

## Introduction

My attempt in this dissertation is to study the manifestation of the idea of region in the ballads of Scotland, Great Britain and the *lokgeet* of Kachchh, India. I do this as both Scotland and Kachchh have been making a case for the distinctive recognition of their region. Both these movements looked to their minstrel traditions to articulate and define cultural heritage. Bhupendra Mistry says “Region has its ‘distinctive personality’ through particular regional specialties. The sources of this personality are: the ecology and the nature of the earth, the folk life flourished through its natural factors and the history and its traditions” (26). Drawing upon this insight the study has attempted to study the relationship between region and folk forms—the Scottish ballad and the Kachchhi *lokgeet*.

The quest for autonomy and self-recognition have marked the recent histories of Scotland, Great Britain and Kachchh, Gujarat. This study is an exploration of these two regions in their interrelationship folk genres, and argues that 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. However, these trajectories are not linear and have undercurrents of politics and cultural dynamics.

Scotland has been ruled by Westminster and Edinburgh at various junctures of times. It has been formed by the amalgamation of the several communities such as the Scot and the Gaelic. It is an integral part of Britain today. Yet, it has fought battles to defend its peculiar national character. The Battle of Bannockburn, for example, that was fought between King of Scots, Robert of Bruce and King Edward II of England in 1314 is often called the First War of Scottish Independence. It had a complicated relationship with England over the next few centuries, quite often its differences with England were articulated on the basis of religion. Scotland and England were unified in 1603 with the accession of King James VI of Scotland and I of England. The Union of Crowns of 1603 added a new dimension to the identity of people of Scotland and Britain. The royal accession on the twin thrones of Scotland and England has also led the Scots to partake in affairs of the Empire which colonized more than half of the globe. The tension created by political revolution of 1688 which established the supremacy of the parliament and the assembly of the last independent Scottish parliament of 1702-03, Scotland’s need for economic safeguard and material assistance, England’s need for political safeguard from

French attacks respectively led to the treaty of the Act of Union which came into force in May 1707. It enforced the merger of the Westminster and Edinburgh parliaments.

The Act of 1707 opened up colonies of half of the world which were ruled by England. The trade of cotton and tobacco reached a peak and led to the growing presence of Scottish men in colonial affairs. This Act of Union brought prosperity to Scotland. New cities, universities, schools were established. Scotsmen had joined in the British army in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many sacrificed their lives for British causes although Scotsmen remained second class, in the House of Lords and everywhere else. This perceived English superiority of character and language gave impetus to the vernacularization of Scotland. The tension between Scotland and England did not get resolved. The Jacobite uprising of 1740s was one result of this. From the 1853 Home Rule movement, Scotland has continually fought for independence from the United Kingdom. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries several attempts have been made to establish Scottish sovereignty. The Referendums of 1979, 1997, and 2016 for Scottish independence mark the continuous desire for a significant section of the Scots for freedom from United Kingdom and a distinctive world view that is strikingly different from England. The Brexit vote is an example of this. More than fifty percent of Britain voted for the break from the European Union whereas Scotland overwhelmingly voted to stay with the European Union.

The Scottish political events of 1603 and 1707 played a significant role in the forming of Scottish identity. Many of the Scottish intelligentsia found London more suitable to their professional life following this. But there were Scottish native intellectuals who found Scotland and Scottish life and culture more significant than the metro city life of London. Allan Ramsay, Robert Burns and Walter Scott, to name a few, are eminent literary figures of Scotland who emphasised on the language and literature of fellow Scots. The emergence of chapbooks, broadsides and magazines and collections of folklore during this period resisted the hegemony of the English. In this way Scotsmen had started challenging the British in order to protest the inferior identity imposed on them. In this way revival of antiquities began in Scotland. They invoked their “cultural materials”: as Walter Scott exclaimed “let us remain as Nature made us, Englishman, Irishmen and Scotchmen, with something of the impress of our several countries upon each!” and, further, “Union is not to be equated with ‘the necessity of Uniformity’” (qtd. in Manning 47).

