Chapter – 1

Introduction
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The present dissertation endeavors to translate and critically appreciate non-translated folktales of Gujarati writer Jhaverchand Meghani (1896-1947) from Gujarati into English language. The title of the thesis is: ‘A Translation of Jhaverchand Meghani’s Non-Translated Folk Tales from Gujarati into English with a Critical Evaluations’. Meghani the illustrious folklorist, poet, journalist, dramatist, novelist and short story writer set a landmark in the history of Gujarati literature. The impact of Meghani’s writing on the minds of the young generation of Pre-independent era was so profound that Mahatma Gandhi in 1935 felicitated the author with the title of National Poet a poet. Meghani explored almost all the forms of literature but in the field of folk literature he made a path-breaking work by studying the folklore of Saurashtra and Gujarat. The study of folk literature of Bengal inspired Meghani to undertake the research of folk literature of Saurashtra. In 1921 Meghani embarked his journey of exploration and excavation of the folklore of Saurashtra and jotted down everything that he found from rote: songs, stories, ballads, odes, fables, legends, elegies; most of them were in derelict and disjointed state but he scrutinized and restructured them. Folklore that stems from human civilization exudes the essence of culture and traditions of the region and the close study of folklore functions as a key to unlock the cultural and social treasure trove of any region. As the present research focuses on folk tales which is the part of folklore the brief discussion of folklore and the relevant keywords like ‘folk’, ‘folklore’ and folktale is prerequisite.
‘Folk’ means people in general and ‘lore’ implies local traditions, handed down by word of mouth and usually it is preserved in the form of stories or historical anecdotes. Thus folklore is a tradition handed orally by one generation to another generation. Folklore is defined as,

…the collective name applied to sayings, verbal compositions, and social rituals that have been handed down solely, or at least primarily, by word of mouth and by example rather than in written form……It includes legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, spells, and nursery rhymes; pseudoscientific lore about the weather, plants, and animals; customary activities at births, marriages, and deaths; and traditional dances and forms of drama which are performed on holidays or at communal gatherings. (Abrams 70)

Defining Folklore Hasu Yagnik writes:

In folklore story, song, proverb, cliché, drawings, music, dance, rites, festival, cultural rites, witchery, homemade medicinal devices, remedies, Good omen, bad omen, forecasts, prophesies, embroidery, printing, daubing with cow dung, skills of substance production etc- various types of traditional educational skills are included. This is the real meaning of ‘lore’. Lore is a convention which is descended traditionally. (Yagnik 6)

Folklore is relevant even today because it unites modern man with social, cultural, nature, anthropological and religious roots. The root of all forms of art and literature also in one way or the other lies in folklore. Despite the fever and fret of day to day life in the twenty-first century, folk culture still looms large and surpasses all the odds of the time space continuum because folklore is the repository of the primordial history of a region and its collective wisdom. As the modern world becomes more industrial and moves farther away from traditional life style the study of folkloristic helps to integrate older traditions into modern life as well as continue to collect previously lost genres of
folklore. The exploration of folktales within folklore thus becomes very significant to obtain an ontological idea of the literature of a particular Society. The folktale is strictly defined as:-

...a short narrative in prose of unknown authorship which has been transmitted orally. The term, however, is often extended to include stories invented by a known author........ Folktales are found among peoples everywhere in the world. They include myths, fables, and tales of heroes (whether historical or legendary) and “fairly tales” (the German word Marchen is frequently used for this type of folktale) are not stories of fairies but of various kinds of marvels; examples are “Snow White” and “Jack and Beanstalk”. (Abrams 71)

Thus a tale circulated by word of mouth among the common folk is termed as folktale. Vladimir Propp’s classic study of ‘Morphology of the Folktale’ became the basis of research into the structure of folklore text. Propp discovered a uniform structure in Russian fairy tales. According to Vladimir Propp,

Morphologically, a tale may be termed as any development proceeding from villainy or a lack through intermediary functions to marriage, or to other functions employed as denouement. Terminal functions are at times a reward a gain or in general the liquidation of misfortune, an escape from pursuit, etc. This type of development is termed by us a move. (Propp, 92)

