1. Understanding Folk Literature, *Lok Sahitya* and Region

What makes people "folk"? Do "folks" make a region or do regions shape "folk"? These multifaceted questions pose a never-ending loop of stimulating thoughts. However, these questions manufacture their meaning from various disciplines, so the study of folk and region and vice versa in necessarily directed towards a multidisciplinary investigation. They need to be studied in the theoretical praxis of folklore, cultural studies, sociology, ethnography, in geography and politics, in short, through what Farhana Ibrahim calls "ethnographies of state formation" (Ibrahim 2012). Therefore, my approach in this chapter will be two-fold, juxtaposing folk literature, that is, in the context of my dissertation, ballads and *lokgeet*, and region back and forth to make sense of the politics of identities and the socio-cultural and political imagination of a region. This chapter proposes to draw a relationship between the people making a region through practising the traditional way of life and a (folk) region shaping the imagination of the people residing in it. In other words, it explores the social construct of the region through the lens of the folk. Broadly, it revolves around the proposition, as Ibrahim has argued, that "region is a subjective, experienced category" (Ibrahim 10). Extending this, I seek to explore how people shape an experienced region and the way this subjective experience of region is tied to the modern political region.

In order to do so, this chapter first refers to the Western imagination of folk and region. Then it turns to the Indian, Gujarati, and Kachchhi scholarship on *lok* which is roughly equivalent to folk and (*pra*)*desh* which can be contextually translated as region. Discussing Western ideas of folk and region in the first place does not insinuate its priority over the non-West, but rather, a recognition that the modern understanding of the idea of folk, region and nation-state emerged from Western political thoughts in the first place. So, in order to situate gradual development of both the concepts and the manner in which they got translated in India as being one of the colonies of the British Empire and carry forwarded by the Indian native scholars of twentieth and twenty-first century after that. Indian and particularly Gujarati and Kachchhi's disciplinary understanding of *Lok* is informed by the Western understanding folk. A few scholars from Gujarat have tried to contextualise folk in the native socio-cultural milieu. Scotland and Kachchh, being widely disparate, nevertheless, have similar histories of imagining and reimagining what, in modern-day terms, called folk and region, subjectively experienced and imagined through

the lore of the people. The imaginations of the region and their knowledge are different. Still, the way they experience the region subjectively through the respective lore of the region is more or less similar in fashion. Even the emergence of new technologies and the internet have added a new facet to it. So, it would be productive to engage both the ideas of folk and region in the context of Scotland and Kachchh so as to analyse and understand it both individually, and within a comparative framework. In this regard, the chapter first takes up the Western debate over folk and region and then turns to the Indian articulations of the debate.

Scholars have widely contested that the idea of "folk-lore" (1846) given by William Thomas was situated in and exclusively meant for the class-based European society. Hence, it has little or no meaning in other differently organised structures of communities across the globe. Understandings of the term folk in the United States of America, which has a relatively wide variety of migrants settled from Europeans to forced African slave-migrants to voluntarily migrated people across the globe along with indigenous native Indians, pose another dimension. At the same time, South Asian and mainly Indian socio-cultural contexts constitute an altogether different lifeworld and, therefore, a new direction of imagining what or who is folk in a society marked by caste-based divisions as well as community and indigenity. This is a basic but important question to understand folk and their lore in India, which has systematically been overlooked in nationalist whirls of folkloric institutionalisation.

The modern nation state took its present form in Europe from the late eighteenth century onwards. Since the mid-twentieth century, the decline of the British Empire had led to the emergence of the modern nation-state in these former colonies Through political upheavals, new nation-states came onto the global map. Scholars since the mid-twentieth century have endeavoured to conceptualise the idea of a nation-state and a region in the political, socio-linguistic context through the praxis of post-colonial and cultural theories. However, region as a framework for understanding particular geo-cultural space invoked and studied by different disciplinary approaches such as geography, history, economic, anthropology, development and policy studies suggest a distinction between region and nation state. Fredrik Söderbaum notes that "The heavy emphasis on state and global levels in mainstream international theory leads to a weak, even superficial, conceptualization of "regional space." Therefore, when the "taken for granted" national scale/space is problematized, then other spaces and scales necessarily receive more recognition" (11).

This chapter discusses two broad themes of folk and region and examines how they shape each other. It will first locate the historical emergence of folk as a concept in Europe, the USA, and will later look at the Indian context. Through this, the chapter will develop an understanding of the region through a primary investigation into the category folklore. It is divided into sections on folk and *lok*, folklore, and literature and various conceptualisations of the idea of region. The chapter consists of a review of literature in these conceptual areas and will set the field for an investigation into the folklore practices of Scotland and Kachchh. The chapter will address questions such as, what is folk? Who is the folk? How does the concept of folk emerge in the Western as well as in the Indian context? What were the socio-political circumstances that paved the way for its emergence as well as its institutionalisation? How did it spread with the progressive spread of the British Empire? How did it get institutionalised in revivalist/nationalist paradigms? These are the questions that academic scholars grapple with in folklore studies and folkloristics. This chapter aims to critically engage with the established notions of folk and folklore in the ongoing debate.

The Beginnings of the Idea of Folklore: Scotland and India

Folklore as an umbrella term is group of various arts used to find in the non-urban region across the globe. Scholars have defined and traced the different origins of the folk lore and arts. Individual creation and communal recreation are the major theories that seek to explain the origin of the folklore (Utely 7). A person or set of persons within the community generally compose or perform a composition in the literary or any other artistic genre. Often performed in public, the compositions of a folk art, be it literary or utilitarian, enter the public sphere; from there they spread into the wider community and often lose the authorial imprint. In this way such compositions become an asset of the community as a whole. This lore later with hereditary oral transmission reaches generation after generation.

Folklore has existed prior to and simultaneously with the written and printed texts. It is often an aspect of ritual articulation of communities. However, the significance of folklore and the roles that it plays get transformed from time to time; for example, people started paying attention to folk in a different way during certain condition of social and political unrest. Three key moments in which folklore play a significant role can be identified: one, romantic and with the sense of losing out the golden past and its

antiquities; two, colonial exploration and the quest for administrative knowledge to rule the colonized people; and third is quest for a contemporary identity of the community.

When we look at the origin of the term, we can see it is closely tied to the political shifts in Europe. The political turmoil in nineteenth-century Europe sought the nationalist re-imagining of the state, the revisiting of people far removed from the urban and industrial area, and a life close to nature in terms of time and space by their lore. The romantic notion of the people of the far rural and the southern part as well as colonialism gave impetus to knowing, understanding, and preserving folkore which was on the path of extinction in Germany (Yagnik 2). Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm popularly known as the Grimm Brothers are the figures known in Germany and across the globe for their collection of fairy tales in Germany. Their collection of fairy and folktales is known to be the first systematic collection and the record of the life of the country's people, which they believed has been there for ages (Noyes 20). To mobilise mass consciousness in the minds of people, nationalists and intellectuals revisited lore like this—this practice of knowing the people, by folklore or as earlier termed antiquities, spread across Europe.

After the Grimm Brothers, the archiving wave started and spread globally. As a part of the U.K., Scotland was not unfamiliar with this. Subsequently, the quest to archive and preserve extinct folklore It has produced pioneering archival work of Scottish folk songs, ballads, and lore. There are two major figures in the eighteenth century who collected folklore of England and Scotland. James MacPherson (1736-1796) published *Fragments of Ancient Poetry"* in 1960. Thamos Bishop Percy (1729-1811) published *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765. In the eighteenth century, Walter Scott (1771-1832) compiled and published ballads and songs sung near the border of Scotland and England in *Minstrelsy of Scottish Border* (1802). Robert Burns also contributed significantly in the two works: *The Scots Musical Museum* and *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* by James Johnson published in 1793 to 1818 respectively. 'Auld Lang Syne' is famous song in Scotland, and through the world, by Burns. Francis James Childe, who lived in America, is also a one of the major figures in the history of the collection of Scottish folklore. He brought out *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* in ten parts in 1882-98.

These collections of antiquities, as they had named it, were done in the time of great political upheavals and intellectual awakening. However, the increasing English dominance over Scotland post-Union of 1707 paved way for the Jacobite group and periods of unrest. After a few decades the Scottish Enlightenment also held sway over the

thinkers of Scotland. On the one hand, attempts for regaining self-rule in eighteenth century alongside French and American quests for equality and fraternity and fast growing industrialization on the other hand led Scottish thinkers and scholars towards a Scottish national identity which in a way directed them to the folklore of Scotland. They believed that Scotland is preserved in it and that it was necessary to preserve it in order to claim the historic autonomous status of Scotland (*Preface*, McGillveray 1994).

During this epoch of British history, the British Empire was being expanded in Asia and Africa by the British and fellow Scottish officials and soldiers. They were accompanied by the missionaries and other scholars and professionals. They were aware of the folk revival going on in their home countries. They brought their knowledge which was supplemented by the upper-caste allies across India.

Similarly, the collection and publication of the accounts on the native folklore in India had begun. James Todd, Alexander Forbes, James Burns, Marrian Postans, S.N. Raiks, L.F. Rushbrook William, and George Abraham Grierson were among many British officers who had collected and published the folklore of the western region of India. These colonial officers were accompanied by their native counterparts, mainly the upper-caste. Most of the works were published either from London or other British cities.

