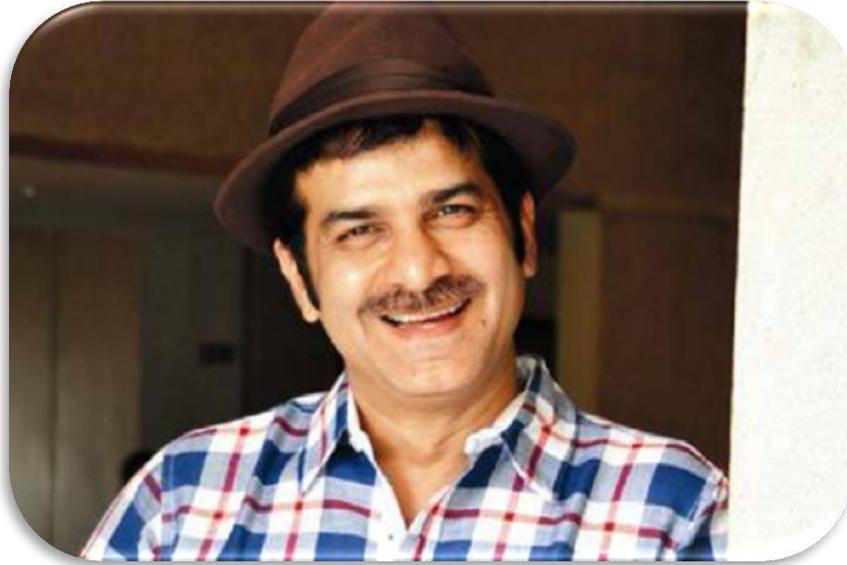


AlumSpeaks

In conversation with Mr. JD Majethia

SIMSR Alum Batch 1987-89

Actor, Producer & CMD - Hatsoff Production Ltd



Q. According to you, what was your most memorable moment at SIMSR?

A. The most memorable moment was a role-play which we did to explain the fundamentals of marketing and the professor of our class told us that it was one of the best acts he had seen. He was a fantastic teacher and a wonderful entertainer. I enjoyed sitting through his classes. Those two to three hours of his lecture were inexplicable, especially for a person like me who was never very inclined to academics. When this role play happened, that was the moment when I found the joy and belief in studying in such a stressful program. And that's how it became my most memorable moment at SIMSR.

Q. What was your key learning from those two years that you spent in MMS course?

A. I learnt many things, but most importantly, how to take the right decision about career choices in life. Those two years taught me the underlying principle of life, that if you do something that you are best at, you don't have to worry about anything and eventually success will follow. The Indian entertainment framework was mostly based on films or Doordarshan back then and satellite channels hadn't entered the market yet. It would have been a blunder to plunge in to acting, just based on theatre experience, especially by quitting my job. I had to take that decision at the right time and the thought process that had sieved in during my studies helped me a lot. Those two years made me more balanced and took away my impulsiveness.

Q. How was your work experience with Mudra Communications for two years as a market executive?

A. I had worked in TOI for six months too, in circulation during the launch of newspaper called "The Independent" and then I joined Mudra where I was in Client servicing.

Q. What do you consider as the biggest turning point of your life?

A. My life is full of turning points but surely quitting my job was one of them. Had I continued today I could have been in some big place. But I always wanted to do something on my own that will reflect my creativity, like advertising, and so I wanted to join Mudra from my MMS days because I wanted to have that advertising experience. But that was the year when Mudra had not come to campus, so I decided to join a publication house which would be close to what I wished for. Hence, I joined TOI, although it wasn't that high paying a job. But then quitting it at the right time was my biggest turning point.

Q. How did your venture Hatsoff Production start? You started with your B-School friend Mr. Atish Kapadia right?

A. Although his domain was writing, different from my area of acting, we thought we should start something of our own since we were best friends. I was quite in dilemma then, because I couldn't afford to quit my job just like that. I wanted to be an actor but the thought of insecurity in the industry worried me. I also wanted to start my own production house since I was always good with organizing. So I started my production house with Atish and one other friend. And we successfully delivered few hit theatre dramas where I was the producer and Atish was the writer. Later we launched our venture in television too and slowly we grew big.

Q. How did Khichdi happen and what according to you is the major reason for the success of Khichdi?

A. My friend from UP was always eager to work with me in television. By then, Atish had already written for the mega series Ek Mahal ho Sapno Ka. Upon consistent nagging from that friend, we came up with an idea of projecting a family which would be completely opposite from that 'adarsh' family portrayal which we were used to seeing in television. So that's how Khichdi happened.

Q. In a recent interview you have mentioned Sitcoms in daily format is not possible anymore but considering the viewership of web series is still very limited in India, what do you feel about the success of relaunching Sarabhai vs Sarabhai in the web series platform?

A. Once a week format for sitcoms is almost gone in India. Even if you like sitcoms, you have to be available at that day and at that particular slot. But you can watch a web series at your convenience and at your own time. One does not have to wait for the repeat telecast. You can watch it as many times as you want. Therefore I feel sitcoms will be more successful as web series in the future.

Q. Sarabhai vs. Sarabhai was a very different and a progressive show for its time? Where did this idea come from?

A. After we made Khichdi, we wanted to make something different. We did not want to stick to the traditional 'gujju' format. Since Khichdi was set in the suburbs, we thought of making something set in the town to show the stark difference. Something modern and ahead of its time. That's how Sarabhai was born.

Q. You mentioned that from outside the entertainment industry looks very glamorous but on seeing it from inside, there is a lot of stress and work pressure. How do you deal with it? Any advice to those who want to join it in the future?

A. Stress is everywhere in life, not just in the industry. We all live in a dream world and we want everything to go as we wish. But eventually you realize the reality of life. When we look at the globe, it looks round and beautiful, but on looking closely, its hard and rocky. The closer you get to something, the better you understand the reality. It's good to have your dreams but one should also have the maturity to accept reality.

Q. Any advice for students of SIMSR?

A. Reminds me of an incident. We had only one computer in SIMSR and for practical exams we had to wait in a very long queue. So some of us decided to not take the 40 mark practical exams and instead try to pass by scoring above 50 in the 60 mark theory exams. [laughs] Now when I think of it, I laugh for sure but at the same time I feel foolish to have done that. It was overconfidence for sure and I would not advice this to anyone. If you are doing something, do it whole-heartedly with sincerity and commitment.

Interviewed and drafted by ALCOM Members -

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