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1. INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER: 1
INTRODUCTION

In my motherland Senjal, situated in the lap of mountains and on the bank of a beautiful river Fooljar, I used to hear the tales and songs of valour and chivalry, nobility and generosity of the heroes and heroines, living legends of Kāthis and others from my father and the Chārans and Bārots (minstrels and bards) visiting our place traditionally and sometimes during the social and religious ceremonies; and as a child I grew utterly fond of them. These tales and songs have been the life blood of the people. There is a poem unfolding the facets that build the human character all along, from the moment of birth, during the life time and unto the ultimate departure:

Lāgyo Kasumbee-no rang –
Rāj, mane lāgyo kasumbee-no rang!
Janani-nā haiyā-mān podhantān podhantān
Pīdho kasumbee-no rang
Dholān dhāvan keri dhārā-e dhārā-e
Pāmyo kasumbee-no rang. – Rāj…!

[I got soaked with the shade crimson fellow, I got.....
While sleeping in the bosom (abode) of mother I drank it,
In the white flowing of mother’s milk, I gained the shade crimson.]

‘Kasumbi’ is the deep dark colour of opium liquid. This poem “Kasumbee- no Rang” eulogizes the hue of opium intoxicant that deepens as the liquid condenses during the grinding process. Regarded as the elixir of life, the hue indicates the colour of life with all feelings poured in it and symbolizes the integrated and proud human existance rather than mere survival at any cost. During my childhood and adolescence, I also got soaked with this crimson, especially with reference to the sublime stories and songs by great folklorists. I read most of the folk literature of Meghāni and wrote three stories (one of them published) before my graduation.

After ten years’ gap, in 2004 while participating in the Refresher Course at the Himāchal Pradesh University, Shimlā, I presented a Research Paper on ‘Sublimity and Spontaneity in Dulā Kāg’s poetry’ with the special
style of a folk artist. I could see an extra ordinary impact being created by it on the intellectuals present—the lecturers from 12 states of India. Many of them, including the co-ordinator herself asked for the copy of my paper. I got inspired by them, especially by the co-ordinator Prof. Jaywantee Dimri, who suggested me some further study in the field, I experienced the same response at the University of Calcutta where, again, during the refresher Course in 2005 on the topic: Race, Class and Gender: Literacy and Cultural Representations, I presented my research paper ‘Literacy and Cultural Representations of Race, Class and Gender in the Folklore of Saurashtra’. Consequently, I was nearly forced to present some beautiful items of the folklore in the entertainment programme in the farewell function.

Unable to contain the zeal, I decided to attempt a study of ‘Folklore of Kathiyāwād with special reference to Jhaverchand Meghāni and Padmashree Dulā Kāग’. But I had to be patient as far as my choice of the guide and the guide’s readiness were concerned, as some guides asked me to select some other subject which perhaps my soul was not ready to work with that real enthusiasm and commitedness that is required for any thorough and thoughtful study. After the prolonged waiting I could prepare a stage, getting the consent of a Bengali guide working in the M.S. University. I did not yet meet her face to face but prepared a proposal to this regard and showed it to my elder brother-like friend Dr. Dilipbhāi Bhatt who is originally from a village nearby Senjal, my village. He guided me through the proposal with the intimacy that was required for this type of subject to be studied with the medium of English language.

Some of my friends were still persuading me for chosing a straightforward subject for the degree of Ph.D. and not to dive in that pool of folk literature. But as it is said, the fruits of patience are sweet and fortune favours the firm, the news of Dr. Dilipbhāi Bhatt getting the guideship (in the Saurashtra University) to my utter surprise, poured a new spirit in me and made my heart aglow. Soon I met him and his generous consent really illumined my path, as I got free from all the hurdles that were supposed to take place before actually beginning the work. I submitted the proposal under the supervision of Dr. D.D.Bhatt to the Saurashtra University, Rājkot, where in the meeting of Research Development Committee, the renowned scholar of
English Literature Avadesh Kumar Singh objected my inclusion of the poet Dulā Kāg on the ground that the poet doesn’t have any contribution as far as English subject is concerned. I got really nervous, but the encouragement from Dr. Kamal Mehta, the Head of English Department, and the warmth of my guide provided me with the tonic which was required at the time to change my course a bit as they suggested me to render any remarkable work of the folklore with critical studies. And after a due consideration and consent the subject got finalized, as I selected the book which is not yet translated and is unique in itself.

i) The Author: Jhaverchand Meghāni (1896-1947)

The poem “Lāgyo Kasumbee- no rang” by Meghāni deals with the ceaseless and everlasting flow, the true, sublime and ecstatic colour spread all around the nature, in human existence expanding thoroughly in the Universe. It deals with the dignified and lofty manifestation of true human spirit, soaked in this nectar like flow and absorbed in the abundance of the deep red colour symbolized as ‘kasumbee’. This symbol becomes really the mark of Meghāni’s diligent, persevering and devoted life and exuberant, exquisite and extra ordinary works, particularly related to folklore.

There has been a great deal of criticism and argumentations over the terms ‘Lok’ (folk) and ‘Lokvidyā’ (lore of the folk) or ‘Lokshāstra’ (logy of the folk) – folklore (Meghāni first used the term ‘Janvidyā’ for it) during recent times when the studies of folklore and cultural phenomena have been prevailing world wide and the scholars of Gujarāti have also started questioning Meghāni’s literature to this regard. The words – ‘Folk’ in English and ‘Lok’ in Gujarāti or other Indian languages (perhaps ‘Volks’ in German too) have gone almost synonymous as far as the initial and progressive meanings are concerned. There are many a disputes among Gujarāti scholars, particularly the critics on Meghāni regarding the concepts of ‘Lokvidyā’, ‘Lokshāstra’, ‘Lokvārtā’ (Folktale) and ‘Lok Sāhitya’ (Folk literature). Considering the ‘Lok’ of Lok- Kathā (‘folk’ of folktale) as the group of human beings, living at the lap of nature, yoked with cultivation, cattle
breeding and the professions concerned, living in the flow of the tradition of the time, a well known Gujarāti scholar Jorāvarsinh Jādav says:

“Illiterate and yet bestowed with distinguished insight this ‘folk’ possess the abundant heritage of their own oral folk literature.”¹ Using Meghāni’s words ‘Gangotri of Shista Sāhitya’ (holy source of formal/classical literature) for folk literature he quotes Evelin Martinengo “The folk tale is the father of all fiction and the folk song is the mother of all poetry.”¹.

He further recognizes it as the historical event of literary world that editing and formulating the dust-covered tales of the folk dialect of the village Meghāni made it to knock the doors of the University.

Whether the critics have come to a definite conclusion or not, one thing is of course certain that the songs, tales and criticism provided by Meghāni belong to the lofty category of literature as they have one great common feature – the quality of permanence. Its proof is the number of people in general, and scholars reading, translating and transcreating them, increasing by leaps and bounds day by day even after eight-nine decades. The great seer of the world, Rabindranāth Tagore, kept singing in his hymn: Amrutasya Pootrāhā Vayam (We are the sons of immortal). This truth is borne out by the folk literature all over the world. “Humankind”, says Meghāni, “by untiringly persevering to create art and literature, culture and civilization, has successfully thwarted the designs of annihilation.” Regarding folklore as the universal language, he further says:

“The rays emanating from this earthen lamp entered every home, made every heart aglow and illumined the path for the generations that followed; it’s the voice of the desert, of the sea, and of the mountain.”²

That is perhaps why the proverbial truth ‘What a villager tells and a citizen hears is folklore’ is prevailing about folk literature. Meghāni has of course regarded it as ‘Dharati- nun Dhāvan’ (feeding from Mother Earth), as if to agree with the encyclopaedia Britanica which opines:
“Each nation and each locality has, of course, folklore as it has its language and it is obvious that to set forth any given folklore with all its stratifications in a comprehensive and orderly way, would virtually be equivalent to exhibiting fully the past and present intellectual, moral, religious, and social condition of the people to whom it belonged. An exhaustive account of the folklores of the world would be equivalent to a complete history of the thoughts of mankind.”

For the study of thematical and stylistic concerns, ethical and ethnic aspects, folk elements, traditions and cultures of men and women belonging to various regions, religions and ages, the researcher has selected the work which is truly representative of Meghāni as the explorer, editor and author of folk literature of Kāthiyāwād (now Saurāshtra). The work selected here is unique in itself as it includes the tales that do not strictly fall in any of the four kinds – legends, anecdotes, myths or folk tales and yet they are the sagas of Bahārvatiyās involving all the four kinds above. Secondly this book is not yet translated and brought to the notice of English speaking world or rather people outside Gujarāt inspite of the rare existence of such tales in world literature. The researcher has made humble efforts through the study of the folklore in general and Meghāni’s folk tales in particular to show here its why and how.

a) The Life of the Versatile Genius:

The dignified and illustrious writer, editor, poet and folklorist Jhaverchand Meghāni was born as a son of a Vāniyā* called Kālidās Meghāni, a junior police official under Kāthiyāwād (British) Agency stationed in the Saurāshtra region of Gujarāt at the police out post situated in the town Chotilā beside the foothill of Mount Chotilā, the abode of mother Goddess Chāmundā. Chotilā is situated in the heart of Panchāl land which is also called Dev- bhoomi (lord’s land) that has a formation of vermilian-hued rocky soil. The poet also accepts the effect of his birth place on his life though he could remain there for hardly a few weeks after his birth, as his father was
frequently transferred from one out-post to another. He writes in his letter dated 11-01-'1929 to Rāmchandra Shuklā,

“Then, I saw Panchāl after thirty years, but it seemed to me that mine is the spirit of mountain which is due to my conception. During the intervening three decades, however hills had continued to nurture my growth… Almost all the out posts were located either in the heart of Geer forest or in the foothills of one or the other knoll, or atop formidable and fierce cliffs below which gushed past perilous rivers. These deep streams that penetrated the rocky hills and their gorges haunted by solitude were my childhood mates.”