Collecting, archiving, and publishing folklore created a foreground for the revival of the folklore, which had taken place in the West in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and then in the Indian subcontinent in late nineteenth century. In India, it achieved substantial momentum during the high nationalist period. Folklore was indeed a powerful tool to mobilize and organize people of the country for the sake of independence. Native Indian following the call of urge of mass mobilisation by the nationalist leaders like Gandhi had started engaging with the lore of folks who supposed to partake in the movement. Fear of extinction and losing out the folklore was also dominant in the urban India. Peter J. Claus and Frank J. Korom in their introductory book *Folkloristics and India Folklore* aptly pointed that:

> The modern study of folklore in India grew during British occupation, inspired in part by the British themselves. In Bengal, for example, attention was given to the collection of folklore early in the nineteenth century by a handful of brilliant British scholars, including such pioneers of lndology as William Jones, Charles Wilkins, William Carey and, later, George Grierson. Bengali intellectuals joined in the effort early on, but by then they were already an urbanized English-speaking elite almost as far removed from the village folk as the British were. It was not until late in the

nineteenth century that nationalism and a nostalgic yearning for their 'lost' culture drew large numbers of local scholars to; the field. Indeed, fear that the unique Bengali folk culture might soon disappear was (as with Thoms) a major motivation. (Claus and Korom 21)

In doing so, the prominent intellectual, for example Zavechand Meghani, of that time had ended up selectively appropriating the folklore of certain types by castes, which would have to feed into the need of the hour. It was in this context that the terms *lok,* folk, and folklore in India had been defined and appropriated in the Indian context without being very careful about the void created by the system of social stratification in Indian society, deriving from the West or instead arrived with the colonial regime. Claus and Korom argued that:

> Again, while we can sympathize with the enthusiasm for folk traditions, it is hard for a folklorist to approve of nationalism as a motivation for collection. Whatever benefits and encouragement the folklorist receives from others on the basis of such collection effort usually prove to be only temporary and any political dogma ultimately only serves to limit the scope of collecting and understanding the material. (Claus and Korom 21)

Folklore and Literature

Western Debate on Folklore

Whatever the folk have practised and performed, it eventually becomes lore. Lore includes the different knowledge systems that the folk possess, passed on and, on appropriate occasions, used it. It consists of art, too. Literary art is also a part of it, and folk literary compositions of different genres fall under the larger rubric of folklore. Since its coinage, scholars in different contexts have defined folklore in distinctive ways.

Regina F. Bendix and Galit Hasan-Rokem, in their seminal book A *Companion to Folklore,* note that "the hyphen between "folk" and "lore" anticipates key questions for the discipline. What common sense relationships exist between bodies of knowledge and groups of people? What relationship should scholars posit between cultural forms and social structures?" (Bendix and Galit-Hasan 13). Folklore is a term rooted in the romantic understanding of the literary creations prevalent in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. In the following few conceptualisations of folklore, we shall see this. However, in the contemporary mass mobilisation and communication era, it has been defined across a new range of matrixes. The movement of the folks necessitated the movement of

folklore from far remote areas to urban spaces. Reaching from a far-removed location to a city, it has undergone several changes. As an inevitable characteristic of folklore, new layers have been added to the understanding and meaning of it. Moreover, it initially consisted of the literary genre only; now, folklore is a body of knowledge, with various genres ranging from the different arts. Folklore has also been studied through wide-ranging interdisciplinary perspectives, i.e. anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, feminism, and Marxist perspective.

The term folklore was coined by William J. Thomas in 1846 and was meant to be used instead of ancient antiquities (Thomas 1). It consists of the two words folk and lore, which have been highly contestable since their first use. The term(s) has/have been variously defined and appropriated. Thomas used the term in the European context; it was widely circulated and accepted in other parts of the world. In India, as a result of colonial, orientalist, and nationalist scholarship, it was derived, accepted, and has been used (un)like European society, which makes it more complex and debatable.

The concept of folk derived from the German *Volks* or *Volkskunde*. No matter how appropriate it has been for the different life worlds across the globe, it was this word that paved the way to the development of new conceptions and the study of people who were dwelling far from the cities and sometimes towns, by or for the foreigners from the other life world of different continents or the urban residencies of their same nation-state. The term then got wider currency in Europe, which was highly informed by the folklore of the colonies being the laboratories of their experience on understanding and making meaning of themselves, except overpowering the colonies. In short, the term has two possible roots: Grimm Brothers *Volkskunde* or William Thomas folklore. In the late eighteenth century in Europe and early to middle of the twentieth century in India, the masses, of which folk/*lok* were major part, became the locus of study primarily due to European enlightenment sentiments and nationalist politics in India (Yagnik 2). Politically, the rise of folklore and its study has been associated with the grand transformations occasioned by democratisation and industrialisation, in short, the powers of (Western) modernity (qtd. in Bendix 2). These two historical events in Scottish and Kachchh/Indian context had a vital role to play in the construction of nationalist identities, which was a need of an hour at that time, from the past that is more off as they believed preserved in the folklore. It is important to know how nationalist revival during the freedom movement had impact on the study of folklore. Lore has also been defined in various ways. In different contexts, constituents of it have been matters of inclusion and exclusion.

Scholars who belong to the humanities pointed towards its literary and oral aspects and therefore considered it an essential literary and verbal genre. Social scientists are leaned toward its material and literary aspects (Bendix). By this she means that the literary and cultural studies scholars focus on the genre, structure, use of language, medium of expression, here orality, and its poetics. Whereas anthropologists and sociologists examine folklore as a source or material to understand development and evolution of human society and culture.

Zaverchand Meghani in his collections of lore of Saurashtra focused on the stories of ruling caste involved in war and skirmish. He particularly focused on the valorisation of the characters from the near historical past to mobilise the youth to develop certain character and personality for the national cause (Yagnik 156). Even Scottish ballads most often narrate stories of people who remained in popular memory. Meghani, particularly has been known for his *Saurashtrani Rasdhar* (1923), consist of genre of short stories of heroic deed similar to the ballads of Scotland. This tendency can also be found in folklore of Kachchh and other parts of India (Yagnik 156).

From context to the performative turn in the 1960s, folklore studies have posed a new understanding of folk and lore. The initial quest of the search for authenticity has started to be taken into consideration, and folklorists offered critiques on it (Bendix and Hasan-Rokem 22). Cultural studies, Post-colonial Studies, as well as Gender Studies too brought up new layers to the understanding of folk. Alan Dundes said that "the term 'folk' can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor" (1977) in the American context (qtd. in Bendix 22).

Definitions of Folklore

Scholars from different disciplines, regions, and times have added elements that made understanding of folklore deep and complex. Contextualizing *Volk*, folk and folklore as primitive, authentic, unsophisticated, illiterate, etc., has necessitated scholars to base it on various contexts or bases (Noyes 13-14). Locations in which folklore is defined are important as scholars contextualise or base the folk into temporal, spatial, social, cultural, and educational spaces.

In her crucial essay 'The Social Base of Folklore', Dorothy Noyes reflects on the "social matrix", a concept propounded by Richard Bauman, while locating the historical trajectory of the development of folkloric activities and folklore studies in Europe and America. I discuss this essay in detail as her propositions inform my own approach to

folklore studies. Noyes takes Bauman's social base theory as a starting point to locate the social base of folklore in the West. The United States of America, being a home for multi-ethnic people, migrated relatively in the recent past, the antiquarian base of folklore, people like Bauman and his followers did not find it fitting in. She discusses the social base in the four contexts: vernacular, performance, emblem, and stigma (Noyes 3).

In her study, she discusses the dominant approaches— "old and new, particular and universal, fluid and fix—and claims that it situates folklore on neither pole of one of the core binary oppositions (Noyes 14). This approach situates folklore in the ancient past, in the community and the situation in which it is used. She also suggests three strands: stratification, communal group and performative. She argues that the communal cannot withstand the stratification of folk, whereas performative turns limited the sense of community. These three strands rooted in the social of folklore can be seen as the three phases of the evolution of folklore. Noyes unfolds the social base of folklore in these three strands and draws lines of histories of folkloric activities in Europe and America (Noyes 14-39).

According to her, there is a long history of folklore in Europe. In contrast, she argues, America does not have such a deep-rooted history as being a multicultural nation; people migrated to it in the very recent past. However, in Europe, Noyes states it has existed since Renaissance times. The conflict between vernacular and Christianity has a long history in Europe. The word vernacular means a child born at a slave house. Conflicts of native language and mother tongue also existed in Europe. In the nineteenth century, attention was given to peasants as against the bourgeoisie by the German romantics and nationalist such Johann Gottfried Herder and Friedrich Schlegel and their fellow colleagues in Europe. A new layer of understanding of folk and folklore was added when the Empire strengthened its grip over the colonies as a readily available subject.