“Contemporary Scotland is a place of complex geographies: some parts imagined, some parts remembered and some parts real,” Hayden Lorrimer has argued (20). The feudal system, kinship and land capitalization have played a vital role across history from the Middle Ages to the contemporary time. Till the twelfth century, the feudal system was prevailing in Scotland, but the advent of new techniques in agriculture led to the establishment more of structured and standardized towns and villages. Land owners patronized the Church on their land, which firmly rooted Christianity in the land. But after the Union in 1707 some interrelated changes occurred in agriculture which brought forth changes in the geography of modern Scotland. Industrialization, urbanization, population displacement and land capitalism have taken place.<sup>1</sup>

Just as Scotland is considered a distinct part of Great Britain, Kachchh is considered to be a desert land, with a distinct culture and geography, in mainstream Gujarat and India. Kachchh is on the west coast frontier of Gujarat and has been a district of the Gujarat State since 1960. Its strategic geographical position has given it historic importance before and after independence. Kachchh has hosted thousands of migrants from almost all over the world. It was a gateway for millions of immigrants and rulers. This has given Kachchh a unique character. Kshatrap, Chalukya, Gupta, Mourya, Solanki, Mughal, Chavda, Vaghela, Samma-Jadeja and the British had ruled over Kachchh at various points of time. Twenty-eight kings of the Jadeja dynasty ruled over Kachchh for almost nine centuries from 1147 to 1948. It experienced a period of turbulence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The state was stabilized by mid-eighteenth century through the formation of a council called Bar Bhayat ni Jamaat with the Jadeja Rao placed as the titular head. Jamadar Fateh Mohamad was very influential in this period and it was he who played a key role in negotiating a treaty with the British. The state accepted British suzerainty in 1819. As a consequence, the Cutch Agency of the East India Company took over and paved the way for colonial intervention in Kachchh. Kachchh had enjoyed the status of a princely state from 1819 to 1948 when it acceded to India. After that it was established as an independent state from 1950 to 1956 under direct central rule. After 1956 Kachchh

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the history of Scotland, see Ian Brown, Thomas Owen Clancy and Murray Pittock, ed. *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature From Columba to the Union*. Edinburgh University Press, 2007 and Ian Brown and Susan Manning, ed. *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature Enlightenment, Britain and Empire*, Edinburgh University Press, 2007

was merged with Bombay Presidency and later in 1960, with the linguistic organization of the states, was constituted as a part of Gujarat.<sup>2</sup>

Though an integral part of Gujarat, Kachchh has a distinct character of language, culture and geography. As Rita Kothari rightly notes, “Kutch is distinct not only in itself but also by being different from 'Gujarat', an idea and a state with which it shares an uneasy relationship and challenges the monolithic idea of nationhood” (9). Nomadic communities like Samma, Jats, Marvada, Rabari to name a few, settled in Kachchh after passing through Sindh before political boundaries were drawn. Some refugees from Pakistan settled in 1965 and 1971. All these differently rooted cultures incorporated together have given to Kachchh its peculiar character. Kachchhiness is a result of the union of these cultural identities. Kachchh has always been a land of different religions. Hindu and Islam are the major religions. Buddhist caves of Siyot dated back to the medieval era and Jain temples of Bhadreshvra and others reveal the presence of these religions in the medieval age or even before. Kachchh has always been separately accounted by gazetteers and British historians like Marian Postans.

After 2001 the Government of Gujarat began promoting Kachchh as a tourist destination. Settlers, mainly from Balochistan and Sindh, brought with them their arts and crafts, to which they added a Kachchhi dimension. As Kothari argues “Kachchh has the cosmopolitan dimension of the region, is constructed out of the exchange of population, trade, goods, and ideas, which challenges the monolithic idea of nationhood” (15). Folklore, including ballads, folk song, narratives are some of the arts that migrated with them. These arts have attracted not only Indians but foreigners too. Being the prime locus of tourism, these kinds of arts have been revived and globally acclaimed. Kutch is an important ingredient in the shaping of “brand Gujarat” (Kothari 16). However, incorporating Kachchhi identity with that of Gujarat and projecting them as similar to mainland Gujarat culturally and linguistically has led to a growing feeling of marginalization and subordination in Kachchh.

