

Damoo Kenkre

COMPUTER CARD

THEATRE PERSONALITY

Name	Damoo Kenkre
Photographs	88
Printed material (articles / clippings / brochures)	2 + 30 + (20 ground plans and sketches)
Publicity Material	1
Books on	Nil
Books by	Nil
Audio Material	1
Video Material	1
<i>Cross Reference:</i> See Natasamrat, The Goa Hindu Association and Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh files.	

Bio-data

Name	Damoo Kenkre
Date of Birth	5 May 1929
Address	23, Kalanagar, Bandra (East), Bombay 400 051
Education	G. D. Art
Languages	Marathi, Konkani, Hindi, Gujarati, English

Major Awards and Positions

1974	Sangeet Natak Academi Award
1976-80	Director, Cultural Affairs, Maharashtra State
1980-84	Honorary Secretary —Goa Kala Academi
1986	Natyadarpan Awards —Prize for Direction (Play: <i>Sparsh</i>)

1988	Natyadarpan Awards – in the name of late Vasant and Suman Gangal
1988-89	Maharashtra State Professional Play Competition – Prizes for Acting, Direction, Sets and Lights (Play: <i>Kalachakra</i>)
Books	Nil
Films	<i>Tujbyavachun Karmena</i> , Direction. Also acted in a few films
TV	<i>Kaalchakra</i> (Marathi serial)
Radio	Participation in several radio plays, interviews, talks etc.
Additional Information	Closely associated with Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh and The Goa Hindu Association, toured Germany in 1956 and one-year stay in England to study theatre.

Mr Damoo Kenkre interviewed by Mrs Pushpa Bhave and Dr Ashok Ranade

Bhave: The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan had created an atmosphere of a theatre movement. How did it feed your generation?

Kenkre: The Inter Collegiate Competitions were instituted in 1950. In 1951, when I was studying in the School of Arts, we participated. Our entry was *Rabasya ani Taruni*. We won prizes etc . . . It occurred to me that we can try out different things, apart from the competitions which were held only annually. I thought of bringing together students from different colleges to form a nucleus of theatre persons . . . Girish Munshi – Shri K.M. Munshi's son, was the secretary of the Kendra. He had a lot of enthusiasm and welcomed the idea with great delight. Apparently the idea was tried out earlier with some success . . . Thus various facilities came our way. Firstly we had a theatre, so it was possible to do actually what we felt. In those days daily shows never went up to three. In addition there were only two theatres – Bharatiya Bhavan and the open air theatre of the Sahitya Sangh . . . Having gathered together the boys, we used to rehearse and produce a bunch of three to four one-acts. All were newly written and mostly commissioned to different writers. For example, Anant Kanekar wrote a few. Vijay Tendulkar's initial one-acts were written for this movement. Vasant Mane also contributed some . . . The one acts were selected consciously to try out new things . . . The electrician in Vidya Bhavan – Kalyan and some other back stage workers and people like us used to stay back after the show in the theatre. Girish had given a special permission to

us. From mid-night hours, after the show was over, we used to try out our ideas. 'How could this set be arranged?' 'If we divide it, how would it look?' 'Where should the source of light be located?' 'Of what intensity?' . . . 'What is a spot?' 'How is it constructed?' And 'how can we do something new with it?' We were able to dismantle, break and reassemble . . . everything . . . practically. We read a lot about these matters later. To get a hands-on experience without any previous knowledge or reading, was very important and Girish made it possible. Costumes, lighting or set-design . . . we used to begin our work at midnight, continue till the early hours, spread something, somewhere, snatch some sleep and return to our homes at 7.30 a.m. This went on for days together and helped us immensely . . .

Ranade: You have mentioned technical aspects of theatre. Did you try out other aspects?

Kenkre: To work on other aspects did not require special facilities. Our imagination and responsiveness of the others concerned were sufficient. For example, Tendulkar's play, *Manoos Navache Bet* . . . We read the first act and discussed, suggested changes and alternatives while the play was being written.

Bhave: In an interview, Tendulkar has said 'I became a dramatist because Damoo Kenkre goaded me on' . . . during that period you, Tendulkar and others were moving towards something in concert . . .

