"ARUN KOLATKAR’S RATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON SUPRSTITIONS: ANALYSING SOME POEMS FROM “JEJURI”

i) **Introduction:** - Arun Kolatkar was a brilliant bilingual poet, who wrote in English and Marathi. His major works in English are ‘the boatride’ (1986), ‘Jejuri’ (1976), ‘Kala Ghoda Poems’ (2004), ‘Sarpa Satra’(2003) and ‘THE BOATRIDE & Other Poems’(2009) and in Marathi are ‘Arun Kolatkarchya Kavita’(1976), ‘Chirimiri’(2003), ‘Bhijaki Vahi’(2003) and ‘Droan’(2004). No single book of poetry has received such continuous and serious critical appreciation and attention as Arun Kolatkar’s “Jejuri” right from the 1977 Commonwealth Poetry Prize.

Arun Kolatkar with an observant eye wearing the rationalist’s spectacle, has observed the events, situations, traditions, customs and rituals performed by the people at the barren land Jejuri. He has presented them with minute details in order to show the cultural decay, superstitious nature of the pilgrims and tradition bound society. What are the genuine problems to Kolatkar may not be to the people blinded by superstions at Jejuri. The journey of the poet begins by ‘The Bus’ and ends with ‘The Railway Station’. Most of the poems make mention of the superstitious and contain rather detached rational reactions from the poet narrator’s perspective of modern scientific temperament.

**Origin of the Research Problem:**-
The violation of the norms is considered as a social problem by an educated mind. An attempt is made to present Arun Kolatkar’s rational perspective on superstitions as mentioned in his collection of poems- ‘Jejuri’. According to Oxford Dictionary, superstition means the belief that certain events cannot be explained by reason or science or that they bring a good or a bad luck. (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 1996:1199)

**Interdisciplinary Relevance:**
Though Arun Kolatkar is a bilingual and particularly Marathi poet, but his volume of poetry in English called “Jejuri” gives an opportunity to non - Maharashtrians to understand Maharashtrian traditions, customs and superstitious beliefs very well. The poet has tried to depict a realistic picture of the devotees of Khandoba at Jejuri from social and cultural point. Thus, Khandoba is a living presence for a very large section of Maharashtrians and the place Jejuri reverberates
throughout the year and particularly on certain auspicious days with ecstatic loud cries of his devotees—‘Yelkot Yelkot Jai Malhar’, ‘Sadanandacha Elkot—’ with yellow turmeric power i.e. ‘bhanara’.

- **Review of Research and Development in the subject:**
  - **A) Primary Sources:**
    
    For the interpretation and analysis, the primary sources will include the collection of Kolatkar’s “Jejuri”, Interviews and articles of the eminent scholars.
  
  - **B) Secondary Sources:**
    
    Criticism by the scholars, contemporaries, critics and his volumes of Marathi poems.
    1. Nemade Bhalchandra: ‘Experts from Against Writing in English- An Indian Point of View’
    5. King Bruce: ‘An Expert from ‘Two Bilingual Experimentalists’
    6. Raykar Shubhangi: ‘Cross Cultural Dimensions’
    7. Gunther Sontheimer

- **International and National status:**

  Arun Kolatkar is a Maharashtrians poet writing both in English and Marathi. He is the only bilingual poet who caught the attention of critics and readers at National and International levels through his poetry. No single book of poetry has received such continuous and serious critical appreciation and attention as Arun Kolatkar’s “Jejuri” right from the 1977 Commonwealth Poetry Prize. Arun Kolatkar was influenced by modern Marathi poets like B.S.Mardhekar and P.S.Rege. He was under the influence of the Marathi saint poets like Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Namdeo, Muktabai, Janabai and Bahinabai Chaudhari. He was well read of international poets and authors such as Walt Whitman, John Donne, G.M.Hopkins, Dylan Thomas, W.B.Yeats, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Kafka, D. H. Lawrence, Wand Wei, Li Po and Tu Fu.

  However, the single strongest influence on him seems to be the famous American poet William Carlos William and among the Europeans like Rilke, Rimbaud and T.S.Eliot. (Shubhangi Raikar: 1995: P - 01) being an international
graphic artist, he got the company of National and International artists in Bombay. The Bombay artists like Ashok Shahane, M.F.Husain, Bandu Waze, Ambadas Baburao Shejalwalkar, Tybe Mehata, Dilip Chitre, Kiran Nagardkar, Bhupen Khakhar, Dandawate and Balwantbuwa were very much close to him. A German translation of “Jejuri” by Giovanni Bandini was published by Verlag Wolf Mersch in 1984.

- **Significance of the Study:-**
  This is an attempt to study ‘Socio-Cultural’ elements in Arun Kolatkar’s single volume of poems called ‘Jejuri’. The poet attacks the ancient, religious, traditional and evil customs, commercialization, corruption and hypocrisy at the religious places, quest for spiritual truth, spiritual hollowness, poverty and starvation at religious places, superstions among Indians.

- **Problems to be investigated:-**
  1) To investigate the scattered journey of Arun Kolatkar in his poetry.
  2) To attempt the study of the conflict between belief and disbelief, traditional and modern world, skepticism and superstition, urban and rural, idealism and realism in his poetry.
  3) To attempt a study of the problem of clash cultures in the poetry of Arun Kolatkar.

- **Objectives of Research Study:-**
  An attempt is made to present Arun Kolatkar’s rational perspective on ‘superstitions’ as mentioned in his collection of poems – “Jejuri”. He is a bilingual poet, who wrote independently in both English and Marathi. The chronology of his poems can not be easily traced. Some of his poems are found on common themes, in both English and Marathi. It is to make very clear that his poems are independent creations and not translations.

- **Research Methodology:-**
  The researcher will go for the field work. He will follow the descriptive and analytical methodology.

- **Hypothesis:-**
  Arun Kolatkar’s volume of poetry called “Jejuri” has multiple themes. An attempt will be made to study socio-cultural elements in his volume of poetry called “Jejuri”. The scope of the research study, the researcher has selected the volume of poems called “Jejuri”.
• **Limitations:-**

The researcher has selected only one volume of Arun Kolatkar’s poetry for his research study i.e. “Jejuri”.

**A CLASSIFIED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


3) King, Bruce.: *Modern Indian Poetry in English*, New-Delhi