Shaken by two earthquakes of 1819 and 2001 Kachchh has re-established itself from the wounds of these natural calamities. Free trade zone, growth of the economy, establishment of the university and institutions of higher education have freed Kachchh

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the history of Kachchh, see: Hansaraj Maheta, Umiyashankar Anjani, Naresh Antani and Dilip Vaidhya, ed. *Kachchh no Sarvangi Itihas*, Vol. 1., (Ahmedavad: Gurjar Grathratna, 2012) 2 vols, and Marian Postans, *Cutch or The Random Sketches of Western India*. (Smith, Elder and Co., 1838)

from interdependency on mainland Gujarat. Kachchh has been a playing pivotal role in the economy of the state by beginning of the twenty first century. Based on the different articulations of standard dialect by Kachchhi intelligentsia, locating influences of the other languages like Sindhi, Gujarati and Sanskrit on Kachchhi, several attempts have been made to get it to be a constitutionally recognized language. In doing so some bodies like Kachchhi Sahitya Academy and Kachchhi Sahitya Mandal have been promoting Kachchhi language and literature. Narayan Joshi ‘Karayal’, Gautam Joshi, Lalji Mevada, are some contemporary writers acclaimed for their potential writing. ‘Karayal’ has received Padma Shree for his contribution to the Kachchhi literature in 2020.

This study locates the representation of these regions in the processes of claiming or asserting the autonomous identity status. In doing so it explores the class/caste categories of analysis and examines the ballads and *lokgeet* to uncover the hegemonic role of class and caste in both the contexts of Kachchh and Scotland and investigates their monolithic singular identity.

### **Decolonization and the Quest for Autonomy**

The twentieth and twenty-first century (the 1920s to 2020s) claims of cultural autonomy in both regions have similar themes. Their roots can be traced to the decline of the British Empire. However, the claim for the political autonomy in Scotland goes back to the fourteenth century. Kachchh, a princely state, has attempted several times to remain, often unsuccessfully, as an independent princely state. In other words, the growing notion of the nation-state has been pivotal in the manifestation of Scottish and Kachchhi identity and nationalism that these regions put forth in order to as well as the assertion of them to their governing culture.

It was the worldwide exploration by the Britishers and Europeans that paved the way for world-wide colonization. Scotland partook in the processes of colonization, yet as many present-day scholars of Scottish independence reiterate, even though Scotland was an integral part of the British empire, it was an indirect colony of Britain. Scotland became a stepping stone for England to foster its colonial mindset. In that sense, colonization began firstly with the United Kingdom before spreading and capturing the Africa and Asia. On the other hand, Kachchh as being a princely state on its own has been a part of the larger ruling power be it from Ahmedabad or Delhi. It has also been attacked severally by the rulers of Sindh, Morbi and Navagam. In the 1820s it became a part of the

British Empire. It has been a colony of inside and outside of ruling powers. This played a significant role in the shaping of its identity.

The development of colonization by the near and far ruling powers and the emerging sense of regional, cultural as well as political identities within these regions led to growing a sense of discomfort and dissonance at various levels—cultural, social, and political. The claims for autonomy are rooted in this development of politics of difference which can be linked to the moments of decolonization. Two world wars severely affected the British Empire which brought a sense of independence to the colonies. India as a colony began asserting its right to freedom from the Raj. Kachchh as part of the Indian colony of the Empire joined the struggles. For Scotland, it led to renewed calls for autonomy.

The state of Kachchh chose to be within the federal structure of the Indian nation-state, perhaps with special provisions, which were promised and later denied. The last titular King Pragmahal III till his death reiterated the demand for Kachchh as a separate state within India based on the neglect and ignorance of economic, education and other basic rights towards Kachchh since the inception of Gujarat as a state:

“Our language is different, our culture is different, our climate is different, our history is different...I regret that our forefathers, our brothers who sacrificed themselves to keep us different from the rest, today we do not value them. Today we have forgotten them. Today we are a small district of Gujarat. It is a good state. I praise our chief minister Rupani but that does not mean that we have to abandon *kachchhiyat* and embarrass Gujaratiness. For this, I feel sorry that those who died for us we do not value them...If you see Ladakh become a new state from the Kashmir. It is not impossible to make Kachchh as a state if we all Kachchhi think that we want to be distinct. Gujarat is our elder brother, we respect them. We do not say that they are not good, maybe better than us, but we want to be remain distinct.”  
(Danidhariya and Pragamal III)

Similarly, Scotland had its own systems of education, religion and economy which later merged with England. The quest for safeguard—economic and political— in both the regions led rulers to merge their states with the dominant states with the promise of the same but in both cases, they were denied to a greater extent.

