

Chapter: 3

The Representation of Region in Pannalal Patel's Novels

To discuss the representation of region in Pannalal Patel, the researcher has preferred to offer a brief survey of political, geographical and literary manifestation of the Gujarat region in this chapter through which the idea of the Gujarat region can be viewed in a broader perspective. This chapter briefly surveys the manifestation of Gujarat in literature and its geographical set up along with the detailed sketches of Pannalal's 'Ishan' region demonstrating its regional dimensions in the socio-cultural form. Ishan region portrayed in many of his novels has a living relationship with his personal life. This region, drawn in a realistic manner shows the true spirit of its native inhabitants and rural flavour of regional culture. This small region remains a symbolic representation of Indian rural culture during pre and post-independence period. Hence, various dimensions like the novelist's art of characterization, various communities, their customs, beliefs, superstitions, social evils, natural disaster as well as the specialty of the creator along with the dialectical tone, poetic sense and life-philosophy exercised by the novelist to locate the regional spirit are also included in this chapter.

The present-day Gujarat is considered one of the leading states of India. In the field of economic development it has attained the prestigious status. Owing to adventurous spirit, Gujarati people could establish commercial relationship with many foreign countries in the course of time. Gujarati people are known for their practical outlook, capacity of adjustment and peace-loving nature. While introducing *Economic and Regional Geography of Gujarat* Manjula Dave specifies that the regional set up of Gujarat is found changing in the course of time due to the political transformation in the state. After 1947, many parts of Tal-Gujarat (bottom part) were administered directly under the Maratha governance while regions like Ahmedabad, Surat, Panchamahar, Saurashtra and Kutchh came under the dominance of

Rajwadashasak (native rulers). During Mughal period Gujarat was considered a part of the Empire. During 942-1304 AD, under the dominance of Solanki rulers, Gujarat: 'Gurjardesh' was treated a part of region extended from South Gujarat to Rajasthan and Avanti and Bhilsa area of Madhyapradesh. Before this period, no single authority was observed over this region of Gujarat. The Western part of Saurashtra was under control of Saindhavas; South Saurashtra and North-East Saurashtra under the Pratiharas (as Keepers) of North; North Gujarat under Chavadas and North-East, Mid-part and South Gujarat were running under the rule of the Rashtrakutas. During the Maitrak period (470-788 AD), Saurashtra, North Gujarat and Madhya Gujarat were dominated by Maitrak rulers while over the northern part of South Gujarat the Laat Branch of Gurjars and Chalukyas' Laat branch was ruling over the southern part. During the Gupta period (400 to 470 AD) the administrative wing of Saurashtra was conducted separately. The authority of the western Kshatrapas (1 to 400 AD) prevailed from Saurashtra to Malwa. Hence, since the ancient times, Gujarat remained a part of other political regions. During the early historical period, North Gujarat and Saurashtra region were known as *Anarta* region. Afterwards, when Solanki rule extended its borders, it received the identity of *Gurjar Pradesh*. Lastly, the term *Gurjar Bhumi* transformed into Gujarat. Hence, the present day name Gujarat has existed since last 700 to 750 years. The evidence to the term 'Gujarat' is examined in *Kanhadde Prabandha* written in 1456. During the Muslim reign the name 'Gujarat' remained popular for this entire region. The regions like Saurashtra and Kutchha were already included in it during that period. Hence, the name Gujarat remained prevalent ever since Mughal and Maratha time (1-3). Akbar annexed Gujarat in 1572 and it remained a *suba* (province) of the Mughal umpire for the next 200 years. The Mughal Empire disintegrated after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 and was succeeded by Maratha rule (Yagnik & Sheth 11).

The existing state of Gujarat is the result of Mahagujarat Movement. Previously, it was a part of Bruhad Mumbai State. After independence (1948), Mahagujarat conference demanded to amalgamate the entire Gujarati speaking population under one single administrative body. As a result, on May 1, 1960, the Bombay State was divided into two States: Maharashtra of Marathi and Gujarat of Gujarati speaking people. Thus, Gujarat received its autonomous status covering the regions of Saurashtra and Kutchh with it. Many Gujaratis faced the harsh treatment to set it free from the Bilingual Mumbai state. Indulal Yagnik known as 'Induchacha' and Ravishankar Maharaj stood as the leading source of inspiration while carrying out the Mahagujarat movement. Ravishankar Maharaj, known as *Muksevak*, had declared the establishment of separate Gujarat state at Gandhi Ashram. Since then Gujarat has witnessed the variety of changing shades as well as prosperity and adversity.

Looking to its geographical set up, Gujarat is located in the western part of India and surrounded by Rajasthan to the North, Maharashtra in the South, Madhya Pradesh in the East and the Arabian Sea as well as Sindh to the West. It has ocean in the West, the desert and the Aravalli mountain range in the North, Bhil region, Vindhya and Satpuda in the East and the forest of Dang and Satpuda in the South. Such geographical make up has offered it a secured and healthy environment. The surroundings serve as an invulnerable castle to this region.

Gujarat is considered the land of the legends. K.M. Munshi identifies the region of Gujarat as framed according to the perception of the trio: Siddharaj, Hemchandracharya and Mahatma Gandhi. In his *Gujaratni Asmita* Munshi explains that the father of present day Gujarat was Siddharaj who had united the Gurjar Mandal and Laal, Sorath and Kutchh through his mighty muscles. He made 'Patan' a centre of education and enriched folk-literature of Gujarat. It cannot be mere region, a group of people or cultured person, but also a life-feeling earned through humble effort by collective willpower from generation to generation. The realization to that sense is called *Asmita* of Gujarat. Munshi has used the

term *Asmita* from *Yogsutra* and defines it as ‘self-consciousness’ (24). His devotion towards the land of Gujarat is misunderstood sometimes and he is accused of favoring provincialism, but he has clarified his views that “Gujarat can never be separated from *Aryavarata*” (25). Regionality can in no way protest Nationality. Region walks in its harmony, without disturbing national integration. If any individual develops and flourishes the consciousness of the region, it doesn’t mean he is hurting or attacking the feelings of the nation. The idea of family, social group, region and nation expands gradually and it should be treated the natural condition of his/her developing state. Regional pride transforms ultimately into the perception of *Vishavaprem* (worldly love) (27). Such *Asmita* was generated by Hemchandracharya (1088-1173). After leaving *paribrahaman* (travelling), Hemchandracharya dedicated his life to construct Gujarat according to his perception. He was known as *Kalikasarvagna*. He defeated the scholars and wrote texts through churning the heritage of glorious past and placed Gujaratis in the Sanskrit literature. His writing of *Kumarpalcharita* was considered the first effort to flourish the true image of Gujarat. Being inspired by Siddharaj, he wrote a book on Grammar: *Siddhahemshabdanushasan*. In order to explain the readers ‘how this grammar is applied in language’ he wrote an epic poem called *Dwayashray*. Hence, he offered a *Shabdadeh* (word-structure) to Gujarat that was growing of expectation during that time. Gujarat was born out of the imagination of the group of people adorned with bravery, cultural values and capability. The constructed Gujarat received its new form during Gandhian period when Gandhiji fought against the colonial government by conducting non-violent movement. The fallen state of Gujarat and its language after Siddharaj was survived in course of time by its bards and Manbhattas. In about 1645 the sequences of events were formed to provoke regional consciousness which was lost in the course of time after the fall of Patan. The lovers of literature were attracted towards Narasinh Mehta’s contribution. Premanand (17th century) sang the life-story of Narsinh and tried to strengthen the cultural heritage of Gujarat through

composing *Hundi*, *Shraddha* and *Mameru*. He proclaimed *Garvo Desh Gujarati* (Gujarat is Majestic!) in his work titled *Nalakhyan*. Wali Muhammad Wali, a junior contemporary of Premanand expressed his affection while parting from this land in a poem '*Dar Firaag-e-Gujarat*': "Parting from Gujarat leaves thrones in my chest ... The heart's still anxious to catch a glimpse of my Gujarat again" (qtd. in Yagnik & Sheth xi). Afterwards, Narmadashankar Dave, known as Narmad came to the stage of Gujarat in the mid-nineteenth century. In pursuit of knowledge, he studied the multifaceted scholarship, searched history and discovered the heroic tales of brave Gujaratis. The beginning of the modern age (Arvachin Yug) in Gujarati literature is considered with Narmad. In his Gujarati Lexicons known as *Narmakosh* (1873) Narmad begins with an invocatory poem Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat. He sang not only the geographical status, but the true spirit of the land of Gujarat:

Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat Dipe Arunu Parbhat,
 Unchi Tuj Sundar Jat, Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat,
 Uttarman Amba Mat, Puravman Kali Mat,
 Chhe Dakshin Dishaman Karant Raksha, Kunteshvar Mahadev,
 Ne Somnath Ne Dwarkesh Ee Paschhim Kera Dev...
 Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat.

, i.e. Glory to proud Gujarat, a glorious sunrise, Gujarat you belong to superior status. In the north Goddess Amba, in the east Goddess Mahakali, in the south Kunteshvar Mahadev protects and in the west Somnath and Dwarkesh are ready to protect, Glory to proud Gujarat. Narmad and his contemporaries established the prestigious status of the region in literature. The *Ras Mala* (1856) by Alexander Forbes (1821-65) has become a 'classic' text on Gujarat's regional history. Dalpatram (1820-98) whom Forbes credited his chief assistant as the source of his description, was one of the foremost interpreters of Gujarati literature and culture managed the affairs of the Gujarat Vernacular society and wrote extensively in favour

of social reform. He attempted to demonstrate how differences between castes were historical rather than religious in his essay *Jnatinibandh* (1851) (qtd. in Simpson & Kapadia 34, 63). After Narmad, many poets sang the characteristics and glory of Gujarat. Khabardar defines it as: “Gunvanti Gujarat”; Nanalal appreciates: “Dhanya Ho Dhanya je Punya Pradesh, Apano Gunilal Gurjar Desh”, Umashankar Joshi experiences the proud to be the inhabitant of this land: “Gujarat Mori Mori Re”. Hence, this feeling of the region has been flourished completely. The imaginative character of brave and courageous warriors shaped by the novelists has offered it a place of shelter. Through the search of literature and cultural values, this land received its wealth. But such feeling would become ‘narrowness’ and prejudiced, if it serves mere regional interest. The existence of Gujarat can never be separated from India. The Gujarati appreciates the *Rashtradharma*: the duty towards the nation through his language, literature, *sanskars* and life-spirit and gets ready to merge his existence within the soul of a nation.

Binding the region in mere geographical boundaries is viewed inappropriate. Gujarati poet Khabardar rightly justifies the natural and practical truth of Gujaratis:

Jyan Jyan Vase Ek Gujarati Tyan Tyan Sada Kal Gujarat;

Jyan Jyan Gujarati Bolati, Tyan Tyan Sadakal Gujarat.

i. e. wherever a single Gujarati lives, there exists the Gujarat forever.

Chandravadan Mehta seems to be dedicated to this land while expressing his desires:

Bhamo Bharatkhandaman Sakal Lok Khundi Vali

Lidho Janam Ne Game Thavu Ja Rakh Aa Bhumiman.

It means: Even after travelling around the whole earth, I would prefer to die in the land where I was born. Here, he wishes to validate the well-known saying of Sanskrit literature: “Janani Janmabhumichha Swargadapi Gariyasi” (Mother and Birthplace are greater than heaven).

