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LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND POWER IN MODERN INDIA

GUJARAT, C. 1850-1960

Riho Isaka

ROUTLEDGE

‘The book is based on meticulous archival research into the Gujarat region and its ‘formation’ in the domains of literature, history, and geography. As such it unravels the history of the ‘making’ of Gujarat as a region and problematizes the multilayered identities of the Gujarati people. A work of deep scholarship, it makes an immense contribution to knowledge.

Gyanesh Kudaisya, *National University of Singapore*

‘Conceptually the book is brilliant, taking a modern language from its emergence, through its evolution in the hands of some of its most powerful early writers, its contact with outside influences, the ways in which its leading proponents used it and built institutions to promote it, its role in creating a new society, a new state, and a new nation. No other book brings together the many different eras of historical development of Gujarati into a single framework.’

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Language, Identity, and Power in Modern India

This book is a historical study of modern Gujarat, India, addressing crucial questions of language, identity, and power.

It examines the debates over language among the elite of this region during a period of significant social and political change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Language debates closely reflect power relations among different sections of society, such as those delineated by nation, ethnicity, region, religion, caste, class, and gender. They are intimately linked with the process in which individuals and groups of people try to define and project themselves in response to changing political, economic, and social environments. Based on rich historical sources, including official records, periodicals, literary texts, memoirs, and private papers, this book vividly shows the impact that colonialism, nationalism, and the process of nation-building had on the ideas of language among different groups, as well as how various ideas of language competed and negotiated with each other.

Language, Identity, and Power in Modern India: Gujarat, c.1850–1960 will be of particular interest to students and scholars working on South Asian history and to those interested in issues of language, society, and politics in different parts of the modern world.

Riho Isaka is Professor in the Department of Area Studies at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo. Her research interests concern issues of language, politics, food, and identity in colonial and post-colonial India, especially Gujarat.

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*Note: These are historical maps and are included here for representative purposes. The international boundaries, coastlines, denominations, and other information shown do not necessarily imply any judgement concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such information.

Abbreviations

ARPGC	*Annual Report of the Principal of the Gujarat College*
BLAD	*Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*
BLCD	*Bombay Legislative Council Debates*
BPCC	Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee
CWMG	*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*
ED	Educational Department
GA	*Gandhijino Akshardeh: Mahatma Gandhinam Lakhano, Bhashano, Patro Vagereno Sangrah*
GPCC	Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee
GVS	Gujarat Vernacular Society
MGJP	Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad
MPCC	Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee
MSA	Maharashtra State Archives
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
RNP	*Report on the Native Papers Published in the Bombay Presidency*
SMS	Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti
TOI	*The Times of India*

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This book is based on my PhD thesis that I submitted to the University of Cambridge in 1999 (in the last century!) and a few published and unpublished papers I have written since in English and Japanese. I am grateful for the comments and encouragement I received at different stages of my research from a number of people. Without the help of the late Rajnarayan Chandavarkar and the late C.A. Bayly, I could not have finished my PhD at that time. I benefitted greatly from discussions with David Hardiman, Francesca Orsini, Peter Kornicki, Douglas Haynes, Howard Spodek, Françoise Mallison, Harald Tambs-Lyche, Crispin Bates, Jennifer Davis, Jayeeta Sharma, Anindita Ghosh, Samira Sheikh, Amrita Shodhan, Ornit Shani, Manjiri Kamat, Veena Naregal, Anil Sethi, Gyanesh Kudaisya, Medha Kudaisya, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, A.R. Venkatachalapathy, Hanna Kim, Takashi Shinoda, Toshie Awaya, Takako Inoue, Akio Tanabe, Katsuo Nawa, Aya Ikegame, and Megha Wadhwa.

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Recently, I developed some health problems, which have made me rethink what really matters in life. I wish I could have spent more time updating my old thesis, and there are still numerous primary and secondary sources I should have looked at and yet could not do so. In spite of its shortcomings, I hope this monograph still has some value presented in its current form.

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Introduction

This book aims to explore the debates over language among the elites in colonial and postcolonial India, focusing on the case of Gujarat, a region in western India. Language is not merely a tool of communication; it also functions as a source and symbol of power and identity (Edwards 1985; Burke 1987; Bourdieu 1991). The debates on language thus closely reflect power relations among different social groups, such as those delineated by nation, ethnicity, region, religion, caste, class, and gender. These debates are intimately linked with the process in which individuals and groups of people try to define and project themselves in response to changing political, economic, and social environments. The relationship between language, identity, and power in modern Gujarat is central to this study. The book also attempts to demonstrate the impact colonialism, nationalism, and the process of nation-building had on the ideas of language among different social groups, revealing how different ideas of language competed and negotiated with each other, and how certain discourses of language became dominant and were incorporated into state policies.

India is widely known as a multilingual country. Linguistic maps of India, where the country is divided into different coloured segments on the basis of language, are commonly found images. These maps usually fill the current state of Gujarat with a single colour, indicating that speakers of the Gujarati language are dominant in the region. At a glance, this looks 'natural'. Gujarat state was after all established in 1960 as a 'linguistic state' for Gujarati speakers, following the example of other earlier linguistic states. In the linguistic maps, there is a clear boundary between Gujarat and its neighbouring regions associated with other languages. These maps, found in books and internet searches, appear colourful and diverse enough, as do the variety of scripts on station and airport signboards across India. However, the actual linguistic situation is even more complex.

Neelima Shukla-Bhatt, a scholar of Gujarati literature, described an interesting game that she and her siblings used to play in their childhood whenever they crossed state borders on family trips. The game was to find the border between two states linguistically demarcated on the maps just by listening to people at the stops. She recollected (Shukla-Bhatt 2018: 71): 'We expected that

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the neatly drawn lines on the maps, which formed the basis of the medium of instruction at our school and gave us a marker of identity, would correspond to the linguistic realities on the ground. But they did not'.

How should we understand the gap between 'linguistic realities' and the ideas of language, linguistic communities, and linguistic territories reflected on the map? How did these ideas become so influential in society? How do people reconcile with or resist these ideas and boundaries drawn on the basis of these notions? It should also be remembered that 'linguistic realities' themselves may look different, depending on the perspective from which you look at them.

Here it is worth reminding ourselves of what many linguists have already pointed out: languages are 'social constructions/inventions' (Edwards 2013: 4). The categories of languages and their borders are not naturally determined, and there are endless ways in which we can arrange them. Also, the forms and vocabularies of languages are constantly changing and so are the values people attach to them. This is especially the case when and where people from different regions actively interact, their languages influence each other, and words and expressions travel between them. Yet in certain historical contexts, social and political powers have taken the initiative in defining and standardising 'their' languages and spreading the ideas about how language and literature should be like. This has led to the emergence of dominant forms of these languages and the discourses on them. In fact, there are many examples of different periods, across the world, where we can see how certain ideas of language obtain a dominant influence over a population. The processes seemingly resemble each other, although they simultaneously reflect the specific conditions of each society at the time.

In relation to this, it should be remembered that the difference between a 'dialect' and a 'language' is highly ambiguous. To borrow the words of a sociolinguist, Gianrenzo Clivio, a language is a dialect 'that has an army and a navy and an air force' (Steinberg 1987: 199). In other words, there is 'nothing of a linguistic or aesthetic nature' that confers special status upon the standard (Edwards 1985: 21). The act of differentiation between the two can be described as an exercise of power (Jha 2018: 7).

One of the themes discussed in this book is how the 'standard' form of the Gujarati language which we are familiar with today was defined and became dominant in the colonial period, and how in this process, other forms were relegated to the status of 'dialects'. How did this process start? Who were the leading forces behind this development? How was the 'standard' form of the Gujarati language defined? What implications did this process have for Gujarati society and different social groups in the region and how did it affect the relationships between them? How was it related to the reconstruction of a regional identity that was taking place at the time? How did the people whose ideas of 'our' language differed from the dominant discourse of the Gujarati language resist or/and negotiate this process?

This book, however, is not exclusively concerned with debates over the Gujarati language. The territory associated with the Gujarati language on the linguistic map of India is in fact a multilingual space, even if we try to house what are now generally regarded as 'dialects' under the roof of 'Gujarati language'. There are always inhabitants who have moved from other regions and continue to speak the language of their birthplace. Furthermore, there are multilingual individuals who utilise languages besides their mother tongue, whether for work, for communicating outside their group, or for acquiring knowledge they cannot necessarily obtain through their mother tongue. A substantial number of the population throughout time have been familiar with multiple tongues, often mixing languages in their writings and dialogue. Their usage often questions our own understanding of language, especially our tendency to categorise languages and assume fixed boundaries between them. In fact, the expression 'mixing languages' implicitly assumes the existence of fixed boundaries between languages.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Gujarat in the precolonial period was, as it continues to be, undoubtedly a multilingual space. This book, focusing on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Gujarat, looks at the debates on a wide range of issues concerning language besides those related specifically to Gujarati. These include those surrounding English, Sanskrit and Persian, and Hindi/Hindustani. English was the language of the ruler during the colonial period and it has been used, along with Hindi, for official purposes by the Union of India following independence. Sanskrit and Persian began to be classified as 'classical languages' in colonial India and continued to play symbolic roles in the discourse of the nation and of religious communities, whereas Hindi/Hindustani was the language spoken widely in North India and projected as the 'national language' by the leaders of the anti-colonial movement. Hindi was then chosen as the 'official language' of the Union of India after independence. The debates considered in this book show a variety of attitudes among different social groups belonging to the elite in Gujarat towards these languages, reflecting the complex process in which group identities based, for instance, on religion, castes, and gender were recast during this period. By returning to language debates at different points in history, this book reveals the constant revision of linguistic perceptions among the elite in response to dramatic political, economic, and social changes in India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Although there are by now a significant number of scholarly works that have examined the debates on language in different parts of India in modern times,[1] the case of Gujarat has not attracted much attention and thus needs further investigation. The study of Gujarat presented here reminds us once again of the regional diversity of historical development in India. Substantial variation is clearly apparent in the development of dominant regional discourses and the way in which elites in different regions discussed language, linguistic communities, and linguistic territories. While intellectuals in Gujarat, as explored in the following chapters, expressed their attachment

to the Gujarati language, this did not necessarily take the form of a strong devotion to their language, as was demonstrated by Tamil intellectuals for instance (Ramaswamy 1997). In addition, the movement organised by Tamil leaders and intellectuals against the 'imposition' of Hindi on their region was not mirrored by the elite in Gujarat when it came to the idea of making Hindi the national/common/official language of independent India. We can similarly contrast the Gujarati elite's lack of interest in the idea of a separate linguistic state for their linguistic community during the colonial period with their counterparts in Orissa, Andhra, and Maharashtra, among whom the demand for linguistic provinces had already gained momentum (Phadke 1979; Mohanty 1982; Mitchell 2009). Therefore, investigating the language debates in Gujarat provides us with yet another perspective on the construction of the Indian nation and its regions.

Gujarat is widely known for its strong mercantile tradition, and its intellectual and literary histories have been given little attention in general books of modern Indian history. Recently, however, a series of significant works have been published on the issues of language and literature in this region during the colonial and postcolonial periods. In particular, Sudhir Chandra, Rita Kothari, and Tridip Suhrud have presented insightful and detailed analyses of the writings of leading Gujarati intellectuals, examining their ideas on language and literature, modernity, colonialism, nation, and other key concepts and issues (for instance, Chandra 1992; Kothari 2006, 2015; Suhrud 2009, 2012). The current work, instead of presenting such close analyses of literary texts, tries to look at a wider range of debates on language from different historical moments in colonial and postcolonial Gujarat. It situates these debates within the broader social and political changes that this region experienced from the mid-nineteenth century until 1960, the year in which the linguistic state of Gujarat was founded. I would also like to stress that this work owes much to scholarly works that look at different political, economic, and social aspects of this region in medieval, early modern, and modern times.[2] Anthropological studies focusing on current Gujarat, including those discussing the impact of Hindutva discourse in this region, also provide important insights into the ideas of Gujarat in its contemporary form and the role of language in them (for instance, Ghassem-Fachandi 2012). Recent works focusing on non-Gujarati-speaking communities in the current state of Gujarat, such as Sindhi and Kutchi speakers, also give us vital perspectives on the impact that the formation of the dominant/official discourse of the Gujarati language, the community of its speakers, and the territory associated with this language has had on these people (Ibrahim 2008, 2010; Kothari 2009, 2010; Simpson 2010).

In order to embrace a comprehensive range of debates on language from different historical contexts in the nineteenth to twentieth century, the sources used in this book vary from one section to another. They include official records, periodicals, publications of various associations, literary texts, memoirs and autobiographies, and private papers.

Language, identity, and region

The period covered in this book begins with the mid-nineteenth century. It should be noted, however, that the notion of Gujarat as a linguistic region developed during the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries (Sheikh 2010). Although the forms and boundaries of languages, linguistic communities, and linguistic territories were extremely fluid and 'fuzzy' before the colonial period (Kaviraj 2010: 95–7, 141–3), there had been in precolonial India some notion of communities based on languages and affiliated with certain regions. Therefore, the regional attachment that we find in various narratives in modern Gujarat was not entirely a 'construction' or 'invention' of the colonial period.[3] Earlier notions were incorporated into regional literatis' discussions on language and literature, including in Gujarat, during the British period.

As has already been noted, the Gujarat region has been, like other regions on the subcontinent, hardly homogeneous linguistically. In the precolonial period, there existed a variety of spoken forms of languages and also trans-regional languages such as Sanskrit, Vraj, and Persian, mainly used by the elite (Chapter 1). Sanskrit, the language associated with high-caste intellectuals, and Persian, the official language of the Mughal empire, had spread widely among the elite on the subcontinent, and was used for their communications and writings (Washbrook 1991; Bayly 1996; Kaviraj 2010). In this regard, it should be stressed that Indian society had long been 'accustomed to a multiplicity of "tongues"' (Washbrook 1991: 180).

In the colonial period, Persian was replaced by English as the language of the ruler and for administration at a higher level. It was also chosen as the medium of instruction for higher education and projected as a symbol of modernity. Furthermore, it was used as the common language of the elites from different regions in India. Later, during the nationalist movement, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the 'father of the nation', strongly insisted that English be replaced by the mother tongue in administration and education at the regional level, and Hindustani/Hindi at all-India level. Yet a significant portion of the Indian elite continued to use English as their common language even after independence. Today, if one stands on the street in Ahmedabad, the central city in Gujarat, for instance, most people can be heard speaking Gujarati (including different forms of Gujarati), but also some English, Hindi, and other languages. It is also possible to catch people using words and phrases from English or Hindi in their conversation in Gujarati, or vice versa. Undoubtedly, India continues to be a society 'accustomed to a multiplicity of "tongues"'.

The power of the English language in India under British rule evidently affected the position of Sanskrit and Persian, especially the latter. Yet they did not immediately become 'irrelevant' languages for the elites. These languages were instead projected as 'classical languages', and their association with religious identities began to be stressed by the colonial state and

the Indian elite. Sanskrit was generally associated with Hindus and Persian with Muslims and Parsis. Such associations had a significant implication for the discussions among the leading literati on the extent to which Sanskrit, Persian, and English words should be integrated into the 'standard' and 'pure' Gujarati language. Which words were adopted and which excluded was largely determined by the nature of the participants in this 'reformation' process.

A substantial part of this book is dedicated to an analysis of the debates on the Gujarati language in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It shows the way in which the intellectuals who were involved in these debates referred to the concept of nation and ideas of language developed in Europe on the one hand, and various literary sources in precolonial society on the other. Their interest in 'reforming' their language was developed through their association with educational institutions, voluntary associations for social and cultural activities, and the press. We will find in their debates how language was consciously projected as an essential identity-marker. In the process of examining these issues, we will come across some features unique to the debates in Gujarat, such as the significant role played by mercantile communities and the way in which the Parsis were involved in these debates.

One of the key questions to be addressed here is how a 'regional *political* identity centred on a language' (italic in original, Kaviraj 2010: 99) developed during this period. In the context of dominant nation-states in Europe, nations were often imagined by political leaders and publicists as linguistically homogeneous spaces, while in India, in spite of the fact that its elite were deeply influenced by the ideas of nationalism in Europe, it was impossible for them to apply the same criteria. Here regionalism and nationalism developed side by side, often overlapping and intertwining with each other. When the national identity of India began to be actively articulated by political leaders and intellectuals during the anti-colonial movement, they tried to explore the way in which their 'imagined' regions could find their place in an 'imagined' nation, that is, India.[4] The conversations on the relationship between the national language and regional languages discussed below were part of their interrogation of this.

Bernard Cohn describes regionalism as based on 'a pool of symbols', which were usually made up of 'religious and/or literary and/or political historical symbols' (Cohn 1987: 120). Although in the following chapters, I will look at the development of 'regional *political* identity centred on a language', I also intend to stress that the notion of a region and a regional identity were not developed on the basis of language alone. The debates we look at have the potential to disclose a gap between the notion of the Gujaratis as the speakers of the Gujarati language and as a people associated with a region (territory) called Gujarat. Although these two understandings were often projected as synonymous, the complex relationship between the imagined community of the Gujarati speakers and that associated with the Gujarat region as a territory needs to be investigated.

Nation, region, and language

The debates on the Gujarati language continued even after the nationalist movement gained momentum in the early twentieth century. During this period, however, the attention of the regional elites in India also began to be drawn to questions about the national language. This was particularly so in Gujarat, due to its close association with Gandhi, who was from Gujarat and exerted a great influence on the region.

Gandhi's criticism of the use of English among the elite, his advocacy for the use of a mother tongue at all levels of education, and his attempt to replace English with Hindi or Hindustani (the latter is the word Gandhi preferred to use from the 1920s) as the common language of the Indian elite are all well known. In the words of Peter Burke, language is an 'active force in society, used by individuals and groups to control others or to defend themselves against being controlled, to change society or to prevent others from changing it' (Burke 1987: 13). Gandhi, through his experiences, became fully conscious of such roles of language. For him, the use of English in higher education and administration was to allow the colonial state to continue its control over Indian people and society. Gujarat became a testing-ground for Gandhi's language 'experiments' and other unique trials described in his autobiography. In regard to the question of the national language, a variety of opinions were expressed by contemporary intellectuals and political leaders. Even among those who advocated the desirability of replacing English with Hindi/Hindustani, opinions were evidently divided on the question of scripts and the extent to which Sanskrit/Persian words should be used (Chapter 5).

Different views were also presented on the power that should be given to this language in relation to other regional languages. Although their sense of belonging to the region and to the nation often overlapped with each other, elites in different parts of colonial India were highly conscious of the possible contradiction between the two. The debates on language in this period reflect the process in which various ideas of nation and of its relationship with regions were navigated. 'Unity in diversity' was a famous slogan used by the nationalist leaders, but collectively acting upon it was a different matter. Language could become a major dividing force for independent India, as some of its elite feared, along with other forms of 'boundaries' such as those based on religious, caste, and class identities. Discussions continued even after independence, especially throughout the debates on the Indian Constitution and on the reorganisation of provinces/states. The latter part of the book considers a series of these discussions, including those on the use of English, the national/common/official language of India, and the relationship between this language and other regional languages, focusing on the dialogues between Gandhi and other Gujarati intellectuals.

Gandhi's impact among the Gujarati elite on matters of language was not confined to the questions mentioned above. He also showed a keen interest

in the standardisation of the Gujarati language and the development of literature for the 'people'. His emphasis on the importance of villages in India drew the attention of the elite to the areas beyond major cities and their urban population. For him, language was important precisely because of its role for enabling people across territories and communities to communicate with each other. This notion, along with his advocacy of the use of the mother tongue for education and administration, encouraged Gandhi and the Indian National Congress to support the idea of reorganising provinces on the basis of language, an approach that had already been advocated by some regions' elites. All of these discussions could not help influencing the ideas of language among the Gujarati intellectuals.

Language and territory

This leads us to look at another set of debates on language, that is, on the relationship between language and territory. India under British rule consisted of presidencies/provinces under the direct rule of the British, and princely states under Indian princes with whom the British established subsidiary alliances. Borders were largely determined by the historical process of British expansion through wars and treaties. When the current Gujarat state was formed in 1960, consisting of the areas where the Gujarati speakers were dominant (or more precisely, where the Gujarati speakers were believed to be dominant according to the official discourse), it included both a part of the former Bombay Presidency and former territories under the princely states. The Bombay Presidency encompassed areas in which speakers of Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, and Sindhi resided and was divided into different districts.

In some regions in colonial India, as mentioned above, the demand that borders of provinces should be redrawn along linguistic lines began to be articulated by regional elites from the late nineteenth century. During the nationalist movement, the idea of linguistic provinces was officially supported by the Indian National Congress. Yet its attitude continued to be ambiguous at a national level. There was a concern that reorganising the provinces might encourage 'separatism' among linguistic communities or lead to regional conflicts over territories. These concerns were only enhanced following Partition, which was accompanied by painful experiences of communal violence.

The historical stance of the Gujarati elite is interesting in this regard. Until the late 1950s, they hesitated at accepting the idea of a separate state of Gujarat. Even after the *Maha Gujarat* movement, which demanded the foundation of Gujarat state, gained a significant support in North and Central Gujarat from the middle of the 1950s, the cause was not necessarily popular in other parts of Gujarat. Although the bifurcation of Bombay state into Maharashtra and Gujarat did take place in 1960, some social groups continued to express discontent in the aftermath. The final part of this book

turns to the debates on linguistic states in postcolonial Gujarat. It tries to show how competing ideas of language, linguistic communities, and territories were expressed during this period and how these ideas were silenced in the official state discourse that followed. It also suggests that there are as many narratives concerning the creation of the current Gujarat state as there are subregions, imagined regions, and social groups in this area.

Let me add a few notes on my personal memory related to the topics of this book. As a person from a country which has been often described as monolingual society – an evidently inaccurate expression in many ways – I found it fascinating to witness multilingual daily life in India as a student and a researcher in the 1990s. The sense of being 'surrounded by numerous languages and multiple cadences', as described by Sumathi Ramaswamy (Ramaswamy 1997: xix), was a new experience for me. The ways in which people in urban India used and mixed different languages, however, varied depending on many factors, including their educational background, occupations, regions of their origin, and contexts. It seemed to me that the diverse manners in which people used languages reflected, at least in part, the way in which they defined their position in society or tried to project who they were. They also suggested that different social, political, and economic power was attached to different languages. There were often politics in choices of language: the politics of who 'belonged' and who 'did not belong', as well as who was 'authentic' and who was 'inauthentic' in each context, to borrow the phrases of Vedita Cowaloosur (Cowaloosur 2018: 22).

In regard to power attached to languages, my perception of English being a language with an undeniable power in India and the world was repeatedly confirmed during my stay in India. Minae Mizumura, a famous novelist born in Japan and educated mostly in the United States, who decided to write her novels in Japanese, described effectively the 'asymmetrical relationship between the world of English and the world of non-English' in the context of literature in her controversial book entitled *The Fall of Language in the Age of English* (Mizumura 2015: 62). 'Both in the original and in translation, whether recent works or classics', Mizumura argues, 'novels written in English are increasingly dominating the world and can only continue to do so' (61).

Yet, in spite of the obvious power of English in our age, it is unlikely that the world will become linguistically homogeneous. History shows us the way in which people associate themselves with different languages and attribute diverse roles and characters to these languages. The hidden aim of this book may be to show the diverse and dynamic manners in which people have used, adopted, appropriated, and associated themselves with different languages and presented a variety of ideas of language/s in modern Gujarat and India. While constantly being reminded of the power of English in academia at the global level, I would still like to believe, like many others, that the diversity of languages and the variety of language choices we make are vital in helping us to be more conscious of diverse ways of looking at the world.

Structure of the book

Chapter 1 presents a general social and historical background of Gujarat, in particular describing its strong mercantile tradition. The linguistic situation of this region before the colonial period is also outlined here.

Chapter 2 explores how the elite in late-nineteenth-century Gujarat acquired knowledge of English through colonial education. For the Indian elites, English became the tool of communication with the ruler and their counterparts in other regions, and thus a symbol of power and modernity. This chapter looks at debates among the elite in Gujarat on the medium of instruction and the study of languages at various levels, especially focusing on the ways in which diverse opinions were expressed by different sections of the elite.

Chapter 3 highlights how the elite in Gujarat, under the influence of the British, developed an arena where they expressed and exchanged their ideas on language and literature. This chapter examines in particular the membership and activities of the Gujarat Vernacular Society, a leading voluntary association of this period with the aim of 'developing' the Gujarati language, which involved a wide range of the Gujarati elite. It shows who were the leading forces behind the definition of the 'standard' and 'correct' form of the Gujarati language, and 'good' and 'useful' literature. The strong presence of Nagar Brahman and Vaniya intellectuals in these literary activities will be discussed in detail, along with the roles played by the people involved in mercantile activities. This chapter also looks at the history of the Gujarati press, in which the Parsis played a leading role.

Chapter 4 analyses debates on the Gujarati language and literature among the intellectuals in this region from the late nineteenth century. It illustrates how the regional literati sought to define and reform the Gujarati language and to develop Gujarati literature in response to the increasing influence of the English language and literature. This is also the process by which other forms of language were relegated to the status of 'dialects'. The presence of competing ideas on language, which continued to exist even after the standardisation of the language had begun, will also be considered. The same chapter further examines how the intellectuals articulated the literary tradition of Gujarat and how their narratives revealed their idea of the region that they were trying to project.

Chapter 5 presents discussions on language during the time of the nationalist movement, especially after Gandhi's rise to power from the mid-1910s. It specifically interrogates the ideas of language presented by two famous figures from Gujarat, M.K. Gandhi himself and K.M. Munshi, a leading novelist and politician from this region. I will explore how they discussed the issues related to Gujarati language and literature, English education, the national/common language of India, the relationship between regional languages and the national language, and the relationship between language and territory. I will also examine their dialogues with other intellectuals

in and outside Gujarat on these issues. Some parts of their ideas, as this chapter shows, were to be incorporated in the language policies of the Indian National Congress and those of the Indian state after independence.

The last chapter focuses on the debates related to the linguistic reorganisation of states after independence and especially on how the Gujarati elite approached this question. The foundation of Gujarat state in 1960 marked the moment in which the crucial role of the Gujarati language as an identity marker and its relation to territory were officially confirmed and consolidated. This official discourse hardly corresponds to linguistic realities, and there continue to be people who negotiate with or resist the idea of Gujarat as a territory for Gujarati speakers, an aspect to be discussed at the end of the chapter.

Throughout the book, the names of places are spelt according to the ways in which they were officially spelt in English at the time. Thus, I use Bombay and Calcutta instead of Mumbai and Kolkata. However, when the spellings of their names in the official documents of the time were not necessarily fixed or when it is assumed that the current spellings are more recognisable, I use their current spellings. The names of Gujarati-speaking individuals are spelt in most cases following the ways in which they are conventionally spelt in books and sources in English, though there are many cases in which one finds more than one common spelling. In the modern period, when I can find how they transliterated their names into English in their own writings and publications, I use these forms.[5]

Notes

1. For instance, see Washbrook 1991; King 1994; Ramaswamy 1997; Naregal 2001; Rai 2001; Orsini 2002; Ghosh 2006; Pinto 2007; Mitchell 2009; Sarangi 2009; Kaviraj 2010; Mir 2010; Sarangi and Pai 2011; Venkatachalapathy 2012; Jha 2018.
2. To name but a few, see Gillion 1968; N. Desai 1978; Mehta 1982; Raval 1987; Haynes 1992; Yashaschandra 2003; Yagnik and Sheth 2005, 2011; Mehta 2009; Sheikh 2010; Spodek 2011; Shah 2016; Kapadia 2018; Chavda n.d.
3. This leads us to the question of how we should describe colonial India in terms of 'change' and 'continuity' or 'modernity' and 'tradition'. See, for details, Bayly 1996, 1998.
4. The word 'imagined' here is based on the ideas discussed in Benedict Anderson's famous work (Anderson 1991).
5. There is some inconsistency in regard to transliteration in this book. For instance, the same character in Gujarati can be transliterated as either 'v' or 'w' in the Roman script, and in most cases I chose the former. However, I chose 'swaraj' instead of 'svaraj', for instance, as the former spelling is more commonly used in English publications.

1 Gujarat society and its people

In 1892, Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi (1855–1907), a well-known Gujarati writer, delivered a lecture at the Wilson College Literary Society in which he described Gujarat as 'a country of merchants and poets' (Tripathi 1958: 49). His theme was famous poets of medieval Gujarat, and yet, we should note, he found it necessary to refer to 'merchants'. They were, for him, an important symbol of the region. His description vividly demonstrates the strong position that the mercantile tradition held in Gujarati society.

This chapter presents a brief overview of the history of Gujarat until the mid-nineteenth century. It engages with some of the unique features of this society that were to significantly influence the development of colonial education and intellectual conceptions of language and literature in the region.

A brief history of Gujarat

It is widely believed that the term 'Gujarat' was derived from the *Gujjaras* (*Gurjjaras, Gurjaras*), which referred to the group of cattle-rearers, husbandmen, and soldiers who accompanied ancient conquerors (*Gazetteer* I-I 1896: 2). From the reign of Siddharaja Jayasimha (r. 1094–1143), a Rajput king of Chaulukya from the height of the dynasty's rule, terms such as *Gurjara-mandala* and *Gurjara-bhumi* came to be used to designate territories in which Chaulukya political power had been established (Sheikh 2010: 26). The Chaulukyas extended their control over most of the territory of modern Gujarat, including Saurashtra (Kathiawad) and Kutch (Sheikh 2010: 4), thereby inventing a regional entity that survived through subsequent eras. At the same time, the boundaries between the four geographical, sociocultural subregions of North-Central Gujarat, South Gujarat, the peninsula of Saurashtra, and Kutch remained (Yagnik and Sheth 2005: 9). Relationships among these divisions continued to play important roles in the political history of Gujarat.

From the thirteenth century, the Vaghela dynasty replaced the Chaulukyas. They were eventually deposed by the Delhi sultanate, following an invasion at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and their territory

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was incorporated into the sultanate as a province called 'Gujarat'. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, this province gained its independence and the Gujarat sultanate began (Bayley 1970: 84). The city of Ahmedabad was founded by its ruler, Ahmad Shah, in 1411, and has held its position as the centre of the region since. Ahmad Shah is believed to have gathered merchants, weavers, and artisans from many different places, settled them, and given them 'every encouragement' (Dosabhai 1986: 67). Gujarat developed as a distinct political and linguistic region in this period. The sultans unified the region, obtaining support from traders, military and landed intermediaries, and religious figures (Sheikh 2010: 186). They facilitated connectivity within it and with the world outside.

Under the patronage of the sultans, feudatories, merchants, and other social groups, the religious movements of Vaishnavism, Jainism, and Ismaili and other Islamic sects were reorganised and subsumed within a regional identity (173–4). The sultans also supported scholarship and literature in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit. Scholars and poets began to write in early Gujarati and Gujari, the latter being a version of the general North Indian lingua franca with distinguishing characteristics specific to Gujarat (and yet distinct from Gujarati). Beyond being a purely administrative region, Gujarat came to be 'identified with the local language in its diverse forms' (6, 211).

In 1573, Gujarat was annexed by Akbar, the third Mughal emperor, becoming one of the empire's *subas* (provinces) for almost 200 years. Surat became an important port during this time and a commercial hub of the Mughals (Yagnik and Sheth 2005: 11). European traders, including the Portuguese, the Dutch, British, and French, established factories there, and it was used as an embarkation port for the *hajj*. Under the Mughal empire, Gujarat also saw the growth of the *bhakti* movement, particularly that of Vaishnavism led by the Vallabhacharya sect, which spread especially among the trading communities. The strong influence of Vaishnavism in this region due to the rise of the Vallabhacharya sect from the sixteenth century and that of the Swaminarayan sect from the nineteenth century seems to have contributed to some form of social and cultural unity across different parts of Gujarat (Majmudar 1965: 309).

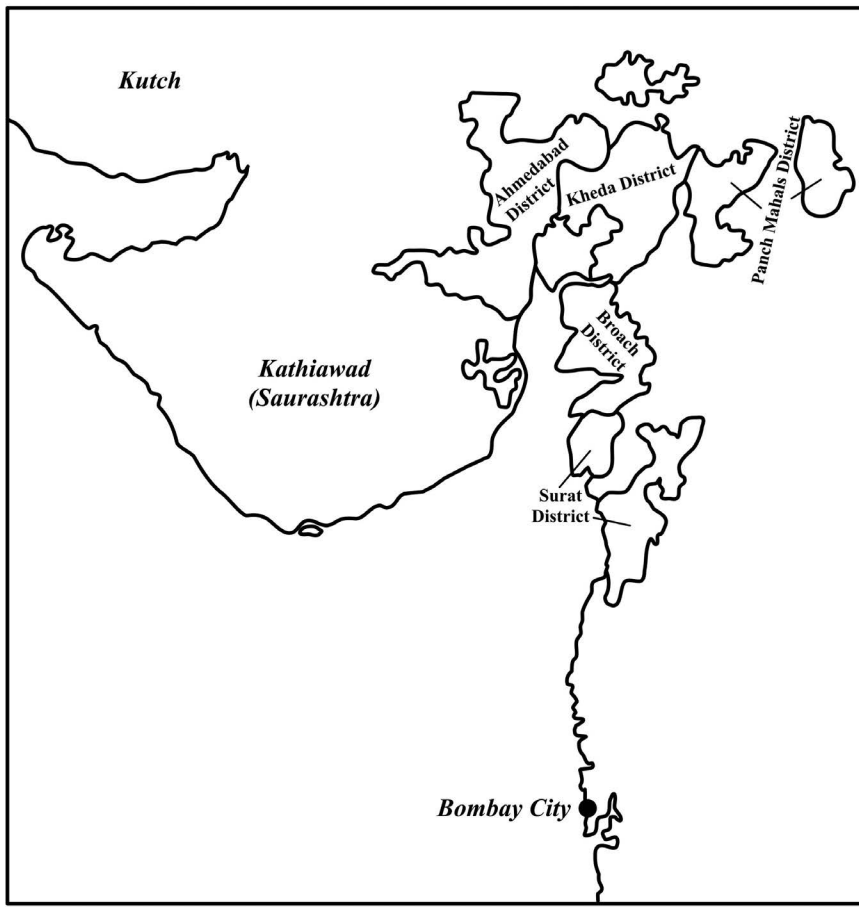
The death of the emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 heralded the weakening of Mughal control. From the eighteenth century, Maratha power was gradually established in Gujarat, detrimentally affecting mercantile activities in the region. Maratha rule was often critically described in subsequent periods, based on the popular memory of the Maratha rulers as 'plunderers' (Vakhatchand 1977: 53–5). British impressions recorded in the early nineteenth century enhanced this picture. For instance, James Forbes, in his *Oriental Memoirs* (1813), bemoaned 'the cruel oppressions and mean advantages of the Mahratta pundits and governors, now dispersed throughout Guzerat, and occupying these magnificent remains of Mogul splendour' (Forbes 1813: 120).

In 1817, the Marathas were overthrown by the British, who had been increasing their influence in different parts of India since the seventeenth century. Edalji Dosabhai, a historian of late nineteenth-century Gujarat, expressed his view that the British were the saviours who had delivered the region from a 'crushing calamity' under the Maratha rulers (Dosabhai 1986: 292). He was not the only one who praised the British government in colonial Gujarat. Maganlal Vakhatchand, who wrote a history of Gujarat in 1851, described British rule as 'Ram Rajya (the rule of Lord Ram)' (Vakhatchand 1977: 53, 65). Gujarati intellectuals often compared British rule with previous regimes, under which, in their view, frequent plunder and fighting occurred and little attention had been paid to public welfare. Even at the time of the 1857 Rebellion, Bholanath Sarabhai, a famous intellectual of the period, wrote a prayer to God in his diary that the matter would be settled quickly, for British rule was, in his opinion, far superior to any other rule (Bholanath 1888: 65). Similarly, Edalji Dosabhai, looking back on this incident, stated that 'happily' the Mutiny extended to Gujarat in 'only a slight degree' (Dosabhai 1986: 258). Such ardent support for British rule, however, was to wane by the end of the century, as described later.

The territory of Gujarat in its present form (that is, the state of Gujarat founded in 1960) was divided politically into two broad divisions during the British period. The first consisted of five districts (Ahmedabad, Kheda, Panch Mahals, Broach, and Surat) in the Bombay Presidency directly under British rule. The second contained the princely states of Gujarat, including those in Kathiawad (amounting to around 220 states), Kutch, and other states in the mainland such as the large and influential state of Baroda. According to the census of 1891, the populations of British Gujarat and the princely states were, respectively, 3,098,197 and 7,938,509. A total population of 11,036,706 lived in a territory measuring 69,037 square miles (10,296 square miles in the British districts and 58,741 in the princely states) (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: vii; Menon 1985: 176, 205).

The Bombay Presidency, which later became Bombay Province under the Government of India Act, 1935, was named after the capital city of the presidency. Although Bombay city was never part of Gujarat in terms of administrative divisions, under British rule it had a sizeable population of people originally from the region. It was also closely related to Gujarat economically, socially, and culturally, playing an important role in the development of the Gujarati language and literature in the colonial period.

Bombay city came under British rule in the seventeenth century, when it was given to King Charles II of England as dowry upon his marriage to the Portuguese Princess, Catharine of Braganza in 1661. Three years later, it was passed to the East India Company, leading to its evolution into the centre of trade and commerce for western India. The Company encouraged the trading communities of Gujarat to move to Bombay, which they did in large numbers, taking up prominent roles in its economic activities (Dobbin 1972). After it became the capital of the presidency, Bombay city was



Map 1.1 British districts in colonial Gujarat.

developed as a centre of not only trade and commerce but also of administration, education, and social and cultural activities, attracting people from different areas in western India. As a result, Bombay grew as a multilingual city. According to the 1881 census, for instance, half of the population were Marathi speakers, 20 per cent Gujarati, 12 per cent Hindustani/Urdu, 4 per cent Konkani, and 7 per cent Kutchi (Weir 1883: 58). Although Kutchi is now often projected as a dialect of the Gujarati language, it was considered as a separate language in this census. As discussed in Chapter 6, in the *Linguistic Survey of India* conducted by George Abraham Grierson, whose results were published between 1903 and 1928, Kutchi was defined as a dialect of Sindhi and not Gujarati (Grierson 1919: 184). Gujarati was spoken widely among trading communities such as Parsis, Vaniyas, Bhatias, Bohras, Khojas, and Memons (the last three were Muslim communities),

though Bhatias and Muslim trading communities also include many people whose mother tongue was Kutchi (Weir 1883: 58–9). As Christine Dobbin shows, Gujarati speakers were a dominant presence in nineteenth-century Bombay and their language was the city's lingua franca (Dobbin 1972: 2). This prominence was to be strongly criticised by the Marathi-speaking leaders after independence, when the latter began to demand actively a separate linguistic state for the Marathi speakers and the inclusion of Bombay city in it.