Kenkre: It cannot be described as that exactly . . . Vasant Mane was my friend and Tendulkar was Vasant Mane's and so on . . . Friends of friends etc. came together and that resulted into a group. Somebody would say 'I have an idea for a play' then the discussion would begin about how the play should be written on that idea. At the Opera House corner, on the steps of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan . . . we would gather and continue discussion, on occasions till 3 a.m. at night . . . It was really working together.

Ranade: What was your relationship with the people and the effort put in by them in other languages?

Kenkre: Not much. Except with the Gujarati Theatre. Participants of the Inter Collegiate in Gujarati used to attend our activities. There were 'theatre-struck people' in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Bhavan's College and in Wilson College . . . I think I had directed one or two one-acts in Gujarati in Wilson College.

Bhave: You were active in Vidya Bhavan and Alkazi used to run his training activities for the collegiates in Hasman, used to have classes in the morning to be followed by rehearsals and performances. His

*Damoo Kenkre
at the
Goa Kala Academy's office
(1982)*



was a very methodical effort. For example, in the Elphinstone he asked the boys to begin working with the carpenters and continue till the final setting went up. Did this not inspire you to think about dramatic training?

Kenkre: No . . . Firstly because we had not given any thought to the training aspect. Our main objective was to try out different things. Learn with each others help, without a teacher. We knew that Alkazi was carrying on his training activities but we did not feel like establishing a contact with him . . . In fact the very words like experimentation, movement etc. were not in circulation. It occurred to us much later, after about 10 years, that our work together could be described as a Theatre Movement . . . Arvind Deshpande, Nandkumar Ravte, Raja Patwardhan, Ram Bhadsavle, Sudha Karmarkar and Lalita (Kenkre) . . . There were about 75 odd girls and 100 boys involved in our work outside the competitions.

Bhave: *And most of them are active on the stage today . . . Let us come back to Manus Navache Bet. While directing it, you must have become aware that it had a different concept of drama and hence required a different style of performance. How did you think about it—as a director and as a set designer?*

Kenkre: I felt the play to be different in the context of that period. The plight of the middle class and its total attitude, its response to the society around . . . was the theme we discussed and Tendulkar wrote on it. He had completed the first act earlier, but it needed much editing. So nothing happened for many days. He wrote it again and we discussed. The play evolved in this way. I therefore realised that it required simplicity and realism. For

example, there are flats built for people working in various industries. Government builds them to allot, provided you represent an industry. The hero of the play has started manufacturing soap and has been (therefore) allotted a flat. I imagined from this clue. What would be the area in which the flat would be located? What would be the design of the flat? Simple. You enter through a door into a small passage and again face a door . . . In the first act three friends stay together. In the second act, one friend—a production manager, has moved out and naturally has left with his furniture. Thus the stage was blank in the second act. The blankness was important from the point of view of the total impact.

Bhave: *Let me intervene. The rhythm of the play is such that there is no climax. The audience could not understand when the play was over. In fact an announcement to the effect was deemed necessary! In the rhythm of your direction, how did you take care of this . . . ?*

Kenkre: I feel there was a theme and there was also a climax. However the earlier plays used to tell something to the audience directly at the close and we kept out the deliberate conclusion consciously . . . You do imagine a lot of things. If you offer a choice to the audience and allow them to imagine . . . they will connect on their own. This was the idea . . . and now to the lack of a obvious climax. . . The hero's business has slumped. His friend, a journalist, has lost his job. The yellow notice for auctioning the place has been pasted on the door. In these circumstances the character has gained sympathy because it is facing a collapse. And *this* is the point of climax . . . However the main objection of the audience was different, they felt that nothing happens in the third act. The 'imminent

action' is the only item dealt with in the entire act . . . I thought differently: The hero is restlessly moving about the room . . . his friend is playing 'patience'. Hero's wife comes in and is consoled . . . The special thing about the action in the third act is: 'NOTHING HAPPENS'. In other words the pace of the entire play is controlled by this idea . . . *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* by Ray is an example in a similar category . . . however while producing the play I deviated from this strategy. No kind of pace should cause trouble to the spectators. The lack of pace, in other words, will have to be compensated for. I feel I tried to do that . . .

As far as set design is concerned, I had used things which I may or may not use today. For example the flat of the hero. There are references to suggest it being on the second floor. I had shown the top portion of an electric pole to suggest the height, the second floor. Further I expanded on this visual by using another familiar sight in Bombay. A kite is shown to have been caught in the wires. This accentuates Bombay as well as the second floor. Further I showed the kite to be bright red in the first act while in the second act it has lost its colour. In the third act what has remained is only a skeleton! These visual contrasts are on the cyclorama to register the atmosphere, the thought . . .