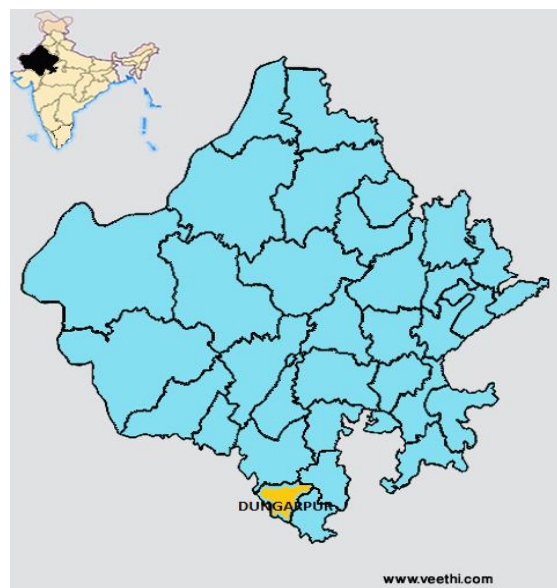
Hasu Yagnik while scrutinizing 'The Region and the People' in his *The Folklore of Gujarat* observes that Gujarat is a geographical region attached to the mainland of India, where human beings had inhabited since prehistoric period. It is considered that pre-historic inhabitants migrated to Gujarat were from the eastern coast of Africa. If the geographical process of separation of the African continent from the western India during the period when Himalayas came into existence, is considered then the possibility of the inhabitation of the group of African Proto-humanoids in the geographical part of Gujarat known at present as Saurashtra cannot be denied. Yagnik further clarifies that if the map is marked carefully, it is clearly found that the Arabian Sea has been formed in a gap after the two continents separated. Later on since proto-historic period of the stone age to the Copper-Bronze Age many tribes inhabited in Gujarat. The ethnologists have searched that the human beings which lived twenty-two million years ago in Gujarat belonged to the Negro or Negrito tribe. The findings of skeletons of human beings having long head, ordinary height, protuberant forehead and brows as hanging lower lips, etc. justify such a logic (2-3). The geographical formation of present day Gujarat is different than the ancient one. At present, it is the north-western region of the Federal Republic of the Indian states, is located between the northern 20.1 and 24.7 degree latitudes and between the 68.4 and 74.7 degree eastern longitudes. The area of this region covered by these four latitudes and eight longitudes is 1, 87, 091 sq. kms. (3). The geographical sub-units of Gujarat (here 'sub-regions') are Kutchh, Saurashtra, Madhya Gujarat, North Gujarat and South Gujarat. Two of these regions: Saurashtra and Madhya Gujarat have already been scrutinized in the first chapter while North Gujarat is included in this chapter.

Since 1930, Gujarat has remained an active force in enriching the image of true India. Gujaratiness is not against Nationalism. National feeling is the part and parcel of Gujarati *Asmita*. It is alive and awakened human being. The personality of this human being (region)

is constructed through rivers and mountains, but real constructors are its saintly figures who through their heroic deeds shaped the stature of regional identity.

Some of the Gujarati novelists have attempted to represent the concept of regional identity which merges within the soul of state in due course. They have introduced the regions like Sorath, Ishan, Charotar and Kutchh in their novels to exhibit the native culture in its multicolored form. The integrated form of such regions defines the entire personality of Gujarat's regions. The regional novelists have offered a chronicle related to the region. In the context of the region, they focus the issues like native cultural identity of the people correspondingly. Sometimes, mere the naming of the region governs the incidents, according to nature of regional impressions. The story takes place in the drawn picture of that region. Once having offered the name, the novelist moves towards depicting the social reality of that region. As stated earlier in the thesis, the representation of a region that persists in the novels transmits to the author's sagacity of place to his notion of self-hood itself. The narratives aim at bringing together the integrated past, which is lost in the course of time because of interfering factors like colonial impact, industrial revolution and changing values. They generate the pre-colonial or pre-industrial natural history of that imaginative or natural land.

Pannalal's Ishan Region:



According to the Puranic tradition Vaivasvat Manu entrusted the rule of different regions of India to his ten sons. The charge of Gujarat was handed over to Sharyata who had a son named Anarta and the region where Anarata ruled is present day North Gujarat (Yagnik 40). Hence, the North Gujarat region is also referred as *Anarta Pradesh*. Pannalal's depicted region *Ishan* is North Gujarat, which is connected with Rajasthan as Kutch is with Sindh Pradesh and South Gujarat is with state of Maharashtra. Hence, the neighboring states have their direct or indirect associations and reciprocal expressions in language, literature and culture. Gujarat, before receiving its present name and status, was known as 'Old Western Rajasthan' territory or what Umashankar Joshi called it 'Maru-Gurjar' (Maru-Marvad, Gurjar-Gujarat). Hasu Yagnik further clarifies that the usage of the household colloquial dialects, the customs related to marriage, their songs and some story-motifs of the Idariya Mewada Brahmin caste of Gujarat, of the Chaudharis of North Gujarat and supposedly aboriginal Bhil-Garasiyas of the Khedbrahma district are connected with Rajasthan. He justifies this argument by stating the similarities of some known ceremonies like the Pata worship of Ramdev Pir (who is considered the incarnation of God) and the Rel of Rupande-Malde of Rajasthan are also performed in several tribes and communities of Gujarat (4). Pannalal himself belonged to Chaudhari (Anjana Patel) community so his *Ishan* Region has live appeal to such impressions. The folk background designed by Pannalal has a mixed type of cultural heritage observed in Rajasthan as well as Gujarat. It has also been viewed that in the Gupta period the Meds of Media (presently known as Mer) and the Gujars of Georgia entered into India by the land route through Iran and Baluchistan, and from Punjab, Sindh and Rajasthan arrived in Gujarat (Yagnik 18). Pannalal has mentioned Bhoja with hundreds of Gujaras (a kind of shepherd community) in *Malela Jiv* in the chapter titled Haiyana Huda (Huda, Sung from the Heart) based on the love story of Bhoja and Velu (105). Similarly the Gujars community is also one of the sub-castes in Chaudhari community residing in

Sabarkantha (the region located on Sabarmati River), Banaskantha (region located on Banas River), Mehsana and Patan district of North Gujarat. Yagnik while surveying some historical evidences observes that the forefathers of the extant Bhills in the Sabarkantha were possibly the Nishads who are linked with the Nishads in the commentary on the Yajurveda. The Kshatra religion is revealed in their songs, tales, rituals, attitude to life, and in some of their royal characteristics. The tribes like Haihaya, Shabar, Kaarup, Barbar and Ahir merged with the Aryans in the course of time (Yagnik 16).

Pannalal Patel depicts mainly the Sabarkantha region in his novels. Sabarkantha is a district in the North-East part of Gujarat state of India. It is bordered by Rajasthan state to the northeast, Banaskantha and Mehsana district to the West and Gandhinagar districts to the South and Panchmahal to the east. Ministry of Panchayati Raj named Sabarkantha region as one of the country's 250 most backward districts out of 640 total districts in the year 2006. It is one of the six districts in Gujarat receiving funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) (Ministry of Panchayati Raj Sept. 8, 2009). Pannalal is the resident of Mandali village of Dungarpur district situated near the northern-eastern frontier of Gujarat where the border of Gujarat and Rajasthan states are linked. The whole region depicted by Pannalal exists as a geographical unit autonomously. His novels receive the importance of such region and its life. The chief occupation of this region is agriculture, which remains at the centre in his plots and characters. *Manvini Bhavai* and *Bhangayana Bheru* are the stories narrating the agriculture-centered village of decades ago from the border region of Gujarat. Darshak in a review titled as 'Truptino Ghant' on *Manvini Bhavai* observes that Vala Patel does not narrate merely the story of his own life, but indirectly narrate the glory of trustworthy community of meticulous village people, the burglary, the natural catastrophe, the landlords and the people subjugated and trodden by the riches and landlords yet enjoying the life with the spirit of wonderful aspiration (13 Trans.) Vala Patel while dedicating to the earth his just

born “peacock” (Kalu) of rare clay – making his devotional offering and avowing silently utters:

For gods and goddesses
People bring cocks, goats, and cattle
As solemn sacrifice.
But I would only place
My playful peacock of priceless clay
In the laps of the Earth

(E. D. S. 10).

Actually through the medium of Vala Patel, Pannalal himself expresses his attachment to the soil of his Ishan region. He has offered this invaluable piece of saga appreciating the beauty of his native land. The naming of *peacock* suggests the multicolored form of this land envisaging its natural surroundings.

Here, the sky, the earth and the exterior world of human being along with the interior one are woven together in such a way that they cannot be alienated from each other. So, this tale titled *Manvini Bhavai* is the product of the innate world of this region. The incidents depicted here, have a direct alliance with its earth and farming business. All the incidents occur here seem probable with this earth. To all these characters, the earth of this region is the whole lot. The famine, owing to the scarcity of rain remains the indispensable factors to develop the plot. The novelist narrates the wretched predicament occurring through devastating time and the horrific consequences of it as a form of reaction. The varying shapes and colours of the earth are at the center. Hence, the novelist could render the regional dimensions through this novel in a striking manner. What Henry James considers the ‘prime sensibility’ of creator in *Theory of Fiction*, seems proper in the case of a writer like Pannalal:

The question comes back, thus, obviously to the kind and degree of the artist's prime sensibility which is the soil out of which his subject springs. The quality and capacity of that soil, its ability to 'grow' with due freshness and straightness any vision of life represents strongly or weakly the projected morality. (313)

Pannalal's impressive novels seem to be revealed through any of such 'prime sensibility'.

Malela Jiv describes the love story of Kanji and Jivi under the backdrop of local colours. Many incidents are found closely connected to the business of agriculture, e.g. The character sketches of the farmers like Kanji and Hiro, the meeting of Kanji and Jivi at the fair held in the mountain region of Kavadiya on Janmashtami, their meeting under the shade of the field and the incidents of testing Kanji by motichhada (smallpox, measles) deity, etc. expose the regional sphere. The plot of this novel can be understood through its natural dealing. The distance between the two villages has been estimated around seven miles. The selection of two nearby villages and Kavadia Mountain, located amidst them by the novelist has been conducted efficiently. The fair held at the Kavadiya Mountain on Janmashtami remain the center of attraction. The incidents of meeting of two lovers can be managed naturally, if the location covered has a modest distance. Hence, the novelist has designed his tale by narrating two villages and Kavadiya Mountain situated in a triangle form. Pannalal chiefly describes the village called Udhadiya in this novel, which represents the general representation of Ishan region:

The village of Udhadiya was situated on a broad and high hill, providing a beautiful view. Most of the villagers belonged to the Patel community. Each mohalla consisted of eight to ten houses. In this way there were forty houses in all. There were about twenty scattered huts owned by the people of the Thakarda community. There was a shop owned by a Bania and the residence

of a Brahmin also nearby. Besides, a barber, a tailor, a carpenter and a blacksmith lived in the village. In this way, the village of Udhadiya was considered larger compared to other nearby villages (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 16).

Manvini Bhavai and *Bhangayan Bheru* describe the residential specialties of Bhill community:

The house measured hardly some fifteen feet each way. A compact mass of thorny shrubs bonded together formed its walls, and instead of the usual roof-tiles it had a thick thatch of pressed leaves. The front verandah was so low that only bending almost double could anyone enter it, not without difficulty. Instead of a charpoy there were four posts planted in the floor supporting a wooden plank on their top (*E.D.S.* 287-288).

Valamana is a tale of conventional community of rural culture and human beings confined in the rigid structure of conventions imposed by the *panch* (the jury made of five people to settle the social dispute). Though, the novel does not merely render the representation of villages belongs to Sabarkantha region, but also offers the usual representation of each region of Gujarat.

Na Chhutate the story of rural life of Thakore community belongs to Idar region. Cultivating the land, harvesting the crops, grazing the cattle and goats, cutting the woods, etc. are their routine works. This novel narrates the dacoitship of some people from this vigorous community. It visualizes their traditions, customs and practical approaches of day-to-day life. The novel describes the Magariyo Mountain, situated in the eastern part and newly settled small village like Dariyapar on the hills. When one sees at the monstrous stone surrounded on the peak among the thick bushes of its slope, he realizes vigorously that the name assigned to this mountain is praiseworthy because during monsoon when the lakes and fields located nearby are filled with water the mountain seems like giant alligator lies swimming in the

water (40). Dalo, once the dacoit converted into Gandhian and a freedom fighter, while departing from Magariyo expresses his gratitude towards it. He prays to God to offer him 'daughter like Dariyav, friend like Ratno and lap of Magariyo' even in the next birth (126). Such is his hearty attachment to the region and its soil. When poor people are harassed and imposed heavy taxes from Thakur, they settle on hilly sides to guard their living. The name Dariyapar is actually assigned by one of the young princes of native king. Dariyapar is named after Dariyav, a brave girl of Dala. People convert this forest land full of bushes and stones into a beautiful residence with their hard labour.