Mercantile tradition

Gujarat has long been known for its mercantile activities, as the words of Govardhanram Tripathi quoted at the beginning of this chapter demonstrate. Its long coastline granted it access to the world of Indian Ocean commerce. Trade across the seas, along the coastline, and overland had always been important for the economy of this region. Merchant groups even played a prominent role in politics (Yagnik and Sheth 2005: 19; Sheikh 2010: 5).

Among the cities of Gujarat, Ahmedabad had been particularly known for its prosperous mercantile activities for many years. For instance, John Jourdain, an Englishman working for the East India Company, who had visited Ahmedabad in 1611, considered the city as 'one of the fairest' in the whole of India, with its thriving cloth production and trade (Foster 1905: 171). Jourdain's colleague, William Finch, was equally impressed by the richness of the place. He not only found its buildings 'comparable to any citie in Asia or Africa', and the streets 'large and well paved', but also admired the flourishing trade, affluent merchants, and skilful artisans producing carvings, paintings, inlaid works, and embroidery with gold and silver (Foster 1921: 173). John Albert De Mandelslo, a German traveller, left a similar account of the city he saw in 1638. 'There is not', he declared, 'in a manner any nation, nor any merchandise in all Asia, which may not be had at Ahmedabad, where particularly there are made abundance of silks and cotton stuffs' (Commissariat 1931: 26). Ahmedabad possessed a rich and fertile hinterland that supplied it with food, cotton, and indigo to fuel its various industries, including its famous cotton textile production.

With the arrival of the East India Company, Surat and Bombay also developed as centres of commercial activities in western India. During the eighteenth-century period of political instability, a close tie was established between the East India Company and the merchants from Gujarat, a situation which some scholars have described as the 'Anglo-Bania order' (Subramanian 1985, 1987, 1996; Haynes 1992: 89–90). While the company depended on indigenous collaborators who became financiers and intermediaries for their business, the local trading communities began to regard the British as a source of profit and also as an alternative source of law and order (Haynes 1992: 90). Some local traders became involved in the import-export business by themselves too, mainly with

Britain and China. In particular, Parsi merchants became successful in their export business of raw cotton and opium sent to China (Dobbin 1972: 10–13).

British rule not only made a significant impact on the commercial activities of the Gujarati merchants, but it also led to the development of the textile industry in this region. Observing the rapid growth of cotton textiles imports from Britain, some merchants in major western Indian cities began to start their own cotton mills in the middle of the nineteenth century (Dobbin 1972: 19). The first of these was founded by a Parsi merchant in Bombay, Kavasji Nanabhai Davar (1814–73), who started the Bombay Spinning and Weaving Company in 1854. Other merchants in Bombay and Ahmedabad gradually joined him (Dobbin 1972; Mehta 1982; Chandavarkar 1994: 244–51). These local merchants were well-equipped to become pioneers of the cotton mill industry in India. They had thrived under British rule, possessed financial resources and business skills, and raw cotton was readily available from surrounding regions of Gujarat.

It is noteworthy that the interests in trade and industry were not limited to those directly involved in commercial activities. Government officials and professionals among the Gujarati elite shared them. As Govardhanram Tripathi's words suggest, there was a strong sense of pride among the colonial elite that their region had long been characterised by its mercantile tradition. This feeling was articulated in various forms. For instance, Ambalal Sakarlal Desai, a prominent intellectual of Gujarat in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, described Gujarat as follows at the annual session of the Indian National Congress in Ahmedabad in 1902: 'Guzerat and its people have long been well known for their patient and industrious habits and for their strong partiality for commercial pursuits' (*Report of the Eighteenth Indian National Congress, 1902*: 5). Similarly, an article in an Ahmedabadi newspaper a few years later demonstrates the pride of the Gujarati elite in their ability to develop industry by themselves, through comparison between Gujarat and Bengal.

> Our readers are aware that jute is one of the staple articles of industry and commerce in Bengal, but the industry is practically wholly in the hands of the European capitalist. With pardonable pride, we venture to state that if Guzrat had grown jute, our Guzrati brethren would have engrossed the trade mainly or wholly. Our fellow-countrymen of Bengal, though undoubtedly ahead of us in literature and general knowledge, have yet to acquire the aptitude and means, which go to the making of successful captains of industry.
>
> (*Praja Bandhu,* 20 January 1907: 1)

The notion among the regional elite that Gujarat was a 'country of merchants' strongly influenced their social and cultural activities. In addition, the economic power of traders and industrialists was important as financial

support for these activities. Pride was openly voiced regarding the capacity of the people in Gujarat to support educational institutions and schemes for public welfare with their own money. They often emphasised that they had been improving their local areas through 'self-help' (Education Commission II Memorials: 9).

Although the elite in Gujarat were evidently supportive of the colonial government as long as they could see the economic benefit, their attitude began to change around the turn of the twentieth century. Some factions began to express frustration at the government's economic policies. Some showed interest in political developments in other parts of India, especially Bengal and Maharashtra, where nationalist ideas were being strongly articulated. Such changes prepared the ground for the 'Gandhian era' that was to come in the late 1910s, with its accompanying debates on language.

Their pride in the mercantile tradition of this region also led the elite there to be conscious of geographical areas outside Gujarat or even outside the subcontinent with which they were connected through trade and commerce. Krishnalal Mohanlal Jhaveri (1868–1957), in the Introduction to his book on the history of Gujarati literature first published in 1914, enumerated as follows the places in the world where the 'natives of Gujarat' resided and continued to use their mother tongue:

> Banias, Jains, Lohanas, Bhatias, Khojas and Musalmans, along with Parsis, have helped to carry the use of the Gujarati language beyond the borders of India. Natives of Gujarat are to be met within Burma, Ceylon, South and East Africa, Siam, Manilla, Hong-Kong, Shanghai and Kobe, and recently in London and Paris, and though scattered over such a wide area, they are using their mother tongue for purposes of trade and commerce.
>
> (Jhaveri 1914: 5–6)

In the second edition of the same book, published in 1938, Jhaveri added 'Mauritius, Fiji Islands, and Straits Settlements' as well as Berlin, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Vienna, and New York (Jhaveri 1938: 7), suggesting the further expansion of the areas with which the elite in this region became familiar. This imagined community of Gujarati speakers across the globe, it seems, had a significant influence on the regional elite idea of territory. In the words of K.M. Munshi, another intellectual who wrote a history of Gujarati literature around the same period, 'the best minds of Gujarat have always been "de localised [*sic*]" by a continuous inter-change of trade and ideas with other provinces and countries' (Munshi 1935: ix). He further argued that they lacked the 'fierce attachment which, for instance, the Bengali or the Maharashtri feels for his province' (ix).

Munshi's observation here might be rather too simple in view of the diversity among the Gujarati speakers. However, it is possible that the strong presence of people connected with different parts of India and the world

through mercantile activities discouraged the regional elite from developing a great interest in defining 'their' territory in a fixed manner and demanding a separate province for themselves that corresponded with this territory, as we will discuss later.

Caste and religious communities

At the end of the nineteenth century, 90 per cent of the people residing in Gujarat were Hindus and 10 per cent Muslims, according to official figures. The *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* described Gujarat as a 'land of castes', noting the existence of a number of caste subdivisions in this region (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: xii). The number of castes in this region which would 'neither eat together nor intermarry' was, according to the *Gazetteer*, not less than 315. This number would be much greater, it further emphasised, if all the subdivisions which dined together but did not intermarry were added to it.[1] It should be noted here that although the categorisation of religious and caste groups remains problematic in many ways, I use these categories to discuss certain aspects of the Gujarati population, as these categories were constantly referred to by the state in the process of policymaking and by community leaders asserting their rights.[2]

The Brahmans and the so-called trading castes constituted 5.75 and 6.06 per cent of the total Hindu population, respectively, according to the 1891 census (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 1, 69). In spite of the fact that they constituted only a small portion of the entire population, they were socially, economically, and culturally influential. It must be emphasised that in this 'country of merchants', the trading castes sometimes overshadowed Brahmans. In the words of the *Gazetteer*, in Gujarat, many Vaniyas showed Brahmans 'little honour', and Gujarat Brahmans in general met with 'less consideration' than their counterparts in other parts of the Bombay Presidency (22). With few exceptions (such as Nagars), Gujarati Brahmans were even thought to have 'no claim to learning' (31).

This situation presents a clear contrast with the case of Maharashtra, where some sections of Brahmans established their reputation in Sanskrit learning during the Maratha period. For instance, in the words of Narasimharao Bholanath Divatia, a well-known linguist of colonial Gujarat, Sanskrit learning was associated inseparably with the Deccan Brahmans in the Maratha period, 'so much so that Gujarati Sastris adopted even the headdress of the Maratha Bramhanas, till that peculiar turban came to be regarded as a mark of learning' (Divatia 1993: 54). K.M. Munshi, one of the leading intellectuals in twentieth-century Gujarat mentioned above, stated that 'a large class of orthodox Brahmans with traditions of learning, as in Bengal or Maharashtra', was absent in Gujarat and this slowed the progress of learning (Munshi 1935: 17).

Among the Brahmans, the most prominent subdivision in the political, economic, and social life, especially in literary activities, in Gujarat both

before and during the British period was the Nagar Brahmans, which was further divided into different subgroups (Enthoven I 1990: 234–7). Although Nagar Brahmans constituted only 5 per cent of the Brahman population of this region (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 1, 13), they occupied important administrative posts in the courts under the Gujarat sultanate and the Mughal empire with their proficiency in Persian language (Mehta 1979: 69). They were also characterised by high geographical mobility. During the colonial period, they actively joined new educational institutions, acquired knowledge of English, and obtained administrative posts as a result, both in the British territory and in the princely states. Significantly, Brahmans in Gujarat, including Nagar Brahmans, were often involved in commercial activities. For instance, there are many references to Brahman businessmen in the seventeenth-century documents (Yagnik and Sheth 2005: 24). The majority of the Brahmans were Shaivites, though they also held Vishnu in 'high veneration' (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: xxxvi, 30).

The so-called writers' castes such as Brahmakshatriyas, Kayasthas, and Prabhus accounted for less than one per cent of the Hindu population of Gujarat. Their presence in state administration and sociocultural pursuits was not as visible as their more influential counterparts in Bengal. Rajputs, accounting for 5 per cent of the Hindu population of Gujarat (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 123), occupied the dominant position in Kathiawad and Kutch (Tambs-Lyche 2010: 108–9). Yet, in 'mainland' Gujarat, in which the Chaulukya dynasty and other politically dominant powers resided one after another, their presence was evidently less prominent than that of Brahmans and Vaniyas.

The word 'vaniyas' has two meanings. It can be used simply to refer to merchants and as the name of a caste group (Hardiman 1996: 62–3). However, in the following chapters, I use it mainly to refer to the latter.[3] Most of the mercantile groups in Gujarat belonged to subdivisions of the Vaniya caste (which includes both Hindus and Jains),[4] though there were other trading castes such as Bhatias, Bhansalis, and Lohanas. Vaniyas (in the sense of a caste group) were described in the *Gazetteer* as 'one of the most important sections of the population of Gujarat' (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 70). Although predominantly traders, some sections of Vaniyas were known for their administrative roles (Spodek 1976: 17), and strong presence in literary circles, as discussed in the next chapter.

Vaniyas, like Brahmans, were greatly subdivided. Firstly, they were separated into Meshri Vaniyas (who were Hindus) and Shravak Vaniyas (who were Jains), although the boundary between these two groups was often ambiguous, especially in North Gujarat, Kutch, and Kathiawad. They generally ate together and sometimes even intermarried (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 69). Many of the Meshri Vaniya subdivisions had their counterparts in Jain Vaniyas; there were Porvad Meshri Vaniyas (Hindus) and Porvad Shravak Vaniyas (Jains), and Shrimali Meshri Vaniyas (Hindus) and Shrimali Shravak Vaniyas (Jains).[5] Jain Vaniyas were strict vegetarians.

This was widely shared also among the Vaishnava Vaniyas, especially after the rise of the Vallabhacharya sect in the sixteenth century.

The social life of Vaniyas in general was dominated by caste norms maintained by caste *panchayats* (councils). They were also under the influence of *mahajans*, guild-like organisations that controlled activities related to their members' businesses. Their purview included fixing prices, wages, and holidays, and protecting their interests against the government, other guilds, and outsiders. They also played important roles in social activities, building temples and rest houses for Hindu and Jain pilgrims, and organising religious functions and dinner parties (Haynes 1992: 37). They strove to uphold not only the rules of their guilds but also those of the castes (Gillion 1968: 24). A mahajan sometimes comprised different castes, and its membership was hereditary or by purchase (Gillion 1968: 23; *Gazetteer* of *the Bombay Presidency* 1879: 108). In Ahmedabad, the head of the bankers' guild, also the head of the Jain community, was called the *nagarsheth* and occupied a prominent position in society (*Gazetteer* of *the Bombay Presidency* 1879: 113–4; Tripathi 1981: 30–9).

As to the religious life of the Hindu Vaniyas, it is worth noting the impact of several Vaishnava movements from the sixteenth century. The most influential of these movements was led by a Telugu Brahman, Vallabha or Vallabhacharya (1479–1531). He preached love and devotion for the deity, Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Krishna was believed to belong to the Yadava clan that had come to Gujarat from the north in ancient times (Yagnik and Sheth 2005: 3). The new sect thus formed was known as *Vallabha Sampraday* (the sect of Vallabha) or *Pushtimarg* (meaning 'path of fostering'). It soon developed into the largest and most influential sect among the Vaniyas in Gujarat. The heads of the Vallabhacharya sect were called *Maharajas* and were regarded as the descendants of the founder. Pushtimarg attracted the majority of Hindu Vaniyas in this region. It is possible that the spread of the Vallabhacharya sect among the Hindu Vaniyas contributed to the rise of their social status. It gave them chances to display their wealth publicly with large offerings, which earned them admiration and religious virtue (Dwyer 1994: 175). Bhatias, Bhansalis, and Lohanas were also Vaishnavas. Bhatias were especially known for their strong attachment to Vallabhacharya. Vaishnava tradition was given an important position in the literary narratives of Gujarat that began to be consciously articulated by leading intellectuals in the colonial period (Chapter 4).

Shravak Vaniyas (Jains) enjoyed a social status similar to that of Hindu Vaniyas. They established dominance in the economic sphere and their religious and occupational background contributed to the image that they were 'intelligent, sober, thrifty' and also 'clean and tidy' (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 99). The Jains' main precept of non-violence (*ahimsa*), strict rules related to food and drink, and the tradition of extreme asceticism among the Jain sadhus all helped to secure them a high social position among the Hindu

population despite their religious difference. Like Hindu Vaniyas, Jain merchants were known for their generous religious donations. It should be also noted that Jain monks were responsible for a significant number of medieval manuscripts, thereby contributing to the development of Gujarati literature (Yashaschandra 2003). The strong influence of Jainism in this region can be gauged from the fame of its historical figures, such as Hemachandra (1089?–1173?), a prominent Jain scholar under Chaulukya rule. He was born a Modh Vaniya and became the disciple of a Jain monk in his childhood. He grew up to be a celebrated scholar of his time, receiving patronage from rulers and exerting his influence over them, to the extent that some Jains believed that the Rajput ruler Kumarapala (r. 1143–74) converted from Shaivism to Jainism (Munshi 1935: 40).

Besides the Brahman and Vaniya communities, the Kanbis had also established a relatively high social status in Gujarat by the late nineteenth century. Their association with the nationalist movement in the twentieth century enhanced this. Generally known as cultivators, though those who moved to towns also became involved in administration, trade, and industry, the Kanbis constituted 14.26 per cent of the Hindu population of Gujarat in 1891 (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 154). They also came under the influence of Vaishnava bhakti movements, particularly the Swaminarayan sect, from the nineteenth century.

The Swaminarayan sect was founded by Sahajanand Swami (1781–1830), who was born to a Brahman family in a village near Ayodhya and later settled in Gujarat. The sect soon made a visible impact on the sociocultural life of Gujarat. The main features of Swaminarayan teaching, besides the worship of Krishna, included a proscription of the killing of animals, prohibitions on animal food, intoxicating liquors and drugs, an emphasis on keeping one's purity, and strict gender segregation (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 537; Williams 1984; Raval 1987: 12). The sect had followers from various castes, especially Kanbis, though 'untouchables' were banned from the sect's temples (Hardiman 1988: 1908; Fuller 1992: 173). As in the case of Pushtimarg for Vaishnava Vaniyas, the spread of the Swaminarayan sect among the Kanbis aided their social elevation (Hardiman 1988: 1908). In the words of the Education Commission in 1882, the Kanbis of Gujarat at the time were 'the most enterprising cultivators in the Presidency' (Education Commission I 1884: 60). From the early twentieth century, they increasingly referred to themselves as Patidars and began to exert a strong influence in this region through their deep involvement in the nationalist movement.

Some sections of the Parsi and Muslim communities also played roles in the cultural activities of colonial Gujarat, though they were often marginalised in the world of Gujarati literature. According to their narratives, Parsis were the decedents of migrants from Persia who arrived in western India between the eighth and tenth centuries, having left their ancestral land as a result of the Arab conquest. It is likely, however, that they had been present

in this region from earlier periods in view of the trade network that had long existed across the Indian Ocean (Mistree 2002: 412). Their tradition, based on verses written at the end of the sixteenth century, explains that the Parsis, having arrived in Sanjan in South Gujarat, accepted certain conditions made by the local ruler in order to obtain permission to settle there. These conditions include the adoption of the local language and other local practices (Karaka I 1884: 22–34; *Gazetteer* IX-II 1899: 183–6). The Parsis' settlements gradually spread into other parts of Gujarat such as Surat and Navsari.

After the seventeenth century, many Parsis in Gujarat began to be attracted to Bombay. They worked as mediators for European traders, and before long, became traders themselves, with a particular involvement in the cotton and opium trades with China. During the colonial period, they eagerly sent their children to high schools and colleges, which helped them to obtain positions in the civil service or become professionals such as lawyers, teachers, and doctors after their graduation. Some of them became well-known businessmen. The Parsi elite educated in these institutions were active in voluntary associations, social reform, and the publishing industry. In 1891, the Parsi population of Gujarat was small, constituting only 0.25 per cent of the total population (27,712 people). Even in Bombay, where the majority of the Parsis lived, they only accounted for 5.8 per cent of the population (47,458 out of 821,764) (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: vii; Drew 1892: 39–45). Yet, they continued to show their strong presence in the social, cultural, and economic life of western India.

Some groups of Muslims also played important roles in the urban leadership of Gujarat. These were the communities mainly associated with trade, such as Bohras, Khojas, and Memons. The *Gazetteer* categorised the Muslims in Gujarat into two groups: those who claimed foreign origin, such as 'Sayads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans' and spoke Urdu (*Gazetteer* IX-II 1899: 6–7), and those who were regarded as descendants of Hindu converts, who mostly spoke Gujarati but some also Urdu (18–90). The latter, including the trading communities described above, constituted the majority of the Muslims in Gujarat.[6] Among these three trading communities, Khojas and Bohra traders belonged to the Ismaili sect of Shias,[7] while Memons belonged to the Sunnis of the Hanafi school.

Although the power of the Muslim ruling classes declined under Maratha and British rule, Muslim trading communities were generally more successful in adjusting to the new environment. Like Parsis, many Bohras, Khojas, and Memons from different parts of Gujarat moved to Bombay after the rise of the East India Company, engaging in mercantile activities, including overseas trade. As language began to be seen as an important identity marker of a community in colonial India, some segments of the Gujarati-speaking Muslim elite began to discuss what 'their' language was, and which language (Gujarati or Urdu) should be the medium of instruction for their children (Chapter 2).

Language

When we use the word 'Gujarat' today, it is generally associated with the state of Gujarat, which was founded in 1960 as a linguistic entity. Although the current boundary of Gujarat state has a rather more recent origin, the idea of the region of Gujarat has a much longer history. It should be stressed once again that this Gujarat, as well as the state of Gujarat in its present form, is hardly a linguistically homogeneous region. There are residents who speak different forms of the Gujarati language as well as those whose languages are officially differentiated from Gujarati. It must also be stressed that a sizeable portion of the elite used and continue to use more than one language in everyday life, depending on different contexts.

Sitamushu Yashaschandra, in his insightful work, explains the changing linguistic situation in Gujarat from the twelfth century to the time of Gandhi. According to his analysis, Gujarati became the medium of literary expression from the twelfth century; the earliest and the second earliest available literary texts in Gujarati date to this period (Yashaschandra 2003: 574–6). Prior to this, 'transregional languages' such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Apabhramsha had fulfilled that role. Yet, according to Yashaschandra, it was only with the rise of bhakti poetry, beginning with Narasimha Mehta in the fifteenth century, that the 'new regional literature', which was different in 'its very mode of being' from literature in transregional languages, finally emerged in Gujarati (576).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the famous Gujarati poets of the later periods, such as Akho and Premanand, began to assign greater importance and value to Gujarati-language work, often comparing it with Sanskrit. While Akho seemed to believe that Sanskrit was of no use without Gujarati (581), Premanand tried to raise the status of Gujarati to make it equal to that of Sanskrit (Chavda n.d.: 14; Munshi 1935: 188–9; Jhaveri 1938: 134–5). The status of Gujarati in the world of literature was evidently affected by the presence of more 'authentic' languages used for religious purposes, such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, and later even Vraj (Vraj was believed by devotees to be the language that Krishna himself would have spoken) (Dwyer 2001: 28). Premanand expressed his wish in one of his *akhyans* (narratives in verse) that the Gujarati language would attain a high status, singing

> May the Gujarati language be rich with implied meanings, lovely in its parts. May her feet be full of grace and ornament. May she excel all her comrades. May she reach the pedestal occupied by the language of gods [Sanskrit]. May God fulfil my hope of seeing her the best among all her friends.
>
> (Translation by Munshi 1935: 189, with minor changes by the author.)

It is also claimed by later historians that Premanand was the first person to give this language the name, 'Gujarati' (Chavda n.d.: 12; Munshi 1935: 98).[8]

The desire of Premanand to see the Gujarati language attain a high position may have been a consequence of its relatively low status in contemporary society. Although it is not clear when exactly the following couplets began to spread, the intellectuals in colonial Gujarat often mentioned them when narrating the story of Premanand's resolve to improve the status of Gujarati:

> Abe Tabe (Urdu or Hindustani for 'here and there') is worth sixteen annas in the rupee, and Athe Kathe (Marwadi for the same words) twelve. Ikdam Tikadam (Marathi for the same) eight annas and Sun San (Gujarati equivalent for 'what') only four pice (one anna).[9]
>
> (Jhaveri 1938: 95)

Thus, according to these couplets, the value assigned to Gujarati was much less than that of Hindustani, Marwari, and Marathi.

In this regard, it should be noted that Arabic and Persian also occupied important positions in the region's literary and cultural activities. The sultans of Gujarat actively patronised literature and learning in them (Kapadia 2018: 13). They also encouraged scholarship and literature in Sanskrit and furthered the growth of a lingua franca known as Gujari. Gujari was a regional variation of the general North Indian lingua franca. It had distinguishing characteristics specific to Gujarat and yet differed from the Gujarati language in which Narasimha Mehta composed his poems. The Gujari language had been developed to facilitate commercial and social transactions, and gradually became a 'literary and spoken Indo-Muslim dialect, helping link the Gujarat court with the other Indo-Muslim courts of north India and the Deccan' (Sheikh 2010: 209–12). Outside the direct patronage of the court, other literary dialects/languages were used in medieval Gujarat (207). Jain intellectuals continued to compose, for instance, works in Sanskrit and Apabhramsa (Kapadia 2018: 14).

It was in such an environment that literature in the Gujarati language began to develop from the fifteenth century, as discussed above. According to Yashaschandra, by the early seventeenth century, the literary form of Gujarati had been 'sufficiently distinguished from local speech forms, standardized and disseminated', and was 'intelligible to a readership spread over a wide cultural region' (Yashaschandra 2003: 573). In the development of literary Gujarati, Jain monks are known to have played an extremely important role (Shukla-Bhatt 2015: 7).

The Gujarati language was influenced by other contemporaneous languages in the medieval period. During the Gujarat sultanate and Mughal periods, many words from Arabic and Persian entered into the Gujarati vocabulary, especially words relating to administration and trade (Nayak 1954–5; Divatia 1993: 46). Some well-known Gujarati *kavis* (poets), for instance, Samal Bhatt and Dayaram, also used many Persian words in their verses (Dwyer 2001: 49–52, 69–70). Pre-colonial Gujarat was a

'complex region in linguistic terms', with medieval Gujarati, Prakrit, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, and Gujari 'playing simultaneous roles in a region that could not be made synonymous with any one particular language' (Kothari 2015: 7).

The same environment created a regional elite who were familiar with more than one language. For instance, high-caste Hindu literati such as Brahmans (especially Nagar Brahmans), Kayasthas, and Brahmakshatriyas during the Gujarat sultanate and Mughal periods studied the language of the court, Persian. They even wrote in that language (Nayak 1954–5; Divatia 1993: 45–6), though they were also familiar with Sanskrit and literary Gujarati, besides various spoken forms of Gujarati. Such a multilingual elite did not hesitate to acquire knowledge of yet another language, English, when they began to recognise the benefit of having this knowledge under the increasing political dominance of the East India Company and the British government in western India. It should be emphasised, however, that the linguistic impact of colonial rule went further than simply spreading English among the regional elite. New ideas on language, literature, and linguistic communities accompanied the British political advance.

Conclusion

Gujarat had developed as a distinct political and linguistic region long before the arrival of the British, though its territory had always been ambiguous. The idea of Gujarat as a 'region' continued among the elite during the colonial period, even though this area was then divided into the Bombay Presidency and princely states. There had also been a wide geographical, linguistic, and historical difference among the 'mainland', Saurashtra, and Kutch, and even within the 'mainland', among its subregions. Importantly, during the colonial era, Bombay city was often included in the territory of 'Gujarat' imagined by the Gujarati-speaking elite, due to the significant roles that this city played for them.

Gujarat has long been known for its mercantile activities. From the late nineteenth century, large cities such as Bombay and Ahmedabad saw the development of the textile industry, to which the Gujarati-speaking elite made a significant contribution. The sense of pride in their region as a 'country of merchants' was frequently expressed by these elites. This perception of Gujarat was to be incorporated into their ideas of language and literature.

Although the Gujarati language became the medium of literary expression from the twelfth century, pre-colonial Gujarat was a linguistically complex region with many languages. However, the multilingual elite were ready to acquire knowledge of yet another language, English. This would wreak great changes on the elite perception of language, as discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

1. For instance, Brahmans were traditionally considered to be divided into 84 categories, although the same gazetteer gives the figure at 79, exclusive of subdivisions of the subcastes (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 2). R.E. Enthoven's *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay* suggested 93 endogamous divisions among Brahmans (Enthoven I 1990: 216). A leading poet in nineteenth-century Gujarat, Dalpatram Dahyabhai, in his essay on castes written in 1851, listed well over 'conventional' 84 castes of Brahmins and Vaniyas, as well as various Rajput and Shudra castes (Shodhan 2010: 34: Dalpatram 1885).
2. Amrita Shodhan shows in detail how caste was constituted as part of the public judicial process and how it was gradually 'interiorised' in nineteenth-century Gujarat (Shodhan 2010). For one of the most comprehensive discussions on the question of how to interpret the phenomenon of caste in India from early modern to contemporary period, see Bayly (1999).
3. In Gujarati, it is spelt (in Gujarati script) 'Vaniyo' in the singular, and in Hindi (in Devanagari script) 'Baniya'. In primary and secondary sources in English, it is spelt in different ways, such as Bania/Baniya/Vania/Vaniya. In this book, I use the spelling, 'Vaniya' partly because the word will look more familiar to those outside Gujarat in comparison with 'Vaniyo'. 'Vaniya' is also the plural form of 'Vaniyo' in Gujarati, but I still add 's' at the end of the word when I make it plural as I do for the word 'Brahman/s'.
4. Although the Jains belonged to different 'castes' in western India, most of them were categorised as 'Vaniyas' in Gujarat (Enthoven II 1990: 82–3).
5. Many names of subcastes are also shared by Brahmans and Vaniyas (including Jains), such as Shrimali Brahmans and Shrimali Vaniyas. Some of these names were also used for several subdivisions of artisan castes such as Sonis and Ghanchis (for instance, Shrimal Brahmans, Shrimali Vaniyas, and Shrimali Sonis). Such subcaste names, found in different varnas, were believed to indicate their places of origin (Dalpatram 1885: 5–6).
6. For details of different groups of Muslims in Gujarat, see Misra 1964; Engineer 1989.
7. Besides Bohras who were traders and Shias, there were also Bohras who were 'tillers of the soil' and Sunnis (*Gazetteer* IX-II 1899: 24).
8. The first reference in European sources to the Gujarati language dates back to the early eighteenth century (Grierson 1908: 33).
9. Slightly different versions of the couplets were introduced by other scholars (Modi 1991: 99; Yashaschandra 2003: 582).

2 Educational institutions and language

Between 1887 and 1901, Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi, mentioned in the previous chapter, published *Sarasvatichandra*, now considered a 'classic' of modern Gujarati literature. While writing this novel in Gujarati, he left a diary in English called the 'Scrap Book'. The entry for 19th September 1899 explained his detailed plan for future writing. He intended to issue an English pamphlet every year on the subject of the British and their rule in India, which he hoped would be read by them too. He also planned to publish a paper every year on the 'History of the Indian People and their Institutions from the earliest time', written in English and aimed at the 'educated countrymen in India' (Tripathi 1959b: 177–8). In addition to these, he was eager to write one or two Gujarati novels every year and contribute essays occasionally to Gujarati and English periodicals. These would address issues related to law and literature as well as sociological, philosophical, and political interests. Lastly, he thought that he might also compose occasional poems in Gujarati (179–80).

The ambitions of Govardhanram Tripathi show that by the end of the nineteenth century, there was a widespread notion among the elite that the 'educated' meant those with a knowledge of the English language. Tripathi's choice to write his diary in English itself indicates the way in which English 'seeped into the intimate and personal domains of men of the elite classes' in colonial India, to borrow the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee (Mukherjee 2000: 9). Yet, it is also apparent that they continued to write in vernaculars too, especially when it came to novels and poems. Among the elite in late-nineteenth-century India, English was not yet considered 'their' language.

As colonial rule was consolidated throughout the nineteenth century, the number of educational institutions teaching English increased, even though those who studied in these institutions constituted only a tiny portion of the population in India. English was the language of the ruler and seen as the medium in which Indians could access 'modernity'. Knowledge of this language helped them to find jobs and attain success in their career as government officials, professionals, and businessmen. In addition, it provided a new common language for regional elites, who in the past

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used other languages, including Sanskrit and Persian, for interregional communication.

This chapter examines how new educational institutions, especially those teaching English, were introduced under colonialism, and how children from regional elite families began to study in them. These children were to become familiar with not only English but also the ideas of language and literature discussed in the West and the concept of nation, which led them to play leading roles in the debates on language in the late nineteenth century, including those with regard to the reform and 'standardisation' of the Gujarati language. Their family backgrounds, in terms of caste and religious communities, are also important for understanding this process. The last part of this chapter looks at the contemporaneous debates over Muslim and women's education, especially the question about which languages they should learn at school.

Education in the Bombay Presidency

The educational system in the Bombay Presidency was largely shaped by Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779–1859), its governor between 1819 and 1827. His minute of 1824 emphasised the importance of mass education through the medium of the mother tongue and encouraged the improvement and extension of 'indigenous' schools. At the same time, he suggested the establishment of higher-level schools where English should be taught for 'those disposed to pursue it' as 'a means of acquiring a knowledge of the European discoveries' (Nurullah and Naik 1951: 117). Although opinions on the medium of instruction differed even among the British, the idea of primary education through the vernacular, and higher education through English, continued to be the basic policy of the colonial state, not only in the Bombay Presidency but also in other regions.

In the Bombay Presidency, primary education was relatively advanced in comparison with other areas. A key role in this development was played by the Native School and School Book Committee, established in 1820 as part of the Bombay Education Society, whose president was Elphinstone himself.[1] The committee aimed to improve existing schools for Indian children, to establish or aid new ones, and to prepare books for the use of Indian children (Nurullah and Naik 1951: 189). Later, this organisation became the Bombay Native School Book and School Society (and then the Bombay Native Education Society). It trained teachers and prepared new schools in the presidency. In 1826, ten schools were opened in Gujarat; three at Surat, two at Ahmedabad, one at Dholka, two at Broach, one at Kheda, and one at Nadiad (Raval 1987: 49). Besides these official educational institutions, Christian missionaries started schools for the education of local society.

Even before the British government implemented the school system, India had 'indigenous' schools. E. Giles, Educational Inspector in the Bombay

Presidency since the 1870s, gave a detailed account of the indigenous educational system to the Education Commission. He categorised its schools into three groups: 'Hindu Schools', 'Muhammadan Schools', and 'Parsi Schools' (Education Commission II Evidence 1884: 321–3). While the latter two often focused on religious education (which was frequently accompanied by the learning of languages related to their religion, such as Arabic, Persian, and Pehelvi), Hindu schools were, in his opinion, generally 'secular'.

A survey of indigenous schools shows that their teachers in Gujarat were Brahmans and Vaniyas. Subjects generally taught included calculation (mental arithmetic) and the alphabet (Parulekar 1945: xxiii, 79). Teaching of the *anks* or multiplication tables and other types of calculation received much emphasis due to their relevance for business (xxxii.). B.M. Malabari (1853–1912), a well-known social reformer in the late nineteenth century, left a vivid account of the indigenous school where he studied. There he suffered greatly with classes of mental arithmetic, in which questions such as 1/4 of 95, or 3/4 of 65 had to be answered immediately. He concluded sarcastically that

> The Native system of accounts is immensely superior to the European system. In dealing with the heaviest and the most intricate figures the Native accountant has merely to sing a verse, and there the result is ready to hand!
>
> (Gidumal 1888: xi)

Some schools also taught the writing of business letters and *hundis* (bills of exchange) (Education Commission II Evidence 1884: 322). The strength of mercantile influence is reflected in the dominance of Vaniyas among the students of these schools (Parulekar 1945: xxix, 67). According to an official record from the Ahmedabad Collectorate in the mid-1820s, for instance, there were 1,080 Vaniyas, 410 Brahmans, and 524 Kanbis among a total of 2,973 students. In the city of Ahmedabad, there were 502 Vaniyas, 244 Brahmans, and 284 Kanbis among 1,333 students (85).

Some children from elite families took private lessons from *pandits* or *mullas*. During the time of the Gujarat sultanate and the Mughal empire, even children from high-caste Hindu families would study Persian and Arabic with mullas to become qualified for state service (Jhaveri 1956: 3). These languages were replaced by English with the rise of the East India Company and the establishment of British rule in western India. Besides these ruling languages, Sanskrit was commonly known among high-caste intellectuals. The tradition of learning Persian and Sanskrit was to be incorporated into higher education under the colonial system, as discussed below.

School education under the British government distinctly contrasted with its 'indigenous' counterpart. In the first place, the curricula of new schools obviously differed, including subjects such as science, mathematics, literature, geography, history, and philosophy. The teaching of religion was not

encouraged, though moral education received emphasis. Elphinstone, the Governor of the Bombay Presidency, for example, was of the opinion that neither religion nor 'any topic likely to excite discontent among the natives' should be touched on in government schools or publications (Ballhatchet 1957: 261).

Under government supervision, attempts were made to introduce textbooks, curricula, and regulations prescribed by the government into the presidency's schools. Teachers at government schools were now paid by the state, and thus became civil servants (Kumar 2014). The Gujarati Reading Books edited under the supervision of T.C. Hope between 1857 and 1860 were used extensively in schools throughout Gujarat.[2] For example, by 1892, the number of copies of the Gujarati Reading Book I to VII and of five other school textbooks had reached about 5.5 million.[3] The government also intervened in the selection of other books used at school. This contributed to the way in which the 'standard' form of the language was defined and spread through educational institutions, a process that was observed also in many other regions in the modern world.

The government was well aware of the importance of teachers in these schools. In Ahmedabad, Male and Female Training Colleges were established in 1857 and 1871, respectively, where students were trained to become schoolteachers.[4] These Training Colleges attracted people from all over Gujarat and deployed teachers to different vernacular schools in the region. Since they were expected to teach in Gujarati-medium schools, the medium of instruction of these colleges was not English but Gujarati, in contrast with the cases of other colleges for higher education.

English education

Colonial education in India is often associated with the teaching of English. However, not all children enrolled in colonial schools learnt English. With the introduction of the new educational system, British officials surely expected to see the emergence of a new Indian elite who were acquainted with English and ready to support the colonial administration. The famous Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education (1835) reflects this. Yet, not all children were subject to this system. Primary education continued to be given in the vernacular. English lessons were reserved for secondary institutions, which were often called 'English schools' (Government of Bombay 1958: 153). As the demand for English education rose, the government tried to increase the number of English schools, but the number of children with access to them remained highly limited.

Between 1855 and 1871, attempts were made by the Government of the Bombay Presidency to develop English schools. They created three types of English schools to serve the different requirements of various localities and groups: (a) High schools, (b) Anglo-Vernacular schools of the first grade, and (c) Anglo-Vernacular schools of the second grade (156). High schools

taught in English and were defined by E.I. Howard, the Director of Public Instruction, as those that

> send up boys to the colleges not only just able to pass the University Entrance Examination, but also imbued with a fair amount of English Literature, and thoroughly grounded in the rudiments of Sanskrit or Latin. (156)

They served students between Standard IV and VII, and therefore 'Anglo-Vernacular schools' were attached to them or associated with them to teach Standards I–III of secondary education. These high schools aimed to train a new elite in colonial India, one proficient in English and in a classical language.

In the second category, that is, Anglo-Vernacular schools of the first grade, the intention was to 'turn out clerks'. It was expected that they would enable boys to

> write a good and rapid hand in English, be quick at practical arithmetic, and be able to read English aloud intelligibly, write correctly from dictation, draft an English letter on ordinary business matters, and translate from easy English into his own language orally as well as on paper. (156–7)

The students were also expected to learn some basics of geometry, algebra, geography, Indian and English history, and physics, within five standards. English was first taught as a subject and then used as a medium of instruction from a certain stage, according to the decision of each school headmaster. After studying in these schools, students could progress to high schools (from Standard IV) if they wanted, or sit the public service examination to become clerks.

The third category, Anglo-Vernacular schools of the second grade, taught students between Standard I and III.[5] These were broadly of two types: Those whose objective was to prepare students for high school; and those that did not provide English-medium education, but did allow students to learn English (in fact 'a little English' in the words of the Director of Public Instruction) as a subject. The latter schools became popular and increased in number (157). This was partly because they could be started even in small and remote places and partly because the fees were lower than other types of English schools. As a consequence, the government tried to maintain the standard of these schools by imposing certain conditions. It is evident that high demand existed for learning some English for practical purposes, to obtain jobs and carry out family businesses, but not necessarily in order to fluently read English poems and novels.

