

4. Folk Literature and the Articulation of Autonomy: The Case of Scotland and Kachchh, 1900 – 2023

Colonized countries were making moves towards independence from the British Empire from at least the early nineteenth century, and several countries from Asia and Africa succeeded in getting independence in the mid-twentieth century. Independent Asian and African colonies became nation-states. New boundaries and territories were marked out. Nevertheless, that could not actually bind people from diverse regions within these nation-states.

Scotland, as part of the British Empire, enjoyed the socio-political and economic gains of the British Empire overseas. Yet, in a critical way, Scotland, too, experienced state domination by the English. As I have shown in Chapter 2, it has, politically, been a part of the English Crown since 1606. No matter the differences in language, ethnic group, or culture, it was forced to unite with Great Britain by various political powers and historical forces. In this milieu, Scotland has always struggled to be ruled autonomously. Scotland had been asserting its autonomy since the fourteenth century, but it intensified this assertion after the two Unions of 1603 and 1707. These claims were powerfully restated in the nineteen twenties. Since then, Scotland has achieved considerable success in gaining some degree of autonomy from Great Britain. For example, it succeeded in establishing a separate parliament in nineteen ninety-eight. However, it has remained an integral part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

The history of claims of autonomy of the Scottish region can be classified into three different periods. In the case of Scotland, the first period was a War of Independence in the early fourteenth century. In feudal society, the warrior class fought for the protection of power and the feudal state. The second important phase of protest was the post-1707 Union Jacobite rising of 1745. Again, the people who defended their rule and state were from the feudal warrior class. The third, most significant in terms of modern nation-state politics, which is in focus here, started with the decline of the British Empire, post 1920, in spite of the fact that Scotland was a part of the British colonial enterprise. The nationalist ideals and sentiments emerged with the rise of the Scottish National Party, and the people, drawn from across classes, who uphold them are the chief claimants of Scottish autonomy since the 1950s.

Kachchh had been a princely state in colonial India, and, therefore, a part of the British Raj since the early nineteenth century. The princely state of Kachchh had fought

several wars on minor and major scales, in response to the attacks from neighbouring princely states. As the feudal kings of Kachchh had embraced subordination to the more powerful and bigger states from time to time until the twentieth century, there was no attempt at autonomous rule (Shah 8). Perhaps subordinated feudal chiefs and the members of the royal family quarreled around questions of autonomy within the larger Kachchh state.

In the twentieth century, people from Kachchh started participating in the Indian independence movement. Being a colony of the Raj, people in the era intensely mobilised for the great cause of freedom from the Raj. Until 1948, Kachchh was a part of the freedom movement for India, but post-1948 events sowed the seeds of the claims for autonomy of Kachchh as several conditions made by the political leaders to the last King of Kachchh during accession to the newly formed Indian state were not met. Therefore, the king and his allies demanded autonomy as they believed Kachchh was an autonomous state by itself. Similarly, Kachchh had been ruled by different dynasties and from different places, remote and close; natives and invaders too. Therefore, a significant array of claims for autonomy within the broad framework of the Indian nation-state have arisen after independence.

Although Scotland and Kachchh's claims for autonomy have different histories and different socio-political and cultural contexts, they emerged in similar socio-political conditions in the wake of the rise of modern nation-states across the globe. So this chapter, unpacking the history of the claims of autonomy by both the regions in the first section, locates the politics of claims for autonomy. It also attempts to locate the regions emerging from the assertions in the section.

The first section of this chapter explores the construction of a region and folklore. It then moves to the role of folklore in the claim of autonomy in Scotland. Similarly, the third section explores the case of Kachchh. The fourth section examines folklore, autonomy and the question of representation through a comparative study. This chapter, closely reading the ballads and *lokgeet* analysed here and in the previous chapter, argues that they are exclusive in nature and the regions they imagine, and the claims they make for their autonomy are limited to particular classes and groups. Based on the analysis of ballads and *lokgeet*, it further argues that the claims for the autonomous region in both contexts are exclusivist and deeply entrenched with a consciousness of class and caste in Scotland and Kachchh, respectively. In other words, the folklore that is used to invoke the past is selective and glorifies specific sources of *Asmitā*, putting it in Munshi's terms, it

significantly discounts the masses, which can be considered as folk, which goes against the basic understanding of the folk as well (Ibrahim 14). Even the identity given or constructed through the folk remains a reality only for a small portion of the region in both contexts. The role of British masculine colonial intervention in both regions cannot be ignored as well.

Constructing a Region and Folklore

Folklore and folklorists or folklore studies have a significant bearing in both Europe and Asia in the context of socio-political development. The whole enterprise of folklore and folkloristics emerged from the romantic notion of the rustic life and its character of living in the past in a heavily industrialising Europe of the mid-eighteenth century. This was heightened by the progressive control of the modern colonial empires of Europe over native sovereignties in Africa and Asia. The first reason that led to the rise of interest in folklore in the late eighteenth century was as a means to escape the unwanted realities of industrial society in the urban locales across Europe and to construct an idea of nation that drew from a golden past. The second reason for this rise was to provide a contrast to native oral culture of the colonies (barbaric, uncivilised) and the print culture of the colonizer (modern, civilised). These were the Western paradigms of looking at human civilisation in Europe and later in different colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, delivered by the colonial masters and upheld by the native allies for emerging political and social realities. Folklore in India gained currency from the early nineteenth century with the expansion of the British Empire. The collection and study of folklore in colonies like India has had two broad phases: colonial intervention and native response. The ideological paradigms of both phases are based on superiority.

Most importantly, folklore, in a broader sense in Europe and the former colonised countries, was a significant source of generating a consciousness to construct a nation from the scraps and antiquities of the past. This is often termed as nationalism or cultural nationalism. This means that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Europe emerged in a political situation in which the concept of nation-state developed. As David Hopkins notes, “The subject of folklore emerged alongside not only the political modernisation that flowed from the French Revolution, but the economic modernisation that flowed from the industrial revolution and the concomitant emergence of class societies, and one might have expected folklorists to have taken more explicit notice of this” (374).

In order to conceptualise a nation, one needs its constituent parts: citizens, culture, religion and polity. Where these can be found? A question that haunted and aided to hunt them. Romantics across Europe were, during this epoch of its history, diverted their attention from Classical morals and values to life in nature and purity. The processes of the emergence of the concept of the nation-state and romantic ideals of rustic life went hand in hand. The old decaying folk got inserted into citizenship within the state. Thus, as defined by German romantics and William Thomas, folklore became a site or source of material that could help (re)build a name. “Folklore often constituted one of the key elements of national identities, a distinguishing feature of a group of people which could be identified as a nation through their folkloric cultural practices, stories, traditions, dwellings, songs, music, costume, dialect, cuisine, etc.” (Baycroft and Hopkin 1).

Folklore in Scotland and Kachchh has played an essential role in archiving the past and helping them construct themselves as a cultural region distinct from their neighbours. However, it is essential to understand the politics behind these processes, in which who decides what, how, and when will be, appreciated for the value that they bring to the building of national character. To understand this more clearly, it is important to note what nationalism is.

Michael Keating writes, "Nationalism is a doctrine of self-determination; that much is agreed. However, the definition of the group which is entitled to self-determination and the conditions under which these demands are formulated is contested" (1). He believes that there are two types of nationalism: ethnic and civic (3). Ethnic nationalism holds that a nation comprises different ethnic groups to whom the nation provides rights, liberties, and duties (Keating 3). Ethnic ways of thinking in nation-building can take three forms: inclusion integrative, particularist, and special treatment of a group, *and disintegrative as an autonomous nation* (Keating 4-5).

Ethnic nationalism takes an ethnic group as a point of departure where a nation is pre-given or ascribed. It is also particularist in nature. In the second type, civic, as Keating notes, “It is a collective enterprise of its members but is rooted in individual assent rather than ascriptive identity” (5). In this kind of nationalism, members derive common values and identity from the different institutions. As this is not based on ethnic origin, anyone can be a member who may not derive identity from a myth of common ancestry, and thus, it is universal in nature (Keating 5-6). These forms interact and borrow ideas from each other as civic nationalism develops an ethnicity-based identity to further its aim. Ethnic nationalism uses the language of civic nationalism to “acquire international legitimacy”

(Keating 7-8). Keating further maintains that “then we can recognise that there are nationalisms which do not aim at the creation of states; we can also see nationalism as a phenomenon of continued importance as the classic nation-state gives way to new and more complex forms of political interdependence” (18).

Keating asserts that:

Nationalism is widely seen as a response to modernization... Modernization is usually identified with the breakdown of traditional social order based on ascriptive status, the dissolution of affective communities, the erosion of traditional authority structures... Nationalism is a new form of collective identity and capacity for action, replacing the old (2).

As Keating argues, ethnicity, nation, and state are different entities and interact with each other in the affairs of nationalism. All these categories are different, and it is not really required to be together in the contemporary political conditions proposing various forms of nationalism (3).

If we look at the case of Scotland and Kachchh, we find nationalisms that are a mixture of both ethnic and civic; however, their demand is different in nature. Moreover, in these demands, as Keating terms, responding to modernization brought about by their host state in cultural and political colonisation, Scotland and Kachchh/India bring their past to invoke their nationalism. In order to make their claims of autonomy, the regions needed a common source of an undivided population. David Atkinson demonstrates that “folklore was supposed to be the possession of an undivided people” (Hopkins 374). Both the regions, Scotland and Kachchh, therefore, were in search of such undivided people to lay claim to autonomy.

Scottish Independence and Role of Folklore

Scotland, as a region, sojourned with the cultural and politically powerful state of England. It has historically accepted the lordship of England. However, it did so whenever Scotland got a chance to make attempts for freedom. These attempts have become history and remained a site of popular memories in the Scots, who have not ceased to use it in the continuous struggle for independence to date in Scotland, the eighteenth and nineteenth-century revival has played a significant role in keeping the sites of popular memories alive in the form of anthologies of the folklore of Scotland inspired by their colleagues in Germany and other parts of Europe.