Pachhale Barne describes the plot demonstrating the special qualities of landlords existed once in a Dungarpur district. The major focus is on how the innocent subjects under their autocratic rule are harassed and oppressed. While characterizing the region portrayed here, the novelist illustrates that the difference between Tal Gujarat (Mid-part) and Himmat's region akin to the British Raj and Rajwadas (Native ruling). There is neither train facility nor the availability of postal services in the region, then how can one think over freedom or non-cooperation movement? (81) Hence, it's an interior region completely cut off from urban and modern culture.

The chief characters of Pannalal's novels stand as the representative of all the communities of Sabarkantha. They usually belong to Patidar (Patel), the riches, socially and economically backward class people, Bhill and Thakarda communities. The region is agriculture-centered. They all receive the nourishment of life from the earth of this region. The farmers are lively and awaken characters.

Manvini Bhavai and *Bhangayana Bheru* depict the tale of rural communities. Though Kalu is the chord master and the chief protagonist, but actually the 'Time' and 'Social factors' are at the centre of interest. The novel has been considered "Time-dominated novel" by Darshak, an eminent writer of Gujarati Literature. The earth of this region is everything

to them. They are painstaking, courageous and full of self-esteem. They have never learned to be frightened of pains and suffering. The outlook to face any predicament with strong willpower is acknowledged by the novelists among them, e.g. Raju, the beloved of Kalu, says in the days of famine when she receives the grain to manage for at least a month: “Well now for a month or so at least death is set at naught, is held off! In that breathing time, who knows, we shall manage something; if not exactly win a *kingdom* that the proverb promised!” (E.D.S. 322) Here, the voice of self-trust of soulful and hardworking people is echoed. Each work of these people either while cultivating the land or harvesting the crops confirms their unique sense of self-trust in usual life-spirit.

The real form of these characters excels in the great famine '56 (Era of Vikram: in the year 1956). When majorities of these people have lost their faith from God, man, nature and social system, Kalu neither becomes superstitious nor depressed. This soulful rural farmer has full trust in humanity of men. He considers that hunger is wretched, not human being. He strictly remains attached to self-respect and therefore doesn't lose the faith in life. He is not ready to beg even when death knocks at his door. He refuses to take *Khichadi* from *Sadavrata* (a place where food is served free of cost to needy people) by standing in a queue of drought-stricken people. He tells Raju, “Do you know this? Worse than hunger and more terrible, is begging. Hunger melts down our flesh and bones, but this begging, in fact-” “Yes, Raju, I tell you, it actually dissipates our pride, even our souls... turns everything to water... reduces us to nullity ”(E.D.S. 416). Raju too, has marvelous nature who does not sell her chastity to survive from hunger; she rejects the merchant's proposal, further gets angry that at any cost she would not corrupt her religion of ideal womanhood. While discussing the issue of scarcity of grain in her house with Kalu, she expresses her helplessness over miserable plight as a woman, but does not yield to circumstances: “That day when I went to the *shet's* house to get some grain I saw that granary of his crammed full... overflowing. He praised my

beauty and tried to play mischief, attempting to lay his hands on me. That day, returning home empty-handed, I was filled with such resentment, had I been a man I would have looted that granary then and there.” And adds further “... But what could I do? God has made me a woman!” (E.D.S. 320) Sundaram observes in his introduction to *Bhangyanan Bheru* that Pannalal’s Raju is revealed as a divine character in the form of Goddess Jagdamba and Chandi. Truly speaking, she is the incarnation of pity. It is clearly visible that more than love the element of pity towards all human beings is absolutely apparent in her character which survives her from physical hunger... positions her to be adjusted with her diseased and poor husband in domestic life ... even offers her new strength to survive her beloved Kalu from becoming a *kalrakshas* (time-being monster) (16 Trans.). The writer has very appropriately portrayed the evils of rurality, self-centeredness, narrowness, the complexes, the envious and conniver character sketches of Ranchhod, Nano and their cunning mother Mali, through which the overall personality of rural culture is demonstrated. The entire Bhil community also remains as one of the characters in the novel.

The characters depicted in *Malela Jiv*, too, are involved and associated to the same terrain. The continuous flow of cultivating the earth and the problems occurred out of it in daily routine life of Kanji, Jivi and other characters are at the roots in the novel. Besides being a true lover, Kanji proves himself the best friend and obedient brother. He has reverence towards Bhagat, the saintly figure. He loves Jivi very much, but the status of his brother in a community prevents him to keep her as his wife. He doesn’t believe in superstition and is bold enough to challenge man like Reshma and other worshippers of the Goddess. While confessing his love-affair with a lady named Baiba, Pannalal himself has confessed that ‘he was like Kanji’. When asked about his favourite character, Pannalal has shown the greater sympathy towards Kanji as his favourite one among all his characters. A man of high morals, Kanji leaves an unforgettable impression on the minds of reader

community. Jivi is a nice portrayal ever created by Pannalal. Kanji while appreciating her beauty says “Her feminine beauty is such that just a look at her would satisfy all inner desires for the entire life” (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 22). She is a sublime, pathetic and auspicious character. She is like blossoming delicate flower spreading its fragrance, ultimately gets to be withering down, but Kanji survives her by accepting her as his life-partner in the end. While the character sketch of Bhagat remains a selfless servant of humanity. He is such a gentleman who proves like a cool shade and shelter to the village people. He could scrutinize the psychology of human mind well. When Kanji accepts mad Jivi as his life-partner, Bhagat heaving a heavy breath mutters the philosophy over human nature: “O human Heart! How mysterious you are! On one hand, you spew the blood of sorrow and suffering; while on the other hand, you sip the nectar of love and joy!” (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 259)

In a novel *Na Chhutate* the whole Thakarda community performs the role of the character. The writer depicts the brave community associated with agriculture having the men like Ratno and Dalo: the dacoits, the cruel and evil character of Mashuro, Rimal, the brave man and the woman like Dariyav who in order to survive her husband even confesses the murder. The novelist has very appropriately judged the brave and promise-keeping Thakarda community by depicting such characters. Ratno and Dalo are represented as friends to ruin and solace to miserable people. The character-sketch of Dariyav, a daughter of Dalo, has been nicely portrayed by Pannalal: “Brahma had offered too much in exchange for wet complexion to Dariyav. Her nose seemed as if it were a petal of herbal tree (kesudo) placed sought from the heap. Lips too were small, charming... and eyes – extremely black-coloured pupils set in the centre of milky coloured black and thin eyelashes...” (13 Trans.). Rimal, the son of Ratno is a true son of the soil who very heroically challenges the Raj’s people. He is the heroic personality, but remains the victim of evil conspirators. Though ultimately proves his valiant spirit. Dalo is less educated, but proves his kindheartedness towards all while

Ratno by nature is like boiling milk. Dalo is full of patience and serious enough, while the Ratno is like an unmoving hard stone lying in the river. Both have been enduring against the mighty Raj (41). Mashuro is not only Mukhi of the village, but also the man of influence in the whole Betali's community. He has the ability to wipe out or survive anyone whom he wishes as he has good terms with Raj. The police inspector and Tehsildar too are considered 'his men' while Thakore of Betali uses to offer him seat on his red carpet (61). Lalakaka, the blacksmith is portrayed as the gentleman who tries to support the unhappy people and solves the social issues to avoid further complication. Hence, the majority of these characters depicted in the novel strive to perform their role as earthly human being. They neither demand wealth nor luxuries, but want a peaceful and self-respecting life.

In *Pachhale Barne* the small state of Dungarpur district and its Thakore and Thakurani (the native rulers) are introduced as the characters. The character sketch of Rajbai has been shown as a noble personality, who anyhow manages to protect her small kingdom (local state). The distinct portrait of small states (Rajvadu) has been made alive in connection to the region. Kumvarbai offers her dear son Amar to Rajbai to protect the native kingdom yet her whole life passes under wretched torturing from native rulers. She is shown craving constantly to receive motherly love. Galbaji is the noble servant to Rajbai and Thakore who tries to survive Thakore's prestige even after facing their harsh treatment. Himmat is the only educated youth and follower of Gandhian philosophy who resists Thakore's injustice and tries to protect the region from clutches of evil hands. He is a true nationalist. Himmat has pursued the Gandhian path, but reluctantly. Of course, his only ideal is to serve the nation, even to sacrifice the self for the sake of the nation, not as a helpless goat or facing the persecution like cattle, but as a brave and bold disciplined soldier. Maha Rana Pratap and king like Shivaji are his role models. He neither prefers to be a slave nor accept *mukhiship* (leadership).

The characters from lower level of society in Pannalal's novels spend their life in small villages for many generations, owing to their emotional attachment for the motherland. They do not migrate from their native land because of insufficient scope. To add to this, agriculture is their main business and their mind seems fully engrossed in it. They have little contact with other regions; as a result, they remain aloof from exterior influences. They preserve their local culture of folk-life, customs and traditions, the divine and semi-divine elements, festivals and song to enjoy their life within a world of limited sphere. The community itself becomes the living character in Pannalal's novels. Along with the love affair between Kanji and Jivi in *Malela Jiv*, Kalu and Raju in *Manvini Bhavai* and *Bhangayana Bheru* and Rupal and Dariyav in *Na Chhutake*, Pannalal portrays diverse social issues attached to this region. The rigid composition of community disturbs their existence and makes them the victims of wretchedness.

As stated above, the region depicted in Pannalal's novels is agriculture centered, i.e. the actual life is the product of the original design of reigonality. As mentioned in *Manvini Bhavai* farming is considered a droll saga. It is a property or wealth of these people. The farmer is considered the preserver of the world. He never begs from anyone except the rain-god. He doesn't get enough share of grain even if he works hard from early morning to late evening. The producer of grain remains grainless and receives mere course *Kodra* and *Kuska* (Unclean rice). On his part he receives mere drudgery. The other becomes the master in place of him without labour. Here, he is rightly called 'A Beast of Burden'. He is made to carry the weight. The farmer's living has been found fully attached to the earth and its nature. "There is truth in what people used to say," put in Shankarda, "The farmer has a backbone which is the mainstay of millions." "And yet the farmer is always sunk in misery!" Kalu says, "It's enough to make one feel outraged and ask, 'Does God mete out justice or injustice?' Right from birth, the farmer's lot is nothing but painful drudgery. Not a single chance turns up for

him promising happiness- whether that of creature comfort like food and drink or happiness from woman.” Kalu would have continued in that strain, but Ramo cut him short, “O you crazy fellow! Don’t you know, we are what they call the nourisher-preservers of the world? ... Haven’t you heard our priest- the man of sterling self-respect- declare that just as parents worry about their children the farmer worries about the world, having to work for it?” In the old saying quoted here-“The *Kanbi* has a *karod* behind him.”- There is obviously a pun on the word ‘*karod*’ which may mean spine, backbone or a crore (10 millions) of people. Thus, the sentence might emphasize that the farmer is self-reliant and strong or that millions of people depend upon him. In the old saying, nuances of both these senses seem to reinforce each other (*E.D.S.* 276).

The soul of Kanji in *Malela Jiv* seems completely involved in green fields and enjoying the beautiful form of nature. The novelist emphasizes that how can Kanji sleep at home when he has drifted into close friendship with such beauties of nature? Kanji loves:

To watch the moonlight spread across the land leading to the faraway hills, to delight in the sky pulsating with innumerable twinkling stars in utter darkness, to gaze at a single fleecy cloudlet drifting in the sky, or to watch the merry-making of the dark clouds resounding in the surrounding area. Besides... to watch the falling stars and the shining glowworm, or to hear the hooting of an owl or the roaring of some lion residing in the grove on the opposite hill!

(*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 151)

There is nothing surprising if Kanji’s poetic soul has an association with vibrant nature in a lonely environment same as the blood to his body. Actually to the farmer’s mind, the earth and the nature seem everything from where he receives his livelihood. When the rain-god shows its favour to drought-stricken region, Kalu by smearing the earth on his head while returning to Degadiya, his native land, speaks: “We are survived until today because of your

grace”! And all of them loudly utter the victory of the rain-god and mother earth (*Bhangayana Bheru* 19 Trans.).

On his way, Kalu merely seems watching the earth and its multi-coloured form. Sometimes he could experience its tenderness and smell the sweet fragrance or concede the unknown strength lies in that land. When the rain showers, the farmers move towards the fields and begin their work: “July rains arrived and the whole scene was suddenly transfigured. The villagers readied the ploughs with bullocks strapped up. Everyone started for the fields filling the countryside with the resounding echoes of the jingle of bells to their bullocks’ necks” (*E.D.S.* 71).