From the 1870s, a variety of changes were further introduced in secondary education. For instance, high schools began to teach students from

Standard I to VII, with English as a subject in Standards I–III and then as a medium of instruction (159–60). In his autobiography, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) described the difficulties he faced at high school when the medium of instruction was suddenly switched from Gujarati to English in the fourth standard. He recollected: 'I found myself completely at sea. Geometry was a new subject in which I was not particularly strong, and the English medium made it still more difficult for me' (Gandhi 2018: 73).

Some children with a high school education progressed to college, where the medium of instruction was again English. For some families, the main purpose of sending their children to colleges was to imbue them with knowledge and skills useful for their future career, particularly the ability to use English. It was also expected that college life and an academic degree would enable them to obtain high social status, and some recognition from the colonial state and their communities. They would be accepted into the networks of the regional elite and beyond on the basis of their educational experiences.

For many students in these colleges, however, English was not simply a career-supporting tool. It became the language in which they expressed their ideas and exchanged opinions with their peers. Some student groups also began to devote attention to the situation of vernacular languages and literature, trying to reform 'their' languages and create 'new' literatures with reference to the English example. These students were familiar with famous figures in English literature, such as Walter Scott, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Gray, whose works were taught in colleges (and regularly appeared in B.A. examinations) (McDonald 1966: 459). In the eyes of the educated youth, English symbolised Western civilization and modernity. This perception was encouraged by the colonial government, which expected these college students to acquire a good knowledge not only of the English language but also of its literature. English literature would become, the government believed, 'the source of moral values for correct behaviour and action' for these youth, who would support the British in ruling the colony (Viswanathan 1998: 93).

Initially, the number of colleges was limited, but it gradually increased towards the turn of the century. In Pune, western India, Poona Sanskrit College was founded in 1821. This was amalgamated with Poona English School in 1851 and later renamed Deccan College (Dongerkery 1957: 2). In Bombay, the first college classes were projected in 1827 (Dobbin 1972: 27) and in 1835, two professorships were endowed from a public fund to commemorate the services of Mountstuart Elphinstone. These professors' classes were attached to Elphinstone High School in 1840. The school was renamed Elphinstone College School and later Elphinstone Institution, before splitting into Elphinstone High School and Elphinstone College in 1856 (Dongerkery 1957: 2). The latter became one of the leading institutions for higher education in the presidency. In 1845, Grant Medical College was

also started in Bombay city with the objective of imparting, through a 'scientific system', the benefit of medical instruction to the 'Natives of Western India' (3). In 1857, the University of Bombay was established, along with the Universities of Calcutta and Madras. The three colleges described above became affiliated to the University of Bombay in 1860 (Government of Bombay 1958: 238). This meant that the students continued to study in their colleges, but examinations were held and degrees conferred by the university (236). The number of colleges under Bombay University steadily grew and by 1903–4, the University had 16 affiliated colleges with 3,454 students enrolled (238). Some of these affiliated colleges were located in the Gujarat region, including Gujarat College (Ahmedabad), Baroda College (Baroda), and Samaldas College (Bhavnagar), with the latter two located in princely states.[6]

It should be noted here that the institutions for higher education first developed in Bombay and Pune with the latter being the centre of the Deccan due to its historical status as the residence of the *Peshwas* (Chief Minister of the Maratha Confederacy) before the British conquest. This led some sections of the elite in Gujarat to make public complaints of the colonial government's 'neglect' of education in Gujarat.[7] The lack of colleges, they argued, placed them at a disadvantage for obtaining posts in the civil service and resulted in the 'introduction of foreigners from the Deccan and other provinces into the administration' of Gujarat (Education Commission II Memorials 1884: 4; I 1884: 54). Although Gujarat College in Ahmedabad began to develop slowly in the late nineteenth century with financial support from the regional elite, the sense of being behind the other areas, especially the Deccan/Maharashtra, in regard to educational development and involvement in administration continued to be shared among the elite in Gujarat, especially those in Ahmedabad (Education Commission II Memorials 1884: 2–4). This feeling, however, did not immediately encourage the Ahmedabadi elite to demand a separate province for themselves. This was probably due to their strong connection with Bombay city and the mercantile tradition, which led them to imagine a wide range of areas associated with the Gujarati speakers through business. It was several decades later that this sense of being behind Maharashtra was repeatedly invoked by the elite in and around Ahmedabad in their attempts to mobilise public support for the idea of a separate state of Gujarat (Chapter 6).

It is noteworthy that the government decided to exclude vernacular language as a subject from all university examinations from 1862, except the matriculation examination. Even in the matriculation examination, a modern Indian language could be taken only as an optional subject (Nurullah and Naik 1951: 292). It is evident that colonial education thus played an important role in reconstructing linguistic hierarchies (Naregal 2001). By contrast, 'classical languages' such as Sanskrit and Persian were given some importance and included in examinations at Bombay University, along

with English. This resulted in prominent high-caste intellectuals being able to use English and Sanskrit besides Gujarati. They frequently mixed words and sentences from these languages in their writings. For instance, Govardhanram Tripathi freely included sentences in English and Sanskrit in his Gujarati novel, *Sarasvatichandra*, and intermixed Sanskrit and Gujarati in his predominantly English diary (Tripathi 1957, 1959a, 1959b, 1992). The manners in which he used these languages freely depended upon the occasions and purposes of his writing, indicating not only his deep knowledge of them but also that he attached different meanings and perceptions to these languages.

In line with the decision of the Senate of Bombay University in 1880, the first year of the B.A. course ended with what was called the 'Previous examination'. This included six subjects: English, a classical language, mathematics, logic, history, and natural science. In the second year, examinations covered English, a classical language, and mathematics. Third-year students could choose one of five electives: language and literature; history and political economy; logic and moral philosophy; mathematics; and natural science. For their B.A. examination, students were tested in their electives, English, and a classical language (McDonald 1966: 457–8). The position given to Sanskrit in educational institutions as a 'classical language' (although not all Hindu students chose to study it) confirmed the conviction of some high-caste Hindu intellectuals that Sanskrit occupied an extremely important position in their culture and tradition. This encouraged some of them to 'develop' the Gujarati language by introducing many words and expressions derived from Sanskrit (Chapter 4).

Family background of students

Gujarat was thought to be relatively advanced in terms of the spread of primary and secondary education (Basu 1974: 136). In the words of the report of the Education Commission in 1882, with a 'rich soil and abundant openings for educated talent in trade and commerce', the 'middle classes' here were 'ready to improve their position' (Education Commission I 1884: 60).

In relation to the literacy of different caste communities, it was generally high among upper-caste groups, such as Brahmans and Vaniyas, who occupied dominant positions in the so-called indigenous schools. When government schools started under British rule, these caste communities soon began to send their children to them. According to the report of the Educational Inspector of Northern Division for 1871–2, most of which was in Gujarati-speaking areas,[8] there were 51,406 students in 'Lower Class Schools' (primary schools) under the category of government schools during 1871–2. Among them, as many as 10,164 were Brahmans. Those who were Jains or from a 'Trading Caste' were, respectively, 4,986 and 6,399. This means that Brahmans, Vaniyas (including Jains), Bhatias, and other trading castes constituted about 40 per cent of the total number of students in government

primary schools. The dominance of Brahmans and Vaniyas is even more evident in 'Middle Class Schools' and high schools. In high schools, out of 687 students, there were 266 Brahmans, 44 Jains, and 136 trading castes. Therefore, they constituted 65 per cent of the total. Other communities that actively sent their children to high schools were Kshatriyas (Rajputs) (44 students), Kayasthas/Prabhus (30 students), cultivators (Kanbis and others, 32 students), and notably Parsis (108 students) (*Report of the Department of Public Instruction, 1871–72,* Appendices 1872: 194–5). The predominance of Brahmans and Vaniyas in Gujarati educational institutions can be observed continuously in the late nineteenth century, as can the strong presence of Parsis in high schools and colleges.

Although children from Vaniya families were highly visible in schools, complaints were expressed by some sections of their community about the contents of colonial education. For instance, Premabhai Himabhai, an affluent Jain merchant and nagarsheth, argued that traders could not employ people who had gone to Anglo-Vernacular schools, unless they had attended their offices and learned their ways of business. He conceded, however, that because many companies now carried on their correspondence in English, the knowledge of this language had become necessary. His statement confirms that there was a high demand for the teaching of English for practical purposes, as discussed in the previous section.

Muslim trading communities such as Bohras, Khojas, and Memons also actively participated in educational institutions. Being asked by the Education Commission in 1882 about what 'classes' availed themselves of government-related educational institutions, Gopalji Surbhai Desai, who had been working for the educational service for many years, answered: 'Brahmins, Vanias, [and] Trading classes, including Bohras, Memans, and Khojas' (Education Commission II Evidence 1884: 293). The Educational Inspector of Northern Division's report also showed that more than half of the Muslim students in the government primary schools were from trading communities (*Report of the Department of Public Instruction, 1871–72,* Appendices 1872: 194–5). Like Vaniyas, these Muslim trading communities needed knowledge of reading and writing Gujarati as well as arithmetic for business purposes, and thus even before colonial education developed, they often sent their children to indigenous schools (Parulekar 1945: 67). Although it seems that sending their children to Gujarati-medium primary schools was a natural choice for them, some Muslims further advocated the expansion of Urdu-medium education, a stance further considered later in this chapter.

At college level, the prominence of a limited range of communities among the students was even more pronounced. For instance, in Gujarat College in Ahmedabad, Brahmans and Vaniyas (including Jains) were again in the majority. For instance, between 1890 and 1891, out of 119 students, there were 51 Brahmans, 13 Jains, and 17 Vaniyas (Hindu Vaniyas). During the same period, there were 9 Parsis and 7 Muslims (*Annual Report of the*

Principal of the Gujarat College [henceforth, *ARPGC*], *1890–91* 1891: 8). The situation remained more or less the same ten years later. Out of 272 students, 130 were Brahmans, 33 Jains, 44 Vaniyas, 4 Parsis, and 6 Muslims (*ARPGC 1900–1* 1901: 6). The Brahmans and Vaniyas represented the majority in most years in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (*ARPGC* 1889–1911).

The consistent presence of Parsi students, despite their community constituting less than one per cent of the entire population of Gujarat, remains noteworthy. By contrast, the number of Muslim students in this college was evidently small, when we consider the size of the Muslim population in Gujarat (constituting about 10 per cent of the entire Gujarati population). The attendance of students from cultivating communities, such as Kanbis (Patidars), increased gradually, but in the late nineteenth century their presence hardly matched that of Brahmans and Vaniyas in the college.

Parsi attendance was even more striking in colleges in Bombay city, where students with different mother tongues gathered. For instance, in Elphinstone College, which was regarded as one of the most elite institutions in the presidency, in 1870, 34 per cent of its 179 students were Parsis, 34 per cent Brahmans, and 9 per cent Prabhus (Dobbin 1972: 35). In 1882, the dominance of the Parsis declined slightly, yet they still constituted as many as 26 per cent of all students, while Brahmans represented 33 per cent, Hindu trading castes 21 per cent, and Prabhus 10 per cent (162). Parsis spoke Gujarati, though the form of it they used was called 'Parsi Gujarati' due to its unique pronunciation/spelling and vocabulary. The high percentage of educated Parsis in Bombay, along with their distinct 'Parsi Gujarati', was to have a significant impact on the debates surrounding the Gujarati language in the colonial period.

At this point, it should be stressed that the students in these colleges came from different places in the presidency. The collegial environment was one in which students with different origins, dialects, and languages interacted. Indulal Yagnik, who was from a Nagar Brahman family in Nadiad in Kheda district and later became a well-known social worker and politician, joined Gujarat College in 1907. There he came into contact with students from Kathiawad and Surat through an organisation of Nagar Brahman students. He could not help noticing that these Kathiawadi students of his caste community spoke Gujarati with 'their typical accents' (Yagnik I 1967: 118–9; Yagnik I 2011: 160–1). In this manner, colleges not only trained students to become part of the English-speaking elite and equipped them with knowledge of the 'West', but also gave them the opportunity to understand the linguistic situation of their society and develop an interest in 'their' languages. Consequently, some students familiar with English and English literature attempted to reform their languages, define standard forms, and further develop vernacular literature.

Importantly, students who went to high schools and colleges in colonial India often had collective 'old-boy feelings' (McDonald 1966: 467). These

were the product of shared experience. They read the same books, discussed the same things, and often played sports (such as cricket) together.[9] These college-based life experiences created elite circles formed around students and graduates of the same institutions. Various public activities and voluntary associations were organised by these elite networks (Seal 1968). After graduation, many of them took jobs as administrators, professionals (such as lawyers, teachers, doctors, and journalists), merchants, and industrialists, and worked in different parts of western India, sometimes even beyond this area. With their resources and access to government institutions, they began to establish their influence in a wide range of cultural debates, including those on language and literature.

The highly educated often described themselves as the 'middle class', thereby articulating their identity as mediators/interpreters between the state and the 'people'. They took a keen interest in the 'reform' and 'enlightenment' of local society and 'their' people, often in collaboration with the colonial government. At the same time, some presented themselves as 'representatives' of indigenous society, communicating demands and opinions to the colonial state. Their presence and activities remind us of what Jürgen Habermas described in relation to Europe as the development of 'public sphere' from the eighteenth century (Habermas 1992). To borrow the words of Partha Chatterjee, these elites were social agents 'preoccupied not only with leading their followers but … also conscious of doing so as a "middle term" in a social relationship' (Chatterjee 1993: 35). Familiarity with the English language played a crucial role in the formation of this 'middle class', which encouraged them to differentiate themselves from 'others' in society.

The idea of a 'middle class' was articulated by members of the Managing Committee of the Gujarat Vernacular Society (GVS), a leading voluntary association in Ahmedabad, in its memorial to the Education Commission in 1882:

> Where there is a wide gulf between the rulers and the ruled, as between the English and the Indian people, separating them in thoughts, aspirations, and habits, it is, we believe, of the greatest importance that the Government should do all in its power to foster, by means of liberal education, the formation of a class of men who may be looked to as faithful interpreters between the rulers and the ruled.
>
> (Education Commission II Memorials 1884: 8)

The message expressed here reminds us of the famous minute of Macaulay (1835), in which he stressed the necessity to 'form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern' (Zastoupil and Moir 1999: 171). With this middle-class consciousness, these educated individuals also became involved in various social reforms and literary activities, and before long, began to organise political movements.

Medium of instruction among Muslims

As discussed above, primary schools in colonial India generally continued to teach in vernacular languages. In the Gujarat region, this predominantly meant Gujarati. For most students, including Muslim students, this was their mother tongue, though some Muslim communities, especially those who claimed foreign origin, spoke 'Hindustani' (Urdu) at home (*Gazetteer* IX-II 1901: 7). Under British rule, the idea of linguistic communities with fixed boundaries began to develop and the Muslim community was not exempt from this; the best medium of instruction for Muslim children became a matter of debate.

From the late nineteenth century, some Muslims in this region began to advocate the primacy of Urdu as their language. Kamruddin Tyabji, a son of a famous Bohra merchant, Tyabji Bhoymeeah (1803–63), recorded an interesting story about the language of his family. According to him, in 1859, his family decided that 'Hindustani' (Urdu) was to be used in place of Gujarati, though his mother continued to speak Gujarati even after that (Fyzee 1964: 3). Although the exact reason underlying this change remains unclear, Tyabji and other family members might have believed that speaking Hindustani would symbolise the family's rising social status. They were no longer uneducated merchants, they might have thought, but members of a high-class Muslim elite. It should be remembered that Tyabji, who spent his childhood in poverty, had become an extremely successful businessman by 1859. Urdu was regarded as the language of high-class Muslims in western India and the lingua franca of North India and therefore more fitting for his family's position in society at that time (Karlitzky 2002). According to his son, Tyabji even fined members of the family who continued to use Gujarati (Tyabji 1952: 15). That his mother continued to speak her original language reminds us that attitudes towards languages varied even within single families. Gender, generation, and educational background were all influencing factors.

Tyabji Bhoymeeah was evidently familiar with multiple languages. He had learned Hindustani (Urdu), Gujarati, Persian, Arabic, and English, and wrote a book named *Gul-bun-e-Hidayat* (Bud of Guidance) in a language that was described by his biographer as 'Gujarati Hindustani'. That is Gujarati 'with an abundance of Arabic words in good Arabic characters' (Tyabji 1952: 9). His daughters learned Hindustani (Urdu) and Persian, besides Gujarati, and his six sons learned English in addition. The sons were even sent to Europe to gain experience of trading and higher education. Their language skills helped them to be involved in various different activities in and outside India.

Although this anecdotal evidence from the Tyabji family is probably rather extreme, it seems that there was some demand among Muslims for schools in which their children could learn Urdu. The government in turn started 'Urdu schools' to attract Muslim students. These imparted 'some

knowledge of Urdu', while Gujarati remained the medium of instruction, as many Muslims in Gujarat did not understand Urdu. In his report on the Northern Division in 1873, the Educational Inspector stressed that the language of business, of higher schools, and of the courts and offices was Gujarati, and that a knowledge of this language was 'indispensably necessary for every one who wishes to make himself useful or gain his livelihood by trade or service' (*Report of the Department of Public Instruction, 1872–73,* Appendices 1874: 82). It is possible, however, that even among Gujarati-speaking Muslims, some considered Urdu a language they should learn. Similar efforts were made by the Bombay government from the 1870s to encourage Muslim attendance by introducing the teaching of languages that were closely associated with Muslims. For instance, a professor of Arabic and Persian was appointed to Elphinstone College, while Persian teachers were employed at both Elphinstone and Surat High School (The Government of Bombay 1958: 468).

It seems that the demand for schools where Muslim children could learn Urdu properly was expressed repeatedly by some sections of the Muslim elite in this region. One of Tyabji Bhoymeeah's sons, Badruddin Tyabji (1844–1906), who later became a famous lawyer, social reformer, and leading member of the Indian National Congress, voiced his opinion to the Education Commission in 1882 in this regard. He stated that the mother tongue of the Muslims was Urdu, and argued the need for Urdu-medium schools where pupils could acquire a knowledge of English and Western literature:

> The higher classes of Muhammadans are to a great extent excluded from Government schools by reason of no attention being paid to their special requirements. They attach great importance to a knowledge of Hindustani, Persian, and Arabic, and are therefore unwilling, as a rule, to go to a school where instruction is only given in Gujarathi or Marathi and English.
>
> (Education Commission II Evidence 1884: 497)

He further argued:

> What wonder, then, that only a few Muhammadans could be found who would be willing to give up ther [*sic*] own mother-tongue and their own classical literiature [*sic*] for the purpose of acquiring a language like Gujarathi or Marathi, which was of no value to them in ordinary life, and possessed but small literary attractions, and could only be useful to those who wished to enter into Government service, and that too in those places only where those languages prevailed. (504)

Some Muslim intellectuals in western India thus strongly advocated the importance of learning languages associated with Muslim identity, such as

Urdu and Persian, later even demanding the establishment of Urdu-medium schools. In a debate in the Bombay Legislative Council in 1912, Rafiuddin Ahmad also argued at length for the need for Urdu schools that taught in Urdu.[10] He stressed that this practice was already underway in Bombay's Urdu schools, and that other parts of the presidency should follow them. 'If we have to learn through Marathi or Gujarati we have to forego our own language', he stated. It is evident here that for him the mother tongue of the Muslims was nothing but Urdu, even though he must have been aware that the majority of Muslims in the Bombay Presidency spoke vernaculars such as Marathi and Gujarati.[11]

However, such opinions were challenged by other sections of the Muslim community; Shriniwas K. Rodda, another member of the Bombay Legislative Council, quoted the words of his Muslim friend Fazulbhoy, who said that but for his education in Gujarati, 'he would not have been what he is now'.[12] Shriniwas emphasised that all commercial accounts and transactions took place in the local vernacular languages and that a knowledge of these languages was required in order to join the public service. In response to this statement, Rafiuddin Ahmad argued that Fazulbhoy could not represent Muslims, for he was a Khoja who spoke a 'Hindu language' and followed 'Hindu law'.[13]

The weight Rafiuddin Ahmad placed on the importance of Urdu as a Muslim language also led to questions about the difference between Urdu in North India and in this region. In the opinion of R.D. Prior, who was the Inspector of the Central Division at that time, the Urdu spoken in this area was 'highly corrupt' and 'adulterated with the vernacular of the district'.[14] He cited examples of teachers in Urdu schools in Ahmadnagar and Ratnagiri who came from North India to find that children in these places could not understand their language. His opinion was immediately criticised by Rafiuddin Ahmad, who claimed that Prior had 'anti-Urdu views' and that he was called 'Pandit Prior' among Muslims. He also found it strange that Prior should decide what Urdu was 'without knowing a word of Urdu' and argued that 'Urdu as written in this Presidency is just the same as in Upper India or anywhere else'.[15] He continued: 'Some corruption might have been introduced here and there, but as a matter of fact, Urdu is the same everywhere'.

The extent to which those Muslim intellectuals tried to project Urdu as the language of the Muslims can be gauged from the following episode. It was reported in 1912 that 'a zealous Mahomedan Deputy Inspector' had driven many Muslim children 'from the Gujarati schools they wished to attend into Urdu schools which they did not wish to attend'.[16] In spite of conflicting opinions on Urdu-medium schools, in 1912 the Bombay government decided to start training Urdu teachers at Ahmedabad Training College, and to issue papers in Urdu at the Vernacular Final Examination in the Northern Division.[17] The government's response to the demands of Muslim intellectuals for the expansion of Urdu education enhanced their

position. Although the majority of Muslims in Gujarat continued to use Gujarati in their everyday life and sent their children to Gujarati-medium schools, ambiguity remained among the Muslim elite as to what 'their language' was.

Women's education

As in the other regions in colonial India, the proportion of girls in Gujarat who received school education, let alone in high schools and colleges, was extremely limited in the late nineteenth century. According to B.M. Malabari, a contemporary Gujarati social reformer, women's education in Gujarat was in 'a fairly satisfactory state, more so in the Ahmedabad centre' (Malabari 1889: 118). The same view was expressed by the Director of Public Instruction in 1863: 'Female education (in the limited sense of the term) flourishes more among the Gujarati-speaking people, both Hindoos and Parsees, than among the Marathas' (*Report of the Director of Public Instruction, 1862–63,* Appendices 1864: 40). Census figures seem to confirm the above statements. For example, in 1881, the average number of women 'learning or knowing how to read and write' in every hundred girls between 5 and 15 years old was 0.9 in Gujarat, while the figures in both Konkan and the Deccan were 0.4 (Baines 1882: 156). Yet it is also evident that the number of girls who went to school in Gujarat was still extremely small.

Needless to say, the idea of sending girls to school was unpopular even before the development of colonial education. When an official enquiry on indigenous schools was conducted by the Bombay government in 1824, there was no mention of girls in these schools (Parulekar 1945: xlvi). Missionaries began to establish schools for girls in the nineteenth century, and the first school of this kind was started in 1824 in Bombay city (The Government of Bombay 1958: 387). The Indian elite gradually began to show an interest in girls' education. The Students' Literary and Scientific Society, founded in 1848 by Elphinstonians with the support of professors, discussed various issues on social reform, including girls' education. The society soon resolved itself into three branches: the Marathi Dnyan Prasarak Sabha for the Marathi-speakers, Gujarati Jnan Prasarak Mandali for the Parsis (both mean 'Association for Spreading Knowledge'), and the Gujarati Hindu Buddhivardhak Sabha (Society for the Extension of the Mind) for the Gujarati-speaking Hindus. Among them, the Gujarati Jnan Prasarak Mandali, with Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917) and other Parsi social reformers as its members, obtained financial support from Parsi merchants. As a result, the first Parsi girls' schools were opened in Bombay city in 1849 and continued to develop afterwards (Dobbin 1972: 56–7). Among high-caste Hindus too, Vaniya merchants gradually began to provide support for the establishment and management of girls' schools (58). In Ahmedabad, the first girls' school started in 1849 under the management of the GVS. It

should be stressed that the main initiative for developing women's education in this city was taken not by the British but by the local elite. Here again prominent merchant families actively provided financial support for female education.

Local support of female education may be attributed in part to a colonial encouragement of philanthropic activities, but it was also motivated by a growing consciousness of the necessity for women's education in the formation of 'good' wives and mothers. For instance, Premabhai Himabhai, the nagarsheth of Ahmedabad, gave the following opinion to Mary Carpenter, a British educator, in 1866: 'It is because they are ignorant that they (women of this country) do not understand in some respects what is right and good, and what is wrong and bad' (Carpenter 1868: 68). The motto of a Gujarati journal for women, *Stri Bodh,* published in Bombay from 1857, was as follows: 'The greatness of the country depends upon the education the mothers receive' (Shukla 1991: WS-63). In this regard, advocates for women's education often argued that women were more educated in ancient India than now. They referred to the example of mythical and historical women who had been known for their intelligence, and whom they now reconstructed as models for contemporary women. It must be further pointed out here that in debates over women's education or other social issues relating to women in this period, the involvement of women themselves was evidently limited.

Contemporary discourse regarding women was reflected to some extent in the actual content of women's education. It was generally expected that female students should study separately from male students, which required the establishment of girls' schools. In these schools, the students were normally taught only up to the fourth standard in this period and did not receive any English lessons. Girls' schools had a special curriculum. Although its general outline resembled that of the boys' schools, modifications were made to 'suit feminine interests and limitations' (Covernton 1906: 19). Emphasis was laid on singing, sewing, and simple domestic economy, and the teaching of arithmetic and history was shortened, whereas subjects such as Euclid and Prosody were removed completely. Hargovinddas Kantawala (1849–1931), a leading Gujarati intellectual and an administrator in Baroda, was responsible for editing the separate Gujarati Series for the girls, published in 1907.[18] These readers were 'simpler in general treatment and narrower in the range of subjects than boys' (Covernton 1906: 80). For, according to an official report, the 'native public opinion' considered it more suitable for girls to read

> biographies illustrating the good deeds of great and virtuous women, accounts of their native land and its most distinguished sons, ethical stories and lessons inculcating modesty and sobriety of conduct and demeanour, together with poems of a moral and natural religious tendency. (80–1)

Lessons on domestic economy were also included in this new series. The content of the textbooks clearly reflected the editor's idea of women's education. In his words, the aim of this education was to make a girl the 'deserving mistress of her home, the competent companion of her husband and a useful member of society'.[19] It is not surprising in this context that few families considered it necessary for their daughters to learn English.

As in the case of male students, female students belonged to a limited range of communities and castes, that is, high-caste Hindus and Parsis. The presence of Muslims in girls' schools continued to be generally small. Even as late as 1908, the number of Muslim girls constituted only 5.3 per cent of the total number of girls at school in Ahmedabad (*The Stree Bodhe* 1908: 222). The figure should have been much higher, had their presence in schools corresponded to the size of their population in the city. It is noteworthy that of the 119 Muslim girls attending school, nearly half were in the school started by the Anjuman-i-Islam in 1887. Generally speaking, Muslim parents were eager to see religious instruction given to their daughters,[20] again possibly due to the symbolic role attached to women as protectors of community identity.

Women and English

Even among families who sent their daughters to school, those eager to see these girls educated in English were very few in this period. It was only in 1871–2 that four girls joined the Anglo-vernacular standards in Gujarat for the first time and started learning English at school (*Report of the Department of Public Instruction, 1871–72*, Appendices 1872: 178). In the case of Ahmedabad, there was no Anglo-vernacular class for girls until 1882, when it was created under local initiative in connection with the Female Training College (*The Stree Bodhe* 1908: 223). In 1884, 12 girls were in this class, learning English, Gujarati, arithmetic, needlework, and music with a male teacher and the Lady Superintendent of the Female Training College.[21]

According to an essay by Vidyagauri Nilkanth, who joined this class in 1887, there were four or five Parsi girls besides Vidyagauri and her sister, Sharada. As these Parsis had joined the class earlier and were more advanced in their studies than the sisters, they made fun of them due to their ignorance of English. Soon, however, 13 or 14 girls from different communities joined the class to their great relief (Basu 2008: 44). Two European assistants to the Lady Superintendent of the Training College taught sewing, embroidery, and drawing, besides English. Later this Anglo-vernacular class for girls was turned into a high school, which taught students up to the matriculation standard. By 1908, 12 students from this school had passed the matriculation examination, out of whom eight subsequently joined Gujarat College.

Vidyagauri Nilkanth later recollected how she studied English in this Anglo-vernacular class under Mrs McCaffy, the Lady Superintendent of the Female Training College:

> She made us read Shakespeare, Scott, other English classics and poetry and created in us a love for English literature. She taught us History and Geography in the English medium. We learnt Indian and British history. She taught Geography in such an interesting manner that we felt as though we were traveling all round the globe seeing different countries.
>
> (Basu 2008: 44)

Although the number was still small, women familiar with English grammar, language, and literature thus emerged, and became involved in various social and literary activities along with their male counterparts.

From the 1880s, a very limited number of women began to study in colleges in the Bombay Presidency. The first graduate of Bombay University was Cornelia Sorabji (1866–1954). She had joined Deccan College, Pune, in 1884 and received her B.A. in 1888. Her parents were educated Christians, though her father was originally from a Parsi community. She and her siblings spoke English at home in Maharashtra, while they also learned the 'languages of the peoples', that is, Marathi and Gujarati (Sorabji 1934: 7). She studied among men in Deccan College and then even taught English and French to male students in Gujarat College for a year before she left for Britain in 1889 to study law at Oxford. Later, back in India, she worked as a legal advisor for women in royal and aristocratic households and also as a barrister at the Calcutta High Court (Sorabji 1934; Gooptu 2006; Sorabji 2010).

The female population of college students increased in the twentieth century. In 1901–2, 75 girls were studying in colleges in the Bombay Presidency, out of whom 24 were Europeans and Anglo-Indians, 37 Parsis, 8 Indian Christians, and 5 Hindus (The Government of Bombay 1958: 392). No Muslim women were enrolled in colleges in the presidency, while the strong presence of the Parsis was evident, as in the case of male students.

In 1901, two Gujarati-speaking Hindu women passed their B.A. examinations for the first time. Until then, all female Bombay University graduates were Parsi and Maharashtrian (Marathi-speaking) women (Mehta 2008: 72). Vidyagauri R. Nilkanth (1876–1958) and Sharada S. Mehta (1882–1970) were born to a famous Nagar Brahman family in Ahmedabad, whose members were known for their involvement in social reform. Vidyagauri's husband, Ramanbhai Nilkanth, whom she married in 1889, supported her studies, teaching her Sanskrit and logic, and both read books in English and Sanskrit together. His support was extended to her sister Sharada and her female friends at school (Mehta 2008: 50–51; Parikh 2013: 75).

Vidyagauri's studies were disrupted several times due to the birth of her children (she had married before she joined the college), and after she returned to college, her mother took care of these children. Vidyagauri and Sharada both remembered in their memoirs having learned Sanskrit and English under the guidance of a famous Gujarati intellectual of this period, Anandshankar Bapubhai Dhruva (1869–1942). They also studied various subjects through the medium of English and became familiar with famous English works by both British and Indian authors, with the latter including those by Ramesh Chandra Dutt and Mahadev Ranade. Later Vidyagauri and Sharada even translated one of the English novels of Romesh Chandra Dutt, *The Lake of Palms*, into Gujarati (Basu 2008: 44–5; Mehta 2008: 68–9, 86–7).

The diminutive number of female college students placed them at a disadvantage. They were generally unable to participate in a wide network of college students and ex-students, in contrast with their male colleagues. The memoirs of Sharada allow us to imagine the difficulties that women faced as a micro-minority at a college around the turn of the century. She described how she and another Parsi woman in her class sat at some distance from the benches where the male students sat and did not dare to look to see who was in class. As soon as the professor left the classroom, they followed him and spent their free time in a separate room. Even then, they were not spared the 'snide remarks of people' and they also received 'all kinds of anonymous letters'. Their chairs would be overturned, or annoying messages scribbled on their desks (Mehta 2008: 56–7). Reflecting on her experiences in the college, Sharada wrote:

> During these years we were not able to taste even a fraction of the benefits of college life that our male colleagues enjoyed; all we accomplished was receiving instruction as we neither associated with fellow students nor with the professor. (57)

Even after graduation, it was not easy for them to utilise the benefits of a college education and pursue a career as their male colleagues did. When Vidyagauri and Sharada were nominated as fellows at the same college, a Gujarati newspaper, which had congratulated them on their success at the B.A. examination, expressed its strong opposition to this nomination. It stated that they were 'hardly prepared to hear that the learned sisters would so soon overstep the limits by which nature has circumscribed womanhood'.[22] In spite of such opinions, Vidyagauri was appointed as a Dakshna Fellow and Sharada an Honorary Fellow of the college in 1902, and the former for some time took care of the college library, corrected English composition exercises, and helped Anandshankar Dhruva in his course on logic and moral philosophy (*ARPGC* 1901–2: 10, 24–5). Both sisters continued to play leading roles in various social reforms and educational and literary activities throughout their lives.

The education these women acquired, in particular a knowledge of English, not only impacted their public lives, but also significantly influenced their relationships within their family. For instance, when Sharada met her husband, Sumant Mehta, for the first time at their wedding in 1898, they talked for an hour and a half in English during the wedding procession (Mehta 2008: 4). This might have annoyed the orthodox Nagar Brahmans of Ahmedabad, but their use of English in this instance must have helped them to feel close to each other. In the case of her elder sister, Vidyagauri, her husband Ramanbhai asked her to write him letters in English when he was in Bombay and she in Ahmedabad. Their use of passionate expressions displays a familiarity with English literature and an enjoyment of using words that the elders would not approve of. In one of his letters, Ramanbhai wrote, 'Kiss Kishori (the name of their daughter) for me, but darling how will you kiss yourself for me. Had I the wings of a dove, how soon would I meet you again' (Basu 2008: 45). Vidyagauri, while using equally affectionate phrases in her letter to her husband ('My ever most dearly beloved Raman'), still expressed her hesitation to write letters in English, due to her lack of confidence in her ability, saying:

> I am writing this in English but I am sure there are many mistakes. … Please don't make fun of me after reading the letter. You know that I am not in the habit of writing letters in English. … I am sure it was like letters written by native boys, full of Gujarati idioms, … (45)

Ramanbhai in his reply assured her that her English letters were 'far superior to the ridiculous and poor compositions of half-educated boys containing Gujarati idioms translated in wretched English'.

English helped the couple to develop a relationship based on what might be called 'Victorian ideals'. In the words of Aparna Basu, these ideals cast the wife as 'an intellectual companion of her husband's daily life, giving him sympathy and encouragement, counsel and advice, solace and relaxation' (48). It also enhanced their sense of being different from other sections of society, such as those who were not highly educated or did not share their views on social reform, especially in regard to women's education.

As this section draws to a close, it is necessary to emphasise that these college-educated women were not the only women who began to use English. Women could acquire a limited knowledge of English taught in Gujarati-speaking institutions for secondary education or the Female Training College. As previously mentioned in relation to the male members of trading communities, English was regarded by those in business as a useful and practical tool. Similarly, some women began to see the advantage of learning this language to obtain better career and business opportunities.

The case of Ganga Yagnik (1868–1937) is illustrative in this regard. She was born to an Audichya Brahman family in Vavol village in North Gujarat

and became a widow at the age of 12. Staying with her elder sister, Ganga then attended primary and middle school. She became an assistant teacher in a primary school but gave up this job to join the Female Training College in Ahmedabad. In 1887, she took up the post of headmistress at Victorian Jubilee High School in Mansa (Mehta 2009: 275–6). She was involved in the activities of the GVS, which will be discussed in the next chapter, and published books on social reform and indigenous industries. At the end of her book on the latter, in which she discussed Ayurvedic medicine and her experiments with it (for instance, how to make soap, detergents, shampoo, dental powder, pharmaceutical medicine, etc.), was an exhaustive glossary of technical words in English. This indicates that she had some knowledge of English or at least had some ideas about the effect of using English for such a book to make it look more 'useful' and 'authentic'. It seems that this book found its readers, and as many as seven editions of her book were published between 1898 and 1908 (278–80).

As the example of Ganga suggests, women educated outside English language schools could still acquire some knowledge of English language and literature, even if limited. They were unlikely to become leading members of major literary organisations such as the GVS, or to assert their ideas on language in public debates, but they were fully aware of the linguistic changes taking place around them. Their educational experiences as well as the spread of Gujarati publications contributed to this development. They became familiar to some extent with the standard form of Gujarati at school and might read the poems of leading literati such as Dalpatram and Narmadashankar that were printed in journals and school textbooks. These women were not exiled from the process by which elite-articulated ideas of language spread and influenced society. Often they themselves played some role in spreading these ideas.

Conclusion

Colonial education fostered the emergence of an elite who were familiar with English and who shared similar educational experiences. These individuals began to project themselves as the representatives of the 'people' and as mediators between the ruler and the ruled. Their self-perception in this role led them to term themselves the 'middle class'. They also developed an interest in defining their social groups (i.e. castes, religious communities, regional communities, classes, and gender) with ideas and concepts they obtained from colonial education and Western literature. Debates on language were an integral part of this process.

The range of people who received English-medium education at high schools and colleges in Gujarat was extremely limited. Most of them were high-caste Hindus and Parsis, and the presence of Muslims, low-caste Hindus, and women was evidently diminutive in these institutions during

the late nineteenth century. It should be noted, however, that the benefits of having a knowledge of English for business and empowerment were acknowledged even by the people who did not formerly receive an English education. These people too were involved in the literary activities in colonial Gujarat, even if in a limited manner, and played a significant part in disseminating the notions of language and literature articulated by the members of the dominant literary circles.

Notes

1. The Bombay Education Society was established in 1815 by the European inhabitants of Bombay for the promotion of education among the Anglo-Indian and poor European children, though it also worked to extend education to the Indians (Nurullah and Naik 1951: 188; Dongerkery 1957: 1).
2. Educational Department (henceforth, ED), 1894, vol. 55, no. 686, Maharashtra State Archives (henceforth, MSA).
3. A letter from T.C. Hope to the Director of Public Instruction, 10 December 1892, ED, 1894, vol. 55, no. 686, MSA.
4. The Training College in Surat was closed down in 1870. Rajkot also started Training Colleges both for men and women in the late nineteenth century, but those in Ahmedabad retained their dominant position.
5. The distinction between these two categories of the Anglo-Vernacular Schools was later abolished and both were described as middle schools.
6. Gujarat College was the oldest among them, having originally started as Gujarat Provincial College in 1861. It ceased to operate in 1872 due to its poor performance. It was then reopened as a college affiliated to the University of Bombay in 1879 (Education Commission II Memorials: 2-3; Gujarat College, n.d.). Baroda College and Samaldas College were founded in the 1880s.
7. For instance, see *Chandrodaya*, 27 September 1869, in *Report on the Native Papers Published in the Bombay Presidency* (henceforth, *RNP*) (9 October 1869), p. 9; *Gujarat Mitra*, 20 November 1870, in *RNP* (26 November 1870), p. 6.
8. The Northern Division then consists of eight subdivisions: Surat, Broach, Kheda, Ahmedabad, Mahikantha and Palanpur, Rewakantha, Kathiawad, and Kutch (*Report of the Department of Public Instruction, 1871–72,* Appendices 1872: 122).
9. The annual reports of the principal of the Gujarat College gave some insights into the life of the students in colleges in Gujarat during this period (*ARPCG*, 1888–1911).
10. *The Bombay Government Gazette*, pt. VII, 25 September 1912, pp. 688–9, ED, 1912, vol. 75. no. 176, MSA.
11. The idea that the language of the Muslims should be Urdu instead of regional languages was expressed by the elites in other parts of India too. For instance, see Ahmed (1988).
12. *The Bombay Government Gazette*, pt. VII, 25 September 1912, pp. 690-1, ED, 1912, vol. 75. no. 176, MSA.
13. Ibid., p. 698.
14. Ibid., p. 693.
15. Ibid., p. 697.
16. ED, 1912, vol. 75, no. 176, MSA.
17. Press Note, ED, 1912, vol. 75, no. 176, MSA.

