that agreement, I had not mentioned this condition as he had promised me. He had promised me that he will be giving it to Raja Nene but he did not keep his word. At that time that film was a second big hit. It was released in Metro theatre at Mumbai

in 1974. It was Diwali season. This film had cost after printing nearly Rs.6 to 7 lakhs and gave return business of Rs.14 to 15 lakhs. It was such a successful film.

Bapu Watve : That means as a writer this was your first successful movie.

Bapat : After that, the second story I wrote was for the film “Paijecha Vida”. It was a true story of 1942. It is a story on the basis of movement, 1942. I read that story for Nagvekar and he liked it very much.

Bapu Watve : For whom did you read it?

Bapat : I read that story for Nagvekar. He liked it very much. That story contained thrill, fighting, lawni and all masala which the audience required. But when he got it in his custody he made lots of changes without informing me. I feel proud to say because the story it was successful.

Bapu Watve : That means it made a business. It gave a good monetary return.

Bapat : My third movie was “Rani Ne Dav Jinkala”. I had an argument with them as I was telling them not to take that lady. You must know the name. But they did not listen to me. That film did not run as per the expectations. After that, I had written two more stories. One was.....(inaudible), it's a comedy movie. You can say family comedy movie. The second film is on Torne.

Bapu Watve : That means, Kamlakar Torne?

Bapat : Yes. It was on Kamakar Torne. But what happened of that I don't know.... (inaudible).

Bapu Watve : What is your experience as a movie story writer?

Bapat : I just wrote three movie stories.

Bapu Watve : Whatever, though it is only for three movies. Sometimes, producers or directors make changes wherever they feel. Did they interfere in your story plot?

Bapat : It is not only my complaint but also with

Bapu Watve : Has it ever happened with you? Has it happened with your story that director or producer has modified your story?

Bapat : My experience, in this case, is very different. It is exactly the opposite. In the case of “Bayano Navre Sambhala” film, in the story, the end was different whereas it was different in the movie. They changed the end without my consent. In the film, unnecessarily, they had included rape scenes and even they had exposed prestigious people. That is the reason; censor board was asked to ban the movie. But somehow, we escaped from Censor board rules. The film ran successfully but I was not satisfied. The producer got money, I got fame but I was not mentally satisfied with any of the stories.

Bapu Watve : That means all three movies for whom you wrote stories, gave you a good business.

Bapat : No, One movie “Rani ne Dav Jinkla”, could not make business.

Bapu Watve : No?

Bapat : No. The reason was that of the palace shooting. They made unwanted changes in the story. When I saw 4/5 reels of that movie, I sent a letter to the producer by registered post and told him not to mention my name as a story writer. I am not in favour of this film. But they did not listen to me and they mentioned my name. Unnecessarily, I became a reason for its' failure

Bapu Watve : Now your two more films are in queue to release and you will be getting experience as Director or Producer.

Bapat : When I gave the story for “Kritike cha Navra”, I made an agreement with them. When the screenplay and dialogue writer and I are fully satisfied with this

story then I will give you the story. We will fully observe the secret of this film. If you say that I am a producer and I can do anything then we will not give you this story. I had made it very clear and they promised us that they will not interfere. They told me that if you find my suggestions useful then you can implement them. I told him that I am ready to take the suggestions from 4 years old child, I don't mind. Any good suggestion is welcome.

Bapu Watve : If Director has made any changes then what will you do?

Bapat : If Director wants to do any changes, he has to seek our permission. If the changes are suitable for the film then I will have no objection. I am not adamant that they should always listen to me. It should not be distorted.

Bapu Watve : Anna, as a representative, distributor, writer, publisher, producer and also report, you have seen the film industry very closely and even you have vast experience. On this, I would like to ask you that according to you, what the future of the film industry is. Also of Marathi film Industry and Indian film industry as Indian Film Industry has just completed 75 years.

Bapat : I think, the future of the Marathi Film Industry seems to be good.

Bapu Watve : You think, it looks good?

