

KANDE - POHE

(SHOOTING DRAFT)

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KANDE POHE

When Ishaan's parents are stuck with Ishaan and his 'friend' Manav due to the lockdown, Manav suggests Ishaan to come out to his parents about their relationship.

THE NAME

Kande-pohe is a typical dish that's prepared during arrange marriage meets in India. In older times it used be the taste of that dish that decided the bride's future. Now, although, this way of judging has evolved, the meets are known by the name 'Kande-Pohe Ceremony'

MAIN CHARACTERS

Ishaan (27): A boy living in Pune.

Manav (30s): Ishaan's partner.

Vidya (60s_ - Ishaan's mother.

Anil (60s) - Ishan's father.

TIME

The second lockdown of 2020.

SETTING

Ishaan and Manav's house in Pune city.

*Dialogues in the script are spoken in Marathi and translated in English for the submission of the portfolio.

*This is a released short film and you can watch it on - PlanetMarathi OTT.

FADE IN.

EXT. PUNE, CITYSCAPE - DUSK

AN ARIEL VIEW OF PUNE CITY. OVER THE CITYSCAPE -

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)
Kolhapur and villages around are experiencing sudden spike in Covid patients. Due to limited medical facilities the mayor has imposed a ten-day strict lockdown, starting from tonight.

INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DUSK

PULL OUT FROM A TELEVISION SET.

NEWS REPORTER
All the roads will be blocked for strict travel control. No E-Passes will be issued for travelers. The shops for home-basics will be open from 9Am to 12PM.

OVER THE NEWS: ANIL and VIDYA, a couple in their 60s, and ISHAAN and MANAV, young boys in their late 20s are seated in the living room, intensely watching the television.

Manav has his laptop in front of him.

A moment of silence between the four. Ishaan looks utterly worried. He swallows. Then the chaos bursts -

VIDYA
Anil, I don't remember if I shut the gas...

ANIL
I don't remember if we shut the door properly..

VIDYA
(worried)
We thought we would be back in a couple of days -- we didn't lock the safety door with a big lock.

ISHAAN
Maa, both our doors have latch-locks.

VIDYA
That's not enough. Our neighbors, Pawar, last week, some local boys broke their lock and tries to steal money.

ANIL
I think I've left bathroom the tap running!

ISHAAN

Maa, Pawars leave their door open all the time - even I can steal from them. No one needs to 'break-in'

VIDYA

Oh no - Anil, are you sure you left it running?

MANAV

Do you keep a spare key with your neighbors or someone?

ANIL

We've trust issues!

VIDYA

Ishaan - it looks like we're stuck here at least for ten days.

ISHAAN

10 DAYS???

MANAV

It's only 10 days - It won't be a problem at all.

Ishaan gives a sharp look to Manav. Noticing Ishaan's frustration, Anil begins pulling his leg.

ANIL

I think we'll have to stay longer. This lockdown will go on for a two months at-least - remember the first lock-down stretched almost for three months.

ISHAAN

2 months? Together? In this tiny house?

Ishaan looks around the house - indicating a small space.

VIDYA

We're used to staying in a small place. When we got married we used to stay in a chawl. Our room was barely 10x10 and it was 8 of us. We even managed privacy to have you!

ISHAAN

Baba, why don't you call your police commissioner friend. He'll manage something.

ANIL

It doesn't look nice to call a commissioner for personal favor when the world is battling pandemic. He must have a lot going on.

Ishaan is about to say something but Anil begins grinning. Manav smiles pursing his lips. Vidya also joins the laughter. Ishaan tries to maintain an angry face.

ANIL (CONT'D)
Have we ever stayed this long with you?

VIDYA
But I think Ishu, we'll have to stay at least this week. I need to check if we've got enough BP tablets for Anil. Where is my purse?

MANAV
I kept it inside, in the cupboard.

Vidya begins going inside. Ishaan gives Manav a look.

MANAV (CONT'D)
(hushed voice)
I don't like stuff lying around in the house.