Keeping away from home he completed his school education in a boarding school, Rājkot. He obtained his B.A. with English and Sanskrit languages at Shāmaldās College, Bhāvnagar. He had no idea of folk literature during his studies. He used to read the literature of the famous Gujarāti poet Nhānālāl whose ‘Rās’* seems to have influence over him as he said afterwards that they awakened the taste for folk songs in him. ‘Kalāpi’ was his favourite Gujarāti poet. Among English poets he likes Byron very much. As he himself has written in his letter to Rāmchandra Shuklā while still living in Bhāvnagar reading for M.A. he joined as a volunteer for the activity of ‘Swadeshi’ (domestic things) movement and finally spoiled both – as it was the time of the full flow of Mrs. Annie Besant and the beginning of Mahātmā Gāndhi.

* Vāniyā or Baniyā: A community of traders and businessmen, or member of it, some of them follows Hindu religion; while the others follow Jain religion (Jainism). They were also involved in money lending.

*Rās or Rāsadā: A rhythmical song intended to accompany the special kind of folk dance, especially of women’s group traditionally performed on festive occasion, or full-moon night or in marriage ceremony, which is also called Rās or Rāsadā. It is performed in a circular position, singing the lilting chorus rhythmically with drums and clapping of palms or striking two sticks with the stumping of feet and graceful body movements. The Rās-ballads are most popular in the culture of Gujarat. Lord Krishna’s Rās with the Gopis (young ladies) are famous in scriptures.
In 1917 he went to Calcutta for a family business and got engaged in trade with a firm called Jivanlāl Co. He also accompanied the owner of the firm on a visit to England but as he admits he proved Zero in trade. The owner would have left him, at the foreign land for the business, but he himself was hopeless. Then the same owner trained him as the manager in his newly established alluminium factory and he satisfied him by working there for about three years. Because of his genuine attachment to languages he started to learn Bengali seeing the sign boards of the shops during his stay and came in contact with Bengali litterateurs like Tagore and Dwijendranāth. He could read the works of Bankim Chandra with ease as he said because of the simplicity and lucidity. He read and watched the plays of Dwijendranath and others. He also tasted the real beauty of the jewels of Tagore. He himself confesses that Bengal had given him much. But his heart did not feel at ease as Kāthiyāvād was calling him back. The impact of folk literature on the Bengali intellectuals fascinated him and tempted him into the possibilities of exploring the rich heritage of folklore of his native land. The factory owner tried his best to settle him with more benefits, but the call from Kāthiyāvād was getting stronger.

He could not ignore the call of the soil from within the soul, and as if with some mysterious mission he returned to Saurāshtra in 1921. In his last letter from Calcutta to his childhood crony Gulābchand, he wrote:

“...I say it again you won’t understand this. Two years ago I myself could not have understood. The waves of new life have arisen in the mean while. The grave sound of life has struck the ear. I behold before me a sign of one invisible hand – and I answer I’m coming... coming... coming...

It’s getting dark. It is the time of ‘Godhuli’.* I hear the serious tinkling of the bells at the neck of the cattle returning from the forest. The bronze gongs started to sound (in the temple). I am also coming

* ‘Go’ means a cow and ‘dhuli’ menas dust. The word indicates the dusk of the evening when cattle (especially cows) return from the forest and raise dust in their way.
back within a month or two, getting exhausted. At the time of this ‘Godhuli’ of life, at the time of the strife between light and darkness, my herdsman is calling me. I won’t miss the path. I recognize his call… Li. Hun Āvun Chhun (I’m coming…)”

After coming back to his motherland, he spent some time in leisure as if it was the stillness before the real storm. From his early childhood he had a sense of reverence and fascination to a great person whom he regards as the mentor of his literary life. The vassal, the overlord of Hadālā village near Bagasarā, the native of his father, Darbār Vājsurvālā, the intimate friend of the famous romantic poet and overlord himself ‘Kalāpi’. The tales of their friendship and sharing the literary pursuits are famous in Gujarāt. He took it as the blessing to be near ‘Bāpushree’, Vājsurvālā during his last years as he said he found the same mysterious resemblance in the inner of both—the blue extended above and the Bāpu. Now he thought about that mysterious call of the native land, Bengal had also given him much according to him as far as various literary trends and cultural phenomena are concerned but he was not aware of the streams of old, classic taste flowing within. He writes,

“The ‘Pānee Kalo’* apprehending those streams met in 1922. The man resounding the very first murmering sound of folk literature at the shore of the stream of my animate love for literature was Vājsurvālā. I used to stay for days at that king’s prime ‘Kāthee shāhee’ (typical of Kāthees) courtyard blooming with the sounds of peacocks as he was affectionate to me almost from the childhood. Theosophists used to visit. Vājsurvālā used to relate tales to us in his graceful dialect, sometimes recalling the style and effect of Late Sāmatbhāi Gadhavi, a great story-teller in his court and some moments of happiness, getting down the soft guitar of his youth from the shelf, setting the strings with the tender, jingling he infused interest and languishing taste of

* The right person to judge the resource for the stream of water; the expert recognizing the source of water underneath. Here, the intelligent person recognizing the literary genius of the author.
Duhās** in us. His daughters used to sing the Kāthee marriage songs. He used to gather the story tellers- Rāvals and Chārans*** at Hadālā selecting for me.

The tales seemed exquisite to me. I began writing them without any purpose. This’ my initiation of folk literature and thence accompanying me in that activity is the great benefactor Shree Vājsoorvālā, not with money but with interest and taste, with the knowledge of the distinctive features of the customs and traditions of old and heroic races of Kāthiyāwād. As if I was growing up for some mysterious future with the literary particles of Sorath (Saurāshtra) instilled by this elderly overlord. In a short time the office of Saurāshtra’in Rānpur opened that future.”

He also developed friendly terms with some Chārans and consequently got acquainted with ‘Chāranee Lore’, the dominating oral tradition of folklore in Saurāshtra and Rājasthān, especially with the lofty dialects, tones, rhymes and rhythm. Chief among them was Gagubhāi Leelā whom he called ‘the

** Duhā means paen or heroic verse; it is the most popular and significant composition of folk culture and literature, usually in a couplet with four ictus, sometimes in more lines. The descending and ascending nature of its rhyme and the meaning are very important.
*** The communities or the members of them serving in the royal courts or some of them to the public in general by creating, reciting or singing folksongs and telling the stories; narrating the incidents of heroism, love, etc. Mostly the Chārans were dominating and that is why the literature is called ‘Chārani Literature’, which is really rare and special kind of literature as discussed later in this chapter and the last. Chārans [Deviputras (born of Goddess Supreme); also called ‘Gadhavis’ (lit. means the governor of a fort)] generally used to extol the virtues of the overlords and patrons; also working as the guardians of ethics and values, some of them also worked as cattle-breeders. Bārots and Bhāts were also involved with story-telling, but they generally took to maintaining family-tree, records of different communities and the ruling clans. Rāvals is also one such community particularly concerned with the performance of different rituals with singing and music. While Bharathari and Nāthbāvā were the ascetic singers of Bhajans accompanied by folk instruments called ‘Ek- tārā’ and ‘Rāvanhatthā.’ Mir is also one such community but it observes Muslim religion.
Treasure Trove of folktales’. Many of the tales of his Saurāshtra-ni Rasadhār and outlaws (Bahārvatiyās) have been received here. The significant thing about this acquaintance is that Meghāni acquired the sublime style of the traditional narration as these tales belonged to the oral traditions preserved by rot. Meghāni was a great fan of Gagubhāi for his style of the beginning and keeping up (Māndanee), reciting the Duhās and creating the overall impact. That is perhaps the secret of the immense popularity of Meghāni’s stories – the mixture of his genuine lofty style of description and the adopted narrative art.

Nobody knew how the beginning of that mysterious expedition would reach the peak and within a century enrich the entire world with the invaluable treasure of the folklore of Kāthiyāwād, opening the doors of all around discoveries, studies and researches in the years to come. With the publication of his early three four tales he was offered the post of a literary editor of a newly founded weekly named ‘Saurāshtra’. His journalism in ‘Saurāshtra’ encouraged by the owner Sheth Amrutlāl and later Janmabhoomi and Phoolchhab in Mumbai also played a big role in his life.

Then with the zeal and diligence he made constant endeavour to embark on the exploration of the folklore of the land of legends and legendery lives, rugged hills and vales, terrifying cliffs and brimming rivers, of the land where lions roamed in majesty and folklores flourished in abundance. He journeyed by rail, road ad sea, riding horses and camels, trudged by foot to traverse the region for almost two decades to get the materials of the folklore – full of love, valour, honesty and nobility befriending bards, ministrels, street singers and story tellers, illiterate men and women, the only source of folklore preserved by rote. All the renowned scholars perhaps agree with the fact that Meghāni possessed a tender and generous heart and immense capacity to get mingled with lay man, simple ignorant country men, even women folk. It was with that special skill in him that earned him those beautiful bounties of tales and folk songs even from the old Mer women Dhelee of Baradā region.

His correspondence with the society in general, literary circle and various scholars show the real depth of his character and literary life. The unnatural death of his first wife Damyantiben in 1933, as she committed suicide shattered the heart of this hardy man. But as it is said adversity is the
touchstone of character, especially for the great men, this ache in his heart, and the added responsibility of keeping the little children couldn’t stop the ceaseless voyage of this towering literary personality. After a decade he started all-around attempts towards almost all forms of literature together. The writer of the lore of the yore, as cited by Hasu Yāgnik in the introduction to his celebrated book Sorath Tārān Vahetān Pānee which is translated into several Indian languages and reprinted many times [translated in English as Echoes from the Geers by his son Vinod Meghāni], Meghāni has applied his creative skill as the first novelist in International fiction (in 1943) to break free the conventional hero heroine set up like Gabriel Garcia Marquez (In Evil Hour 1962) by stemming the torrent of time and the tide of events in Sorath Tārān Vahetān Pānee, a document of the socio-cultural transition of his time. Meghāni proved the cultural vitality and inspirational potential to awaken the masses, by the enriched essence of our folklore when other men of letters, groping for Indian identity, struggled to awaken the sleeping multitude of India by imbibing something or the other form the ancient heritage of the orient.