## **The Idea of Folk and Folklore**

The study revolves around the analytical categories like folk, folk literature, region, representation, class/race and caste. The colonial intervention in both the regions, Scotland and Kachchh, has significantly informed these categories and therefore homogenized them by institutionalizing them. The conception of folk in Scotland is derived from the German term *Volk* and *Volkskunde*. It was also influenced by the concept of folk-lore by the Thomas Williams of England (Thomas). However, the concept of folk rooted in the notion of class division in European society varies in comparison to the American idea of folk in its social structure informed by the economic class as well the racial segregation. Most of the achievers and scholars of folklore in the UK located it and defined it in terms of the economic and socio-cultural organization of structures of society. The Americans brought it out from the social, cultural and topographical burdens of category and generalized it in a much wider sense (Ben-Amos ix).

In India and particularly Gujarat, folklore studies from Ranjitram Maheta to Meghani till the day have borrowed from Western conceptualization to a greater extent. Ranjitram used *lok* instead of folk first time in Gujarati in the nineteenth century. Meghani, in the twentieth century with his wide reading of English and Scottish folklore and folkloristics, developed and defined several key concepts of folklore in the context of Gujarat in *Loksahitya: Dhartinu Dhavan*, 1939 and *Loksahityanu Samalochan* 1946. Meghani in his writing quoted British and Scottish writers at greater length to make certain concepts distinguish from one another (*Loksahitya: Dhartinu Dhavan*, 1939; *Loksahityanu Samalochan*, 1946).

He was also strongly influenced by the contemporary politics of nationalism and the role of folklore particularly folksongs and narratives in constructing a nation or state by reconstructing the past through the repertoires of folklore and literature. Meghani was at his best to utilize folklore in the cause of nation-building invoked by the leaders of the Indian independence struggle.

Contemporary scholars have attempted to think about it otherwise but they seem trapped in the dichotomy of class and caste systems deriving again from the Western idea of folk and lore. Caste as a lived reality of most of the people in India is systematically avoided while defining the idea of folk/*lok*. The question of caste while defining folk/*lok* is always important and slippery as well in the context of India. While analyzing the idea of folk/*lok* this study thinks through keeping caste as a system of social organization in India. Therefore, posing new methodologies to view folk/*lok* in India/Gujarat.

This leads us to question the literature or the lore that is sprung from the life of these folks/*lok*. In Gujarat, *lok* is defined against the civilized upper caste strata living in towns or urban areas. Here western modernity comes into for as the upper castes are defined as educated, utilizing privileges since time known, and having literature that is in written form, what Ong calls it is technologies of writing (Ong 1).

Nonetheless, the upper caste strata have a tradition of folklore and literature though they are not always folk/*lok* in the sense of being educated, not residing in far away from the urban areas defying the classic definition of folk/*lok*. The technology of writing may add a new dimension to their being of modern and therefore civilized. The religious scriptures as always maintained and argued are in written or scripted form accessible to the upper caste or may be non-folks. Another way of going away from the definition of the folk. The literature by and of the Bhadrakok/Shishta society is defined against the folklore and literature. But always lacks distinctions of caste and the technologies of power structure they offer to the upper caste.

As Walter Ong in his book put forward before the advent of the technology of writing, people had to memorize ideas by immediate and frequent repetition in order to store them in the mind. And the process of memorising the popular and popularising the memorable had happened on a massive scale. What people used to memorise was popular and so it became popular to memorise it (Ong 2; 12; 18). The popular always belonged to the dominant strata of community and society be it king, upper class/caste, other powerful men, soldiers and martyrs and less often women of upper class and castes.

