



Exploring Nautical Culture in Gunvantrai P Acharya's *Dariyalal*: A Study

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Abstract— Nautical culture with its various characteristics has attracted writers over the years. Gunvantrai Popatbhai Acharya, who is exceptional in Gujarati language and literature, is one of the leading discoverers of audacious nautical narratives in Gujarati literature. Ancient accomplishments of Gujarati shipment are portrayed in Acharya's *Dariyalal* written in the Gujarati language in the foundation stage. Subsequently, the text was translated into English by Kamal Sanyal and demonstrated by Gautam Chattopadhyay in 2000. The focus of the novel offered is set against the background of past experience. The present paper titled, "Exploring Nautical Culture in Gunvantrai P Acharya's *Dariyalal*: A Study" seems to explore nautical fantasy, importance of sea, festivities related to sea and Gujarati oceangoing community with the kaleidoscopic aspects.

Keywords— *Sea Imagination, Nautical Culture and Dariyalal.*

I. THE ETHNICITY OF GUJARAT

The ethnicity of Gujarat has the longest coastline in India, is adorned with three natural resources: Sea, Desert and Forest. The sea is an integral part of Gujarat's commercial culture. The sea contributes significantly to the economic as well as social prosperity of Gujarat. In this way, the history of shipping in Gujarat can be traced back to Indus culture. But in the modern era, **Gujarat has been associated with Arabia, Africa and Southeast Asia since the 14th century AD.** Hence a distinctive coastal culture has developed here. Among the main features of this culture are qualities like brotherhood, patriotism, compassion as well as vices like adultery and addiction. Fighting has become a characteristic of the people here, then drunkenness and prowess come from their throats. This **marine culture** with its various characteristics has attracted writers over the years.

II. GUNVANTRAI POPATBHAII ACHARYA: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Gunvantrai Popatbhai Acharya (1900-1965) is unique in Gujarati language and literature, got his schooling in Kutchh-Mandvi. He is one of the foremost inventors of adventurous marine novels in Gujarati literature. As Mandvi is a seaport, sea-adventure stories were heard from the sailors. His father was in the police department. Because of this, Vaghers, Mers, Barots, the brave outlaws' stories were found out, whose influence is felt in his creations. Historical achievements of Gujarati shipping are depicted in Gunvantrai Acharya's *Dariyalal* written in the Gujarati language in the beginning phase. After, the text was **translated into English by Kamal Sanyal and illustrated by Gautam Chattopadhyay in the month of March, 2000.** The subject matter of the novel presented is set against the backdrop of historical background. In *Dariyalal*, the Gujarati business firms at Jangbar were active in the disgusting trade of slavery which began to bother the adventurous Bhatia youth like Ramjibha.

III. NAUTICAL CULTURE IN *DARIYALAL*

The Java Sumatra-Borneo is one of the islands in the sea of South-East Asia, where the people of India and Gujarat used to go for trade. Gujarat, Gujarati people, adventure and heroism have been spread in the minds of the people for thousands of years. Adventure and prowess are the effect of the Gujarati people. The glorious history of Gujarat's shipping and the many adventure stories connected with it lie in the public life and history of Gujarat. *Haji Kasam Tari Vijli, Jessal – Toral's Sea Poems*, many stories emphasized on the life and culture of Gujarati people. The seeds of public life can be seen in the above discussed works. In Gujarati literature, one of the creators who wanted to shape many such sea adventures, Gunvantrai Acharya has given many novels presenting the story of sea adventure, one of which is *Dariyalal*.

“Dariyalal is a pet name the sailor of Kutchh and Saurashtra have for the Indian Ocean. It conveys a lot of love and respect for this ocean where their ships have been sailing for centuries...Dariyalal carries ships like a father carries his child on his arm, lovingly and safely. This secured period is called the Mousum, the dangerous one the Aakhar.” (p.21)

This is the novel of the sea of India, the adventure of the **Maduos of Kutchh** - the pride, the fight against slavery, the pride of humanity, the dignity of Gujarat, the superiority of Gujarat's shipping, the vanity of India and Indian culture. This novel has gained wonderful popularity in the hearts of Gujaratis and is facing difficulties in today's changing times. *Dariyalal* is a novel that shapes the object of marine adventure. In which marine life and social life are drawn on the basis of historical facts and characters as well as legends. Shipping for trade or emigration has been associated with Gujarat since ancient times. The same thing is illustrated here by the creator. A navigator - Jeram Shivaji's family and an administrator - Munim Ladha Dhamji Thakkar (Ladhabha) associate with slaves' trade.

