

Conclusion

The ideas of folk and folklore have been widely discussed since the eighteenth century in Europe; from the nineteenth century, there developed a sharp interest in the folk culture in European colonies across the globe. Subsequently, in these colonies there emerged new initiatives by the natives to study their folk culture. In the context of India, the question of folk and folk literature was articulated through the closely related concepts *lok* and *lok sahitya*. This study, while focusing on historical regional identities, has explored the repertoires of folk compositions of ballads and *lokgeet* in the respective contexts of Scotland and Kachchh to understand recent manifestations of culturally autonomous regional identities within these regions, which are not only imagined in these contexts by way of geography but also through social and cultural specificities.

Scotland, being a part of the British island and political state—the United Kingdom of Great Britain—has been considered inferior to its British counterparts. Although geographically connected to mainland England (the United Kingdom), Scotland and Scottish culture have always been distinct and it has been considered as secondary and inferior to England, socially and politically, by the Court, the nobility, and by the English people at large. In a similar fashion, Kachchh, being a part (district) of Gujarat state since 1960, has been considered culturally and politically inferior due to its geographical and cultural remoteness from mainstream Gujarat, much like the way Scotland is far away from London and its discourse. Both regions have been home to several different communities, that are the birthplace of a wide range of folklore that reflects their cultures, their landscape and their region; in short, their folk life. The central proposition that I have made in this thesis is that a folk life-world, a landscape or a region is always imagined, which bonds the people residing in it with cultural as well as geographical ties, that is, their regional specificities practiced and performed by them. This can be seen in the folkloric repertoire.

At present, in the wake of the emerging consciousness of regional identity, the folk of both regions have been trying to hold on to their respective regional identities that articulate the cultural identities of Scotland and Kachchh. I argue that a significant site where these identities are shaped and expressed is folklore. Folklore is one of the sources which have been preserved by the people belonging to these regions. I argue, in my thesis, that it is this corpus of regional knowledge systems, preserved in folklore which is seen to play a key role in the articulation of autonomy of identity and culture, both regional and cultural.

Central arguments

Set in the aforesaid regional and socio-political settings, this thesis chiefly puts forward two central arguments: A region is an "experienced category" (Ibrahim) built upon the lived experiences of the people residing in it, with landscapic peculiarities expressed in folklore that shape and provide a repertoire for the articulation and manifestation of regional identities. So, the ballads of Scotland, Great Britain, and, the *lokgeet* of Kachchh, India, play a similar and crucial role in making a case for the recognition of their respective regions in the contemporary context where these regions have laid a claim to cultural distinction.

The second argument suggests that the folklore of any particular region profoundly captures the geographical and socio-cultural landscape and its peculiarities. The portrayal of both landscapes plays an essential role in folkloric genres. So, this study has argued folk narratives help to shape the idea of landscapes—geopolitical and socio-cultural—and are thus central to constructing a geo-cultural region and identity via an imagined region (Anderson).

In this dissertation, I have discussed the role and function of ballads in the cultural life of Scotland. Ballads of Scotland are peculiar to the Scottish culture and history. Ballads written on themes like war, love, separation, supernatural, and history imagine and create a multi-faceted image of Scotland. Bardic and minstrel traditions in Scotland helped to develop and spread the ballads. Later in the eighteenth century, broadside sheets became an important vehicle for disseminating the ballads. Scotland was/is represented by these ballads. More than ten volumes of ballads were published since 1765 in Scotland and later, often including new versions of the same ballads. James Child, Walter Scott, and David Buchan, among others, were the crucial names in the collection of the Scottish ballads. Walter Scott and Robert Burns were the literary figures who employed their first-hand experiences of the ballads and folklore of then Scotland and had written several monumental literary pieces. Apart from the folk tradition, this was another tradition altogether that carved a different image of Scotland as a region unique from its neighbours on the British Isle.

However, the ballads that were collected centered around people of higher status in society: kings and queens, princes and princesses, noble and gentry and their affairs, domestic and foreign. In my analysis of the ballads I have shown that they actually represent a class while appearing to represent the region as a whole, in other words, they thematize a specific class in a particular region. Scottish ballads are set in popular settings,

singing the deeds of popular personalities. It is also an element of folklore and folk poetry, but it limits the life world of the popular and folk. The oft-cited ballads and folksongs in the claim for Scottish Independence are mostly centred on people or actions that are related to war and the warriors, often from the higher-ranked classes.

The *Rebels Ceilidh Songbook* is a collection of ballads and folk songs which focuses on the pride of Scotland and its independence. It was published in the wake of the Scottish revival of Scottish ballads and folksongs as well as Scottish nationalism post-1950s. Two major issues that were undervalued were class and race in the Scottish independence movement and revival. The Scotland that had been imagined until 1999 or the post-colonial era was Royal/Aristocratic and White, therefore limited in itself.