Ranade: *You have often maintained that you do not like a set-design that dazzles. And you have also stated that it should reach the people. The visualisation you are describing now amounts to 'subtle effects'. Do you feel they are likely to reach people? To be dazzling is one kind of danger which you avoided. What about the danger of subtlety?*

Kenkre: I might do things differently today. Compared to those days, the audience today might be more ready to accept subtlety. However, I think that even in those days the effect was not entirely lost on them. The reason was that the rest of the set is very simple. There is a door, a door-frame, behind that, the railing of a gallery . . . How much space is now available to see the sky? On the blue background of that 'sky' you see the red kite. The visual location is such that people cannot miss it. This position is to be helped. Therefore the kite etc. did not go out of the field of vision.

Bhave: *In your early career also there seems to be some balance. You did a realistic modern play such as Manus . . . and while doing it you were thinking of Hamlet too! What prompted you to do Shakespeare?*

Kenkre: Really speaking I will prefer directing a second rate play to doing a first rate role! *Hamlet* is such a play that everybody thinks of taking it up

after getting a good acquaintance with the world theatre and after attaining some 'development'. This was not so in my case . . . But I had seen Nanasaheb Phatak's *Hamlet* many times and for different reasons. Somehow I felt it cannot be done this way. So I read and re-read G. G. Agarkar's version. I felt it has many things and one should try them out. However trying them out, in my case, meant directing it. My repeated readings of Agarkar's version convinced me that there was something crude in it. Somebody told me Ganpatrao Joshi's *Hamlet* followed a different director's script and Shri Nanasaheb Phatak had a copy of it. I went to Nanasaheb and requested him for the copy. He said 'no'. I told him 'I will get it copied and return the original to you'. He said 'no'. I then said 'I will prepare a copy in your presence, in your own home!' Nanasaheb finally made an interesting statement. He said, '*Hamlet* is not for any *Tom, Dick and Harry*'. That decided it! I asked him 'Nanasaheb, you began doing *Hamlet* when you were of my age and therefore you are able to understand *Hamlet* at your mature age! Do you have any objection if I come to understand *Hamlet* in my mature age? . . .' He got wild and gruffly told me go to 'Jogdanda' . . .

I went on wondering who this 'Jogdanda' was! P.L. told me 'Jogdanda' was Mr Nana Jog—who was Phatak's brother-in-law! They always called names to each other. P.L. further told me that Nana Jog has translated *Hamlet* again . . . in three acts. Compact . . . and somewhat abridged . . . I wrote to Nana Jog. Nana Jog came to Bombay, read the script to me. I liked it and decided to produce it.

Bhave: *Your production was heavily criticised, especially for its spoken word and the presentation of soliloquies. What do you feel now, while looking back?*

Kenkre: I could not accept the criticism . . . Nana Jog had explained to me: 'Even though the entire play is in blank verse I do not know how people will receive it and hence only the soliloquies are to be rendered in blank verse.' I liked the idea, I like it even today. In fact this way of treating the problem, in my opinion, has influenced the writing of later playwrights. For example, Kanetkar's *Himalayachi Savli* and such other plays have followed the device.

Now I asked Nana Jog about the royalty. He said, 'you decide it and send the money directly to Vidarbha Sahitya Sangh. However I lay down one condition. I will decide on the person who will do 'Hamlet'. Casting of all other roles is your responsibility!' I agreed and we went on thinking about the casting. At that time P.L. used to stay at Canary House near Model House. While I was discussing

something with him in his house, Prof. Vasant Bapat and his wife paid a courtesy call. And P.L. suddenly said 'Damu, Vasant Bapat is your 'Hamlet' . . . rehearsals began with Vasant Bapat as 'Hamlet' . . . However after some rehearsals Bapat probably felt that he could not do it. Once again Nana Jog was called and we tried out at least a dozen persons, including Arun Kolatkar, the poet whose name was suggested by M.V. Rajadhyaksha. I liked Kolatkar's appearance and his total expression, but he too returned the script after the few rehearsals! We were really doing Hamlet without the prince of Denmark! By this time Nana Jog was asking me to do it. But I refused because I felt a lack of certain factors necessary for the role.