Stirred by the national yearning for liberation from the foreign rule and oppression he participated in the freedom struggle carrying out relentless campaign as an influential journalist. Gifted with expressive voice, he could render lyrics—authentic folk songs as well as his compositions – with intense emotional involvement, not for entertainment but always to illustrate his discourses. As a sensitive nationalist poet, Meghāni inspired his generation with his soul stirring patriotic poems. His poems and the collection titled Sindhudo were banned by the British Government after Dāndi March. He was also imprisoned for the freedom movement. When he was being prosecuted, he recited his poem “Chhelli Prārthanā” [Last Prayer] at Dhandhukā court, with the permission of the Judge. When he sang –

Hajāro varsha-ni juni amāri vedanā-o
Kalejā chirati kampāvati am bhayakathā-o
Marelā-nā rudhir ne jivatā-nā ānsudā-o
Samarpan e sahu tāre kadam pyārā prabhu-o!  

(Our age long suffering, our heart rending and terrible tales of fears, the blood of the dead and tears of the live: We dedicate it all to your feet, O beloved God!) – Tears started flowing from the eyes of the gathering and men
and women including the judge couldn’t help burst out with tears, when he sang the last lines. In 1929, when Gandhiji was in dilemma whether to go to London to participate in the Round Table Conference offered by the British, Meghāni wrote a poem alluding to the feat of Lord Shiva in drinking the poison churned out of the ocean: “Chhelo Katoro Ā Jher-no Pee Jaje Bāpu!” (The last cup of poison you are to drink, O Bāpu!). On reading the poem, Gāndhiji had said that the poet had managed to penetrate his conscience and correctly read its dilemma. He described the author as ‘Rāshtriya Shāyar’, a poet manifesting nationalism.

It is actually that sublimity of his stories and songs which cast deep influences on the upbringing of an entire generation of Gujarāt during the Gāndhian era and imbued it with true human spirit and universal values. That is why the volumes of Meghāni have become inevitable part of libraries as well as home collections even after eight decades proving his own statement that the peak of dignity cannot be scaled by those unable to feel the affinity with the earth under their feet. Manubhāi Pancholi, ‘Darshak’, a great litterateur of Gujarāt and an acknowledged authority on Jhaverchand Meghāni says,

“Every age needs its bard. The great bard of our age is Meghāni. He does not dab with the era by gone. In his one hand he holds the present and in the other the future. Meghāni is the voice of the era.”

b) His works, Particularly on Folklore:

Jhaverchand Meghāni was really a prolific writer as he has contributed in both prose and verse in formal as well as folk literature touching almost every type of literature. He recovered songs, stories, ballads, odes, fables, legends, elegies, fairy tales, etc. from the jaws of time and jotted down everything from whatever source he had. After getting varied materials and making comparative studies, he scrutinized and edited the great heritage. The extra-ordinary thing about his writing is that it reflects every important aspect of human spirit and culture. But seeing the varied and distinguished works of
Meghāni it becomes very difficult for the critic of today to classify his works on folklore.

In his relatively brief literary career of less than three decades he produced approximately 90 volumes of ‘biographies’ of Bahārvatiyās (outlaws), short stories, plays, novels, folk songs, ballads and poetry in general; original; translated or transcreated apart from the critiques immensely helpful for further research in the field of folk literature. As the fruit of his life long perseverance we get the works of pure folkloric nature in 16 volumes of tales and 10 of songs and some miscellaneous works. Listing them chronologically they are as follows:

1. The Prosaic Works (Folk Tales):
   a. *Doshimā-ni Vāto* (Granny’s tales), 1923
   b. *Saurāshtra-ni Rasadhār* (Saurāshtra’s Streaking Nectar) Vol.1-5, 1923-1927
   c. *Sorathi Bahārvatiyā* (Outlaws of Saurāshtra) Vol.1-3 1927-1928,
   d. *Dādājee-ni Vāto* (Grandpa’s Tales), 1927
   e. *Sorathi Santo* (saints of Saurāshtra), 1928
   f. *Sorathi Geet Kathāo* (Ballads of Saurāshtra), 1923

There has been great deal of controversy among critics for the classification of the above tales as Meghāni has never stuck to any strict forms, structures and styles. Hasu Yāgnik writes:

“The pure perfect classical work of Meghāni’s folk tales is of course *Sorathi Git-Kathāo*. It is like the landmark in the history of the editing of Gujarāti folk literature. And this only work of editing these pure folk tales lying in the scattered Duhās (verses) earns for Meghāni, the place in the history of world folk literature.”

The scholar of folk literature and pioneer critic on Meghāni, Pushkar Chandarvārkar classifies the following categories of folk tales: 1. Legends and Myths, 2. Biographies or Life sketches, 3. Ritual Stories, 4. Ballads (Geet-Kathā, Rās, Garbā or Lok kathā), 5. Serious Historical stories or local History tales (oral prose-verse mixed, bringing out love ands chivalry), 6. Fairy-Tales, 7. Rupak Kathā, 8. Illustration Stories and 9. Folk Tales for humour and
Entertainment. According to him Meghāni did not get trapped in the confines of classification. Not to do this implies the distinct view of taste and sentiment not scientific insight. He writes,

“He wanted to spread the delight of taste and interest. He was not one getting confined to dryness and rigidity of a scientist. It is the task of beholding only the box of bones, skeleton while Meghāni is eager to behold elegant men encased in bones and hide. He has accepted this style for ‘Māndani’* and writing folk tales and left the task of classification for some successors.” He rightly observes:

“After a whole-hearted constant search Meghāni received the pearls of folk literature form the vibrating ocean of folk life. He collected them like an indigent Bakāl** from there.”

According to Dr. Narottam Palan most of Meghāni’s tales can be regarded as Chārani tales not pure Lok- Kathās (tales of folk). But Dr. Niranjan Rājayaguru protests against him saying there are no fixed criteria of Chārani tales and no evidences for their strictly being Chāranee Tales. Referring Palan’s own definition of Chārani Literature,

“Chārani literature is mostly the literature of Darbāri (courtly) pomp. It generally has become poetic by Duhā, Chhanda, poems, lyrics and songs.”

– Dr. Niranjan Rājayaguru contradicts the two statements – ‘The tales of saints and Bahārvatiyās are originally Chārani literature.’ and ‘Mostly the tales told by Chārans reached to Meghāni’s hand.’ Made by Narottam Palan:

* Start; dress-up and working out the details; arrangement for folktales.
** A graingrocer or vegetable seller.
“Then which is Chārani literature? The literature composed in its definite Chanda- Kavit Padhya (verse form) in old Māru Gurjar language, in Dingali language”, he asks, “How can this be Chārani literature when its style is different, the style of language is different, its vocabulary different, its presentation distinct?”12

Actually as one of the last exponents of oral tradition and a folklorist himself, Darbār Punjāvālā says Meghāni’s task is really praiseworthy that he could shape the tales of pure oral tradition where the motion of narration and other aspects of narrative art are significant into the well balanced written form using his elegant style of Māndanee and attracts the interest of reader throughout infusing taste in them. Considering the tale of Hothal Padamani as the perfect example, he says,

“In his mind Meghāni sustained the wholesome, distinct traits of whoever he had heard with respect. As a result he has succeeded in carving the image of the folk life of the concerned region, folk dialect and the narrative style of the original teller on the paper.”13

Pushkar Chandarvărkar also remarks that it has become easy to find faults as the scholarly materials on different forms have become available in the west and in India today, but Meghāni has earned very respectable place for the folk literature of Gujarāt as the first rank litterateurs have also started studying it.

To whatever forms, styles or categories the tales belong the most important thing is as Meghāni wanted to rescue them attaining the popular taste and interest, the stories have not only become the life blood of the people of Gujarāt but started appealing universally too. Its evidence is the more and more number of their new additions. And after all why the forms deserve that much consideration so long as the excellent substance is preserved so nicely? To this regard Jorāvarsinh Jādav quotes Dr. Vasudevsharan Agarwāl proving that the plank of ‘Lok- Kathā’ (folk tale) is as

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vast and extensive as human life and it hasn’t got enclosed in any small circle or subject. It has not been caught in the differentiations of prose and verse –

“Oral mouth to mouth tradition is significant characteristic of a folk tale. It can be compared with the lump of clay put over the potter’s wheel. It cannot be said what shape would be produced by the finger tips of the potter until its descent.”

2. **Folk Lyrics:**
   c. *Hālardān* (lullabies), 1929
   d. *Rutu Geeto* (songs of seasons), 1929
   e. *Sorathi Sant vāni* (sacred songs of saints), 1947
   f. *Sorathiyā Duhā* (Duhā verses), 1947

Pushkar Chandarvārkar expects that Meghāni should have classified the folk songs with special care as it had been done by his contemporary Suryakiran Pārikh who insisted on the accuracy and subtle scientific approach for the classification after editing the folk songs of Rājasthān. But at the same time he also defends Meghāni for rescuing about 770 folksongs beginning in 1923 when there had been hardly any active search of folk literature in the other languages of India. Observing the scientific approach put by modern folklorists in it he says,

“The extent of work done by Meghāni for editing folk songs or folk tales needs the following scholars to cope with the extensive range: 1. Photographer, 2. Painter (Artist) and Sculptor, 3. Archeologist who is also well-versed and aquainted with ancient alphabet (letters), 4. Linguist, 5. Mythologist, 6. Expert of folk tale, 7. Scientist (technician who operates tape recorder, etc. also), 8. Litterateur, Author, or journalist Here
the folktale scholar can be replaced by the scholar of folk music.”

He further adds that the research of folk literature had not even been established as the science at that time, so the acceptance of editing folk literature or folk songs was done as the work of literature and in the beginning Meghāni has evaluated folk literature by of course that scale.

Second important point is as Meghāni spoke in his lecture inspite of the liking of his writings by the whole of Gujārāt, there arose a voice – “Is this history of heroism and love lying only in Saurāshtra land alone? Is the land of Gujārāt barren?” Actually Meghāni answered the quest by giving the wonderful work, Mānsāi-nā Deevā (also translated in English as Earthen lamps) afterwards but what is important here is the reflection of Meghāni’s true character as the universal personality in his response to this:

“…I am of the opinion that no portion of the earth can be lacking in the cultural flourish naturally availed in man. The indirect indication of this question why I don’t search the folk history of Gujarat is I am suffering from the sentiment of regionalism. The fact was not that but Kāthiyāvād was my home, and my growing up at the lap of men like the residues of old Saurāshtra, and my wallowing in the clay of that land etc. factors occupied me.”