Similarly, Kachchh, as a part of the Western peninsula, is assertive in the matter of political and cultural autonomy. The beginning of the Jadeja dynasty might have unified Kachchh as a princely state and thereafter until 1948. Folklore, as in forms of historical narratives, has become one of the important sources in the historiographies of Kachchh. *Lokgeet*, the genre this thesis explores, vividly portrays the region's geo-political and socio-cultural landscapes of the Kachchh. However, the question of autonomy is different in comparison to Scotland. Nonetheless, Kachchh struggled against all odds to preserve its cultural independence.

Various archives of Kachchhi *Lokgeet*, in the form of books, audio-visual, written or digital, can be found. Interestingly, the *lokgeet* of Kachchh does not refer to the distant past, except in a specific genre of historical *lokgeet*. Caste, directly or indirectly, comes into play in the *lokgeet* of Kachchh. Like Scottish ballads, popular personalities remained at the centre of the narrative charge of the *lokgeet*. The imagination that they propose is limited to certain castes. Histories of Kachchh have also been indifferent to the lower castes. Most of the now-known history is sourced by folk narratives of different forms and vice versa. Even the *asmitā* of Kachchh remained confined to the popular Hindu places located at the different edges of the district of Kachchh.

The assertion of autonomy has come from two major strands: Monarchical and Democratic. In the history of Scotland several fighters from the warrior class or aristocracy, closely associated with the monarch, who defended their freedom by often fighting wars against the invaders. Battle of Bannockburn, Battle of Sterling Bridge are a few examples of it. The attempts were to save the princely state from the enemies being a monarch or a monarchical leader. Monarch in Kachchh have made similar claims until the last king of Kachchh alive. Kachchh as a princely state ruled by Jadeja kings was

always in conflict within and outside. Battle of Zara, and Battle of Bhujyio can be considered as examples of how the princely state defended its autonomy against the invaders from Sindh and Ahmedabad.

In the post 1950s a democratic way of claiming autonomy emerged in the wake of the collapse of the British Empire and emergence of modern nation-states. Scotland, however, started its parliamentary efforts from 1960s which took almost two decades to get diluted parliament. Several referendums in Scotland became the means of voice of people to be either with the UK or an autonomous country. Different literary and political bodies in Kachchh have been seeking status of Kachchh as a state with India. In doing so they are focusing on language, literature and culture.

Chapters

The thesis begins with an introduction to the study, creates background to the study, a literature review and opens up methodological questions, and methods to validate the hypothesis and achieve the objective of the study.

The first chapter is titled “Understanding Folk Literature, *Lok Sahitya* and Region”, which discusses the idea of folk, *lok*, folklore, and folk literature in detail. In this chapter, the Western and Indian ideas of folk, *lok* and folk literature are comparatively discussed. It argues that the Western understanding of folk and folklore has vividly influenced the Indian understanding of it. The difference between folk and *lok* is also discussed and how class and race in Scotland and Caste in Kachchh informed the understanding of the caste. In terms of folklore and literature, it is also argued that, in India, it has been defined against the classic literature or the literature of upper-caste/class communities. It also shown how folk or *lok* is defined against the civilized upper caste whereas folk literature is attributed to both the lower caste *folks* and upper caste society. The agency of caste in defining, collecting, and archiving folklore has been pivotal. However, the American understanding of folk has offered a dynamic understanding of folk (Ben-Amos xi).

The second chapter, titled “Ballads, Literary Imagination and Scotland as a Region”, is based on folk ballads and other folk songs and the idea of Scotland as a distinct region in the British Isles. It argues that how imagination Scotland is exclusive and limited to the royal families, aristocrats and white upper-class males and less often females. In doing so, it examines several folk ballads and other folk songs published in the book *The Rebel's Ceilidh Songs Book* as well as online archives focusing on Scottish pride, nationalism and Scottish Independence. It concludes that the imagination of Scottish

uniqueness in the wake of the revival of independence was highly class and race-conscious. Those socio-economically and politically at the margin were excluded from the imagination of the independent Scotland.

The third chapter, “*Lokgeet*, Literary Imagination, and the Idea of Kachchh”, similarly focuses on the idea of Kachchh as a region imagined through the *lokgeet*. Like Scotland, Kachchh has been a part of the colonial regime and is now part of its dominant neighbour. As mentioned earlier popular personalities were always centered in the literary imaginations across the globe. Folk and folklore have not been an exception from it. Rather, folk most often preserve the memories of popular imaginations and personalities and their deeds. However, *lokgeet* do focus on the geo-political landscape of Kachchh. The majority of the *lokgeet* are centered around any popular characters from the historical past which follow the histories of Kachchh as they are centered on the king, courts and upper-caste personalities. Nonetheless, this imagination of people of the past in grand larger than life characteristics drew from the popular memory of caste operation. It signifies how caste operated in Kachchh and has been dominating in imagination of Kachchh as a region. The chapter concludes by establishing the way caste plays a crucial role in the imagining of Kachchh as a region.