Ranade: *For example?*

Kenkre: Bad voice. I do not have the range and the category of voice needed for 'Hamlet'. I had done comic roles till then and I had also used my bad voice to good purpose in these roles. But 'Hamlet' posed problems . . . For sometime I discontinued the rehearsals and thought about the situation. I realised that in a lower pitch I can go down. Hence I started using a pitch, lower than what we usually employ for stage projection. This helped me but all other characters were conceived in different ranges. Eventually their ranges were adapted to my pitch. This naturally required hard thinking and much time was lost in it . . . However our 'Hamlet' with a bad voice did not prove to be absolutely trash! Anyway I did it for my own study and it helped me in later days.

Bhave: *You began from the collegiate stage . . . worked on the experimental and the parallel stage before taking to the professional. Did you make a conscious decision to turn professional?*

Kenkre: I thought that I should not enter the professional theatre merely to turn a professional! It is not that I was hostile to the professional stage, though many of my age were hostile to it in the beginning. In fact I have always advised persons with talent to enter the profession. I hold that the standard of theatre in any language is determined by the professional theatre it has. Work on the experimental or the parallel stage should be helpful in improving the standards of the profession . . . I told Vijaya (Mehta) 'You are good for professional theatre because you are talented'. Talent on professional theatre would be useful for bringing about maturity . . . In those years I did not enter the profession because I wanted to try out many things. . . Till about seventies I did not do anything professionally. Even in later years whatever professional theatre I have done is not entirely professional!

Bhave: *In your generation, farce became popular due to the efforts of Baban Prabbu and Atmaram Bbende. However the humorous plays which you selected were comedies . . . or more precisely, light comedies. In the context of Maharashtrian taste, how far did you succeed? What special efforts did you make?*

Kenkre: It required some time for it to strike roots . . . I had to persuade people to select, write and construct plays with this orientation. Lots of discussions went into 'fashioning' of such plays. For example, a play like *Vaje Paul Apule* is humorous but not so in the conventional sense. It definitely is on the level of a light comedy. I also recommended Kaufman and Hart and such other English playwrights for reading adaptation etc. Of the same kind are *Man who came to dinner*, *George Washington slept here*. . . I could not do them but they were staged. *Sabhya Grubastha Ho* is also a good example . . .

Bhave: *This play, in my opinion, marks an important point in your career . . .*

Kenkre: When I was about to take up *Sandhya Chhaya*, *Sabhya Grubastha Ho* was also being considered. I opted for *Sabhya Grubastha Ho* because I

Damoo Kenkre in Hamlet



felt that it offered more scope to a director. Comparatively speaking, *Sandhya Chhaya* is a straight play . . . To make an impact, a play generally needs a story which *Sabhya Grubastha Ho* does not have. To take up a theme without a story and to hold the audience for two-three hours is a joint responsibility of the actors and the director.

Ranade: In this connection I would like to note an objection about your direction. It is said that you do not direct! Whatever the actors do, you merely refrain from spoiling it! That is, your 'negative' direction stops at allowing them to act according to their own conceptions. How would you react to this objection?

Kenkre: Those who have worked with me will never agree with this. Once Vijaya had said to Arun (Joglekar) after *Akbercha Sawal*, 'In what way Damu can be said to have directed the play?' While thinking, directing a realistic play I feel it important to give people a feeling that they are not watching a play, but something which happens in their presence . . . Every character in a play will have its way of thinking, manner of speaking and method of behaving. If I demonstrate these to the actors and tell them to follow me—it will appear as if there is only one character. This should not happen. (My strategy is to note each individual actor's voice, diction, mannerism etc. and the variety available.) My method is *not* to obstruct an actor if his speech, mannerisms etc. approximate to those of the character. I only intervene when the actors leave the track of the characters . . . Now to the case of *Akbercha Sawal* . . . The play has many possibilities which can be described as melodramatic. But as you know, Kanetkar has based the play on a real-life person related to him. Kanetkar has often said that the dialogues in the third act between the mother and the daughter have really taken place, Kanetkar has only taken them down! Under the circumstances, one should get the feeling that the things are happening in one's presence. The direction should be to attain this aim. I consider the requirements of a play and not those of a director!

Bhave: While we are discussing your direction I would like to ask you about the relationship between set-design, your study of visual arts and your direction. How do you plan these?