18. Before this series was published under the supervision of the Educational Department, the same textbooks were used both at boys' and girls' schools. ED, 1894, vol. 55, no. 686, MSA.
19. Compilation of Opinions on the Subject of the Education of Girls and Women, Bombay, 1916, p. 89. ED, MSA.
20. Ibid., p. 296.
21. ED, 1884, vol. 12, no. 568, MSA.
22. *Deshabhakta,* 14 January 1902, *RNP* (18 January 1902), p. 23.

3 The Gujarat Vernacular Society and the press

This chapter considers how those who obtained an education and knowledge of English, as explored in the previous chapter, became involved in newly established literary associations and publishing.[1] For these individuals, English came to represent not just a tool to communicate with their British rulers and across regions, but also a symbol of modernity and a 'window to the world'. Their engagement with English also led them to re-examine their native languages and to reform and develop them. These attempts to recast 'their' languages were sometimes initiated by the British, who took an interest in vernacular languages for academic and practical purposes. However, the regional elites soon began to take a lead. They articulated their ideas on language and literature through educational activities and publications, often using Western examples as references. Literary organisations, founded from the nineteenth century, also provided a forum to discuss the place of language in Gujarat society.

This chapter mainly looks at the activities of the Gujarat Vernacular Society, one of the leading regional voluntary associations of the late nineteenth century, through which the regional elite expressed their ideas of language, literature, education, and social reform. Their ideas were articulated also in various kinds of publications, reflecting the development of print culture in western India, another key topic to be discussed in this chapter.

A history of the Gujarat Vernacular Society[2]

The Gujarat Vernacular Society (henceforth, GVS) was founded in 1848 by Alexander Kinloch Forbes (1821–65), an assistant judge in Ahmedabad at the time. It played a leading role in Gujarati literary developments and is a recurring character in histories of Gujarati literature.[3] Forbes later established a similar association in Bombay named the Gujarati Sabha (1865, which was to be renamed the Forbes Gujarati Sabha after his death) (N. Desai 1978: 365; Raval 1987: 126). The GVS became a prominent organisation, as evidenced by M.K. Gandhi's application for the membership in 1916, just a year after his return to India (Chapter 5).

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A.K. Forbes had arrived in Ahmedabad as an assistant judge in 1846 after having served in Ahmadnagar as assistant collector (Rawlinson 1924: ix). He developed a deep interest in the history and culture of Gujarat, culminating in his voluminous work, *Ras Mala: Hindoo Annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India* (1856).[4] In writing this book, he obtained assistance from Dalpatram Dahyabhai (1820–98), a Shrimali Brahman from Kathiawad. Dalpatram helped Forbes in collecting, copying, and reading Gujarati sources, including old manuscripts and inscriptions.[5]

Dalpatram was Assistant Secretary for the GVS from 1855 and played a critical role in its initial stages. He was also the editor of the society's journal, *Buddhiprakash* (Light of Knowledge). Along with Narmadashankar Lalshankar, he was known as a leading poet (*kavi*) of late-nineteenth-century Gujarat. He was familiar with Vraj and Sanskrit, but not so much with English, unlike those who had received colonial education. Yet it is highly likely that his close relationship with Forbes exposed him to English language and literature to some extent.

By forming the GVS, Forbes intended to both collect old Gujarati books and publish new ones, thereby encouraging the language's 'development' (*Buddhiprakash,* January 1878: 4–5). For these purposes, Forbes expected financial contributions from the rulers of princely states and from the region's wealthy. The GVS was the first voluntary association in Gujarat for encouraging literary activities. Even within the context of all British India, it was among the earliest organisations founded to promote vernacular literature. Forbes was vocal in his criticism of those who would 'import our English language, manners, and character, to be retailed to the public of India like a batch of Birmingham wares' (Dalpatram 1990: vii). His attitude and deep interest in the culture of Gujarat was long remembered by the region's literati, and his society became well known in the middle classes of the British districts and princely states.

The GVS was initially managed by a European-dominated committee, which, aside from Forbes, included British officials like T.B. Curtis (the headmaster of Ahmedabad High School) and M.H. Scott (an assistant judge of the Ahmedabad Court) (Parekh I 1932: 230–6). In 1848, the idea of forming an organisation for developing a vernacular language and cultivating its literary status was still a novel idea. Mahipatram Rupram, a prominent educator of this period, would later describe the formative stage of the GVS in his speech at a meeting of this society:

> The Society … owes its birth to European friends (the late Hon'ble A.K. Forbes and others) of this country. It was nurtured and brought up by them and was afterwards handed over as it were to us (natives) for keeping it live and making it grow.
>
> (*The Gujarat Vernacular Society* 1884: 9)

As Forbes expected, the society quickly attracted financial support from princely rulers and local merchants. The list of donors between 1848 and 1849 records large donations made by well-known Jain merchants, including Himabhai Vakhatchand, Premabhai Himabhai, Hathisingh Kesrisingh, and Maganbhai Karamchand. The rulers of princely states such as Baroda, Bhavnagar, Dhrangadhra, Idar, Palanpur, and Radhanpur also contributed significant sums (*Buddhiprakash*, January 1878: 9–10).

Although it was started by Forbes with the support of other Europeans, the GVS steadily increased its Gujarati membership during the late nineteenth century. In 1879, there were only 65 members, including 12 Europeans and 10 rulers of princely states. By 1889, this figure had grown to 186, while the number of Europeans and princely rulers remained relatively low at 14 and 27, respectively. Over the next ten years, the society expanded to 550 members, consisting of 17 European members, 33 rulers of princely states, and 500 others, out of whom 463 were men and 37 were women (*Buddhiprakash*, October 1880: 224–5; August 1890: 193–8; January 1899: 6). Alongside the swelling in membership, the society's leadership shifted from Europeans to Gujaratis. These developments reflected the expansion of secondary and higher education in this region.

Most members were 'Life Members', paying Rs. 50 as a donation to the Society in return for copies of the GVS journal *Buddhiprakash* gratis, as well as any new publications, the price of which did not exceed one rupee (*The Gujarat Vernacular Society* 1885: 8). As discussed below, *Buddhiprakash* became a vehicle for the discussions of the Gujarati literati regarding issues related to social reform, education, language, and literature. The growth of Gujarati publishing further helped people to obtain information on voluntary associations and their activities. By the early 1890s, the GVS was described in an official report to have included 'most of the literate men of Gujarat' (*Report on Publications* 1892: 34).

In addition to its initial aim to encourage the development of Gujarati language and literature, the GVS soon launched projects for 'educating' and 'enlightening' the people. According to its 1872 constitution, the society aimed to promote 'useful knowledge' in Gujarati and to publish books for this purpose. The constitution was revised in 1879 to emphasise its role as a promoter of education (Parekh I 1932: 225; II 1933: 200–1). This was reflected in its decision in 1885 to halve the subscription fee for schoolteachers whose monthly salary was less than Rs. 30, thereby attracting more teachers to join the society (*Buddhiprakash,* January 1899: 6). To fulfil its objectives, the GVS published Gujarati books and journals, organised prize essay competitions, and managed libraries and schools. It also exchanged journals with other similar organisations in and outside Gujarat.

Among its publications, the journal *Buddhiprakash* was probably the best known. This journal, published by the GVS since 1854,[6] with the intention of providing 'useful knowledge' for its readers, presented discussion on a

wide range of topics, including science, philosophy, history, language, literature, biography, and contemporary news of Ahmedabad, India, and the world (Patel 1990: 17–20). Dalpatram, who joined the GVS in 1855, became its editor and wrote poems and essays for it. Other prominent intellectuals associated with the GVS – including Maganlal Vakhatchand, Bhogilal Pranvallabhdas, Mahipatram Rupram, Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi, Shastri Vrajlal Kalidas, Bholanath Sarabhai, Ranchhodbhai Udayaram, Hargovinddas Kantawala, and Gopal Hari Deshmukh – also contributed articles (Raval 1987: 120, 129). The colonial government encouraged the circulation of the journal and arranged for it to be distributed to school libraries (Parekh I 1932: 106).

The *Buddhiprakash* seems to have been read widely among the Gujarati elite. For instance, it had a monthly sale of 1,250 copies in 1876 (*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* 1879: 310). Even though female membership of the GVS was limited, it appears that the journal reached them too. In one of her letters to her husband in September 1892, Vidyagauri Nilkanth asked whether he had read 'Sitaharan in this month's Buddhiprakash'.[7] Although these women could not freely participate in public activities as the male members of their families did, the journal helped them to be familiar with contemporary debates on social reform and education (Mehta 2009: 277–8).

Besides *Buddhiprakash,* the GVS published, in the words of the gazetteer, 'useful books' (*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* 1879: 310). The Registrar of Native Publications acknowledged the role of the GVS in expanding Gujarati publishing (*Annual Report on Native Publications* 1898: 1, 8). Again, the government supported this publishing activity by buying the GVS publications and distributing them as prizes in schools (Parekh I 1932: 106). Government patronage clearly enhanced the position of the GVS as the leading literary association in this region. With the financial support of the government, princely states, and other sources of revenue, by 1899, the society had published 180 books, most of which were educational (*Buddhiprakash*, January 1899: 2–5).

Many of the GVS publications were originally written for essay contests organised by the society. These contests, again with state encouragement, contributed to the authority of the GVS in evaluating Gujarati language and literature. Publications of this kind included Maganlal Vakhatchand's *Amdavadno Itihas* (History of Ahmedabad), the winner of an essay contest in 1850 (Vakhatchand 1977: Preface); Edalji Dosabhai's *Gujaratno Itihas* (History of Gujarat), which won the prize in 1850 (Dosabhai 1986: Preface); and Dalpatram's *Bhut Nibandh* (Essay on Ghosts) in 1849, as well as his *Jnati Nibandh* (Essay on Caste) in 1851 (Dalpatram 1885: 3; Dalpatram 1990: i). Vrajlal Kalidas Shastri's *Gujarati Bhashano Itihas* (History of the Gujarati Language) was also written in response to an advertisement for an essay contest in *Buddhiprakash* in 1864 (Shastri 1887: Preface).

The winning works in the essay contests were those regarded as being written in 'good' language. *Amdavadno Itihas* was described by the selection

committee as a work written in 'pure Gujarati' and in an 'excellent way' (*Buddhiprakash*, February 1878: 30). Similarly, *Gujaratno Itihas* was praised by Forbes in a GVS report as a work written in 'very good Gujarati' and which gave a 'useful summary' of the history of this region. He suggested that it should be published immediately and even used as a 'school-book' (Dosabhai 1986: Preface). In this manner, the GVS projected itself as an expert in defining 'good' Gujarati language and literature.

The attempt of the GVS to become an authoritative organisation in the Gujarati literary sphere was further encouraged by merchants and rulers of princely states. They established funds under GVS management and entrusted the society to organise essay contests or to select literary works for sponsorship (for instance, see *Buddhiprakash*, July 1878: 153; August 1878: 187–8). Although wealthy individuals continued to give personal and direct patronage to writers, this new form of patronage, which used specific associations as conduits, seems to have become increasingly common during the colonial period. The GVS, in turn, consciously projected these funds as evidence of the 'public confidence' in this organisation (*The Gujarat Vernacular Society* 1885: 15).

The influence of the GVS was also enhanced by its members' involvement in the educational activities of the Bombay government. The society's membership included many officials in the Educational Department, most of whom were teachers at schools and colleges. Not surprisingly, when Gujarati school textbooks were edited in the late 1850s under the supervision of T.C. Hope, the educational inspector of the Northern Division of the Bombay Presidency (who was himself a member of the GVS), the people appointed by the government to take part in this project were leading members of the GVS who belonged to upper castes (Chapter 4).

From its earliest days, the society managed schools, scholarship trusts, and libraries. For example, it opened a private Gujarati school in 1849,[8] followed by two girls' schools in the early 1850s. Scholarships for the students were provided from various funds under GVS management. In terms of libraries, the main and biggest one run by the GVS was located in the Himabhai Institute in the centre of Ahmedabad (Parekh III 1934: 205), but the society also funded smaller libraries. These included the Aparao Bholanath Library and the Manilal Ranchhoddas Library in Ahmedabad, founded in 1870 and 1896, respectively.[9] The Himabhai Institute library stored 2,943 printed materials in Gujarati, 122 in Sanskrit, 335 in English, 103 in Marathi, 131 in Hindi, while there were only eight printed materials in Persian in 1901 (*Gujarat Varnakyular Sosaitino Varshik Riport* 1901: 25). These figures reflect the relative importance attached to each of these languages by the leading members of the GVS, who were, as discussed later, mostly high-caste Hindus. Libraries also registered with the GVS, paying the registration fee in order to receive its publications, including *Buddhiprakash*. By the turn of the century, the number of these registered libraries increased to 53, and included many libraries in the cities and towns outside Ahmedabad (13).

Although these libraries must have varied in their day-to-day running, their foundation and the wide circulation of *Buddhiprakash* suggest that a regional elite circle was evolving based on colonial education, publications, and literary networks. Through public organisations and their output, intellectuals asserted ideas on language and literature. With the help of the state, these ideas were incorporated into school education, thereby making a visible impact on the linguistic situation in Gujarat.

Membership

Examining the membership of the GVS in more detail is crucial for understanding linguistic and literary developments in Gujarat. In 1901, among Indian members of the GVS (excluding the rulers of the princely states), 121 men and 32 women were from Ahmedabad, whereas 330 men and 62 women were from different places outside Ahmedabad such as Bombay, Baroda, Broach, Nadiad, Surat, Navsari, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Dhandhuka, Junagadh, Jamnagar, Palanpur, Bhuj, Mandvi, and Visnagar (*Gujarat Varnakyular Sosaitino Varshik Riport* 1901: 2–13). The GVS encouraged the women's participation by reducing their subscription to half the rate for men in 1896 (*Buddhiprakash* January 1899: 6). Vidyagauri, Sharada, and Ganga, the three women discussed in the previous chapter, were all included in the 1901 list of members. Yet, needless to say, the presence of women in literary circles was extremely limited on the whole, as it was in other voluntary associations for social and cultural activities.

As expected, the leading members of the GVS, who had received higher education and were familiar with the English language (though their ability to use this language varied), mostly belonged to upper castes. In particular, Nagar Brahman intellectuals occupied important positions. Here, I would like to focus on four members of this group – Bholanath Sarabhai, Mahipatram Rupram, Lalshankar Umiyashankar, and Ranchhodlal Chhotalal – examining their careers, involvement in social and cultural activities, and their association with different languages.

Ranchhodlal Chhotalal (1823–98), president of the GVS between 1889 and 1898, was born in Ahmedabad to a family whose ancestors had been administrators (Parekh II 1933: 224–9; Mehta 1979: 83–6). While receiving vernacular education at a local school, he learnt Persian and English with Bholanath Sarabhai (see below) under the latter's father (Badshah 1899: 5). He also studied Sanskrit language and literature privately, and then further studied English in a private school and with a private tutor (Edwardes 1920: 9–10). Leading GVS members during the society's early phase were often familiar with Persian and/or Sanskrit, along with English and Gujarati.

Ranchhodlal then served the government, but he lost his post following allegations of bribery. While he was still in service in the late 1840s, he planned to start a textile mill with machines from England. His plan remained

unrealised due to difficulties sourcing sufficient financial resources, until he finally managed to start a spinning mill in Shahpur ward, Ahmedabad, in 1861. A weaving section was added during 1864–65, which focused on the production of coarse cloth (Mehta 1982: 54–57). Shareholders of this mill included prominent Jain businessmen such as Maganbhai Karamchand, Premabhai Himabhai, and Jesanghbhai Hathisingh Keshrisingh, and those belonging to the Vaishnava Vaniya community, such as Achratlal Girdharlal Veragi and Damodardas Mohanlal (51). Bholanath Sarabhai too extended financial support to this enterprise. Ranchhodlal was also known for his role in the municipality and became its president between 1885 and 1898 (Gillion 1968: 135–142).

Bholanath Sarabhai (1822–86), another important early GVS member, was born to a Nagar Brahman family in Baroda, where his father was a government officer. He learned Persian, Sanskrit, Marathi, and English at home under the guidance of his father and a *munshi* (teacher) (Bholanath 1888: 3; Parikh 2013: 38). Later he passed the judicial examination for the post of *munshif* (judge) and was appointed to Ahmedabad in 1844. From this position, he was gradually promoted, eventually reaching the status of first-class subordinate judge (Bholanath 1888: 4; Houston 1900: 91; Raval 1987: 134–35). Although he was known mainly as a government official, a social reformer, and an intellectual, he was also involved in industry, having started the Ahmedabad Calico Printing Company with Ranchhodlal and others in 1876 (Mehta 1982: 67–8). His close relationship with Ranchhodlal and his involvement in the textile industry also demonstrates the interest taken in economic activities by a wide range of the region's elite.

Bholanath was also known to have founded a religious reform organisation, the Ahmedabad Prarthana Samaj (Ahmedabad Prayer Society) in 1871. This society advocated theism and the abolition of idol worship, both of which were rather bold ideas in the context of late-nineteenth-century Gujarat. Bholanath was originally a devoted worshipper of Shiva but then began to re-examine his ideas on religion under the influence of Christianity (Divetiya 1926: 15; Raval 1987: 134–43). He was also inspired by the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal and the Bombay Prarthana Samaj.[10] Not only the doctrines but some of the customs in this organisation were unconventional. For example, it held prayer meetings in the Christian manner, which led some people to ridicule its members as 'pseudo Christians' (Shah 2016: 165). Its members addressed their wives as 'Dear' or 'My Dear' and taught their children to call their mothers 'Mamma' (Chavda n.d.: 160). The impact of the 'West' is evident here. Other Nagar Brahman members of the GVS, including Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, Lalshankar Umiyashankar, and Mahipatram Rupram, were members of this association. These Nagar Brahman intellectuals were also active in social reform movements for the abolition of child marriage, the promotion of widow remarriage, and the dissemination of education among women (Raval 1987; Shah 2016).

Lalshankar Umiyashankar (1845–1912) was another Nagar Brahman who held the post of Honorary Secretary of the GVS for as long as 21 years. He was born in Nardipur, a village near Ahmedabad. He studied at the Training College when Mahipatram Rupram, who had returned from England, was its principal. He then worked for the Gujarat Provincial College and the Judicial Department, ultimately reaching the position of the judge of the Ahmedabad Small Causes Court (*Praja Bandhu*, 20 October 1912: 1; Parekh II 1933: 248–65). As in the case of Bholanath, while working mostly as a civil servant, Lalshankar also became involved in the textile industry of Ahmedabad in the later stage of his life (Mehta 1982: 125).

Mahipatram Rupram (1829–91), again, a Nagar Brahman intellectual who became Honorary Secretary of the GVS (1877–91), was born in Surat. Having finished his education at a government vernacular school and an English school, he later moved to Bombay and joined Elphinstone Institution, where students initiated various social reform movements and literary activities. Mahipatram became involved in the students' literary associations such as the Jnan Prasarak Mandali and the Buddhivardhak Sabha. In 1857, two years after he joined the Educational Department, he was appointed as acting headmaster of a government school in Ahmedabad, and then as a deputy educational inspector. He was selected by the Educational Department to visit England in 1860, a move which was to create a great controversy within the Nagar Brahman community. Some of them considered his action of 'crossing black waters' as a violation of their caste norms and tried to excommunicate him. In spite of this experience, Mahipatram continued to play a prominent part in educational activities and the social reform movement in Gujarat, while working as the principal of the Training College in Ahmedabad from 1862. He was also the editor of the semi-official monthly journal entitled *Gujarat Shalapatra* (Gujarat School Paper), and the Gujarati translator in the Educational Department (Parekh II 1933: 92–117; Raval 1987: 127–34; Raval 2002). Mahipatram, with Dalpatram Dahyabhai, started a printing company called the Ahmedabad United Printing and General Agency, with money they obtained from the share market (Mehta 1982: 82–3).

Along with these Nagar Brahman intellectuals, Jain and Vaishnava Vaniya merchants and professionals also occupied important positions in the GVS. With their success in trade and industry during this period, Vaniya merchants often became donors supporting schools, hospitals, and voluntary associations. From the early stages of the GVS, well-known Jain merchants such as Himabhai Vakhatchand, Premabhai Himabhai, Hathisingh Keshrisingh, and Maganbhai Karamchand acted as patrons. Himabhai Vakhatchand (a nagarsheth) initially considered the activities of the GVS as 'work for leisure', which had no relevance for him. Dalpatram, the Assistant Secretary of the GVS, however, managed to persuade him otherwise, arguing that he should provide financial support for this organisation just as he did for the building of temples and travellers' hostels (Dalpatram 1926: 312).

Himabhai's contribution enabled the GVS to construct its own building (Parekh 1933 II: 221).[11]

Some Vaniya members of the GVS were known as leading intellectuals rather than as patrons. For example, Bhogilal Pranvallabhdas (1818–89), a Dasa Porvad Meshri Vaniya from Surat and Honorary Secretary of the GVS in 1852 and 1853, was known for his educational activities (Parekh I 1932: 230, 243). As the headmaster of an English school in Ahmedabad, he started the Vidyabhyasak Mandali (Association for Promoting Education) in 1851 and encouraged its members to write essays and participate in discussions. This organisation soon became a forum for intellectuals to exchange ideas on social issues, including the condition of the Gujarati language (Raval 1987: 121–2). Members of the GVS, including Dalpatram, were connected with this association directly or indirectly. Bhogilal was later transferred to Rajkot, where he apparently started the same organisation again (170).

Another example of a Jain intellectual associated with the GVS in this period is Maganlal Vakhatchand (1830–68), a Visa Shrimali Jain who was once Assistant Secretary of the GVS. Educated in the English school in Ahmedabad, he became the assistant master of the same school, before joining the banking business and the cotton industry (Vakhatchand 1977: 'Biography of the Author'). He was also known as the author of *Amdavadno Itihas* (History of Ahmedabad, 1851).

Members of other high-caste groups likewise joined the GVS leadership. These included Ambalal Sakarlal Desai (1844–1914), a Brahmakshatriya intellectual from Kheda district. Having obtained M.A. and LL.B. degrees from Bombay University, he first became headmaster of Surat High School, and then Ahmedabad High School. From 1875 he served in Baroda, in time becoming the chief justice of this state. As there were a number of princely states in western India, highly educated people like Ambalal could explore job opportunities not only in the Bombay Presidency but also elsewhere. Such mobility of administrators contributed to the development of the network of Gujarati-speaking elites across the borders of administrative units and the expansion of literary circles along with it.

After his retirement in 1899, Ambalal returned to Ahmedabad and became actively involved in its public associations, including the Municipality, the Gujarat Vernacular Society, the Gujarat Club, the Rate-payers' Association, the Swadeshi Udyog Vardhak Mandali (Association for the Development of Swadeshi Industry), the Indian National Congress, the Brahmakshatriya Conference, the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad (Conference on Gujarati Literature), and the Gujarat Kelvani Mandal (Gujarat Education Society) (*Praja Bandhu*, 20 September 1914: 1; Chavda n.d.: 229–31). The diverse range of activities undertaken by the elite reflected their multilayered identities.

The initial stage of the GVS also saw the contributions of a Kanbi businessman. President of the society for a time, Bechardas Ambaidas Lashkari (1818–89) was born to a Kanbi family of Ahmedabad. He learned English

privately with a European officer, which helped him to obtain a job in the military service of the East India Company. He succeeded his father in his banking business, and in 1867, started the second textile mill in Ahmedabad after Ranchhodlal's mill (Parekh II 1933: 222–4; Mehta 1982: 64–6). He joined various voluntary associations and was involved in philanthropic activities. His involvement in caste reform, including the problem of female infanticide and large marriage expenses among the Kadva Kanbis, was well known (Raval 1987: 167–8).

In contrast with the characters discussed above, who belonged to influential caste communities, there were several groups of highly educated individuals that found themselves marginalised in Gujarat's literary circles. For example, the Parsi presence was rather small in the GVS, in spite of the fact that Parsis otherwise played prominent roles in the fields of education, business, and administration in western India. This marginalisation was partly due to the small population of Parsis in Ahmedabad, where the GVS was founded, but it also reflected the dominance of high-caste Hindu intellectuals in the literary circles and the latter's view on 'Parsi Gujarati', the form of language associated with the Parsi community (to be discussed further in Chapter 4).

The presence of Muslim members in the GVS was even more limited. This was in part a consequence of the low numbers of Muslim students in higher educational institutions in Gujarat at the time. That the Muslim elite often had an ambiguous relationship with the Gujarati language was probably another contributing factor. In addition, some high-caste intellectuals expressed their view that the Muslims were 'outsiders', even though they were aware that the ancestors of the majority of Muslims in their region were not from 'outside'.

GVS membership expanded visibly in the late nineteenth century, partly because it was technically an open-ended body, although those who led the GVS at this stage were almost all high-caste Hindus. These leaders attempted to project themselves as the 'representatives' of society, often using the concept of the 'middle class'. As noted in the previous chapter, the GVS submitted a memorial to the Education Commission in 1882 in which its leaders advocated the need for the state to 'foster, by means of liberal education, the formation of a class of men who may be looked to as faithful interpreters between the rulers and the ruled' (Education Commission II Memorials 1884: 8). With this self-perception, the members discussed issues of social reform, education, language, and literature, and tried to spread their ideas throughout the regional elite, often with the support of the state.

Development of the press

The late nineteenth century saw the rise of print culture across the subcontinent. This development contributed to the construction and expansion of regional elite networks as the same publications, especially newspapers and

journals, were read by a wide range of educated individuals in different families and localities, who sometimes even exchanged their ideas through publications. The press also contributed to the evolution of their thoughts on language. Through their encounter of a variety of forms of language used in these publications, in regard to spelling, vocabulary, and expressions for instance, they became more conscious of the heterogeneity of the Gujarati language. The presence of these different forms began to be considered as a reflection of the undeveloped status of the Gujarati language by the state and the leading literati. The discussion on the standardisation of language was thus encouraged by the growth of the press, the spread of higher education under the colonial system, as well as by the emergence of literary associations such as the GVS.

The first Gujarati printed book in the Bombay Presidency was published in the city of Bombay around 1780. It was a calendar, and the printer was a Parsi named Rustom Caresajee (Priolkar 1958: 71). It is important to note that the Gujarati press owed its inception largely to Parsis. This is clearly different from the situation in Bengal where the earliest Bengali printing presses were run and controlled by Europeans (Ghosh 2006: 109).

Then a font of Gujarati type was invented and cast by two Parsis in Bombay by the end of 1796 (Shaw 1989: 118). This choice of Gujarati script over Devanagari provides an interesting contrast with the case of Marathi publications as discussed in the next chapter. In fact, even in the case of Gujarati books, those published under government auspices in the early nineteenth century were printed in the Devanagari script (Priolkar 1958: 76), suggesting that there was a possibility that Devanagari would gain dominance in Gujarati publications. The fact that the Parsis, not the Sanskrit-oriented Brahmans, were the instigators of the Gujarati press might partly explain why the Gujarati script instead of the Devanagari script became dominant.

The first Gujarati paper, *Shri Mumbaina Samachar,* began to be published in 1822. Its founder, Fardunji Marzban, was again a Parsi. He started a vernacular press, Shri Samachar Press, in Bombay in 1812 (Murzban 1915: 11), that regularly published Hindu calendars and religious books for Parsis, and then started *Shri Mumbaina Samachar* (later renamed *Bombay Samachar*), first as a weekly and later as a daily.[12] Soon several other Gujarati papers also started in Bombay, whose founders were again mostly Parsis. The dominance of Parsis in Bombay's publishing industry, the centre of publishing in western India, was striking throughout the nineteenth century. It should be remembered that the Parsi trading community in Bombay were receptive to the idea of publication and circulation of information about trade, and this led them to recognise the advantages and commercial possibilities generated by independent press initiatives (Naregal 2001: 177). The paper was subscribed mostly by traders at least in its initial stage and it was circulated not only in Bombay but also outside (Parikh 1965: 16). The predominance of Parsis in the press may explain why Hindu intellectuals became so critical of Parsi Gujarati.

The form of Gujarati script used in print had horizontal headstrokes at first, but soon afterwards these began to disappear.[13] According to Priolkar, this change was made due to the technical 'inconvenience' of printing headstrokes (Priolkar 1958: 76). A linguist in contemporary Gujarat, Bharati Modi, presents two possible reasons for the disappearance. One is that they were removed 'in order to bring economy and ease in printing', and the other is that Parsi writers and the Parsi press were responsible for this simplification (Modi 1991: 97). Again, the strong presence of Parsis in the Gujarati press was regarded as an intrinsic factor behind the adoption of a current form of Gujarati script in Gujarati publications. By the time that the influential school textbooks, Hope's Reading Series, were edited between 1857 and 1860, the Gujarati script in its present form seemed to have established its dominance in Gujarati publishing (Covernton 1906: 30–1).

While the press developed rapidly in Bombay city from the early nineteenth century, publishing initiatives also gradually began in Surat, Ahmedabad, and other cities in Gujarat. Surat saw the establishment of a press for Gujarati publications by the London Missionary Society in 1820 (Jeffrey 1890: 122). The first Gujarati translation of the Bible was published there. In Ahmedabad, it was as late as 1846 that Bhogilal Pranvallabhdas, the well-known educator previously mentioned, co-founded a press under the organisation Pustak Vriddhi Karnar Mandali (Association for Encouraging Publication of Books) (Shah 2016: 88). Two years later, the first Gujarati paper in Ahmedabad, *Vartman,* a weekly, was started by the GVS (Raval 1987: 118). By the end of the 1850s, an official report described Bombay and Ahmedabad as the two places where printing had most developed in the presidency.[14] In contrast with Bombay, Parsi influence was much more limited in the Ahmedabad press. For instance, the editors of five newspapers published in Ahmedabad around the turn of the century consisted of two Brahmans, two Vaniyas, and one Kanbi (*RNP* January 1902). It is noteworthy that there were 26 Gujarati and 13 Anglo-Gujarati papers published in the Bombay Presidency at that time, of which as many as 18 papers (mostly Bombay papers) had Parsi editors.

Along with newspapers, the late nineteenth century saw the emergence of various other types of vernacular periodicals. There were Gujarati journals published by voluntary associations, such as *Buddhiprakash* published by the GVS, and *Buddhivardhak Granth* published by the Buddhivardhak Sabha. Other social and religious reform organisations and caste associations also published their own journals. The editors of these journals were intellectuals who were often involved in the GVS and educational undertakings. Through these journals, they conveyed their ideas on social reform and provoked debates among the readers.

Gujarati journals intended especially for women were also created during this time. The most well known was a monthly called *Stri Bodh*. Its publication began in 1857 in Bombay with the aim of providing 'suitable' reading materials for women, though in fact the bulk of the content was

directed at middle-class Parsi women in towns and cities. Kaikhosro N. Kabraji (1842–1904), a prolific Parsi writer in Bombay, became the editor of this journal from 1867. The journal also involved famous writers and social reformers such as Dalpatram Dahyabhai, Karsandas Mulji, Sorabji Shapurji Bengali, and Magaldas Nathubhai. Not surprisingly, *Stri Bodh* and other journals for women published later were edited and managed by leading male intellectuals in this region. Women were hardly involved in the process of producing these journals at this stage (*The Stree Bodhe* 1908: 1–2; Shukla 1991: WS63-6).

Besides these periodicals, the publication of books expanded rapidly in the late nineteenth century. In the case of North India, C.A. Bayly pointed out that apart from schoolbooks, the 'most common types' of early printed books remained strikingly similar to the types of manuscripts that had circulated before the coming of print. These were religious texts, almanacs, works on astrology, medical books, and antique ballads, stories, and novelettes (Bayly 1996: 242). Early printed books in western India were of the same kind. The Director of Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency described the characteristics of contemporary publications in 1859:

> Punchangs/Calendars appear to have been printed at almost every printing press. These calendars which sell for a trifle from 6 pies to 4 ans [annas] are to be found at almost every native house. They are books of constant reference. They contain much information on astrological matters. Small tracts containing popular poetry, mythological and religious and works well known to the mass of the people such as Gita Ramayan, Shivasun Buttishi, Veedoor Neetee, and similar others are extensively printed and sold.[15]

The catalogues of books printed in the Bombay Presidency in the nineteenth century compiled by the government also indicate a constant demand in the market for almanacs, religious texts, and 'classical' and 'medieval' songs (*Catalogues of Books* 1867–71; Grant 1867; Blumhardt 1908). According to the *Report on Publications* for 1875, poetry was very popular among the 'natives of all classes', and 'particularly among the Guzeratis' (*Report on Publications* 1875: 16). Many poems that were published were of a religious nature, including 'songs to be sung at the performance of certain dramas on the stage, Puranic legends, Jain prayers and legends, a few love tales, [and] some tracts of Hindu morals' (*Report on Publications* 1891: 28). The language and contents of these publications reflected the oral and manuscript traditions of the region. Yet as discussed later, they could be 'modified' in the process of editing and publishing. From the 1880s, many novels, short stories, and dramas began to be printed in this region, greatly influencing the development of language and literature.

The rise of print culture fostered an expansion in its audience. These publications were generally more easily available than manuscripts. In addition,

colonial education increased the number of people who would read books for themselves instead of listening to others reading them, even though the number was still small in comparison with the total population.[16] Printing also enabled the sharing of texts widely and often within a short period. Narasimharao Bholanath Divatia (1859–1937) described in his memoirs an episode he heard from his father in which two clerks in a government office in Kheda district, both of whom subscribed to the same newspaper, were amazed to discover that the two copies tallied to a single word (Divetiya 1926: 20; Yashaschandra 2003: 593–4). The regular reading of papers seems to have soon become a defining characteristic of the educated. In his essay written in 1876 on the need to encourage indigenous industry, Navalram Lakshmiram (1836–88), a prominent intellectual of this period, noted that the new generation, who were well-educated in English or Gujarati and 'who read newspapers every day', had already realised the need to promote local industry, while others had not (Parikh 1966: 302). This account reminds us of Benedict Anderson's description of the role of newspapers in the creation of an imagined community. The reading of newspapers became, in his words, a daily 'ceremony' participated in by a number of readers (Anderson 1991: 35). Navalram's description indicates that by his time, the act of reading papers was already a widespread habit among the Gujarati literati, providing them with another criterion to differentiate themselves from 'others'.

The form of language (including vocabulary) used in newspapers, periodicals, and other publications had a constant and marked effect on the ways in which the readers used language. Printed works, along with postal services, enabled intellectuals in a wide range of areas to share the experience of reading the same things. As we have seen, in one of the letters to her husband in Bombay, Vidyagauri Nilkanth in Ahmedabad asked him in 1892 whether he had read 'Sitaharan in this month's Buddhiprakash'.[17] Elsewhere she also mentioned that she had read the second volume of *Sarasvatichandra*, a well-known novel by Govardhanram Tripathi. She wrote to Ramanbhai: 'Dearest Sarasvatichandra drives me mad. … I want to talk a great deal about the book when you come back'.[18]

When Vidyagauri was writing, some other intellectuals were probably also turning the pages of this book. The novel was evidently popular among those who were highly educated; an official reporter of native publications stated that the final volume of this novel was awaited 'with the same eagerness with which our fathers expected the issues of Pickwick' (*Report on Publications* 1902: 11). A few decades later, K.M. Munshi (1887–1971), a famous Gujarati novelist, described the enthusiasm among Gujarati readers for *Sarasvatichandra* at the time:

> Young men in college imbibed Saraswatichandra's [the hero's] waywardness and sentimentality, and sighed over the loss of imaginary Kumuds [Kumud is the name of the heroine]. Families of culture named

> new-born girls after Kumud. Quotations were freely used in literature, speeches and private correspondence.
>
> (Munshi 1935: 256)

The experience of reading the same works was shared then not only through private conversation and correspondence, but also through public discussions. These took place in educational and literary institutions and in papers and journals. Readers strongly felt the existence of fellow bibliophiles whom they would not meet but could sometimes exchange opinions with through publications. The crucial impact of the press should not be overlooked when we consider this period's debates on language.

Conclusion

The literary associations in Gujarat began to be organised in the late nineteenth century on the basis of similar bodies in the West. The most well-known organisation among them was the Gujarat Vernacular Society, which played a crucial role in the debates on language in colonial Gujarat. Its leadership was dominated by highly educated high-caste Hindu elites, especially those belonging to the Nagar Brahmans and Vaniyas (including Jains). In spite of their prominent positions at educational institutions as well as in the field of administration, business, social reform, and the press, Parsi members did not constitute the leading force of this association.

The constitution of the leading members of literary circles had a significant influence on the way in which the 'standard' and 'correct' form of the Gujarati language and 'good' and 'useful' literature were defined, a process which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Some parts of this chapter are based on Isaka (2009).
2. The detailed analysis of this organisation and activities is available in Shah (2016). The same book also looked at the development of various other voluntary associations and the press in colonial Ahmedabad.
3. Later this organisation was renamed the Gujarati Vidya Sabha.
4. On A.K. Forbes and his *Ras Mala*, see Chand and Kothari 2003; Kapadia 2010; Kapadia 2018: 129–57.
5. Gujarati-speaking high-caste intellectuals in this period such as Dalpatram were often known by their first names or a combination of their first and second names. In the case of Dalpatram, his full name was Dalpatram Dahyabhai Travadi, with Dahyabhai being his father's name, but he was commonly referred to as Dalpatram or Dalpatram Dahyabhai in publications. For late-nineteenth-century Gujarati intellectuals, I mostly use first names in this text. The structure of names varied in modern India depending on the time, regions, and social groups, though Western notions of names began to exert an influence on the Indian elite during the colonial period.
6. The journal of the GVS was originally called *Vartman* (News), but *Buddhiprakash* took over that position from 1854. *Buddhiprakash* had been

published from 1850 by another association as a bimonthly, but the GVS took charge of it in 1854 (Raval 1987: 118).