In his book *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History*, Hugh Trevor-Roper argues that Scotland was invented by its intellectuals who, through the popular memories, constructed Scotland. He even goes to the extent that “Indeed, I believe that the whole history of Scotland has been coloured by myth; and that myth, in Scotland, is never driven out by reality, or by reason, but lingers on until another myth has been discovered, or elaborated, to replace it” (xx). He believed that Scotland was invented drawing on three different aspects of its history: The political myth of the constitution of Scotland, the literary myth of ancient poetry, and the sartorial myth (xx). This process started from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century. When the union of 1603 came into being, Scotland as an independent nation lost its cultural and political identity again, which was supposedly achieved in the fourteenth century by winning several battles. The histories of the original inhabitants of Scotland were gathered in various volumes by John of Fordun and John Major. They made attempts to define Scotland and traced the genealogy of the word in order to establish the connection between contemporary Scotland and the establishment of the nation. The forty kings of Scotland, which are painted in the Holyrood parliament house, were used to invoke a king of the independent Scotland.

After the merger of parliaments with the Union of 1707, Scotland, in a way, gave up to the political invocation of Scotland as an independent country. As argued by Trevor-Roper, Scotland now turned to the literature. The Scottish and particularly Jacobite’s political quest was quashed in 1745-46. The Scottish writers and nationalists now turned to the ballads. This was infused by the similar movement in other European countries such as Germany and Finland. Trevor-Roper notes that:

It was the age of Rousseau, Herder, and the German poets of *Sturm und Drang*. In this new climate of opinion, the cult of sublimity and melancholy, hitherto satisfied with overgrown graveyards, ruined abbeys and deserted villages, found a new and more lively embodiment in primitive peoples crushed by the march of progress, and expressing their last prophetic message in high, tragic strains. (85)

As Keating suggested, the romantic turned to folk literature was a response to the coming of modernity and modernisation as well as the emerging political scenario. Scotland found its culture and people in the folklore, which was, as the collector of it often mentioned, fast decaying it is unguent to record them (4). This recording of the oral into written form took place in the long eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Collections and anthologies of the ballads and folksongs came out and established ballads and folksongs, a major genre of Scottish folklore and literature, which was the vehicle of

Scottish culture and identity. However, an ideological proposition can be traced in these collections.

As this process of textualisation begins with a recording of the oral performance into the written text, Pertti Anttonen argues that “it involves the practices and processes of representing orality in written form. The term thus refers to the ways in which oral performances and orally expressed utterances are transformed into literary representations of orality” (325). This transformation, she maintains, involves “to transform oral utterances into literary representations that are to be read, interpreted and analysed through reading, and by extension, to be preserved as textual documents that call for further reading as well as cultivation as specimens of cultural history and heritage” (325). The textualisation or literalisation of the Scottish ballads and folklore that took place in the span of two centuries in the form of the collected volumes and anthologies, and broadsides helped Scotland generate and keep alive the idea of an independent Scotland through the literary renditions preserved in the memories of the folks.

This antiquated’ “lore displays and generates power,” says Anttonen (328). The works of Robert Burns and Walter Scott, for example, had a continuous effect on the minds of the Scottish people regarding the history and identity of Scotland. The ballads and songs written and collected by Burns have come to be of national importance. Scott, with his *Minstrelsy* and novels, recreated Scotland and represented across the world. “By transforming tradition into heritage, and by metonymising tradition in the course of its representation, the study of oral traditions has created ‘national texts’ that are authored by the nationalistically conceived ‘folk’, who are heard to speak in the voice of ‘the nation’” notes Anttonen (325).

The revival was successful in voicing the nation in the tone of the ‘folks’. However, this did not cease to influence and generate power in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Since the nineteen-thirties, the cultural and political unrest began again, which was cultivated in the fifties and sixties. As a result, referendums and devolution took place. *The Rebel’s Ceilidh Songs Book*, for example, was published first in the nineteen-fifties, and later, two editions came up in the sixties. The ballads and songs which were published in this book were important in terms of the history, culture and identity of Scotland and the historical struggle of Scotland for independence. This collection again gave a new currency to the Scottish identity, which was backed up by the growing nationalistic politics of the Scottish National Party. However, as Anttonen notes, “their separation and consequent manipulation and appropriation are founded upon particular

means of making literary artefacts, the value and aesthetic qualities of which are historically specific and ideologically motivated” (325).

In this way, folklore has played a crucial role in the history of Scottish independence. It has remained a ready reference for the assertion of Scotland as an independent nation. Folklore, particularly ballads, brought alive the symbols of Scotland. The growing political and cultural pressure of culture and politics from English folklore sourced Scottish politics to the ‘people’ and discourse of legitimising the claim that Scotland was an independent country. Scotland invented a way to imagine the relationship between autonomy and tradition. A tradition of the folk who derive their ancestry from the forty kings, whose deeds are recorded in ballads and other lore, which help construct a national history appropriated by the national elites as the demand arises. As Timothy Baycroft argues, “folklore was often central to nationalist claims for legitimacy, derived from association with the ‘true’ people identified through folk culture” (5). However, whom to consider as a ‘true people’ and ‘true heritage’ of the nation remained a matter of social and political position, or to what extent the collector is vailing power. In the case of Scotland, class and race were the prominent factors that decided ‘the national heritage of the people’. Folklore, perhaps, has been crucial to define this as well.

The Case of Cultural Autonomy of Kachchh and the Role of Folklore

Kachchh, as a district of state and an integral part of Gujarat and India, struggles for quite different aims from the Scottish independence. However, folklore has a similar role to play in the context of Kachchh as well in the process of “nationalisms which do not aim at the creation of states” (Keating 18). As mentioned earlier, the history and historiography in Kachchh go hand in hand with the popular memories of the folks. Even the histories of Kachchh often start with mythical lineages of the rulers of Kachchh with Ram, Krishna or Moon.

The advent of the British Empire in Kachchh initiated the systematic collection of folklore in the early nineteenth century. These attempts were made by British officers and scholars who were guided by their native counterparts. These collections of folklore were not delimited to any genre at all. In the initial phase, for instance, Marrian Postans’ Cutch records customs and practices which are commonly followed around the royal court. The other reports and documents by the colonial officers are not directly concerned with the folklore directly. Postans, perhaps, wrote about the Charan or the bards and poetry prevalent during that time.

Ismail Bhachal's *Kachchhi Piroli*, (Riddles from Kachchh 1880), was the first attempt to collect riddles in the late nineteenth century. The collection and archive of the folklore of Kachchh gained momentum with the arrival of Duleray Karani, who was commissioned for it. Karani who came to known as a Meghani of Kachchh and has written more than sixty books. A few of them are his own compositions, but folklore was the chief subject he dealt with. Zohara Dholiya in the 1990s and Dinesh Joshi in the last decade have collected *lokgeet* in book-length volumes. Apart from these, audio recordings have come in the form of cassette tapes in the twentieth century, CD-DVDs in the first decades of the twenty-first century. NGOs such as Mahila Vikas Sangathan and Kala Varso and, recently, People's Archive of Rural India [PARI] have archived the *lokgeet* in audio-visual forms. Hamirji Ratnu Center for Folk Literature at Krantiguru Shyamji Krishna Verma Kachchh University also promotes the study of Kachchhi folklore and *charan* literature⁵⁸ of Kachchh.

Folklore activities in Kachchh and India began later than the European countries, and Kachchh and India, as colonies of the British Empire, informed the role of folklore in Kachchh. Thus, the folklore in Kachchh, similar to the other regions of the subcontinent, was collected and presented in quite unlike the Scottish revival. The folklore of Kachchh as a source has played three different roles in the history of Kachchh. First, it was a source of exotic information to the colonial masters in the nineteenth century. Whereas in the twentieth century, when natives like Karani had begun to build the archive, it was informed by the nationalist vigour with a romantic attitude similar to the eighteenth-century European revival. In later life, Karani's work transformed from a nationalistic resource to a body of work that could be used to assert the cultural autonomy of Kachchh.

In these phases, the folklore of Kachchh has helped Kachchh shape its character to allow it to be distinct from its neighbours. In doing so, it has brought several key issues that are directly connected with ethnic and civic nationalism. Perhaps it is politically ambiguous nationalism. Scotland had a single nationalist force against which it had to pose Scottish nationalism. Meanwhile, in Kachchh, a variety of cultural forces have

⁵⁸ Literature composed by a Charan or on Charan, their patrons and their god/goddesses and ruling caste mostly in the Dingal and Pingal script. Charan can be considered as a native counterpart of bard in Scotland and England. See for more detail: *Charano Ane Charani Sahitya by Zaverchand Meghani* 2021 [1943].

existed, some of which have run counter to the idea of Kachchh. Nonetheless, folklore comes to the rescue. However, the politics of appropriation of folklore has indeed made the nationalist approach of Kachchh to the folklore explicit.

Kachchh makes its case of distinctness against mainland Gujarat and the adjoining region Sindh, now in Pakistan. In so doing, it has tried to articulate the distinct character of Kachchh in terms of geography, ethnicity, language, religion, and sovereign state, at least since the sixteenth century. As mentioned earlier, the folklore of Kachchh, which was on the verge of extinction, was textualised as parts of memoirs and reports by the colonial officers. This practice helped the next generation to build upon it. It archived the ancient history and recent geography and changes it took in as a result of seismic activities and other calamities. This was the initial stage of information, which was often collected from the field experience as field notes. The documents refer to the earthquake of eighteen nineteen and the diversion of the flow of the Indus River and the creation of the *Allah bandh* or embankment created by Allah. They also refer to the desert between Kachchh and Sindh, which remains wet and muddy during monsoon season and winter.