Kenkre: We visualise every play on a stage of 31 x 24 ft. The sets are constructed in this space. These are integrated with the special qualities of various areas identified in the geography of the stage. For example, the down right area (to the right of the actor and near to the spectator) is the most intimate. The same intimacy envelops the adjoining

spaces. Love scenes or other tender scenes achieve the maximum effect when they take place in this area. The left down is also an intimate area, but the scenes which take place here would be of a different type, for example—gossiping or conspiracy etc. On the other hand the area identified as down right centre is conducive to the scenes of conflict etc. The set design has to take into account the impacts associated with these areas. All these are established facts. Even the movements must take into consideration these factors. For example, take *Kala Chakra*. The first act has a diagonal gallery in which the parents are compelled to accommodate themselves. The idea is to keep them away! They are to be squeezed into a narrow space. Their tender scenes would have suffered if the gallery had been designed somewhere at the back as is the normal convention. So what was the solution? To bring the gallery nearer to the spectator, somewhere near the right down position. This determines the set and the treatment. (In fact this determines the area available for acting, location of the television set, positioning of the sofa, placement of the dog and all such matters.) The set decides organisation of the movements and makes them specific. This is the process and hence set design is not an independent aspect. It is a directorial technique. The director must conceive the set because he conceives everything that is visualised.

Bhave: The make-up also needs to be considered in a similar way. With us, make-up is used as a mere technique!

Kenkre: Because it is not realised that make-up is a part of an actor. It is the actor who is to decide on the make-up. In more progressive countries, a make-up assistant keeps the things ready and the actor does the make-up himself.

Bhave: For our generation, there were not many auditoria . . . Gradually auditoria sprang up in Bombay. Are these constructed after having consulted the people who work on the stage?

Kenkre: It did not happen that way and even now the things have not changed . . . It is not realised that theatre architecture is a specialised discipline and needs to be considered as that.

Bhave: At least in the case of Sabitya Sangh, with so many theatre-connected persons around . . .

Kenkre: In case of the Sangha, matters were slightly different. Consultations *did* take place, but the available space to build the auditorium and such other limitations did not allow what was desired and understood to be so!

Bhave: In Goa, you were actively engaged and you

*Mandakini Bhadbhade
and Lata Jookar in
Sabhya Gruhast Ho!*



had an architect of Charles Corea's imagination to work with. How was the experience?

Kenkre: Initially a committee of three persons—P.L. Deshpande, Prafulla Dahanukar and myself was appointed to help the architect. The first two members were not easily available! So it was reduced to a one-man committee. However, I told Charles and he agreed that finally he has to think of those who will use the auditorium . . . Therefore the Goa Kala Academy has not only an auditorium, but also an environment. That must be the only auditorium which has maximum facilities.

Bhave: *A question about the administrative aspect . . . You have not been an 'organisation-man'! Yet you accepted the directorship of the Cultural Directorate and the Goa Kala Academy. Was your experience useful or the posts proved to be so?*

Kenkre: I could achieve some things but could not do some important ones. Firstly the Directorate is a government department with its own system. To follow that system means not to be able to do certain things . . .

Bhave: *What about Goa?*

Kenkre: It was an autonomous body. But the present Government in Goa cannot distinguish between an autonomous body and a government department! . . . Initially the Akademy enjoyed more autonomy because of the origin of the idea of establishing an Akademy. This took place when Shri Bhausahab Bandodkar was at the helm of affairs. I broached the idea of the Akademy with Shri Bandodkar.

There is a history to this. When I was teaching in the school of arts, it occurred to me that terms

and concepts such as line, form, colour and texture used by students of the visual arts are not really confined to them. They are also operative in the performing arts . . . For my own benefit (and ostensibly for the benefit of the students!) I organised a seminar on Line, Form, Colour and Texture. Performing artistes were invited to explain how these concepts operate in the performing arts. Jitendra Abhisheki (music), Acharya Parvatikumar (dance) and K. Narayan Kale (theatre), participated.

If a man from music establishes a contact with a painter and a painter with a dancer and a dancer with a theatre person—all of them would be enriched in their respective fields. This idea gathered momentum. I thought of the Kala Akademy to bring all arts under one roof. At that time, Mr Bandodkar was the Chief Minister and he immediately agreed. On the fifteenth day, he called a meeting with Corea and others to finalize the outline! He was a Chief Minister, but by temperament he was different from a government-person!