“The original name of Zanzibar was Kazimbe. In Portuguese history the sultan of Zanzibar was named ‘the king of Kazimbe.’ Zanzibar was the gateway to inner Africa. It was an important port and Indian sailors and traders used it extensively. ‘Jung’ means ships that sail the oceans and ‘Bari’ is a window in Gujarati. So, the name Jangbar

commonly used many have evolved into Zanzibar.” (p.18)

In Zanzibar (originally Jangbar) – Africa's ‘Suburb of Halar’, Ramjibha is most trusted person of both of them. He is the head of the slave operation. Once twenty slaves caught by Ramjibha are killed by a single rhinoceros. Ramjibha shocked and hearty broken to saw this event of killing those slaves by rhinoceros. Sentiments and emotions wake up in his heart. At this time, the movement from Ramjibha to becoming Ram. This change of heart in Ramjibha is not acceptable to Munim Ladhabha. Yet, the experienced Ladhabha tries his best to persuade Ramjibha. Here, an experienced Ladhabha man, who has seen the times, gives an insight. Inspired by his Vaishnava tradition and human goodwill, he pledges to Neem Agiyaras to stop the slave trade by Gujaratis in the presence of Ladhabha during the day, and lonely ties with the Negroes, uniting them for clove cultivation. The Negroes call him Lakuna a benevolent foreigner. Meanwhile, Ramjibha also frees the English traveler Dunkirk from the clutches of the Negroes. The first feature of maritime culture, unity and brotherhood, is depicted in *Dariyalal*. At the beginning of Dariyalal, in the chapter ‘**Neem Ekdashi**’ (‘**The Day of Dedication**’), when Ladhabha is given permission to build a temple, he reluctantly rejects it. After rejecting such a beautiful proposal to build a temple, Ladhabha explains to the disgruntled Modi, “Whose temple will we build, five or five? If someone asks for Mahadev, if someone asks for a mansion, if someone wants a mosque.” They do not want to bring religious differences into business. On Neem Ekdashi, Ramji vows to abolish slavery and the slave trade, and leaves the lineage of Jeram Shivaji to the clove-cultivating inhabitants of the Jungbar forests. Ramjibha's adventures and efforts towards the ending of slavery are slowly succeeding. Ramjibha's commitment to the abolition of slavery leads the novel to an exceptional narrative. Throughout the novel, love, humanity, dedication to accomplish the task entrusted, whether it is a sea adventure or the release of a piece or a feat, adventure.

Whether it is a matter of freeing the woman of Halar or manipulating the driver Lalia the Devil or sympathy for the slaves, the whole thing makes Ramjibha a handful of high human beings. *Dariyalal* manages to keep the reader hooked from beginning to end. One by one, the characters and events give a new twist to the plot of the novel. All these twists create dramatic, which is the foundation of the success of the novel. As Ramjibha is portrayed as the protagonist in the entire novel, the sea which is a part of his adventures also remains a character of the novel. Throughout the novel, the sea proves its presence, spreading its infinite expanse. Here comes the sea for the

trade and commerce of the Kutchhi - Kathiawadi people, in South Africa, like Gujarat, a **'Halar Puran' is also formed along the coast.** The sea is a witness to trade. Also, the sea of pirates is different, the sea of red bells is different, the sea of Dakar is different, the sea of Ramjibha who is trying to rescue Rukhi is different, the sea of sailors is different, Changes. Ladhhabha sends Ramjibha overseas to rescue Halar's Lakshmi. Seven ships, buses carrying sailors and buses carrying youths, while the armed ship from Halar came out of the barracks and came to the Mediterranean. The word 'Middle of the Sea' gives her a glimpse of what the sea can be like in Midstream. Abu used to stay somewhere in the middle of the sea while jumping in a bat. Here the creator mentions the bat coming to Madhari along with Shakrabaj Abu. Discussions to capture Abu include sending the ship overboard. Then the word 'seaman' becomes a witness to the sea voyage. The seafarers from Oman, Malabar, Mumbai, Surat and Lanka etc.... are depicted in the novel while on the other hand Abu's informant Lalia the Devil is proposed to be caught.