The folklore of Kachchh, however diverse in nature, was selectively collected by the British and the later native counterparts. This, in a way, led it to remain court-centric, dominated by the Jadeja dynasty who ruled for more than four hundred years. As the different naming theories have derived only from Hindu mythology and which were later textualised by the early colonial writings on Kachchh.

Language, Kachchhi, has also played a major role in the identity of Kachchh. Karani, as has been considered a folklorist of the Kachchh language, has indeed collected folklore found in Kachchh, which was initially composed in Sindhi. It constitutes a considerable part of his entire collection. Kachchhi, as unintelligible to mainland Gujarat, has also posed Kachchh as a unique linguistics region. Post-merger into the Gujarat state census surveys considered Kachchhi as a part of Gujarati. This is also a contesting factor of the identity of Kachchh. The colonial writings have considered the Kachchhi language closer to Sindh than Gujarati.

Another factor that the folklore of Kachchh, with connections of politics and culture to Gujarat and Sindh, brought the question of sovereignty. It poses a new arena of experiences that Farhana Ibrahim brought forth in her analysis of *Asmitā* as she argues that the experiences of the people living at the border being narrated through poetry and other symbolic use of things in daily life offer different views of the border and making

of the border. Folklore of Kachchh also portrays the places of *Asmitā*, which gives a sense of the geography and the territories of Kachchh.

Most importantly, folklore of Kachchh that has been collected from popular memories is told by and centred on the upper caste and often on a person from the royal family. As the histories of Kachchh are sourced from the mythical and folk narrative narrated by the commissioned bards and Charan, they eulogised the upper castes and the kings. Just as the lineage of the forty kings of Scotland was used to be narrated in the special occasions and enthronement, similarly the deeds of the ancestor of the kings were narrated with making connections of the kings with the lineage. The roots of the Jadeja dynasty also goes to Mod and Mannai, the son and ancestor of the dynasty. As the political elite always decide what would be remembered represented as national history. So the folklore, which is present as the folklore of Kachchh, seldom portrays people other than popular personalities. If it does so, it does not give the biographical identity of the people and as a folk as defined in the remote past away from the urban and modern life. The tourism industry has added a new dimension to the identity and understanding of folk and folk.

The folklore and craft of the northern Kachchh, for example, have been advertised and promoted at the global level but the identities of communities represented are silenced together as being portrayed as the folks of Kachchh. The lower castes— Meghvars, Rabirs, Ahir and Muslim minorities—who are the major constituents of the folklore of the Kachchh, are presented as authentic Kachchh. However, the folk art and craft they present are a product of mutual cultural and social exchanges between Kachchh and Sindh, which are historically connected to each other.

Folklore Kachchh at different points in history provided a new vigour to the nationalistic ideas for the autonomy of Kachchh. As opposed to Scottish nationalism, Kachchh put forward nationalism, which demanded its distinct status within the union of India. First in nineteen forty-eight and later in nineteen-sixty when the princely state of Kachchh had merged with the union of India and Gujarat state. The demand for a special status thereon remained at the forefront of the politics of Kachchh, of which folklore and history stating its uniqueness was invoked, appropriated as a merger of ethnic and civic nationalism, however, which veiled caste privileges.

Therefore, folklore in both regions sourced the social, cultural, and political identity which fed the nationalist quest for autonomy. What Scottish and Kachchhi identities are today are comprised of the factors which have been sourced by folk through popular

memories in the form of folklore. Thus, as in the romantic terms, folklore rescued ‘the folks’ from the antiquities of both regions, and they will continue to do so as and until they are invoked as national heritage and resource for antiquities and authenticity of the culture and society. However, it is not so ancient in the case of Kachchh. Folklore and nationalism, therefore, are mutually and dialogically dependent on each other. Folklore paved the way for nationalist ideas and perspectives, and in return, nationalism as a movement kept folklore relevant, no matter its ancient origin.

Scotland: Assertion of Identity and Claims for Autonomy

The medieval feudal society of Europe, particularly the U.K., had transformed as the socio-political scenario across the globe started changing in the late fifteenth century. The development from colonialism to industrialism and then to the modern nation-state brought various political conditions in which people from different parts of the world started asserting their identity and political autonomy. There are three major phases of the Scottish struggle for independence: the fourteenth century, beginning; the unions of sixteenth hundred three and seventeen hundred seven; and the breaking of the Empire in the mid-twentieth century.

The roots of Scottish independence can be traced to the War of Independence started in the late thirteenth century. Nevertheless, the feudal and warrior classes attempted to defend and rule the nation. Although these wars were against the British army, internal feuds also cannot be dodged. The ultimate goal was to keep their rule intact over certain parts of the land. The ballads that we have on the battles, i.e. Bannockburn, Sterling Bridge, etc., narrate to us how the warriors must have fought for the cause of the nation or a kingdom. However, the idea of a nation did not appear to exist in its modern form in the fourteenth century.

The Scottish have been fighting to keep the nation and rule intact. Robert de Bruce and John Balliol, among others, led the struggle against the usurpation of the throne, which also led them to the treaty of the Scottish and French alliance known as the ‘Auld Alliance’. After the death of David I, Robert I of Scotland took control of it. During his time, the Declaration of Arbroath 1328 was sent to the Pope to accept their kingdom and allow the king to be anointed as a Christian king. This was granted by the Pope in 1329.

The Declaration of Arbroath is a significant document as it claims for the recognition of Scotland as a kingdom, which is indeed also an indication that it did not exist as a kingdom or a nation there before, therefore, it required recognition. It can also

be considered as a systematic assertion or claim of Scotland as a Christian kingdom as the ‘Auld Enemy’, i.e., England had not recognised William Wallace’s Victory of 1297 at Sterling. The claim was based on the response to it, as they declared that we would not accept the English crown at any rate.

In the next two centuries, the Union 1603 and 1707 were the major events in the independence struggle among the latter had generated considerable unrest in Scotland, particularly in the wake of ongoing feuds since the last two decades of the previous century, known as Jacobite rising. In support of the divine rule and Edward Stuart as a rightful king in the wake of the kingdom, his grandfather, James VI and II, lost in the 1688s Glorious Revolution. Though the Scottish troops lost miserably, it had a lasting effect on the Scottish mind.

The third important period began with the shattering of the Empire. The unrest that began in the early twentieth century resulted in collective resistance and struggles for cultural and political autonomy in colonies and in the U.K. itself. One of the significant events was the establishment of the Scottish National Party in 1934, merging two different parties from one constituency, which later won elections in 1945 and 1967.

As James Foley and Pete Ramand note, “Just as Thatcher’s policies had produced devolution, so Blair’s transformation of Labour produced 2014” (13). Growing unrest reached its peak when Margret Thatcher introduced several laws, one of which was particularly discriminatory to the Scottish. Earlier, the Referendum of 1979 was held for the devolution of the parliament and power from London to Edinburgh but did not result in favour of Scotland. Alternatively, Scotland could not have generated strong support for transference. However, Scotland, no longer cowed by decades of Tory rule, was asserting its independence from Labour, recoiling from three parliaments of domestic failures and foreign policy horrors.

Foley and Ramand assert that “a Yes vote is more than a protest against the injustices of UK capitalism. It can be the first step towards a better society, one that sets precedents of social and environmental justice, rather than dehumanising its citizens in a race to the bottom” (22).

The September 1997 referendum was a huge success in terms of the Scottish motives are concerned. In the two-part referendum, more than seventy percent of Scots voted for the devolution of parliament. This led to a diluted parliament, which was established in 1999. The momentum that the Scottish National Party gained led to a significant change. Alex Salmond was selected as First Minister of Scotland, being a

leader of the SNP, which was growing as one of the major parties in Scotland led by the native Scottish people. It had won 47 seats out of 129 seats in 2007. In 2009, Alex Salmond announced a holding referendum on Scottish independence on the ‘White Papers’ as Scotland’s Future: “Your Scotland, Your Voice”.

In the 2011 election, the Scottish National Party won with a clear majority. Before holding a referendum, the first minister wanted to make the Scotland Bill sound and strong enough at the London parliament. After two years of debate and discussion, Scotland managed to hold a referendum for independence in 2014. The campaign for it began earlier, though. The Election Commission was the sole authority to look after the fair process of referendum. The question that Scotland initially proposed for the referendum was later rephrased as “Should Scotland be an Independent country?”. The Answer was divided into two: Yes or No. The Yes represented the Scottish side for independence, and the No represented the Unionists or those who wanted to remain in the UK.

The Campaigns for voting by both sides started as early as 2012. With mutual allegations of unfair practices, the voting for it was held on 18th September 2023. However, the highest turnout for voting in the referendum resulted in 55.3% No and 44.7 Yes votes, with a clear majority of No or Better Together. The No or Better Together campaign argued that:

“Scotland’s path would be less clear. By itself, voting Yes offers no guarantees of a better, more progressive future, never mind a radical redistribution of wealth and power. Scotland would face creating a new state under hostile circumstances after decades where states have eroded expectations about national citizenship. The right to free education, universal healthcare, and support for the disabled, unemployed, and pensioners are no longer guaranteed.” (Foley and Ramand 14)

Since two-thousand fourteen, politics in the United Kingdom has witnessed several political upheavals. In the latest election, Labour has won a mandate to govern after three consecutive conservative government failures. Most strikingly, the Scottish National Party has lost its thirty-nine seats compared to the last general election in 2019.

Ballads and the Case of Scottish Autonomy

Ballads, as a major genre in Scottish folklore, have been monumental in representing the Scottish identity. More than that, Scottish ballads have remained vital as they narrate the historical events that have been pivotal in the history of Scottish independence. Some of the ballads are long enough to be more than one ballad narrating

different versions or events connected to a single major event, the Battle of Bannockburn, for instance.

The Scottish revival gave space not only to the historical ballads based on true events but romantic and other miscellaneous themed ballads as well. The historical ballads, however, did not lose their importance in the due course of the history of Scotland as a nation. These ballads narrate the life and affairs of the popular personalities of Scotland and its neighbouring countries. This section comprises an analysis of these ballads in the context of Scottish independence and claims for autonomy. These ballads are selected on the basis of their representation of the Scottish past and their historical importance as a site of memory of the event in the history of Scottish independence.