Thus each new act of villainy, each new lack creates a new move. One tale may have several moves, and when analyzing a text, one must first of all determine the number of moves of which it consists. The Gujarati folklorist Jhaverchand Meghani’s views regarding a tale are quite similar to Propp’s views. ‘Vartakar jivan na koy pan prasang ne ke mantaviyo ne ghatnarupe vyakt kare chhe (the story teller narrates or projects any happenings of life or opinion through a chain of events. Meghani
‘Moves’ or ‘Events’ are synonymous to each other. Thus Folktales is a short traditional narrative, usually anonymous, handed down orally and consist several moves and contains myths, fables, fairy tales, legends and the tales of heroes. The main aims of folktales according to folklorists are- Anand (Joy), Shikshan (Education), Varta - Sanskruti ane jagat na parichhay nu madhiyam (story is a means of introducing world). Folktales does not aim at preaching. Folktales never impart any moral lessons directly. It gives glimpses about life of people of particular era, region or country. There are various types of folktales- Pari Katha (Fairy Tales), Vrat Katha (Religious and rituals tales), Pasu Katha (Fables), Sthanik Dantt Katha (Regional Tales), Geet Katha (Ballads), Parakram ni Vartao (Adventures Tales), Prem Katha (Love tales) etc. Though they are categorized but many times even in a single folktale elements of various types of folktales are found.

The present research undertakes the following number of the Folktales from the anthologies of folktales by Jhaverchand Meghani

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>1st Edition Published Year</th>
<th>Total number of Folktales</th>
<th>Number of Folktales Translated</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Saurashtra Ni Rashdhar vol 1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
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<td>05</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Kankavati vol 1, 2</td>
<td>1927, 1936</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dadaji Ni Vato / Doshi</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>04</td>
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<td>Mani Vato-</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Rang Chhe Barot</td>
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In the anthology of Kankavati 23 stories have been translated especially to cover national, local and regional *vrat kathas*.

In 1922, Jhaverchand Meghani went to ‘Saurashtra Karyaalay’, at Ranpur. He took *Doshi Mani Vato* with him. The anthology was designed especially for teenagers. In 1946, during the seventh publication of *Doshi Mani Vato*, Jhaverchan Meghani’s son Mahendra Meghani pointed out the morbidity in the stories of *Doshi Mani Vato* to Jhaverchand Meghani. Mahendra Meghani’s remark raised the question of validity of morbid stories for teenagers. Jhaverchand Meghani accepted the suggestion of the reader Mahendra and cancelled the anthology of *Doshi Mani Vato*. He could not think of new edition of *Doshi Mani Vato*. In 1954 during the publication of a new edition of *Dadaji Ni Vato*, Mahendra Meghani went through the cancelled 15 stories of *Doshi Mani Vato*. He felt to preserve five stories from the anthology and added the stories with the other stories under the title of *Dadaji Ni Vato*. Thus, *Doshi Mani Vato* no longer remained an independent anthology. In this thesis one story titled ‘Sonbai’ from the cancelled anthology of *Doshi Mani Vato* has been translated to get the idea of morbidity on which ground the anthology was cancelled. The cancelled anthology has been taken here from the family file maintained by Jhaverchand Meghani’s son Mahendra Meghani (Lokmilap, Bhavnagar).
Total number of collection of folktales by Jhaverchand Meghani is 175. Out of these folktales, Vinod Meghani has translated 31 folktales into English from the entitled collection *Saurashtra Ni Rashdhar*. The titles of the following anthologies are as under:

1. *A Noble Heritage* - Vinod Meghani, 2003

Reviving Folklore is although a difficult task, it does not simply mean to try to revive the past and linger in some kind of a ‘golden era’ but to re-study them with the motive to throw light on the contemporary and future situations and to guide our minds into steps and strategies that may lead to the solution of some of the problems which face us from time to time. The oral traditions need to be studied and cultivated by reviving and recreating them to bridge the cultural lacuna between the old and the new, the past and the present. In the present age, the revival of folk literature is the need of the hour in two senses; as a study of the literary forms of the past that bears its imprint on the present, and as a record of the cultural life the remnants of which in some measure still continues either as values/ principles or as practice/ behavior. The contribution of Meghani as a scholar and compiler of Saurashtrian folklore is indisputable and comes foremost to mind when one wants to study the folk culture of Saurashtra. Emphasizing the importance of the revival of folk literature, Meghani in one of his lectures mentioned,