Bapat : Yes. It looks good. The wave of (inaudible) will reduce. Whatever you have seen movies, besides 2/3 all are a flop. So I don't think this wave of critics will remain for more than a year or two. And if they come out with social or family-oriented films or on social problems films then Marathi Film Industry will survive. If you are talking about Hindi Film Industry then as I told you earlier that now it is in the hands of builders and smugglers. It is like whatever they say is right. So, I could see darkness for the Indian Film Industry. There is a heavy competition of TV, Video,

cable TV and even in future they might come out with different technology. The condition is that any new technology may come out at any time. I will tell you what is happening in America. Before the discovery of television, they have come out with technology that one print will be shown at one theatre and the same print will be shown at the theatres within 1000 sq meter. There will be no expenses of carbon and any other material. Once television entered the market and this was discontinued. With this technology, they will be saving lots of money.

Bapu Watve : Because of this technology it must have affected American Film Industry!

Bapat : Yes. It has affected me badly. Hollywood is also in trouble. You must know that even in the UK many theatres have closed down.

Bapu Watve : Oh God.

Bapat : Yes, because of television, there is no business.

Bapu Watve : That means from your point of you, even the future of the Indian Film Industry is not so hopeful.

Bapat : Yes, it is not hopeful. If any miracle happens and producers and financiers become cautious and if they make changes accordingly then the film industry might progress. I am not denying this. Why I am talking like this because the kind of films is getting produced, the life of that films is only for 2 to 3 years.

Bapu Watve : What else would you like to tell us about the film industry? I doubt that the productions of films are reducing.

Bapat : yes, it is true. It is the opposite of Marathi films. The reason is that refund of government entertainment tax. The rich people who are financiers of these films feel that once the film is released then we will get our tax back. This is what producers

make them understand. One gentleman from Marathwada had come to me and explained to him that it is not like that. The government does not pay you from their pocket. When they get Rs.12 lacs as entertainment tax, out of that 80% you get it back. If you are under impression that if the film releases in Marathwada theatre then you will get your money back then you are wrong. If you have Rs.3 lacs and you are going to take a loan from somewhere to invest in the film then better you keep it in the bank and live peacefully rather than taking a loan and suffering. I advised them but they don't agree with it as they had been given many attractive promises. Instead of blaming someone, it is better not to advise them in a money matter. Those ordinary Directors' many films are not getting released but still, they are getting new ones, I don't know the secret of this. Directors have many ideas to fool the financier. The ordinary person even cannot think about these ideas. They implement these ideas on financiers.

Bapu Watve : Now you are not willing to become a producer.

Bapat : No.

Bapu Watve : Would you like, If you get a chance to become a movie story writer again?

Bapat : Yes, Yes. I am willing to and I have some stories in my mind. If I could get some good director who really has knowledge of directions then only I am willing to give him my story otherwise I will not. My earning is not dependent on it.

Bapu Watve : As you have mentioned that at present, the condition of the Marathi film industry is better than....

Bapat : Yes, Right now, it is not.

Bapu Watve : Now I feel that historical and mythological movies in Marathi will not

be produced.

Bapat: Yes. It will not be produced. The reason is that it is very expensive to produce and also difficult. Even the audience for these Mythological and Historical movies is reducing slowly. Leave aside Ramayan on the television show as we are getting it free but if you produced Ramayan as a movie then I cannot give a guarantee that 100% it will succeed. Even if you produce a movie on Mahabharat I will not give a 100% guarantee of its' success.

Bapu Watve : As you are a writer and producer, do you think, in future, there will Marathi movies with great stories, how they used to be previously?

Bapat: Yes. It is possible. If that does not happen, then the future of Marathi film will be in danger. Most of the producers, who cannot write word "Katha" properly, they have started announcing themselves as a writer. Or sometimes they pay for their name and ask the director to write their name as a story writer. This is the condition now a day. If you see, some of the movies stories are so bad then you will doubt their knowledge or attitude of taking a risk or you will feel sorry for them to spend Rs.8 to Rs.10 lacs.