The death of Margaret I, granddaughter of Alexander III of Scotland, vacated the crown of Scotland as she was heirless. John Balliol was crowned as King of Scotland in the hope that Scotland would accept the overlordship of England, which Balliol did not accept, and he instead allied with France, an enemy of England. They sowed the seeds of the wars of Scottish independence of which the Battle at Stirling, Bannockburn, and Otterburn took place. These battles were won considerably by Scottish troops and helped make Scotland an independent nation.

The ballads of Scotland that were collected are a source for invoking Scotland as an ancient and independent nation. The ballad “Sterling Bridge” opens with the claim and establishing Scotland as an ancient realm to which the English army has come. It narrates the speech of William Wallace, who, as a leader of the battle, motivates with the invocation of the ancient rights to be a nation and invites the soldiers to save them with their swords on the name of their forefathers.

To Scotland's ancient realm, proud England's armies came, /.../

By the name our fathers gave her, our steel shall drink the crimson stream,/

"We'll all her ancient rights redeem; Our own broad swords shall save her !"

(https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/stirling_brig.htm)

The last stanza, “Have fought for right against England's might and cast your chains away”, justifies their act of battling with English might for the right, and the narrator further says that ‘the Scotsmen’ shall do the same.

The ballads and folksongs commemorating the Battle of Bannockburn of thirteen fourteen are of the major importance as they narrate the battle and the victory of Scotland over England which had helped Scotland establish itself as an independent nation, no matter for a short while. These ballads are also a link between the existence of Scotland

as an independent nation in the past, which was achieved again. It also brings down a narrative of the hero of Scotland. It has been mentioned in the histories of English literature as an anonymous epic, which probably became a base for the ballads composed in later.⁵⁹ Different versions of it have been recorded in the anthologies of the Scottish ballads from Percy to Motherland and Scott and Childe.

However, another important battle was won by the Scottish force at the Sterling Bridge in 1297, led by William Wallace. Robert Burns's "Scots Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Ble" is another song of the modern era which not only reminds the battles for independence but the heroes who had fought the battles. In this popular composition, Burns playfully yokes the historical past and invitation to his contemporary Scots. The song also brings those nationalist ideals and sentiments that were prevalent at the time of Burn. He states that Scotland had been led by the swards of leaders like William Wallace and Robert Bruce now it is time to fight for the nation and to be free away from slavery and chains.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!

(https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/stirling_brig.htm)

Burns writes that for Scotland, its kings and law, we will draw the sword and no matter whether we will stand as freemen or fall as a freeman, we will not allow the oppressor to make our sons slaves and tie them in chains for that we will fight till the death but we will face the foe. For the sake of liberty, let us do or die.

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',

⁵⁹ See, for more detail, Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature*. Supernove publication, 2019; Long, William J. *English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*. Maple Press, 2012. Carter, Ronald and John Mcrae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English: Britain and Ireland*. Routledge. 2021.

Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!

By your sons in servile chains!

We will drain our dearest veins,

But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!

Tyrants fall in every foe!

Liberty's in every blow!—

Let us do or die!

(Burns, "Scots, wha hae" *Poetry Foundation*

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43813/scots-wha-hae>)

The song, therefore, presents the strong will of the Scots in the post-Jacobite era. Burns had never aligned with the idea of union, and he called the Scottish unionists "parcels of roughs." Burn, therefore, invokes the warriors and the heroes of the battles in the nineteenth century, which was the age of revival. Hundreds of ballads and folksongs were brought into written form in the anthologies or re-creation. This song also re-creates the historical moments in the struggle for independence and, in a way, textualised it as a historical source. Therefore, this song is representative of the two epochs of the history of Scottish independence: the age Wallace and Bruce, the late thirteenth and fourteenth century and age of revival eighteenth century.

The ballad "Chevy Chase" or "Battle of Otterbourn" narrates the raids of James, Earl of Douglas. The Scots won the battle, but Douglas died.

It fell about the Lanmas tide,
When the muir-men win their hay,
The dough ty Douglas bound him to ride
Into England to drive prey.
"My wound is deep, I fain would sleep"
"Yake thou the vanguard of the three,
"And hide me by the braken bush,
"That grows on yonder Illye lee.

This deed was done at the Otterbourne,
About the breaking of the day;

Earl Douglas was buried at the braken bush,

Moreover, the Percy led captive away.

([https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/battle of Otterburn.htm](https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/battle_of_Otterburn.htm))

This battle was fought in 1388 at Otterbourne in the night. Sir Walter Scott wrote: “James, Earl of Douglas, with his brother the Earl of Murray, invaded Northumberland at the head of 3000 men, while the Earle of Fife and Strathern, sons of the King of Scotland, ravaged the Western Borders of England, with a still more numerous army. Douglas penetrated as far as Newcastle, where the renowned Hotspur (Percy) lay in garrison” (qtd. in Folkways Records 4).

The song “Wee Magic Stan” also reminds the two major events and the Scottish and English relationship. As the song narrates, the Stone of Scone or Stone of Destiny upon which the Scottish kings were enthroned was usurped by Edward I. The stone was later stolen from Westminster Abbey in the 1950s. The song commemorates both the event in a satirical way. It is attributed to John McEvoy. It is a part of *The Rebel’s Ceilidh Songs Book*. It signifies the English usurpation and Scottish recovery. The stone used for the coronation throne also symbolises the power that went into the hands of the English, and the Scots anyhow want it back. The character of Dean hints towards the English forgery with the help of some Scottish who were in favour of personal gains.

Noo the Stane had great pow'rs that could dae such a thing
And without it, it seemed, we'd be wantin' a King, (6-7)

So if ever you come on a Stane wi' a ring,
Jist sit yersel doon and proclaim yersel King,
Fur there's nane wud be able to challege yir claim,
That you'd croont yersel King on the Destiny Stane.
With a too ra li oor ra' li oor a li ay. (45-50)

([https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/wee magic stan.htm](https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/wee_magic_stan.htm))

“Coronation Coronach” is supposedly composed on the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Humorously, the song ties the coronations of both Queens Elizabeth I and II. The Gaelic word coronach means funeral song. The ballad ironically points out that Scotland has a king now. However, Scotland had not the first “Liz” or Elizabeth ever as a monarch, how can it have second.

O, Scotland hesna got a King,
And hesna got a Queen.
For ye canny hae the saicint Liz
When the first yin's never been.

(https://electricscotland.com/culture/songbook/coronation_coronach.htm)

The ballad further mocks on the monarch Queen and her husband. The narrator asserts that we do not need any Elizabeth. We do not want a Greek man, the Duke of Edinburgh. We will make our land a republic with the Scottish breakaway. The last stanza of the ballad invokes the Scottish symbol of the Rampant lion. The rampant lion is used emblem in the Banner of Kings of Scots. The ballad, therefore, suggests that Scotland, as the rampant lion, is strong and active in fighting the enemy. It also signifies goodbye to the English monarch and England. The Banner, however, has no fixed date of origin but is found on the flag and seal of Scotland. Probably its first use by King Alexander III in the thirteenth century, it has been a crucial symbol for Scotland's bravery, pride and independence.

Sae here's tae the Lion, the bonny Rampant Lion,
An a lang stretch tae its paw,
Gie a Hampden Roar, an' we're oot the door:
- An ta-ta, ti Chairlie's maw.

(https://electricscotland.com/culture/songbook/coronation_coronach.htm)

The other songs, such as “Flowers of Scotland”, “Freedom Come You All”, and “Liberty”, are popular in the independence struggle. The “Flowers of Scotland”, attributed to Roy Williamson, is often considered a national song in the games and sporting events. The song uses flowers as a symbol of Scotland. The Thistle is a national flower and has been used as a symbol for Scotland for several centuries. However, Williamson metaphorically invokes the people who fought and sacrificed for Scotland. It addresses them waking up again to make Scotland free again.

Oh Flower of Scotland
When will we see your like again
That fought and died for your own wee hill and glen
And stood against them - proud Edward's armies
And sent them homeward to think again.

(https://electricscotland.com/culture/songbook/flowers_of_Scotland.htm)

In the last stanza of the song, the narrator expresses hope that no matter what Scotland's people have gone through, who had fought and sent the army of Edward home, Scotland can still rise and stand against the Crown and send them home to think again. This song is also a continuation of the pattern of invoking the past and its link to the present. The song expresses the anti-Edward and British sentiments. The song was composed in the nineteen-sixties when the political disagreements in Scotland were brought out.

Those days are past now
And in the past they must remain.
But we can still rise now and be the nation again
That stood against them - proud Edward's armies
And sent them homeward to think again.

(<https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/flowers> of Scotland.htm)

The "Liberty" is a song that recalls the glorious history of Scotland as an independent nation, from St. Andrew to Wallace and Bruce. It narrates patriotic sentiments. Optimistically, the song recounts the past, invoking people like St. Andrew, William Wallace, and Robert Bruce. Through their effort and inspiration and for them, we will win our liberty. It is a call to fight and win the liberty. The narrator asks to call the falcon, lion soldier, and troops to fight and win back their liberty.

By the cross that Andrew bore,
By the sword that William wore,
By the crown our Robert swore,
We'll win our liberty.

(<https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/liberty> .htm)

The next stanza mentions the traitors who were sold by the English gold whose reference Robert Burns made in his poems. The song playfully invokes historical figures like St. Andrew and Wallace and the people who live on the border of Liddesdale and Annandale, as well as the national symbols of Scotland. The previous stanza mentions falcon and lion, whereas in the second stanza, gold, treachery, etc.

By the man whose faith was old,
By the man they sold for gold,
By the man, they'll never hold,
We'll win our liberty.