7. A letter from Vidyagauri Nilkanth to Ramanbhai Nilkanth (13 September 1892), Vidyagauri Nilkanth Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (henceforth, NMML).
8. This school was closed down in 1853, since several more government schools had been established by that time (Raval 1987: 117–8; Parekh I 1932: 29).
9. *Annual Report of the Aparao Bholanath Library, Ahmedabad, for the Year 1870,* ED, 1871, vol. 15, no. 192, MSA; *Gujarat Varnakyular Sosaitino Varshik Riport, 1901*, 26.
10. The Prarthana Samaj in Bombay was established in 1867 by the English-educated elite in Maharashtra. See, for instance, Jones 1989: 141–2; O'Hanlon 1985: 221–2.
11. On the donations of the elite for 'public causes' such as education, health care, and relief efforts, as well as for older forms of religions gift giving, see Haynes (1992: 121–6).
12. Initially this paper was a weekly, but was then changed into a daily, then a biweekly, and again a daily. This paper remains in circulation even today (N. Desai 1978: 282–3).
13. *Buddhiprakash* used the Gujarati script with headstrokes until 1863.
14. Report from the Director of Public Instruction, ED, 1859, vol. 12, no. 462, p. 221, MSA.
15. Ibid. These features of early publications were also observed in other parts of India. See, for instance, Ghosh 2006: 107–51; Roy 1995: 41.
16. In this regard, A.R. Venkatachalapathy has discussed the change in reading practices and modes of reading in colonial Tamilnadu after the penetration of print culture into this area (Venkatachalapathy 2012: 208–42).
17. A letter from Vidyagauri Nilkanth to Ramanbhai Nilkanth (13 September 1892), in Vidyagauri Nilkanth Papers, NMML.
18. Ibid. (13 October 1892).

4 Debates over Gujarati language and literature

This chapter focuses on the discussions surrounding the reformation of the Gujarati language in late-nineteenth-century Gujarat, and how these debates reflected the contemporary elite's attempts to redefine themselves in a new environment. It further examines how the same elite tried to articulate the literary tradition of their region on the one hand, and to develop 'their' literature by incorporating styles and themes from Western literature on the other. High-caste intellectuals, educated under the colonial system, reconstructed their cultural dominance, and although their voices were not always homogeneous, dominant ideas emerged from their debates that would inform the literati of the following periods.

The Gujarati language and script[1]

According to Navalram Lakshmiram Pandya (1836–88), a prominent intellectual in late-nineteenth-century Gujarat, the literary form of Gujarati had already been standardised to some extent even before British rule began (Parikh 1966: 240–2). Within this, the kavis (poets) were seen to have played an important role. As we saw in Chapter 1, this might have been the case to some extent when it came to the literary form of the language. However, a great variety of dialects still existed in the colonial period, especially in regard to spoken language.

Accounts from the contemporary literati confirm the linguistic diversity of Gujarat. The author of an 1858 article in *Buddhiprakash*, probably its editor, Dalpatram Dahyabhai, went so far as to assert that Surat and Kutch were foreign countries to him since nobody spoke his language (*Buddhiprakash*, September 1858: 139). We have also seen how Indulal Yagnik, who was from a Nagar Brahman family in Nadiad, noted the different forms of Gujarati spoken among the Nagar Brahman students of Gujarat College (Chapter 2). The desire to define and spread the 'standard' form of language began to be felt by both the colonial government and the regional elite, as the former established its political dominance in the nineteenth century.

Variations in language were not only regional. In the *Linguistic Survey of India*, published between 1903 and 1922, there was a detailed analysis of the

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Gujarati language by G.A. Grierson. The forms of Gujarati examined in it included those based on non-regional criteria too, such as 'Parsi Gujarati' and 'Musalman Gujarati'. These two forms, the survey noted, had many words of Persian and Arabic origin in their vocabulary, as well as some 'peculiar' rules of pronunciation which diverged from the 'standard form' of Gujarati (Grierson 1908: 326, 392–3, 436–9). The dividing lines used to define languages in the *Linguistic Survey* should themselves be questioned, and Grierson himself was in fact fully aware of the ambiguities and problems in regard to the classification of languages (Kothari 2018; Majeed 2019a, 2019b). Nevertheless, one can at least say that an array of language forms were (and still are) observed in Gujarati society.

Some distinct characteristics were associated with the form of Gujarati used among the merchant communities. For instance, they used 'Vaniai' (from the Gujarati word for merchant) script, also called 'Sarrafi' (from banker) or 'Bodia' (from shorn) script, which corresponds to what was known as 'Mahajani' (from merchants) script in North India. It is a kind of shorthand, used in ordinary mercantile correspondence, with all vowels except initials omitted (Grierson 1908: 338; Diringer 1968: 291).

While Mahajani script was commonly used among merchants, Gujarati literary works and official documents used the Devanagari script (the script used for Sanskrit) until the nineteenth century. Legal documents regarding transactions of land and houses were mostly written in the Devanagari script (Mehta 1981: 23). Thus, it seems that the Gujarati script established its primacy in this region only during the British period (Masica 1991: 143). This provides a clear contrast with the case in Maharashtra, where the Modi script developed as a uniform script for the Marathi language under Maratha rule but was replaced with Devanagari in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the intervention of the colonial authority and later the nationalist government (Gupta 1905: 28; Deshpande 2007: 209; Sohoni 2017, 2018). As noted in the previous chapter, the role of Parsis in printing might be one of the reasons why the Gujarati script was chosen and became widespread. In addition, we can note that the Gujarati script was associated with merchants,[2] but not with the legacy of any past political power, and therefore was probably considered 'safe' for the new regime. In contrast, the Modi script was associated with the Maratha Confederacy, making both the colonial and postcolonial states cautious of its power to promote the idea of a 'Marathi nation' among its speakers (Sohoni 2017: 679).

The Gujarati language and colonialism

The participants of late-nineteenth-century literary pursuits were essentially those with high school and college educations from the towns of Gujarat and Bombay. As they became involved in publishing and voluntary associations such as the Gujarat Vernacular Society (GVS), they began to speak on behalf of the 'people'. In this context, the language question was

inevitably linked with the wider question of how to define Gujarat and its inhabitants.

It should be remembered that the GVS repeatedly emphasised the role of Gujarati as a medium of the 'people' and advocated the necessity of improving this language (*Gujarat Varnakyular Sosaitino Varshik Riport* 1860–4: 21). *Buddhiprakash* argued in the 1860s that only through the use of Gujarati could they develop their 'intelligence and morality' and carry out the reform of society (*Buddhiprakash*, June 1864: 137). The idea of the Gujarati language being that of all Gujarati people, however, did not mean that intellectuals accepted the diverse forms actually spoken by this people. Instead, they advocated the standardisation of the language, sought to define its 'pure' and 'correct' form, and assert its pre-eminence.

In turn, the notion grew that language was an important marker to define a community or 'us'. This idea further encouraged them to imagine 'their' region as an inherently linguistically homogeneous area, which means that those who did not speak 'their' language did not belong to their regional community, and in some cases, even territory.[3] According to this view, Gujarat belonged to Gujarati speakers and although those who did not speak it could be there too, they were considered essentially as people from 'outside'.

Importantly, Gujarati intellectuals were conscious of the literary development in other Indian regions such as Bengal and Maharashtra. For instance, when *Narmakosh*, the first large-scale Gujarati-Gujarati dictionary in the style of an English dictionary, was published in the 1860s and 1870s, the editor Narmadashankar Lalshankar noted that equivalent dictionaries had already been published for Hindi, Marathi, and Bengali (Narmadashankar 1873: Preface). In particular, the Marathi example attracted much attention from the Gujarati literati. They often complained that the British gave substantial patronage to the development of Marathi literature while neglecting that of Gujarati. This criticism became so common by the 1870s that the government official who compiled the report of the native newspapers described it as an 'often-repeated assertion'.[4] For instance, one of the Gujarati papers argued that dictionaries for the Marathi language were compiled with state aid, but that 'nothing of the kind was done for Gujarati'.[5] It is likely that one of the dictionaries referred to here is the Marathi-English dictionary compiled for the Government of Bombay by James T. Molesworth with the assistance of Thomas and George Candy, published in 1831, with a revised edition following in 1857 (Molesworth 1831, 1857). Similarly, the editors of the English-Gujarati dictionary published in 1877 believed that, thanks to the government's encouragement, there existed a more extensive literature in Marathi than in Gujarati (Montgomery, Desai, and Desai 1877: iv). The editors also alleged that the former had attained a 'greater degree of fixedness and uniformity' than the latter. The same view was expressed by Joseph Van S. Taylor, who published *Gujarati Bhashanum Vyakran* in 1867 (Taylor 1867). The Gujarati intelligentsia thus found another incentive to pursue

linguistic reform, namely, to catch up with other 'advanced' regions.[6] These statements also infer that these intellectuals considered government patronage crucial for literature to develop.

In the debates on language reform among the Gujarati literati, the work of individual European scholars and officials in this field had a significant impact. Some of these scholars provided inspiration through their linguistic research, and others through their organisation of literary associations and accompanying activities. Alexander Kinloch Forbes, the Scottish judge and the founder of the GVS, is a prime example of the second category. Among European scholars known for their linguistic research on Gujarati, the most famous example is Joseph Van S. Taylor, a member of a Christian mission in Surat. In 1867, he published a grammar of the Gujarati language in the style of an English example, but written in Gujarati (Taylor 1867).[7] This book was to become widely known among Gujarati intellectuals, not least for its spirited defence of the Gujarati language: 'Gujarati – A member of the Aryan family, a daughter of Sanskrit, sister of many excellent tongues, who can call her inferior?' (Jhaveri 1956: 18–9). Contemporary and later Gujarati literati often referred to Taylor's comments in asserting the 'richness and beauty' of the Gujarati language.[8]

The Gujarati intelligentsia was quick to adopt the European approach to language.[9] For instance, many Gujarati-English and English-Gujarati dictionaries were produced, not only by Europeans but also by Gujarati speakers (Grant 1867: 206–7; Grierson 1908: 334–6; Jani 1988). The earliest example was a Gujarati-English dictionary by Mohammed Kasim and Naoroji Feredoonji. As mentioned above, *Narmakosh*, a large-scale Gujarati-Gujarati dictionary edited by Narmadashankar was published between 1861 and 1873 (Jani 1988: 1020–1).[10] In the preface of this dictionary, the author expressed his opinion that a dictionary reflects the greatness of a language and that without a dictionary its strength would decrease. According to him, a language whose dictionary did not exist was analogous to a country without a treasury, or a pond without a lotus (Narmadashankar 1873: Preface). The importance Narmadashankar attached to compiling a dictionary evidently reflected his familiarity with the contemporary Western approach to language. Moreover, for the style of dictionary, he referred to Webster's English dictionary and existing Marathi-English dictionaries edited by the British. In fact, these English and Marathi-English/English-Marathi dictionaries were often referred to by other lexicographers who edited Gujarati-English and English-Gujarati dictionaries in the late nineteenth century (Moos and Ranina 1862; Umiashankar, Dwarkadas, and Trikamdas 1862; Edalji 1868; Montgomery, Desai, and Desai 1877).

Narmadashankar, the compiler of *Narmakosh*, was born to Nagar Brahman parents in Surat and studied at Elphinstone Institution in Bombay in the early 1850s. This experience exposed him to Western literature and ideas, and facilitated his involvement in social reform movements and literary pursuits. This environment greatly influenced his ideas on Gujarati,

leading to a strong confidence in his 'pure' language. In his autobiography, he wrote:

> I am not a villager, I am a city-dweller, I belong to a high caste, I keep high company, and I have been speaking pure language since birth then there is no reason why my language should not be pure.
>
> (Narmadashankar 1994: 82; translation by Suhrud 2009: 20)

Narmadashankar was conscious of the difference between *bhasha* (language) and *boli* (dialect) (20). In his opinion, while he wrote a purer form of language, Premanand, a poet of medieval Gujarat, wrote in a language closer to a boli. He further argued:

> The language of the learned is correct and beautiful language. … I am the first one to use refined Gujarati, and people with old mentality and with new ideas both like my language. How can my language be called impure and faulty? And since I am charting a new course, even if my language is faulty, can it be considered in any way inferior to Premanand's? No. No.
>
> (Narmadashankar 1994: 82; translation by Suhrud 2009: 21)

His pride and confidence in his ability to present 'correct and beautiful language' are evident here. His descriptions vividly show the significant impact that Western education had on the literati in this period.

It is noteworthy that Gujarati intellectuals, in their attempts to recast their language, often claimed that they were 'reviving' the 'original' form. An increasingly common argument in literary circles was that the 'original' form of the Gujarati language was 'pure'. For instance, in his book entitled *Gujarati Bhashano Itihas* (History of the Gujarati Language, 1864), Vrajlal Kalidas Shastri (1825–1903), a Sathodra Brahman scholar of Kheda district, emphasised the 'purity' of the 'original' Gujarati language and its deterioration during the later periods (Shastri 1887: 85). In the same manner, the Nagar Brahman intellectual Navalram Lakshmiram asserted in an essay that the language had been largely uniform in ancient times. Its disintegration, he claimed, had started after the Muslim period, due to the decline of communication between different areas (Parikh 1966: 241). Dalpatram also emphasised the flourishing state of literature in ancient Gujarat, which was, in his view, destroyed during the later period (Dalpatram 1926: 303–13). In 1878, *Buddhiprakash* argued that the condition of the language depended on that of the kingdom, and attributed the present unfavourable condition of Gujarati to the lack of encouragement the language had received under Muslim and Maratha rule (*Buddhiprakash*, January 1878: 4). Thus, in this way, some late-nineteenth-century intellectuals understood the 'standard' language to be the 'pure' and 'original' form of Gujarati. This version, they asserted, should be revived and disseminated throughout society.

The standardisation of the Gujarati language

For those Gujarati intellectuals who were interested in the 'development' and 'reformation' of the Gujarati language, the core problem was how to standardise the language and popularise this 'correct' form. In their language reform, the high-caste Hindu literati were at a considerable advantage due to their access to the state machinery. They were, for instance, deeply involved in educational initiatives and voluntary associations like the GVS. This led to their being party to the editing of a textbook collection, the Gujarati Reading Series, in the late 1850s, which was considered to be a good opportunity to promote their 'correct' language form. The work was carried out under the supervision of the educational inspector in Northern Division, T.C. Hope. These books were thus often called the Hope's Reading Series (*Hope Vanchanmala*). The members appointed to this task by the government were Mahipatram Rupram, Mohanlal Ranchhoddas, Bhogilal Pranvallabhdas, Dalpatram Dahyabhai, Mayaram Shambhunath, and Pranlal Mathuradas (Parekh I 1935: 107–9). Among them, Mahipatram was a Nagar Brahman. Dalpatram and Mayaram were also Brahmans, though not Nagars. Pranlal was from the Brahmakshatriya community, which was usually considered as a writers' caste. Mohanlal and Bhogilal were Vaniyas (N. Desai 1978: 439, 447). This textbook committee was thus dominated by high-caste Hindu intellectuals, and included neither low-caste Hindus nor members of non-Hindu communities such as Muslims and Parsis.

The absence of Parsis here is rather striking in view of the dominant positions that they occupied in colleges, government service, and the press. In fact, there seems to have been a widespread notion among British officials and scholars that the forms of Gujarati spoken by Parsis and Muslims were different from that spoken by Hindus, and that the 'standard' language should be learned from Hindu scholars. From the British viewpoint, the Parsis were originally 'immigrants' who came from Persia to western India from around the eighth to tenth century and constituted a 'minority' of society. The British also seem to have considered high-caste Hindus, due to their association with the Sanskritic tradition, as the people in the best position to define 'correct' Gujarati, which was even described by J.V.S. Taylor as 'a daughter of Sanskrit' (Jhaveri 1956: 18–19).

British scholars and administrators who studied Gujarati often depended on Brahman intellectuals. J.V.S. Taylor took the guidance of Dalpatram, Mahipatram, and Vrajlal Kalidas (all Brahmans), for instance, and A.K. Forbes learned the language with Bhogilal Pranvallabhdas (a Vaniya intellectual) and Dalpatram (Shah 2016: 92, 297). It was precisely these high-caste Hindu intellectuals who were chosen for editing the school textbooks mentioned above. This British attitude is well illustrated in Clair Tisdall's *A Simplified Grammar of the Gujarati Language*, which identifies 'three main varieties' of this language – 'Hindi Gujarati', 'Parsi Gujarati', and

'Muhammadan Gujarati' – and endorses the government's adoption of 'Hindi Gujarati' (which here means the Gujarati language spoken by the Hindus) as the appropriate form (Tisdall 1892: 15). The criticism of 'Parsi Gujarati' by Hindu intellectuals further encouraged such attitudes among the British.

In the process of editing the Gujarati Reading Series, much attention was paid to the problem provided by the enormous variety of Gujarati orthography. The diversity of spelling in this period can be gauged from the words of a contemporary lexicographer:

> The same word spoken by a Surati, a Kathiawadi, a Palanapuri, or a Charotari; or by a Nagar, a Vaniya, a Jain, a Kunbi, or a Vaghari; or, again, by a Surati Nagar, a Kathiyawadi Nagar, &c., (and one may make these permutations and combinations to any length), assumes, without any change in the meaning, a different form in each case.
>
> (Belsare 1895: ix)

The variation of orthography, in many cases, reflected regional differences in pronunciation. The lexicographer also noted that in 1872 the GVS had published its rules for the 'correct Spelling of Gujarati words' (x).

The official report published later, which mainly concerned the revision of vernacular reading books, recollected how the textbooks had initially been edited. According to this report, the government had adopted 'Charotri or Ahmedabadi' for the standard (Covernton 1906: 11). The 'Ahmedabadi' here meant the language used among high-caste Hindu elite circles in North Gujarat, which the textbook committee probably contrasted with the languages in other parts of Gujarat, such as 'Surti' in South Gujarat or 'Kathiawadi' in the peninsula. The publication of the Reading Series also enhanced the position of the Gujarati script.

Although it is difficult to confirm how widely this textbook series spread, it is certain that a number of its copies continued to be published. By 1892, the number of copies of Book I to VII and five other school textbooks had reached about 5.5 million (Chapter 2). Hope's Gujarati Reading Series was not revised in any major way until the early twentieth century. The adoption of these textbooks in Gujarati-medium schools had crucial implications for the standardisation process.

To define the standard form of a language also means that other forms, which are not selected, are likely to be relegated to the status of 'dialects'.[11] In the case of Gujarati, such treatment was meted out particularly to so-called Parsi Gujarati. Generally speaking, this language reflected the features of the local dialect in the coastal area of South Gujarat, where the Parsi community first settled (Grierson 1908: 392–3; Gajendragadkar 1974). Parsi Gujarati was also characterised, in the opinion of Hindu intelligentsia, by the use of many 'foreign' words, including examples from Persian, Arabic, and English. Their frequent use of English words

in Gujarati reflected the spread of English-medium education among the Parsi elite and also their attempt to supplement the vocabulary to express new ideas and concepts that they felt could not be articulated otherwise. The Parsis' prominent role in the Gujarati publishing industry, especially in Bombay, additionally explains the Hindu intellectuals' critical attitude towards Parsi Gujarati.

The perceptions of the Gujarati language among high-caste Hindu intellectuals seem to have been supported by the government, directly and indirectly. In its early stages, the Bombay Native Education Society accepted the same textbook to be published both in 'Banyan' Gujarati and in 'Parsi' Gujarati (Covernton 1906: 26). Yet by the middle of the century, such a decision was already unthinkable. The British government soon noticed the repercussions of this standardisation process for Parsis. The Director of Public Instruction noted in the 1860s how some Parsis of 'great abilities' had been rejected at the matriculation examination for 'want of a proper acquaintance' with 'Hindoo Gujarati' (*Report of the Director of Public Instruction, 1861–62* 1863: 283). It can be argued that the dominance of the Brahman-Vaniya leadership in the Gujarati literary circles was thus confirmed and strengthened with the support of the state.

When judging the quality of Gujarati publications, the state openly accepted the opinions of these leading Hindu intellectuals. When one Parsi lady published her translation of Queen Victoria's work, the Educational Department asked four high-caste Hindus (along with two European scholars) for their opinions as to whether this work should be given government patronage. Not surprisingly, most of these examiners expressed critical opinions of her Parsi Gujarati. The work was criticised, for instance, for the frequent use of 'Parsi Gujarati idioms and styles' and 'incorrect' orthography.[12] Even the few positive comments it received demonstrate how the Hindu literati had imposed their own criteria for good writing on the work. One of them argued that 'the Lady Translator has successfully tried to give in proper orthography many sanscrit equivalents usually used by Gujarati standard authors for English words'. Based on such opinions, the Director of Public Instruction recommended to the government that if it was to purchase a small number of copies as a form of patronage, they should be distributed only to Bombay and Surat 'where the Gujarati of the book would not be much noticed'. This comment incidentally illustrates that the extent to which the standard form of Gujarati had become dominant differed between regions.

It is evident again from the above that the high-caste Hindu intellectuals, with their access to state machinery, had a major influence in the process of defining the standard language. As indicated above, these Hindu literati took a serious interest in the selection of vocabulary besides orthography. In the 1850s, an article in *Buddhiprakash* strongly criticised a Parsi's statement that the Gujarati language borrowed words from Marathi, Persian, and others. It argued that this might be true for the Gujarati language of Bombay

('that is, Surti'), but not of the Gujarati found in 'old books' (*Buddhiprakash*, September 1858: 139). Evidently, the author did not like the use of words of 'foreign' origin in Gujarati. This article gives us an insight into how some intellectuals began to advocate what could be called the 'Sanskritisation' of the language.

The Sanskritisation of the Gujarati language

The Sanskritisation of Gujarati in some cases simply referred to the supplementary introduction of Sanskrit words into Gujarati, but it also often meant the replacement of words of 'foreign' origin with Sanskrit equivalents. The former type of Sanskritisation occurred in particular when the literati tried to transpose Western concepts and struggled to find appropriate Gujarati vocabulary for the task. In the opinion of Vrajlal Kalidas, the author of *Gujarati Bhashano Itihas*, this was partly because unlike Sanskrit or Persian, Gujarati had never been the language of the professional literary circles before the British period (Shastri 1887: 87). In the context of expanding higher education and the introduction of Western literature, the literati strongly felt the need for expanding the vocabulary of Gujarati. Ramanbhai Mahipatram Nilkanth, a leading intellectual, wrote in 1894 that Gujarati literature was 'yet in a state of formation', and that words in it had not yet acquired 'that figurative breath which includes in one term various shades of meaning developed by a moral expansion of the idea' (Nilkanth 1923: xiii). To increase their expressions, high-caste Hindu intellectuals resorted to the use of words from Sanskrit, the language of classical literature and their religious texts. Sometimes the original meanings of such words evolved as they were transported into Gujarati writings.

The second kind of Sanskritisation had more visible political implications. This was the process in which common words of 'foreign' origin – i.e. Persian, Arabic, and English words – were substituted with Sanskrit versions. Some high-caste literati claimed the 'purity' of their language in the ancient age and its deterioration during the 'Muslim period'. Therefore, based on this argument, some began to attribute the present 'impurity' of the Gujarati language to the influence of Arabic and Persian. An article in *Buddhiprakash*, for instance, stated that as long as Gujarati and Sanskrit words were available, all foreign words should be removed (*Buddhiprakash*, June 1864: 140). Narmadashankar also believed that the Gujarati language of the Nagar Brahmans of Surat was pure due to its relative proximity to Sanskrit (Desai 2014: 179). Stressing the importance of Sanskrit words in Gujarati clearly worked to the disadvantage of non-Hindus within Gujarati literary circles.

Here we should once again look at the debates over 'Parsi Gujarati'. As discussed above, it was often criticised by the high-caste Hindu intelligentsia from the late nineteenth century for its 'incorrect' orthography and pronunciation and use of many 'foreign' words. In the eyes of some Hindu

intellectuals, this proved how 'corrupt' this language was. The strength with which Parsi Gujarati was condemned reflects the strong influence that Parsis held in society.

The following episode recorded by Narasimharao Bholanath Divatia (Divetiya), a Nagar Brahman from Ahmedabad, provides us with a key to understanding the relationship between Hindus and Parsis in the field of literary activities. It concerns Manilal Dvivedi (1858–98), a Nagar Brahman from Nadiad, who was to become a famous Sanskrit scholar. When Manilal was still studying in Elphinstone College in Bombay, there was a Parsi student, who used to ridicule the Hindu students from Gujarat and even issued a pamphlet entitled *Shudh Gujarati Shikhavnar* (Teacher of Pure Gujarati). Once he placed a Gujarati poem before them and asked if any of them could compose such an excellent piece in their 'Vaniya Gujarati' (Divetiya 1926: 225–7). Manilal answered his challenge by composing an excellent poem on the spot, which showed, in Divatia's view, the difference between Parsi Gujarati and 'respectable' Gujarati. The episode and the way it was introduced by Divatia indicate the undeniable presence of the Parsis in such educational institutions on the one hand, and the attempts of some high-caste Hindu literati to assert their primacy in Gujarati literary activities on the other.

Hindu intellectuals also undertook similar attempts to 'Sanskritise' their languages in other parts of colonial India, including in North India, where they sought to establish the dominance of Sanskritised Hindi.[13] Yet there was an important difference between the two cases. While North Indian intellectuals, by asserting the superiority of Sanskritised Hindi, sought to emphasise separate identities for Hindi and Urdu, those in Gujarat did not recognise Parsi Gujarati as a different language. It was a 'corrupt' form of Gujarati, which had to be 'corrected'.

The drive for the Sanskritisation of Gujarati gained momentum during the 1880s, led by Brahman writers such as Manilal Dvivedi, mentioned above, and Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi (1840–1907). Such writers tended to be still more intolerant of what they considered as 'impure' forms of Gujarati, an attitude that was strongly satirised in Ramanbhai Nilkanth's novel, *Bhadrambhadra*, published in 1900. Early on in the novel, the hero, Bhadrambhadra,[14] takes a vow not to use any 'impure' words of foreign origin. Accordingly, when he goes to buy a train ticket at Ahmedabad Railway Station, he asks a ticket-seller to give him two *'mulyapatrika'* (mulya = price, patrika = note, letter) to 'Shri Mohmay', by which he means 'two tickets to Bombay'. The ticket-seller, who happens to be a Parsi, not only cannot understand what is being said to him, but answers in typical Parsi Gujarati; his pronunciation is of South Gujarat, and he uses the English word 'mad'. On hearing this, Bhadrambhadra becomes absolutely furious (Nilkanth 1994: 7).[15] The popularity of this novel suggests that such an extreme form of Sanskritisation did not necessarily enjoy support among all Hindu intellectuals.

Nevertheless, Sanskritisation, albeit far less extreme than that attacked in *Bhadrambhadra*, did indeed take place in the leading Gujarati literary circles. In the early twentieth century, the editors of Gujarati dictionaries admitted that 'slowly and steadily, stealthily but surely' Sanskrit words had been 'creeping into the Gujarati literature' (Mehta and Mehta 1925: 2). This tendency might have been encouraged partly by the importance placed on classical languages in the curricula of higher education (Dalal 1897: v).

The Parsis' view of this development can be gauged from a letter written by Kersasp R. Dadachanji, a Parsi, for Ambalal Sakarlal in 1913. He emphasised the Parsis' contribution to Gujarati literature. At the same time, he made a strong criticism of the 'great literary man, scholar and philosopher sage and teacher of the world – the Gujarati Graduate', which here means a high-caste and highly educated Hindu (Thakor and Mehta 1929: 1060). He recounted how the 'learned man' tried to avoid words of Persian origin, even those commonly used among Hindus themselves:

> Because the learned man has just got through a few Sanskrit books and passed his B.A., and as he could not write good or correct sensible English, and has no ideas which he can put into readable Gujarati, he must *make a show* of learning and wisdom by words of learned length and thundering sound with no other object than to conceal his proverty [*sic*] of thought. (1060)

Yet, at the same time, Kersasp noted that this phenomenon of Sanskritisation was observed only among a limited range of Hindus. Another of his letters stated:

> It is now openly avowed that the Persian element should be thoroughly eliminated, and whether the other classes agree or not, Sanskrit shall be the only source from which our vocabulary is to be enriched and by which that vocabulary is to be expurgated and purified. This is a monstrous pretension. The Gujaratis of the north of Nerbada [Narmada river] are the people that have put it forward and are practising it. (1062)

As noted earlier, the degree of influence held by 'standard' Gujarati differed from region to region. The same was also true of Sanskritisation. In the opinion of Kersasp, only in North Gujarat did one find people advocating Sanskritised Gujarati. The actual number of intellectuals who involved themselves in the drive for Sanskritisation was probably rather limited. However, they could still project their language as 'correct' Gujarati, by taking advantage of the importance given to them by the government in defining the standard form of language as well as their dominance in literary associations.

This situation led some sections of the Parsi literati to turn increasingly towards the Persian language, which they now emphasised as 'a link to their

tradition and historical past' (Kulke 1978: 85). Some Parsi writers such as Firoz Jahangir Marzban (1876–1933) refused to use Sanskritised Gujarati, believing that with the mixture of languages, the Parsis made the Gujarati language 'sweet' (Parekh 1978: 207).

Other Parsis were keen to bridge the gap between Parsi Gujarati and 'standard' Gujarati, thereby securing their position within literary circles. Kersasp, in his letter quoted above, stated that 'Our Parsis read more Gujarati books and adopt more of current Sanskrit words. They attend well to the construction and rhythm of sentences and orthography is improving' (Thakor and Mehta 1929: 1061). An article in an Ahmedabad paper from the same period also noted the movement by educated Parsis for cultivating a 'purer Gujarati diction' (*Praja Bandhu*, 19 October 1913: 2). The author, hardly hiding his pride, continued: '... we of Gujarat welcome heartily this friendly move, and are prepared on our part to do our best to promote it'. In fact, such attempts by some sections of Parsi intellectuals to revise their 'impure' writing had begun to be made already a few decades before. The *Rast Goftar*, a Parsi newspaper in Gujarati, accused well-known journals such as *Bombay Samachar* of 'confusing dental and retroflex characters' and lacking consistency in grammar (Nicholson 2020: 201). The Parsi intellectuals who were involved in compiling Gujarati-English dictionaries from the 1860s were also conscious of the need to regulate Gujarati orthography (202). The idea of Parsi Gujarati as a 'dialect' to be 'corrected' had thus gradually spread among the Parsi literati through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Even Parsi supporters of 'standard' Gujarati, however, remained marginalised in the Hindu-dominated literary circles of Gujarat. Again, Kersasp asserted:

> Your annual Parishad [the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad (Conference on Gujarati Literature)][16] is doing some good, but it is almost exclusively Hindu. It is not to blame for it does not exclude the Parsis, but the latter won't join because of the undisguised attitude of hostility and contempt which some of its leading spirits have assumed towards us and of the determination to follow their line, and eliminate our methods and lines of literary action.
>
> (Thakor and Mehta 1929: 1065).

The impact of the debates covered above continued into the following period, as will become apparent in the subsequent chapters.

The emergence of modern Gujarati literature

Alongside attempts to remould Gujarati, intellectuals also took a keen interest in encouraging 'new' literature with reference to Western approaches. In today's common narratives of the history of Gujarati literature, a

changing of periods roughly corresponds with the establishment of British rule (Munshi 1935: 229; Jhaveri 1956: 1–22; Jhaveri 1978: 67). The year 1852, when Dayaram (1767/1777–1852), a Vaishnava bhakti poet died, is generally used as the border between the 'medieval' and 'modern'. By this rationale, two poets represent the first stage of 'modern Gujarati literature': Dalpatram Dahyabhai and Narmadashankar Lalshankar (who were also called Dalpat and Narmad, respectively). This stage was followed by the so-called Pandit Yug in which literary works written in Sanskritised Gujarati became prominent. From the late 1910s, 'Gandhi Yug' began with Gandhi's rise to power in regional and national politics and the accompanying impact on ideas of language and literature.

Let us look at each of these stages briefly. One of the two literati considered pioneers of modern Gujarati literature, Dalpatram Dahyabhai Travadi (1820–98), was born into a Shrimali Brahman family in Wadhwan, Kathiawad. He became famous for his *kavya* (poems), and as a result was often referred to as kavi (poet). He was close to A.K. Forbes and deeply involved in the activities of the GVS (Chapter 3). Through his uncle, he came under the influence of the Swaminarayan sect in his childhood (Thoothi 1935: 269). He was familiar with Vraj and Sanskrit, but not so much with English, unlike Narmadashankar, who was educated at Elphinstone Institution (Sanjana 1950: 147–8; Jhaveri 1978: 72). At the age of 21, he started composing poems for the Swaminarayan sect. While attending poetic gatherings in temple precincts and royal courts, Dalpatram proved his literary abilities and became well known in the region (Kapadia 2010: 57). His occasional visits to Ahmedabad gave him the opportunity to be acquainted with the urban elite, including Bholanath Sarabhai, who, in turn, introduced him to Forbes in 1848 (Parekh I 1935: 247; Dalpatram 1926: 304). He helped Forbes with his research on Gujarat, organised the GVS, and at the same time continued composing a large number of poems, besides writing dramas and essays. Some of his essays such as *Jnati Nibandh* and *Bhut Nibandh* won prizes in the GVS essay contests (Dalpatram 1885: 3; Dalpatram 1990). Sometimes Forbes requested that the GVS publish Dalpatram's works. These include *Lakshmi*, a comedy which was an adaption of Aristophanes's *Plutus* (Vasunia 2013: 294). It is highly likely that his knowledge of the Aristophanic comedy derived from his association with Forbes. Dalpatram also taught poetry at the high school and the training college in Ahmedabad.[17]

Interestingly, even a person like Dalpatram took an interest in business though it seems that he learned a hard lesson out of this. When the price of cotton for export increased due to the American Civil War in 1861–5, there was a fever of speculation in cotton and shares. Once the war was over, the price of cotton crashed and many lost money, including Dalpatram, who obtained help from Forbes (Raval 1987: 95–6, 126; Yagnik and Sheth 2005: 106–10; Shah 2016: 119). The vibrant economic activities in Gujarat even affected a poet considered to be one of the pioneers of modern Gujarati literature.

Dalpatram's poems were originally recited for the purposes of entertainment, to celebrate an occasion, convey some social message, or praise patrons (Maniar 1969: 38). He thus continued the 'old tradition of oral recitation of poetry' (Joshi 2004: 339). As a result, his works covered a wide range of topics chosen for specific contexts. These ranged from the praise of British rule, the plight of widows, contemporary events, to important public figures. These poems were written in a simple language to attract a wide audience and reflected a thorough knowledge of traditional metres.

The poems of Dalpatram were not only recited but also published in the GVS journal, *Buddhiprakash*, and other forums. The form of Gujarati used by him in the journal was held up as an exemplar of 'good' Gujarati due to the prominence of the GVS in the region's literary activities. In this regard, Dalpatram was also involved in the editing of textbooks, as noted above, and his own poems were also included in them (Sanjana 1950: 112). He thus played an important role in the process in which the standard form of the Gujarati language was defined.

While following a traditional style, the contents of his poems reflected contemporary debates. He took up issues of social reform and education, and even articulated ideas of *swadeshi* (Jhaveri 1956: 29). Dalpatram expressed his strong support for widow remarriage and opposition against child marriage. He also wrote a poem entitled *Hunnarkhanni Chadhai* (The Invasion of Hunnarkhan, 1851), an allegorical poem on the impoverishment of Hindustan as a result of the invasion of Hunnarkhan (meaning King Industry), who is the ruler of Vilayat (a foreign country) (Dalpatram 1921). After describing the misery of present Hindustan, Dalpatram makes a suggestion about how to revive this country. The only person who can save it is Mandalik (Unity), who is deep in sleep. While emphasising the necessity of awakening him, Dalpatram urges the readers to defeat Yantrakhan (the Machine Minister) of this Vilayat and take over the technology and industry dominated by foreigners.

His works show a preoccupation with 'enlightening' his readers. This can also be gleaned from the contents of *Buddhiprakash*, the GVS journal that he edited. A notice published on the back of every issue included the following sentence in English, stating the role of the journal: 'It [*Buddhiprakash*] contains articles on various interesting subjects and it is believed "enlightening" many'. The choice of English here symbolically shows the way in which this language was associated with the idea of 'modernity' and social reform.

While Dalpatram was known as a poet, Narmadashankar Lalshankar Dave (1833–86) was regarded as a pioneer in many genres of literature. Born to Nagar Brahman parents in Surat, his father obtained a job as a lithograph scribe in Bombay, and Narmad spent his early life in these two places.[18] In contrast with Dalpatram, he received a Western-style education and often showed his pride in his familiarity with European literature and ideas. His association with Elphinstone Institution in the early 1850s fostered his

participation in social reform movements and literary activities among the Bombay elite. For example, he was a key member of the Buddhivardhak Sabha, a representative organisation for social reform at the time.

After briefly teaching, Narmad devoted himself to literature. His poems, often very subjective and emotional, evince the influence of European writings, such as Homer, Milton, Byron, Wordsworth, Southey, Shakespeare, and Walter Scott (Maniar 1969: 57–60). For instance, Homer's *Illiad* made such an impact on him that he resolved to write a similar poem (57). When he evaluated the Gujarati poets in the past, he and his friends used Homer as a measure by giving 100 points to Homer. Then Narmad gave 60, 40, and 30 points each to Premanand, Dayaram, and Samal Bhatt, all of whom were famous poets of medieval Gujarat, and 70 points to himself (Narmadashankar 1994: 81; Suhrud 2009: 19).

It should be noted that Narmad's European acquaintances also encouraged him to write poems with Western literary works as a model. For instance, a retired principal of Elphinstone Institution exhorted Narmad to write a work similar to Milton's *Comus* in Gujarati, while another Briton advised him to work along the lines of Byron's *Don Juan* (Maniar 1969: 59). Such nudges helped direct him towards embracing Western styles in his work.

Narmad composed poems on a variety of issues, including those related to social reform and the conditions of the country in the past and at present.[19] He also wrote poems on nature, religion, and love. One of his representative poems written in the 1860s, known for its passionate phrase, 'Jay jay garvi Gujarat (Victory, victory to great Gujarat)', is vividly redolent of Western patriotic poems. He also used words such as *desh* (country), *swadeshabhiman* (pride in the country), and *deshjanta* (people of the country) repeatedly (Suhrud 2009: 24). Narmad argued that pride in one's country is as natural as pride in family or caste, and it is this pride that unites people (24–5).

His descriptions of Gujarat were frequently quoted in the following periods to promote Gujarati identity. 'Jay jay garvi Gujarat' was repeatedly sung in the Maha Gujarat movement in the 1950s (Chapter 6), acquiring the status of an anthem (Yagnik and Sheth 2005: 80). The most famous lines of this poem read:

> Victory, victory, to beautiful Gujarat
> Victory, victory, to beautiful Gujarat
> The beautiful light of dawn
> Its saffron-coloured flag, bright with light,
> Is infused with love and bravery …
> More than that colour of Anhilwad
> More than that of Siddhraja Jayasimha,
> A still more beautiful colour will soon appear, Mother.
> With auspicious omens appearing, soon

a beautiful high noon will arrive.
The night is over.
The people are with Narmad.
Victory, victory, to beautiful Gujarat.
(Narmadashankar 1993: 99–100: translation by Pathak, Spodek, and Wood in Yagnik III, 2011: 455, with minor changes by the author.)