Bapu Watve : That means if the Marathi film industry will get capable producers and directors then still it has a better future. This is what I feel.

Bapat : Certainly. There is an example of Dada Kondke. The credit goes to Dadasaheb Kondke for bringing back the audience. He has brought back the audience of Marathi Film. I am of this opinion. Even today, Sachin and Mahesh Kothare have done a great job for Marathi film Industry. For example, the film "Ashi Hi Banvabanvi". This film can be seen by anyone, then it may be 5 years old child or your wife. Anyone can see this film. In spite of no vulgarity, no porn scene in that

movie, still it is running smoothly. The futures of this kind of movie are really good. I don't have negativity opinion about Marathi films but I feel we should produce sensibly. If today's youngsters don't know the meaning of the title then you will have to first explain the title to them. These kinds of the movie will never succeed.

Bapu Watve : That means the future is not hopeless.

Bapat : No, Not much.

Bapu Watve : Till now.

Bapat : Yes.

Bapu Watve : That means, looking at the format of this business.

Bapat : Not only writer but producer also has to be sensible.

Bapu Watve : Yes. This is also equally important. You don't have much hope about Hindi movies.

Bapat : Yes. I don't have much hope for Hindi films. What Hindi producers are doing? They go to London. See some English movie and before it comes to India, they copy the same movie in Hindi. This is what they are doing.

Bapu Watve : Do you see any other language movie?

Bapat : Yes, I understand Kannada. So I see Kannada films. I understand Gujrati. I have seen Gujrati movies but they are of low quality.

Bapu Watve : Kannada is of good quality.

Bapat : Yes. After seeing Kannada films, we should be ashamed for not producing such kinds of movies.

Bapu Watve : if you see south Indian film..

Bapat : If you take the example of the film "Shhankarabharanam". There is nothing special in that film but it runs smoothly.

Bapu Watve : South Indian films are always good and of top-level films.

Bapat : Yes. They are of top-level films. You can say that they were at the Hollywood film level.

Bapu Watve : I feel sorry that these kinds of films are not produced in Marathi. Even you have mentioned it. For that, even producers should be ready. And even for that Marathi audience has to be ready.

Bapat : Yes our audience is not really ready. Now there is little change taking place. Movies like “Ashi Hi Banvabanvi” are getting produced and the audience likes them. The audience wants entertainment. If you try to give them philosophy through film then the audience will not like it and the film goes flop.

Bapu Watve : I feel, the top-level movies run smoothly and it should also happen with Marathi movies.

Bapat : In Maharashtra, they have done so many advertisements for Hindi movies that if you give your maid Rs.5 for a movie and if tomorrow you ask her, she will definitely tell you that she had seen the Hindi film “Khoon Bhari Mang”. She will not say she had seen a Marathi movie. It is so much advertisement for Hindi movies. General people understand also understand Hindi though not fluent. They cannot understand fluent Hindi but understands well.

Bapu Watve : That means Hindi movies are hurdles for Marathi movies.

Bapat : Yes. It is not in Tamil Nadu. There Hindi movies..

Bapu Watve : Generally, not in South India.

Bapat : Excluding Karnataka. Hindi movies run well in Karnataka. As I told you before all four language movies run in Karnataka.

Bapu Watve : So now we hope that there will be a change in the attitude of Marathi

audience after that of producer and of the director or if these three will combine together then Marathi cinema will have good days.

Bapat : As I told you that the efforts of the producer, director and writer should combine together. I had done a similar effort.

Bapu Watve : When??

Bapat : 15 to 16 years back. I had created a story of the film “Pinjara” on the basis of famous movie “Nora Prentiss”. We had made changes suitable to the Indian surrounding. We had kept the name of the hero Doctor as it is in the film of Nora Prentiss. The story was ready. The actors we had decided were Raja Paranjape, Sulochana and Jayashree Gadkar. We had also discussed this with them. But for some reason or you can say my bad luck; my dream did not become true. It remained like that. After that, you must be knowing another “Pinjara” movie came and how it was successful.