(<https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/liberty.htm>)

The last stanza, again invoking the trio of St. Andrew, Wallace, and Bruce, exclaims that for them, we have to fight and win our liberty, and the narrator says that if we follow them in their directed path, we will surely win the liberty. The next stanza portrays Scotland as a land full of young soldiers whose shields were shining, and their swords were always ready for the battles. We will win our liberty, says the narrator. With blessed man whose faith we hold, whose chains the enemy sold, and man, the king, we will win our liberty.

By the field that once was green,
By the shield of silver sheen,
By the swords in battle keen,
We'll win our liberty.

Bless the man whose faith we hold,
Bless the man in chains they sold,
Bless the man in cloth of gold,
We'll win our liberty.

(<https://electricScotland.com/culture/songbook/liberty.htm>)

The song connects the faith, courage and hope to win the liberty of Scotland from the English monarchy. It has historical significance in the sense that four stanzas narrate the history of Scotland as an independent nation and how it was sold for English gold. The song then calls to come together to fight to win the lost liberty.

The Scottish ballads and folksong collected and composed during the eighteenth century and nineteenth century commonly project Scotland as an independent nation, directly or indirectly. These collected volumes, however, arrested the fluidity of the text to some extent, but they made them available to the world wherever the British Empire held its colonies. More than that, it projected Scotland as a nation not only in foreign lands but within Great Britain and Europe. It helps Scotland to keep the idea of independent Scotland and autonomy alive.

The ballads and songs published in *The Rebel's Ceilidh Songs Book* in the fifties and other compositions of the songs which ultimately become national or folk songs portrayed and represented the historical pride and inspiration invoking the popular personalities and the events in the due course of history of struggle for independence. The significance of it has not lessened in the twenty-first century at all. As Scotland has made

an attempt at autonomy, constitutionally, the folklore, ballads and folksongs have not ceased to be important.

Lokgeet and Cultural autonomy of Kachchh

Lokgeet of Kachchh are in abundance and in a variety of genres. However, few of them have remained a monumental source of social and cultural identity down the ages. Unlike Scottish ballads, very few attempts have been made to collect the *lokgeet* of Kachchh in the last two centuries. It was Karani who made efforts to get them recorded with other Gujarati folklorists. Since the last decade of the twentieth century, recording of *lokgeet* in the form of digital cassettes and CDs, DVDs and online archives kept alive the older *lokgeet* with new vigor.

These songs are often sung and performed at schools, colleges, and public events. The songs deemed to be considered as *lokgeet* are often recreated in public and private concerts within Kachchh and worldwide. “Munji Matrubhumi Ke Naman” or Salute to Motherland is the most popular and often sung and played on the occasion of celebrating Kachchh. As the song was written in the era of the Indian freedom struggle, it portrays patriotism and nationalistic sentiments invoking the popular personalities and places of Kachchh.

Kachchhi asaanja kod minja kulbhaan kari tan man,

Mooji matrubhoomi ke naman!

We (Kachchhi) sacrifice with affection, our body and desire,

Salute to my motherland.

(Karani; Gor and Pethani 251)

The song sings the sagas of the people who have sacrificed and played a crucial role in shaping the history and state of Kachchh in the past. The second and third stanzas are about the historical maritime relationship of Kachchh with the other countries of different continents. It suggests the maritime possibilities of Kachchh. As it is often argued that a separate Kachchh would not be able to survive without enough revenue, scholars like Jayant Khatri and even the last tutelary head of Kachchh Pragmal III reiterated what the song sang (Maheta et al. 9-44).

“*Hi Kachchhdejo Pani*” or “The Water of Kachchh”, or “The Spirit of Kachchh”, similar to the previous song, counts the people and places of importance in the history of Kachchh and who still matter Kachchh as a distinct region. The first couplet of it narrates the story of Kachchh, its bravery, its language, who are all known to the world for their

glorious past. In this way, it establishes a different position of the Kachchh being a state linguist who has been known in the world by its own unique identity.

*Kachchhdo vanko kachchhi vanka, jag mein jenje jash jadanka,
Vanki kachchh vatanji vani, i panje kachchhde jo paani!*

Kachchh is brave, Kachchhis are brave, whose glory is known to the world
Bold is the Kachchhi language, that's the spirit of Kachchh!

(Karani; Gor and Pethani 450)

The song then recollects the deeds of Lakho Phulani, Jagadusha, the Sumaris and Abado against the Allah-ud-Din, the incident of Vrajvani, the attack of Gulamshah, Buland Shah and Fatehmohamd Notiyar, and Shymajikrushna Verma, Jethibai and Vir Kabali before Indian independence. These people played an important role in the history of the Kachchh battle, as well as in philanthropy, education, and the independence movement. It also mentioned the invaders, such as King Edward I, in Scottish ballads, such as Gulam Shah, Buland Shah, and Raj or the British Empire as they have incited believed that incited consciousness to fight as well the incidents connected with them had helped shape Kachchh in a different way. As the song chronicles the people and places, it becomes crucial in the sense that it weaves some of the major historical events.

“Gajiyo” is also one of the popular *lokgeet* as well most ambiguous to decipher the word ‘Gajiyo’. The song is usually attributed to and understood as a song that describes cement block, and the narrator expresses her difficulty working simultaneously, having worn ornaments such as Kambhiyu, Kadiyu, Varlo, etc. The ballad brings forth the cultural aspect of one of the communities of Kachchh with the use of names of the ornaments worn in Kachchh.

Apart from the historical *lokgeet* which are in a way chronicles of the major event and incidents of the past in the history of Kachchh, there are other *lokgeet* based on the social and cultural life and the ecology of Kachchh. Kunjal or Demoiselle cranes is a migratory bird that nests in wetland. It seasonally migrates to Kachchh in, mostly in the winter. As it is a foreign bird, the *lokgeet* of Kachchh uses it as a metaphor for a girl who is married off in a foreign land. Several *lokgeet* can be found on the kunjal. One of them is published in an archive Songs of the Rann: archive of Kutchi folk songs. The song runs into five couplets. The first and last are couplets:

*Kunjal na maar veera kunjal na maar, hi kunjal vedhi dariya paar
Kadala re ghaday de veera kadala ghaday de,*

kabhiye je jod te kunj ke veeray Kunjal na maar
veera kunj na maar, hi kunj vedhi dariya paar
Kunjal na maar veera kunj na maar, hi kunj vedhi dariya paar

Do not kill the kunj. Oh please, don't! The kunj will go across the seas

Make me a couple of kadalas, please, a pair of anklets for my feet,

Do not kill the kunj. Oh please, don't! The kunj will go across the seas.

Do not kill the kunj. Oh please, don't! The kunj will go across the seas

[trans. Pratishta Pandya, Songs of the Rann: archive of Kutchi folk songs
(<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/a-pair-of-kunjal-birds/>)

“Sudala Pakhi” “Kare oonare sudla pakhi gheli gujarat” is a song that weaves stories about relation of Kachchh and Gujarat, seasons and the green parrot with demands for ornaments by a lady. The song narrates the seasonal changes that occur in the ecology of Kachchh. The refrain, *Kachchhdo Bare Mass*, evergreen Kachchh, suggest the active weather throughout the year. Gujarat remains sprung and bloomed in the summer, but Kachchh remains the same for twelve months. The song is in the Gujarati language. Therefore, it can also refer to Kachchh's social and cultural relations with Gujarat.

In the days of merciless summer
green parrots enchant Gujarat.
They feast through the season,
mango, java plum, and sweet fruits of rayan,
green parrot of evergreen Kutch.

[trans. Pratishta Pandya, Songs of the Rann: archive of Kutchi folk songs
(<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/a-pair-of-kunjal-birds/>)

Odho Jam and Hothal Padhamani are the epitome of Kachchh's identity within Kachchh and in Gujarat. Odho, who was a person of the warrior caste, was exiled for his supposed love affair with his elder brother's wife. On his journey, he met Hothal, who was planning to take the pending revenge of his father on the king of Sindh. As Karani wrote, when they were on the journey, they halted at Chakasar Lake for some time when Odho realised that the handsome man in disguise as Hothi was actually a young lady Hothal; he fell in love at first sight with her. Later they married and the song narrates people celebrate their marriage and welcomed them. The song is about how would they welcome the couple.

Both of them are popular in the present time, as Odho remembers Ashadhi bij, the second day of the lunar month, which is the new year of Kachchh and the start of the monsoon. The version here is also a part of Songs of the Rann: archive of Kutchi folk songs, however, the translation is *lokgeet* shows grief then sorrow, but it remains on the lips of people. The narrator tells the couple that it will give them space to stay, like a palace and good food. It represents the welcoming nature of Kachchh and its people.

Chakasar

Chakasar ji paar mathe dholida dhroosake (2)

E phuladen phoroon chhadeyo odhajam hajasar hoobake (2)

Utaara desoon orada padmani (2)

E desoon tane mediena mol... Odhajam.

Chakasar ji paar mathe dholida dhroosake

At the shores of Chakasar Lake drummers mourn,
they weep (2)

Flowers have deserted their smells so sweet,
and the lake wells up like Odho Jam's grief. (2)
We'll give you spacious rooms to stay, Padamani (2)
We'll give you palaces with many storeys steep.

[trans. Pratishta Pandya, Songs of the Rann: archive of Kutchi folk songs
(<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/a-pair-of-kunj-al-birds/>)

Hamirsar Lake is also a concurrent place in the *lokgeet* of Kachchh. Located in the capital city Bhuj, several *lokgeets* are composed mentioning it. It narrates the story of lover for whom a lady is waiting at the lake. The song ends with a grief note that the lover is killed which could be an honour killing. As the inter-caste and inter-faith love and marriage have been prohibited in the typical Kachchh and India society the killing of the lover could be read as a caste instigated act.

She waits by the waters of Hamisar Lake; Hamli waits.
Climbing on the embankment, she waits for her love, Hamiriyo.

Oh! the boy is not here, not yet.