The real picture of village environment and its rhythmic association with nature is depicted in *Malela Jiv*:

The winter Sun, spilling its pink rays on the wheat crop, climbed higher and higher in the sky. The fragile morning dewdrops that had secretly taken their seats on the summit of the plants were on their way to fading away. A line of Paniharins, carrying a big brass pitcher on their heads, a small one under one arm and covering the other arm under the end portion of their sari were walking towards the village well. The sweet and melodious rumbling of the bullock-powered water-wheel had also begun coming from some of the fields (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 97).

The falling of rain brings man and nature to its life. The nature reveals its live association with Meghraj (rain-god). It shows the miraculous effect on dry land:

In five days’ time all the land whether cultivated or lying fallow turned green and throbbed with life. Just as when a young girl is about to come of age youth manifests itself in her every limb, in every tissue and pore of her body, so did youth blossom forth in every atom of the earth (*E.D.S.* 307).

The various seasonal changes of the village leave their vivid impression on the farmer's mind. The novelist has shown the arrival of *makarsankranti* and phenomenal consequence of season of spring. Such time in farming is considered very busy and laborious one yet people seem welcoming the festival of Holi in advance: "The festival of *makarar-sankrant* (Winter Solstice) came along and brought with it the bat and ball game (played like hockey) as usual. Simultaneously, it spirited away the green velvet that the swaying crops had flaunted all winter long. *Vasanta* (spring) had spread abroad his white and yellow bridal garment which too was tossed about and dissipated by the late winter breezes. On one side, sharp-toothed sickles were cutting through the ripened crop while the *Holi* drum was beginning to boom on the other" (*E.D.S.* 269). Hence, the novelist introduces portrayal of multicolored forms of seasonal environment and its harmonious alliance along with the celebration of festivals by people.

The customs and manners were and are the system to sustain the individual life bound up with the family entity. It mirrors the entire folk life and develops the spirit of facing the possible danger or calamity among the people. Every race or caste possesses its special individuality acquired only from its tradition. The people belonging to the Gujarat region have their characteristic individuality. It can be the expression of their attitude to life. Gujarati people are generally characterized as men having the capacity of adjustment, practical outlook, and peaceful, comfortable and non-violent by nature in general. Gujaratiness remains unharmed in everything like language, dress-code, a food or way of living. Though, at present many changes are observed in its social customs, manners, in vows and in celebration of festivals like 'Navratri Mahotsav'. Certain shortcomings manifested through illiteracy and rigid social frame, are woven together with traditions since past. Some of rigid customs and traditions have already disappeared in the course of time while some still exist in interior areas. To rationalize the aptness of beliefs, customs or traditions logically

or scientifically is rather an awkward exercise. But through the exposition of the evils pervaded in social frame, at least the task of social reforming can be carried out gradually as well as the utility of certain traditions can be understood in a better way.

Pannalal has vividly depicted the social world of his region keeping in mind certain features of Gujarati people. Residing in the lap of the nature, all these characters are the product of their individual region. As a result the whole effects on their daily routine, customs, beliefs, festivals, and professions are being experienced naturally, so the image of regional specialties comes through local colours of their daily life. Before some time, the community and the *panch* (the jury made of five members to settle the social issues) had its dominance over the villages, so people were forced to obey the orthodox and rigid conventions of *panch* either willingly or reluctantly. If one tries to refuse to pursue the established structure of community, the leaders of the *panch* soon punish him by throwing him out of the community. No one can challenge the authorities of the *panch*. If he wishes to re-enter the community, he has to accept the conditions formed by *panch* in a form of repentance. The writer describes such incident in his novel *Valamana* where Zamku has an illegal sexual relationship with another male. The situation brings havoc in the community. The *panch* gathers to punish her, if she doesn't follow the resolution drafted by the authorities. The community proposes three conditions:

- Zamku will have to pay the claim of the *panch*.
- She has to pay fines of two types of expenses to the community.
- She will have to seek forgiveness. (To confess the guilt.) This third condition is proposed from her husband's side. Of course, Manorda, the Mukhi has proved the third condition illogical by convincing them. In place of it, it has been decided that Zamku's father should arrange a dinner to please the group of twenty Brahmins.

After, fulfilling all such conditions, Zamku is allowed to re-enter in community.

If someone breaks the engagement, he will have to pay the fine to the community, e.g. in a novel *Manvini Bhavai* Ranchhod cancels the engagement of Kalu and Raju, as a result of it, Petha Patel, the leader of *panch* recovers two hundred rupees from Ranchhod in a form of punishment for committing the sin of breaking the engagement (Ch. 12).

The novel *Malela Jiv* is fully based on the orthodox customs of the community. The disgraceful situation of Kanji and Jivi's life itself is the proof of such caste discrimination. Kanji tells his friend, Hira that he would have certainly married Jivi if she belonged to his (Patel's) community. But Hiro tries to convince Kanji that why doesn't he get ready to pay the fine of two to three hundred rupees and break the social norms to engage with Jivi, but the fear of community prevents Kanji to do so and ultimately he gets Jivi engaged to Dhuliya, the barber of her community (ch. 44). The novel *Fakiro* also focuses on custom of widow marriage in the community, e.g. When Kashi becomes widowed; Bhuro thinks that she should re-marry Fakiro. But here too, the strong wall or the law of casteism does not permit as a widowed woman cannot remarry and bachelor cannot be betrothed with married woman" (*Fakiro* 48).

On the incident of death, they have the custom of wearing a particular dress, although such customs are by and large observed among other communities too. If one does not pursue them, it is considered that he has disobeyed the ideal norms of the community. The writer remarks the custom of wearing mourning dress in *Pachhale Barne*. Himmat, the educated youth of the village, goes to attend the condolence meeting on the death of Thakore Hamirji, wearing slightly different dress. In place of 'Safa' (turban like), Kediye and boots, he wears Gandhian cap, shirt and Jawahar brand coat. When Thakore and other people see him, they express their hate, anger and surprise (69).

There are sixteen *sanskars* ceremonies observed in Hindu culture. They are related with *Seemant*, *Garbhadhana*, *Pumsavana*, *Janma*, *Namkarana*, *Anna-prashana*, and

Mundanna. Though not all, but some of them like *Seemant*, *Mundanna*, *Lagna* or marriage rite, etc. are still performed with mirth and merriment. Jhaverchand Meghani has defined marriage 'as an epic of life'. In the past the marriage ceremony was being conducted for fifteen to twenty days. The main rite of the marriage continued for seven meals and five days. There were about fifty-two small or big rites. They were like *Kankotari*, *Vadi-Papad*, *Gar*, *Mandaparopan*, *Ganesh-Matali*, *Gotraj*, *Peethi*, *Mindhal-bandhan*, *Graha-shanti*, *Phulekum*, *Vara-yaan*, *Samaiyum*, *Alvum-calvum*, *Torane pokhan*, *Mayarum*, *Hasta-melap*, *Chori*, *Tel-sinchan*, *Bhane besadavum*, *Purat Paheramani*, *Ma-matalum*, *Kumkum-thapa*, *Kanya-viday*, *Vara-kanya-num pokhanum*, *Kodim-Kedo*, *Gotraj- puja*, *Dashaiyum*, etc. (Yagnik 77). Some of the traditions of Hindu religion are also represented in Pannalal's novels:

- ❖ To bring *Gormati*. It's a part of the marriage ceremony. The soil with raw bricks is used to construct *yagnakund* wherein the religious ceremony takes place (*Bhangyanan Bheru* Ch. 22).
- ❖ To arrange *Grahashanti* (performing small type of Yagna to please the gods and planets to receive their favor and peace). It is usually performed a day before the wedding ceremony takes place (*Ibid.* Ch. 22).
- ❖ To fill *Gotardo* (the pot of Lord Ganesh). The elder brother and his wife or uncle and aunt of marrying boy or girl perform this auspicious ritual to receive the blessing from Lord Ganesh. Among Hindu community, to begin any type of religious ceremony, Ganpati Pujan, i.e. the worshipping of Lord Ganesh is performed. Ganpati is considered the *Vignaharta* and *Mangalkari* (who removes the obstacles) deity in Hindu civilization (*Ibid.* Ch. 22).
- ❖ To offer *Mameru*. It is one type of event organized on marriage ceremony where the uncle (mama) of bride brings her money, cloth and jewelry. Since the time of Manu, daughters are treated as the inheritor of father's property. After marriage, daughters

go to their husband's place without carrying any property in the form of land, house, etc. with them. Consequently, on her daughter's marriage time, she is allotted the part of her father's property called *Mameru* (*Ibid.* Ch.22). It is also considered that female exploitation can be prevented through such healthy system because here she is considered the equal partner in a property matter. Male dominance and women's dependence on male over the matter of wealth and property can be reduced to a large extent through such tradition.

- ❖ To arrange a pre-marriage party (*Phulekum*) where the bridegroom rides on a horse in a procession and people enjoy the celebration by cracking the fire cracks along with dancing on drums (*Manvini Bhavai*).
- ❖ To offer *Barmu*, the funeral feast on the twelfth day organized for the village people and the relatives of the dead person. It is their belief that the soul of the dead one showers its blessing and it may rest in peace if the inheritor of the dead one performs such offerings. *Anna Danam* (the donation of food) is considered *Maha Danam* (great offering) in Hindu culture through which one can earn *Punya* (the reward of good deeds for which one receives the auspicious fortune). Kalu performs such offerings after the death of his father, Vala Patel. Though, such customs are not observed in every community, but Chaudhari, Patel, Rajput or Thakor community used to practice such offerings in those days. The present scenario is slightly changed where the importance of such customs seems to decrease gradually (*Manvini Bhavai*).
- ❖ *Antyesthi* or obsequies is the last ceremony among sixteen *Sanskaras* of the life performed in Hindu culture, i.e. the offering of a silver or gold coin in the mouth of the dead one is considered one of the parts of *Antyesthi*. This offering is conducted among Hindu communities to receive the blessings of the dead one whose soul can move easily towards the path to heaven, if offered precious metal after death. Kalu

offers his precious silver ring to dead Mali even if she treats him harshly throughout his life (*Manvini Bhavai*).

The people in those days used to believe in superstitions, ghosts, witches and supernatural elements. It seems that Bhuvo (the worshipper of deity) is one of the indispensable parts of rural culture. The innocent, frank and superstitious people are simply seen cheated by such Bhuvas and opportunists. There seem some brave persons like Fulima in *Manvini Bhavai* who exposes such frauds. For example, once she catches such Bhuva by his long tuft of hair and makes him confess: "No, no mother, I only practice this hocus pocus knowing fully well it is all a hoax, pure fabrication." The frightened Bhuva falls on his knees pleading piteously, "What can I do, mother? It is to satisfy this wretched hunger that I have to take recourse to such fraud." But to tell the truth, after that incident, the villagers seem firmly fitted Fulima into the role of the powerful witch-all the more so than ever before! Fresh canards are afloat: some say, "No sooner the sorcerer bhuva called the spirit and recited the mantra Fulima materialized outside the room, emerging from a wall." Some people think, "The bolt of the door slid by itself opening the door for her." and so on. On the contrary Vala Patel himself does not believe in witches, though almost all his life he did desperately take recourse to counter-magic, every time trying to drive away evil spirits to save each of the children. After that experience, he reaches the firm conviction: "Witches, ghosts, evil spirits... and so forth, is all bunk-Just nonsense talk... No, there's nothing to it. All is but God's will-all, nothing but his inscrutable sport!"(*E.D.S. 12*)

For any disease they do not seek help from a doctor. They have deep faith in black-magic as more effective treatment than medicine. Fulima serves as a gynecologist in the village. In a matter of delivering children Fulima is looked upon as an expert *Dayan* (who can treat the patient by natural curing talent). Often she receives invitations from households as far as some twenty-thirty villages away. Not only this, but she knows it well how to cure a

variety of infantile diseases and common ailments, often employing simple massage and exercising of limbs. She has indeed a considerable fund of such useful knowledge (*E.D.S.* 37).