From the place where Ramjibha's army ships are anchored in the Mediterranean, the Lalia bell stops at the end of a two-three-day sea voyage. There is an island near the coast. Here is a vivid description of the Batia sea of Lalia the Devil: Chopas was a barren shore stretching, there was no sign of bushes or hills till the traveling Gaugau district. On such shores was the island of the red bell. In which Lalia also arranged a cage to keep an eye on the Mediterranean. From this cage, Lalia sees the sails of six or seven ships in the distant horizon and with a keen eye, the ships move closer to the five ships and their sails are folded in the middle. Out of all the ships, the anchors are fastened. To Lalia's surprise, a small boat sails from the ship and brings Ramji towards the island. Lalia the Devil does not tell Ramji Abu's address but Ramji manipulates Halar to talk to Lalia about the woman and Ramji leaves. The next evening Lalia drives his fish towards Abu's paddle. Here, Ramji takes his ship from the Mediterranean to the opposite shore. One of these storks is the land of the sea, which easily makes its way to Abu's Pal - at that time the description of the sea stands witness to Lalia's adventure and ingenuity.

Ladhhabha, on the other hand, tells the story of Rukhi, a Halar woman who was kept as a slave by Arab pirates to a freed English couple. Rambha rescues her from the Arabs. On the island, Abu talks to Halar's wife and Abu takes Lalia to Rukhi. In the conversation, Lalia finds out that Rukhi is his own wife, kills Abu and runs away in anger and resentment. At the time of this catastrophe, Ramjibha's ships, chasing Lalia, fire Abu's bat and release Rukhi. Here the white curtain of this shelling spreads out

from the sea all around and takes the bat into its grip. Here is the sea of Ramjibha and the sailors who came with him. And, Rahmatullah and Ladhhabha have stopped the slave trade through Gujarati firms. With the sudden death of the Sultan of Jangbar, Rambha defeats Burgess with the help of the Negroes, one of his princes rebelling against Burgess.

The experience of the labyrinth appears. Jungbar's sailor, on the other hand, sails his seven ships ashore at midnight. Here is the experience of a sailor who has been sailing and navigating the ocean for twenty years. The ships came and anchored. These sentences echo Ramjibha's victory. A captain Abha Patel and her fellow partner Nathu skillfully encircle the island of pirates, find their secret abode, pass ships through narrow canals and witness the sea at their adventure. With the death of the Sultan in Jungbar, a terrible uprising broke out. When Bargus escapes to seize the throne, Dar-Ee-Salaam escapes and joins hands with the Arabs and encircles Jungbar by sea. This time, the novel tells the story of a maritime adventure through a battle taking place at sea. Like *Dariyalal* in the history of Jungbar. Lalia the Devil's Sea adventure is thrilling. Throughout the novel, Daryo and *Dariyalal* are seen scattered in an endless cult, and the words associated with the sea bear witness to it. **Words like, 'Dariyalal', 'Sea track', 'Mariner', 'Dariyalol', 'Water Tomb', 'Strait' make the vast labyrinth of the sea national.** Throughout the novel, the sea can be seen blooming from its calm-gentle form to its vast expanse. At a time when little is written about the sea, the novelist comes up with a new subject, a new subject. *Dariyalal* is not as satisfying as can be expected about marine life. However, when Ramjibha goes to Lalia the Devil, the pirates besieged Abu Island. The place of women in marine culture is unique. But women are rarely seen on ships. Rukhi in the text is the only female character. Apart from this, the colorful nature of Kharwa is depicted in '*Dariyalal*' with the atrocities of a character like Lalia the Devil on slave women, the tradition of the seafarers' 'Aakhar' and 'Mousum' is also adapted to suit their respective themes in the novel. In the text, during the three months of 'Aakhar', sailors, Kharwa, and Malmo, etc.... are going to catch slaves, while in the chapter 'Inside Satanism', it is said that there are few Hindus in Jangbar due to 'Mousum'. Marine diseases are described in the novel.