Moreover reacting to the statement in the report of the poet Nhānālāl’s lecture in a daily ‘The folk songs received by Meghāni are mainly given by a Mer woman of Baradā’, he says that it was true that the beginning had been made by the Mer woman, but he had wandered every region and come across the sweet voices of many lands. In his own words –

“From Khavāsans and Kāthiyānees, Vanik and Brāhmin women, I got the graceful ‘Prasādi’ (offering) from many women representing Zālāvād,
Hālār and Gohilvād.* I obtained these jewels approaching the throat (voice) of even the ones whom we laugh at by saying ‘Mārwādā and whose sounds seem wild and bitter to our ear. This is my Mahā Gujarātdarshan (sight/vision of great Gujarāt). The word ‘Gujarāt’ is subordinating. The blood of culture streaming in the veins of the western Hind- Rājasthān- all pulsate and rejuvenate my body and soul."17

In addition, Meghāni has proved himself as a distinguished critic by laying the foundation for the exposition of research and interpretation of folklore:

3. **The Critical Works:**
   b. *Lok- Sāhitya, Pagdandi-no Panth* (Folk Literature, a Foot-Track), 1942.
   c. *Chārano Ane Chārani Sāhitya*, 1943
   d. *Lok Sāhitya, Dharati-nun Dhāvan – Vol.2* [The breast- feed from the earth], 1944
   e. *Lok-Sāhitya-nun Samālochan* (A Review of Folk Literature), 1946

Most of the above works include his scholarly introductions to his works and his lectures on folk literature at academic levels such as Gujarāt Vidyāpith, Mumbāi University, Shantiniketan, Gujarāt Vernacular Society, etc. Meghāni also shows his humble gratitude to university saying that even if we have the right passion and attachment by birth, they alone are useless, as the journey of truth is possible only when we combine its electrifying spirit with the conscience given by the university:

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*The reference is to the different communities belonging to different provinces of Saurāshtra. Zālāvād is the Surendranagar district, Hālar – Jāmnagar district and Gohilvād Bhāvnagar district of today.
“I believe myself to have sucked the milk of the earth and grown up by being brought up in the lap of the university. I believe that it is my education received from university that taught me the evaluations of folk literature. We obtain the comparative approach of study and the sense of bringing out the truth from universities.”

On his journey in search of folklore, Meghāni wrote the following:

4. **The Travelogues:**
   a. *Saurāshtra-nān Khandero-mān* (Amid the ruins of Saurāshtra), 1928
   b. *Sorath ne Teere Teere* (Along the sea coast of Sorath), 1933
   c. *Parakammā* (Circumambulation), 1946
   d. *Chhelun Prayān* (Final Departure), 1947

The above are really the great works as far as the depth of folkloric studies and criticism are concerned. These works are almost the crop of Meghāni’s constant endeavour, fully matured and ripened, offering to the world many times much more than what he says:

“The entire writing included in my works about folk literature is not called pure classical. But I have collected abundant original materials to be useful to the ones who are to work on the subject of folk literature.”

Thus Meghāni made his final departure giving us about 35 volumes of folklore single-handedly. Apart from these, he has given 14 novels, 9 collections of poems, 12 of short stories, 4 of plays, 12 of biographies and 16 of historical themes, including some translations and transcreations, many of them having the touch of folklore here and there.

**Other Works:**

**Poetry:**
- *Ektāro*  
- *Killol*  
- *Bāpunān Pāranān*  

The collection including all the above: *Sonā Nāvadee: Samagra Kavitā*
Biography:
Akbar-nee Yādmān
Anne Besant
Thakkarbāpā: Achhio Jivanparichayā
Dayānand Sarawatee
Dariyāpār-nā Bahārvatiyā

Anne Besant
Pānch Varasnān Pankheedān
Purātan Jyot
Be Deshdeepak
Mānsā-nā Deevā
Vasant-Rājab Smārak Granth (editing)
Narveer Lālājee

Novel:
Aparādhee
Kālachakra (unfinished)
Gujarāt-no Jay (2 volumes)
Tulasee- Kyāro
Niranjane
Prabhu Padhāryā

Ra’ Gangājaliyo
Vasundharānān Vahālān davalān
Vevishāl
Satya-neen Shodhamān
Samarāngan
Sorath, Tārā Vahetān Pāne
Beedelān Dwār

Short Story:
Kurabāni-nee Kathāo
Jail-Office ni Bāree
Palakārā

Pratimāo
Meghāni-nee Navalikāo (2 volumes)
Vilopan Ane Beejee Vāto

Play:
Rājā- Rānee
Rāno Pratāp

Vanthelān Ane Beejee Nātikāo
Shāhjahān

The collection including all above: Meghāni-nā Nātako

Miscellaneous:
Ajab Duniyā
Āpanā Gharanee Vadhu Vāto
Āpanun Ghar
Asia-nun Kalank
Dhvajmilāp
Paribhraman (3 volumes)
Bhārat-no Mahāveer Pādoshee

Marelān-nān Rudhir ne Jivatā nān
Ansandān-o
Misarano Muktisangrām
Lok- Gangā
Verān-mān
Salagatun (Burning) Ireland
Sāmbelān
Sāmbelānā Soor
Main Compiliation- editing

*Antar- Chhabi* compiled autobiography of Jhaverchand Meghāni

Editor: Himānshi Shelat, Vinod Meghāni

*Li. Snehadheen Jhaverchand* (Meghāni letters)

Editor: Mahendra Meghāni

*Li. Hun Avun Chhun* (2 volumes): Jhaverchand Meghāni’s life of letters

Editor: Vinod Meghāni, Himānshi Shelat

He was in the 51st year when he died on the 9th March, 1947. About a hundred books during the quarter century of diligence, lifelong endeavour of exploration, compiliation and creativity! And see his humbleness, true passionate love and faith to folk literature in the words in his letter to the celebrated Gujarāti poet Umāshankar Joshi:

“Let my other writing be surely erased (and what if certainly erased!), I’ll stand only with the name of folk literature alone. I will feel even the derogatoriness involved in it as my own.”

**ii) SORATHI BAHĀRVATIYĀS AND THE TEXT SORATHI BAHĀRVATIYĀ PART-2**

‘Sorath’ is actually the region covered in old Junāgadh state and Sorathi means of Sorath, but here the word ‘Sorathi’ in the title of this book and other works of Meghāni denotes, as in the case of the term Kāthiyāwād, the whole of Saurāshtra region of Gujarāt, the western peninsula of India. Secondly ‘Sorathi’ is more suitable term than the ‘Saurāshtri’. Some miscellaneous incidents and tales of Bahārvatiyās are also included in Meghāni’s five volumes of *Saurāshtra-ni Rasdhār*, which are considered as the entrance door of his folk literature. After the fifth volume of *Rasdhār* there appeared the three wonderful and mesmerizing volumes of *Sorathi Bahārvatiyā* (1927-1929) with the style and narrative more vigorous and ripened.

Some English officials, historians and writers such as C.A.Kincaid, Capt. Bell, Justice Bimon, Aston wolf, etc. have given the attribute ‘outlaw’ to
the Bahārvatiyās. In his prologue to Sorathi Bahārvatiyā part 3 Meghāni writes under the title “Bahārvatān-ni Mimānsā” (Examination of Bahārvatān):

“Because of his disputes with the royal authority, if any man takes the way outside the state disregarding that state he is called Bahārvatiyo. In English language its synonym is ‘Outlaw’: means the one who goes out of the area of law and statute, refusing to obey the law and as a result remains deprived of the protection of the law too.”

Meghani’s use of the letter ‘Vā’ in the bracket for ‘Va’ is strange here. Because the two terms ‘Vat’ (dignity, self respect) and ‘Vāt’ (way, road) are utterly different sharing nothing in common. Even the Modern Gujarāti-English Dictionary adopts both ways – that of English interpretation and somewhat of domestic; according to it ‘Bahārvatiyā’ is one who withdraws himself outside the limits of a state, with a view to harras and molest it by frequent raids, and so compel it to come to terms with him; an avenger and the meaning of ‘Bahār’ (Bār) ‘vatun’: 1 Outlawry, 2 Revenge; vengeance. The term ‘Bahār’ clearly means out, but we are not to complicate the word ‘Vat’ by referring to the Sanskrit origin ‘Vrut’ or ‘Vart’ (set about) which is already suggested by the word ‘Bahār’, ‘vat’ simply deals with the sense of dignity, keeping honour- as it is also used as suffix in many words, e.g. Kshatriyavat (the honour or dignity as a Kshatriya), Rājvat (Royal credit), etc.

Actually the term ‘Bahārvatiyā’ is peculiar and unique in itself involving the resolute mission with hard and fast observances of righteous conduct and austere regulations. It should not always mean ‘outlaw’. Infact the terms ‘outlaw’ and ‘Bahārvatiyā’ are very different involving two hugely different cultural phenomena and genuinely distinctive meanings. In Europe there remained only one sovereignty. The common people as well as the landholders, dukes all were bound to obey one whole Government, while in our country there were many big states as well as small ones, even with ten villages or less, all with their independent administrations. Therefore, even the landholder or duke of Huntingdom (Robinhood) gets outlawed and deprived of the protection by the one whole power when he violates the so called or
defined rules. But in case of Jogidās Khumān and the king of Bhāvnagar it is a different issue – one is the ruler of only 84 villages of Sāvarkundalā very small but independent domain and the other having the kingdom of 1800 villages. So there is no question of forcing one out of the protection of the state when he actually does not belong to the state. Here the term ‘Bahār’ means out of his own home not the state. When the mighty kings, sometimes with the help of shrewd Britishers, captured the small domestic states, the lords of that states had to leave the family and the home for revolting against the capturer. They chose to keep honour either by doing (getting justice having the domain back) or dying. Yes, there were some Bahārvatiyās who were not actually the rulers but because of the tyranny and injustice of the law they themselves moved out to protest and not that they were thrown out by the authority. It was not perhaps customery in our culture. In that case too the term suggests the preference of being outsiders and also the rebellions of the valiant man for self respect, dignity and protection of virutes against the selfish law and oppression of power. They became outsiders of the enemy’s state for some positive cause and resolved to keep honour till the end of life either by getting justice or by facing death. The ‘oulawry’ is self made rather than enforced by the authority. In case of some Bahārvatiyās, particularly all the Bahārvatiyās described in part-2, there is no question of outlawry as they themselves had been the rulers of their respective states before they were snatched. That is why the researcher has kept the title Sorathi Bahārvatiyā Part-2, instead of Sorathi Outlaws Part-2.