ISHAAN
It's just a purse. Maa, wait - I'll get it

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A photo of Ishaan and Manav, Manav kissing Ishaan on cheek, is stuck inside the cupboard Vidya stares at it.

ISHAAN (O.S.)
Did you find it?

Vidya quickly shuts the cupboard.

VIDYA
Where is your cupboard?

Beat.

ISHAAN
We only have one..

An awkward silence.

TITLE CARD: KANDE-POHE

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vidya is shuffling through the drawers looking for something. Anil stands by the window giving her the instructions.

ANIL
Did you check in the cupboard for blankets?

VIDYA

No.

ANIL

Should I look?

Anil starts going towards cupboard.

VIDYA

Wait - why don't we ask Ishan? It's not nice that we're combing through his room - we need to respect his privacy.

ANIL

Privacy? What privacy does he need from us?

VIDYA

He's a grown man now..

Manav enters.

MANAV

Do you guys need anything?

ANIL

Blankets..

MANAV

Here.

Manav reaches the top of the cupboard and removes three blankets.

ANIL

We need one more - it's four of us.

CUT AWAY: Ishaan stands at the doorway.

ANIL (CONT'D)

(To Ishaan)

I can't sleep on the floor - I have back pain..

MANAV

I have the same problem! But mine is because of the desk job.

VIDYA

Good you said - I'll give you this Ayurvedic medicine tomorrow. It works like magic.

ANIL

Why don't we do one thing - Manav you and I can sleep on this bed and Ishaan and his mother can sleep outside..

Anil looks at all four of them with a proud smile. Vidya widens her eyes. Manav and Ishaan share a look.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anil snores loudly. Manav is awake, on his phone. He opens his WhatsApp to text Ishaan but shuts it and turns over.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ishaan also awake, turns. Checks his phone. Then stares at the darkness under the sofa. Suddenly a hand taps on his shoulder. He turns.

VIDYA

Can't sleep?

Ishaan clicks his tongue - saying no.

VIDYA (CONT'D)

Close your eyes and imagine a mango tree in your backyard. Now count the mangoes. I used to ask you to count different things every time when you were kid and you'd fall asleep in no time..

ISHAAN

But I'm not a kid anymore.

VIDYA

Sometimes you can't sleep because somethings bothering you. Or you're missing someone..

ISHAAN

Maa please..

VIDYA

I know when you miss someone, you can't sleep. During the summers when you visited you grandmother, you'd miss me and then have trouble sleeping.

ISHAAN

Not true..Grandma told you this to you to make you feel better.

They both smile.

VIDYA

Want some warm milk? That would help..Let me get it -

Vidya gets up.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Milk is boiling on the gas. Manav then pours the milk in the boiling black tea.

Then he adds chopped onion in a wok.

CUT AWAY - Vidya watches Manav proudly from living room.

Ishaan enters the kitchen with a towel around his waist.

ISHAAN

Manav, they could've stayed else where. Are you going spend all your time in cooking for everyone or what? We both have work.

MANAV

It's fine..No one anticipated this situation and by the way, I like them.

ISHAAN

Listen - you think they're going to understand everything but that's not true. So cut it out!

Manav pours the tea into four cups.

MANAV

Can I suggest something?

Mixes sugar in all four cups.

ISHAAN

No!

MANAV

(Surprised)

Fine..I won't.

ISHAAN

They don't take sugar - diabetes.

MANAV

Oh! (Beat) You should tell them!

ISHAAN

It's fine - they can have sugar once in a while.

MANAV

I mean about us! Anyway you keep on saying they know already. Can you taste this *poha* for me?

Manav takes a spoon full, gently blows on the Poha and then feeds Ishaan. He gently holds his chin while feeding.

ISHAAN

Oh wow! It's good. I think they know but I never said they'll support.

MANAV

Your parents don't seem like that. You'll be surprised!

Manav places his hand on Ishaan's for assurance. Ishaan pulls away.

ISHAAN

Don't push me, now is not the time.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anil is reading (Lokmat) newspaper with his legs stretched on the stool.

