



Stony Brook University  
College of Arts and Sciences

# MATTOO CENTER FOR INDIA STUDIES

## S.N. and Meena Sridhar Distinguished Lecture in India Studies

### Preservation, “Translation” and Transformation: Understanding Hinduism in the U.S.

**Rajeshwari V. Pandharipande**

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

As a transplanted religion, Hinduism in the U.S. is represented and practiced variously, in a new Avatara. It admits apparent dichotomies such as “official Hinduism” (represented by organizations) vs. “popular Hinduism” (practiced by Hindus) (Kurien 2007), “Americanization” vs. “Hindu nationalism,” and “globalization” vs. “localization”. While previous research presents a thematic/chronological history, I argue that understanding Hinduism in the U.S. should address: a) which aspect of Hinduism (linguistic, theological, ritual, etc.) is preserved? b) how is it “translated” or adapted to the sociocultural context of the U.S. (e.g., flexible times of rituals, reinterpretation of Yoga and Vedanta, use of English in wedding-vows)? c) how has its interaction with Indian culture (e.g., visits of saints from India) and global culture (use of technology in Puja, Satsang) influenced its development? In short, how is Hinduism transformed and authenticated in the U.S.?



Professor Rajeshwari Vijay Pandharipande, Chancellor’s University Distinguished teacher/scholar is Professor Emerita of Linguistics, Religion, Sanskrit, and Comparative and World Literature at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A. Her research and teaching focus on language of religion, sociolinguistics, South Asian languages, Hinduism in India and Diaspora, and Asian Mythology. Her publications include three books, *A Descriptive Grammar of Marathi*, *Sociolinguistic Dimensions of Marathi*, *The Eternal Self and the Cycle of Samsara*, five co-edited volumes, over a hundred articles and book chapters, and two collections of original Hindi poems.

**Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 5PM**  
**1006 Humanities Building**