The term also involves some striking principles, penances and human values such as protection of women, children, innocent, etc. Considering the atmosphere of Bahārvatiyā eccentric Meghāni states some contradictory phenomena mingled in it. He writes:

“The various atmospheres get woven around different entities –Power and luxury around the king, pure and pious tranquility of austere land around the ‘Rushi’ (sage) erudition, full of interest around the learned; but around the Bahārvatiyā of course royalness with begardliness, mercy with cruelty, generosity with the feature of looting,
gaiety with adversities and fearless dignity with treachery and deceit, such dualities are stuck.\textsuperscript{23}

Many times the public shows more interest in the small incidents of the Bahārvatiyā’s brave exploits than great heroism of some conquerer of the world, they enjoy, zubilantly, laughing over the incidents of his gay nature and feel pain hearing his cruel acts as if some beloved kinsman has committed errors, according to Meghāni. In his prologue Meghāni also throws light on the outlaws of foreign lands – Robinhood who was regarded as the universal darling of common people. He also describes the three cronies’ very famous archers in the North England, William of Cloudeslee, Clym of Clough and Adam Bell whose motto of life was heroism and merriment and so they were regarded ‘merry outlaws’. He also depicts the unforgettable picture of brave Sangrāmsinh, the outlaw of Kāshee, narrated in the autobiography of Satyavir Shraddhānandji.

The question of the type and nature of the literary form remains always controversial as discussed earlier. According to ‘Upmanyu’ who regards folktale as the unflinching art of folklife in his article “Folktale and Meghāni” – As Meghāni’s field work increased he used to wonder, hear the tale, note in short and remember, but while writing he gave the shape which attracts general interest. He writes:

“Meghāni’s folktale is not the simple straightforward photograph of the original (source). It is the artistic picture with enimated features. It moves between ‘Talk’ and ‘Tale’. It gives life to the details. He was interested not merely in the incidents, but more in the sublimity of the character and sensitivity, in the values of folklife... the aim is taste, interest and sentiment.”\textsuperscript{24}

According to him Gream and Anderson have also made the folk tales interesting this way. He divides Meghāni’s folktales in five categories:

\begin{itemize}
\item Fairy Tales: \textit{Doshimā- ni Vāto}, \textit{Dādājee- ni Vāto}, \textit{Rang chhe Bārot}
\item Rasadhārs: Chārani style and yet remained between Kathā (tale) and navalikā (short story) with more literary form, story form
\end{itemize}
Vrata kathāo: The distinctive tales of our Gujarāt only. If the editing of folk songs has to be put among the best works of the whole of India, the work of ‘Kankāvati’ is to be regarded of International standard. Myths (Purakathās) live in rare societies today, they are living here still. The tales of saints and national heroes also move on with legend and evidences but they are biographies.

The tales of Bahārvatiyās: They seem biographical in a sense, seem history-based, and yet give the taste of folk tale that moves with the particles of both legend and history. It is ‘oral History’. When oral history would be considered at our place, the first name which has to be given in India would be of Meghāni (The Columbia University started the consideration of this subject, in 1948, the year after Meghāni’s death).

Pushkar Chandarvārkar says, “The stories of Sorathi Bahārvatiyās, Part 1, 2, 3 seem to be mini-novel like. These stories may be identified by the name ‘Sagas of Outlaws’ [Tales of Bahārvatiyās’ intrepidity]. But the incidents or events are not available to the extent of the characters of sagas in the tales. Meghāni himself writes… ‘There is no development of characters in all the talks, as merely an event or two of the life of the characters are at hand, the remaining strung in the darkness. He says, “The editor has understood the limits of these tales and called them Jivankathāo (Biographies.)”

According to Chandarvārkar, in folk literature the literary form of biography has been mentioned nowhere in the vast criticism of west. But an eastern thinker of folk literature has written that the literary forms of folk literature may be of course different to the opinions of different thinkers. So there is no point of disagreement in Meghāni’s consideration of the literary form of biography. He further adds that the problem of where to put his three volumes of Sorathi Bahārvatiyā gets solved because of his addition of this form of tale. He says,

“The literature of folk tales in Ireland is prosperous with the Bahārvatiyas’ literature. The popular term for this literature there is ‘Sagas of Outlaws’ [The historical heroic story/ family story of Bahārvatiyās.] Like in Saga the increase in the
length is possible. The tales of Jogidās Khumān and Jodhā Mānek are lengthy.”\textsuperscript{25}

Hasu Yāgnik also gets to the same way when he writes:

“The tales of Rasadhār, the biographies of Bahārvatīyās and saints are not Lok- Kathās (folk tales). Meghāni himself would have rarely used the term ‘Lok Kathā’ for these tales. In the introduction of his collections he has recognized these works as only ‘kathā’ (tale).”\textsuperscript{26}

Regarding them as ‘legends’ or ‘anecdotes’ he further remarks that when the story of a Bahārvatīyā’s valour-character-dignity gets perfected in the form of folk songs, gets resulted in Rāsadā it is said to be transformed in folk tale. As discussed in the prologue by Meghāni, most of the Rāsadā compostitions about Bahārvatīyās are made by the professionals like Bhartuhari-tooree-Nāthbāvā and he noted that such Chārani extallation types got ceased after becoming buds only. He has also expressed the probability of some Rāsadā compositions of Bahārvatīyās by the womenfolk of the village. It attracts contemplation but no reason can be perceived for the social women composing the Rāsadās of Bahārvatīyās according to him. This statement by this authority on Meghāni is also thought-provoking. Why shouldn’t the women folk compose the Rāsadās of Bahārvatīyās if they can compose other folksongs? Secondly it is very clear from the prologue and other tales that the common people had special feeling and attachment to Bahārvatīyās. The women also belonged to the same society. Moreover the hero-worship is almost the dominant feature of not only Saurāshtra but of the whole civilization of our nation. There are many Rāsadās about the heroic persons, e.g. Jogidās Khumān, Rām Vālā, being sung even today in the villages. If it is the case, would you go on to regard them folktales?

Another debated issue about these tales apart from their being historic, biographic, legends or anecdotes is the dispute of their being folktales or Chārani tales. Regarding all the tales of saints and Bahārvatīyās historic and yet prescribing to assess whether all the incidents of these stories are historical or not, Narottam Palān writes,
“The prologue of Bahārvatiyās has really become Meghāni’s first attempt of the criticism of folk literature! Regarding the tales of Bahārvatiyās, Meghāni has mostly got the Chāran- told stories, these tales were and they are of course popular among lay men. Meghāni only wrote them and while writing he made some changes also. Particularly he has tried to delute the element of miracles as much as possible in the tales. Infact, today it seems that they should have been kept as they were.”

The words to be noted here are – mostly Chārani tales, Meghāni made some changes, diluted the element of miracles which should have been preserved. Now, if they were and they are historic and popular among common folk why shouldn’t they be regarded folk tales? The scholar of Chārani lore and Chāran himself Ratudān Rohadiyā considers all the Rasadhār stories except one or two to be of Chārani literature. To him they cannot be included in Lok-Kathā, as their creators are Chāran-Bārot. He further writes,

“All the tales of Bahārvatiyās can be included in Chārani literature without even least hesitation. The Chāran has always put the eye- witnessed heroism to prevail among the common folk narrating by his word this way. Their motive is of inspiring the heroes of Kshātra (Kshatriya) society and commonfolk by setting an ideal before them. The Duhās and Chārani poems and the style of talking occurring in these tales give the proof of their being Chārani literature, but on the other hand Meghāni has done some sprinkling of folk literature also by putting the Rāsadā at places, nevertheless barring the exceptions of the Rāsadā here and there, all is to be regarded as unmixed Chārani literature.”

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Here too, arises the question of Rāsadā, the vital factor of folk. Rohadiyā also says that the tales got prevailed among the folk. Then why shouldn’t it be the lore of the folk even if it is created by Chāran? The remarks and observations of the scholars provoke debate on one hand but on the other they also allure us to think of Meghāni’s extra-ordinary endeavour of editing and creating. No doubt, the tales are the products of Chārani literature, but they have been extremely popular among the folk. Secondly they were originally ‘Vangmāyā’ (in oral tradition). It becomes really a difficult task, to relate the thing of ‘mouth-to-ear’ to ‘eye’ only. Even if there are some dangers of losing the naturalness of ‘Vāngmāyā’ and elegance of the original form; the effort is praiseworthy as it removed the still more dangerous possibility of losing them at all in the course of time; extra ordinary as it has remained as close as the elegance of the oral form. Hence, whether we call the tales biographies, history tales, legends, anecdotes, memorates or folk tales, whether they are regarded as pure Chārani tales or not, the form deserves no consideration, as the famous author and contemporary of Meghāni, Rāmnārāyan Pāthak, said as long as the substance is preserved. The disputes actually add to the extra-ordinariness of Meghāni’s editing work as he has succeeded to attract the readers for about a century by editing the difficult to write ‘Vāngmaya’ of this pure historic Chārani lore, popular for years among common folk proving immense socio-cultural significance as he preserved the great treasure of our ancient heritage that is otherwise impossible a task to write as well as preserve.