In contrast, America itself was a colony of Europe. Another issue that came with that was the multiethnic people who did not have long-term roots in America. English and French settled in the early seventeenth century. The Europeans brought African-Americans as slave on the continent. Apart from them indigenous red Indian cultural had been on the central region of America. Later colonial and post-colonial followed by globalization in post-1990 gave new surge to the immigration of the people from diverse ethnicity from different parts of the world. She further adds that the folkloric activity started with J.G. van Herder. Later in Napoleon's regime, scholars revisited Herder for national identity and to mobilise consciousness in two phases: collecting and archiving

the cultural wealth and disciplining it. In the twentieth century, three primary elements necessitated redefining folklore and its bases. Followers of the Boasian conceptualisations of culture relativism and historical particularism followed rural life and their descent into the urban areas. Boas explained how we should study a culture in itself away from the western paradigms of studying and understanding culture. He also brought another view forth from his fieldwork experiments on how different cultures have evolved in particular context and situation surrounding to it.

From the beginning, the community was the object of study for the social sciences, so they turned to forms and genres. Even the common descent or history ceased to be the criterion of folk (Noyes 21). According to Ben-Amos and Noyes:

> the methodological turn to context and participant observation, the political preoccupations of the civil rights era, and professional anxiety about the dwindling population of ballad-singers and fairytale-tellers all prompted a search for a contemporary folk, defined increasingly in sociological rather than anthropological terms as "small groups" without reference to a prior tradition. (Noyes 22)

These emerging trends of American society led to the sociological definitions rather than anthropological ones with an emphasis on the social base.

The performative *turn* in America situates folklore in different scenarios. She argued that scholars began to look at the material and contingent aspects of performance and how and why it emerges in particular situations (Noyes, 25). Since the mid-1970s, American scholars have been interested in the situation-based definition, and performance was the chief element. She also points out that scholars focused on how genres are used in certain situations where intertextual elements become essential to the meaning of the performance (Noyes 27). In that case, folklorists began to be suspicious about the reliance on performance as a source of analysis.

At the end of the essay, she discusses how emblems and stigma are attached to folklore as she argues that institutionalisation constitutes the social base. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argued that "once objectified in institutions, folklore becomes a mode of cultural production" that must continue to generate new content to sustain national identities, heritage industries, and the academic discipline of folklore itself (qtd. Noyes 29). She ends with the emerging problem of flexible networks and the mobile world. She rhetorically asks that it is sensible to talk about the social base of folklore, and these new emerging phenomena in society.

Noyes argued that "in this formulation, the anxiety of folklore research is explicitly problematised, both the ethical commitment to social justice and the desire for disciplinary respectability. The stigma is the conspicuous visibility of something normally kept out of sight, in this case, the marked term of modernity's binary oppositions: the traditional, the non-standard, the low, the poor, the collective" (29).

> "Folklore—a word uniting the performances of subalterns with the scholarly framings and institutional packagings thereof – might then be seen as a euphemism, the screen that simultaneously conceals and calls attention to an anomalous presence inside the modern nation state or global order". (Noyes 32)

In the initial stage, the folklorists or rather antiquarians, dealt with tradition and antiquity, which remained dominant until the beginning of the twentieth century. With that, different kinds of folktales, fairy tales, ballads and folksongs were also on the locus of study as European folklorists believed specific genres were important in forming national identity. After the development of Structuralism and the writings of Ferdinand de Saussure, a thinker, devoted attention to the structure of the various folklore genres. Vladimir Propp, a Russian folklorist, in his book *Morphology of Folktales* charts out thirty-one archetypes that run through folktales. In contrast, Levi Strauss studied mythology in *Structural Anthropology* (1968). Both of these scholars drew basic methodology of analyzing folktales and myths from Structuralism which is itself an extension of Russian Formalism.

> Perhaps the most striking difference between Propp and Levi-Strauss is that Propp remained a literary scholar even in his semi-ethnographic work *Historical Roots of the Wondertale,* whereas Levi-Strauss as a mythologist is concerned to clarify "not so much what there is *in* myth . . . as the system of axioms and postulates defining the best possible code, capable of conferring a common significance on unconscious formulations which are the works of minds, societies, and civilizations chosen from among those most remote from each other" (1969, 12). Propp and Levi-Strauss are not complementary, each espousing his own brand of structuralism; Propp tried to discover the structure of the tale, and Levi-Strauss, the general laws of the structure itself. (Liberman, xxxiv)

Around the mid twentieth century, the notion of the centre was destabilized by post-structuralist thought, instead, what was propounded was a multi-centric approach. With this approach the study of folklore revolved around the infinite play of the different structures (Derrida 1). It was brought by 1990s performance's turn in the context of

multidirectional migration of people and information/ folklore (Shuman and Hasan-Rokem). Poetics of folklore concentrates on this historical development across two centuries.

Another significant study of folklore is Simon J Bronner's *Folklore: The Basis.* In this study, he approaches folklore through tradition. Bronner argues that "the labelling of traditional expressions as folklore has a long history with an evolving meaning about industrialism, nationalism, colonialism, and cultural literacy in addition to modernisation" (2). While tracing the etymology of the word folklore, he notes that it could have derived from "*folclār* (literally "knowledge or learning held in common") against *bōclār*, meaning academic "book-learning" or "doctrine" (Mazo 1996)" (qtd. in Bronner 2).

In the UK, scholars like Herder called folklore a "science of tradition. However, folklore during the Victorian era was restricted to illiterate or semiliterate. In America, communication was on focus as Ben-Amos defined folklore as "artistic communication in a small group" (13) who detached tradition from folklore as common conscious about American folklore is that it does not have deep historical roots. Herder was of the view that folklore reside in the people of lower rungs in society.

Technological advancement since the 1990s has given a new dimension to understanding folk and folklore and opened up a new arena to explore the layers of meaning it has added to folklore and folkloristics.

Joseph Jacob's essay "The Folk" dismisses the literary base of defining folk. He asserted that "(1) folklore is continuously being updated and invented, and therefore folklore involves innovation, and consequently individual initiative; (2) folk is not a level of society, but a group sharing tradition that could be of any stratum; and (3) tradition is not a body of knowledge among the illiterate, but a process understood by following spatial and psychological patterns" (qtd in Bronner 18). Bronner argues that once folklore began to be devoted to individual needs, it lost its racial touch (18).

Bronner further deliberates on the questions that the advent of technology has posed to the concept of tradition. He argues that the term "folk" is needed as a qualifier to the authentic traditions in modernity (Bronner 20). He believed that folklore was sometimes associated with the "creativity of 'expressive culture'" and:

> it often was presented as the profound intellectual property of disempowered groups hanging on to tradition as a form of resistance to official authority or to bolster claims to political recognition and advocacy for social change" (Bronner 1992b; Limón 1983; Norkunas 2004; Silverman 1983) (Bronner 21).

Bronner suggests that folklore as "an expression of tradition is wrapped up in the internet because in "messaging," "connecting" and "linking," if not talking to one another, people incorporate the symbolic and projective functions that folklore distinctively provides which was based on the interface the internet has" (Bronner 22). This happens because he believes in the features that the medium has. The internet has, in addition, he asserts, an "interactive, instrumental quality that differentiates it from television and radio for which people are divided between broadcasters and listeners or viewers" (22). Meanwhile, Beth Blumenreich and Bari Lynn have focused on individuality in folklore. They assert that:

> with the use of the network as a term, in the words of folklorists Beth Blumenreich and Bari Lynn Polonsky, is an understanding that Folklore is individually determined and based, not "group" determined and based. Moreover, the individual's folklore is determined by the nature of his interactions and experiences. This suggests that folklore can be most profitably studied in terms of interactional communicative and experiential networks (qtd in Bronner 24)

> In the end, Bronner cites Herder, who is of the view that although tradition is always dynamic and ever-shifting in nature, it does follow law and patterns, so there can be a science of tradition whose goal is "to discover those laws by the examination of their products, the customs and beliefs, the stories and superstitions handed down from generation to generation, to ascertain how those products arose and what was the order of their development" (1899, 11) (qtd in Bronner 25).

This was another significant shift occurred in the field of folklore studies, as Bronner asserts, was the question of the authority of tradition and shifted interest from development to the generation of folklore (26). Internet has changed the pattern and base of the origin of folklore. The folk which used to come together face to face now able be to be virtual and produce lore that can be disseminated online with the help internet. This development added a new layer of meaning to the folk, and folklore.

Indian/Gujarati Debate on the Ideas of *Lok*

The colonial endeavours in the African and Asian subcontinents provided an apt setting for the colonisers to establish their regimes. The practice of othering had been translated in a very similar fashion considerably on a large scale in the affairs of the British Empire in the colonies. The British officers had roamed far-removed places and collected folklore practised in those days' society and culture.

In Gujarat, Ranjitram V. Mehta was first known to use *lok* in the Gujarati language as a synonym for folk in his paper titled '*Lokgeet'* in a meeting in Ahmedabad in 1903 (Maheta 90). Later, it was widely circulated and accepted in the Gujarati literary and academic milieu. People like Alexander Kinloch Forbes, among other British officials and civilians, Narmad, Ranjitram Mehta, Zaverchand Meghani, Jaymalla Parmar, Jashvant Sekhandivala, Balavant Jani, Hasu Yagnik, and others in mainland Gujarat and Marian Postans, Usman Bachal, Karamali Rahimali Nanjiani, Jivram Ajramar Gor, Gourishankar Vorasat, Lalaji Mulaji Joshi, and Duleray Karani were prominent collectors and folklorists in Kachchh. They had roamed and collected lore different from what was available the towns and cities. Although some of them were from the same region but were outsiders to the culture; still, they had tried to compile the lore as their writing indicates. Their foreignness is often inherent in their misinterpretation and misappropriation, which needs to be unpacked from the insider/subjective perspective. How caste prejudice works underneath this whole collection and preservation exercise is crucial and needs to be critically examined. Before turning to the problematics of caste, class, and space-time in the understanding of folk, folklore, and literature, let us look up the historical development of folk and folklore literature in Gujarat through the various scholars' conceptualizations from the last quarter of the 19th century to today.