In both the region of Kachchh and Scotland, the warrior class and caste were most often related to the king by blood, or the king himself and events around their life portrayed in the folklore. Even the ninth to twelve centuries' epic poetry has similar subjects, persons of repute and fame. The narration of the popular past in folklore and literature often tends to lean towards class and caste consciousness by appropriating and homogenizing the singular/monolithic identity of a particular class or caste hero or less often heroin. Monarchy added a new dimension of power and representation in the folklore altogether. Bardic traditions in both the regions patronized by the kings and rulers made the lore and narrative of the popular figures easily available to the masses through poetical compositions leading to the neglect of the masses and their life.

The oral composition that is composed on the basis of popular figures in the class/caste divided structure of societies the imagined region emerges from it remains

limited and exclusive based on and focusing on the popular imageries always dominated by the structures of powers in various ways. This thesis explores Farhana Ibrahim's idea that region is an experienced category and multitude of experiences and differences portrayed in homogenous time and space which may not go hand in hand with the space and time of the other (10).

The study covers the period of 1920 to 2024, roughly a century in which the world has witnessed several momentous changes in the West as well as in the East. Since the beginning of the twentieth-century changes in the formation of states and regions at least in the political domain occurred in both Scottish and Kachchh's contexts. The study, therefore, takes several historical moments and movements as entry points. In the context of Scotland, World War I and II, the gradual fall of the Empire, economic and social conditions in the 1970s to 1990s and the referendum are the major events that paved the way to the idea of Scottish difference more strongly. In Kachchh colonial interventions during the early 1920s, Indian Independence and the construction of the nation-state, the establishment of Gujarat as a state in 1960, the 2001 earthquake and rehabilitation post-2001 are the major junctures of the history of Kachchh that are considered significant in this study.

### **Objectives**

The prime objective of this study is to examine the idea of folk, folk tradition and folk genres of ballad and *lokgeet* in terms of their characterization of region and society with relation to Scotland and Kachchh. It studies these folk forms of Scotland and Kachchh to understand folk literature as cultural artefacts used for the contemporary self-imagining of the region. In doing so, the study tries to investigate their role in constituting the character of the region.

Another objective of this study is to examine the way the performances of ballads and *lokgeet* function as a socio-cultural apparatus to invoke the cultural autonomy of the region and articulate the hegemony of monolithic culture.

### **Hypothesis**

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.

## Scope

After the emergence of enlightenment consciousness in Scotland, the emphasis on vernacular and folk literature dramatically increased. From the early nineteenth century, the revival of Scottish folklore took place. Scotland has been continuously making efforts for an autonomous state since the battle of Bannockburn to the 1707 Union. These attempts, in modern form, took place in the form of referendums. The people of Scotland posed their case always with reference to the traditional repertoire of folklore along with other significant symbols. Therefore, this study mainly focuses on the moments during these periods when ballads appear as a significant cultural form in such political contexts. In the same manner, with the case of Kachchhi *lokgeet*, this study pays attention to the periods when the British began collecting *lokgeet*, from the first decade of the twenty-first century, in which there has been a major revival regarding the documentation and study of the genre. The entry point for the study of Kachchhi *lokgeet* has been limited to those historical moments where it appears as a significant cultural form. Ballads and *lokgeet* have been composed on various themes, but this study chiefly focuses on the theme of the portrayal of the regional identities and socio-cultural landscape of Scotland and Kachchh, respectively. The emphasis of this study is on the ways in which the Scottish and Kachchhi identities have been constructed in the ballad and *lokgeet* respectively.

Although the comparative study of Scottish and Kachchhi folklore, ballads, and *lokgeet* hitherto had not been evidently done, nonetheless, with the focus on the manifestation of cultural and regional autonomous identities imagined in folklore, such a comparison is plausible. As both regions have been asserting their unique identities through folk in the contemporary era, this study would be a significant attempt to understand, analyse as well as theorise the historical juncture of these cultural and regional identities and their history get invoked through the repertoire of folk literature.

## Method and Methodology

Collecting antiquities and folklore in the West started in the eighteenth century. In India and Gujarat, it started relatively late, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Francis Childe, Robert Burns, and Walter Scott, among others, have collected and archived the different varieties of the folklore of Scotland in the mid to late eighteenth century. Whereas in Kachchh, since the first encounter of the British officials with Kachchh collection of folklore had begun only in the mid nineteenth century. Several

political agents and their companions made efforts to collect and published the folklore. Later in the mid-twentieth century, L.F. Rashbrook and then Dularay Karani worked extensively on the collection and publication of the folklore of Kachchh. This study is based on these publications and archives that hold Scottish ballads and Kachchhi *lokgeet*. It extracts ballads and *lokgeet* from these archives dealing with the themes of respective regions and those who portray socio-cultural landscapes.