In this poem, Narmadashankar chose Siddhraja Jayasimha (r. 1094–1143), a Rajput king of Chaulukya at its height, as the historical symbol of this region. He also described Gujarat as Mother, a metaphor commonly used by literati in various parts of contemporary India, reflecting in part the impact of the idea of the national literature. It is evident that Narmad defined the territory of Gujarat in a rather abstract manner; he sang that in the north, there was Amba Mata (the goddess linked with Mount Abu), in the east, Kali Mata (linked with Pavagadh hill), in the south, Kuntesvara Mahadeva, and in the west, Somnath and Dwarka (Narmadashankar 1993: 99). Thus, religious sites, including sites for goddess worship as well as those for Shaivas and Vaishnavas, were important for his vision of the region of Gujarat. Importantly, Kutch is 'remarkable in its absence from the frame' (Ibrahim 2012: 70).

Besides composing poems, Narmad wrote essays, articles and editorials, biographies, autobiography, literary criticism, and history. Prose literature was existent in the pre-British period but flourished from the late nineteenth century. Narmad, who played an important role in this development, is even described as the father of Gujarati prose (Chavda n.d.: 19; Munshi 1935: 241).[20] In addition, he edited dictionaries such as *Narmakosh*, previously discussed, and *Narma Kathakosh*, a dictionary of mythology. Narmad was of the opinion that the Gujarati language was inadequate for him to express his 'high and complex' ideas (Suhrud 2009: 19). He felt, for instance, that this language did not have sufficient vocabulary. It is possible that such a perception drove him to take a great interest in editing these dictionaries through which he tried to develop Gujarati.

Although mainly concerned with Gujarat and the Gujarati language and literature, Narmadashankar also gave some thought to the language problem in India as a whole. He lamented that Indians made no attempt to learn each other's languages and that they were further divided along linguistic lines due to the absence of a common spoken language (25). Based on this observation, he suggested that all Indians learn a language other than their mother tongue and that Devanagari be adopted as the script for various Indian languages. He embraced the concept of Hindustani and English becoming intra-regional languages (62). This suggests that the ideas of language that would come to be incorporated into the language policy of the Indian government after independence had already been discussed among groups of intellectuals in the late nineteenth century. In fact,

Narmadashankar was not the only intellectual in Gujarat who discussed the issue of a common language of India. Navalram Lakshmiram Pandya, another leading intellectual of this period mentioned later, developed a view that a form of a common language of India should be a combination of 'Vraj Hindi and Urdu', which reminds us of 'Hindustani' as advocated by Gandhi. He also suggested that Devanagari script be used for all the regional languages (Shukla 1988: 36).

In the field of novels, *Karan Ghelo*, written by Nandshankar Tuljashankar Mehta (1835–1905) in 1866 (and published in 1868), is considered to be the first major novel in Gujarati. The same year, however, also saw the publication of *Sasu Vahuni Ladhai* (Quarrel between a Mother-in-law and Her Daughter-in-law) written by Mahipatram Rupram Nilkanth (1829–91). Opinions were divided as to which should be labelled the 'first' Gujarati novel. It is noteworthy that the Gujarati word for novel is *navalkatha*. This was invented in this period from an English word, novel, joined with a word of Sanskrit origin, *katha*, meaning a story (Nilkanth 1926: 258). This symbolises the conscious creation of a new genre based on a Western model.

Both Nandshankar and Mahipatram (Chapter 3) were Nagar Brahmans from Surat, where they studied at the English school together (Raval 1987: 128). Later they became engaged in educational matters under the government, once working as principals of training colleges (the former in Surat and the latter in Ahmedabad). They were also members of the GVS. Nandshankar joined the Revenue Department afterwards, became the Diwan of Kutch, and the Assistant Political Agent at Godhra (Vatsal and Mukherji 2015: 319).

A biography of Nandshankar provides us with a glimpse of their schooling and how they became well versed in English literature. An English official, who was a close friend of the English headmaster of this school, opened up his well-stocked library to Nandshankar as a favoured student. Nandshankar later recollected how he had 'gazed at this store house of knowledge with thirsty eyes and like the chataka bird, eagerly lapped it up' (319). He began to feel 'a kinship with the wider world', and was particularly attracted to the works of Shakespeare, Scott, Lytton, Gibbon, and Macaulay.

In the preface of *Karan Ghelo,* Nandshankar explained that he had written the book at the request of the British Educational Inspector. The latter had noted the lack of prose literature in Gujarati and told him to write a Gujarati work similar to English stories (Nandshankar 1934: 9; Jhaveri 1956: 250). Again, British encouragement to create 'new' literature based on a Western model recurs.

Nandshankar's novel centred on Karan, the 'last Rajput king of Gujarat' (Nandshankar 1934). At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Karan lost both his kingdom and family following the invasion of Alauddin Khilji, the Muslim emperor in Delhi. According to a story which was well known in Gujarat, Karan's misfortune was due to his moral corruption, as he took

the wife of his minister in the latter's absence.[21] Nandshankar referred to Forbes's *Ras Mala* for writing this novel (Vatsal and Mukherji 2015: 327). *Karan Ghelo* narrated the fate of this immoral king in relatively simple language. Its first edition was published with the support of the government, and later its abridged edition was used as one of the textbooks in schools (Vatsal and Mukherji 2015: 327; Jhaveri 1956: 253).

Mahipatram's novel, *Sasu Vahuni Ladhai*, concerned the relationship between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law. It reflected the author's great interest in social reform, especially in issues related to the condition of women. His reason for writing the novel is expressed at length in the introductory essay he wrote for its second edition (Nilkanth 2005: 49–62). Written in English, the essay was entitled 'An Appeal to My Educated Countrymen' with the hope that its message would reach other parts of India. This shows how languages were selected for different purposes and audiences.

It is evident that the works which would later be classed as Gujarati 'classics', such as those of Dalpatram, Narmadashankar, and Nandshankar, were produced mostly by high-caste Hindu literati, especially Nagar Brahmans. These writers were also deeply involved in social reform and educational activities, and their works attracted the direct and indirect patronage of the government. Their books (which included many GVS publications) often received financial support from the government, which subscribed to a number of their publications and distributed them to educational institutions. Some of these works, such as *Karan Ghelo*, were later introduced in school textbooks.

The dominance of high-caste Hindu writers can be observed across literary genres. In the field of literary criticism, a Nagar Brahman intellectual from Surat, Navalram Lakshmiram Pandya (1836–88), played a leading role. Navalram, like Nandshankar and Mahipatram, went to the English school in Surat and then started teaching. He was also involved in training colleges in Surat, Ahmedabad, and Rajkot, providing another example of the close connection between educational and literary activities.

In regard to travelogues, Mahipatram Rupram and Karsandas Mulji (1832–71) published books on their trips to England, *Inglandni Musapharinum Varnan* (Descriptions of Travels in England, 1862) and *Inglandmam Pravas* (Travels in England, 1866), respectively. Karsandas Mulji was a famous Kapol Vaniya social reformer, who was sued by one of the religious leaders of the Vallabhacharya sect in 1861 for having criticised his conduct in a paper (the 'Maharaj Libel Case').[22]

Ranchhodbhai Udayaram (1837–1923), again a Brahman and a member of the GVS (also once the editor of *Buddhiprakash*), was a prominent dramatist (Houston 1900: 202). Born in Mahudha, he received his higher education in Nadiad and Ahmedabad. He worked as a government servant and also joined the world of business as an agent in Bombay, but was best known for his plays. These dealt with contemporary social issues as well as Puranic stories.

From the mid-1880s, the prominence of high-caste Hindus in literary activities was even further enhanced. During this period, 'modern Gujarati literature' entered the so-called Pandit Yug. Some of the representative works produced at this time were characterised by the frequent use of Sanskrit words, though the way in which they were deployed reflected English models. Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi, an elderly cousin of Govardhanram Tripathi (Suhrud 2009: 191), was well known for his advocacy of Sanskritised Gujarat (Jhaveri 1956: 187). Ramanbhai Nilkanth's *Bhadrambhadra*, as discussed in the previous section, criticised the form of Gujarati advocated by this 'Mansukhram school' in a satirical manner.

Among several writers associated with the Pandit Yug, the most famous was Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi (1855–1907). Another Nagar Brahman (he was from a Vadnagara Nagar Brahman family) writer, he was born in Nadiad, studied at an English school there, and then joined Elphinstone High School and College.[23] After graduating, he studied law and worked as a personal secretary to the Diwan of Bhavnagar State before obtaining an LL.B. degree. Tripathi then left Bhavnagar for Bombay to start a legal practice there. At the age of 42, he voluntarily retired and moved back to Nadiad, devoting himself to writing for the rest of his life (Suhrud 2017: xvi-xvii).

Tripathi's major work, *Sarasvatichandra*, was a novel in four volumes, published in 1887, 1892, 1898, and 1901 (xxv–xxvii). The story concerns a young educated man, Sarasvatichandra, and his fiancée, Kumud Sundari. Due to intrigue of his stepmother's devising, Sarasvatichandra leaves home before his marriage with Kumud, and she, as a result, is forced to marry another man. The story that follows is too complex to summarise in a short paragraph, with many characters and subplots, but the climax comes when Sarasvatichandra (who changed his name to Navinchandra after leaving home) through the help of ascetics meets Kumud, who by then has become a widow. After deep consideration, in spite of their profound love for each other, Kumud decides that they should not marry since a widow's remarriage is considered as social stigma and will come in the way of Sarasvatichandra's dream, that is, to dedicate himself to the upliftment of their society. She convinces him and her sister, Kusum, that they should marry each other, and she herself goes back to her in-law's house.

The novel, which clearly reflected contemporary discussions on the situation of women and other social problems,[24] aroused huge enthusiasm among the readers, including educated women (Chapter 3). The success of this novel established Tripathi's position as Gujarat's top writer. In view of the success of this novel, it is not surprising that the first presidentship of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad was bestowed on him in 1905 (Tripathi 1957: 39; Chandra 1992: 153).

Tripathi was perhaps inevitably involved in educational activities and took part in the editing of Gujarati school textbooks (Tripathi 1959b: 305). He understandably became one of the authors whose works were recognised

as 'classics' of Gujarati literature. *Sarasvatichandra* continued to be considered a major literary work in modern Gujarat. Gandhi, the father of the nation, read it while incarcerated and recommended others to do so too (Chapter 5).

In terms of language, the novel vividly demonstrates the author's ability to use three languages freely – Gujarati, English, and Sanskrit. The prefaces were written both in English and Gujarati in volumes 1 and 3 (with varying contents between the languages). Volume 2 has no preface and Volume 4 has only an English preface. Readers often come across quotations from Sanskrit and English literary works, which also use Devanagari and Roman scripts.

The main characters in the novel were expected to be familiar with multiple languages in addition to the readers. For instance, Kumud, the heroine, is highly educated and even reads Shakespeare (Tripathi 1992: 146; 2015: 189). On her table, there are books of English poets, Sanskrit poetry, and books on physics and the *Manusmriti* in Gujarati (Tripathi 1992: 210; 2015: 267). Kumud reads *Buddhiprakash* too (Tripathi 1992: 239; 2015: 302), indicating her association with the contemporary literary circle in Gujarat. She can express her feelings and thoughts by composing Gujarati verses as well as reciting appropriate verses from Sanskrit literature. By depicting the main characters referring to literary and philosophical works in English and Sanskrit, the author gives the impression that the wisdom and morality of these characters are based on their knowledge of these languages and their literature. In fact, one cannot help overlapping Kumud with the author's own daughter, Lilavati, who was highly educated, having learned Sanskrit and English with a private tutor. She also read a Gujarati daily entitled *Gujarati* and some other journals, following the instruction of her father (Suhrud 2017: xxxvi–xxxvii). Sadly, she died in 1902 at the age of 21, soon after the final volume of *Sarasvatichandra* was published.[25]

The high-caste Hindu intellectuals described above were not the only authors of their day. Aside from them, there were many lesser known contemporaries, including those who were more sensitive to the market and tried to produce novels, short stories, and dramas that would sell. The attitudes exhibited towards them in elite literary circles is also noteworthy. They again demonstrate how high-caste intellectuals tried to assert the superiority of 'their' language and literature.

Popular books versus 'useful' literature[26]

From the 1880s, many novels, short stories, and dramas began to be published in the region. The writers of these works, aware of the market, produced stories of romance and tragedy in historical and contemporary contexts, or depicted contemporary social problems. Some produced popular books by adapting English dramas and novels, Sanskrit literature, or

mythological and historical stories. Although further research is necessary to identify these authors, according to a compiler of the *Reports on Publications* in the Bombay Presidency in 1885, most contemporary vernacular works were written by people who had 'few pretensions to high education, and who were often low-paid vernacular school-masters and clerks taking to book-making only as a means to supplement their meagre earnings by producing small tracts or compilations of minor subjects' (*Reports on Publications 1885*: 20).[27]

Noting this development, the GVS explicitly distanced itself from such publications. In its annual general meeting in 1885, the Honorary Secretary of the GVS, Mahipatram Rupram, stated: 'As florid love dramas and story books of debasing nature were increasing in number in the Gujarati language, such a Society as this was very much needed to present to the country a wholesome useful literature' (*Report of the Gujarat Vernacular Society 1884*: 15). Given its emphasis on the promotion of 'useful literature', the GVS evidently found such publications of little value.

Among these Gujarati publications, dramas were actually performed in theatres before being published, often in several editions. Popular songs sung in plays were often published separately. Some of these books became extremely popular and were printed in several thousand copies and multiple editions (*Catalogues of Books* 1882–1892). A metropolitan theatrical culture developed in this region under the influence of Western education, first in Bombay itself, mainly from the 1860s, and then in other parts of the presidency. Parsis played a major part in developing this industry. Many theatres and theatrical companies were run by Parsis and a number of plays written by Parsi writers.[28] These dramatists often chose topics related to the contemporary urban life of Parsis, such as problems of marriage, troubles with money, the evils of city life, and Parsis' 'blind' imitation of Europeans (Jhaveri 1956: 241). Ardeshir Bairamji Patel's *Kanjusna Karamni Kahani* (A Story of the Fate of a Miser), a drama of a 60-year-old Parsi man, who is rich but a miser, trying to marry a 17-year-old educated girl, is one example. This drama, which was a great success on the stage, was first published in 1884 and again in the following year (*Catalogues of Books,* 30 September 1885). Other kinds of popular dramas were also performed in theatres and published in several editions; some were based on the *Puranas*, *Shah Nama,* or well-known historical stories; some were adaptations of English and Sanskrit dramas. It should be stressed here that, although Parsis played a major role in the production of these dramas, writers, actors, company managers, and others involved in this industry included non-Parsis. Equally, the audience, initially dominated by the British and the Parsi elite, soon expanded to include a wider range of the urban population.[29]

In view of the popularity of these dramas in Bombay and the impressive quantity of printed versions published, it is rather striking how little they were discussed in one of the most well-known books on Gujarati literature,

Gujarata and Its Literature (1935) by K.M. Munshi. Here he briefly mentioned these dramas as follows:

> The theatrical companies in Bombay, mainly controlled by the Parsis, staged plays full of gaudy and dazzling scenery with the help of actors who generally acted with vehement and unnatural emphasis. The traditions, however, of the Gujarati stage were different, the Morbi and Vankaner Nataka Samajas being the pioneers. Their plays followed the lines laid down by Ranchodbhai.
>
> (Munshi 1935: 304)

Munshi clearly tried to differentiate the plays staged by Parsi theatrical companies in Bombay from the 'traditions of the Gujarati stage'. The works of Ranchhodbhai Udayaram, a Brahman writer mentioned above, were on the contrary categorised as part of 'the traditions'. Yet, Munshi elsewhere also noted that some dramas by Ranchhodbhai were actually staged by Parsi theatrical companies in Bombay (248). It seems more likely that Parsi theatres were not necessarily isolated from the literary activities of high-caste intellectuals.

Along with the rise of popular dramas, the book catalogues of the 1880s show the rapid increase in novels and short stories produced outside elite literary circles and without state patronage. Again, most of these publications, often in the form of small books and pamphlets, are hardly mentioned in the general accounts of modern Gujarati literature, while *Karan Ghelo* and *Sarasvatichandra* are described in detail.

The themes of the popular novels and stories varied: short episodes of wife and husband, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, a foolish and difficult wife, a dutiful wife, a spoiled child, and a vicious stepmother; stories of love and friendship; tales of kings, queens, princes, and princesses; comedies; and religious and didactic tales (*Catalogues of Books* 1885–92). There were also a number of translations and adaptations of English novels. For instance, the melodramatic novels of G.W.M. Reynolds were especially successful.[30] Parsi writers and presses were unsurprisingly at the forefront of the creation of these popular works. In the words of K.M. Jhaveri, although the population of the Parsis was much smaller than that of the Hindus, the former wrote more books than the latter (Jhaveri 1956: 194).

One of the most prominent and prolific Parsi writers in this field was Kaikhosro N. Kabraji (1842–1904), who was educated at Elphinstone College and became a well-known journalist and social reformer in Bombay. Many of his novels were adaptations of English works to suit Parsi life, which were then often converted into dramas and attained a success on the stage (Jhaveri 1956: 241).[31] His works were sometimes published in several instalments, which suggests that they had regular readers (*Catalogues of Books* 1885–1891). These works, mostly written in 'standard' Gujarati, seem

to have been popular not only among Parsis but also among Hindu readers (Parekh 1978: 205).

Most of the works by Parsi writers were not, however, considered part of mainstream Gujarati literature in the dominant narratives. They were associated with Parsi Gujarati and considered commercial publications for entertainment. For instance, Ramanbhai Nilkanth, a Nagar Brahman intellectual mentioned before, noted a large number of translations and adaptations of English novels by Parsis, including Kaikhosro N. Kabraji and his brother, Bamanji N. Kabraji (1860–1925), in his lecture at the ceremony for the Diamond Jubilee of the GVS in 1909. While acknowledging their popularity among Parsi readers, he clearly expressed his low opinion of the language, style, and contents of these works (Nilkanth 1926: 261).

Parsi writings thus came to be marginalised within Gujarati literature by the early twentieth century. This is evident also from the comments of several Gujarati writers in the twentieth century. For instance, M.K. Gandhi stated in the preface he wrote for K.M. Munshi's *Gujarata and Its Literature*:

> It is unfortunate that there is Parsi-Gujarati. It is confined to novels and stories of the shilling shocker style. They are meant merely for passing the idle hour.
>
> (Gandhi 1935: vi)

In the case of Kaikhosro N. Kabraji, K.M. Jhaveri, in his well-known book on Gujarati literature, noted his attempts to 'lean towards pure or Hindu Gujarati' (Jhaveri 1956: 302). There is no mention of Kabraji in K.M. Munshi's *Gujarata and Its Literature*. In a volume in the series on the history of Gujarati literature published by the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1978, Kabraji is recognised as a writer capable of writing in 'respectable' Gujarati (Parekh 1978: 205). It is evident that he was not placed among the major authors of the period however popular his works were.

There were a few nineteenth-century Parsi writers whose works were praised among elite literary circles. Yet they were usually applauded primarily for their ability to write in 'Hindu Gujarati' in spite of their Parsi identity. For instance, when B.M. Malabari's collection of poems, *Niti Vinod* (Joy of Morality), was published in 1875, it received the following comment from one of the Gujarati papers: 'We are glad to see that, though a Parsi, the author has succeeded in writing such polished and harmonious lines in Gujarati' (Gidumal 1888: LI). Another Gujarati paper wrote:

> Looking to the composition and the language of the verses, one would irresistibly be led to believe that they were the production of a learned Hindu writer; he would hardly think a Parsi capable of such chaste and classical language. (LII)

These reviews indicate that Parsis were not usually afforded elevated positions within contemporary Gujarati literary assessments.

Undoubtedly, not all Parsi writers produced 'novels and stories of the shilling shocker style'. Nor were the producers and readers of commercial publications all Parsis. Yet this perception of Parsi writings was emphasised repeatedly by high-caste Hindu literati as they established their literary primacy with state patronage. Parsi identity was associated with 'corrupt' language and commercial publications, and works by many Parsi writers (with some exceptions) were excluded from 'mainstream' Gujarati literature.

Later narratives of modern Gujarati literature bore the impact of these attitudes. For instance, one of the volumes in *Gujarati Sahityano Itihas*, published by the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1978, had an 'appendix' entitled 'The stream of Parsi literature', which included an account of all the Parsi writers (Joshi, Raval, and Shukla 1978). In contrast, the titles of most of the chapters in the book (14 out of 19 chapters) were the individual names of Hindu writers.[32] In spite of the diversity among Parsi writings in terms of language, style, and contents, they continued to be placed in a single category under 'Parsi literature' and discussed separately.

The perception of the literary tradition[33]

Along with the rise of 'modern' Gujarati literature, this period also saw a burgeoning elite interest in the literary tradition of Gujarat. They collected and published old manuscripts and wrote essays on the 'old' literature of this region. This development was clearly influenced by the nineteenth-century British notion of 'national literature', which regarded literature as nothing less than the 'autobiography of the nation' (Palmer 1965: 39; Dalmia 1997: 271). According to Navalram, a nation which did not possess printed editions of its classical works could hardly claim to be called a nation in the cultural sense (Jhaveri 1934: 68). This opinion seems to have been widely shared among the intellectuals of this period.

Gujarat was historically known for its rich collection of Jain manuscripts in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, and old Gujarati. Such works were produced by Jain priests over many centuries and stored in *bhandars* (storehouses) in various places, including Cambay, Surat, Patan, Broach, Limbdi, and Ahmedabad (Mallison 2019: 3, 10). Then, among the regional literary traditions, there were kavya concerning themes related to Hindu gods, such as *bhajans* (hymns) and akhyans (narratives in verse). Vaishnava bhakti poems, especially those on Krishna, were extremely popular in Gujarat. They were originally sung in public but had already begun to be recorded in manuscripts by the early seventeenth century (4, 11). The languages used in them varied and included Sanskrit, Prakrit, Vraj, and Gujarati. Persian and Arabic literature also developed in Gujarat under the patronage of Muslim rulers and governors from the fifteenth century.[34] In addition, there were Islamic hymns such as *ginans* (hymns of the Ismaili community), written in

a language which drew upon various sources, including Gujarati, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, and others, for both vocabulary and grammar.[35] They were transmitted orally, but also had begun to be recorded in writing by the early eighteenth century at the latest (Asani 1991: 11). Lastly, there were various kinds of 'folk literature'. These were largely unrecorded and include the 'bardic tradition' and *bhavais* (folk dramas).

The study of old literary works was not entirely unprecedented, but it was in the late nineteenth century, with the emergence of the press and literary associations, that an organised attempt to articulate the literary tradition started. At first, it was mainly British officers and scholars who encouraged this initiative. For example, as previously mentioned, A.K. Forbes, a Scottish judge and the founder of the GVS, started collecting chronicles and traditions and copying inscriptions from various parts of Gujarat around the middle of the century with the help of Dalpatram Dahyabhai. In his voluminous work, *Ras Mala: Hindoo Annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India,* published in 1856, Forbes quoted extensively from Jain chronicles such as Hemachandra's *Divyashraya Mahakavya*[36] and Merutunga's *Prabandhachintamani*,[37] as well as from examples of the bardic tradition (Forbes 1856). Soon Gujarati intellectuals began to take an active interest in collecting and preserving 'classical' literature, through which they also attempted to define their region and regional community. For instance, Manilal Dvivedi inspected Jain manuscripts for a project supported by a Maharaja of Baroda. It was intended to preserve these materials as well as to translate and publish them (*Reports on Publications 1894*: 25; Jhaveri 1934: 70–1; Thaker 1983: 32). The President of the Jain Conference in 1906 cited several movements which had already begun among them, including the recovery and preservation of old and rare religious books (*Praja Bandhu*, 4 March 1906: 2).[38]

Several collections of medieval poems began to be published too. Examples include *Kavyadohan* (whose English title was *Selections from the Gujarati Poets*), edited by Dalpatram Dahyabhai at the request of the government and published in the 1860s (Dalpatram 1863; Derasari 1911: 117–9); 35 volumes of *Prachinkavyamala* (Old Gujarati Poetical Series) edited by Hargovinddas Dwarkadas Kantawala and Nathashankar Pujashankar Shastri, and published in the 1890s under the patronage of the Maharaja of Baroda (Kantawala and Shastri 1890; Jhaveri 1934: 68);[39] and eight volumes of *Brhat Kavyadohan* (Selections from the Gujarati Poets) by Ichchharam Suryaram Desai, which were published between 1886 and 1913 (Desai 1915; Jhaveri 1978: 92; Das 1991: 629). It is important to remember that the kavis whose works were selected in these series did not consider themselves as 'poets' or men and women of literature (Bhayani and Suhrud 1998: 189). What seems to have been important to people like Narasimha Mehta and Mira at the time of composing their works was bhakti, devotion to God. Yet once they became part of the narrative of the literary tradition of Gujarat, they were inserted into the long tradition of 'poets'.

Besides editing poetry collections, intellectuals also published works focusing on individual poets of the past. Narmadashankar Lalshankar, the famous Gujarati poet introduced in the previous section, gathered and published the works of Dayaram, while Hirachand Kanji, a contemporary of Narmadashankar, did the same with Akho (Jhaveri 1956: 78). Intellectuals of this period began to show a great interest in the 'poets' of the preceding periods. In a poem he penned on the lives of poets, Narmadashankar described Narasimha Mehta: 'Like Valmiki in Sanskrit, Chaucer in English, Narasinha Mehta is called the first poet (*adikavi*) in Gujarati' (Shukla-Bhatt 2015: 167). From Narmad's time, it appears that Narasimha began to be referred to as the adikavi. Hargovinddas Dwarkadas Kantawala, Ichchharam Suryaram Desai, and Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi each studied Premanand, Narasimha Mehta, and Dayaram, respectively. *Buddhiprakash* printed many articles on poets. These included a series entitled 'Gujarati Bhashana Kavioni Itihas' (The History of Poets in the Gujarati Language) in the 1860s.[40]

The literary tradition of Gujarat as presented by the leading nineteenth-century Gujarati scholars can be divided into two categories. The first contained the works of well-known Hindu poets as shown above. The second concerned Jain manuscripts written in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, and old Gujarati. The Gujarati literati's interest in the latter was in part due to the quantity that survived in Jain institutions. They were a crucial source for the discussion of the historical evolution of the Gujarati language and literature (Shastri 1887). The presence of the Jain community in literary circles, including the GVS, also contributed to the weight placed upon Jain literature in the narratives of the Gujarati tradition.

In contrast with these two genres, Persian literature patronised by Muslim courts and Islamic hymns were afforded little attention in the dominant narratives of the literary tradition of Gujarat. The neglect of Persian literature is rather striking, in view of the fact that both Muslim and Hindu elites were deeply associated with Persian language until the nineteenth century.[41] For instance, Diwan Ranchhodji Amarji, another Nagar Brahman of Junagadh, wrote on a history of Sorath and Halar in Persian, which contained a number of incidents and events that the writer had witnessed or in which he had taken part (Jhaveri 1934: 111). Even in the mid-nineteenth century, we can find examples of prominent Gujarati intellectuals who were acquainted with Persian along with Sanskrit and English.

Similarly, the high-caste elite of Gujarat in this period generally paid little attention to 'folk literature', such as the bardic tradition and folk dramas. There were some important exceptions in this area; Sorabji Hormaji published a collection of folk songs in 1857, while Framji Bamanji published three volumes on the folklore of Gujarat and Kathiawad in the 1870s (Gopalan 1976: 10–11). Dalpatram and Narmadashankar also wrote down folk songs and tales, and Mahipatram Rupram Nilkanth published a collection of bhavais (13–15). Nevertheless, it was only in the so-called Gandhi

Yug that folk literature began to attract significant attention from prominent intellectuals.

'A country of merchants and poets'

In 1892, Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi delivered a well-known lecture on Gujarati literature at the Wilson College Literary Society in Bombay. The title of this lecture was 'The Classical Poets of Gujarat and Their Influence on Society and Morals' (Tripathi 1958). It was later incorporated into his presidential address (this time read in Gujarati) at the first Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1905 (Jhaveri 1956: 372; Chandra 1992: 153). The contents of the lecture exemplify late-nineteenth-century conceptions of Gujarat's literary tradition and are thus worth looking at closely here.[42]

In the introductory part of his paper, the author describes the poets of Gujarat in the following words:

> Thus have the poets of Gujarat seldom sung about mountains and meadow-lands or about patriotism and war. They have neither seen nor praised any living kings and courtiers, for they have never been in touch with them. Industrious and peaceful, they were usually a home-keeping people with homely wits.
>
> (Tripathi 1958: 4)

These poets (they were introduced in this lecture as 'poets' rather than devotees of God) are described as the people who were detached from power, yet retained a significant mission in society.

> The mission which poets and philosophers feel within their hearts, is to take their countrymen a step forward—a step in the line of progress and not a leap from one age to another. (61)

> The poets have in fact wielded their power among the masses in this province and enriched them at a time when there were no other educationists in the land, and it is upon the basis of the society as saved or raised by them that modern educationists and writers have to construct their superstructure if they ever think of reaching the otherwise unwieldy masses. (62)

It seems that Tripathi found in the medieval poets a predecessor of the contemporary literati, who, having little access to real political power, tried to lead the indigenous population 'a step forward'. They believed it to be their mission.[43] Here the image of medieval poets was almost like that of late-nineteenth-century intellectuals like Tripathi himself, who attempted to spread the message of social reform through their writings in Gujarati.[44]

Significantly, Tripathi's lecture revealed a perception of Gujarat and its people that was widely shared by his peers. According to Tripathi, Gujarat

'always yielded a rich harvest of merchants'. These 'children of industry and enterprise' were, he said, 'soft and gentle at home' and charmed by the poetry of the Vaishnava religion (56). In Tripathi's words, Gujarat was 'a country of merchants and poets' (49).

Tripathi felt that these medieval poems, which addressed their own surroundings, did not belong to the 'refined world' (4). There was a widespread notion among the late-nineteenth-century literati that 'refined' literature had not developed in this region under Muslim and Maratha rules. Tripathi believed that the subject people under these rules sought refuge in religion from the oppression and anarchies, and as a result, the themes of poetry here were only confined to religion (3–4). Thus, his lecture began as follows:

> In a paper on the classical poets of Gujarat one cannot promise any such glowing picture as may be drawn by one dealing with poets of any of the great languages of the world. The poets of Gujarat have had, like their country, very hard times for themseves [*sic*], and their themes have had a circumscribed field. All that can be said of them is that within this narrow field they have done the work of poets. The wonder is not that they have done so little, but that they have done anything at all. (1)

The notion that Gujarati language and literature had never fully developed in the past was expressed by other writers too. Narasimharao Bholanath Divatia (1859–1937), a Nagar Brahman writer and a son of the famous social reformer, Bholanath Sarabhai, stated in a lecture that

> By the side of these two giants literatures, Western and Sanskrit, our Gujarati literature gets dwarfed perceptibly. For these reasons, we must humbly confess our backward state as yet; and yet, as already stated, we have no need to despair.
>
> (Divatia 1932: 37)

It should also be noted that Divatia expressed his low opinion of those Gujarati writings 'influenced by Persian literature'. According to him, these writings were 'limited and superficial' in nature and 'marked by pseudo-Sufism' which he found 'unnatural and unnational' (36). The idea of 'natural' Gujarati as a language devoid of Persian influence is evident here.

Although Tripathi was of the view that Gujarati literature had not fully developed, he still found plenty of Gujarati poets in history. In his estimation, the number of poets who were 'placed before the public through the printing press' was about 70. Among them, about 30 were Brahmans, while the rest included 9 Vaniyas, 6 Kanbis, 7 artisans, 9 sadhus, 4 Jain priests, 1 Maratha (whom he called 'a Maratha bastard'), and 6 'ladies' (Tripathi 1958: 5). The dominance of high castes is marked, and the fact that 'ladies' constitutes a separate category without being divided into caste groups is also suggestive. It should be noted that Tripathi asserted that the distinctions of caste and

gender vanished in the fields of poetry and religion (6). He seems to have found here his ideal world, free from the oppression of lower castes and women.

His detailed descriptions of popular poets in his lecture further demonstrates Tripathi's perception of language, literature, and Gujarati society. In the following, I focus on his accounts of six poets that are given prominence also in other accounts of medieval Gujarati literature: 'Mira', 'Narasinha Mehta', 'Akho', 'Premanand', 'Samal' (Samal Bhatt), and 'Dayaram' (these spellings are used in the published version of the lecture).

Mira, usually called Mirabai by adding the female suffix 'bai', lived in the sixteenth century.[45] According to the version of her life that is fairly popular in Gujarat, she was originally a Rajput princess of Merta in Rajasthan and moved to Merwar after marrying into the royal family (Shukla-Bhatt 2018: 80). Although historical details of Mira's life are not available, the stories told in Mira's bhajans say she rejected the religious practices of this family and spent her whole life praying and singing for Krishna. She eventually left the palace and after wandering, settled in Dwarka, the sacred land of Krishna in Kathiawad.

The Mira who emerges in this life story is rather rebellious, or unconventional to say the least. Tripathi, however, emphasised how 'pure and innocent and sweet and God-loving' she was (Tripathi 1958: 16). By doing so, he placed her within the familiar late-nineteenth-century discourse on women, where they symbolised purity and spirituality (Chatterjee 1993: 116–34). Or, in the words of Parita Mukta, the figure of Mira was placed within a 'subordinated feminized domestic sphere' (Mukta 1994: 28).

Mira's poems were available not only in Gujarati but also in what today's scholars would call Rajasthani, Vraj, Panjabi, and Eastern Hindi (Alston 1980: 28). Mira's songs, just like songs of other 'poet-saints', such as Kavir and Narasimha Mehta, had been on the move for centuries through regions that now fall in different linguistic states (Shukla-Bhatt 2018: 71). It should be stressed, to borrow the phrasing of Neelima Shukla-Bhatt, that the performative translations in relation to the lyrics of premodern poet-saints of India were not based on an 'understanding of the languages involved as having distinct boundaries' (88). However, the intellectuals in the colonial period began to look at the tradition of these songs in light of their understanding of language and region. K.M. Jhaveri, in his book on Gujarati literature published in 1914, explained that she must have acquired a knowledge of Gujarati after she came to Dwarka, though she was not 'a born Gujarati' (Jhaveri 1914: 34–5). In the second edition of this book, published in 1938, Jhaveri added a footnote here to suggest that in the time of Mira, the same language might have been used in Gujarat and the western part of Rajasthan (Jhaveri 1938: 40–1), a view expressed also by K.M. Munshi (Munshi 1935: 133–4). Here again we can see their attempts to associate language with territory, and place Mira within a linguistically homogeneous region. The claiming of Mira as a Gujarati poet thus reflects the elite's delineation of

linguistic boundaries in the colonial period. The intelligentsia appear to have tried to give a single linguistic identity to each historical figure.

Narasimha Mehta (Narasinha Mehta) is the next poet examined in detail by Tripathi. Although Tripathi described him as 'Mira's great contemporary', he seemingly lived before Mira in the fifteenth century. Born into a Nagar Brahman family in a village near Junagadh, Narasimha devoted his life to the worship of Krishna by composing and singing devotional songs and left many legends relating to Krishna. He was believed to have been indifferent to caste distinctions and to have sat and sung in front of Dheds, who were regarded as untouchables. When this act upset the members of his caste community, he declared that he loved Hari (Krishna) and *bhaktas* (here meaning worshippers of Krishna) above all (Jhaveri 1914: 38–9; Munshi 1935: 146; Tripathi 1958: 17–8). Tripathi considered this aspect of Narasimha Mehta in detail. It is not difficult to understand why he did so in view of the active debates on social reform during the late nineteenth century.

In Tripathi's opinion, it was due to the 'combined work of religious missionaries and of poets' (Tripathi 1958: 23) such as Mira and Narasimha that the devotional worship of Vishnu developed in Gujarat. This bhakti influence, in his mind, led the mercantile classes to be 'weaned from the bosom of rival faiths' and Brahmans to be 'persuaded to give up all but the name of the old Vedic religion in favour of this Bhakti' (23). In spite of the fact that many Brahmans were Shaivas (*Gazetteer* IX-I 1901: 531), they were described in this essay as having adopted the spirit of Vaishnava bhakti worship (Tripathi 1958: 17).

Interestingly, Tripathi had an extremely negative opinion of the Vallabhacharya sect, even though this sect also favoured devotion to Krishna. His view was undoubtedly affected by the debates on the sexual misconduct of its religious leaders, which resulted in the Maharaj Libel Case mentioned above. Tripathi happily stated that the Vallabhacharya missionaries were 'successfully' prevented from 'crawling like so many worms on the body social of Gujarat', thanks to the 'three great poets' of the seventeenth century, that is, Akho, Premanand, and Samal Bhatt (57). Noting the Maharaj Libel case, he added that the Maharajas in Gujarat had not had the courage to do the 'one thousand nasty things' they were charged with in Bombay, because here the voice of poets was still 'constantly ringing in the ears of their worshippers' (59). Thus, the Vallabhacharya sect was deprived of prominence in Tripathi's perception of Gujarati tradition, regardless of its popularity among the Vaniyas of the region. Rather it was regarded as an undesirable influence from outside.

Akho, Premanand, and Samal Bhatt dominate the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in common narratives concerning the Gujarati literary tradition. Tripathi placed great importance on these poets, who, in his opinion, wrote 'pure and genuine poetry without any substantial subservience to religion' (49). In providing a context for this emergence of 'pure' poetry, he

pointed to the establishment of peace in Gujarat under the Mughal empire, which conquered the region in the late sixteenth century.

In his description of the life of Akho, an Ahmedabadi goldsmith, Tripathi again disclosed his dislike of the Vallabhacharya sect and narrated how Akho criticised his Guru, the then head of this sect (26–7). After the story of this goldsmith poet, the writer then closely examined the works of Premanand, a Brahman in Baroda. Tripathi noted that by the 'latest concensus [*sic*] of local critics', he was the 'greatest poet of Gujarat' (30). Premanand, Tripathi argued, had objected to the 'vain pride and haughtiness' of the Sanskritists of his time and tried to challenge them by producing great works in Gujarati (31). Tripathi also tried to show how this poet supplied the people with adaptations of 'time-honoured and revered tales and fictions' into the language and life of Gujarat (32). This emphasis on the 'Gujaratiness' of his works was undoubtedly related to the desire of contemporary Gujarati intellectuals to locate their predecessors and the roots of their notion of regional identity. Premanand's works do contain the earliest use of the term, 'Gujarati language (*bhasha*)' (Chavda n.d.: 12; Jhaveri 1914: 95; Munshi 1935: 98; Jhaveri 1978: 1) and fitted easily into the long tradition of Gujarat that Tripathi and his peers were eager to present. Nanalal Dalpatram (1877–1946), the poet and the son of Dalpatram Dahyabhai, depicted Premanand in a similar manner, calling him the 'most Gujarati of Gujarati poets, modern or ancient' (Jhaveri 1914: 43).