Another example of superstitious people and their blind beliefs is indicated in *Malela Jiv* by Pannalal in the chapter titled 'Parkhan'. During summer days, a woman goes to carry the water-pot from well, suddenly starts shaking the head incessantly on her way. The women, pursuing her guess that 'she would be Goddess', i.e. she is possessed by the Goddess. Shaking the head incessantly with excitement, the woman declares that she is *Motichhada* (a kind of skin disease, chicken-pox) Deity, other deities too are following her, and they wish to play in the village and will remove the diseases spread in the village. After two days, they will march far away from this village. Reshmo, the sly, tries to impress the illiterate folk that he possesses the divine power and knows the black magic. Once the *Raman* (a ceremony where the Goddess is invited to play) is organized to receive the favour of the deity in the village. Reshmo performs shivering and promises people to expose the nakedness of the fraud to the villagers. Dhulo becomes his victim, but Kanji, the brave and bold youth challenges him to prove his magical power by wearing the red-hot chain into his neck. Reshmo cannot perform such ordeal test; his hypocrisy is exposed and is forced to leave the village (156- 172). Dhulo in order to control his wife Jivi offers his bracelet to Reshma to cast the spell on her. Dhulo is fully convinced that Jivi's deteriorating condition is the result of the spell by Reshma. The character sketch of Bhagat too, shows that if one possess sound moral character, neither 'wondering Goddess' nor any type of evil magic can play its mischief upon him. He has no faith over villager's firm belief that 'one can wash away his sin after taking a dip into the water of 'Nagdhara'. When Nana insists him that Jivi would soon be recovered from her madness if she is forced to bathe in cold water of 'Nagdhara', Bhagat expresses his aversion: "Come out of the daydream that Bavji would cure her! Had Bavji wished to cure

her, why would he have made her mad?” (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 253). Mukhi tries to convince people about the magical power of water of Nagdhara. He adds the incident of his parental aunt’s miraculous recovery to justify his arguments: “My paternal aunt had also become the victim of some evil spirit. But after bathing in the holy pool of Nagdharo, she has almost been freed from the evil spirit” (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 251).

Generally, the task of cultivating the land with plough is conducted by the male farmer. It is their superstition that if a woman touches the plough to till the land, it will surely invite the famine or calamity. They consider it a horrible sin. The rain-god may displease and will not show its favour, i.e. such task ‘stops raining’. Rupa is harshly blamed by Mali when raining delays. It is only because Rupa remains helpless after the death of her husband to cultivate the land. Her noble task of tilling the land with plough as a woman is considered immoral by the illiterate people. The village people decide to punish Rupa in order to please the rain-god. The ill-fated incident is described in the novel as: “Let the Mukhi be informed that the offending woman who drove the plough be punished with the leveling plank passed over her. Or else, the maize and the paddy will dry up and indeed no good will come of it but trouble!” But such belief proves wrong because without conducting punishment to Rupa, the rain falls. Kasam addresses to gatherings: “come, come, why are you all turned to statues? Why again? That time Rupa kaki had brought down disaster on you... so you thought. Why now?” (*E.D.S.* 79, 81)

As stated above, such people do not migrate from their native region. So the developed metro culture or urban people remain a mystery to them. They have never seen the British people. When Europeans approach the villages they gather in a huge number to watch them: Kalu speaks: “Oh! After hearing the talk of these white-skinned people, I was eager to meet them once in a whole life! But see, God does me favour by sending the river Ganga at home without much effort!” (*Bhangayana Bheru* 180 Trans.). It was like a wonder to see European

people and the newly invented railway in those days. For example, Banzara (tradesman Ratna) in *Manvini Bhavai* narrates the story of white-skinned people: “This white man, dear folks, is truly a wonder. He is proficient in all thirty-six arts, skills, accomplishments. In appearance, handsome like a celestial being, his physical frame seems to be made of *kumkum*! And ‘madam’ is indeed a veritable fairy, walks with such delicate steps, and talks such a sweet prattle, it’s as if her walk makes auspicious *kumkum* footprints and her talk is a scattering of flowers!” (E.D.S. 274) Kalu replies: “Sure, Ratnabhai, having a ‘darshan’ of such a ‘maddum’ should prove your life’s salvation!” He further describes the miracle of Railway engine: “Like an intoxicated buffalo the engine runs. Oh, the way it runs and runs... like nothing on the earth! It’s wheel go round like rushing spinning top with tremendous speed, and like rushing flood water the train’ chug-chug along... Will have passed some five towns in the wink of an eye” (E.D.S. 275).

The communities of this region and certain specialities of their dialect are characterized through live picturization of festival celebration. The novelist occasionally depicts the favorite festival of this region. The novel *Malela Jiv* describes the fair of *Janmashtami* (the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna) organized every year in the brook of the Kavadiya mountain of Dungarpur village, which is located near two villages called Udhadiya and Jogipura. People arrive here for Darshan of Lord Shiv and enjoy the fair. The shopping market is placed and entertaining facilities like marry-go-round are also set up. The first introductory meeting of Kanji and Jivi is made possible in the fair. In Gujarati the word ‘melo’ means ‘meeting’. Generally in tribal areas, the selection of bride and bridegroom is conducted in such type of fairs. Another fair description here is the fair of ‘Kartiki Purnima’ which is organized near the valley of the mountain. People perform the Darshan and wash their sin by bathing in the water of ‘Nagdhara’ (Ch.1 & 22). The maddened Jivi is brought here to take a bath. Actually the place Naghdhara is situated in Shamalaji of Sabarkantha

district. It has also been argued that the novelist might have kept this fair in his mind while imagining the fair of *Kartiki Purnima*. The fair lasts for about twenty days. People from far-off places approach this place to take relief from pains. Though, at present the bridge has been constructed on Meshvo River, yet people perform the religious ceremony in the small well and continue their religious attachment to the place.

Manvini Bhavai offers the live image of celebration of Holi. As mentioned earlier, Mandali is situated on the border region of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Presently it is in Rajasthan. In fact, the state Rajasthan is known for its Holi festival. They use to say: “Diwali to Atekate, Holi to Ghare (the remaining festivals can be celebrated anywhere in India, but it is only Holi that must be celebrated at homeland). Among all the Hindu festivals, Holi is their favourite one. According to legendary tales Holi was the sister of Hiranyakshipu, the giant who didn’t surrender to God and demanded his supremacy over all. His son named Prahlad used to recite the only God’s name as he was the great devotee of God. In order to test his son’s devotion Hiranyakshipu ordered his sister to make Prahlad sit on her lap. As she was gifted boon so that fire could never burn her. She, with a view to killing Prahlad played this game. But ultimately, Prahlad was survived and Holika destroyed. In memory of this incident justifying ‘the truth wins and the evil is destroyed’ people all over India celebrates the festival of Holi. The romantic atmosphere generates at its height among people and such festival brings them momentous relief from their hard-laboring business. The farmers put aside the instruments of farming like sickles, halara (the process of cleaning the corn with the help of bullocks) for three to four days to celebrate Holi. Women sprinkle the mud and dung while male plays Dandiyaras with each other. The drum-beating is heard at each mountain and the flames of Holi-firing are blazing.

The portrayal of celebrating Diwali is also sketched in *Malela Jiv*. People put their work aside, wake up in the early morning, wear new dresses and gather in the entrance hall of

Mukhi's (the village chief) house. Such an occasion is called *ravanu* (the community gathering). To add this, among some group the singing of Baheda (Doha, Couplet) is also practiced. (Ch. 7)

The festival of 'The Village Cajoles its Cows' is organized on the first day of New Year celebration in this region. The novel *Manvini Bhavai* depicts such incidents. Women apply colours on the horn of cattle and draw the round shade of colours on the animal's skin: "Some like Kalu even stamped coloured circles on the flanks of their cows and oxen, using for the purpose some old udheni dipped in that ruddle-paste" (*E.D.S.* 219).

The main festivals of these people are: Holi, Diwali and Dashera. While celebrating Holi they practice dance in a group, i.e. each time more than hundred people perform their dance. The fair of Shamalaji is well known especially this type of dance where one can observe a wonderful combination of rhythm and speed with disciplined shaping.

It has been surveyed that the drinking of wine has its importance in their routine life. They make the infant drink the wine on the sixth day of its birth. Residing in the range of forests and mountain region, their economic problems and some practical approaches of life are different. They have a distinct type of folk songs, proverbs, idioms and lifestyles. Though, at present the original picture of such tribes seems to getting erased gradually since compulsory education and expansion of urbanization have led them towards the course of upliftment.

The writer offers a pen picture of apparel of various communities. Vala Patel is shown farmer in *Manvini Bhavai* who wears a shepherd-like dress. The old man's outfit too is like that of the rabari shepherds-the same frilled, pleated jacket, and the dhoti is the short handwoven kind common to the lower classes. The turban that is hitched to a peg on the wall is however of a finer weave and quality (*E.D.S.* 6). Pannalal has portrayed the character sketch of Kanji as heroic as well as romantic personality as "He was built like a tree trunk.

His handsome leather shoes were decorated with shiny brass-plated studs. His dhoti hung up to his ankles. He wore a colourful shirt, a sleeveless white coat and a magnificent crimson-coloured turban trimmed with embroidered floral motifs. The style of tying his turban was special. Its crest was outstanding and the flap hung round his neck impressively. A pair of flutes was hanging from a newly tied flower-strip around his neck". The beauty of Jivi is shown matched to her apparel as "she wore a sea-blue silken ghagra and an odhni. The bead-embroidered floral nosegays of her tightly-tied backless-blouse strings swung on her back, adding to the beauty of her graceful walk" (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 3, 6).

The Bhil community generally wears a knee-tight Potadi (short dhoti) and two to three rounded turbans on the head. Alkha Gameti's apparel is described as: a short dhoti which hardly reaches down to his knees and a head-wrap tied in two or three rounds. While the daughters of Bhil wear double anklet rings on their feet, a long strip of sari cloth round their waist gathered up and tucked in above the buttocks, some strings of glass beads and cowries round her neck and a coiled and tangled skein of hair on her head" (*E.D.S.* 288).

Enthoven in *Tribes and Castes of Bombay State* considers that Koli community is derived from Bhil community (qtd. in Mistry 76). The writer mainly depicts the forest region of Sabarkantha district in his novels. The portrayal of Thakarda and Bhil Community comes naturally. Looking to a geographical view, tribal reside in the mountain or hilly range in North Gujarat, Satpuda in the eastern part, the mountain ranges in Vidhyanchal and Sahayadri mountain range in the southern Part of Gujarat. P. G. Shah notes in an article on "Gujarati Prajman Jatikulono Samanvay" (*Shree Farbus Gujarati Sabha Mahotsav Granth* 1940) the physical characteristic of Bhil Community: They have shorter head, but the part of the skull is slightly raised, the bone of brow slightly longer, the forward part (amukh) though short yet flat and wide, the mouth or teeth part slightly preceded. The nose pressed, but the nostril preceded and prominent. They are having brown coloured skin, and black curly hair.

They generally use to live in the hut made of cattle dung and mud. To construct the shade they use the dung or grass on Bamboo's strip and the leaves of the teak - tree. Furniture is hardly found. Men generally wear langots and a blouse and wrap the turban on the head. Women wear short clothes to cover the body and tie its end on the waist. To cover the body they use to wear Kanchali (long blouse). Men wear the ornaments made of silver and tin to decorate ear and hand. Female are fond of wearing wooden or brass made chudis (bangles) covering wrist to ankle of the hand while in legs they wear Kadla (anklet). They are fond of tattoos. These people generally eat light grain, meat and fruits as well as drink toddy (the juice of the tree) and wine (qtd. in Mistry 76 Trans.).

Looking to their profession, they go for collecting gum and honey from the forest region of Sabarkantha. The children carry the herd of cattle to graze in the pasture in the forest and mountain. The farming is secondary to them because of less efficiency; hence, remain fully dependent upon the product of forest, mountain and labour work. To manage their livelihood, they catch fish from small flowing stream. They also receive their food by hen-rearing. The tree of Mahudo (of which wine is made) is a blessing to them from which they receive Doliya (impure oil). The Zamindar (landlord), the forest contractor and financiers exploit them or take full advantage of these poor people. The place of deity is distinct and important in their life. The resident of their deity is not found in a form of big temple or church. The shape, structure and decoration of their deity, in comparison to other religion, do not seem special. They have been maintaining their old-aged traditional religion, customs, traditions and beliefs. They have trust in various types of Gods and Goddesses, the superstitions of ghosts and witches, and sacrificing of animals. The worshipping of the tiger (Vaghpuja) and snake (Nagpuja) are very famous among them. They also worship Goddesses like: Kalka, Okha, and Zampadi. They believe in both the higher and lower rank deities. The idols of their deities are placed in small places. They use to sacrifice a big goat to please the

Goddess. They also practice sacrificial ceremony on the festival of Dashera (Mistry 77 Trans.). According to Hindu mythology, *Ramayan* Lord Rama had killed the monster named Ravana on this day. Dashera is the tenth day of the month of Ashvin.