VIDYA

Anil - I want to talk to you.

ANIL

(without looking up)
About?

VIDYA

It's serious..

Anil keeps the newspaper aside.

ANIL

Go on..

MANAV (O.S.)

Pohe?

Vidya and Anil turn around.

IN HIGH SPEED SHOTS: Manav keeps the poha on the table. Anil and Vidya exchange looks. Manav lowers his eyes. Then pours the tea. It's exactly like the scene from 'INDIAN ARRANGED MARRIAGE.'

Ishaan comes in and takes a sit next to his parents. Anil eats a bite and coughs. Manav quickly hands a glass of water.

MANAV (CONT'D)

Is it spicy?

ANIL

No no it's perfect. Where did you learn to make such good poha?

MANAV

Actually, I'm from Indore. And the only common dish between Indore and Maharashtra is poha - that's how I know.

ANIL

We, Maharashtrians make poha during the first meet of arranged marriages.

Vidya gives a look to Anil. Ishaan rolls his eyes.

MANAV

I didn't get it.

VIDYA

When the groom's family goes to meet the bride for the first time, the bride makes poha for everyone. Her cooking skills are judged by Poha. Ishaan explain properly no..

Ishaan takes a deep breath.

ISHAAN

Baba, did you call commissioner uncle?

ANIL

I forgot. I'll call today.

ISHAAN

Call now! Ask them if he can get you an E-Pass.

Anil gets up and starts looking for his phone.

ANIL

Has anyone seen my phone?

Manav gives a look of 'very rude' to Ishaan.

VIDYA

It's in the toilet. On the commode seat.

Anil finds his phone and makes a call.

It's just Ishaan, Vidya and Manav. Ishaan is nervously tapping his foot. Manav breaks the silence.

MANAV

I want to learn how to make Maharashtrian Daal from you. The one where you use tamarind paste.

Manav says the word so perfectly that Vidya's eyes sparkle.

VIDYA

Really?

MANAV

Yes. Ishaan keeps talking about your special daal.

VIDYA

I've been trying to get Ishu to learn but he never even enters the kitchen.

MANAV

You teach me..I would love to learn.

Vidya looks at Manav lovingly. Ishaan is awkward.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

We can see Vidya's face nose down from the screen. Ishaan's leans in and sets the frame right.

PULL BACK: It's a video call. Vidya and Anil are awkward. MANJU MAMI, 50s, is on the other line.

MANJU MAAMI

Vidya, are you unwell? Is water their not suiting you?

VIDYA

No, I'm all good. How come did you call?

MANJU

I'm calling to tell you that let's do a zoom-family get together today.

VIDYA

Today? I'm a little busy. We're at Ishaan's place.

MANJU

Where is he? It's been three years since I met Ishaan. He didn't even show up for Swarali's wedding.

Ishaan is nervously pops his head into the camera. Manav walks in. Vidya tilts the screen away from Manav and gives a nervous smile to him. Now only half of Ishaan is seen.

MANJU (CONT'D)

Who's that?

VIDYA

Ishaan's room-mate.

MANJU

Ishaan, now enough of room-mates,
you're next in the line to get
married. Vidya, did you show him
the picture I sent you?

CUT AWAY - Manav mutely asks everyone if they want tea.

VIDYA

(To Manav)
Yes!

ANIL

(To Manav)
Perfect timing!

Manju looks delighted over the video call.

MANJU

Great - I'll also give her a call
today..

VIDYA

I didn't say yes to you..Ishaan is
still young for marriage.

MANJU

Young? Ishaan - you tell me..Do you
want to get married or not?

Vidya quickly puts away the phone.

ANGLE ON: Manav as he peeks from the kitchen to look at
Ishaan's reaction.

MANJU (V.O.)

Vidya! I can see your ceiling.
Vidya..

BEAT.

VIDYA

Hello Manju! Manju..Hello..I can't
hear you..Connection is weak.

Vidya quickly cuts the call. Manav is staring at Ishaan,
Ishaan purposely avoids.