Ranjitram V. Mehta first used the word *lok*. Since then, it has been defined in various paradigms, but it is still unclear what *Lok* is exactly or what it means. It has been defined in the various dictionaries in terms of geographical spaces, i.e. rural, tribal, remote; as a mythical space like earth, heaven, and hell; in terms of literacy, i.e. semi-literate, illiterate, literate, some of the people from the groups are literate, most of them are man; in terms of civic society as etiquettes, in terms of language and how they speak; in terms of tradition and customs; in terms of gradual change and development of culture, economy, custom, and tradition (Gohil 1-3; Chaudhary 56; Yagnik 9, 144). It might not be appropriate in the Western context, but folklorists in India have dodged the caste and gender perspective in defining and imagining a *lok*. Caste, gender and patriarchy have played an essential role in the social formation of India, which has led us to a new direction of understanding of *lok* hitherto overlooked. Indeed, it is a fact that whatever is called folklore in India is majorly preserved by the so-called communities considered lower in social status. Women, too, have played essential roles in composition and in the performance and preservation of folklore, in which caste does work implicitly. The advent of new forms of media has also added a layer to the concept of the traditional

understanding of folk or *Lok*. After definition and debate on folk or *lok,* I will return to these different conceptions and attempt to locate the folk in the context of an ongoing study to yield new meaning in the changing scenario.

In the Gujarati literary world, *lok* or folk has been derived from the West or imagined in the European frameworks. Although the Indian counterpart for the term folk as *lok* was readily available in Indian society, it has been argued that the term has been used since the Vedic times (Yagnik22; Parmar 17; Rathod 52). Many scholars, from Ranajitram Mehta to Zaverchand Meghani or Jaymalla Parmar to Harivallabh Bhayani or contemporary Gujarati folklorists, trace the existence of a group known as *lok*. In both the cases of folk and *lok,* the historical condition in the West and the Indian subcontinent has added layers of meaning, making it ambiguous to define what folk and *lok* mean or who were and are the folk and *lok*.

In the West, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and technological advances forced people to move towards the cities or the suburbs. The people moving toward cities in search of so-called advancement from the far-removed villages and remote areas brought folklore with them to urban space. As a result of fast industrialisation urban spaces in Europe and India emerged. People, for livelihood and better opportunities, migrated to the urban locales. They brought their lore with them in the urban locale where folk is defined in opposition to the modern, developed urban dwellers. The availability of the internet, mass communication, and digital archives made it available globally, adding a layer of meaning to the corpus of folklore and the different meanings it generated in the almost new setting. The case in the Indian context was similar but in different socio-historic conditions. The social stratification of Indian society into castes is essential here.

We can track four phases in the development of thoughts around folklore studies in India. Initially British official started exploring the different regions and had collected and interpreted the folklore to be better able to rule the country (Yagnik 156). Folkloric and anthropological activities to boost the understanding of colonizer of the colonised native culture and people residing in the Indian subcontinent to expand the British Empire. Roughly from the first decade of the nineteenth century, it had spread over the major areas under the rule of the Raj, where its political agents and officers were residing. This was a political quest to know the lore of the colonies. It was carried out in forms of survey, censuses, philology, archives of customs and traditions, topography.

The revival of folklore in the Indian subcontinent for the formation of Indian national identity has its roots in nationalist movements. Similar to the Western political upsurge, the nationalist persona looked toward folk life and lore in order to frame a consolidated Indian identity in the wake of independence from the Raj. In India, systematic and disciplinary folkloric activities have been conceptualised in four broad timelines. The first is the initial collection and compilation of lore by the British officers with the help of literate natives, which had roughly started from the beginning of the 19th century and ended about the middle of the second decade of the 20th century with the growing sense of national consciousness for freedom from the Raj. In this early period, British officers had started collecting various literary genres of folklore, similar to the European collectors, but for different motives. At this point, folkloric activities, literary genres and a few practices of upper castes were at the center.

Asiatic Society of Bengal in Bengal and Vernacular Society in Gujarat, for example, had collected varieties of folklore in both regions in the early nineteenth century. Marriane Postans, S.N Raikes among other British officials in Kachchh who archived the customs, traditions and lore in Kachchh in the early nineteenth century. *Ras Mala and Oriental Memoirs* (1812-13) by Alexander Kinloch Forbes and *Cutch* by Marriane Postans can be considered as initial compilation by the Britishers in Gujarat and Kachchh respectively.

The second phase starts with a new social-political awakening from a desire for a unified, independent India and the English education system. Many upper caste personalities being educated in the new education system started voicing their concern about India to the Empire. Leaders of the time had felt that the assimilation of the masses would be crucial to the imagining national identity and an independent nation, which was hitherto neglected. As the Subaltern Studies later brought it out that the movement for independence was dominated by the upper-castes as portrayed in mainstream history of that era. As mentioned earlier people like Meghani attempted to get archived the picture of India but did not successfully to do so focusing on popular characters and narratives of hyper-masculinity and valour excluding the majority of people who were. by the caste-based profession. not suitable to fight. In this political scenario, an urge to revisit the culture of the folk emerged, which paved the way to high nationalism. However, the nationalist literature that were being published have considerably been exclusive to certain castes as it revolved around the idea of chivalry and valour (Yagnik 156). In the Gujarati folk literary milieu, it has been known as the age of Meghani as it starts with

Meghani's pioneer works and ends with his death. As Hasu Yagnik notes it span over 1923 to 1980 (156).

Institutionalization of folklore in Gujarat and other part of India took place with the establishment of different societies and organization in colonial era but by the end of the second phase, folklore studies in Gujarat and India was at peak. In the next phase institutionalization took new direction. Systematic studies and teaching began in different university departments with help of new archives that were created by the Indian, perhaps from the upper-castes as it was in the previous phase.

The third phase is the post-independence phase, in which growing urbanisation and literacy played a significant role. In the third phase, scholars from diverse backgrounds came up with new perspectives. Folklore from the 1980s onward was widely collected in audio-visual forms and research and studied in academia. In the 1980s Saurashtra University started course on folklore. Charni literature and folk literature were taught in the course. A newly established Gujarat Sahitya Akademy gave space to the folklore and started publishing books and articles on it. Harivallabh Bhayani played crucial role in it. Along with him Pushkar Chandravakar, Jaymalla Parmar, Dr. Tairya, Balavant Jani, Ratudan Rohadiya, Kanu Jani, Shanti Acharya and Jashvant Shekhandiwala contribute in folklore studies in Gujarat with writing books, articles and extensive field and archival works (Yagnik 157).

Scholars like Kanu Jani attempted to think folklore differently. He coined the term *lokvangdmay* instead of folklore to distinguish the forms of lore and not just literary genres. But Hasu Yagnik disagrees with this coinage and states that it falls into a trap of literature and using it is unintelligible (159). In this period scholars seem departing from the popular paradigm of folklore and archives of the past and attempted to incorporated people at margins. One the significant archives came in the form of *bhajan, aagamvani and sant sahitya* (literature by saint poet) by Dalpat Shrimali, Nirjan Rajyaguru and Nathalal Gohil. Lore from the tribal also made available for the studies by Bhagvandas Patel and others.

Government programs on cultural and society also helped record unheard voices from the far-removed places. A Folk Literature Committee was commissioned by the state government in 1956 It was functional till 1984. It compiled a fourteen volumes series as well as published 58 other edited volumes (Yagnik 157-8). Bhayani also started audio recording of folk stories within Gujarat Sahitya Akadamy (157-58). Yagnik divides the history of folklore in Gujarat in three phases ranging from 1718 to 2009. However, post-

Internet and digital age has brought new dimension to the idea of folklore and study of it. Perhaps, which has started in the late nineties in the West and spread all over the globe.

The fourth phase can be viewed in terms of theoretical and technological advancement, i.e., the emergence of cultural studies and the "view from below" facilitated by the wide variety of new information and communication technology inventions. The mass movement of humans, information, and globalisation has considerably informed it. The emergence and development of urban spaces led people to migrate from the far rural areas to earn good fortune and a better life. As this is happening around the globe, it raises questions against the traditional understanding of folk and lore. Several folklorists have tried to define folk and folklore in this historical development of folkloric activities. Turning to the definitions of folk and lore, we now will look at the different imaginations of *lok* in terms of space and time, authenticity, and literacy, among others.

Western romantic understanding enormously affected the understanding of folk in India and other colonies as the notion translated directly from the European understanding into folkloric activities to define and conceptualise folk. In the wake of industrialisation and growing urban spaces, this modern notion of folk emerged against the modern advancement in the scientific and socio-political surroundings.

