

the screen test for his next film *Bhabna*. Anupam ji was impressed with the screen test; he said the only issue he could find was in my Hindi speaking. But that could be erased with dubbing. So, everything was finalized. I was given the script as well. However, after some days he called me again and said that due to some internal dispute, preparations for the film had to be paused. The project never restarted. Then I worked with Tabu and Sharmila Tagore in Gautam Ghosh's *Abar Aranye*. My friendship with Tabu became so intimate that we would often gossip endlessly at nights and then fall asleep in the same bed. Tabu is a very down to earth person with no ego or arrogance. We are still in touch, and meet whenever I go to India.

**Rafi:** *That's wonderful. Now let us hear about your recent updates.*

**Champa:** I am currently busy with a few projects. I am playing the role of a drug supplier in one of my next films. Another film that I am doing is called *Safe Life*. It is mainly about some hazards of our lives



that we often see around us and how to overcome those.

**Rafi:** *Moving on to a different discussion, it is evident that artists of your generation had a better grip when it came to the question of balancing their career and their family life. What, according to you, could have been the secret behind this?*

**Champa:** I cannot say for everyone, but for me, it has always been sort of like a responsibility. I believed that both my family and my career are like two vital organs of my body. I could never overlook one for the sake of another. So, I always tried to be prepared and planned ahead. It came down to even briefing my helping-hand on what to cook for the next day and when to pick up my daughter from school. Even if I was in the middle of a shooting, I would call the nanny for timely updates. I still have those habits. To this very day I do not forget to check whether the stove is turned off or the door is locked before I go to bed. I kept my daughter with me 24/7 until she was

admitted to school. I would take her to the shooting spots and check on her when I had a break. My daughter studied in an English medium school, and after that, she studied in Canada. But I never let her forget her roots under any circumstance. I think negligence is something that I genuinely never had in my character, and that has created all the difference.

**Rafi:** *Being a top tier actor of your time, how did you handle the media gossips and scandalous rumors?*

**Champa:** I had been very cautious about this throughout my acting career. I never spent extra time with my co-actors or directors. I kept my professional life secluded so it could never create problems in my personal life. However, some newspapers still tried to play with my stardom and capitalized on it. I still remember a local magazine that once published an extremely misleading and fabricated article with my pictures for their cheap publicity. If it had not been for my mental strength, my career would have seen its decay far sooner. Also, my family had been very supportive in these cases. Once my mother-in-law saw one such libelous news and called me. I was hesitant because I was not sure how I could explain the whole thing. Then she said, 'I see you are in love with this actor. Very well, carry on!' And then she laughed and said, 'Listen Maa, when people are trying to drag you down by dishonest means, you should feel happy because you have achieved something that they could never achieve. Never pay attention to these frauds!' So, I can proudly say that I have been blessed with a wonderful family who have always been by my side.

**Rafi:** *You have paired with many hit actors of your time. Let us hear your thoughts on this.*

**Champa:** I have mostly been paired with Manna and Ilias Kanchan. I did a good number of films with Rubel as well. Working with them has been fascinating. I worked with Razzak bhai once in the film *Bishbriksha*. But Alamgir bhai was the one who first gave me the lead role of a heroine in his film *Nishpap*. It was a superhit film and I have heard that the film is still popular among the loyal audience.

**Rafi:** *Tell us, what is the one thing that you admire in Suchanda and Bobita, not as a sister but as actors?*

**Champa:** (Laughter) I think Suchanda apa has beautiful expressive eyes. It is a marvelous advantage for any actor. Also I find her similar to Suchitra Sen, whom I also admire. Then, in Bobita apa, I would say, I find a unique elegance. She has that innate richness in her charisma that can blow any audience's minds.

**Rafi:** *It was wonderful to have you with us! What will be your special message to our readers?*

**Champa:** Once in Kolkata, I saw a mango tree right by a street. It might have grown without any tenure, because I saw many random people from the locality eating the fruit of the tree without any quarrel or discord. This little example of peaceful coexistence took a special place in my mind. I would request everybody to practice benevolence in every step of their lives. And also, please serve our nation with honesty and treasure our country with true fervor.