The research centrally uses the Textual Analysis method to build a body of local information which has then been used to build the central arguments of my thesis.

Considering folk, folklore, region, and identity as central epistemes of analysis, it draws on the following conceptualization: This study chiefly draws its terminology and theoretical conceptualization to define folk and *lok* and folk literature from the German Romantic thinkers to William Thomas, Allan Dundee, Bauman and Briggs, Regina Bendix from the West, and Ranjitram V. Maheta, Zaverchand Meghani, Jaymalla Parmar, Balvant Jani, Hasu Yagnik, and Kanubhai Jani, among others, from Gujarat. This study tries to step further, taking these thinkers as a starting point of those who have analysed folk and *lok* from an upper-class/caste standpoint.

Folklore Studies: This study draws from the range of concepts of Folklore Studies to conceptualise and understand ideas of folk and folklore. The concepts of folk and *lok* have been variously defined by folklorists from across the globe, yet they seem incomplete. This study, while historically locating Western as well as Indian conceptualizations, tries to add a new dimension to the conception of folk and *lok* with intention of putting forward the voices of people at the periphery, which so far have been largely mis-conceptualised or neglected. Since the last century, the rapid mass mobilisation of people from far-removed rural and semi-rural spaces to urban spaces has complicated the understanding of the concept of folk and folklore. This study also takes up these emerging complications posed by twenty first century developments to enhance the understanding of folk and folk literature. In short, this study proposes to locate the historical trajectories of categories of folk and *Lok*, folk literature, and *Lok Sahitya*.

Cultural Studies: In order to understand the folklore and region/landscape portrayed by folks, this study draws from several theoretical frameworks from the field of Cultural Studies which looks at cultural artifacts as meaning-making systems. This study focuses on the literary text, that is, ballads and *lokgeet*, and their cultural signification. It also looks at other cultural texts bound to them as systems or socio-political and cultural discourse that imagine a land with local images in a way that may or may not go hand in hand with

the political one. In order to read the cultural peculiarities of both regions, studies on identities, regions, power relations, etc. are taken into consideration; Florian Columns is an important reference point in this context (2010).

For the idea of the region in the context of Kachchh, this study has drawn on the conceptualization of region by Farhana Ibrahim in her seminal book *Settlers, Saints, and Sovereigns* where she argues that a region is an experienced category that is constructed from the activities of the people residing in it (Ibrahim10). She examines it from an ethnographic perspective. Postcolonial theories are used to understand and analysed the ideas of region and nation as political categories, which have been much debated in the post-colonial era. This study has relied on theoretical perspectives from postcolonial studies, especially those on understanding the idea of nation and region by Benedict Anderson, Partha Chatterjee and Ashis Nandy.

### **Significance of the Study**

A growing sense of betrayal by the English to the Scots led to a politics of uniqueness and therefore autonomy. The demand for autonomy emerged in the 1920s and achieved momentum in 1929, 1979, 1998-98 and 2011, 2014 and 2016. Political leaders claimed Scottish political, economic, and cultural autonomy. In order to claim autonomy while asserting uniqueness within the U.K. Scotland referred to its past in the forms of folklore and history to distinguish Scots from the British.

Kachchh on the other hand has also been trying to be a state within the Indian nation state. People of Kachchh particularly the last Maharao of Kachchh continuously proclaimed an autonomous status of Kachchh. Like Scotland, Kachchh has been deprived of the infrastructures and development it deserves despite being one of the largest revenue-generating districts within the Gujarat state. Kachchh is unique to Gujarat in linguistic, cultural and geographical domains, people of Kachchh argue for the status of Kachchh as a separate state in India.

While examining the process and movement of the claims by both regions the study explores the categories of class and caste in Scotland and Kachchh respectively and their role in the imagining region/state and its autonomy. Thus, the study is timely and much needed in both contexts to understand and contribute to the ongoing debate of cultural autonomy in both regions.