Deriving from the early folklorist folk/*lok* in the second phase was defined on the similar line of thoughts of early folklorists in India. Remote residence, lack of formal education, away from so called modern life, and having different kinds of lore which do not have a written form were the characteristics upon which *lok* in India has been defined. Whatever is called folklore was/is practiced by either by the people from ranked as lower caste or indigenous. Folklore is often distinguished from Vedic literature and modern literature (Yagnik 156).

Ramsinh Thakur, Suryakarna Parikh and Narotam Swami claim that the *lokgeet* are the driving force of the Indian society. *Lokgeet* portray the character of India, brings the emotions of human, and filled with human genius. Ramnaresh Tripathi considers *lokgeet* as the songs of nature without ornamentation but only *ras*. Vasudev Agrwal considers *lokgeet* as infinite sources (qtd in Jaymalla Parmar 50).

On the one hand folklore and its different genres are considered as lore of people of lower social-economic status however on the other hand considered as a 'driving force' and 'never ending source of civilization'. Folklore in India has always been in this dilemma of romanticising folklore as a source as well as considering it as low in status in

terms of civic life. The Western paradigm of comparing civic-barbaric has not ceased to be used.

Several scholars at Gujarat level have tried to dig into the imagination of *lok* and folk before colonial affairs and the revival, as some of them believe that the concept of *lok* has been conceptualised from the Vedic age to the twentieth century. Let us look at several Indian conceptualisations of *lok*.

Nathalal Gohil says, "A *lok*, in a general sense, is a group of people or community that lives in a particular geographical area or a rural or forest area, in the desert or near the ocean, or a nomad community. The folk community has its own beliefs, orthodoxy, customs and rituals, attires and ornaments, food culture, celebration, dwelling, furniture, and lives according to folk lifestyle. It also has songs, tales, dances, and festivals" (Gohil 2 original in Gujarati).

Jashvant Shekhandiwala defines *lok* as "(1) World or the universe (Heaven, Earth, Hell), (2) Masses, (3) People of the lowest stratum in the society, untouched by the city and town life and civilisation, mostly illiterate, uncivilised, village people (*lok*varna[3])" (2)**.** In contrast, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi notes that "*lok* does not only mean people living in folk or rural area. It is a group of people whose source of knowledge is not books or the Shastra. They live a simpler and easier life than the civilised people" (qtd. in Gohil 2).

For Dr Satyendra, "*lok* is a group of people who are away from classism, intellectual, free from ego, and live in the course of tradition (cited in Nathalal Gohil 2). At the same time, Kunjbihari Dash defines that "*lok* is a group of people which is away from the effects of civilised society which has been living in the old style of life which includes the rural and urban areas" (qtd. in Gohil 2-3).

These definitions have a pattern of characteristics on *lok* ranging from geographical to intellectual, social hierarchies and the historical distance from modern civilisation and its values. Nathalal Gohil's conceptualisation covers almost all the remote geographical areas where urban development and modern space are impossible due to their geography. Moreover, it considers *Lok* to be those who live in these under-developed areas, the people who are always on the move, and those who do not belong to any region. Jashvant Shekhandiwala, in a similar fashion, invokes mythical space or the world of heaven, hell,

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[3] Indian caste system has four Varna. Shekhandiwala adds new. See for more detail Gohil, Nathalal. *Lokgeet Vimarsh ane Meghvalona Kanthasta Lokgeeto*. Parshwa Publication. 2017 pg. 1.

and earth. Four *lok* or mythical worlds have been noted in the Vedas (Chandaria Foundation of Gujarati Language Resources, લોક).

Hazariprasad Dwivedi does not consider people from the rural area to be folk. Still, he adds that these dimensions of the source of knowledge are crucial for conceptualising *lok* or folk in the Indian context as *lok,* caste and availability, and prohibition of knowledge acquisition go hand in hand. The point Dwivedi raises is also crucial regarding the definition of *loksahitya* (folk literature) and *shistasahitya* (classic literature). Previously, only few Varna or castes were allowed to read and write or to be formally educated in the Shastras. People imagined against the shastri or pandit (learned person) were the folk who acquired knowledge not from the orally circulated manuscripts (*shrutis*) but from the predecessor or older generation, mostly in informal settings. Knowledge as a marker of caste differences is vital in imagining *lok.* He further notes that they live a simplistic life as their knowledge is considered less important and away from the centres, be it the court of castes hierarchy.

Being on the margin of the social structure and geographical reality and historically deprived of space they deserve in public life, their illiteracy and intellect have been crucial in understanding who the *lok* or folk are as post-1960s thinkers raised the question of power and knowledge and knowledge as power (Foucault). Similarly, the dominant knowledge system had been appropriated and accepted as mainstream, degrading the voices of the masses as unimportant.

Civilisation values were also a central phenomenon in the conceptualisation of *lok* and folk. All of the above folklorists are explicitly or implicitly concerned about the modern urban civic values about which the *lok* is either untouched or unaware. However, not all civic societies have universal values or systems. Moreover, defining *lok* or folk based on civic values is much more ambiguous and tricky as all the civilisations have been differently rooted in the different geo-social spaces even on the same continent.

Shankarsen Gupta adds another element to it, saying, "We all have inherited oral knowledge from our ancestors, but we do not have the creativity of *lok*. Those are called *lok* or folk who have folk or *lok* creativity" (qtd Gohil 2-3). He emphasises the creative aspect of a group of people on which they have been given social identity. While putting India's caste-based socially stratified society on purview, the creative aspect of constructing *lok* or folk identity becomes essential. Profession was one of the bases of the Varna division in the pre-modern Indian society. However, profession is not only a marker

with which we can understand caste dynamics. In due course of evolution of Indian societies and cultures new facet of social inequality got added into it, making it more complicated.

Castes are often understood in terms of the profession assigned to a particular caste, nonetheless other services and entertainments, often hereditary, were also ascribed to lower castes with multifaceted justifications. Music and arts of different kinds were performed in palaces of kings across Indian subcontinent. Those performances which were meant to be for the royal palaces were/are considered if not classical then above the folk arts and performance which were/are for the common people, the folks. Folklore can also be understood in terms of who consumes it. It can also be thought through the comparison of the *Shishta sahitya* (classical literature) again the folk literature. This brings the caste-based understanding of *lok* which is not symmetrically dealt with in India and Gujarati folklore studies.

Another point that can be substantial to understanding the creative side of the concept of *lok* is that the people who were prohibited from so-called divine knowledge had developed a simultaneous life-world of the creative world against the Sanskritised world. This could be considered a vernacular against the mainstream. Although it was not homogenous, unified and sprung from a trans-regional space, it had creative power, which shook the established understanding of creativity and art. Creative compositions of the Bhakti movement can be understood as a response to breaking the authoritarian hegemony. Even many of the so-called classic arts are rooted in folk practices.

The urban-rural dichotomy has also considerably informed the understanding of the *lok* and folk. As so much influenced by the romantic ideas of folk, people living in rural or town areas are considered near to nature and, therefore, the old way of life but unaware of modernity, which has been believed to be advanced in terms of social and technological milieu. Although a considerable amount of the Indian population lives in rural or non-urban areas, similar to the European Industrial Revolution, urbanisation in India and Gujarat took place and continues to do so. Several scholars have envisaged *lok* in terms of multi-demographic space. Chaudhary notes that "*lok* does not mean an entire society in Gujarat." He adds that the "*lok* is a group… living in villages and towns, of the lower level of society, mostly uneducated masses, including villagers, illiterate, farmers, labourers, and herders" (Chaudrary 56).

Hasu Yagnik believes that "in the modern definition, *lok or* folk does not only mean villagers and tribal; it also includes civic strata of the urban space in the *lok* or folk

(Yagnik 10). Yagnik also states that *lok* can also be defined as the group of people who are/have [at] the lowest level of civic values, civilisation (Yagnik 9). Folk archivists and editors like Meghani and his successors believe that the *lok* means the people living in the semi-urban or cities belong to the village and remain orthodoxly loyal to the tradition…and disbelieves (Yagnik 9). Tradition is another factor pivotal to understanding *lok* and folk until the performative turn of the 1960s. The tradition that has been followed by and is closest to nature and the ancient past is what romantics had envisaged while posing it against the contemporary degradation of European society.

Hasu Yagnik, while defining *lok,* stressed tradition and noted: "that tradition was not only found in the tribal but also the people living in villages, semi or illiterate, which is also considered as a folk" (8). Considering the *lok* as a complex unit, he believed that the tribal and illiterate people living in villages also as folk. He further distinguishes between society and *lok (8)*. He states that "society and *lok* are different. Society is an evolved system, whereas the folk being an intrinsic part of it is a tradition" (Yagnik 144). Here, society is the centre. On the other hand, he says that the "society, masses, and *lok* have a difference, but *lok* is the crucial and unitary factor among these (Yagnik 144). He considers folk as an element. The folk element is one which can be found in the expression of those who are away from the civilised, systematic, and intellectual or found less or not found and one who lives in a single and unified tradition.