One more important factor about Meghāni’s editing is – he puts the original Chārani Duhā’s as they are, as they are the soul and source of the tales. In Darbār Punjāvālā’s words,

“Meghānibhāi has kept the poems of ‘Dingal’ and ‘Pingal’ as they were (without any change) in the folk-tales. Somewhere he himself has put the ancient poems like Duhās, Chhand, Savaiyā or Chhappā befitting the flow of the tale. By doing thus he has preserved the traditional form of Lok-Kathā. Secondly he has also proved the statement
According to Punjāvālā Sāheb, the classical as well as scientific form has been presented by Meghāni to whatever extent possible in the construction of the tales. The right order for the development – 1 Kathāvastu (Subject - matter), 2 Charitra- chitran (character-sketch), 3 Rachanā (construction), 4 Ulzan (Problem), 5 Charam Seemā (Climax), 6 Sandeh-janya Kautuhal (Curiosity produced of doubt) and 7 Samāpan (conclusion) all these phases have been preserved by Meghāni. The story of Hothal Padamani is its perfect example, but in the Jogidās Khumān like stories, where the different historical incidents are to be collected and written Meghāni has not followed this classical method purposefully according to him, as the message of values and culture is to be reached upto people vigorously. To get the values and culture reached together with interest is and it was the chief aim in Meghāni’s mind, according to him.

Here the aspect as important as form and perhaps more is the substance – the most significant one which must be considered. Meghāni himself says about his ceaseless effort of making this historic tales interesting and immortal by procuring and reconstructing the materials he had obtained –

“When you would be reading that tale of Jogidās Khumān which has been put in succession, you might be feeling that, it would have been dictated to the point by a single man! But for weaving (constructing) the whole cloth (plot) of the tale I had to obtain the threads from many a places,... and stitch and stretch... for weaving the whole cloth of the tale.

........ After hearing numerous incidents from many a man, the whole calevar (body) was to be built by adjusting those threads (bones): And sprinkling the cavityful of the current of sentiment on it I animated life in it.”

Some critics like Prabhudās Thakkar criticize Meghāni’s works severely on thematic as well as historical ground. Sometimes it seems that some
people criticize for the sake of criticizing only, or for being different from others. Former V.C. of Bhāvnagar University Vidyut Joshi, while talking on the subject of sociology and literature raises a question that why the Bahārvatiyās are not produced today? Actually the circumstances produced them. Prabhudās Thakkar says that Meghāni has broken the principle of ‘forgiveness’ as no sense of forgiveness prevails in the tales of Bahārvatiyās as they loot and kill people. He goes one step further raising the fear towards the fact of the youth getting influenced reading the stories – ‘are we to make them Bahārvatiyās?’ But these wise men, if they are really concerned about society, morality and historicity, should also observe the law and order prevailing at the time. Actually the so called great states, the big kings, Gāekwād, Bhānagar, etc. had gone immensely greedy for power and wealth and the Britishers taking their side worsened the situation. They all together went on to fleece the people in general to the bone as Britishers wished to suck the wealth to the extreme point and it was possible to get through these big authorities. While most of the overlords possessing smaller states, especially in Suarāshtra, were proud enough not to stoop before the foreign authority, the big states succumbed to them, saluted them and became dependant on their army. Therefore their lust for the expansion of their kingdoms was encouraged by the Britishers. That is what Colonel Walker shrewd treatise (1807) perhaps meant. So the big states captured the small states of these brave heroes and started to exploit all around. They supported the big traders, who gave them bribe to exploit the innocent, poor and middle class people who were otherwise very happy under the authority of their small rulers as they could easily approach them and found solutions of their problems because of the generosity of the overlords. While under the great authority there was nobody to hear their complains. More cruelty was almost exercised by the tyrant forces of those kings and Britishers, so much so that even the women and children were not safe. They gave orders to their soldiers, the Baloches of Gāekwād (at Okhāmandal) and the Sandhis of Bhāvnagar to exploit people. They not only looted people of their riches but of their honour too. They harrassed poor and even raped women in day light. The incidents in the story of Jodhā Mānek are full of this bare reality. The Bahārvatiyās were almost forced to revolt.
Then why shouldn’t these scholars observe the morality, the social welfare under these big powers? Bahārvatiyās were actually the controllers of this corrupt and disgraceful act. That is why the authorities defamed them calling robbers and no common people had the courage to defend it. The irony is we are calling them robbers even imitating without recognizing the real scenario.

Yes, they looted the traders, but it was to prevent their exploitation over poor. What else would be the reason of burning their account books? They prevented the farmers of their own land from cultivating the land as they didn’t want even a single seed of grain to reach these tyrants. The same practice was done by the great hero of our country Mahārānā Pratāp when Akbar captured his state. Shivājee of course looted Surat seven times, as Meghāni says to establish and feed his forces against the Mohmedan kings. Then why should these Bahārvatiyās be blamed too much, and not the original oppressors? No righteous Bahārvatiyā had ever used the wealth secured by the loot for his own. On one hand they looted, on the other they distributed it among the poor and needy people.

And even if you consider them looters and cruel men, they were not the crevices of that literature or the author as they did not actually produce them. On one hand you expect historicity and on the other you have the fear of immoral influence because of the real picture! And as Meghāni says folk literature has one sublime merit: natural truthfulness: Good or bad whatever happened, caused or thought, all these descending in word keep on flowing in new generations subsequently.

According to his contemporary author Rāmnārāyan Pāthak such literature is to be observed with mixed approach historic and poetic, the reader or listener can also think of the vulgar or– think of it with the view point of reality, remaining neutral. History is not only the clamour or thrush of the states but the mind of society of the time, social customs, social interest, intent also. That which is historically bad can also be seen. The conspiracy of blasting the parliament of England (with gun powder) can be reported in history, according to Rāmnārāyan Pāthak.

In the three volumes Meghāni narrates the tales of 13 Bahārvatiyās and the subject matter deals with the folk life, but it is not imaginative or
apocryphal. It is of regional oral history of real heroic men, lionine in form and in heart. The chief among the reasons of ‘Bahārvatā’ was the torture and tyranny of big states such as Marāthā, Gāekwād, Bhāvnagar etc. and selfish law and double standards of British Company. Even the Judicial Assistant of Kāthiyāwād, and later famous as Chief Magistrate of Bombay High Court, Rev. F.C.O. Bimon has written in his article:

“There was a great deal of fine true chivalry in the old outlaws. They were almost without exception have been driven into outlawry by oppression and few of them, at least in early days, were guilty of wanton cruelty to women and children or the old and feeble.......... I believe I am right saying that every one of the genuine old Kāthiāwār outlaws (with perhaps the exception of Jumā Gande) was wiped out, either by sword or the gallows or transportation, before I left Kāthiāwār. I had much to do with the last scene in many of these adventurous careers and as a rule while I had to enforce the law I could feel a genuine respect for these misguided hardly treated desperate men…”

Together with Prabhudās Thakkar, Munikumār Bhatt also objects certain aspects of Bahārvatiyās, but it remains only confined to one or two sketches of Bahārvatiyās, that are included in Part-1. One thing is notable about Munikumār Bhatt’s humble objection towards Meghāni’s two statements in his prologue. When Meghāni writes that the entire public under the Bahārvatiyā’s rule got beaten, got harrased and yet (so generous that) perceived their intrepidity. He protests:

“The fact is certainly that the weak people moved on fearlessly in every good Bahārvatā, the poor had no fear of being looted. Not only that but there remained the probability of getting something, and lessening the cruelty of the authority, and distributing the wealth of the traders addicted with
the sense of extreme proprietorship, among poor people, thus the Bahārvatiyās used to set up equanimity among the public that was not equal and as a result secured their place in public heart. So in brother Meghāni’s statement – perhaps unknowingly – the fact that is depicted as the public merit is indeed dependent upon the Bahārvatiyās virtue.”

Secondly when Meghāni says that Bahārvatiyās perished on the perishing of their righteousness and he places the belief of the deity’s help in the support. Munikumar Bhatt protests that the Bahārvatiyā could not avail the shelter, the defence and the facilities which the state had. The only weapon of the Bahārvatiyā was his moral approach, his religious and righteous intent. By these two he could arouse faith in public heart, extend fearlessness about himself among the people. By giving up these two main and essential merits they give up their one and the only support and that is why the destruction takes place according to him.

These chivalrous and wonderful tales have been obtained during the period of our own freedom movement, except the tale of Jesājee – Vejājee, wherein the material is more of legends and with less historical evidence, as most of the Bahārvatiyās lived during the whole of the 19th century. The circumstances produced four types of Bahārvatiyās, depending on the causes, as classified by Kincaid:

1. Girāsdār (landholders): Against the states that have seized their small states or property.
2. Unprovoked Bahārvatiyās: With their grievance against the authority for the good of others or purpose of charity.
3. Personal Revenge: For some family struggle or following some criminal act.

Robbers: Those who rose for theft and robbery.
The Bahārvatiyās described in part-2 were real heroes in the sense that they themselves were the sons of kings, obeying righteous conduct till the end of their lives without any exception. All the austerities and regulations of Bahārvatā in the real sense of the term are observed in the life, exploits and interactions of these Bahārvatiyās. As the famous Gujarāti poet ‘Sundaram’ says reading these records the picture of the situation of Kāthiyāvād at that time stands out vividly before us. The kingdoms of Kāthiyāwād, their intrigues, their injustices, their tyranny, etc. are visible in these records. And together we see these cleansed and valiant Bahārvatiyās striving with heroism. The Bahārvatiyā Jogidās Khumān struggled with the king of Bhānagar. He rescued the public being crushed under the tyranny of the Sandhi Sepoys of Bhāvnagar state, tired out the state and got his estate. Jodhā and Moolu Mānek strived against the tyrant governors and Baloch sepoys of Marāthā state. A little history of Dwārakā presented before us is getting alive here. The last tale is of Jesājee- Vejājee who strived against Mohmad Begadā.

Most of the Kāthi Bahārvatiyās and the Bahārvatiyās narrated in Part 2 belonged to the first group, i.e. Girāsdār (Tālukdār). They became determined to do or die against the unjust invasion on their small states or property by the big power, as Kincaid also says,

“...........It always happened that the protecting state had acquired part of the Kāthi’s land, it hungered for the remainder. It would then provoke quarrels and on some pretext or other violate its agreement. It was then useless for the Kāthi to seek redress in the state’s own court, so calling together his servants and relatives and placing his wife and children in some friendly shelter, he would turn his back on the homestead where his family had lived for centuries and making Gir his Sherwood forest proceed to...........”34

This book is chapterized on the three wonderful tales of the first ranked Bahārvatiyās, as Kincaid appropriately regards them. According to him:
“The first types rare full of interest and vigorous and they well resemble the earlier outlaws of England. When the property of the courtier of Huntingdom was seized, the courtier left for Sherwood Forest, gathering his men. Till today he is famous as Robinhood.”