VIDYA (CONT'D)

Should I just switch it off?

She starts looking for a button to switch off.

ANIL

Ignore Manju maami, Ishaan!

ISHAAN

What picture was she talking about?

VIDYA

Her friend's daughter.

"Really?" Ishaan gives a look to his parents.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
But we're not telling you to get married or anything.

ANIL
Since we're on this topic - what's your plan?

ISHAAN
What plan?

ANIL
You know - about future?

ISHAAN
I've just started a new job.

VIDYA
I just want to let you know that whatever it is, we'll understand.

ISHAAN
What are you talking about?

Ishaan is purposely playing dumb. Anil looks at Vidya and shrugs. Manav shakes his head in disappointment.

ISHAAN (CONT'D)
I'll get back to work.

Ishaan goes inside. Manav gives Vidya and Anil tea and then follows Ishaan into the room.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Manav locks the room door.

MANAV
Your Manju mami seems like Kolhapur's Seema Aunty!

ISHAAN
Open the door and pretend that you're working.

MANAV
I'm not going to pretend. They clearly said they are ready to talk.

ISHAAN
Open the door, please.

LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

INSERT - The closed door.

Vidya stares at the door and Anil sips on his tea.

VIDYA
I'm 100% sure.

ANIL
About?

VIDYA
That there is something between
these two.

ANIL
I don't think so..but if there is -
then let Ishaan say it to us.

VIDYA
I can sense it.

ANIL
That's because you've never seen a
boys's hostel. Do you remember
Sudhakar? We both used share
boxers. We together had only 4. But
we didn't have anything 'going on'

Anil is now lost in his own world.

ANIL (CONT'D)
Once what happened, we stole
Suhas's clothes and then he had to
walk naked down the hall. What fun
memories..

Vidya is seriously disgusted.

VIDYA
What nonsense. You're not getting
it. He was avoiding the topic
clearly..

INT. BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Manav and Ishaan are standing at the window.

ISHAAN
Ignorance is bliss! Mom and Dad
would never ask unless I tell. So
I'm never going to tell.

MANAV
Don't you think that's worse?

ISHAAN
No.

MANAV
Understand Ishan, we've been living
together for three years. How come
they never came to visit?

ISHAAN
Because they're busy in Kolhapur.

MANAV

Because they know about us. They were avoiding. During lockdown they just missed you a little more than ever. They never planned to stay!

Ishaan lies down on the bed.

ISHAAN

Do you realize how difficult this is for me?

MANAV

I understand. I am just asking you to be honest with your parents.

ISHAAN

I'm not going to tell them.

MANAV

I feel you have nothing to fear. It's worth a try.

Manav lies next to him. Ishaan just looks at Manav.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Vidya gets up and begins pacing in the living room.

VIDYA

I have known this for a long time now. But even I was avoiding thinking about it. I'm not able to accept it.

ANIL

Stop talking from both the sides. Why do you think there is something between them?

VIDYA

Look at this house. It's so well done - as if like a home. Like a couple would do.

INSERT: A well decorated, clean and taste-full house.

ANIL

A well-kept house is not a proof of a relationship.

VIDYA

Not just that. They share one cupboard, one bed, one blanket..WE only do these things with someone we truly love.

Anil takes the last sip of his tea. Vidya puts her hand forward to take his cup; it's a usual habit.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
 You remember how awkward you used to be in front of your mother during the first month of our marriage? That's how Ishaan is behaving.

ANIL
 I was never awkward.

VIDYA
 He's is also thinking the same.

ANIL
 Vidya - if it is what you think it is - it's not going to be easy .. I mean - I'm also not sure..

Anil loses words..Fumbles..

VIDYA
 I know one thing for sure - Whatever it is, I'm never going disown our son. If he is what he is then be it.

ANIL
 What about the rest of the family?

VIDYA
 I'm not thinking about that right now - I just know we need to talk to Ishaan.

Silence. A few moments pass.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
 Oh - it's 6 o'clock already. I'll ask Manav about dinner.