The folk that is imagined from the above discussion and, as several scholars have emphasised, carry a particular way of life that is unique to it, which can be termed as a tradition of the group in which the folk are living. This tradition, as a repository of knowledge handed over to the succeeding generation by words as well as showcasing this knowledge, has been known as folklore or *lokvidhya*. In its initial development phase, folklore consisted of literary arts, but several other arts were added over time. This study focuses on folk literature particularly.

Poetics of Folklore

The history of poetics in folklore is partly a history of how scholars have understood the formal and interactional features to overlap and intersect, for example, through intertextuality, meta-communicative devices, and dialogism (Shuman and Hasan-Rokem 57). The poetics of folklore have chiefly dealt with the origin, tradition, genre, structure, and performance. It held sway to the early 1990s and questioned the universality of genre suggested by the Grimms and their followers (Ben-Amos 1969) and shifted the poetic

interests of research toward performative aspects rather than genre (Bauman 1982); at times, though, attempts were made to correlate both genre and performance (Briggs 1989; Shuman and Briggs 1993) (qtd in Shuman and Galit Hasan-Rokem 57).

Amy Shuman and Galit Hasan-Rokem, in their seminal essay on "The Poetics of Folklore", note that "poetics is famously related to the concept of beauty, and it is thus relevant to ask who is entitled to decide on the aesthetic value of folkloristic creativity as they believe that multidirectional shifts have occurred to the study of folklore" (Shuma and Hasan-Rokem 55). They argue that the topic of poetics is a historical discourse, the site of intersecting conversations among the disciplines. The study of folklore poetics began in the context of literary and philological studies as the gradual configuration of folklore studies to encompass nonverbal aspects of verbal performance it has prompted a theoretical innovation that, contrary to the classical purely literary poetics of Aristotle, Quintilian and Longinus, the medieval poetics inspired by Augustine and the Enlightenment poetics of Lessing with its specific separation of verbal and visual art, suggests a cross-medial and cross-generic approach to poetics in general (56).

The discussion on the poetics of folklore began in the nineteenth century. Amy Shuman and Galit Hasan-Rokem note that "poetics will be understood as the total body of values predicating expressive modes of culture created in various media by individual authors, artists and performers interacting with values and norms collectively accepted and processually shaped through shared forms of transmission" (56). Further, they argue that "the interrelationship between the various media is not merely conducive for the creation of folklore but to a certain degree defines the specific character of folklore" (56)

The poetics of folklore chiefly pay attention to verbal folklore; as Amy Shuman and Galit Hasan-Rokem believe, it combines formal features and interactional features as well as the implications of all the above mentioned on folklore's contents (57).

Lokvidya and Loksahitya/ Folklore and Literature

Lok or folk is one type of large complex unit (Yagnik 18). This unit has a creator and performer class in which there is a search for self-identity and symbols, and these types of groups can be divided and identified into social, political, religious and geographical. Their distinct identity gives them *Lokvidhya or* folklore (Yagnik 18).

Folklore is the collective noun for verbal material, social rituals, customs and religious rituals. From the mid-nineteenth century till today, it has been reaching from one to another in written and oral forms (Ved 7). At the same time, Hasu Yagnik gives

two contrary claims that folklore emerged from the civil and bourgeoisie classes, and lower-class people imitated it before. He also claims that folklore is a product of the collective life of the uncivilised. The fundamental essence of folklore is that a learned person from any class had thought, discovered, and applied, and then its tradition was established, and since then, it has been practised (Yagnik 18).

To know the folklore of a particular region, we have to familiarise ourselves with the geography and language of the people living there, and their history and tradition are also essential to know. It is the treasury of that region (Yagnik 1). Hasutaben Sedani notes that different stages of humankind change, but whatever stays that is folklore. Nevertheless, folklore is not past (12). Yagnik believed that there are two types of folklore: *Sarvasamanya* (general) and *Vyavashayik* (professional) (Yagnik 21).

Narotam Palan says folk literature is spontaneous. Means that is when an event spreads over when it reaches folk and stays there, and initial personal composition with many alterations remains in folklife; in this way, personal elements disappear, and extensive representation of folk feelings arises. This kind of composition could be called folk literature, although it has no known or unknown author (Palan 35). Any creative person from the community composes a work. He does not consider it his property or claim any copyrights. He composes it in the emotion while dancing. And when he wants to know what he has sung, it would have become folk property (34-35)

Folk Literature in Gujarat and Kachchh

Jaymalla Parmar, in his book *Loksahitya Vimarsh*, points out that body, mind, senses, intellectuals, and materials developed at a slow or high level; due to this, differences in self and values have emerged, and through this *lok*/folk and Shishta/Classic dimension of art or literature emerged (17).

Prabhashankar Teraiya, in his book *Lokshitya: Gujarati Lokgeeto,* notes that written literature is the outcome of subjective consciousness, whereas folk literature is the outcome of folk consciousness (1). It is the expression of the people, those who are away from the civic society and through which hope, misery, joy, benefits and losses, good and bad days, birth and death, etc., are expressed in literature that is folk literature (Parmar 19). He further asserts that coming into contact to some degree with the civic society but still elements of folk remain intact, also called folk literature (19). He further notes that, according to Western scholars, folk literature is the knowledge of the people living in their primary condition. Meanwhile, in India, the definition of *lok* and folk is not limited to the

people living in their primary condition (Parmar 21). He adds that it is not only the literature of the illiterate, primitive people but also the songs, tales, sayings and riddles of the educated and civic society (23).

Meanwhile, Naresh Ved, dwelling on (ill)literacy, defines folk literature as mainly composed and circulated in the oral words of illiterate folks (13). Some scholars have tried to understand folklore and literature in the sense of its types of genres. There are two types of folk literature: folk songs and folktales (Chaudhary 2), which means poetry and prose. At the same time, he also demarcates folklore into further five types: *lokgeet*, folktale, folk dance, folk sayings, and riddles. While talking about the genres, he asserts that the difference between literature and folk literature is the difference between genres that fulfil the essential aims of it (54). Whereas Pushkar Chandravakar defines folk literature as a traditional and oral and which expresses folk consciousness, which sung and told by a folk group in folk dialect; he says folk literature is simple, direct and lacks literary ornaments and has been spread across the community by traditional mediums (qtd. in Choudhary 54).

Based on memory and cognitive competence of humankind, Jaymalla Parmar defines folk literature as "*Lok* Sahitya is that which is not someone's work, which is in *smriti* (mind, memory), and that which is included like folk consciousness which is written in dialect and language and each has a folk element in it" (Parmar 20). Raising the question of authorship Parmar makes an important point. He says that although it has authorship, it holds elements of folk consciousness, and although it has the composer's persona, people still accept it as their persona. Through which the persona of impersonal develops, that is called folk literature (Parmar 20). He further asserts that it has been composed by an individual author. However, people accept it as their personality, and then the composer's persona disappears, takes the form of group composition, and becomes folk/masses. This yields a form of folk emotions, ideas and feelings. He argues that it only becomes folk literature when the individual genius entirely dissolves (21).

While focusing on orality, Hasu Yagnik notes that everything in the oral tradition does not belong to folk literature. Some folk literature can be written and later, printed (71-72). Yagnik further argues that a folk composition means that it does not have an author, which makes it a work of folk literature. However, initially, there could be a composer who may be forgotten. However, the author's disappearance from the work alone does not make it folk literature. What is significant is that in folk literature, it is the folk form, genre and tradition which flourishes, not the specific author or performer (72),

which leans towards an argument that suggests the communal composition of folklore and literature. Meanwhile, Hasutaben Sedani argues that being composed in dialects and without known authorship, this literature is not a single person's creation. It is accumulated, and it belongs to everyone (99). Contrary to this, Hasu Yagnik argues that in the oral tradition, there is a part of the oral tradition of written literature. Sadhna, Yoga, and Bhakti are personal/subjective experiences. She suggests that we cannot add it to the folk elements. There are plenty of things that can touch folk's hearts, liked and enjoyed by them, like *bhakti pradhan, vairagya pradhan, and sadhana pradhan* and their authors are known and fixed (77).

Balvant Jani, in the first chapter of *Lokgurjari Vol. 18*, defines folk literature as chiefly emerging from the oral words of illiterate people, and it gets transmitted and circulated. It has verse and prose narrative, poetry, songs, drama, saying, and riddle forms like written literature. It has been composed by people from past or present. It has been composed of small or large groups of people; which has been orally transmitted and depends on the abilities and inabilities of the performer, which have been influenced by material, social, and many other effects (2). While describing characteristics, he notes that it is impersonal, authorless (*Aporushya*) literature and when emotion comes on the lips of the layman, when someone expresses his/herself, in that objective are more than the personal (5). As he suggests, other elements are straightforward, unsophisticated, fluid text related to narrating, listing and singing (6). Orthodoxy and traditionalism in the compositional structure and presentation are the fourth characteristic of folk literature, notes Jani—fluidity in version, preserved by the semi/professional performers is another aspect (7).

As Jani believes, the fundamental aim of folk literature was to apply literature with religious rituals in ever-changing oral traditions. (*Loksāhitya nū Mūlbhūt rite dhāramik kriyākāndyukta parivartānshil kanthya paramparāvalā prāyojyon sāhitya nu hatu*) Moreover, another primary purpose of folk literature is to relieve the tiredness of work and boredom. Moreover, this kind of literature is didactic in nature (8).