Bhave: *Alkazi had invited you to the National School of Drama, in Delhi. You had rejected the offer . . . What do you think of theatre-training now?*

Kenkre: Our pattern in the Universities, consisting of 60% theory and 40% practicals is good for Physics, Chemistry etc. but I do not think the pattern is suitable for education in any Art . . . (In Arts) a person does many things intuitively (and it should be so) to follow up later with theory in order to understand what he has done. This should be the format. Theory should supplement . . .

Bhave: *While taking a look at the experimental movement today, it appears to have three phases—*

a pre-Rangayan, Rangayan and Chhabildas. What do you feel about the experimental movement?

Kenkre: It has been beneficial to have tried out something new at every phase. Not that everything tried out has been accepted. But gradually these things have percolated to the professional theatre.

Bhave: *What do you think about your contemporaries? For example D.G. Godse, Baburao Sadvelkar . . .*

Kenkre: As I said earlier, set-design is a directorial technique. Hence a set-designer must be, primarily, a theatre person . . . While being a painter, Godse has been attached to theatre, literature and history. Much of his work, in which authenticity is required, has been useful. Period plays—historical, mythological or something belonging to the past, has been his strength. On the other hand, Baburao Sadvelkar is a painter . . . The two plays for which he designed sets, had a quality of paintings attached to drama . . .

Bhave: *What about other workers such as Satyadev Dubey, Alyque Padamsee?*

Kenkre: I cannot say much about Padamsee. I have not seen much of his work. About Dubey, I can say one thing. He is essentially and temperamentally a theatre person. And in my opinion this is very important . . . His eccentricity, his behaviour are a part of this intensity about theatre.

Bhave: *With us, whether in professional or experimental theatre—tensions between individuals and personalities appear. When you direct and rehearse, you are handling human material. Secondly, you have succeeded in keeping yourself aloof from controversies. Do you have anything to say on these?*

Kenkre: I think my basic temperament helps. For many years now, I have believed that inconsistency is basic to human nature. To live consistently, or according to one principle etc. is an impossibility in human life . . . This has enabled me to take a detached view. To look at anything and at one's own self through a third person's eye is objectivity. The more we acquire it, the more joy it gives us in theatre. If you think in this way, problems are solved or they hurt less . . . I remained away from the controversies, not consciously, but as a result of my disposition.

Bhave: *When you are working with a group of people as a director, it is not their voices alone that you have to balance! You have also to harmonise their psychologies . . .*

Kenkre: Yes. And it is very difficult. Different people

have different tendencies. They differ in their awarenesses of theatre. They also have their loves and their hates, sometimes expressed and sometimes suppressed. How much of this and how much of the total calibre? A director has to do this arithmetic on one hand, direct plays on the other. While doing this arithmetic, Damu Kenkre might seem to others as not directing at all! . . . I will give you an example of the 'Ophelia' in our *Hamlet*. She was good looking and had an innocent beauty necessary for any Ophelia. In addition, she had a pathos in her voice. While working with her, I had to intervene often—as she carried a convent accent. However in one particular short soliloquy I did not tell her anything. She used to ask me 'Why don't you direct me? Why don't you tell me how to take this soliloquy'. . . Sometimes an actor does the most appropriate thing automatically because of his personality or due to some other reasons. To try to direct him on such occasions is more likely to create confusion. This is where you need a 'directorial technique'. Very often when I see an actor is facing a block, I have declared a tea-break and chit-chatted. And this has brought about the desired change!

Bhave: *Does that mean that a director also tells the actor to follow his own natural gait?*

Kenkre: Yes. And if a change is desired, the director has to explain why and how.

Bhave: *I remember you had directed Kashinath Ghanekar in Manus Navache Bet. Later on Ghanekar 'changed', became popular and developed an image . . . In Indian circumstances is it possible for a director to caution an actor against (an unnecessary change)?*

Kenkre: Yes, but one can do that if it serves a purpose . . . Ghanekar had right from the beginning, a 'professional temperament'! . . . I think we were at the fourth or fifth performance of *Manus Navache Bet*. Booking was poor—which was usual in those times. Ghanekar rang up to say he will not perform . . . I went to his house to ask him what the matter was. Initially he said he was not well and had a tooth-ache! Then he said 'What is the fun in performing before 50 heads?' I told him our job is to act. The number in the audience does not matter . . . I asked him 'Is this your final decision?' He said 'yes'. I went to the Sahitya Sangh in the evening and wrote on the board—'Today's performance stands cancelled as Dr Ghanekar has expressed his inability to play the role on account of toothache!' . . . Later while I was doing *Hamlet* he was after me to offer him some role. I said, 'You will be a popular actor, you will be known, but you will never get a role in my play. . . ' Even before his death

he expressed his desire to play 'Hamlet'. He had also rehearsed some soliloquies . . .