Tripathi further sympathised with Premanand as he observed the poet's attempt to avoid 'pandering to the vulgarities of the masses or stooping to the sensualism of the Vaishnava poetry' (Tripathi 1958: 32). Contemporary intellectuals, who were influenced by Western notions of purity and morality, often strongly criticised the 'vulgarities' in existing popular songs and stories. For instance, when Mahipatram Rupram Nilkanth published a book of folk dramas, he wanted to present them in an 'improved' form, from which any 'vulgar' words had been removed (Derasari 1911: 110–11; Jhaveri 1956: 198–201).

The extent to which late-nineteenth-century scholars were conscious of Western literature in examining their own literary tradition can be gauged from Tripathi's summary of Premanand's verse, 'Ranayajya (Battle-Sacrifice)':

> One of his poems is entitled the Battle-Sacrifice, and its subject is the war against Ravana, the Paris of the Indian Illiad [*sic*]. This Paris has kept his Helen, Sita, … Always calling on Sita with what the great English poet would call "Tarquin's ravishing strides," … [H]e always returns to his post as did Lady Macbeth saying of King Duncan: "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it." … The wife [of Ravana] feels proud of a husband who pleads so well in excuse of a fatal policy, and sends him to war with her sweet blessings. So felt king Henry IV, in the hands of great Shakespeare, …
>
> (Tripathi 1958: 38–9)

It is obvious that even in recounting and evaluating the old poems, Tripathi could not help referring to Western literature. The poems were now deliberately presented in such a way as to prove their literary value by comparing them with well-known works in the West.

Tripathi attributed to Samal Bhatt (Shamal Bhatt), a Shrigaud Malvi Brahman from a suburb of Ahmedabad, again the image of a contemporary social reformer. In his view, Samal Bhatt had presented a picture of a 'new world of men and women who soared above the narrow-minded blasting social institutions of his countrymen'. Interestingly, Tripathi noted here that the patron of Samal Bhatt was a great landholder from the Kanbi community, to whom the religion and philosophy of the 'sacerdotal caste' would have been irrelevant. As a result, according to Tripathi, Samal was burdened by 'no such necessity of passing off poetry for religion', while his contemporary, Premanand, had to sing songs at least partially connected with religion to please his audience (39–40).

After the time of Samal, however, Tripathi believed that a reign of confusion began in Gujarat with the rule of Aurangzeb, which was followed by the rise of the 'depredatory hordes of the Marathas' (49–50). Having described the situation of Baroda before the Marathas' arrival, where Premanand had been 'bringing up a rare garden of literature', he states that 'this promising and hopeful garden was blasted at their [the Marathas'] approach' (3). Maratha rulers were here regarded essentially as outsiders causing great damage to the region, without being wholly able to wipe out the foundation of Gujarati tradition inherited from the preceding periods.

The state of confusion, Tripathi argued, put a stop to the growth of 'pure' poetry, on the one hand, and led to the growth of new religious sects on the other (51). One of them was Vallabhacharya, whose followers were described by Tripathi as 'religious and moral invaders'. In his opinion, it was simply due to the political anarchy and chaos of this period that people, especially the Vaniyas, accepted 'this new dispensation of madness' (52).

Among the poets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Dayaram (1767/1777–1852), a Sathodra Nagar Brahman from a village called Chanod (in the present Vadodara district), is the most famous. He left various types of works in Hindi, Vraj, and Gujarati, and many of them were related to the Vallabhacharya sect and its philosophy. In particular, his *garbis* (lyrics), whose main theme was the love between Radha and Krishna, are well known (Dwyer 2001). Tripathi, while admitting the 'poetical powers' of Dayaram, was critical of the 'lewdness' in his poems (Tripathi 1958: 53).[46] The author's judgement was probably affected by the life story of Dayaram, which contained many episodes regarding his relationships with women. It became increasingly common among the educated in colonial India to criticise literary works on the basis of 'lewdness'. It should also be added that Dayaram was a follower of Vallabha, which further degraded his position in the eyes of Tripathi.

The individual poets examined above were given certain positions by Tripathi in the chronological history of Gujarati literature. In other words, they were all considered to be part of the seamless literary tradition of Gujarat. The poets and their poems were selected and narrated according to the way in which Tripathi wished to depict this tradition and through it this region and the people who belonged to it.

The literary tradition of Gujarat was widely discussed among dominant literary circles, and certain ideas became deeply engrained in their conception of Gujarati language and literature. The narratives generated by these ideas spread through educational institutions and the print media. In the following chapters, it will become apparent how these ideas and perceptions could be referred to and reconstructed in the contexts of the nationalist movement and the period of reorganisation that followed.

Conclusion

The leading members of the literary circles in late-nineteenth-century Gujarat began to take an active interest in the reform and standardisation of the Gujarati language, which they projected as 'our' language in contrast with English. This process vividly reflected the influence of the ideas of language that they became familiar with through colonial education and Western literature. The form of the Gujarati language spoken by high-caste Hindus in and around Ahmedabad was chosen as the standard, while other forms of language, including the so-called Parsi Gujarati, were now delegated to the status of 'dialects' or 'corrupt' forms. Some sections of the literati also tried to recast the Gujarati language through Sanskritisation.

Along with the attempts to define the Gujarati language, endeavours were also made to develop 'new' literature in this language, again under the influence of Western literature. The same intellectuals in addition showed interest in articulating the literary tradition of the region. The positions of the Gujarati-speaking Muslims and Parsis were marginalised in these discussions on the Gujarati language and its literature.

Although the high-caste literati tried to spread the standard form of this language widely within 'Gujarat', its actual territory continued to be ambiguous. Unlike the case in some other regions in India, the idea of creating a separate linguistic province for themselves attracted little attention from the Gujarati elite prior to independence.

Notes

1. The earlier sections of this chapter are based on Isaka (2002a).
2. The Gujarati script was sometimes called Vaniya script (Parikh 1966: 218; Mehta 1991: 84). The Mahajani script mentioned above was also called Vaniya script, but these two should not be confused with each other.

3. This phenomenon was observed also in other parts in colonial India. For details, see Washbrook (1991).
4. *Arya Mitra*, 10 September 1871, in *RNP* (16 September 1871), p. 8.
5. *Rast Goftar*, 3 October 1869, in *RNP* (9 October 1869), p. 8.
6. This sense of backwardness in comparison with neighbouring regions was not unique to Gujarat. The elites in contemporary Orissa and Assam also put forward similar arguments. However, unlike these elites, who felt the serious encroaching influence of the language of their neighbour, Bengal, the Gujarati elite hardly expressed their fear of a serious threat from Marathi to the dominance of the Gujarati language in their own region.
7. His son, G.P. Taylor, also became famous for his publication of a Gujarati grammar for students (Taylor 1944).
8. *Rast Goftar*, 3 October 1869, in *RNP* (9 October 1869), p. 8.
9. C.A. Bayly describes languages as one of the aspects of 'bodily practices', which, he argues, showed growing uniformity across different human societies in the modern world, referring to the examples of books of grammars and rules, and the emergence of 'indigenous statesmen and educators who desired their own national languages' in different parts of the globe (Bayly 2004: 17–8).
10. Although a few other dictionaries were published before this, *Narmakosh* has come to be regarded as a 'point of departure' (Suhrud 2009: 40). It was the first dictionary in which meanings of Gujarati words were explained in Gujarati itself, while earlier dictionaries were compiled in both English and Gujarati.
11. On the notions of language and dialect, see, for instance, Edwards (2013).
12. Report of the Director of Public Instruction, ED, 1886, vol. 32, MSA.
13. On the debates over the Hindi language during the colonial period, see, for instance, King 1994; Rai 2001; Orsini 2002. See also Chapter 5.
14. The novel in fact begins with a story describing how the hero changed his name from Dolatshankar to Bhadrambhadra. Once he had a dream in which Lord Shiva appeared before him and scolded him for using the word of a foreign (*yavani*) language, 'dolat' (which means wealth in Arabic) along with the name 'Shankar' (another name for Shiva) in his name, Dolatshankar (Nilkanth 1994: 3). This made him give up his original name.
15. The English word 'tikit (ticket)' was commonly used in Gujarati throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods.
16. The first Gujarati Sahitya Parishad was held in 1905. For more details, see the later section of this chapter.
17. Application for pension or gratuity from Dalpatram Dahyabhai, ED, 1880, vol. 15, no. 310, MSA; Parekh II 1935: 252.
18. On the life of Narmadashankar, see, for example, Broker 1977; Suhrud 2009.
19. His ideas on social reform changed significantly in the late stage of his life.
20. In colonial India, prose first appeared in textbooks, then in the field of journalism, propaganda, and translation (from English prose). Following this, literary prose and discursive and analytical writing also started (Das 1991: 255).
21. Karan not only took for himself a wife of his minister but also killed the brother of this minister. To take his revenge, the minister went to see Alauddin Khilji and persuaded the Sultan to invade Gujarat. The Sultan's army defeated Karan, and captured and brought his queen, Kaularani, who asked the Sultan to bring her daughter, Devaldevi. The request was fulfilled and Devaldevi herself became the queen of Alauddin's son.
22. Karsandas Mulji had been publicly criticising the practice among the Maharajas of having sexual relationships with the wives and daughters of their devotees. The case attracted much attention from the urban elite at the time. For details, see *Report of the Maharaj Libel Case* 1862; Dobbin 1972; Shodhan 1997; Thakkar 1997.

23. On his life and works, see, for example, Joshi 1979; Suhrud 2017.
24. For an analysis of *Sarasvatichandra* from the perspective of contemporary discussions on women, see, for instance, Chandra 1987; Shukla 1987; Suhrud 2002: 193–211.
25. Tripathi expressed his deep sorrow and regret in his diary and also wrote her biography. For details, see Suhrud 2017: xxxv–xlv; Tripathi 1959b.
26. This section is based on Isaka (2009).
27. The examination of such publications provides us with interesting insight into the world of the 'less successful' within the colonial middle class, who were numerically much larger than the 'successful'. For details, see Sarkar 1997: 159–85; Ghosh 2006.
28. On Parsi theatres, see, for instance, Yajnik 1933; K. Hansen 2001, 2004; Gupt 2005; Nicholson 2015, 2020.
29. Among the theatrical companies run by Parsis in Bombay, some started producing Urdu dramas, with the aim of extending the audience. For more details, see the references in the above footnote.
30. G.W.M. Reynolds's novels seem to have been extremely popular in various regions in colonial India. For an analysis of the way in which Reynolds's works were read in India, see Joshi (2002: 74-92).
31. He also established the Natak Utejak Mandali (Society for the Amelioration of the Drama), which 'sought to distinguish itself from other "low" Parsi troupes through its repertoire and language' (Nicholson 2020: 204).
32. The exceptions are: Introduction, the chapter on Kant, who was converted from Hinduism into Christianity, and three chapters on 'others' ('Other poets in Narmad's period', 'Other writers in Narmad's period', and 'Other poets and writers').
33. The following four sections are based on Isaka (2002b).
34. On Persian and Arabic literature in Gujarat, see, for instance, Dar n.d.; Quraishi 1972.
35. The language used in these hymns is often difficult to place within any of the present linguistic categories. Shackle and Moir have analysed the linguistic sources from which the vocabulary of certain ginans derived (Shackle and Moir 1992: 42–3). On ginans, see also Asani 1991; Kassam and Mallison 2010; Mallison 2019.
36. *Divyashraya Mahakavya* is a Sanskrit work by Hemachandra (1089?–1173?), which describes the glories of the Solanki dynasty (Munshi 1935: 41–2; Jhaveri 1978: 11).
37. *Prabandhachintamani,* written in 1305 by Merutunga, is an important work in Apabhramsha literature. It records the life stories of Puranic, historical, and semi-historical figures on the basis of oral tradition (Chavda n.d.: 5).
38. On the attempts among the Jains to preserve old books, see also *Buddhiprakash,* October 1871: 219–22.
39. Before the publication of this series, Kantawala, with several others, published the quarterly journal, *Prachinkavya* (Derasari 1911: 121-2).
40. *Buddhiprakash*, December 1861: 266–73; January 1862: 22–4; February 1862: 27–9; April 1862: 76–8; May 1862: 100–3; July 1862: 150–2; September 1862: 208–9; November 1862: 251–3; January 1863: 8–9; February 1863: 30–3; March 1863: 60–1; April 1863: 92–3; May 1863: 102–3; November 1863: 242–4.
41. On the Hindu elite contribution to Persian literature in Gujarat, see Quraishi 1972: 237–9.
42. Several scholars analysed this essay from different perspectives. See, for instance, Chandra 2002: 216–39; Mallison 2019: 275–89.
43. The well-known Maharashtrian social reformer, M.G. Ranade (1842–1901) also depicted the poetic tradition of his region in a similar way in the 1890s.

He argued that many poets in the past expressed a 'continued protest against the old spirit' (Ranade 1902: 87).

44. On social reform movements of this period in Gujarat, see, for example, Chavda n.d.; N. Desai 1978; Raval 1987.
45. For both Mira and Narasimha Mehta, no definite evidence is available about when they lived. Furthermore, it is difficult to know whether poems attributed to these poets were really their compositions or not.
46. A similar view was also expressed in a newspaper, *Nyayadarshak*, in 1888, which stated that many 'obscene words' in Dayaram's poems were 'sure to excite lust among lustful persons'. *Nyayadarshak*, 16 April 1888, in *RNP* (21 April 1888), p. 10. *The Report on Publication* in 1899 also considered that Dayaram's talent was 'frequently prostituted in lewd and lascivious writings' (*Report on Publications* 1899: 4).

5 Nationalism and language

The rise of the nationalist movement significantly affected debates on language across India, including in Gujarat. To understand the critical change that occurred, this chapter closely examines the ideas of two famous figures from Gujarat, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) and Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (1887–1971), and their dialogue with other intellectuals in and outside Gujarat. Both men played leading roles in the nationalist movement, and their discussions considered not just the Gujarati language, but also language at a national level. They questioned the relationship between national and regional language and the relationship between language and territory. Their thoughts on these issues provide a vital insight into the linguistic situation of India and Gujarat in their times and the way in which language policies of the postcolonial state began to be formed.

The rise of nationalism in Gujarat

Gujarat before Gandhi, it is often argued, had been politically inactive under colonial rule. The Ahmedabad Association, a body that claimed to present to the government the 'wants of the people', was founded as early as 1872, yet it remained an 'inactive body' until much later (*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* 1879: 217). In 1884, it was succeeded by the Gujarat Sabha (later merged into the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee in 1921). However, this organisation in its initial stage reportedly did little except elect delegates for the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress (*Praja Bandhu*, 5 June 1898: 1; 11 December 1898: 1). This relative lethargy began to gradually lift, but it is the rise of Gandhi to political power in the late 1910s that is said to have brought drastic change.

The Gujarati elite had in fact begun to express feelings of dissatisfaction with the colonial government in the late nineteenth century. Although they had not yet mobilised any mass movement, their displeasure can be observed in other ways. Even some of the works of Dalpatram, who closely worked with A.K. Forbes, contain criticisms. In his poem, *Hunnarkhanni Chadhai* (Chapter 4), he clearly expressed his unhappiness with the contemporary condition of society by allegorically showing how its wealth had

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been taken away by the British. A few decades later, Ichchharam Suryaram Desai (1853–1912), in his well-known Gujarati novel, *Hind ane Britannia* (India and Britain, 1885), articulated similar feelings. Desai was an eminent journalist known as the editor of the leading Gujarati newspaper, *Gujarati*, which was started in 1880 (Jhaveri 1978: 92; Shah 1990: 28). This novel personified India, Britain, and Swatantra (Liberty) as goddesses, and described how Hind, who is lean and emaciated, laments Britannia's exploitation of her wealth. Britannia and Hind then exchange insults, in which Swatantra intervenes. Swatantra shows compassion towards Hind, and criticises Britannia for her deceit and arrogance. She points out, for instance, heavy taxes, numerous complicated laws and acts, and restrictions on the press. Nevertheless, she convinces Hind that the latter is not yet ready to rule herself and thus Britannia's rule should continue (Shah 1990: 32–4).

It seems that *Hind ane Britannia* attracted many readers; three editions were published in four years (29). It was reviewed in the papers and journals, both positively and negatively. *Jam-e-Jamshed* complained that the language of the novel was in many places 'disloyal, low and revolting' and claimed that the educated people would be 'glad as loyal citizens to see severe notice taken of it'.[1] By contrast, *Gujarat Mitra* thoroughly supported the author.[2]

Around the turn of the century, the Gujarati elite became more vocal in their complaints. When the annual session of the Indian National Congress took place in Ahmedabad in 1902, Ambalal Sakarlal Desai, the chairman of the Reception Committee, speaking on behalf of the 'peace-loving and trading population of Guzerat', did not try to conceal his annoyance at the imposition of an 'obnoxious excise duty' (*Report of the Eighteenth Indian National Congress, 1902*: 5–6). The Gujarati elite also became more attentive to political developments in other parts of India. The mass movements organised by Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Maharashtra were noted across the Bombay Presidency, including in Gujarat. The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal between 1905 and 1908 created a visible response in Gujarat, especially among the youth. In Nadiad, for instance, Indulal Yagnik, who was still a teenager, observed meetings at which 'orators spoke and musicians sang about freeing our holy motherland from the bonds of foreign rule' (Yagnik I 2011: 154). A shop for selling native goods was also founded to support the movement (155). Observing political activities in other parts of India, young intellectuals in Gujarat began to search for a new way of defining Gujarat, something more than just 'a country of merchants and poets', peace-loving, homely and religious, as illustrated by Govardhanram Tripathi. This development seems to have formed an important context for Gandhi's rise to power in this region.

About ten years later, Gandhi emerged onto Gujarat's political scene. The lawyer turned political leader returned to India from South Africa in 1915, having organised unique movements to assert the social and political rights of Indian communities there. Through these movements in South

Africa, he developed the idea and method of *satyagraha*, a unique form of resistance without using violence, and by the time he arrived in India, he was already well known. From 1917, Gandhi leapt into action at a local level in various locations around India, including in Gujarat. He soon exerted a great influence over a wide range of people there. The youth in Gujarat began to be involved in the nationalist movement under Gandhi's leadership and in this process developed a great interest in the conditions of the people in rural areas. In this regard, Kheda satyagraha in 1918 had a significant impact on them. This satyagraha also led to Gandhi's close association with the Patidars, a dominant caste group in this area who were known as Kanbis but called themselves Patidars from the early twentieth century (Hardiman 1981: 36–42). In Gandhi's words, the satyagraha 'compelled the educated public workers to establish contact with the actual life of the peasants' (Gandhi 2018: 678). In this period, the Patidars began to have a much stronger influence in this region than before due to their involvement in the Gandhian movement (Bhatt 1970; Hardiman 1981).

The elite in Gujarat came to embrace Gandhi himself and the nationalist movement under his leadership as significant symbols of their region and people. K.M. Munshi described this situation in *Gujarata and Its Literature* (1935). Gujarat was, in his words, 'no longer the land of commerce and industry only', for it was now 'the land of Mahatma Gandhi, as once it was of Sri Krshna' (Munshi 1935: 1).

Against the backdrop of the Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements, Gandhi's Gujarati identity attracted support from a wide range of the region's population. Before the rise of the Gandhian movement, Gujarat had never been a focus for all-India politics. Now, Gujaratis began to participate in political activities on an unprecedented scale for the honour of Gujarat as well as for Indian interests (Isaka 2006: 165). Through Gandhi and his satyagrahas, it became easier for the Gujarati elite to overlap their Gujarati identity with Indian nationalism. It is within this context that Gandhi presented his ideas on language and literature.

Gandhi's ideas on the issues of language

Gandhi indeed gave many thoughts to issues of language throughout his life and developed various unique ideas on them. As he often related his ideas on language to his personal experiences, let us start this section by looking at his educational background.

Gandhi, born into a Modh Vaniya family of Porbandar in 1869, attended school in Porbandar and Rajkot. Both cities were the capitals of the princely states of the same names, which now lie within the state of Gujarat. His father and grandfather were both administrators in princely states and even obtained the position of *diwans*. Later Gandhi joined Alfred High School in Rajkot, where he began being taught in English. Initially he found himself 'completely at sea' in English-medium classes, according to his

autobiography (Gandhi 2018: 73). He also struggled with Sanskrit lessons, recollecting that he was tempted to study Persian, an alternative option to Sanskrit, as it was rumoured among the students to be easier and have a lenient teacher. He gave up this idea, however, after his Sanskrit teacher called him and reminded him of his identity as a son of a Vaishnava father and of the need to learn the language 'of your own religion'. In his autobiography, written about 40 years later, he expressed his gratitude to this teacher and argued that every Hindu child should possess 'sound Samskrit learning' (73–4).

Having passed the matriculation examination in 1887, Gandhi joined Samaldas College in Bhavnagar. Again, he found himself lost, finding everything difficult (100). With the advice of an old family friend, Gandhi then decided to study in Britain to become a barrister. He stayed in London for nearly three years, at the end of which he was called to the bar. While studying in London, he was actively associated with various social activities and 'experiments', one of which was to read the *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit with his friends. Later, when he was in South Africa, the *Gita* became 'an infallible guide of conduct' for Gandhi. He even began to look at jurisprudence in the light of the teachings of the *Gita*.

Interestingly, for Gandhi, the *Gita* 'was not the Sanskrit text alone, but also its translations' (Majeed 2006: 306). In the words of Javed Majeed, Gandhi deepened the 'sense of translation as a mode' by likening his use of the *Gita*, which he describes as the 'dictionary of conduct for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials', to his use of an English dictionary. Majeed argues:

> [T]he comparison suggests that both the *Gita* and the English language are at one level 'foreign' to him; they are both not his 'mother tongues'. Neither is ready made nor unproblematically available and both have to be worked through translation. This translation is simultaneously interlingual and intralingual because a dictionary is used for intralingual purposes but when used by a non-'native' speaker intralingual translation of necessity becomes interlingual. (306–7)

In Gandhi's view, intralingual and interlingual translation could not be clearly differentiated, which also means that the 'unity and identity of a language and its decidable limits also cannot be rigorously determined' (307). Gandhi's understanding of the meaning of translation is reminiscent of the way in which songs of medieval bhakti poets such as Narasimha, Mira, and Kavir travelled through different linguistic regions (Chapter 4). The borders of language are seen as ambiguous and do not present barriers for communication among different social groups, as they can always be crossed through 'translation'. It seems that this idea was to be reflected in his ideas on the national language and regional languages. To use the language chosen as the common language of the nation/region does not necessarily mean

that people need to be able to use this language in the same manner and to the same extent. The common language, he envisaged, should function principally as a communication tool. Thus, its form and vocabulary must be simple, especially when trying to communicate with a wide range of 'people', so that the latter can understand the messages clearly through intralingual and interlingual translation.

With this understanding of language and translation, Gandhi appeared to believe that the existence of diverse linguistic communities in India could not become an obstacle preventing the unity of India. He held the conviction that a simple form of Hindi/Hindustani could be accepted as a common language by the people in India at large, including those whose 'mother tongues' were largely different from Hindi. He had begun to actively articulate this idea since his time in South Africa.

Gandhi tried various 'experiments' with language during his stay in South Africa from 1893. In spite of his own experience of education through the medium of English, Gandhi began to openly and repeatedly object to the use of English among Indians and stress the importance of the mother tongue. When he travelled from South Africa to London in 1909, he attended a meeting of Gujarati speakers which had been arranged to send their congratulations to the third session of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad due to be held in Rajkot (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [henceforth, *CWMG*] IX: 457, 594). The meeting was chaired by a famous Parsi politician, Muncherjee Bhownaggree, who had been a Member of Parliament in Britain from 1895 till 1906 (596). In this meeting, Gandhi moved the first resolution expressing their support for the Parishad and followed it with a speech. In this he first emphasised that they must cultivate pride in their own language before speaking of their country.[3] In his view, as the basis of his pride as an Indian, he must have pride in himself as a Gujarati (457–8). While admitting that he had once been under the sway of Macaulay's ideas on education in India, he claimed that he was now disillusioned with them and argued that the use of English by Gujaratis among themselves indicated their degraded state. Then he articulated his ideas on the Gujarati language as follows:

> No limits can be placed to the growth of a language that has been served by poets like Narasinh Mehta, Akha Bhagat, and Dayaram and which they have found it possible to develop, a language spoken by followers of three great religions of the world – Hinduism, Islam and Zoroastrianism. The same thought can sometimes be expressed in Gujarati in three different ways. He whom the Parsis call *Khuda*, Muslims *Allah-Tala*, Hindus *Ishvar*, is referred to in English by a single word, God. (459)

The names of the poets mentioned here remind us of the perception of the literary tradition of Gujarat that had been articulated by high-caste

intellectuals (Chapter 4). At the same time, we can note that he seems to regard the variety in words and expressions in the Gujarati language as a strength of this language rather than weakness.

Yet such ideas did not lead him to question the need for the standardisation of the Gujarati language in terms of pronunciation and spelling. He requested that the Parsis not 'murder' their mother tongue, Gujarati, arguing that Parsi writers behaved as though they were 'determined to spite the language in respect of pronunciation and spelling' (460). Thus, he made a suggestion to the Parshad at the end of this speech, asking that they appoint 'a standing committee of Hindus, Muslims and Parsis proficient in the language' and charge this committee with 'the duty of watching the trends in the Gujarati writings of all the three communities and of offering advice to the writers'. This message had two different meanings. He hoped that all these communities would be actively involved in the debates on the Gujarati language, and through it the language could incorporate words and expressions specific to these communities. The Gujarati language thus developed would be willingly accepted as the language for 'all'. At the same time, however, he expected that such a committee would play an important role in spreading the standard form of the language and controlling the range of words and expressions accepted into it. These ideas were to be repeated in his opinions on Hindustani, the language he tried to develop as the national language of India.

On his way back to South Africa from London in 1909, he wrote his famous *Hind Swaraj* (the original title was *Hind Swarajya*) in Gujarati (which he later translated into English by himself and published under the title of *Indian Home Rule* in 1910), partly as a response to the questions that had been posed to him (Parel 1997). In this book, he dedicated one chapter to the question of education, in which his ideas on language were also laid out. He argued that by receiving education in English, Indians had 'enslaved the nation' (Gandhi 2010: 85). He was of the opinion that every 'cultured Indian' should know, in addition to 'his own provincial language, if a Hindu, Sanskrit, if a Mahomedan, Arabic; if a Parsee, Persian; and all, Hindi' (86). It should be added that in Gujarati, the word he used here was not 'his own provincial language', but *'swabhasha* (one's own language)' (Gandhi 1995: 66). 'Hindi' here represents the same language that he later referred to as Hindustani. He specifically wrote that a 'universal language for India' should be 'Hindi with the option of writing it in Persian or Nagari characters'. Gandhi believed that religious education was necessary for all Indians, and this made him insist that each religious community should learn the language of their religion.

In the same chapter, Gandhi stressed that some people in each community should learn the languages associated with other communities: 'Some Hindus should know Arabic and Persian, Mahomedans and Parsees, Sanskrit; Several Northerners and Westerners should learn Tamil' (Gandhi 2010: 86). This attitude was reflected in his attempt in South Africa to

publish a newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, in English, Gujarati, Hindi, and also Tamil, though the Hindi and Tamil versions were eventually discontinued (Gandhi 1928: 220–1). Gandhi himself learnt Hindi while he was in South Africa. He also acquired some knowledge of Urdu and Tamil around this period. Even later, he made conscious efforts to study several Indian languages (Lelyveld 2002: 178–9).

Gandhi expressed his dislike of the Indian use of English not only in words but also in action. He stubbornly insisted that a famous leader of the Indian National Congress, Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915), speak Marathi in a public meeting when the latter visited South Africa in 1912. Gandhi later recollected this event and commented that 'rather than speak in perfect idiomatic English it was more desirable to speak as far as may be in the mother tongue and even in broken ungrammatical Hindi' (Gandhi 1928: 405). Evidently, by this point his perception of language had already sharply departed from that of many English-educated intellectuals in India at the time. However, Gandhi never completely denied the benefits of learning English, urging those who were already educated in it to make good use of their knowledge.

Gandhi's criticism of English education and the use of English among Indians became still more intense after he returned to India in 1915. A reception organised by Gujaratis soon after his arrival in Bombay provided him with an opportunity to present his ideas on language.[4] He found most of his co-speakers, including Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), who would later become the 'Father of the Nation' of Pakistan but was then an active member of the Indian National Congress, making speeches in English. When his turn came, Gandhi expressed his gratitude in Gujarati, highlighting his 'partiality for Gujarati and Hindustani' and entering his 'humble protest against the use of English in a Gujarati gathering' (Gandhi 2018: 578). Along with his peasant clothes, which were surely an unexpected sight for the audience (Tarlo 1996: 69–70), Gandhi's choice of Gujarati left a strong impression on them. Indulal Yagnik attended this function and liked Gandhi's 'experiment'. Yagnik later recalled this event in his autobiography:

> He [Gandhi] laid stress on speaking Gujarati and Hindustani in India to awaken the common people. Munshi [K.M. Munshi] who was fond of English was somewhat taken aback but I very much liked this experiment of speaking in Gujarati. … His simple dress and habit of eating green and dry fruits incensed a few so-called modern people, but I felt that his lifestyle was most appropriate for making contact with the people.
>
> (Yagnik I 2011: 208)

K.M. Munshi, mentioned by Yagnik, was another graduate of Bombay University. His ideas will be closely examined later in this chapter. Having passed his LL.B. examination in 1910, Munshi had begun to work as an

advocate. For English-educated elites such as him, the language was seen as one of modernity and a crucial medium of communication among the elites in India. Against this backdrop, Gandhi began to assert the linguistic beliefs that he had developed during his time in Gujarat, the UK, and South Africa. His own usage of three languages, Gujarati, Hindi/Hindustani, and English, for his writings and speeches itself illustrates his unique experiments with languages.

Gandhi's criticism was directed not only at the use of English but also at the use of English words in Gujarati. Mahadev Desai (1892–1942), who too was a B.A. and LL.B. of Bombay University and later became known as Gandhi's secretary, went to see Gandhi in 1916 with Narahari Parikh (1891–1957), another young Gujarati graduate who also later joined Gandhi's political and social activities. The three of them had a long discussion on Gujarati language and literature (Parikh 1953: 47). During the discussion, Desai used a number of English words and sentences in his Gujarati. According to the recollection of Parikh, Gandhi laughed and said to Desai: 'If you talk such a language to your mother, she will surely give you credit for your vast learning, but the poor lady will not understand a word of what you say' (47–8). Parikh claimed that they became admirers of Gandhi due to his insistence that they should respect their own language/s.

Although Gandhi was not the first leader in colonial India to problematise English education, his criticism was certainly far more insistent. For instance, he made Jinnah speak Gujarati at the First Gujarati Political Conference in 1917, which Sarojini Naidu allegedly called a 'miraculous triumph for Gandhiji' (Desai 1995: 69). In fact, Naidu herself had also been forced by Gandhi to speak in Hindi instead of English several months before when she gave a talk in Ahmedabad in front of an English-educated audience (Mehta 2005: 295). Gandhi's repeated emphasis on the importance of the mother tongue had a significant impact, especially on the literati in Gujarat, which he described as his 'birthplace'. It is true that this did not necessarily stop them from sending their children to English-medium colleges. Yet, as the nationalist movement gained momentum under Gandhi's leadership, the elite became increasingly conscious of his criticism of the dependence on English and the importance of using 'their' language.

Gandhi consciously associated himself with Gujarat and Gujarati speakers, and tried to establish close relationships with individuals and organisations in this region. He chose Ahmedabad for the site of his ashram after he came back from South Africa in 1915, for the following reason:

> As Gujarati is my mother tongue and as I know the Gujaratis more intimately, I could serve India best through Gujarat and the Gujarati language. It was this consideration that was at the back of the choice of Gujarat as my place of abode on my return from South Africa.[5]
>
> (*CWMG* LXXII: 310)

Besides founding his ashram in Ahmedabad, Gandhi made an effort to develop contacts with Gujarati literati. For example, in 1916, he sent a letter and money to the Gujarat Vernacular Society and applied for membership (*CWMG* XIII: 267). The Society, having received money from such an eminent figure, whose political activities in South Africa were well known, hurriedly returned the money and nominated him an honorary life member. Gandhi also tried to get articles from Gujarati intellectuals for his Gujarati paper, *Navajivan* (New Life) (Desai 1995: 277).[6] His political fame helped him to gain the attention and support of the region's intellectuals. He soon began to be invited to various functions they organised, such as the Gujarat Educational Conference and the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, where he presented his ideas on language.

In his long presidential speech at the Second Gujarat Educational Conference in Broach in 1917, Gandhi again clearly articulated his opinions on language (*CWMG* XIV: 8–36). In this speech, he emphasised that the medium of instruction in Gujarat should be Gujarati only, and once again criticised English education severely. He remarked that it made Indians weak and 'mere imitators' (14). Here he referred to the example of Japan, arguing that the Japanese had 'brought about the awakening of their people through the use of the mother tongue' and that everything they did bore 'the stamp of originality' (15). He was also concerned that English-medium education had created a 'gulf between the educated classes and the masses' (16). Gandhi, however, did admit that some people had to learn English in order to put the fruits of their learning before the people or use them in their contacts with the authorities. Also, he expected that some people would use their knowledge of English for economic gain (19). However, even for them, he insisted, the medium of instruction should be their mother tongue, not English.

In the above speech, Gandhi also took up the issue of the national language.[7] He had already made it clear that his choice for the position was Hindi in *Hind Swaraj*, mainly because he believed that Hindi was spoken by a large number of Indians and that it was a language which every Indian could easily learn. He enumerated five requirements of a national language:

1 It should be easy to learn for Government officials.
2 It should be capable of serving as a medium of religious, economic, and political intercourse throughout India.
3 It should be the speech of large numbers of Indians.
4 It should be easy for every Indian to learn.
5 In choosing such a language, considerations of temporary or passing circumstances should not count. (23)

Gandhi carefully defined Hindi as the language spoken by both Hindus and Muslims in North India and written either in Devanagari or Urdu (Persian) script (from the 1920s, he increasingly used the word 'Hindustani'

to refer to this language in order to differentiate between it and Sanskritised Hindi). In his view, though educated Hindus and Muslims attempted to create a gap between Hindi and Urdu by incorporating many items of Sanskrit and Persian, those Sanskritised and Persianised languages were 'foreign' to the masses (24). Gandhi was of the opinion that the only difference between Hindi and Urdu was the script in which each was written.

While suggesting that both Devanagari and Urdu scripts should be accepted for Hindi, Gandhi predicted that in future, when mutual trust was established between Hindus and Muslims, Devanagari script, which was 'more popular', would become the 'national script' (*CWMG* XIV: 25). Elsewhere, he even intimated that all Indian languages, including Dravidian languages, should be written in Devanagari script (*CWMG* XXIII: 120–1; XXXIV: 168–9; LXIII: 224; LXV: 35; LXX: 46–7). In his opinion, this would facilitate 'inter-provincial intercourse' and make the learning of various regional languages much easier (*CWMG* LXX: 46–7). He also emphasised that it was only 7 or 10 per cent of literates who associated with a particular form of script (*CWMG* LXV: 35). For the millions who were illiterate, he argued, it would not matter which script was chosen for their language. He once even stated: 'It would be suicidal to impose on the mass difficult scripts for no other reason than a false sentiment and laziness to think' (*CWMG* LXIII: 224). Evidently, Gandhi's thoughts on the national language were based on practical considerations. He found it necessary to have a national language that a wide range of people could use easily for communicating with each other.

The proposal to use Devanagari script for all vernaculars was further justified by his claim that all Indian languages, including Dravidian languages, were 'daughters of Sanskrit by birth or adoption' (*CWMG* LXX: 46). Gandhi believed that even Dravidian languages had 'sprung' from Sanskrit as they were 'replete with Sanskrit words' (*CWMG* LX: 453). His repeated emphasis on the importance of Sanskrit and his plan to make Devanagari a common script of India in fact seem rather contradictory to his advocacy of two scripts for Hindustani (Ramaswamy 1999: 348). Gandhi himself admitted that he was inconsistent and explained that he had accepted both scripts in view of contemporary 'Hindu-Muslim friction' (*CWMG* LXIII: 224). According to him, 'happily' there was no such friction among provinces, and thus he could still advocate the use of Devanagari for all other Indian languages.

Gandhi was aware that his idea of 'one script for all the Indian languages' was hardly popular even in his homeland. Although he once said that he would find little virtue in a Gujarati clinging to the Gujarati script (*CWMG* XXVIII: 120), in reality he rejected a reader's suggestion that he use Devanagari script for his *Navajivan*. He told the reader that such a decision might affect the circulation of the paper (*CWMG* XXXIV: 61). It is evident that practical considerations often prevailed in Gandhi's views on the question of script, which is also the case in his attitude to other issues

of language. For instance, in spite of his criticism of the use of English, he continued to publish his papers in Gujarati, English, and Hindi. This was because he was fully aware that English would allow his messages to reach audiences in non-Hindi areas, especially those in South India, the British, and those outside India.

Gandhi continued his attempts to spread Hindi/Hindustani throughout his life (Lelyveld 2002; Orsini 2002: 361–2). At the same time, however, he emphasised that regional languages should continue to be used (*CWMG* XXXIV: 169; LX: 454). In fact, through his own use of Hindi/Hindustani in his public and private activities, Gandhi presented a good example of the way in which one can use the mother tongue and the common language of the nation side by side.

Despite his ardent desire for national unity, Gandhi sympathised with the demand for a separate state among the Telugu elite and supported the idea of linguistic provinces as early as 1917 (*CWMG* XIV: 22). In 1920, under his leadership, the new constitution of the Indian National Congress divided India into linguistic provinces for the purpose of forming the Provincial Congress Committees (*Report of the Thirty-five Session of the Indian National Congress, 1920*: 109–10). Gandhi, however, had in mind essentially those languages which he considered 'developed' when he imagined such provinces formed on the basis of languages. In the 1920s, when he was asked in Cuttack which language should be used as the medium of instruction for the children of a tribal community, he expressed frankly his opinion that 'undeveloped and unwritten dialects' should be 'sacrificed' and merged into Hindustani (*CWMG* XXVIII: 121). Although he stressed the importance of a mother tongue for all, this mother tongue could be recast according to practical circumstances. His interest in the standardisation of languages might also have been related to his wish to develop common languages that could be shared among a wide range of people across different social classes and communities as a tool for communication and dialogue at both regional and national levels. His ideas of language were in this sense different from those of leading high-caste literati in the late nineteenth century, for whom vernacular languages became the tool through which they could define and project who they were and exert their cultural dominance over other sections in society.