The first and foremost tale in the book is about Jogidās Khumān (1816-1829) and his generous enmity with the king of Bhāvnagar who captured his domain of 84 villages – Kundalā (Today’s Sāvarkundalā). The mini novel like story in 21 chapters describing different incidents together with some more evidences and information covered in more than 80 pages, is the tale of the great saintly hero whom the great poet of Gujarāt, Kavi Nāhnālāl has honoured as ‘Jogi (Mystic) Bahārvatiyā’ exhibiting his feeling to write ‘RobRroy’ of Sorath on Jogidās and expressing his grief over Jogidās’ so little a place in the history book Bhāvnagar Statistics which is followed and mostly imitated by the English historian of the time, Captain Bell in his book History of Kāthiāwār, as stated by Meghāni himself. But Kincaid is almost fascinated by the character of this magnanimous man as he considered him to be the hero of the sublime Duhā received in his research and rendered the Duhā in a beautiful verse in English –

Dhruv chale, Meru dage, *Mahipat mele mān,
Jogo kin Jāti kare, Kshatrivat Khumān!

[The stars may fall from heaven’s dome,
The pride of *thrones depart:
Yet valour still will make home,
In Jogā Khumān’s heart.]^35

The second tale is of Vāgher landholders of Okhāmandal (Dwārakā) Jodhā Mānek: Mulu Mānek (1858-1867) becoming Bahārvatiyās against Marāthā king who seized their Okhāmandal. It is also a huge tale, the longest with 30 incidents covered in more than 80 pages. The two brave Vāghers, the

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*The original word “Mahadadh” (Ocean) is misunderstood here as ‘Mahipat’ (king).
uncle and his nephew fell victim of the malice of Marāthā and the British, as Kincaid writes:
“He (Jodhā) came, as his name (brave warrior) indicates, from Mānik stock that at one time ruled Dwārakā and Okhāmandal before the Marathās with British assistance established themselves therein. Rather than being killed by the enemy he chose to die, with the stroke of a Chāran’s sword.”

The beautiful translation of the ballad on Jodhā exploit at Kodinar is made by Kincaid:

And he gave with open hand to each

…………………………………………..

When Jodhā Mānek looted Kodinār.36

The third tale, of Jesāji- Vejāji (1473- 1494) against the state of Junāgadh, is narrated in 11 chapters covering 34 pages. The story is more of miracles and legends with less evidence. It resembles the old age, especially when Mohmmed Begdā conquered Junāgadh in the later half of the 15th century and seized the tālukās of Jesājee- Vejājee. In 1943 the ‘Bahārvatā’ resulted in the compromise but after some time the Bahārvatiyās ended their lives strangely by killing each other.

iii) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

In his prologue to Sorathi Bahārvatiyās Meghāni himself has emphasized the social, political, historical and cultural importance of these tales of great oral tradition saying that they are not the mere sketches of Bahārvatiyās involving their good and bad actions but they involve the whole scenario of the time around them, the social, political and cultural backgrounds are also served together.

The present thesis aims at bringing the literature dealing with art, culture and civilization to the light as Meghani himself said, ‘Folk mind kindled the lamp of its indigenous oral literature’ regarding folklore as the universal language illumining the path for the generations; as the voice of the desert, of the sea and of the mountain. By the means of this thesis on folk literature that has provided the above-mentioned influence, an attempt is made to bring it to the service of entire world through the world language.
The tales belonged to the time just before the transition of the nation when the revolution was about to begin because of the oppression by the British and passiveness of great kings. Therefore they also serve historical, social and political purposes. Therefore focusing on the thematic concerns with human touch and universal appeal an attempt is made for the revival of folk literature and the search for the uncultivated lore serving as the vital force reshaping the cultural and literary life of the people, as it seems the need of the hour, as man has become machine-like and the erosion of values is prevailing.

The author concludes his introduction saying that the element of Bahārvatīyās has started to be woven in our modern literature of novels and dramas. In this situation the collection of these old records may serve to fulfill the aim that the works written on the name of Bahārvatiyās may not become perversed or illusive for the improbable or improper imaginations and getting inspired by those old illustrations of honesty and dignity the new creations may become more natural and less dramatic. According to him the Bahārvatā of every age occurs in different shape but the principle is one and the same – The desperate challenge against the immoral acts of every authority – of state, religion, etc., and their resoluteness, desperateness, devotion, tolerance, divine faith, faith in self, generosity and valour deserve to be generated at the flank of the new era and to consider the undeserving factors such as brutalness, cruelty, etc. that are to be abandoned.

Thus the thesis aims at popularizing the treasures of folklore, of the legendary human beings devoted to self-respect, valour and justice, of the land where the undercurrents of civilizations continue to flow beneath the layer. Hence, the humble effort to highlight Meghāni’s endeavour to exhibit and depict the forces providing dynamism and spirit – be they of our own or others, ancient or modern, his attempts towards the beholding of common factors of the people dealing with the sense of universality and fraternity by means of the lore of the yore which has remained the life blood of Gujarāti people for decades, is made here with the objective of sharing it with the people outside Gujarāt. As they are the sublime works—the sagas of sheer bravery and heart rending stories and incidents, full of joy as well as elegies with pathetic heartaches, which can arouse the interest of the people in any
corner of the world with their human touch. With the indications to compare them to the lores of other lands, national as well as international, and approaching pragmatically with different contexts and meanings, the scope of finding out the relationship is thought over proving that folklore is the tale of folk’s heart – be it of cultured people or people of jungle, they are to be alike. Thus, the justification of the rare human touch is made, as they are beyond time and place, with differences of tongue and manner. This way the approach of Meghāni that the lore is the one silken thread binding the whole human race together, one supreme religious substance, is also focused here as religious teaching is actually the function of folklore as Meghāni says its original meaning is to connect the people with the human element while referring a western scholar:

“In one sense folklore is a religious teaching. Latin root ‘ligare’ means – to bind, to untie. Folklore binds greatest distances together. Wide distances are spanned by the far-reach of folklore’s human touch.”

Hence, apart from justifying the human touch in the book, its significance and spreading the great work to the English speaking world it has been intended to enrich the world critics and provide the scopes of further research. The thesis aims at revealing this great work of Gujarati emphasizing human values, national and universal spirit to non-Gujarati readers by this rendering and critical study; and intends to introduce Jhaverchand Meghani as a true representative author of an entire generation of Gujarat during the Gandhian era to the people of classical as well as popular interest all over the world. The aim is also to serve towards Meghani’s desire expressed in his last call to the thousands of youth studying in universities to come out and gird up the loin to collect the old lore of folk dialect and present it to the door of the University.

Coming in contact with the ‘Vāngmaya’ of lofty oral tradition of old times when story telling blossomed with full spirit, the etymological purpose is also to be served referring and reviving some sublime expressions and constructions – prose as well as verse. As Pushkar Chandarvārkar says the
customs, dialect, disguise, virtue, habits etc. of different men and women, even the nomadic ‘the anthropologist may also receive much spices.’

Therefore, the thesis aims at serving etymological, ethical, ethnic, ethnological and anthropological perspectives by re-introducing the customs and dialects, the manners and culture and attracting the interest of the learners belonging to the same civilization apart from serving the objective of enhancing art and literature and being useful to present and future by presenting the work of past with the quality of permanence and sublimity relating to present. An eminent Gujarāti thinker and learned writer Rāmnārāyan Pāthak rightly observes:

“These stories should be collected for historical point of view and that of old language, and those seeing with this point of view will always find it useful. By such collection the literature of stories will have more colour of reality. Moreover the keys to direct them properly in present will be found by the acquaintance of the man of past. This task is performed in other countries, and in our nation, Meghāni has served for literature by such task…..”

Finally the researcher also aims at providing the material signifying our own culture and civilization which is full of interest on one hand and which serves for the inculcation of value system on the other, so that we may use the books of our own culture for teaching English language and literature to college entrants who can study them with taste and comfort, especially to ones, who study English as the second language and find the books of other countries less comfortable in the beginning.

Thus, the thesis serves multi-perspective backgrounds together with extending the great work of a legendary author to people outside Gujarāt.

iv) HISTORICAL AND SOCIO- CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The word ‘Kāthiyāvād’ deals with historical significance. It is named after the community of great Kāthi warriors, land holders and rulers said to
have originated from Sindh, after the 9th century AD, and came to conquer the Kāthiyāvād province – Hāth Samsher lai Kāthi-e Kāthiyāwād kidho (with the mighty sword in hand the Kāthi made Kāthiyāwād).

Kāthiyāvād which is now known as Saurāshtra has its own history, tradition and culture. It is believed to be the mainspring – Akshaypātra - an inexhaustible treasure of Gujarat’s folk literature. It is a unique land that is throbbing and alive and ‘has a history yet to be told’ in the words of Meghāni. Not only old folklorists and poets but Englishmen like Kincaid were so much impressed by that region. In his poem “Envoi: Kāthiland” he declares his utter love:

Yes, Kāthiland I love you, right from Bāwli to Porbander
Under any sort of aspect, any skies
.....................................................................................................................
And by Jove...........................................................................
And I’ll take the Friday train to Kāthiland!

Meghāni has written in his introduction – There were no government, courtly or public documentation to reach the conclusion whether the tales received by him were historic, half- historic or non- historic, they were not told merely by Chāran – Bhāt, the relatives of Bahārvatiyās, officials, common people of village, the participants of Bahārvatā themselves, eye- witnesses, etc. variegated knowers were approached and then this milking has been done. So he takes this material as the guide to some extent in the darkness of the history and with its support wants to explore the acts of the Bahārvatiyās as a whole. And the points for this exploration are:The Bahārvatiyās of other countries and provinces: The hearty attitude of country people: the reasons for that earnestness: The construction of Bahārvatiyās’ biographies in European literature; The Bahārvatiyās’ shelters, beliefs, worships etc., The oppression of big powers, the double standards of Britishers; The lack of national concept, political chaos and numerous other factors.

