**Abstract**

My talk will cover, basically, three areas – the research done for PhD, the research that I am currently pursuing, and my teaching interests. My PhD thesis titled *Mystery, Subalternity, and Plurality*: *Recasting Bhakti in the Poetry of Arun Kolatkar* is on the influence of Bhakti tradition in the poetry of Arun Kolatkar. The Bhakti tradition of saint-poetry has been a vibrant literary legacy which has influenced the sensibility of Modern Indian English Poetry in a profound manner. In my thesis, I looked at the scope of Bhakti poetry beyond the ambit of religion as manifested in the works of Arun Kolatkar who made belligerent detailing of the phenomenal world through his poetry. A close and intimate engagement with the poetry of Arun Kolatkar clearly reflects, how in its creative flow, the rich tradition of Bhakti poetry finds its competent and meaningful continuation. Despite the differences with Bhakti poetry in terms of religious beliefs, the soul of Kolatkar’s poetry hovers around the spirit of the Bhakti tradition in terms of its intense attention towards life. If Bhakti poetry evokes the sacred by keeping at its centre, an ingenious notion of the saint-poet’s god, Kolatkar’s poetry succeeds in evoking the sacred without the notion of god. At the core of both Bhakti poetry and Kolatkar’s poetry, a discerning reader can spot elements of: mystery – a sense of utmost reverence and awe that enhances one’s ability to participate in the affairs of the world with compassion and philosophical objectivity; subalternity – a close attention towards the subaltern condition of life; and plurality – an inclusive understanding of the equally sacred multiple manifestations of life. Through a discussion of the tropes of mystery, subalternity, and plurality, my thesis argues that the spirit of Bhakti that cannot be contained in the narrow framework of institutionalised religion finds a creative continuity in the works of Kolatkar.

My current research is mainly on Mysticism, focusing on the element of mystery and the different shades of subjectivity that a life rooted in the mysterious dimension of life brings forth. I intend to pursue this mode of thinking by exploring mystic traditions such as Bhakti, Zen, and Sufism which have left behind great literary legacies with multi-dimensional implications, focusing on the modes of subjectivity that can be discerned in these traditions and their anarchic and contagious spirit of mysticism which cannot be contained in the narrow framework of the institutionalised religion and conventional cultural imagination. Recently, I published a paper on the varying representations of ‘truth’ in the poetry of Kabir.

Other than the communication courses, I would like to teach literature courses that concern the ethical, political, and environmental issues of our times. In the last few decades, technology has redefined the contours of human experience to a never-before extent. The ramifications this process has brought about are immensely vast. In this context, it is quite significant for the contemporary student to have at least a cursory understanding of the ethical implications and environmental impact of this technology boom. I intend to offer literature courses on “Green Studies” which would mainly comprise eco-critical reading of literary texts and on “Ethics in and as Literature” which would look at the ethical dilemmas of this technology-driven world through a discussion of some of the classics of world literature.