Folk and folklore or *lok and Lok Sahitya* are conceptualised as above discussed mostly in time, space, authorship and literacy, which may vary from region to region within a more significant political state. In America, folk and folklore are mostly contextualised in certain situations. In contrast, in England and other parts of Europe, it was based on the social structure of the class and the place. In India, it derived its motives from the West, but it has also been understood in the already available understandings of

social stratifications. Even *lok* in the Indian context has many deep layers of meanings. It has been imagined from mythical space to remote, civic to illiterate, etc. but caste did not cease to play a role in it.

Nonetheless, space or place has been a constant component in understanding folk and folklore. The space or place is sometimes defined by the folks residing there and the lore they perform. People also argue that the place or region folks reside in has always impacted the lore of those folks because of its geography, ecology, and civilisation that emerged from it. In this manner, folk(lore)-region dichotomy is undoubtedly a critical entry point to understanding the folk and lore in a better way. How does a folk enliven a region and vice versa in day-to-day life? People like Farhana Ibrahim, Benedict Anderson and Partha Chatterjee, as well as other geocritics, although in written text, variously unfold the making of state or region by the folks and also show how particular regions shape the understanding of the life of the folks. Nonetheless, the modern technologically advanced society has its own geography and ecology, and even economy, which cannot be neglected and even within this, the question of the folk literature and life continue to have their own significance.

Region

"[…] regions are far from fixed, enduring things, especially if any historical perspective is taken. They are not absolutes and they are difficult, if not impossible, to define by objective criteria' (Cohn 1967: 32) (qtd in Ibrahim Introduction 10)

The word 'region' is derived from a Latin word *region* means line, direct or action ("Region", Merriam Webster). The Oxford dictionary defines it a large area of land, usually without exact limits or borders; one of the areas that a country is divided into, that has its own customs and/or its own government ("Region, Oxford Learner's Dictionary). Where Cambridge Dictionary defines it as: a particular area or part of the world, or any of the large official areas into which a country is divided; an area of a country, especially one that has a particular characteristic or is known for something ("Region", Cambridge Dictionary). These definitions are inclined towards the physical or topographical landscape or appearance of the surface on the earth with clear demarcation of borders. They lack the social and cultural dimensions of the notion of region as well as they often consider region as out there.

Fredrik Söderbaum in "Rethinking Region and Regionalism" notes that: Historically the study of regions and regional integration has focused heavily on

sovereignty transfer and political unification within inter-state regional organizations…. Regions have usually been taken as pre-given, defined in advance of research, and seen as particular inter-state or policy-driven frameworks. (Söderbaum 10) In this essay he proposes an alternative, a societal, "understanding on regional spaces how they are created and for what reason" (11). He maintains that:

> From this perspective, there are no "natural" or "given" regions (or regional organizations), but these are made and unmade—intentionally or unintentionally, endogenously or exogenously–by collective human action and identity formation. In other words, regions are not structurally or exogenously given, but socially constructed by historically contingent interactions. Constructivists replace determinism with voluntarism and make room for cultural factors and the pooling or splitting of identities as determinants for action. (Söderbaum 10-11)

By social construct he means that "the socially constructed nature of regions implies that they are politically contested, and there are nearly always a multitude of strategies and ideas about a particular region which merge, mingle, and clash" (12). He believes that the process of regionalism can be examined in two ways: classical post-war commercial and security purpose and contemporary regionalism is a response to the globalization (17). He adds that contemporary approach reiterates the mistakes of previous and does not consider "fluidity and multitude" (17). Finally, he asserts that regions constructed socially and contested politically… "From this perspective, there are no "natural" regions; all regions are, at least potentially, heterogeneous with unclear territorial margins" (17).

E. W. Gilbert in a lecture "The Idea of the Region" suggests three ways of doing regionalism in nineteenth century: geographer, poet or novelist and political thinkers (159). Different maps and topographical material published in this era with the growing colonial affairs as well as study of region had gained momentum. Poets and novelist of England and Europe created range of fictional region or made resembling regions of their surroundings such as Wessex by Thomas Hardy among other. Later political thinker gave a new meaning to the idea of region.

Anssi Paasi on the process of construction of a region notes that "the idea of 'region as a social construct', which is nowadays almost axiomatic. Yet it is often unclear who or what it is that 'constructs' a region or what this means in practice. Does it refer to the process of constructing or to the products of such construction? (Hacking 1999). In social theory the basic prototype of social action includes four elements: actor, means, purpose, and context" (Heiskala 2296). He explores the "action/actor" to understand region and

how different actors construct the region. He also attempts to locate the construction of region in academic research.

Paasi bring forth three modalities that exist in the geographical research: region as a given, as a construct or end product of the research and, social practices/discourses (2297). He gives example of Marxist discourse which would focus on land accumulation in gain of wealth to construct a region (2297). Scholar of practice and power relation he believes:

It was individual and institutional practices/discourses that mediated agency and social structures. A region was an ``actively passive meeting place of social structure and human agency'' which is ``lived through, not in'' (Thrift, 1983), a historically contingent process (Pred, 1984), or a historical process of institutionalization where certain territorial, symbolic, and institutional shapes emerge in a division of labour (2298).

Paasi maintain that assuming homogeneity of region is not relevant here because it has been constructed by different actors in different settings (2298). Whereas the relational scholars believe that region is not a given entity but rather a "product of a particular combination and articulation of social relations stretched over space" (Allen et al, 1998, page 143) (2298). Based on this, Paasi delineates six ways in which the process of construction of region occurs: "firstly, there are many views on the agency related to the construction of regions; secondly a spatial entity becomes a region in a plethora of practices, discourses, relations, and connections; thirdly regions are performed and made meaningful; fourthly region building may be an intentional project for some actors, while for others it is something to oppose or something that is not at all meaningful. Fifthly, regions differ from each other in terms of history: there are 'old' historical processes and 'new' ad hoc units. Sixthly, borders should not be understood as factors defining regions, even though this is often implicit when regions are taken for granted" (2299).

The idea of region has been widely thought. Scholars from the humanities and social sciences have tried to define it in their respective disciplines, which provides a comprehensive understanding of the term. Scholars have pinpointed the theoretical problem around past studies on regions in relation to society and development.

Alexander B. Murphy says "The term region is used in various ways to denote spatial compartments of formal, functional or perceptual significance. It is thus often understood as an umbrella term that subsumes aspects of place and locale" (22). He asserts that "although there is no consensus as to the meaning of these terms, place is often

defined in scholarly literature as a local setting that derives its existence from the attachments that individuals develop to it" (Ralph, 22).

However, Murphy argues that "the importance of these terms is that they focus attention on local context. In what ways abstract conceptualisations of place, region, or locale relate to empirical investigations remains an open question" (qtd. in Gregs23).

Murphy believes that any concept study has to ground itself in a regional setting. It is a fundamental issue in this necessity of situating it. We can infer from the recent studies on region and society that they are social construct. "However, most empirical studies-including those that espouse a commitment to geographically informed social theory-continue to pose questions about developments in particular regions without exploring the nature and significance of the regions they choose for study" (24). Murphy argues that:

> The regional framework is presented essentially as a backdrop for a discussion of regional change, with little consideration given to why the region came to be a socially significant spatial unit in the first place, how the region is understood and viewed by its inhabitants, or how and why that understanding has changed over time. In short, the increasingly sophisticated theoretical discussion of regions has not produced an equally sophisticated account of regions. (Murphy 24)

He further adds that:

> The tendency to side-step consideration of the nature, scale and ideological significance of the regional frameworks that circumscribe empirical studies seems ironic since one of the hallmarks of the so-called new regional geography is its concern with the dynamics of regionalism (Pudup, 1988 380). They begin by asking questions about what is going on in a particular region, such as Brittany, the American South or Lancaster, without probing how and why that region acquired significance or the ideological and practical import of that process. Such an approach ignores vital aspects of the regionalisation process and its social significance. (Murphy 24)

Region and nation are imagined and counter-imagined. They are constructed and given meaning through the social act of people who live in there. But region and nation differ significantly from each other in various ways. The scale of measure the nation or region perhaps not useful to know the difference. A nation can have a number of region: geographical, social, economic or political and all of these are often invoked in academic and political milieu. To give a few examples of region within India would be the north-east, the Thar desert, Malabar as the geographical region. However, nation as an umbrella

term holds and enjoys power and rule over the regions that fall under its territory. This hold of nation on power often causes of the neglect of certain regions and therefore dissension from the region integrated to it.

On the relation between nation and region and methodology, Murphy notes that "by extension, the attachments of nationalist groups to particular regions are part of what defines their local contexts. However, remarkably, even the literature on nationalism often treats regions as little more than locational referents for particular peoples or groups (Knight, 1982). This provides stark evidence of the gap between our theoretical conceptualisation of regions and how regions are treated in case studies" (Knight 1982).

Murphy argues that "the nature, extent and character of the regions examined in our empirical studies must become a part of our conceptualisation of the social processes that take place in those regions. This, in turn, requires a social theory in which regional settings are not treated simply as abstractions or as a priori spatial givens but instead are seen as the results of social processes that reflect and shape particular ideas about how the world is or should be organised. Instead, in Urry's (1987: 437) words, regions and places are aspects of the spatial environment [that] are themselves humanly produced and humanly changeable" (4).