The popular literary figure Rāmnārāyan Pāthak is impressed with the historical and socio-cultural phenomena depicted in the tales. He writes:

“As Meghāni has used the language of old storyteller the historic viewpoint gets some assistance too, we can be closely acquainted with the merits
and demerits, strengths and weakness of the
nature of Kāthiyāwād.\textsuperscript{40}

History is not only the clamour or thrush of the states but the mind of society
of the time, social customs, social interest, intent also. Not only in Saurāshtra
but in many countries the works on outlaws have become very popular as
they deal with the eulogies of bravery and valour. Wherever and whenever
bravery and valour took place the literature singing the praise was attracted.
Meghāni in his preface quotes Prof. Gamier,

“The outlaw now as a humble poacher and as an
ideal champion of the rights of man against Church
and state is a natural favourite of the ballad.”\textsuperscript{41}

One significant aspect of the Bahārvatiyās of the time to be noted is the
Bahārvatiyās’ fearless and brave encounter with the British authority. The big
states were exercising oppression over the people in general. They also
encouraged the shrewd capitalism of the traders and rich nobles who had
almost become the blood- suckers by exploiting the public without any
restraint as they used to bribe the governors and the big kings were
encouraged by the British armies. Britishers actually wanted more and more
wealth through them and they inspired them by supporting with arms and
forces to capture the estates of small overlords and landholders and fleece
their population, too. People suffer a lot because of this political chaos,
material exploitation and more degradation. According to Meghāni, the
Bahārvatiyās believed that the English did not come here for the arbitration
and justice, and they were responsible for the plight of the overlords as they
assisted for the battles within our country between the big kings and the small
rulers. Meghāni gives the example of Jogidāś Khumān hearing about the
degraded business of East India Company from the pilgrims all over the
nation visiting Saurāshtra. That is why perhaps Jogidāś did not allow even a
single vessel of the British at the ports of Kāthiyāwād as depicted in the tale.
The killing of the political agents and soldiers by Vāghers in second tale of
part-2, Jogidāś Khumān’s brave encounter with the special political agent,
Barnwell stationed at Amareli with huge army with that purpose as mentioned
by Meghāni in the prologue and many other examples justify the fact. So
when the great kings of India and the leaders were under the control and
command of the mighty British rule, the brave and the bold Bahārvatiyās faced them with heroic spirit and even proved to be the real challenge for them. Many Bahārvatiyās fought with the British soldiers and officers. They also sometimes attacked and highjacked them and kept with them for days.

It is really an interesting point that Bahārvatiyās disliked and confronted the presence of Britishers in our states. In a sense, they were the first rebels against Britishers, even before the rebellion of 1857. As the authority of the time was apparently against them, only the ugly side of their act has been recorded in the histories of different states. As these events are uncouth there arise a doubt of their being improbable and secondly these incidents are not recorded anywhere. There is certainly no probability of their place in the record of Bahārvatiyās' opponent authorities. It is common that their records describe the Bahārvatiyās in the words like 'rogues', 'robbers', 'rebels' and presenting their dark side they try to darken them more. And people would also feel their safety in concealing their good or bad experiences. The population had to suffer the rage of the authority on getting their meetings with Bahārvatiyās revealed, and so they also kept quiet. Gradually, as time passed, the fear of the state getting removed, the events of Bahārvatiyās started coming out. Secondly, historians like Captain Bell in his History of Kāthiyāwār and the writer who loved history, an experienced civilian, Kincaid in his Outlaws of Kāthiyāwār have drawn the superficial pictures of Bahārvatiyās with prejudicial and shallow outlook of English officials, according to Meghāni.

Meghāni was also aware of the difficulty of the discrimination of the extent of picturesque element and that of truth in these tales. He has remained conscious by not adding any fictitious character while performing the duty of the editor of historical material. And yet the editor has to be in harmony with the character and after attaining its historical nature and other light or dark lines he has to fill up the details of description on the basis of the impression on his mind as he cannot afford mere reporting of the historical subject matter, according to him. Meghāni assures in his prologue that he has not permitted his imagination except for the composition of words required to put the characters and the incidents in their proper perspective. But the documents and records of the English officials, even if they are superficial
involving the shallow outlook of the administrators, become the reliable evidences of many such incidents as they were very near to the dates, time of the occurances, for example, Kincaid’s reference of Jodhā Mānek’s raid on Kodinār during the time of 1857 rebellion. And so the thesis examines its historicity referring and comparing to the historical events, books and even the records of those enemy states and English officials who deliberately diluted, reserved and tried to curb the praise of the heroes as the poet Nhānālāl says. For example the historical ballad, at the end of the tale of Jogidās Khumān, which is composed by the poet laureate of Bhāvnagar state, though it deals with the praises of both Jogidās Khumān and the king of Bhāvnagar describes the surrender of Jogidās Khumān while in reality it was the case of the compromise in a dignified way wherein Jogidās is considered to be the equal of the King. Secondly, there are no evidences of their imprisonment too. Moreover, as these events were not very old, there was the advantage of still having some witnesses according to Meghāni as most of the tales were of recent past except Jesājee – Vejājee all the Bahārvatiyās lived during the whole of the 19th century and especially after Colonel Walker’s shrewd Agreement (1807). The writer has obtained his material in three ways—

1) From the writings and documentations of English officials and historians like Captain Bell, Kincaid, Justice Bimon, Bhagwānlāl Sampatrām, etc.

2) From the traditions and talks of bards, other people, etc.

3) By visiting the knowers and relatives connected with the incidents directly or indirectly.

This way being the folk stories of the regional oral history, such stories are rare in Indian and international folklore, except in Rājasthān. Even Robinhood stories are not of such historical nature as Maria Leech Writes.

“…………. No historical incident to parallel the story has ever been discovered” and “Robinhood is absolutely a creation of the ballad – muse.”

Thus, the tales deal with the minute details of the historical, political and social backgrounds of the time, as Pushkar Chandarvārkār rightly regards Meghāni as the author observing history in folktales and making them social report. That is why the stories can not be considered apocryphal but they
belong to the history of Gujarāt. The eminent critic on Meghāni, Kanubhai Jāni has written:

“The tales are the folk biographies of the regional oral history of Saurāshtra.”

In Europe these folk stories are of popular literature, here it is oral history concerned with distinct races, Nomadic men and women, their origin, places, customs, disguise, etc. So they have sociological, anthropological and ethnological significance. And Meghāni himself has also said that his focus was not only on the Bahārvatiyās but the history of folk life around them as it was really a wonderful and awe-inspiring culture of old Saurāshtra. To this light, Justice Bimon has also written,

“Yet as late as the eighties, Kāthiāwār was happy hunting ground for wild adventurous spirits, and a paradise for young officials. The last of the great outlaws were still at large, romance, lingering spirit of Rājput chivalry brooded over the land. Waste and desolate plains, ranges of stony hills, jungles dotted everywhere with the oases of rich cultivation and innumerable forts, darbārs and palaces. The Kāthiāwār of those days was full of glamour and charm, and threw its own spell over all those who came within its influence.”

v) PROBLEMS FACED DURING TRANSLATION AND THEIR RESOLUTIONS:

Sorathi Bahārvatiyā being the stories of sublime socio-cultural and complex historical background dealing with lively dialogues and interactions, dignified diction, with sweet and popular Kāthiyāwādi dialect mingling the colour of poetic beauty of the source language Gujarāti here and there, it proved really a challenging experience to render it into the target language, English that has completely diverse and different socio-cultural as well as structural background.
Secondly, most of the events and incidents took place more than 150 years ago and some of them even earlier, and were written 80-90 years ago. So many words and sentences, especially with phrasal and proverbial expressions of the source language offered a great challenge even while comprehending. There were words and expressions that no dictionary at my disposal included. And yet, the researcher has tried at his best to be as literal and as trustworthy as possible while rendering the source language text into the target language, especially while rendering the lofty dialogues and interactions of the peculiar dialect and ensured to preserve the surface meaning of the two as closely as possible but not so closely as to distort the target language structures seriously. Especially in the lively conversations where the author has given informal touch of the regional dialect of the time and colloquialism with the use of short sentences and expressions, the special effort was made to maintain the originality and effectiveness in the target language structures.

Apart from the evident problems in rendering a regional oral tradition as Sorathi Bahārvatiyā many new problems arose for the researcher. An effort was made to remove or belittle the barriers to bridge the gap between the vast areas of stylistics, literary history, linguistics, semiotics and aesthetics of Gujarāti and English. When the words, phrases and proverbial expressions with socio-cultural significance could not be translated with the help of dictionaries the synonyms were first sought and then tested again and again to suit the meaning and taste. Sometimes the experts and folklorists or elderly and experienced people, as the case required, were contacted even for some terms and expressions of the source language text, particularly for the meanings of some regional dialects of Okhāmandal (Dwārakā) in the second story, e.g. ‘Dwāarakā pānjee āy!’ (Dwārakā is ours!) and some Duhās. Sometimes when the author used the dialect of the time and didn’t render it in popular Gujarāti language, a sincere attempt was made to maintain both the spirit and meaning. However, the researcher tried to remove the complexities in the target language wherever practical application was more demanding, keeping utilitarian purposes in mind.

Thus, the search for the most appropriate words and structures to convey what is meant is made to adhere to accuracy honestly and exercised
flexibility to maintain clarity, wherever required. The glossary is also given at the end of every chapter in all the three tales wherever it was really necessary. As translation is not merely an imitative art, as it is already experienced, creativity has been emphasized at places while submitting to the reality of the writer. Particularly, the Duhās accompanying the prose proved really challenging and yet the challenge was worth taking. To make it comprehensible in the target language the verse form has been translated in prose to be practical as done by the author, after writing the original ones in Roman script to exhibit the rhyme and rhythm to English speaking world. However, some significant and exquisite Duhās have been first rendered in verse form to keep the poetic beauty up. As Robert Frost says, ‘One should learn to move easy in harnesses’some priorities had to be taken as required.

To sum up, the researcher enjoyed the fulfillment of the goal of rendering the great treasure with human touch and universal spirit catching up with problems that were evident or inevident before the process of rendering with the essential requirements of the purpose through a committed attempt.
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