He is caught at the gate, killed at the crossroads.

[trans. Pratishta Pandya, Songs of the Rann: archive of Kutchi folk songs
(<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/a-pair-of-kunj-al-birds/>)

“Mitho Panje Kachchhde Jo Pani” or “Sweet waters of Kutch” collected in the same archive refers to the hospitality of Kachchh. Because of that, goddesses Ashapura and Hajipir reside. Water, as scarce available in Kachchh, repeatedly referred often directly or metaphorically. It has been considered as a source of bravery and valour and a different spirit. However, being bordered by deserts and ocean drinkable water has been an issue. It therefore, ironically often mentioned as sweet water or as a symbol of rarity.

Sweet waters of Kutch. Oh! sweet waters of Kutch
People so loving and warm. Oh! sweet waters of Kutch
A dargah of Hajipir, with its flying green signs.
Sweet, sweet are waters of Kutch
In the village Madh, Ma Ashapura’s shrine.

[trans. Pratishtha Pandya, Songs of the Rann: archive of Kutchi folk songs]

(<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/a-pair-of-kunj-al-birds/>)

Lokgeet, as a form to express feelings and emotion in literary style, captures the life of the folks from which the songs emerge. The *lokgeet*, which are analysed in this chapter as well as in the previous chapter, captures the image of its people, geography, history and culture of Kachchh. The symbolic use of birds and things also makes the picture more integrated. However, with a close look at the *lokgeet* we can undoubtedly find that the *lokgeet*, which have become an epitome of the identity of Kachchh in lyrics, are complete of deep-seated prejudices and assumptions. Those *lokgeet* which are based on history or portray the historical past are centered on the Kshatriya caste and warriors from the same community. Those *lokgeet* which are based on the longings and desires are women centric and their pains are personified in asymmetrical ways. Thus, I argue that the *lokgeet* of Kachchh, which is presented and represented as an identity of Kachchh, are exclusive in manner and offers a limited social, cultural, political and religious landscape of Kachchh as a region.

Folklore, Autonomy and the Question of Representation: A Comparison

This section examines the themes and subject matter portrayed and appropriated through ballads and *lokgeet* in the claim for cultural and political autonomy and question of representation. In so doing, it argues that folklore, in general, and ballads and *lokgeet*, in particular, are majorly based on the themes of war and battles, court and royal personalities, historical events centred around the ruler, Nationalism, Patriotism, Symbols, Sites of Popular Memories, History. Thus, they are exclusive in nature and

region imagined, and claims made for their autonomy would be limited to them and often misleading.

One of the crucial aspects of the ballad and *lokgeet* is textualisation. Scottish Ballads are textualised in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In contrast, the textualisation of *lokgeet* has happened in slow motion and is less in number. Nonetheless, this process has made the historical past available to the folks of both regions. As David Atkinson puts “The folk and folklore serve as a common consensus as is folklore practised by them, however anonymous. Moreover, this practice of publishing ballads as anonymous literature squared well with the desire to present them as the representative, collective productions of a nation or people, rather than as the personal efforts of an identified individual” (278).

This helps the political elites to use it as a powerful tool to assert the identity of a region or nation. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, in their *Invented Traditions*, described “in this way first of all in the book of that title edited by, are those elements of culture which acquire ‘national’ symbolic meaning through the action of political elites who consciously try to further their own interests through the further development of national identity among a population which identifies itself with the tradition” (qtd. in Baycroft 3). Based on the popular imagery easily available, anonymised, and published as a source of past and authentic coming from the people of a past and national treasure. This appropriation gave legitimacy to the discourse that is being generated around the nation and nationalism.

The process of inventing a nation or a region takes serious effort, and the political ideology underneath can be apparent. This process involves archives in different forms, and in Scotland and Kachchh, it took the form of textualisation as well as visualisation. It involves various people finalising and, in between the texts, achieving new meaning and signification. Therefore, “In nation-state contexts, the textualisation of oral tradition tends to become an issue of selecting and authorising national heritage, contextualising it with the production of nationalist modernity”, writes Anttonen (326).

The ballad and *lokgeet* analysed above present the symbols of national importance, for instance, lion, thistle, mountains, birds, and the places. “Folklore often constituted one of the key elements of national identities, a distinguishing feature of a group of people which could be identified as a nation through their folkloric cultural practices, stories, traditions, dwellings, songs, music, costume, dialect, cuisine, etc.” (Baycroft 1). The

ballads and *lokgeet* represent these factors in the context of Scotland and Kachchh to distinguish them from their neighbours.

Since the late eighteenth century in Scotland and early twentieth century in Kachchh, nationalistic consciousness has emerged. At that time, in the context of Kachchh, it was pointed towards the British Empire. Nevertheless, Post 1950s a different kind of political awakening emerged in both the regions. As the ballads and songs published in *The Rebel's Ceilidh Songs Book* suggest, one can assume that the people of Scotland had different opinions in terms of the political autonomy of Scotland. Even the later song recordings suggest the same as the songs on the themes of autonomy and nationalism were composed and published.

In Kachchh, the movement of political and cultural autonomy gained post-1955 merger of Kachchh in the Bombay state. When Kachchh, as history suggests, lost its status as a special territory, which the then leader of India promised. Later, its merger with Gujarat as a linguistic state made it more intense, which did not really take a more significant shape up till now as a mass movement (Khatri, *Alag Kachchh Rajya*, Separate State of Kachchh). Contrary to this, in Scotland, the devolution parliament was a peak of the nationalist politics in Great Britain. This movement reemerged from the last part of the first decade of the twenty-first century, which led to two referendums on independence and Britain's existence from the European Union. In mean time folklore do not stopped remind the people of both the region the distinctive identity and nationalist claim for the autonomy.

Anttonen argues that the process becomes an issue in terms of what to select as national or regional sources of identity. It always goes with the ideological inclination of the political elites; in the case of Scotland are the proud Scotsmen who are often mentioned in the collected ballads and the upper-caste personalities in the case of Kachchh. Here, the question also arises of how a song becomes a national song or song of a nation or motherland. In the case of Scotland, "Flowers of Scotland" has become the national anthem and is used and sung as a song of Scotland. In the context of Kachchh, "Salute to My Motherland" has been given the status of song of state or motherland, homeland. Two factors are essential in this process: the theme and people and place it represents, and the social position of the people who call both the song as a song of nation or state. The second factor, as often the author of the folk is anonymised, remains unknown to the folks.

At this point it is also essential to pay attention to what is actually then represented? Race and Caste of superior rank. A close reading of the ballads can bring forth that the personalities that are being referred to are from the royal families or aristocrats and noble class. For instance, St. Andrew, William Wallace and Robert Bruce are often portrayed in the ballads or the ballads became significant in relation to their invoked.

Similarly, in the case of Kachchh, the *lokgeet* presents the personalities of the upper caste and warrior castes, excluding the major part of the society. The battle at Zara had caused the life of the youth of Kachchh in significant numbers. However, the *lokgeet* on the battle exclusively focus on the Jadejas, disregarding the people of other castes as well as faith who fought and died. The *lokgeet* on Jam Abado and his battle of Vadasar against Allah-ud-Din do not mention Orasiyo, who had sacrificed in the same battle before him.

Contours of Scottish Cultural Nationalism

Foley and Ramand have aptly pointed toward the racial discourse of British nationalism. They write, “British rule and nationalism have been a pompous narrative of an aristocracy of Empire, with a right to rule the world, linger in Westminster discourse” (23). It was English nationalism that underscored the fact that the British and Scottish soldiers were instrumental in and a vehicle of it. This has even continued today in disguise. In this context, nationalisms within Britain need to be examined as British nationalism revolves around the life of the royal family and the proud display of it, which is centred on the theme of racial superiority (Foley and Ramand 23). By examining Scottish and British nationalism, a few contrasts should be clear. “Both can involve mythologised references to traditions, national bonds, and kinship” (Foley and Ramand 23).

In contrast, Scottish nationalism in the last quarter of the twentieth century was more or less a critique of the English version of British nationalism amplified with racial superiority and to rule the world, and autonomy and freedom were their chief aim. Alex Salmond, in response, put forth the Scottish racial identity, and he said, ““With Wallace – head and heart – the one word that encapsulates all our hopes – freedom, freedom, freedom!”” (qtd. in Foley and Ramand 23). “Both can involve mythologised references to traditions, national bonds, and kinship”, notes Foley and Ramand (23). The racial and civilisational spirit also comes from the colonies of the Empire. Therefore, the British aim more than a nation and “they wish to comport themselves as a Civilisation” (Foley and Ramand 23).

Social and political movements for Scottish autonomy go hand in hand but with several complexities, as Scotland has been greatly shaped and informed by being a part of the Empire and its exploits, “Scots played a practical role in the British Empire, as soldiers, settlers, churchmen, traders, financiers, and slave owners. An ‘absurdly high proportion’ of Empire administrators were Scottish” (Foley and Ramand 24). Scotland’s participation in these affairs also made its institutions available to the colonies. “The Church of Scotland, that most definitive institution, sprawls across the globe thanks to missionary colonialists.” (Foley and Ramand 24).

The Pre-Referendum survey and the Referendums, although with narrow margins, pointed towards something that always remains a matter of concern in the autonomy of Scotland, i.e. centuries of cross-cultural interaction or communication. Scotland has centuries long political and cultural relation with England. These connections have also shaped Scotland under the affairs of the British Empire. Foley and Ramand note, "Scottish identity has increased in recent decades, but its roots are often very shallow. Pre-union Scottish legends, those ancient memories of Wallace and Bruce, make little practical impact on consciousness” (24). The result of the referendum they will not be affected by the *how Scottish you feel* (Foley and Ramand 24).