The novelist has mentioned that Bhil tribes are engaged in gathering gum from forest trees in the chapter: 'A Pair of Copper Water-Pots' (*E.D.S.* 287). The description of Thakarda community is also observed in *Na Chhutake* by Pannalal. Colonel James in *History of Rajasthan* (666) point out the derivation of this tribe that there was a state called 'kol' situated in the southern part of Vindhya Mountain in Madhya Pradesh state. The word 'Koli' is derived from 'kol'. Some opine that their forefather's name was 'koli' and all their ancestors were called 'koli'. It has also been observed that this community had originally been derived from the region of Sindh River. According to Harivansh Parva of *Mahabharat*, it was Kshatriya community. It was degraded religiously by the sage named Vashishta. Later on when it was accepted, Vedic observers had considered it 'Mlechha' and envious Brahmin considered them 'Shudra'. These 'Kolis' were existed prior to Lord Ram and after King Sagar they remained mere 'koli' and had been rejected 'Kshatriya'. In addition to this, it has also been mentioned that the sage Markand performed a great Yagna near Nakhi Lake at Abu and produced five types of Rajputs who are subsequently known as Parmar, Rathod, Jhadav, Solanki and Makawana. Afterward, in association with Koli community, Rajputs lost their original identity. Though, some of them made changes like assimilating with elite community, yet they allowed the manners and way of living like 'koli'. The fact regarding their settlement in North Gujarat has still remained unknown. These 'koli' people called 'Thakor' and later on known as 'Thakarda'. They are spread in every corner of Gujarat. Though little yet, their living manners and traditions seem different at each and every place. It is believed that at one time this community was considered criminal. They were inspired to commit thieving, looting, dacoiting by landlords and tehsildars in pre-colonial times. Hence,

these Thakarda are originally called 'Rajputs'. They possess qualities and characteristics of Rajput community. At present, the Castes of Rajputs mentioned in the history of Rajasthan State: Zhala, Rathod, Chauhan, Parmar, Solanki and Makawana, are well-known among Thakarda communities (qtd. in Mistry 79 Trans.).

This community has a glorious past, but the present state seems slightly awkward. They are bold, spirited and energetic. On the contrary, superstitions, rigidity and economic backwardness also prevail among them. Though, they are promise-keeping and determined. Due to poor economic situation, they are found involved in committing thieving and dacoit ship.

Thakor or Rajput community is generally referred as Garasiya. Maria Shrey, a Slovakian woman writer (European by birth and bred in Yugoslavia) while residing with Dungari Adivasis of Sabarkantha, has depicted the accurate picture of such community in her remarkable collection of folktales titled as *Rajkumari Fulvanti* (2011). Maria observes that Dungari Garasiya reside in the region of the Arawalli mountain range on the border area of Madhyapradesh, North Gujarat and South Rajasthan. The majority of this community is found in Bhiloda, Vijaynagar and Meghraj tehsils of Sabarkantha region. The word 'Garas' is originally derived from Sanskrit word 'Grass' which means 'a mouthful'. The Garas in Gujarati is interpreted as the land given for maintenance to a member of the royal family and a Rajput or Adivasi possessing such land is known as 'Garasiyo'. They would have been offered some villages as a reward by a local king in exchange for their support in the war. Generally their village has no fixed common border. They prefer to live on different hills in a group of three to four small huts. The Bhills, residing in Mewad of Rajasthan centuries ago were the forefathers of Dungari Garasiya (*Gujarat Samachar*, 30th June, 2013 Trans.).

The natural calamity in the form of horrifying famine 56 is depicted by the novelist in a realistic manner. The novelist has shown the miserable plight of drought-stricken people

when hunger wraps up the whole region under its powerful clutches. When the survival is the only concern, people neither care humanity nor blood-relation. V. Y. Kantak remarks in 'Translator's Note' of *Endurance A Droll Saga* that apart from imaging a peasant culture with ancient roots in its efforts to cope with nature's callousness and human perversities, the novel has the distinction of fictionalizing a historical catastrophe- the great famine known as "the Chhappanio" that had devastated the region in 1900 (*Vikram Samvat* 1956). Kalu when sees the ghastly form of hunger blames God: "Be you damned, oh God! How could you have reduced men to this state?"... Surely, there is nothing more accursed, nothing more wretched in the world. Hunger is indeed the ultimate wretchedness!"(330)

Desert Environment News notes that drought may be classified according to their intensity: '*Annkai* (No Crop grain), '*Jalkai*' (No rain), '*Trinkai*' (No fodder/grass) and '*Trikai*' (Scarcity of crop/grain, water/rain and fodder/grass). Rajasthan, formerly Rajputana, has been subjected to drought from the earliest times. In Marwar people generally expected one lean year in every three years and one drought year in every eight years (*Teejon karyon; Authan kal*). There is a famous couplet in Marwari phrase which tells us the severity and frequency of drought occurrence in western Rajasthan. It means, my (Drought) feet remain in Pungal (Near Bikaner), head in Merta (Near Jodhpur/Nagaur) and belly in Bikaner. Sometimes, I (Drought) can occur in Jodhpur, but I permanently stay in Jaisalmer. Looking to historical fact, Jaisalmer faced most severe drought during the 11th century, when it did not rain constantly for 12 years. Again, during 1348 AD and 1392 AD, the 'Thar Desert' faced severe droughts when the people of the region survived on raw animal meat. Though, to date, the region has faced many severe droughts and famines, yet, the '*Chappna Kal*', 1899-1900 (*Vikram Samvat* 1956) had the worst impact on the people of the area. According to Lord Curzon, it was the most widely extended and most terrible drought known in Indian history. It was Triple Kal (*Trikai*) of food, fodder and water in Rajasthan. The people of the period

who witnessed this severe drought used to say that no such dreaded famine occurred in Rajasthan for the last 100 year (*Desert Environment News*, Vol. 4, 2000).

India's Daily E-magazine 'General Knowledge Today' examines that in November 1900, the Bombay Presidency, Central Provinces, Rajputana, etc. got caught in the grip of that famine. It claimed 90-100 lakh lives, most severely affected were Bombay Presidency according to the official figures and Rajasthan according to the unofficial figures. The famine was followed by the epidemic, malaria and cholera and the scarcity of the famine was so bad that the tribals of Rajputana, Madhya Pradesh (Central Provinces), Gujarat (Bombay Presidency), Hissar and other places died in thousands. The tragedy is still sung in the folk songs of these areas (14th June, 2012).

Manvini Bhavai narrates the wretched facet of that *Chhapano* famine. The jungle tract, which Kalu has to pass through, is in the grip of the terrible 'Chhapaniya' famine. Under its impact all life in that region seems to be panting, hunger-crazed, and ready to devour anything. Even birds writhe with hunger and thirst (*E.D.S.* 324). The sight that meets Kalu's eyes up there is something he would not forget in his entire lifetime ever- possibly not even in seven successive lifetimes....! "Some twenty or twenty-five skeletal human figures were pouncing upon the dead cattle... Their teeth were their only knives, and as to fire-wasn't there enough of it blazing in their stomachs? Kalu shivers and for one moment he wonders, "Aren't these human vultures? Had they been vultures' things couldn't have been any different. One of them was thrusting at the children to keep them off, while an old hag quaffed the still warm blood of the animal! Two of the men were biting, sinking their teeth deep into each of the animal's legs. And those two others with swords in their hands who had got on to the animal's body were furiously hacking away chunks and slices of the flesh. But how to gather up the lumps of flesh when they had not a piece of cloth on their bodies other than their *langots*?" (*E.D.S.* 329) Unable to endure either the screaming of dying cattle or of

starving women and children, empathized Kalu offers them his sword to avoid further pain of feeble creatures: "Take that, you, you miserable wretches!" With that, he gets up and strides away cursing God and heaping choice abuses upon his head, "Oh, you wicked God who sends this famine upon innocent people! May you be damned, you who drive men to such a state at this!" and so on... (*E.D.S.* 332). When the mare you are riding sights or apprehends a tiger in the bushes her legs stand stock-still, paralysed. That's how Kalu feels on sighting that spectacle there half concealed under that tangled web of twig and leaf. For several moments he could [neither] advance a step or retrace a step backward nor could he wrench away his eyes from that sight... just then he felt as if with a jerk his broken spine chord has regained its functions, and like a nimble hare he leaps into the nearby thicket and disappears... Nevertheless, he goes on turning the matter in his mind trying to persuade himself, to reassure himself, "No, no, she was no witch nor a female ghost... hang it, there are no such things! It was a woman all right. But, heavens! What was that she was eating? (How can it be a child?) Oh, no, it wasn't that? Couldn't be... It must have been just a rabbit" (*E.D.S.* 333).

Pannalal while describing the threatening form of famine imagines that man kills man as well as animal to satisfy the hunger. The writer has revealed the naked truth that when survival is the only answer, then woman doesn't hesitate to kill her own child. What can be more wretched than this when the mother herself is inspired to eat her own offspring! The novelist confirms the nastiest predicament of human mind and its extreme end. The earthly relationships remain worthless when the existence itself becomes challenging.

While analyzing their socio-cultural life, Mistry observes very minutely that the people like Thakarda and Bhil community of this region usually reside in row houses made of cattle dung and black sand. The roof of their houses is covered with grass. They use to draw ordinary paintings on the walls. They eat rotten maize, floor or porridge and drink wine and take meat occasionally. The male members wear dhoti, shirt and turbans, while during fair

and festivals they prefer to wear Kshatriya-like dress, tie handkerchief round the neck. The male wears ornaments like anklet (bedi) in the legs, rings on the fingers; beads (Manka) in the ear while female wears the petticoat made of about fifteen feet long cloth, the blouse and coloured sari. On an event of festival celebration, female wears Odhni (small sari to wear on the head), Gavan and Bandhani. The joint family life is generally observed among them. Though, the separate family life is also found now-a-days. Some of them manage family communication or practical approaches co-operatively. The social status of the female is very low. They are often beaten by their husbands, but the rate of their endurance seems very high. Sometimes they are found competing in physical strength with male. In addition to bravery and enthusiasm, this community is known for its spirit of hospitality. The customs like remarriage and *diyarvatu* (To marry the younger brother of the husband after the death of her husband) are also prevailing in this community. They have the rigidity of caste structure. The *panch* is considered their Parmeshvar (God). They never deny the appeal proposed by the *panch*. There are two types of marriage system conducted in their community. One is the approach to the bride's house by bridegroom with the number of people carrying with him (Jan) while the second system *khandu* where the bridegroom sends the sword as a symbol of a marriage proposal to the bride's house. He himself doesn't go to the bride's house, but the bride herself approaches bridegroom's house on the third day of calls and finally the official ceremony takes place. Somewhere the husband and wife beat each other with a stick in the presence of their *Kuldevi* (the goddess of the family). The divorce system is also conducted in the presence of the *panch* as a witness in the community while widow marriage has also its place, widow places two pots full of water on her head to her desired bridegroom and the male draws one out of two pots to conclude the ceremony. Agriculture and animal-breeding are their main business. The traditions of blind-beliefs and superstitions are deeply ingrained among them. They believe that the physical weakness is the result of black-magic practiced

by their enemy. If rain does not drop, they consider it a result of the Goddess's curse. The beliefs like chariot driving, sacrificial of animal and placing the cock playing are pervaded among them. If anyone gets sick, perform the ceremony with the help of *Bhuvas* (the worshipper of the Goddess) to recover from the sickness. They go to the place of Goddess along with *Bhuva* and *Dholi* (drummer) with the seven types of grains like wheat, barley, pea, toor, sesame, *sundhiyu*, where *Bhuvo* practices 'shaking the head' constantly to solve the problems of people. After performing the ceremony for eight days, they use to flow the grown grains in the water of the lake. They receive the entertainment from singing hymns, the fairs, play *dandiyaras* and festival as well. The male members dance with a naked sword while dancing in the rhythm of the drum in an encircling movement. Though, they take revenge against their enemy in this festival and fulfill their oath of revenge taking. They are also expertise in archery. This community is educationally very low. The children are engaged in small work at former stage. The addiction like tobacco, wine, opium and *kasumba* (the juice of opium) are also observed among them (Mistry 81 Trans.). The plot of *Na Chhutate* is fully based on *Thakarda*, the brave and promise-keeping community. This community has produced many dacoits too. *Ratna*, the father of *Rumal* and *Dala*: the father of *Dariyav* and a devotee of Goddess *Kali* are portrayed as dacoits. They practice such business not because of their hobby or likings, but for the sake of self-respect. When they are ordered to carry the shoes of English Sir and Madam, soon they resign from Britisher's job. Later on, *Thakore*; the village head excites the Britishers against them to arrest them. But both escape from jail carrying with them gun of Britishers. They hide in the mountain *Magariyo* and declare the dacoitship. Later on, *Dalo* becomes the victim of *Thakore's* gun, though he prefers death than yielding to *Thakore's* persecution.