In *Dariyalal*, the Sultan of Jangbar is afflicted with a terrible disease 'Kala Azar'. An important feature of the culture of Indian seafarers is that both goodness and devotion are intertwined in the novel. The culmination of a Swami Bhakta is the attention and respect of an unskilled sultan by a skilled administrator like Ladhhabha. Despite

Rambha's pledge to abolish slavery, working under Ladhamba's hands, not stopping him shows kindness. The characteristic of *Dariyalal* is to express the spirit of maintaining the freedom of every person and to prove his devotion to his lord from time to time. The commercial system is mentioned more in the text. Due to the uncertainties of the sea, due to the frequent calamities, the people of the coastal areas have a spirit of mutual cooperation and also a spirit of fighting against the sufferings of others as their own. This sentiment is also portrayed in the novel.

If one looks at the terminology of its language similar to the characteristic of maritime culture, then the description of sea voyage in *Dariyalal* is scarce and it gives very little information about sea rules, shipping information etc. The use of technical terms like 'Mer' 'Vendhar', 'Nakhu', and 'Kharwa' is also common, such marine terms are used a lot in Ratnakar Maharaj. It also provides detailed information about the construction of ships and their parts from different types of vessels. The descriptions of Gujarati people's friendship and enmity with foreigners are also similar in both the novels. The survival of the English traveler Dunkirk by a capable man like Ramjibha in *Dariyalal*, and the gratitude of Dunkirk to save Ladhamba, is a testament to the friendship of seafarers with foreigners. At the time of such descriptions the author seems to have lamented in the novel that our Englishmen were responsible for such slavery. Slavery is a by-product of maritime culture. Slavery can also be said to be the background of *Dariyalal*. Another integral part of marine culture is the weapon. Slavery and foreign weapons like guns, pistols, cannons, swords, knives, whips etc. are mentioned in the novel. In the text, there are notable mentions of Rambha and Arab generals firing, Lalia bells, cannons fired by English man and slaves being used. While the ships of Ranmal Seth and Chandu Seth are firing at each other, it is also worth mentioning that Radha is hitting Hothiji with a whip.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the sea adventure novel, *Dariyalal* using various features of marine culture, the author has passionately portrayed the characters, dialogues and surroundings, which is why the subject substance of these novels has been given due justice. Occasionally, the author's introduction to the sea and his imagination are super introduced. Acharya's interest in marine life is introduced here. So, the novelist has shattered the myth that there is no oceanography in the literature of Gujarat, which has vast ocean shores, from the oceanography of thriller-story gens-dynasty.

V. LIST OF NAUTICAL OBJECT/SETTING AND IMAGINARY GLOSSARY FREQUENTLY USED IN TOTAL 27 CHAPTERS OF DARIYALAL IS AS BELOW

- Indian Ocean: Dariyalal
- Sailing Ships: Travel by water through vessels
- Seafaring: Marine.
- Coastal Area: Littoral Zone
- Vasco De Gama: The Sailor
- Jangbar: Discussed in above Mentioned quote
- Indian Navigator – Jeram Shivaji
- Zanzibar: A port for slave trade.
- Ship laden: Overloaded liner
- Dariyalal: According to Kutchhi and Kathiawadi people, an Indian Ocean.
- Chaitra Purnima: Aakhar started.
- Ekadashi: Eleventh day after full moon or new moon
- Neem Ekadashi: A festival for Khoja or Bhatia community
- Ashadh: A special day for sailor
- Pirates: Sea Voyagers
- Mediterranean Sea
- Congo and Niger River
- Nyanza: God of Water

DECLARATION

The present research paper is the collaborative effort of **Ms. Rima Soni** and **her Ph.D. supervisor Dr. Vidya G Rao**. It is the purely true work and it has not been published or not even submitted for publication elsewhere.

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