

Storied Spaces in the Folk Narratives of Jhaverchand Meghani

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ABSTRACT

Folk tales serve as mirrors of the cultures and people that originate and pass them on. As a result, they include a diverse array of human concepts and emotions. (Dundes, 1969). Folk narratives, characterized as succinct oral transmissions handed down through generations since time immemorial, function as poignant reflections of societal customs, cultural intricacies, heritage, emotional expressions, belief systems and critical appraisals. This extensive corpus of folk narratives encompasses diverse genres, such as folklores, folktales, fables, fairy tales, myths and legends. Embedded within the tapestry of folk literature is a profound exploration of linguistic potency. Beyond merely providing solace to restless spirits, it assumes the role of a societal mirror, substantiating cultural values within their historical milieu. The trajectory of Indian folk literature unfolds through a kaleidoscope of thematic richness, conceptual diversity and nuanced literary frameworks. The subcontinent's linguistic plurality and receptiveness to assimilate the salient attributes of any language or culture underscore the enduring significance of folk literature, persisting amidst the variations and differences inherent to the Indian socio-cultural landscape.

This study, titled “Storied Spaces in the Folk Narratives of Jhaverchand Meghani,” offers a nuanced and meticulous exploration of Jhaverchand Meghani’s trilogy *A Noble Heritage*, *The Shade Crimson*, and *A Ruby Shattered*, specifically focusing on the identification and analysis of the storied spaces in the narrative settings. The book titled *Saurashtra Ni Rasdhar* have profoundly influenced the upbringing of an entire generation in Gujarat during the Gandhian era. These narratives encapsulate

enduring and universally recognized values, with male and female protagonists, even the most modest among them, expending considerable efforts to fortify and enrich life on multifaceted forefronts. A profound reverence is bestowed upon songs embodying the quintessence of Gujarat's folk literature, wherein the continual embellishment of their arduous struggle for survival unfolds amidst dusty and challenging landscapes. The folk narratives intricately weave indigenous caste names and characters, ushering readers into an exclusive realm detached from the broader world. This dimensions, ensconced in Saurashtra, notably in Kathiawar, Gohilwad and Zalawad region, possesses its own captivating allure and cherished customs. The analysis scrupulously scrutinizes the construction of spaces and their impact on the cultural identity and collective memory of communities. It delves into the exploration of themes, symbols and motifs intricately linked to distinct locales and landscapes, elucidating how these narratives concurrently mirror and mould the historical, social, and cultural realities of the region they represent.

The analysis of the conceptual foundations of the legendary settings in the folk narratives of Jhaverchand Meghani is conducted using many scholarly perspectives, including literary theory, spatial theory, cultural studies and folklore studies. According to this framework, narratives include both a chronological sequence of events and the creation of a spatial framework that gives context to these events.

By conducting an in-depth analysis of the folk narratives of Jhaverchand Meghani, these stories explore the concept of space by drawing upon the theories of Edward Soja, Henry Lefebvre and David Harvey in the field of spatial theory. It illustrates how the interplay between the spectrum of space and the folk narratives deepens our understanding of the complex socio-cultural fabric of the community and the region of Saurashtra. The text delves into exploration of physical, imagined, real, conceived, perceived, narrative and other spatial dimensions to fully comprehend the intricacy of Meghani's tales. It highlights the lasting significance of his work as a representation of the diverse cultural and literary traditions of the Saurashtra region. Applying this theory as an analytical framework uncovers the intricate spatial aspects, thereby shedding light on their enormous narrative spheres.

Keywords: Folk Narratives, Storied Spaces, Jhaverchand Meghani, Folk Tales, Gujarati Literature, Saurashtra