Looking to the poetic quality expressed in the novels, the writer has woven together the romantic folk song of this region occasionally in most of his novels. The marriage songs

called *fatana* generally use to blame the bridegroom's party in sweet, sarcastic tone on the contrary, appreciate the bride party through similes and metaphors. Some of these varieties sung by the novelist are as follows: The women sing on the occasion of welcoming Kalu's marriage proposal:

There in the North a great storm is brewing,

O Eager One!

Yes, a rain-storm is brewing in the North, my dear,

And I know, the peacock of my heart's near,

O Eager One!

Yes, here he comes—that stealer of the hearts, my dear

(*E. D. S. 105*).

Manvini Bhavai notes the following folksong:

When Kalu arrives to receive his wife Bhali, the women of Bhali's family sing abusive songs. It is a custom to sing such type of songs, though bitter yet sweet to satirize and make fun of or tease the bridegroom:

How do you deserve ear-rings, O Kalu?

What right have you to ear-rings, O Kalu—?

And you but a fatherless, bastard born...?

How did you get your jacket, O Kalu?

And you but a fatherless bastard bore...?

Your Ma went to the tailor, O Kalu,

But had to stay on for the night, my man...

That's how you got your jacket, O Kalu! (*E.D.S. 194-195*).

To address Dhula after his marriage with Jivi, the young woman of the village sings:

Listen to our advice; you bastard!

Set your mother to carry the baskets of dung,

Let my sister Jivi do the cooking.

Listen to our advice; you bastard!

(*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 70).

When Kasam sees the arrival of Gora –The White man- in railway, he sings the wonder of these fair-skinned people:

The Englishman has come.... is here!

He's of a different race and clime,

Wears a funny cap on his head

And belongs to far *vilayat*

Live coal fuels his carriage,

And his madam stammers sweetly

He has brought his soldiers so fat

But his madam's cheeks are rosy red!

The Englishman has come....

And

Nimbly has the train arrived, O Rama Rathod!

It faltered a little in the hills, O Rama Rathod!

(*E.D.S.* 138-139).

When famine strikes over the region, the helpless Bhills are struggling for their survival, sing pathetically:

It's a grievous famine we've been cursed with, O cowman alakha

The worst we could ever have even dreamed...

True, for sheer hunger I drank wine;

But have no fear, no harm will come.

For I'm the villager's guardian and friend,
 Good God! How can I hinder him or harm?
 O cowman Alakha!

(*E. D. S.* 358).

Even the Bharathari playing on his guitar (Ravanhattho) sings in context to famine '56.

Pannalal's poetic sense flourishes even in the prose work as it is found in *Saraswatichandra* by Govardhanram in Gujarati literature. Pannalal is poet undoubtedly. In his poetry, the essence of folksongs is observed thoroughly. He has woven together his creativity to traditional folk songs and poured his own imagination in it to define the note more realistically. Though, such folk songs are not essential to his flow of narrative, but leave the permanent impression of its rural spirit of regional life in the mind of the reader.

As stated earlier Pannalal neither follows nor advocates any principles or theory in his writing. The systematized form of theoretical perspectives or framing up with a particular theory to convey messages perhaps remained limited in the first half of the 20th century in Indian regional writings. The prime concern in Pannalal's writings is humanism in its widest sense. Pannalal concentrates chiefly on the element of love. Though while narrating the story he presents his insights about human life. His' is art for art's sake primarily, yet wholly looking it examines certain ethical standards too. Without pursuing any ideology he can sing and elevate the human values. His appeal seems universal. The evidence reflected in his fictional world offers due justification of his life philosophy. Here is the detailed account of philosophical insights represented in his novels. The characters utter the wisdom in the forms of idioms, proverbs or general statement often becoming mouthpieces of the author.

Supremacy of God:

- All is but God's will – all, nothing but his inscrutable sport! (*E.D.S.* 12)

- Oh Bhagawan, how mysterious are your ways! Men act viciously towards their fellow beings intending harm, and you extract something wholesome even out of that evil. Oh my God, what sort of twisted strands you turn into a lovely fabric by the skill of your hands! (*E.D.S.* 39)
- This is nothing but illusion (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 29).

Ideal Woman:

- A good woman never curses, and the curses of an evil ‘shankhni’ can never come true (*E.D.S.* 21).
- It is far better to be on the rack at one’s husband’s house than be pampered at the mothers... (*E.D.S.* 20).

Human nature:

- One can close the mouth of a water-pot even with the small piece of cloth used as strainer. How can one-shut up the mouth of a well or a lake? (*E.D.S.* 35)
- A cudgel will respect only a bludgeon (*E.D.S.* 43).

Virtues and Vices:

- Wealth may bring on physical pleasures and keep the body well-nourished and all that. But the craving of our hearts is only peace, above all (*E.D.S.* 45).
- He who digs a hole falls into it, see? (*E.D.S.* 47)
- After-all, our scriptures give pride of place to the householder above the ascetic (*E.D.S.* 60).
- Blood is thicker than water (*E.D.S.* 67).
- Burns inflicted with a fire-brand are endurable for they can heal after a while, but the wounds that taunting words inflict death alone can heal! (*E.D.S.* 70)
- Better be a dirty pauper on one’s own rather than eat another’s salt and thrive! (*E.D.S.* 78)

- It's man alone who has the propensity to tread upon a human heart willfully, while even cattle will harm you only when they can't help it (*E.D.S.* 84).
- There is no other God in the world greater than man (*E.D.S.* 85).
- One gets in life just what one is destined to have (*E.D.S.* 172).
- Man's career on earth is a bout with swords: He who knows how to wield the sword knows how to live. And he who doesn't is as good as dead through living....! (*E.D.S.* 184)
- Hunger, that burning in the stomach, it may be possible to bear; what's truly unendurable is heart-burn! (*E.D.S.* 264)
- Hunger is indeed the ultimate wretchedness! (*E.D.S.* 330)
- Sighs of the oppressed poor would never go in vain; the hide of dead cattle (bellows) will turn iron itself to ash (*E.D.S.* 409).
- Caste doesn't matter... One's value is reflected in one's eyes!" (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 14)

Bhupendra Mistry in his *Gujarati Pradeshik Navalkatha* vividly describes a variety of regional dimensions wherein he observes that Pannalal has used 'vagadi' dialect of 'vagad' region in his novels, which is spoken, especially in hilly areas of the Sabarkantha region near the north Gujarat and eastern border of Rajasthan state. The border of this region is located near the Rajasthan state, so Rajasthani dialect has also influenced it. Hence, the dialect of this region is Gujarati having Marvadi shade. Mistry further explains that Bhil people residing near the border region of Sabarkantha region speak 'Bhili' dialect. In the region of Dungarpur-Vansavada, the Bhili dialect of Pal is considered the regionality of Gujarati language. Hence, it has similarity to the special constitution of Gujarati language. 'Vagadi' dialect is similarly used by the people belong to Brahmins, Banias and Rajputs community. The dialect of Pal's Bhil has similarity with the dialect spoken by Bhil of Idar state. Grierson has mentioned total twenty-two example of Bhili dialect in the 2nd part of 9th volume of

Indian Language Criticism. He says that the external influence felt among this Bhili dialect is of 'Malvi', because 'Malvi' is a well-known dialect among the mountain ranges of Gujarat. Dr. B. A. Mehta in 'The Problems of Aborigines' views that their dialect is strongly influenced by Gujarati, Dungarpuri, Rajasthani and Hindi language. Prof. L.D. Joshi in his thesis on 'Vagadi Boli' says that Dungarpuri, i.e. Vagadi dialect has a distinct relationship with Gujarati language. Among the people of this land, many clear Gujarati words have entered defectively to its pronunciation point of view. For example: they speak the verb 'Gayo' as 'Gijyo', 'Gijya' [pronounced Gayo, Gai (Gone) in Gujarati language]. They do not pronounce nasal consonant 's' as: ɲə. For example, 'Dugar' instead of 'Dungar' (mountain), 'Lagado' in place of 'Langado' (handicapped), 'Jagle' in place of 'Jungle' (forest). The pronoun 'mane' (me) is uttered as 'me' or 'mi', 'i' instead of adjective 'a'/aa' (this), 'vi' in place of 'pela' (that). They use 'sa': sə often unclear in place of 'cha': tʃə and 'chha': tʃhə. They add extra 'ha': hə to some word. For 'mara' (mine), they speak 'hamara' (ours). ('in reference to respect the self, the plural form of my/mine) while in second person they never apply manarthe (to respect), i.e. 'tu' (you) is commonly used for all (qtd. in Mistry 90-91). This one is slightly similar to English language wherein pronoun 'you' is applied in both the form of second person (singular and plural). The language used by Pannalal is clearly made of Gujarati form. To expand the regional colours, Pannalal has applied the sentence structure, word-assemblage as well as dialect in word very appropriately. For example:

- Bhentmanthi pargat thayan (Materialized outside the room, emerging from wall)
(*E. D. S.* 36).
- Etli amari dabjya (lagani) (That's your affection for us) (*E.D.S.* 38).
- Mara gharman badhi sat bapni veja bhari chhe (My household is an odd bunch of persons) (*E.D.S.* 45).

- Jamin thaine tin Tara bhainu kaytu karavyu ne... ? (You go and stand surety for your brother's funeral feast (*E.D.S.* 66).
- Ek ghade char halkhedne shu eng (hing) thavani chhe? (Go, take another water-pot to the field and keep it ready. How can one suffice for four men ploughing?) (*E.D.S.* 72)
- Fuchchhayala (ganda, kangal) rejo pan koina ochchhayala na rejo! (Better be a dirty pauper on one's own rather than eat another's salt and thrive!) (*E.D.S.* 78)
- Naccharvi chhodine mosadi bhens kone avala (alakhamani) lage! (A girl with no child to look after and a she-buffalo belonging to someone else are never an unwanted burden!) (*E.D.S.* 160)
- Marija mari, mara pitya moliya! Ahithi uthine kyank bavaman jato re ne? (Die, my wretched old man; you had better be dead, you gutless coward! Why don't you go somewhere and join the *bavas*? (*E.D.S.* 33)
- Pan jo e kalmukhane painava dau to mane fat kutari keje ja! (But if ever I let this black- faced fellow's marriage take place... go, call me a bitch...!) (*E.D.S.* 48)

Some distinct words and phrase of Bhili Dialect applied in *Manvini Bhavai* and *Bhngayana Bheru* as:

lenjo-patlo [slim], hariyu-tir [arrow], oya-hoy [be], hagalu-badhu [all], kauo-chhokaro [boy], dukada-paisa [money], bedukh-banduk [gun], malejyu-mukyu [put,placed], motiyar-juvan [youth/the young], bhabhara-daxin [south], dodadi-machhali [the fish], bhespatvar-guruvar [originated from Bruhsptivar: Thursday], magara-dungar [mountain], aal-bhaibandh [friend], hadhyo-pakdyo [caught] (Mistry 94).