*Aje apni Bhasa, apna rivaj, apno vivek, apna hetu, apni niti matta vigere badhuj jivan krutrim bani gayu chhe, kelvani ne lidhe apne je sutki ‘protestant thai gaya chhe, jivan no rasa leta lajiya chiye, te krutimta nu kavach apne loksahitya na adhiyan thi- tena punuddhar thi- j todi sakshu (Loksahitya aane Charni Sahitya 85)*
Today, our language, our tradition, our discretion, our aim, our ethics and morality; life in totality has become artificial; due to education we have become protestants and feel ashamed of relishing life enthusiastically and with keen interest; we can knock down this cover of artificiality with study and revival of folk tales.

To make the classics of every culture accessible in written form, translation is the only medium to cross the cultural bridge across the world. In the recent years literary works in various Indian languages are no longer inaccessible thanks to a surge in their translation into international language English and national language Hindi. Popular Indian authors in translation are Rabindranath Tagore, Saadat Hasan Manto, Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, Munsi Premchand, Mahasweta Devi, Sunil Gangopadhyay, Illa Pandey, Pavan K. Verma and many others. Translators of Global Renown are Maureen Freely, the translator of Turkish books into English. She is best known for her work on Orphan Pamuk’s *Istanbul: Memories and the City* and *The Museum of Innocence*; Edith Grossman translated the Spanish works of Cervantes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Mario Vargas Llosa; and William Weaver made a mark by translating such diverse Italian writers as Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*, Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*; Jay Rubin, one of the English translators of Japanese author Haruki Murakami is credited with bringing to English readers one of the latter’s most accomplished novels *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. All these translators aimed at bringing contemporary vernacular literature to English readers. The aim of translating Jhaverchand Meghani’s Gujarati folktales into English is to manifest Gujarati classics in the world because Meghani pioneered the study and compilation of folklore in Gujarat. Meghani’s own words addressed to university scholars substantiate the relevance of the present research:
I offer the gist of my research at the feet of Gujarat, which was the goal of my life; I am offering it with a hopeful and satisfactory outlook. At this moment I express my innermost painful feelings of heart. I have endeavored to explore folk literature of one region. The desire was to dig up age-old oral tales but it remained only a dream. Now I call upon Gujarati youngsters studying in universities: a few of you should come forward and strive to fulfill this dream. Go to Raniparaj, Kaliparaj, our Bhil and Dharavalao and to our sweet-throated sailors, pick and gather the folklore still preserved with them. And offer them on the altar of the university; that will be our success and the real credit of our university.

The task of recreating in the twenty-first century in English through translation the socio-cultural and political ethos that was created by Meghani 90 years ago in his Gujarati folktales is challenging and calls forth various strategies to render the closet meaning. To justify linguistic, authorial and textual intentions and to meet expectations of non-Gujarati readers; encyclopedias, Gujarati as well as English dictionaries, thesaurus and reference books have been referred and the closet meaning of dialects, dialectical proverbs and idiomatic phrases have been incorporated in the present translation. Sometime when, some contextual words or sentences in *duha* and *chhand* which were not
found in encyclopedia, for those experts were contacted. Translator’s note given before the translation of folk tales in the beginning of the fourth chapter will give detailed idea of the strategies employed in the present research.

The following chapters would give an insight into the rich Saurashtrian culture as well as various traditions of this region. The study of Meghani’s folk tales will enable readers to know the region of Saurashtra and Gujarat. It would give glimpses of duha, chhand and Charni lore on which folk culture thrives. Furthermore, the present research attempts to respond to the need of reviving folklore and it would attempt to show that characteristics of Gujarati folktales are not very dissimilar in comparison to folk tales in general which is the hypothesis of the present research.