The fourth chapter, titled “Folk Literature and the Articulation of Autonomy: The Case of Scotland and Kachchh, 1900 to 2023”, examines the articulation and the claims of autonomy in both Scotland and Kachchh since the twentieth century. It approaches the articulation in comparative mode and locates the similarities and differences in both cases of articulating autonomy with their cultural distinctness through the analysis of key ballads and *lokgeet*. It also attempts to locate the politics behind it and how class/race and caste work underneath the articulation of claims for autonomy in Scotland and Kachchh respectively.

Key Findings:

The study, with the close reading of the ballads and *lokgeet* used as a representative of the portrayal of the cultural distinctiveness for articulating autonomy in both regions, concludes that the idea of class and race in Scotland and caste in Kachchh, Gujarat, significantly informs the articulations of autonomy in both regions. As such, this proves the hypothesis with which this dissertation began.

Further:

- The idea of folk and *lok* in Kachchh and Gujarat is translated from the Western/German idea of *volks or volkskunde* or folk where the early German understanding of *volk(s)* was defined away from urban and civilized space. In the United States, folk and lore are defined in the contemporary context of race and globalization, whereas *lok* in Kachchh, Gujarat, is not contextualized in the reality of caste. The dominance of the upper caste in the field of folklore in the Indian context since the nineteenth century remained blind to the caste dimension of the category *lok*. In a similar way, the category folk needs to be aware of the significance of race and class to the category folk in the context of Scotland and in the United Kingdom, more broadly.

- In the context of Scotland, through the study of selected folk ballads, it is concluded that ballads brought into public by different modes of recording in the eighteenth and nineteenth century majorly focus on the symbols and imagery that were deemed to be nationalist. The ballads represent this idea of class and race of the leaders and warriors of the battles fought for Scottish independence. The identity that is constructed based on these ballads leads to narrow and limited sense of identity of the society and nation as whole.

- In the context of Kachchh, folk literature is defined as *lok sahitya*, against the scripted scriptures of the Vedic age in their oral and spoken (*smriti*) form. Upper castes have never been defined as a *lok*. It has been found that the folklore that emerged in certain caste system cannot dodge the dogma and hierarchy. It comes in to underpin *lokgeet* in subtle ways. The conceptualization of folklore based on the western paradigms add layers to the meaning making processes of *lok sahitya* and to the understanding of the people, the *lok* and the region. These understandings of region based on the hierarchy would always remain different from the region discursively and experientially understood by the people, *lok*, who are making and shaping it.

- Through a comparative study of the Scottish ballad and Kachchhi *lokgeet*, I have found that the claims of autonomy in both regions, are connected with various realities and arrangements of power within and outside the region, and these claims are located in social, cultural and political ideologies. Social structures of division in both regions are also crucial in the making meaning of the folklore and the nationalist views read into them to assert the distinct socio-cultural identity while making the case for autonomy.

- Finally, I have found that in Scotland, class and race, and caste in Kachchh have remained fundamental identitarian undercurrents that are structural to folklore.

Limitation

This thesis examines the articulation and claims for autonomy through the close reading of ballads and *lokgeets* that portray the regions and are used for claims published from 1900 to 2023 in print, audio, and visual formats. It does not claim for autonomy rather it studies the articulation of claims for distinct cultural identity and therefore regional identity and the influence of class/race and caste in the claims only through the study of folklore and does not examine the intersections between folklore and other modes of cultural expression used in struggles for autonomy. It examines only selected ballads and *lokgeets* portraying the region and is often used as representative of the regions. It does not examine the performative aspect of ballads and *lokgeet* and the study has restricted itself to textual analysis.

Scope for the Future Research

The influence of the British rule on the anthropological and ethnographic quest to know and rule effectively the colony, folklore has remained and understood in terms of colonial understanding and frameworks in Kachchh, Gujarat as well as in Scotland. This needs to be decolonized to an extent to have voices from the people who are actually deemed to be considered as folks. The folklore of Kachchh is selectively archived and, therefore, selectively appropriated. Archives of folklore in Kachchh need to be rethought in terms of emerging cultural studies in the praxis of decoloniality. This would lead to a new definition of Kachchh as a region and its folk and lore.

The folklore in Kachchh is also a caste-specific folklore, often homogenised and considered as a representative of Kachchh as a region. Future research can be done focusing on the element of caste and particularly lower caste as the folklore and *lokgeet* examined in this thesis are often portrayals of only popular heroes and deeds revolving around the upper caste. This would broaden the idea of Kachchh in a cultural context and the making and unmaking of Kachchhi identity.

Kachchh and Scotland have been deeply affected by climate change. Folklore has woven the hardship of the people, surrounded by desert and sea. The folklore as an archive of the history of people and the region can be explored in the emerging context of the Anthropocene, sustainability and climate change.

Histories and historiography of Kachchh and Scotland are always sourced from the dominant narrative from the local historian in oral form, which were made into written books first by colonial rulers and writers and later by their upper caste/class allies. Folklore of marginal people can help to rewrite these histories. In addition, the performative aspect of the folklore of Kachchh and Scotland could be studied with an intent to unpack the relationship between performance, meaning making and folklore.