As said earlier Scotland is as much made with Britain as much outside. Richard Zoomkhavala-Cook, in his book *Scotland as We Know It*, analyses the representation of popular Scotland outside Scotland and Britain and its role in Scottish independence movements. He begins by saying that:

“Once I started looking, it did not take long to discover that a host of competing popular representations of Scottish national, ethnic, and cultural identity was not only in abundance in Scotland, as one might expect, but in the United States, Canada and throughout the Anglophone white-settler nations of the world”. (Zoomkhavala-Cook 2)

He pointedly invokes his positionality as an academician of Americo-Scottish descent. He notes that he was continuously asked whether he is Scottish or he has any relation with Scotland while doing fieldwork for this study. He notes that “it illustrates the power of origins and identity to assert interpretive authority over culture and history as if my analysis would be more legitimate if I had some definable biological ties to Scotland. (Zoomkhavala-Cook 2)

The texts of ballads and *lokgeet* in Scotland and Kachchh Zoomkhavala-Cook asserts are productions that have the presence of Scotland and Kachchh as regions in a

poetical and ideological sense. He “focuses on the nation’s presence as a poetic and ideological process in the production of texts” (Zoomkhavala-Cook 3). Class and caste are the chief ideological systems that are pivotal in both the region and their presence in the ballads and *lokgeet* and claims for cultural autonomy. The claims for the cultural autonomy of both regions from nineteen-twenty to twenty-twenty-four are highly loaded with ideologies of class and caste; therefore, studying it in this sense also leads us to a clearer picture. “In the case of Scotland and its attendant forms of “Scottishness,” the case is clear in the United States and elsewhere that Britain’s history and its imperial culture continue to influence how identities are imagined” (Zoomkhavala-Cook 3).

He argues that “Scottish culture exists only in its relation to other national and regional cultures, especially in being shaped from sites far outside of the land’s territorial boundaries” (Zoomkhavala-Cook 3). He sees the nation that emerges as not singular and homogenous but as a multiple Scotland that exists and is represented by the Anglophone settler countries in his terms. He argues that “for my analysis of nation, the trick is not finding out what is “really” there, but to discover how the different “theres” are ideologically constructed and enabled in competing for institutional and political legitimacy as their effects are felt on an everyday basis. Scotland is indeed there, but as this book shows, it takes more than a few figures to point to it (Zoomkhavala-Cook 3).

As part of British endeavours, Scotland and Scottish culture have provided a fertile land for British nationalism to cover the Scottish one with modernity and forwardness. With imperial overpower, Britain also subdued the Scottish culture as it did in colonies across the globe the way the Orient was conceived and conceptualised by the Occident. As Zoomkhavala-Cook notes, Scotland and Scottish culture has been “represented repeatedly as a culturally backward, but unadulterated ancient land of Europe, agrarian Scotland, and its Highlands have served as an imaginative reserve for responding to contemporary anxieties about modernity, Empire, social change” (5).

He analyses film, literary pieces, and popular culture, which consist of various traditional practices. He argues that “Portrayals of Scotland, by Scots and non-Scots alike, in modern literature, film, and popular culture have been, and continue to be, rife with popular exotic images of a harmonious pre-modern national culture” (5). He further asserts that Scotland’s cultural reality seems to exist only when it is consumed, produced, and reproduced from elsewhere” (7).

He develops a novel conceptualization of what he calls ‘national home’. He attempts to locate the relation and interaction of popular representation of Scotland and

its national home. The national home is a space defined by material boundaries, which are emotional and physical. It gives a feel of being at home. Echoing the eighteenth-century romantic thinkers, he argues that “National homes therefore recall our earliest memories of the collective self wherein social identities are formed and preserved both by their seemingly permanent access to the self’s origins and the ongoing maintenance of their limits—or by what they are *not*” (9).

The comfort zones are home to Scottish national identity and are situated almost globally, thanks to industrialisation. The emergence and shifting social divisions in Britain and the entire of Europe made the national homes possible. A class that emerged from the industrial advancements opened up new opportunities for the popularisation of something that is old but not so old and similar but not so strikingly different. Zoomkhavala-cook argues that “since the nineteenth century, the prevailing version of the Scottish national home has taken the form of a middle-class domesticated space as the point of origin from which national identity, private property, and economy seem organically to emerge” (9).

As the ‘imagined communities’, the national homes arose from the effect. Benedict Anderson sees it emerging from print capital and culture. The effect that arouses from the popular phenomenon in the given society is always limited as Zoomkhawala-Cook argues, “However, in national homes, affect functions as an ideological instrument to cloak, ossify, and enforce social inequalities” (10).

Zoomkhawala-Cook adds a layer, implying gender is central to Scottish identity. Masculine, in culture and literature across the globe, has been given importance. One obvious reason could be that males are always allowed to act as their will by males. This made their achievements and honour available, which females cannot think of. Histories, folklore, and literature, therefore, are full of male affairs, although for several reasons. Zoomkhawala-Cook argues that “the changes and uncertainties of modern Scottish identity and its self-representation frequently revolve around negotiations of national manhood as means for garnering individual, cultural, and collective power” (11).

The appropriation of the past, as it had been unequal in every possible way, does not form contemporary life subtly unequivocal. Drawing from the discourse that is masculine in manners and temperament, popular representation of Scotland in and out of Scotland remains the same. The class division of British and Scottish society proved fertile for gender and class veneration. As he notes, “These narrative and images of return and departure are presented as national feelings and cultural belonging, but serve in

shifting ways a series of persuasive but often unacknowledged, justifications for male privilege” (12).

The nostalgic reference to the proud past, as Zoomkhawala-Cook notes, has a momentous effect on the Scottish and Kachchh’s assertions of identity and claims for autonomy. Scotland is shaped and reshaped by the imaginations outside Scotland, similar is the case of Kachchh. The idea of Kachchh and Kachchhiness since its encounter with colonial rule is substantially informed by and from outside of it as within it. Modern Gujarat, both a princely and democratic state, has imagined Kachchh, along with India, being abiding glue as a nation. This, in turn, influenced the movements and struggles for cultural autonomy in both the regions, Scotland and Kachchh, at least since 1920. As Zoomkhawala-Cook notes on the relationship between self and nostalgia, he writes that: “The cultural function of this nostalgia is thus not only to reveal contemporary fantasies about social life in Britain and North America but to address the changing modes of defining the self in relation to historical and present communities” (27).

Scotland, as a part of the British Empire and therefore its racialised history, derives identity from the past, which is highly racial and prejudiced. It once focused on the modern free self, and it derives gist from history and develops affective connections with the society which shares the history and cultural practices. As he analyses, the Scottish self is confused between its connection and disconnection. These practices he maintains:

Together, they problematically propose a cultural subject that is at once connected and disconnected, a depoliticized identity that can privately celebrate the “best” of a culture while ignoring subordinating social divisions and struggles for solidarity against institutional power that are deeply embedded in its public practices”. (Zoomkhawala-Cook 27)

The history of the Scottish proposition for freedom since 1920 includes crucial events that made its way clearer and possible. However, some of them turned reversed and adverse as well. The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922 paved the way for a Free Irish State. However, the northern part of it remains a part of the United Kingdom. This treaty proved to be an inspiration for Scotland in the first quarter of the twentieth century. This was followed by the foundation of the Scottish National Party in 1934, which was a merger of two different parties started in 1928. Since then, it has been a major political collective or party that proposed the devaluation of the UK's parliament. This proposal bore fruit in 1998. The events took place in the 1950s over ‘stealing’, as Scotland claims, of Stone of Destiny, is fueled by Anglo Scottish antagonism. The return of the Stone of Destiny to

Scotland is also symbolic in terms of Scottish independence from the UK. This was the time of the counter-revolution of colonies of the British Empire in Asia and Africa. The affairs of the Empire were slowly shutting down. (Reuters)

Throughout this period of a hundred years, assertions of Scottish identity became stronger than ever and gradually achieved thrust from the different sources of identity. The Scottish laid claim to resolve the old and the new problems that emerged from the historical unions and mergers of Scotland and England. The old problems were related to the kingdom and state and, therefore, political in nature. However, new complications arose within and outside of the UK as Scotland was colonised and colonised.

Scotland proclaims the autonomy of parliament and an independent economy, education, and church, which it has controlled at least within the nation since 1707. Ben Jackson, in his seminal essay “The Political Thought of Scottish Nationalism”, explores and explains approaches of Scotland and trends of its nationalism. In this article, Ben Jackson suggests two major things: the aim of Scottish nationalism is not to conserve the decaying Scottish culture and character but the neo-left and liberal central politics with labour socialist democracy to assert hold on the key institutions. This is, he argues, difficult to maintain simultaneously. He claims that “Scottish nationalism as we know it today began to take shape only in the 1960s and 1970s and achieved its present ideological maturity in the course of the 1980s and 1990s” (1). It was not an attempt to save the decaying culture but a promotion of left oriented politics to achieve power. He proclaims that it was not fear of losing antique cultural heritage under the British hegemony but liberal social democratic corporatism that was at loci. In the face of the neoliberal restructuring of the British economy that emanated from London, Scottish nationalists interpreted growing opposition to the Conservative party in Scotland as expressive of a deep political divergence that could only be resolved by the creation of a new Scottish state” (Jackson 1).

Jackson believed that however if, the independent Scotland, will retain the British institution monarchy and finance it will be under the domino of London. Similarly, the pursuit of a social democratic Scotland would be inhibited by leaving control of monetary policy, and significant elements of fiscal policy, in London.” (7)

Kachchh, Culture and Assertion of Identity

In his study of history, Edward Simpson notes that the demand for discovering new Kachchh emerged after the earthquake destroyed the sources of the *asmitā* of Kachchh (Simpson 69; Farhana 14). Several monuments, major sources of popular history and Kachchh identity, were destroyed in the earthquake. Re-habitation and relocation of the major cities and towns of Kachchh have been done with the focus on the reconstruction of the *asmitā*.

There is a two-fold argument: firstly, Kachchh was deprived of an equal share of the development of the state, so it was doing poorly socioeconomically and emerged like a phoenix. Secondly, if it had very limited resources, how did it emerge as one of the developing districts?