The experiment of depicting the regional set up in the Gujarati novel has been conducted by Meghani at an earlier stage. With the arrival of Pannalal, the world of rural culture and its regional shades receive its artistic form in every respect. The narratives which depict the region of the earth and the life of its human being of the Idar region of Sabarkantha

region, has its direct association with the writer himself. Pannalal is the product of the same land and Hence, has a blood relationship of this earth laced with his personality. His' is the hearty attachment to the world of that region. The realistic life of each part is located with its native colour harmoniously in his novels. His interior experienced revelation, not only points out the exterior approaches of folk-life, but also reveals the values and feelings of native folk-life mirrored in its culture. Pannalal seems mitigating the broad humanistic concept by portraying the routine life of its people. His novels illustrate the communities like Patidars, Barbers, Rajputs, Bhills and Thakarda of rural region. The writer has visualized their entire socio-cultural and religious set up.

Yashvant Shukla very aptly notes in *Parab* (5th Dec., 1961), a magazine:

In spite of having the small radius of his experience, Pannalal did not leave the centre, which is his immense specialty. The echo of experiencing truth is heard in some of his novels, hence, the justification we receive that this form remains under his control (qtd. in Mistry 99 Trans.).

Pannalal does not merely describe reality, but expands its emotional world with the help of his imagination to make us realize the same pound of human heart either in literate or illiterate cultural form. The writer reflects the poetry of the human heart by offering it a live regional touch. As a neutral viewer Pannalal has described the social life of rural culture. The selection of theme and its apt merger leads the writer to develop an ideal artistic piece without making his novels mere a documentation of natural, social, geographical and ethnographic chart. While operating world of character he does not merely describe the facade of originality, but strives to attain genuine life-form within. His interest of experience is witnessing in his use of figures of speech like simile and metaphor. Pannalal prefers the dramatic method of narration so it turns out to be poetry. As Longinus considered 'Nothing is

poetry unless it transports' the reader, similarly, Pannalal pursues such theory of creativity to achieve the grandeur of native reality.

Sundaram in a 'Preface' to Pannalal's novel *Bhangyanan Bheru* while scrutinizing Ishan region observes that literature, the creation and creator of literature, the mental world of the creator and attitude behind the creativity have always been remained the subject of interest and wonder to us. In the present era, we have been trying our best to understand the mystery of creator by approaching his inner heart. To know and search the activities like: why do the writers write, what are the sources of inspiration, whose influence, which theory and which activity has influenced, etc. have proved fruitful up to some extent. But out of it, if we are willing to receive more literary artists or the best literary creation by catching the grip over the cause and deeds of it, we do not expect the possibility of better success then... the creation merely, either of literature or of life, is not a mere region of cause and deeds. Pannalal has expressed these things without much formal training of cause and deeds for literary creation. In that sense, Pannalal is the miracle of the present literary world. Pannalal himself says that it has been derived from his unknown or mysterious world which leads us towards its root. Hence, looking at Pannalal it seems that when we would be crying of depression because of famine occurred in the literary world; it would certainly bring the clouds of nectar from that unknown region. As Meghani has offered us the aroma of Saurashtra: the land of lions and mountain, its variegated lifestyle, the saints and *satis* (the woman having saintly features), the dacoits and the brave, likewise Pannalal has transcribed the vibrant nature of the land of Ishan (northeast) mountain, a border region of Gujarat state. Pannalal has searched the clue of ethical duty (*Swadharma*). While writing the fiction, he prefers to select the plot from every corner of urban and rural life. But when his logical power turns out to be self-reliant, he has steadily thought over one and only region, which is his own. And in such region, the natural uniqueness of his creativity could flourish in its full

swing. The sites of this land and its people seen in his novels have remained the first charming introduction of the unknown and the unseen region of Gujarat since present. It seems that Pannalal has made alive the big fair of Ishan corner in the universe of Gujarat: Its Ishan region, the Magariya (shaped like alligator) mountains and chora hills, the Jambudiya dhara (ditches, deep lake), and uproaring rivers, the fields of maize crops and horrifying forests, the youth wearing colorful feathers, the woman wearing mere blouse and petticoat or flowered skirts, gavan (sari having the design of flowers), the snuff smelling women or Hukka drinking by male, its Baniyas and Kanbis, its Bhills and Shepherds, their cowerds and buffalos, their verandah-cum-sitting room (chopad), the courtyards and barns, and houses made of cow-dung and black sand, of godown, the walls made of bamboo and maize stalks and houses shaded with grass and bamboo sticks (raw houses) or the wells of fields and shades, their fairs and merry-go-round, the marriage songs and ballads to praise the Goddess, their dacoits and thieving, the echoing guns and swinging swords, their bhaidaka (the grain ground coarsely) and kansar (sweet made of wheat, ghee and jaggery or sugar) and the people: living beside the mountain and in lap of forest, crying, sobbing and enjoying, worshipping the deity of motichhada Vir (god of measles) and ghost, sacrificing the hens and goats, etc. (*Bhangyanan Bheru* 7-14 Trans.).

To conclude this chapter, the researcher would like to introduce briefly an overall representation of this region portrayed in *Tarasya Malakno Megh*, which is a biography of the creator Pannalal by Manilal H. Patel. Manilal Patel, an eminent writer and academician is considered an authority on Pannalal's literary creation. As a researcher, he has often visited this region, its communities, the fields and the forests, met one of the contemporaries of Pannalal namely Somalal Pandya, who is still alive at the age of ninety, met some of the relatives of Pannalal, and examined certain facts regarding the writer. In addition to this, Manilal's native too is nearby Pannalal's region. Here is the summarized account of the

geographical and social set up of Ishan region depicted by Manilal Patel in *Tarasya Malak no Megh*: (The title assigned to this biography seems to symbolize Pannalal as Megh (rain god) of thirsty (famine-stricken) land or region):

The white stony hills, the crooked path, the narrow zigzag moving trail of village border, live streams and ravines, the large or small fields in between the slopes and the plains somewhere with raised borders for storing water-looking like children's slate, the village embracing the hills, as if it were like seated crippled dogs, scarcely fifteen to twenty houses, nearly all constructed in a mixture of dung and earth, single sloped open roofs, the shades, the native roofing tiles overhead, houses fairly large, the cattle in a courtyard and upper storey packed with fodder, the thrashing place in an open fenced compound behind a house and stack of hay and earthen made large cylindrical vessel filled with grain in a house. Much darker and with very little light, the water platform and blackened, smoky cooking hearths, the mangers to tie cattle and wooden platform over it, large verandahs and big courtyards, bedsteads hanged on walls and carts parked in the streets, few trees in a village and the barren borderlands, the hills like humped camels ... the whole scene demonstrates that the encampment of horrifying famine⁵⁶ (Chhapano Dukal) is until now in a state of slumbering!

Mandali, the birth place of Pannalal Patel is a village seated in the lap of forest land. The live image of Mandali during the first and second decade of the twentieth century is portrayed as:-

The majority of the people residing in Mandali village were belonged to Anjana-Patel (Chaudhari) community. Some other communities, though in small numbers had also been settled there who assist the Patel farmers in their agricultural and cattle-breeding tasks. They were Thakor-Rajputs, Barbers, Carpenters, Weavers, Modis (Grocers), Pagis, Damors,

Khants, Kataras, Bariyas, Chokiyats, Gametis, Brahmins, Vhoras, Kumbhars (potters), Khatakis (Butchers), Nut-Turis, etc. Most of them lived in a village; some had their huts on hills. Their small-big tasks were well-managed within the region. One could find Bhuvas (experts in black art) and Vaidhya (acquainted with Ayurvedic treatment), somewhere the manger of Blacksmith and one or two shops.... There wasn't a road facility, but raw tracks to carry the bullock-carts. The river Vatrak was flowing in the northern areas and streams were moving from the East to West direction. This stream was the dividing line of Rajasthan and Gujarat. The border region village named Undava belonged to Megharaj tehsil was located nearby. Both Meghraj (of Gujarat state) and Simalvada (of Rajasthan state) towns of moderate size had their small marketplaces.

The second decade of the twentieth century was the period of Pannalal's childhood. As a child, he had experienced the wretched predicament of this region. The native rulers were like rubber stamps under colonial authority. The illiterate people often used to chat about white skinned people and the newly introduced train. To see the Goras (the white people) and sit in a railway were their precious dreams. The school education system could not be thought of in those days. A person who could read the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* was considered educated and respectable among them.

Gujarat is well known for its Patidar (Patel) community for many years. They are having a strong physique and are sentimental people by nature. The task of farming was considered a beast like labor in those days. They were striving to be well-off through cultivating the hilly lands into fertile fields and cattle-breeding. They could manage their livelihood by keeping buffaloes to produce milk, ghee, buttermilk and curds. The person, having agricultural land could afford the small business like animal keeping because of the availability of fodder and grain. The communities dependent upon Patel were called Vasavayan (who are kept in the village to assist the farming class). They too were keeping

cattle according to their aptitude. The people who reared sheep and goats were treated inferior in social status. The beasts like camels, horses and donkeys were used for transportation. The rate of illiteracy ratio was very high. Though, some literate Brahmin or teacher studied up to seventh standard was heard in a far-off school. Patel, who could produce the hundred kilograms of maize, had good prestige in the village. They could control the other communities by offering them the labour work to earn livelihood. The Mukhiship (the chief) was chiefly in charge of Patel group. Patel community has three sub-categories: Leua, Kadva, and Anjana Patel. There are sub-castes and surnames of Patels as per the region in Saurashtra, but in Tal-Gujarat Kadva and Leua have been residing in the majority while in comparison to them the population of Anjana-Patel is less in numbers. There isn't any social dealing or custom of intermarriage among these three communities as each of these three groups considers their social position higher than the rest. Those who use to write Desai-Chaudhari as their surname, consider themselves as the descendants of the Rajasthani Kshatriyas community. Manilal Patel while offering the various facets of this region adds that the Brahmins were highly respected people in society who used to practice various religious ceremonies in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. The toll centers on the border area were in charge of native rulers at the local level who used to collect an excise duty from people while total governance was administered by the British government at a higher level. The people were afraid of 'Raj' in those days. Talati (the revenue officer) had prestigious status and was addressed as 'Sir' in the villages. The thirst of receiving education had not been awakened among them in those days: 'We, the Kanbi, are born to be a farmer, why (to) study?' was their firm belief. If somebody received an education, they used to criticize him bitterly in place of appreciating his worth (In case of Pannalal, the same had happened). It was the stage of ignorance and superstitions. The rate of interest was much higher and Patels were debtors to Banias. So whatever they could earn, it was meant to be balanced on the

credit side of a Bania's account. The occasional practicing of social and religious events and orthodox traditions forced them to receive loans and increase the heap of debts year after year. Even they were living under terror of Bhuvras who could seduce and convince them to rob with no troubles. The age of Narmad among elite class had already been passed and the wind of the Renaissance was taking place, but this was the Ishan region where the dominance of illiteracy, fear, black-magic, labour and feeling of helplessness were pervaded largely. The scarcity of rain often brought them to starvation. It was like 'the head in a mortar and its executioner is about to kill you '. Of course, it's a charming region where mountains and hills, rivers and streams and magnificence of the various seasons seem alive. Such a prospered land of Ishan region has offered us a creator like Pannalal (*T.M.M.* 1-4 Trans.).

Hence, Pannalal's region mainly depicts the pre and post-independence phase of the nation. He is considered a representative of Gandhian period [1915-1945]. His colloquial expression has enriched Gujarati prose literature to a larger extent. Pannalal depicts the language of north Gujarat region, wherein new values take place highlighting Gandhian bearings, Indianization and simplification. Literature of this period is characterized by humanism, social consciousness and perseverance of national spirit. Though, the modern Gujarati prose has been ushered in by Narmad at the initial stage, but along with Gandhi, Munshi, Meghani and Darshak, Pannalal too has contributed much in enriching it during this age. Gujarati novel has become a household and has generated the consciousness through addressing regional and national issues at this stage. During this period the idea of new Gujarat has been shaped wherein along with Meghani, Umashankar and other celebrated writers, Pannalal too has remained the major contributor to generate the regional consciousness of Gujarat thorough his fictional space. In course of time the geographical and political set up of this region seems to vary or several changes take place obviously, i.e. from prehistoric to independence phase or new Gujarat, there has not been a stable construction

through time. But the indigenous inherited traditional or socio-cultural image in general shows its linkage even in the 20th century. The traditional background either in the form of humanitarian values and *sanskaras* or social complexities and weakness is apparently visible in Pannalal's region.

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