## Chapters

The study is divided into four chapters followed by conclusion. The first chapter, titled, “Understanding Folk Literature, *Lok Sahitya* and Region”, of the thesis introduces and chiefly deals with the ideas of folk and folk literature, *lok and lok sahitya*, as well as the idea of the region informed by the folk literary imagination from a methodological perspective. While tracing the historical emergence of the idea of folk and folklore studies, it also tries to draw a new understanding of the idea of folk, especially in the context of Indian society. With this, it attempts to encapsulate the relationship between folklore and region and how the daily practices of folk life shape the region to aid in the imagination and assertion of regional identity. This section also locates several key scholars, in Western as well as Indian contexts, in folklore studies who have dealt with the idea of folk, folklore, folk literature as well as *lok, lokvidhya/vandgmay, and lok sahitya*. It has attempted to answer the question, "What does the idea of landscape or region do to the genres of ballad and *lokgeet*? How and why is the process of the folk narrative central to either case? It sets a conceptual background to move forward with the arguments and analysis of the research question. It primarily deals with, what is the folk/*lok*. What is a region/landscape? How do both of these categories interact with each other?

The second chapter of the thesis is titled “Ballads, Literary Imaginations, and Scotland as a Region”. Unfolding the Scottish past, ballads, and folksongs and Scottish claims based on them, this chapter argues that historic socio-political events are an inevitable source in shaping the contemporary socio-political identity of Scotland, which is crucial to making claims based on them for cultural and political autonomy. This chapter examines the Scottish ballads and folksongs, interweaving the Scottish glorious past, culture, and folklore with an outline of the Scottish assertion of autonomy from the fourteenth century until the twenty-first century. It locates Scotland as a region with its cultural peculiarities expressed by the Scottish folks and collected by people like Francis J. Childe, Walter Scott, Robert Burns, and *The Rebels Ceilidh Song Book*. By close reading of some of the selected ballads and folk songs, it highlights the peculiarities of Scottish culture and society compared to its counterpart, England, and how these peculiarities are essential to constitute and consolidate the Scottish identity. These folksongs have been variedly written and used to invoke the Scottish past and therefore mobilise consciousness to claims for sovereignty. This chapter also illustrates the use of folklore, particularly ballads and, folksong, at key junctures of the socio-political history of Scotland to invoke

the Scottish identity against the English. It is divided into four sub-sections: A history of the idea of Scotland as a country since Alba to Holyrood, Ballad as a genre, folk and literary imagination of Scotland as a region, i.e., an analysis of select ballads and folksongs in which Scotland emerges as a region, followed by the conclusion.

The third chapter, titled “*Lokgeet*, Literary Imagination, and the Idea of Kachchh” follows the schematic structure of the previous chapter. This chapter examines the *lokgeet* in the context of Kachchh and focuses on questions such as the idea of Kachchh and its historical relationship with mainland Gujarat as well as Sindh. How has it been articulated in the *lokgeet* of Kachchh? What is the significance of the *lokgeet* in the imagination of Kachchh as a region with its exclusive peculiarities? The first and second chapters also briefly touch upon the genres of ballads and *lokgeet* and their historical significance in both regions, respectively. This chapter has four sub-sections: the first is on the location of Kachchh and its historical roots as a princely state and island, the idea of *lokgeet*; the third is an analysis of select *lokgeet* and Kachchh as an imagined region in it, followed conclusion.

The fourth chapter attempts to analyse the cases of Scotland and Kachchh’s articulations of autonomous identity and the manifestation of the region in the contemporary socio-political circumstances in both regions. It puts forward an argument that 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. It also takes the narrative process of the ballads and *lokgeet* and seeks answers to the question of how they are crucial in the articulation of cultural and regional identity. The chapter is titled “Folk Literature and Articulation of Autonomy: A Case from Scotland and Kachchh, 1900 – 2023”. It also compares and examines the structure as well as the themes that manifest the identities of both regions.

The fourth chapter is followed by a concluding chapter, in which key findings and conclusions drawn from the previous chapters are discussed. Although the ideas of identity and region are in constant flux, this chapter offers a set of open-ended conclusions.