However, the *District Human Development Report 2016: Kachchh*, with the framework of Human Development, compares the 2004 Human Development Report by the Government of Gujarat. The report notes that, however, Kachchh “ranked 17th in human development index with 0.399 value out of 25 districts. In terms of Human Development Measure (HDM-1) ranked 18th in the state with a 0.382 index value. Kachchh ranked 1st in income but ranked 23rd in education with 0.247 and 0.556 index values, respectively (UNDP 23).

There have been several initiatives taken by the state government to mitigate the disparity at economic, educational, cultural, and healthcare levels. Special Economic Zone, developing ports, and the tourism industry have certainly been highly effective in the economy and human development. However, some policies resulted otherwise, arousing mixed feelings about them. Under the Education for All policy, several schools opened up, but a shortage of teachers led to the merger of schools. The tourism industry witnessed a major shift after the Desert Festival started, which attracted people from across the globe. It brought questions of culture.

There are three major strands in which Kachchh has been proposing and asserting its socio-cultural uniqueness to Gujarat: Culture(s) and Language, Education and Language, Literary imagination and identity. To begin with, the culture of Kachchh has always been conceived as a homogenous one, which is not the case. The popular culture of Kachchh, which Gujarat, India, and the Globe know, is often a time that merges pluralities of caste, religion, and ethnicity in a homogenous singular. As in the case of Scotland, imagined and contracted outside Scotland, Kachchh is conceived similarly by Gujarat and across the globe. What makes it heterogeneous is the settlement of

communities of different ethnicities. However, just the existence of the decedents does not make it so, but the living traditions that have still been practised.

There are striking differences between the city/town and rural culture. Caste and class are the most obvious bases that make it possible. Nevertheless, there is always an amalgamation of the buildings of former kings and folk music and songs that were never part of courtly culture. Most of the urban settled Kachchhi people always feel amused listening to the songs and music or even visiting people of the village in their crud lifestyle, if one would say in comparison with their urban middle-class lifestyle highly influenced by the mainland Gujarati language and culture. Even most of the Brahmin communities migrated either from mainland Gujarat or other parts of India and are therefore unaware and new to the village life of Kachchh. However, their agency as a custodian of the culture of Kachchh, being near the Court of Kachchh and British officers, is striking in making Kachchh what it is popularly known. In most cases, Kachchh is represented by everyday life in villages rather than in towns and cities.

Unlike this position of urban Kachchh, rural Kachchh is made up of lower castes and religious minority groups and castes. The east and west of the North (Dholavira to Lakhpat) are densely populated with people of lower castes and religious minority groups, and castes that are mostly represented in popular culture. In terms of Gopal Guru (2001), in Kachchh, there is a system of theoretical urban upper-caste and middle-class and rural empirical folk and lower caste. In urban theoretical imaginations, Kachchh is represented by them and outsiders. The everyday experience of the urban and rural Kachchh is strikingly different.

On this front, several changes have occurred following the development of modern technology and music systems. *Lokgeet* and folksongs that were otherwise anthologised were recorded in the form of CDs, DVDs, and other digital forms. As a result, the longest spread enormously to a broader audience within Kachchh and out as well. This digital repertoire helped generate a sense of uniform identity. However, they portray popular people and places, things, and activities, often leading to stereotypes. However, the music and songs that are played and sung make a case for a unique assemblage of the identity of Kachchh within and outside of Kachchh, ethno-musically.

The next is language and lifestyle. Attempts have been made to develop a scripture for Kachchhi and standardise it as a language, but the influence of Gujarat as much as of Sindhi made it somewhat impossible. Dinesh Dosi divides seven parts of Kachchh based on the tone and accent of the Kachchhi spoken in these regions. However, the accent of

the Northern part is always considered alien and new to the centre of Kachchh and often amusing.

The significant language based case of constructing Kachchhi's identity was made by Narayan Joshi from Nakhatrana. He developed two levels of the Kachchhi language proficiency test: *Jaan* and *Sujaan* (Beginner and Advanced, Joshi 1-2). Joshi, writing in the Kachchhi language, found the true root and source of identity in the language, and he stressed it. His efforts were praised by the conferring civilian award Padmashree to him by the Government of India for his contribution to the Kachchhi language.

Another argument from the case of language-based identity construction is based on the medium of instruction. Since Kachchh joined the state of Gujarat and even before that, Gujarati was the chief language of instruction and internal administration. Several thinkers claim that the medium of instruction shapes the minds of tender-age students. They are being a speaker of Kachchhi as a mother-tongue leads to a crisis of identity in the classroom while Gujarati text is taught to Kachchhi-speaking students (Widdowson). Narayan Joshi tried to bridge this gap by preparing two levels of exams for teachers and students (Joshi 1-2).

The third space that emerged as a medium is literary works. Since the establishment of Kachchhi Sahitya Akademy as a constituent part of Gujarat Sahitya Akademy, several books on various themes have been published in the Kachchhi language (सूचिपत्र [catalogue] 28). With this, literary circles have also been established by the writers with the support of NGOs, private firms, and the government. Kachchhi Sahitya Mandal is a literary circle that organizes book talks and publishes books. It has also started a magazine. However, the authors are mostly located in the urban area, offering a view and imagining Kachchh from the upper-caste world view.

Other than these sociocultural, educational, and linguistic fronts, several NGOs have been working on archiving and encouraging different crafts and arts. Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangathan, Soorvani, Kalavarso, as well as Aakashvani Bhuj and Kutchmitra daily newspaper, have been instrumental in a wide spread of folklore and literature and contributed to the construction of cultural identity from the relics of past particular post-2001 (Soorvani⁶⁰; *KalaVarso*⁶¹; *Kutchmitra*⁶²).

⁶⁰ See for more detail, Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangathan website, <https://kmvs.org.in/soorvani/>

⁶¹ See for more detail, KalaVarso website, <https://kalavarso.org/>

⁶² See for more detail, Kachchhmitra website, <https://kutchmitradaily.com/>

Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangthan, an NGO devoted to women's development, also contributed to achieving folklore not only from the centre but most of the corners of Kachchh. It has created a wide variety of archival materials that are significant for understanding life beyond the city and urban centres (KMVS). The NGO website expresses a sense of loss:

Despite the region's strong musical tradition, Kutchi folk music has been in decline for a variety of reasons. The partition of India in 1947 split the Sindhi community across national boundaries, threatening that culture's sustainability. The decreasing demand for traditional folk music among Kutchi audiences has, in turn, marginalised many musicians. Lacking an interested audience, many musicians are forced to turn to other work in order to sustain themselves and their families. For many, this means leaving the music tradition behind altogether, as the time required to earn enough for basic living expenses prevents them from performing or teaching the music to a younger generation. (*Soorvani*, KMVS)

Kala Varso is another NGO that has brought out the finest collection of Kachchh folklore from the artists of Dholavira to Lakhapat. Additionally, it is an artist-run NGO devoted to inherited arts, as the name suggests. Some of its artists are national award winners and have performed across the globe (KalaVarso).

Organisations like the Living and Learning Design Centre and Craft Museum in Azarakhpur and Khamir in Kutch promote cultural identity through various crafts, particularly handicrafts.⁶³ For a few years, LLDC also organises the Winter Folk Festival. However, these private organisations are focused on the market and trends in world fashion, and they try to attract people all over the globe. What, in turn, becomes significant is the construction of material/cultural identity through various crafts and arts found in Kachchh, some native to it, and some migrated with the communities. However, the

⁶³ The Living and Learning Design Centre (LLDC) is a pioneering effort of the Shrujan Trust to preserve, revitalize, and promote the glorious craft heritage of Kutch. The sprawling LLDC complex, located in Ajrakhpur, Kutch, houses an international-standard crafts museum that has received wide appreciation from visitors all over the world. *The Living Embroideries of Kutch*, an on-going show at the museum, celebrates the rich and diverse embroideries of Kutch. For more detail: <https://shrujanlldc.org/>

Khamir is a platform for the crafts, heritage and cultural ecology of the Kachchh region of Gujarat. Instituted after the earthquake of 2001, it is a space for engagement and development of Kachchh's rich creative industries. For more detail: <https://www.khamir.org/>

dominance of the popular notion of identity cannot be ignored. Nonetheless, these NGOs are successful in the reconstruction and projection of Kachchh's material cultural identity at national and international levels.

As in the case of Kachchh, it is not a claim for full autonomy as a nation but may be a separate state that shapes case and claim, most often pro-state. Kachchh's claim for autonomy always came from the ex-kings or the titular heads and the upper-caste strata, with a growing sense of injustice done to Kachchh by the state. This, in turn, makes it more complex in character. Most often, it becomes contradictory and limited: the identity that has been created is based on the folklore that can be found far away from the court, and the city area becomes the major source of identity. Caste matters at its best when imagining a region like Kachchh with a multitude of pluralities.

Kachchh's political identity has been majoritarian, often disregarding religious and caste minorities, although they are practitioners of most of the various folk arts and crafts. Therefore, the pluralities of culture and life in Kachchh should be thought through in order to get a sense of the multitude of identities of Kachchh; this, in turn, would make the case of Kachchh more inclusive and stronger.

To conclude, the claims of autonomy in both regions, are connected with various realities and arrangements of power within and outside the region, and these claims are located in social, cultural and political ideologies. Social structures of division in both regions are also crucial in the making meaning of the folklore and the nationalist views read into them to assert the distinct socio-cultural identity while making the case for autonomy. With close analysis of the ballads and *lokgeet*, I have argued that in Scotland, class and race, and caste in Kachchh have remained fundamental identitarian undercurrents that are structural to folklore. The socio-cultural identity that has been derived from it through the invention of tradition as a tool to propose a nationalist view for autonomy inflect from the politics of class, race, and caste in both the regions, obscuring the hegemonic dominance of identity presented and represented through folklore.