Vidya's hurriedly gets up and walks towards the bedroom. She stops and turns.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
 Anil, we're going to talk to him today. If we have to stay for a week then we need to get this sorted. If you need some courage, I've seen some whisky in their cupboard.

Anil just keeps staring at her. Manav opens the door and comes out. There is an awkward moment.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
 (Hesitates)
 I was just coming to ask about dinner..

MANAV
 Dal-rice? Your style..

VIDYA
Perfect.

MANAV
Teach me.

Ishaan sits sulking on the bed.

VIDYA
Ishaan, you come here too.

Ishaan who is pretending to work, reluctantly gets up.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Ishaan sits on the counter looking at Vidya prepping for dinner. Manav is not there.

Vidya gives Ishaan some lentils.

VIDYA
Wash them and put them in the
pressure cooker.

Ishaan follows. Still not talking. Ishaan struggles to put the lid on the cooker, gets irritated. Vidya takes over.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
Do you remember Jitu Mama?

ISHAAN
A little - He used to come to
Kolhapur during holidays.
What about him?

VIDYA
We were four sisters and he was the
only son.

ISHAAN
So?

VIDYA
He was the most intelligent, the
kindest and the most loved. Manav
reminds me of him.

ISHAAN
Maa - what are you trying to say?

VIDYA
Jitu mama died early. He was 35. No
could understand him really. We
didn't have enough exposure to
understand him. He was an expert in
draping the saree..He draped my
wedding saree..

Beat. Vidya hesitates.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
everyone used to call
 him..tease him.. saying that he's
 such a girl..He was a little
 feminine..

Ishaan gets the hint.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
 Were you ever bullied in school?

Manav interrupts as he enters with grocery. He takes out a steaming hot wadas from inside along with other things.

MANAV
 I couldn't resist but get some.
 Ishaan loves them.

He gives Ishaan a plate of wada. Vidya smiles at them.

VIDYA
 Lets begin..

Vidya keeps the wok on the gas.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
 Soak the tamarind in water and when
 it's soggy - we take out the pulp.

Vidya shows him. Manav is learning with utmost attention.

Ishaan watches them getting along well.

Pressure cooker hisses. Manav takes off the lid.

QUICK SHOTS OF -

Onions sliding into hot oil.

Tamarind pulp going in.

Then finally the boiled dal.

Manav lifts the lid of the wok. Dal is ready and boiling. He smells it -

MANAV
 It smells amazing.

VIDYA
 I'll write down the recipe for you.

MANAV
 I'll make the rice and rayta. You
 can relax.

Vidya gives a warm smiles and wipes her hands to a kitchen towel. Manav nudges Ishaan to tell. Ishaan sternly gestures says NO.

MANAV (CONT'D)
 (to Vidya)
 I want to ask you something.

Ishaan looks at Manav in terror.

Beat.

MANAV (CONT'D)
 Could you teach me Puran-Poli?

VIDYA
 Happily. Will do it tomorrow.

MANAV
 I'll get all the things.

Anil pops his head in.

ANIL
 What's the plan?

VIDYA
 Puran-poli tomorrow.

ANIL
 Great. I spoke to the commissioner,
 he said we can travel. If anyone
 stops us he has asked to just give
 a call. And it's better we leave
 tomorrow only.

Vidya's face saddens. So does Manav's and Ishaan's. They look
 at each other, as if they wish they had little more time.

A long moment as we linger on their face.

CUT TO:

DINING AREA, LATER

PULL OUT FROM A BOTTLE OF WHISKY - Manav brings delicious
 looking of daal. Vidya and Anil sit at the table. Ishaan
 comes in with water. He looks a bit stressed.

All four of them sit. Dinner is served. A moment of silence.

ISHAAN	VIDYA
I want to talk to you about	We want to talk to you.
something.	

They all laugh.

VIDYA (CONT'D)
 Why don't you start?

Manav clasps Ishaan's hand under the table. Ishaan clasps it
 back. Ishaan clears his throat and opens his mouth.

FADE TO BLACK.

END CREDITS.