Bhave: Some actors appear to do imitation and not acting. Why? Any criteria to distinguish between acting and imitation?

Kenkre: An actor means to create a complete man! . . . To mimic a person is to pick up and present mannerisms, characteristic gestures etc. To mimic is to do something temporary. Even among the actors it may happen that an actor liked by the audience for a particular role is commented upon for his repetitiveness . . . Firstly, because versatility is a rare commodity in the world . . . Secondly, if an actor, in the beginning of his career, gets a role which requires mannerisms, gestures of the actor himself—he proves effective. Mannerisms depend on the physical build, mental make-up, psychological state etc. The actor tends to take all these with him in the role he is trying to create. Naturally he tries to repeat what has proved successful. In reality, a good actor has to distinguish between his own mannerisms and the character's mannerisms etc. Some of his own mannerisms, not required for the role, are to be discarded. This is the process. It is not given the thought it deserves.

Bhave: This was about the actors. There have been many playwrights with whom you have worked. What has been your experience about getting a raw script and turning it into a director's script?

Kenkre: 'Lot of disagreement with the playwrights and the eventual, totally different script for the production' etc. has never happened in my case. If for any reason I feel that I cannot do a particular thing . . . I simply do not do it! No disagreements, no controversies! Because I believe that finally the

play-text must be written by a playwright and according to his own lights . . . Discussions and minor changes result if a playwright is convinced . . . This has happened. And the writing has changed but not diametrically opposite to the playwright's script.

Bhave: Today a frequently heard complaint is that the actors take over the play after a few performances . . .

Kenkre: In this respect nothing much can be done under the present circumstances. Because the profession of theatre is not in the hands of artists! It is true that management etc. is better in the hands of non-artists and yet there should be some respect for the art and the artist. Unfortunately even here the blame is not entirely of the non-artists! . . . The actors do not take over all kinds of plays. Probably this is more so in case of humorous plays . . . I personally feel that actors should add to what has been rehearsed, provided the director's track is not entirely forgotten . . . Take for example *Suryachi Pille*. There is a scene in which Shanta Jog and Madhav Watve enter after having decided to marry each other. On that particular day, Lalita (Kenkre) had brought some rose flowers and given one to Shanta. Shanta wore a red rose while making an entry! Obviously the scene rose to new height because the flower accentuated the effect of an old woman's intention to marry. As a director, I should have thought of this effect. I told Shanta that this addition is good because it adds without deviating from my track . . . Fundamentally theatre is an actor's art and one should remember that.

Bhave: Now you have arrived at a point where your conclusions can be put down even academically.

Kenkre: Things are getting consolidated . . .

List of Productions

No.	Year	Play	Credits	Playwright	Institution
1.	1947	Sangeet Municipalty	Acting	M. N. Joshi	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
2.	1951	Rahasya aani Taruni (one-act)	Acting Direction, Sets, Lights	Gangadhar Gadgil	J. J. School of Applied Arts*
3.	1952-53	Rakshaasachaa Janma (one-act)	Direction, Sets, Lights	Anant Kanekar	J. J. School of Applied Arts*
4.	1953	Bramhachaari Yaksha (one-act)	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Mane	J. J. School of Applied Arts*
5.	1954	Bramhachaari Yaksha (one-act)	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Mane	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
6.	1954	Rahasya aani Taruni (one-act)	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Gangadhar Gadgil	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
7.	1955	Gruhastha	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Vijay Tendulkar	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh Utsav
8.	1956	Chhaapil Sansaar	Direction, Sets, Acting	S. G. Sathe	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh

No.	Year	Play	Credits	Playwright	Institution
9.	1956	Maanus Naavaache Bet	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vijay Tendulkar	Lalit Kala Kendra
10.	1957	Hamlet (three-act)	Direction, Acting, Lights	Tr. Nana Jog	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
11.	1957	Adhaantaaraatil Ardhaa Taas (one-act)	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Sabnis	J. J. School of Applied Arts*
12.	1958	Vairyachi Ratra (one-act)	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vijay Tendulkar	J. J. School of Applied Arts*
13.	1958	Tuze Aahe Tujpaashi	Acting (replacement)	P. L. Deshpande	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
14.	1958-59	Vaijayanti	Acting (replacement)	V. V. Shirwadkar	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
15.	1959	Sundar Mee Honaar	Acting (replacement)	P. L. Deshpande	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
16.	1959	Dusraa Peshwaa	Direction, Lights	V. V. Shirwadkar	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
17.	1961-62	Chauryaashichaa Pheraa	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Mane	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
18.	1963	Sawaai Maadhavrao Yaancha Mrutyu	Sets, Lights	K. P. Khadilkar	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh (for Delhi's summer drama festival)
19.	1964	Hamlet (three-acts)	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Tr. Nana Jog	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
20.	1968	Vaaje Paaul Aapule	Acting, Sets, Lights	Vishram Bedekar	Marathi Natak
21.	1968	Saathaa Uttaraachi Kahaani	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Keshav Kelkar	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
22.	1968-69	Major Chandrakaant	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Sabnis	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
23.	1969	Aasa Zala Aani Ujadala	Direction, Lights	S. N. Pendse	Rangdhara
24.	1969-70	Ghetala Shingaawar	Direction, Sets, Lights	Manohar Katdare	Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh
25.	1970	Vallabhapurchi Dantkathaa	Tr. Vasant Sabnis		(Produced by Yashwant Pagar)
26.	1971	Tughlaq	Sets	Tr. Vijay Tendulkar	Aawishkar
27.	1972	Saari Raat (Hindi)	Sets	Tr. Pratibha Agrawal	Theatre Unit
28.	1972	Idaa Pidaa Talo	Direction, Sets, Lights	Tr. Sai Paranjpe	Elphinstone College
29.	1972	Birhaad Baajala	Direction, Acting, Sets, Lights	Ratnakar Matkari	The Goa Hindu Association
30.	1973	Aatun Kirtan Varoon Tamaashaa	Direction, Sets, Lights	Ashok G. Paranjpe	Jasraj Theatre
31.	1973	Vidushak	Direction	V. V. Shirwadkar	Chandralekha
32.	1973	Sabhya Gruhastha Ho	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Jaywant Dalvi	The Goa Hindu Association
33.	1974	Kaathokaath Bharoo Dyaa Pyaala	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Manohar Katdare	Manisha Kala Mandir
34.	1974	Akherchaa Sawaal	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Kanetkar	The Goa Hindu Association
35.	1975	Ek Naar Chaar Bejaar	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Sabnis	Jasraj Theatre
36.	1975	Dista Tasa Nasta	Direction, Sets, Lights	Dr. Gajanan M. Rege	The Goa Hindu Association
37.	1978	Suryaachi Pille	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Kanetkar	The Goa Hindu Association
38.	1979	Aapla Buva Aasa Aahe	Direction, Sets, Lights	Manohar Katdare	Aniket
39.	1980	Durgi	Direction, Lights	Jaywant Dalvi	The Goa Hindu Association
40.	1981	Chandra Jithe Ugwat Naahi	Direction, Sets, Lights	V. V. Shirwadkar	The Goa Hindu Association
41.	1985	Kaarti Premaat Padli	Acting, Direction, Sets, Lights	Ratnakar Matkari	Mauli Productions
42.	1985	Maamla Chorichaa	Direction, Sets, Lights	Vasant Sabnis	Kalakar
43.	1986	Vaandhaa	Direction, Sets	Rajeev Naik	Theatre, Mumbai
44.	1986	Natasamraat	Set, Lights	V. V. Shirwadkar	Rangayatri

<i>No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Play</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Playwright</i>	<i>Institution</i>
45.	1986	Ammaldaar	Direction, Sets, Lights, Acting	P. L. Deshpande	Mauli Productions
46.	1986	Sparsha	Direction, Sets, Lights, Acting	Jaywant Dalvi	The Goa Hindu Association
47.	1987	Kaalchakra	Direction, Sets, Lights, Acting	Jaywant Dalvi	Sateri Productions
48.	1988	Shahaanewaaddaa	Direction, Sets, Lights	S. N. Navare	—

(* for Bhavan's inter-collegiate one-act competitions)