Both the ideas—folk and region vis-a-vis identity—historically shift their paradigms and are informed by socio-political surroundings. While taking region as an analytical episteme, this study draws its theoretical conceptualisation broadly from Farhana Ibrahim's *Settlers, Saints, and Sovereigns*. She argues that "a region is a subjectively experienced entity". As she notes that her study is "an ethnographic exploration into the political contexts of memory, the subjective experience of place and the socio-cultural production of a political border, this book examines how nation-states and the people within them construct meaningful narratives of place; how they at once establish and transgress the boundaries within which they can act as meaningful agents" (5). As the title of the book reveals it is an "ethnographic study of state formation". How is the state/sovereign being in play in forming pre/post-independence India, particularly in Kachchh and Gujarat?

She further argues that "the ethnographic vignettes within Kachchh reveal alternative notions of place-making, sovereignty and belonging" (5). Kachchh, as a being region unlike other regions in India, has been uniquely formed throughout its history, as sociologist Philip Andrew viewed the state as a historical construct (qtd in Ibrahim 7).

Ibrahim argues that "the analysis focuses on state-making and place-making, i.e. its subject's responses to the former, as inherently dialogical and processual. I also underscore that *both* processes are emergent and inherently unfinished (Ibrahim 8). She furthers this idea and states that "a region may be more productively thought of as an experiential category, i.e. subjectively experienced rather than objectively given (9)."

Ibrahim asserts that each competing experience of the region is also associated with its legitimising discourse (9). She argues that there are other idioms and history…that seek to establish Kachchh as constituting a distinct space from Gujarat (9). While referring to Cohn, she notes that:

> I refer not only to its geographical, political or legal referents. In an early essay, Bernard S. Cohn pointed out some of the complexities inherent in using the term 'region' or 'regionalism.' He argued that '[…] regions are far from fixed, enduring things, especially if any historical perspective is taken. They are not absolutes, and they are difficult, if not, impossible, to define by objective criteria' (Cohn 1967: 32). He proposed a typology of regions that, went beyond a physical sense of space: for Cohn, regions were best understood as historical, linguistic, cultural or structural. Inherent in each of these types is some subjective element that determines the coordinates of a region. (Ibrahim 10)

Ibrahim further puts forward the relation of the subjective experience of place and emphasises:

> instead of a fixed and immutable space, the meaning ascribed to place can morph and change depending on perspective, memory and experience. While this is not in itself a particularly problematic assertion, it is also clear that subjectively experienced aspects of territory, home or region, borne out of particular structures of experience and affect, must also inevitably contend with their political and legal counterparts that may look quite different on an objectified map. I would argue that a region is experienced rather than encountered a priori within these political and legal constraints. (10-11)

She adds, "What is required, therefore, is an unsettling of the fixity of 'region' in its political and legal referents, to engage the uncertainty and fluidity of the concept when viewed as a subjectively experienced category" (Ibrahim 10-11).

Another critical theorisation of space, or region, i.e. nation, is Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Community". He asserts that due to the rise of print technologies, a sense of nationalism in the European community mobilised through writings, which led to an

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imagination of space that, in the end, was named a nation. This imagination was literary in a sense, which involved written material. As Partha Chatterjee notes:

> Benedict Anderson demonstrated with much subtly and originality that nations were not the determinate products of given sociological conditions such as language or race or religion; they had been, in Europe and everywhere else in the world, imagined into existence. He described some major institutional forms through which this imagined community-acquired concrete shape, especially the institutions of what he so ingeniously called 'print capitalism'. He then argued that the historical experience of nationalism in Western Europe, the Americas, and Russia had supplied for all subsequent nationalisms a set of modular forms from which nationalist elites in Asia and Africa had chosen the ones they liked. (216-17)

Chatterjee objects to this and argues that what has been left for Asia and Africa to imagine is if they derive their module of nationalism from the West. He asserts that "the most powerful, as well as the most creative results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa, are posited not on an identity but rather on a *difference* with the 'modular' forms of the national society propagated by the modern West" (Chatterjee 218).

Chatterjee's intervention is significant in understanding the formation of states and claims of autonomy by regions within India. During the high nationalist era, as in Europe, a nation in India was imagined as a homogenous entity, although several hundred princely states did exist. Gujrat can be imagined, alternatively, as far as the history of Gujarati literature can be traced. The literary imaginations of Gujarat as a political entity remain restricted to central and north Gujarat, including Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat Anand, Kheda, Mahesana, Patan and some parts of Saurashtra. Most literary imaginations have excluded Kachchh, Kathiyavad, and the tribal belt (Ibrahim 32; Sheikh 28). Litterateurs like Narmadashankar Labhshankar Dave 'Narmad' and Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi are prominent figures who propound the concept of Gujarat. Narmad gave importance to Gujaratiness through language and culture, whereas Munshi focused on the significant historic places as a source of '*Gujaratni Asmiā*' (Pride/Glory of Gujarat) as he termed it. What is striking here is the exclusion, which may be unconscious of significant parts of what is now known as Gujarat (Ibrahim 19, 23).

These nationalist writers' attempts were indeed, in Chatterjee's terms, based on *difference.* However, I argue that these attempts to pose differences to Western modernity and rule to mobilise the masses for independence were exclusionary in the context of the area at present time we call Gujarat as they limited themselves to the monolingual

Gujarati-speaking area. In this way, a region that emerged from these imaginations was small in scale. Later, this linguistic model of state was employed in state formation in 1961. However, though Kachchh became a part of modern Gujarat state, it always remained distinct from the other parts of the state.

As the West had imagined nationalism, state and modernity for Asia and Africa, mainstream Gujarat has been imagining a region for Kachchh as being a part of it since the 1960s, as did Narmad and Munshi. However, Chatterjee's understanding of imagined community in Scotland and Kachchh's contexts is essential. He formulates how anti-colonial nationalism creates its own sovereign space, dividing social institutions into material and spiritual. England and mainstream Gujarat challengingly dominate the material in Scotland and Kachchh. Meanwhile, the spiritual, which is inner and related to cultural identity and region, is the entity through which one preserves his identity. It is through this domain that Scotland and Kachchh as regions claim their cultural autonomy being dominated by the other, i.e. material. It is this domain through which a sense of identity emerges in both regions. In this domain, they pose their uniqueness as being distinct socio-cultural regions.

A space that Chatterjee brings forth is certainly relevant or applicable to a region. A region, similar to a state or nation, is imagined by the people of that region. Although the imagination of a region is informed by 'the western modular', counter imaginings have been posed by the people for whom these imaginations are exclusionary. Scotland and Kachchh have been attempting for this: to assert their regional identity and cultural autonomy as overpowered by the Western modules and mainstream politics.

On one hand it is believed that region is a social construct through the action other believe that is given life through the imagination. In studies and understanding of the idea region West has dominated and thinkers such as Partha Chatterjee argued to develop a non-western understanding of it. In this act of paradigm shifting, particularly in India, caste as a pivotal base should not be left aside in the imagination and evaluation of the region. The next two chapters open these themes imagining the region and role of class/race in Scotland and caste in Kachchh/Gujarat. Folklore as a one the possible resource of the socio-cultural and topographical history best portrays the region and their cultural uniqueness. Setting out what is folk, *lok,* folklore and region it attempts to examine how these notions interact with each other and shape how they construct each other in context of the social systems of class/race and caste.

In this chapter, concept folk, folklore, folk literature. *Lok*, *lokshatiya* have been discussed at length in the context of Scotland, Great Britain and Kachchh, Gujarat and India. The Western and Indian/Gujarati debate about folklore is also discussed. The idea of region has also been discussed and I have argued that it is the folk and people through their day-to-day experiences who construct the idea of region. To conclude, the idea of the folk and folklore that emerged from the purview of the romantic and nationalist political atmosphere emerged from an attempt to find the original authentic life in midst of political and industrial changes that were taking place in the Europe. The successful "discovery" of folk in the Europe then equally led to the quest for the folk in the colonies of different European countries with the help of the native educated elites, but this quest was mainly tied to the question of administration. The coalition of both these dominant groups—the colonizers and the native elite—in the colonies created a discourse which was ideologically and politically loaded. The definitions and understanding of the folk and folklore in India were derived from the West and applied to a society with a different social structure, for example, caste. Caste, therefore, was often ignored in the conceptualization of folk and folklore in India, rather the category folk was positioned through a self-positioning deriving from class and race.

Region as a concept is also much debated and defined in the humanities and social sciences. However, as the characteristics of region are evolving and dynamic therefore objectively defining the concept of region is difficult. However, as Ibrahim has shown, region can be understood as a subjectively experienced category, and this perspective has not been given sufficient critical attention. This perspective allows me to argue that it is the people who reside in a particular region, who experience the region enable the region to be more alive and felt. However, the geographical aspect also plays a role in the understanding of region, through its presence in the field of the visible, as a landscape within a region. An attempt has been made in this chapter as well in the next three chapters to show how a region is imagined through folklore and particularly ballads of Scotland and the *lokgeet* of Kachchh, and how a dominant ideology and social structure informs the idea of folk and of region and the process of imagining itself.