By the 1920s, Gandhi's advocacy of Hindustani was already attaining visible results. The Congress passed a resolution in 1925 that the proceedings of the Congress Committee, All-India Congress Committee, and Working Committee should 'ordinarily be conducted in Hindustani', while the proceedings of the Provincial Congress Committee should be conducted in the language of the province (Mitra 1990: 341). The claim that Hindi/Hindustani should be the national language of India gradually acquired support among the Indian elite in different regions, including in the south to some extent. Meanwhile, however, the Hindi-Urdu conflict intensified in certain parts of North India.[8] The advocates of Sanskritised Hindi increased their influence within the Hindi public sphere, particularly from the late 1930s. This

was indicated by the changing atmosphere of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Hindi Literary Conference), a major literary association of the Hindi-speaking elite in the north (Rai 2001: 109; Orsini 2002: 358–65). Facing this situation, Gandhi decided to resign from the Sammelan in 1945 (*CWMG* LXXXII: 9). This was regardless of the fact he had even presided over its meetings in the past (in 1918 and 1935) and expected this organisation to play a leading role in developing and spreading Hindi/Hindustani (*CWMG* XIV: 292–7; LX: 443–55).

In Gujarat, Gandhi's experiment with language initiated some discernible changes. For instance, Gujarati, instead of English, began to be used in public meetings (Haynes 1992: 222). New educational institutions were founded on the basis of Gandhi's ideas of language and education.[9] Of them the most famous was the Gujarat Vidyapith, which was founded in Ahmedabad as a 'national university' in 1920. The medium of instruction in this institution was Gujarati, and Hindi/Hindustani was taught as a compulsory subject (*CWMG* XXXVI: 7). Its students, however, began to dwindle in number from the early 1920s (*CWMG* XXV: 581). A wide range of the elite in the region were obviously conscious of the importance of a mother tongue as an identity marker and of the need to develop and spread Hindi/Hindustani as the national language of India. Yet this did not necessarily lead them to give up their long association with established institutions for higher education through the medium of English. As the language of the ruling British, English continued to be understood by a significant portion of the elite as a useful and essential tool for increasing their knowledge, obtaining better jobs, and securing their position in elite circles.

Gandhi on Gujarati language and literature[10]

Gandhi often declared his insufficient knowledge of Gujarati language and literature, which he attributed to the fact that he received higher education through the medium of English (*CWMG* IX: 458; LXVII: 160–1). Yet he insisted on writing in Gujarati and also advised others to follow his example. As Tridip Suhrud points out, Gandhi was a 'bilingual thinker' in a real sense (Suhrud 2012: 19). He wrote his most important works in Gujarati and then supervised their translation into English by others (2). He translated his *Hind Swaraj* from Gujarati to English, and works by Tolstoy, Plato, and Ruskin from English into Gujarati. While thus going back and forth between Gujarati and English texts, or Gujarati, Hindi, and English texts (sometimes even Sanskrit texts were added to these), it seems that he obtained opportunities to re-examine his ideas and concepts in different languages, enabling him to obtain a variety of perspectives.

Gandhi's insistence on writing in Gujarati, in spite of his educational background, conveyed a strong message to a broad spectrum of the population. Gandhi also promoted the inherent richness of the Gujarati language and the need to develop it. For example, he quoted in his speech at the

Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1936 sentences from a famous Gujarati grammar written by Joseph Van S. Taylor, *Gujarati Bhashanum Vyakran* (1867) to show that this language was praised even by a Western scholar:

> When I went to South Africa, I took some Gujarati books with me. Taylor's Gujarati Grammar was one of them. I liked it very much. … I remember the epilogue to that grammar. Taylor asks in it, "Who said that Gujarati was inadequate? " "Gujarati, the accomplished daughter of Sanskrit, how could it be inadequate? " And he concluded: " As the speaker, so the language. " It is not its inherent poverty that Gujarati reflects but the poverty of the people speaking it.[11]
>
> (*CWMG* LXIII: 419)

Taylor's grammar was thus used by Gandhi to confirm the value of Gujarati as well as its status as a 'daughter of Sanskrit'.

Gandhi tried to prove the inherent richness of the Gujarati language by referring to the legendary 'poets' in medieval Gujarat, such as Narasimha Mehta, Akho, and Dayaram, as well as well-known poets and writers in modern Gujarat such as Nandshankar Tuljashankar, Navalram Lakshmiram Pandya, Narmadashankar Lalshankar, Manilal Dvivedi, and Behramji Meharwanji Malabari (*CWMG* IX: 459; XIV: 21). He also mentioned Rajchandra, a Jain thinker and jeweller for whom he had a great respect. It is well known that Gandhi found in Narasimha Mehta's songs a source of moral guidance, singing them for the daily prayer at the ashram, and referring to them in speeches and writings. One of Narasimha's song's, *Vaishnavajana to* (Call only that one a true Vaishnava) remained Gandhi's favourite (Shukla-Bhatt 2015: 91, 188). He also adopted the term *Harijan* for 'untouchables' from another of Narasimha's songs (195). Among the poets of the past, besides Narasimha Mehta, Akho, and Dayaram, Gandhi also referred to the works of Mira and Samal Bhatt. Mira, as a woman poet, was made into a symbol of satyagraha in Gandhi's discourse (Mukta 1994: 184).

Of the modern literary figures listed by Gandhi, mentioned above, all except Malabari were Nagar Brahmans, a community which held a dominant position in the field of Gujarati literature. While Malabari was a Parsi, in Gandhi's view, his works showed how a Parsi could also write 'pure (*shuddh*) Gujarati' (*CWMG*, XIX: 507; *GA* 19: 450). Gandhi's perception of Parsi Gujarati indicates how his ideas were influenced by the high-caste literati of his time and the previous period.

The following quote from his letter dated 8th April 1932 to Kusum Desai gives us some ideas about his perception of the preceding period's Gujarati literature.

> I had liked the first part of *Saraswatichandra* very much, but you ought to read all the four parts. You should also read the four parts of *Kavyadohan*. Besides, you should read *Karanghelo* and *Vanaraj Chavdo*,

> as also some writings of Narmadashankar and Manilal Nathubhai. If you read these works, you will have a complete understanding of the nature of the Gujarati language.[12]
>
> (*CWMG* XLIX: 280)

Although Gandhi praised the innate richness of Gujarati, he was at the same time critical of the contemporary condition of the language. He often took up the problem of 'the anarchy prevailing in Gujarati spelling', which he considered 'unparalleled in any other language' (*CWMG* LXXI: 176; *GA* 71: 187). He even described this situation as 'barbarous' and took action to address it.

In the early 1920s, Gandhi sent a letter from prison to Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar (1885–1981), who had been involved in Gandhi's educational activities, and ordered him to make a 'really good Gujarati dictionary' which contained 'all the words in the Gujarati language, spelt correctly according to definite rules' (Kalelkar 1960: 136). 'It must be unimpeachable', Gandhi wrote to him, 'so that anyone who is in doubt as to how to spell a certain word can look it up in your dictionary and go ahead with a free mind. That is what we do with English, do we not?' (136–7). Kalelkar hesitated to accept this assignment at first as his own mother tongue was not Gujarati but Marathi, but Gandhi insisted that it should be Kalelkar's work. Therefore, he, along with Mahadev Desai, Narahari Parikh, and others, began to work on this project, and as a result *Jodni Kosh*, a spelling dictionary, was published by the Gujarat Vidyapith in 1929 (*CWMG* XXXV: 204; Kalelkar 1960: 137; Sebastian 2009: 98; Upadhyaya 2010: 27). In 1931, the second edition was printed with the meanings of each word included (*Sarth Gujarati Jodnikosh* 2003: 22). Importantly, it seems that the spellings chosen for the dictionary were not 'pulled towards etymology and heavy Sanskritisation' and precedence was given to the forms that were commonly used at the time (Pandit 1969: 115; Upadhyaya 2010: 27).

Gandhi, commenting on the dictionary's publication in *Navajivan*, stated that a language which had no fixed spelling for its words was like a 'man without a nose' (*CWMG* XL: 213: *GA* 40: 204). He then recommended that people whose knowledge of Gujarati was as incomplete as his should use this dictionary when they wrote to others. Elsewhere he suggested that educational institutions in Gujarat should disseminate the spellings adopted in it (*CWMG* XL: 335). Even in his private letters, he kept advising people to refer to this dictionary (*CWMG* XL: 345; XLV: 9). His efforts did obtain some results. In 1936, the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad decided that the spellings in this dictionary should be considered as the standard forms (Modi 1991: 95). Four years later, the Bombay government also pronounced that all primary and secondary schools had to follow these spellings.

Along with the problem of spelling, Gandhi's attention was drawn to the existence of allegedly 'corrupt' forms of Gujarati. For instance, he was

openly critical of so-called Parsi Gujarati. While commenting on a letter he received from a 'Parsi gentleman' in 1921, Gandhi noted that the Gujarati used in this letter would not be comprehensible for many Gujaratis. He argued:

> Every reader of a Parsi newspaper knows that many of the Parsi newspapers simply murder the Gujarati language. If they wish to write ordinary Gujarati, it is not as if they will not be able to do so. … Some Parsi writer may ask why the Gujarat that the Parsis write should not be accepted as genuine Gujarati. It is easy to meet this argument. That Gujarati which is spoken and written by hundreds of thousands of educated people who have their home in Gujarat is true Gujarati. Having been derived from Sanskrit and being its daughter, Gujarati must necessarily lean on Sanskrit—no one can question that.
>
> (*CWMG* XIX: 507)

Here again Gandhi underlined the importance of Sanskrit for its 'daughter' language, Gujarati. There are unmistakable traces of the late-nineteenth-century debates on language among the high-caste Hindu literati in these comments. Elsewhere, Gandhi mentioned that it was 'unfortunate' that 'Parsi-Gujarati' and 'Muslim-Gujarati' existed. Both, he wrote, were 'not wells of Gujarati undefiled' (Gandhi 1935: vi).[13] It is likely that he wrote these words in specific kinds of works in mind rather than criticising the languages used by Parsi and Muslim communities as a whole. Even then it is evident that he expected people living in Gujarat to share the same form of the Gujarati language.

Around the same period, again in *Navajivan*, Gandhi noted a request he received from Muslims who seemingly belonged to the working class. They asked Gandhi not to use difficult words in the paper. Gandhi however suggested that they should follow 'cultivated language (*sabhya bhasha*)' (*CWMG* XIX: 155; *GA* 19: 138). He also imagined that, although an effort was made to keep the language of *Navajivan* 'as simple as possible', they could not avoid using certain words that Muslim readers might find difficult to follow (*CWMG* XIX: 156). He also described the existence of three different communities in Gujarat as follows:

> Our language, Gujarati, is used by three classes of people: Hindus, Muslims and Parsis. Each class has developed its own dialect and, besides, the three communities keep so much aloof from one another that none of them acquires acquaintance with the language of the other two. … When the feeling of oneness is born among us, when especially we come to have all our education in schools through Gujarati and Gujarati comes to be respected by Gujaratis, all of us will learn to write one and the same language.
>
> (*CWMG* XIX: 155)

Here again Gandhi's aim was to develop a common form of language to be shared by a wide range of people so that they could communicate with each other easily. He urged the sharing of a common, standardised language with the active cooperation of different communities, not as a forced imposition. Yet, as discussed above, his attempt to involve non-Hindu communities sometimes exposed the importance he attached to Sanskrit and reflected in part the ideas of language and literature propounded by high-caste intellectuals in the late nineteenth century.

Gandhi was aware of the relationship between class and language too. He took up this issue in his speeches at the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1920 and 1936 (*CWMG* XVII: 301–3; *CWMG* LXIII: 407–17). Remembering that he had heard 'obscene words' from the mouths of peasants when he was in a village, he urged people in the Parishad to 'help remove the filthy language from the mouths of our peasants' (*CWMG* XVII: 303). To achieve this goal, Gandhi believed that the intellectuals should study the condition of the people and develop literature for them (*CWMG* LXIII: 413–17). Writing a foreword for Munshi's *Gujarata and Its Literature*, Gandhi regretted that 'we know next to nothing' in respect of the 'language of the people' (Gandhi 1935: v). He gave the author the following advice: 'If he [Munshi] has health, he will now go direct to the people, and find out what they are thinking, and he will give expression to their thoughts' (vi). Gandhi himself used simple words in his Gujarati writings, which was described by Munshi as being 'direct, clear and easily comprehensible, the result of precise thinking and an incessant effort to avoid the devious by-paths of rhetoric and sophistry' (Munshi 1935: 312).

Interestingly, one of the representative writers in 'Gandhi Yug', Jhaverchand Kalidas Meghani (1896–1947), expressed opinions on the issues of language that diverged from Gandhi's in significant ways. Although there were other well-known literati in Gujarat of this period, including Dhoomaketu (1892–1965), Sundaram (1908–91), Umashankar Joshi (1911–88), and Pannalal Patel (1912–89), whose works show the great influence of Gandhi's ideas on politics, society, and literature, Meghani's works were unique due to his deep knowledge of the folk literature of Kathiawad (Jhaveri 1978: 174–8; Das 1995: 286–7). Meghani was born at Chotila in Saurashtra. Having graduated from the Samaldas College in Bhavnagar, he worked as a high school teacher and an aluminium factory manager in Calcutta before becoming a journalist based in Saurashtra (Jhaveri 1978: 174; Shah 2018: 262). He also wrote poems, novels, short stories, plays, and essays, and collected and documented 'repositories of oral culture through folk stories, songs, ballads and various other forms of popular memory in Kathiawad' (Jhaveri 1978: 174; Shah 2018: 262–4). His works often attracted the attention of readers from different social strata both in cities and in villages, whose letters gave him great encouragement (Meghani 2002: v). Gandhi appreciated his works and bestowed the title *rashtriya shayar* (national poet) upon him (Shah 2018: 262).

Meghani's close association with Kathiawad and its people led him to question the notion of 'pure' Gujarati and the primacy given to its standard form. He felt that standard Gujarati should instead be called 'Gujarati of central Gujarat', arguing

> What is pure Gujarati? 'Gujarati proper', or standard Gujarati? Shouldn't one specify that 'Gujarati Proper' is the Gujarati of central Gujarat? Or are we to understand that the language that central Gujarat speaks is 'pure Gujarati'? … To say that a particular region speaks 'pure Gujarati' or chaste Gujarati is an empty boast and shows ignorance about the way languages are shaped.
>
> (translation by Shah 2018: 265)

He thus, in the words of Krupa Shah, asserted the 'legitimacy of languages from Saurashtra against the onslaught of standardized Gujarati' (265). The language of 'folk literature' demonstrates how difficult it is to divide languages into compartmentalised categories and what implications such categorisation has. Languages are constantly mixed or blended, especially in oral tradition but also in writing. A linguistically homogeneous region is an idea, not a reality. Meghani's understanding of language based on his knowledge of folk literature sharply questioned the assumption that a 'pure' Gujarati for all could ever exist. It is not surprising in this context that Meghani was against a Sanskritised form of Gujarati (Trivedi 1977: 25).

Munshi's life and writings[14]

Although writers and intellectuals abounded in Gujarat during this period, Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (1887–1971) was probably one of the best known and most influential among them. He was prominent in Gujarat and across India, not only as a man of letters but also as a politician.[15] It is worth examining his thoughts on language in detail as he held influence within contemporary Gujarati literary circles and was closely involved in the formulation of language policies after independence. Before examining his ideas of language, this section briefly looks at his life and his association with Gandhi.

Munshi was born into a Bhargava Brahman family from Broach in 1887.[16] He graduated from Baroda College, where he came under the guidance of Aurobindo Ghosh (who was then a professor of English in this college). He obtained an LL.B. in 1910, after which he pursued a career as a lawyer in Bombay.

In college, he developed a keen interest in the history of Gujarat and was inspired by European writings on the region, such as A.K. Forbes's *Ras Mala* (1856) and H.G. Briggs's *Cities of Gujarashtra* (1849) (Dave et al. IV 1962: 22–3; Munshi 1967: 559). He also became intrigued by politics

and attended the annual meetings of the Indian National Congress in Ahmedabad and Surat in 1902 and 1907, respectively (Munshi 1940: 1; 1967: 2–3). Even after he began to work as an advocate, he continued to write and publish his fictional and non-fictional works, while actively engaging in politics. His famous trilogy of historical novels, comprising *Patanni Prabhuta* (The Greatness of Patan), *Gujaratno Nath* (The Master of Gujarat), and *Rajadhiraj* (The King of Kings), was published between 1916 and 1922.[17] These novels depicted Gujarat in the twelfth centuries, that is, around the time of Siddharaja Jayasimha of the Chaulukya dynasty.[18]

As a successful writer, Munshi became closely involved in literary associations. In 1922, he founded the Sahitya Sansad (Literary Association) in Bombay and started its monthly journal, *Gujarat*. He was later appointed Vice-President of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1926, a position he held until he became its President in 1937 (Mehta et al. I 1947: xvii). He thus continued to be a leading figure in Gujarati literary circles.

As explained in the previous section, Munshi met Gandhi for the first time in 1915 at the reception organised by the Gurjar Sabha. Gandhi, who had recently returned to India, made a speech in Gujarati there, leaving a strong impression on his audience. Until almost the end of the 1920s, Munshi generally maintained a distance from Gandhi, believing that a 'movement of an unconstitutional nature' led by Gandhi would 'inevitably result in widespread violence' (Munshi 1967: 18). Thus, when Gandhi took over the leadership of the Home Rule League and the Indian National Congress in 1920, Munshi, along with Jinnah, resigned from these organisations. Munshi continued his career as a lawyer and a writer and became a member of the Bombay Legislative Council in 1927.

In 1928, however, Munshi changed his mind. The achievement of the Bardoli Satyagraha under the leadership of Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel, another leader from Gujarat of the Patidar (Kanbi) community, altered Munshi's attitude. He resigned from the Legislative Council and, two years later, finally decided to 'surrender' to Gandhi, as he vividly described in his memoir (Munshi 1940: 81). He rejoined the Congress and participated in the Civil Disobedience movement, being imprisoned for the first time. His well-known book, *Gujarata and Its Literature*, was penned in jail and published in 1935 (Munshi 1935: vii). This work was and still is widely referred to in discussions on Gujarati literature.[19]

The 1930s and early 1940s were a crucial period in Munshi's life, during which he played a significant role in politics. In 1937, when the Congress governments were installed in different provinces of British India, Munshi, who was then a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, became the Home Minister of the Bombay government. He also advanced some of his key ideas on India and Gujarat during these decades. On the one hand, he actively articulated his notion of *Gujaratni Asmita* (which he translated as 'Gujarat Consciousness') and its relationship with Indian nationalism (Munshi 1939b). On the other hand, he

expressed in detail his ideas on India and Indian culture through various literary and educational activities. He founded the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (literally the 'House of Indian Knowledge') in Bombay in 1938 and through this organisation tried to organise 'active centres where ancient Aryan learning is studied and where modern Indian culture is provided with a historical back-ground' (*Bharatiya Vidya* 1939: 101). The Bhavan started a series of lectures on Indian culture in the following year, and Munshi delivered the first of these, entitled 'Fundamentals of Aryan Culture' (102). This lecture, which was published subsequently in the Bhavan's journal (Munshi 1939a), vividly shows how Munshi associated India with his notion of 'Aryan culture'.[20] Later, when he revised this lecture elsewhere, he further stated that Aryan culture was in fact equivalent to Indian culture (Munshi 1942: 177). One of the essential features of this culture as defined by him was 'the supremacy of Samskrta' (Munshi 1939a: 7).[21] This idea was deeply incorporated into his thoughts on language as discussed later.

In spite of the differences of opinion between Munshi and Gandhi on various issues, Munshi tried to 'follow' Gandhi in the 1930s, as indicated in the title of his memoir published in 1940, *I Follow the Mahatma*. However, their differences became increasingly evident. In 1941, he openly questioned Gandhi's insistence on non-violence, and this led to Munshi's resignation from the Congress for the second time. Munshi had by then become convinced that 'organised resistance in self-defense' was a 'paramount inalienable duty' in the face of what he considered as rising 'goondaism' caused by the Pakistan movement (Munshi 1942: 261–4). Having left the Congress, Munshi started an all-India campaign to advocate *Akhand Hindustan* (United India), vehemently criticising the Muslim League and the idea of Pakistan. During this campaign, he came into touch with the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, such as Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, whose ideas of Hindutva were well known, and even attended a rally of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Munshi 1967: 83–6).

Alongside his political activities, Munshi continued to produce literary works, one of which was another popular novel, *Jay Somnath* (1940). His descriptions of ruthless Muslim invaders who destroyed the temple of Lord Somanatha (Shiva) and the heroic Hindu warriors who bravely fought the invaders to save the country left a strong impression on its readers (Munshi 1976, 1999). He also wrote non-fiction around this time, including influential works on the history of Gujarat, such as *The Glory That Was Gurjaradesa, Part III, Imperial Gurjaras* (Munshi 1944).[22]

When independence was won, Munshi played a critical role in drafting the Constitution as a member of the Constituent Assembly and of several committees appointed by the Assembly, including the Drafting Committee (Munshi 1967: 182–332). He continued to be active in political and literary spheres in independent India.[23]

Munshi's ideas on the issues of language

Although Munshi had clearly been aware of Gandhi's ideas on language since their first meeting in 1915, it was only in the 1930s that he actually began to pay close attention to them. His opinions on language, especially on the form of Hindi/Hindustani, significantly differed from Gandhi's, despite sharing his enthusiasm towards promoting this language as a common tongue for all India.

As noted above, Munshi placed much importance on Sanskrit, which was for him one of the main features of Aryan culture. Munshi believed that Sanskrit was a language 'perfect in structure and classic in expression, with a rich, varied and beautiful literary achievement' (Munshi 1939a: 11). It was, furthermore, the 'living embodiment of the cultural ideals of the race, an Aryavarta in verse and prose of undying beauty woven into the mind and life of every cultured home' (12). In other words, Sanskrit symbolised *Aryavarta* (the land of Aryans) and Aryan culture, which were, for him, more or less equal to India and Indian culture. Based on this idea, Munshi tried to promote Sanskrit studies through the undertakings of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.[24]

In this context, the emphasis he placed on the influence of Aryan culture in each region of India should be noted in particular. In *Gujarata and Its Literature* (1935), he argued that the history of Gujarat had been characterised by the 'interplay of two factors'. These were the 'individuality of the Gujaratis' and the influence of Aryan culture, which, in his words, had 'maintained the homogeneity of Indian life and the continuity of its tradition for the last three thousand years' (Munshi 1935: viii). In the process of writing this book, he became convinced of the value of Sanskrit for the enrichment of other Indian languages (Munshi 1967: 447).

It is thus not surprising that his ideas on Hindi evidently diverged from those of Gandhi, even though initially, impressed by Gandhi's attempts to spread Hindi/Hindustani, he did not pay their difference much heed. In 1935, Munshi accompanied Gandhi to Indore, where the latter presided over the meeting of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, founded in 1910. He recollected later that he had then observed how Gandhi had inspired the Sammelan and realised the 'strength of the movement which Gandhiji was sponsoring for a national language for India' (Munshi 1940: 134). Munshi, for his part, began a Hindi journal, *Hans* (Swan), in 1935 with the prominent Hindi writer, Premchand (1880–1936). Its aim was to publish Hindi translations of literary works originally written in different Indian languages. Gandhi, in his message to *Hans*, stated that a monthly of this kind was sorely needed if 'Hindi or Hindustani' was to become the national language (*CWMG* LXI: 312).

From Munshi's perspective, the publication of this journal formed part of his project to establish a 'commonwealth of literatures' (Munshi 1940: 142). He claimed that he had cherished this dream since he had become actively

involved in the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1925. Observing that separate literary associations in each province pursued 'the path of provincial isolation', Munshi became convinced that a commonwealth of literatures would be necessary for India to attain the 'full stature of nationhood' (142). Such a commonwealth, Munshi now believed, could be rendered possible only through the medium of Hindi.[25] In 1936, the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad (Indian Literary Conference) was organised under the initiative of Munshi and D.B. Kalelkar. It tried to collect 'gems from all provincial literatures', make them available in a common language, and thus stimulate people's desire to know the languages of other provinces (Prasad 1965: 261). However, this project ended soon, partly because he and other leaders were then preoccupied with various other activities (*CWMG* LXV: 59; Munshi 1940: 143).

His support for Gandhi's advocacy of Hindi/Hindustani more or less ended in the early 1940s, and he began to express his disagreement with Gandhi's ideas of language more openly. In his words, until then, Munshi believed that Gandhi had accepted Sanskritised Hindi as a 'literary form of spoken Hindustani' (Munshi 1967: 447). Now he realised that was not the case. From Munshi's view, their disagreement emerged because Gandhi changed his opinion. Munshi later recollected:

> I worked for Hindi for several years with him [Gandhi]. Then he changed over to Hindustani. I could not follow him into the wilderness of a non-Sanskritic tongue. Sanskritic culture, of which modern Hindi was becoming the vehicle, was to me as dear as the breath of my life. He pressed me to take up the cause of Hindustani. I frankly told him I could not.
>
> (Munshi 1951: 31–2)

Gandhi's position on Sanskrit, however, was not without its share of contradictions as discussed before. While in North India, he opposed the Sanskritisation of Hindi, in the south, he stressed that Hindi contained a large number of Sanskrit words which would already be familiar to the speakers of Dravidian languages. From Munshi's perspective, Gandhi's attitude had made him believe that Gandhi in fact had accepted Sanskritised Hindi as a literary form of Hindustani and that the advocacy of the latter would not deny the necessity of retaining the former in Indian society.

By the 1940s, Munshi could not ignore the difference of opinions between him and Gandhi in regard to the idea of nation, Hindu-Muslim relationship, and also language. In a letter to Gandhi written in 1944, Munshi openly expressed his opposition towards Gandhi's form of Hindi. For example, he wrote:

> The power of our language which can express thought and creative endeavour belongs in general to the Sanskrit element. And so, if we

> are going to evolve in India a medium for expressing our thoughts and literature there is no alternative except resorting to the use of Sanskrit words. … As I have understood, the Congress aims to make the colloquial Hindustani – which is used as a common means of communication in North India – a common medium for the whole country. This medium would have as many accepted Sanskrit and Persian words as possible. This is an ideal, not an actuality. This ideal can be only confined to the ordinary means of communication; for, an enriched language won't be required for that purpose. But how can the colloquial Hindustani be the medium of thought or literature?
>
> (Munshi 1967: 447)

In 1945, Munshi accepted the presidentship of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan soon after Gandhi resigned from the association due to its leaders' advocacy of Sanskritised Hindi. Although Munshi in his presidential speech did not state clearly whether he would choose Hindustani, as advocated by Gandhi, or Sanskritised Hindi, advocated by the Sammelan, his decision to accept the presidentship of this organisation at this point openly indicated that he was no longer with Gandhi. In his speech, Munshi articulated in detail the importance of Hindi from a historical perspective, emphasising its status as the language of *Madhyadesha*, which was, in his view, the 'heart of India' where 'our culture' was born and developed (Munshi 1953: 167). Besides stressing the historical importance of Hindi, he also referred to figures from the 1931 census to argue that Hindi should be the national language:

> On the basis of the 1931 census, 34,90,88,000 persons spoke Indian and Burmese language [*sic*]. Of these 25,37,12,000 used languages of the Sanskritic family; 4,67,18,000 used Dravidian languages which are predominantly Sanskritic; 2,14,12,000 used languages which are mixed with Sanskrit. (171)

Munshi stated, based on these numbers, that only a language which was 'predominantly Sanskritic' could be the national language of the country. Hindi, in his view, fulfilled this condition, not Hindustani. For Munshi, the national language was not simply a communication tool among a wide range of people in India. It should be the 'medium of thought or literature' (Munshi 1967: 447). For Hindustani to become such a language, he argued, there was no alternative except resorting to the use of Sanskrit words. According to him, with the help of Sanskrit alone, they could make their languages, by which he meant those in India including Hindi and Gujarati, 'as powerful as English and French' (447). One can discern here the clear influence of the ideas of nation, language, and literature that were predominant in the powerful nation states of Europe on his notion of the national language of India.

Debates on the official language of India

The controversy over the national language raged among Indian leaders before and after independence, until a final decision was made in the Constituent Assembly in September 1949. Munshi, who had returned to the Congress yet again in 1946, became one of the leading members of the Assembly. He was chosen as members of several committees under the Assembly, such as the Rules, Steering, Drafting, Advisory, Union Subjects, and Union Constitution Committees (Austin 1972: 19, 333–6, 342–3).

Soon after the Assembly came into force in December 1946, language-related issues were taken up first by the Rules Committee. As a member of the Rules Committee, Munshi presented a proposal to the Assembly including a rule that Assembly 'business shall be transacted in Hindustani (Hindi or Urdu) or English, provided that the Chairman may permit any member unacquainted with either language to address the Assembly in his mother tongue' (*Constituent Assembly Debates* I 1966: 168). In the following debate, a member from a Hindi-speaking region asserted that the language of the Assembly should be Hindustani (Rao et al. 1968a: 783; Austin 1972: 274). He did not conceal his annoyance with those who were not able to understand Hindustani 'after twenty-five years of efforts on the part of Mahatma Gandhi' (Rao et al. 1968a: 783–4; Austin 1972: 275). A Tamil member, however, proposed that all motions and amendments be tabled in English and that all speak in English in the Assembly (Austin 1972: 275). Munshi, having heard these different opinions, stressed that Hindustani was undoubtedly the national language and that in the Assembly this language would have precedence. However, he simultaneously admitted that English could not be omitted altogether.

This debate exposes the fundamental conflict between 'Hindi protagonists' and those who opposed the imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi speakers. In particular, the members from South India, where Dravidian languages were spoken, were unwilling to accept Hindi as the sole national language. Munshi, whose mother tongue was not Hindi and yet who was close to the Hindi protagonists through his involvement in the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and other organisations, was to play an integral part as a mediator between these camps.

It is notable that many Congress leaders, including Munshi, were using the word 'Hindustani' by this stage. This signals Gandhi's influence to some extent but perhaps also reflects their attempt not to alienate Urdu-speaking Muslims. The Congress still very much opposed the idea of Partition at this point. Thus, Munshi, in spite of his own ideas on the national language, included the following sentence in his draft articles on fundamental rights, which were submitted to the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee in March 1947: 'Hindustani, including Hindi and Urdu shall be the national language of the Union written at the choice of a citizen in the *Nagari* or Persian characters' (Rao et al. 1967: 75).

In June 1947, the situation changed dramatically as the Congress agreed to the Partition. This decision 'killed Hindustani', in the words of Granville Austin, who wrote a classical work on the constitution-making process (Austin 1972: 277). Now as Pakistan was to be created, consisting of the areas where the Muslims were the religious majority, it became increasingly difficult for the advocates of Hindustani to obtain support from other members in the Assembly. In July, a meeting of the Congress Assembly Party[26] voted by majority that Hindi, not Hindustani, should be the national language and Devanagari the national script (277–8). Some leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, were unhappy with this decision (Munshi 1967: 217). Gandhi was not a member of the Constituent Assembly and thus did not participate in these debates.

Soon after this decision was taken by the Congress, Gandhi received a letter from Gujarat in which it was reported that people in this region were now strongly opposed to the Urdu script (*CWMG* LXXXVIII: 467). Gandhi, in his Gujarati paper, *Harijanbandhu*, addressed the readers: '[T]he duty of people like you and me is to write in both scripts. The Gujaratis decided to perform this duty with gladness. … Why then have they developed a dislike for the Urdu script now?' (468). At the end of the article, he pleaded with readers once again: 'Let us not turn away from the Urdu script. We must not turn back' (469). His call was not heeded, however, then or afterwards.

Partition may have 'killed' Hindustani, but it also had a marked effect on the debates regarding the position of English and provincial languages in the Constitution (Rao et al. 1968a: 786; Austin 1972: 277). The Hindi protagonists became even more insistent on establishing Hindi as the sole national language and imposing it on the non-Hindi-speaking regions to enhance 'national unity'. In addition, these leaders even began to argue that the Devanagari form of numerals should be used instead of the international form. This was firmly opposed by members from South India.

To solve the continuing dispute among the Assembly members, Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, a Tamil member of the Assembly, drew up detailed language provisions. These, in the words of the latter, represented a 'compromise between opinions not easily reconcilable' (*Constituent Assembly Debates* IX 1966: 1319; Rao et al. 1968a: 793). The provisions were proposed to the Congress on 2nd September 1949 and engendered a heated discussion. It was eventually decided that they would be proposed in the Assembly by Munshi, Ayyangar, and Bhimrao Ambedkar (the Chairman of the Drafting Committee) in their personal capacities, not as an official proposal on behalf of the Drafting Committee (Rao et al. 1968a: 794; 1968b: 615–6). The decision was also made to allow all Congress members in the Assembly to freely move amendments and vote as they pleased.

The draft provisions, which were generally called the 'Munshi-Ayyangar formula', stipulated that the official language of the Union (it should be noted that the word used here was the 'official language' and not the 'national language') was to be Hindi in the Devanagari script.[27] The international form

of numerals, instead of the Devanagari form, was chosen. English was to be used, the formula declared, for all the official purposes of the Union for 15 years, after which the Parliament could extend the period. The President was to constitute a commission consisting of a chairman and those representing the different languages specified in a separate schedule, and this commission was to make recommendations to the President regarding matters related to the official language of the Union. A state (province) would be able to adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the state or Hindi as the language/s to be used for the official purposes of that state (*Constituent Assembly Debates* IX 1966: 1321–3; Austin 1972: 296).

Munshi later recollected that the 'Hindi enthusiasts' charged Munshi with 'being a renegade' and fought the formula 'tooth and nail' at the time (Munshi 1967: 221). In their view, the acceptance of English as an associate official language was the 'handiwork of men with a slave mentality' (218). Munshi, however, had a different opinion. He believed that English was the most valuable legacy that the British had left behind and that it had already become their own language by historical necessity (Munshi 1967: 218; 1953: 37). He also thought that if their universities, law courts, and legislatures were rushed into accepting Hindi in place of English, the whole intellectual and administrative standard of the country would deteriorate. In Munshi's view, Hindi could also grow 'in precision and range' by close contact with English (Munshi 1967: 219). The fact that English was an international language further increased its value. Most importantly, English was, according to Munshi, the only available medium for interstate connection, both official and non-official, and thus was an instrument of national unity. On the whole, he took a practical attitude in regard to the status of English. As to the issue of numerals, he saw no problem in accepting the international form of numerals, if, he argued, that would lead the whole country to accept Hindi (218).

Regarding the question of the form of Hindi, the formula in part incorporated the ideas of Hindi protagonists, though a compromise was also made for those who backed Hindustani as the national language. It was to be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of Hindi and to secure its enrichment by 'assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India',[28] and by drawing 'primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages' for its vocabulary (*Constituent Assembly Debates* IX 1966: 1323; Austin 1972: 296). Later, Munshi justified this emphasis on the role of Sanskrit for the enrichment of Hindi:

> Those who complained that the protagonists of Hindi favoured Sanskritization and were communal in their outlook scarcely realized the position of Sanskrit with regard to our regional languages. All languages of India (except the Arabicized or Persianized Urdu and the Tamil spoken in the rural areas in the South), age after age, had

> drawn their vigour and vitality from the spoken dialects of the people and acquired their richness, expressiveness, dignity and rhythm from Sanskrit.
>
> (Munshi 1967: 218)

His reiteration here of the importance of Sanskrit for developing regional languages recalls his descriptions of Aryan culture and Sanskrit in his writings of the 1930s and early 1940s. It is also worth noting that the 'Arabicized or Persianized Urdu and the Tamil spoken in the rural areas in the South' were, in Munshi's perception, regarded as the only exceptions among 'all languages of India' (218).

The Munshi-Ayyangar formula was in principle accepted by a majority of the members after a three-day intensive debate in the Assembly. Five amendments, which did not change the basis of the formula, were added to the proposed provisions and the Assembly subsequently accepted them on 14th September 1949 (*Constituent Assembly Debates* IX 1966: 1489).[29] As discussed in the previous section, Munshi, who had once worked with Gandhi to establish Hindi/Hindustani as the national language and who had also been close to the Hindi protagonists, was in a good position to negotiate with different camps on the question of the national language. The fact that he, a non-native speaker of Hindi, had been active in propagating this language might have also helped him to play this role of negotiator. The final compromise was in fact not very different from the ideas Munshi himself had developed during the nationalist movement. The provisions passed in the Assembly continue to be the language policy of the Indian government even today. While defining the official language of the Union, the Constitution also declared that the legislature of each state may adopt 'any one or more of languages used in the State or Hindi' as its official language/s. This leads us to the next question, that is the relationship between regional languages and territories within India.

Munshi on the Gujarati language and territory

While he was party to the debates on the official language in the Constituent Assembly, Munshi began to notice a growing demand for the foundation of linguistic provinces in different parts of India, especially in western India. Although the debates among the Gujarati-speaking elite on the issue of linguistic states will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, I would like to analyse Munshi's ideas on it separately in this chapter, as they were closely related to his experience of nationalism and the nationalist movement in the early twentieth century.

The call for the reorganisation of provinces (which were later called states) began to be made by Marathi-speaking elites as early as the late nineteenth century. For instance, Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920), a famous leader from this region, used his Marathi paper, *Kesari*, to criticise the division

of Marathi-speaking people into different provinces and princely states (Phadke 1979: 66; King 1998: 59). As mentioned in the earlier section, the Congress had already accepted the principle of linguistic provinces in 1920 and organised provincial committees accordingly. However, after Partition took place in 1947, leading Congress politicians, including Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, became rather hesitant to reorganise provinces on a linguistic basis. They feared that such a move would weaken the unity and stability of India, which had only recently gone through great confusion and tragedy due to Partition.

Yet there were already high expectations among the leaders in several regions that reformations would take place now that British rule was over. In 1948, a commission was appointed by the Constituent Assembly to study the desirability of creating Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra as new linguistic provinces (*Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission* 1948; King 1998: 103). This commission, officially called the Linguistic Provinces Commission, was commonly known as the Dar Commission after the name of its chairman. Their report concluded that the formation of provinces on exclusively or even mainly linguistic considerations was not in the larger interests of the Indian nation (*Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission* 1948: 34). Soon afterwards, the Congress also appointed its own committee to examine the question of linguistic provinces. The members consisted of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, and B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and thus was generally known as the JVP Committee. It reached more or less the same conclusions as those of the Dar Commission (*Report of the Linguistic Provinces Committee* 1949).

Munshi, as an associate member, submitted a 'Note' to the Dar Commission and published it as a booklet entitled *Linguistic Provinces and the Future of Bombay*. In this booklet, he first stressed the urgent need for a strengthening of national unity and noted that, despite this necessity, the demands for linguistic provinces had 'thrown the whole of the South into a vortex of controversy, bitterness and uncertainty' (Munshi 1948: 5). Munshi then analysed 'linguism', the phenomenon which he believed was currently developing in India. For him, linguism meant the 'elevation of a language as a basis for group-sentiment, seeking expression in terms of power-politics' (6). Munshi later claimed that he was the first to bring this word 'into currency' (Munshi 1967: 222). In his view, it was 'a form of modern parochial nationalism' (Munshi 1948: 6).

Munshi explained how linguism had developed during the colonial period. Young Indians in each region, educated in English, tried to develop their own mother tongue. For each regional language, a body of scholars was then created, 'with whom the love of that language became a paramount passion'. This led to the foundation of literary conferences for each language, which, Munshi argued, 'provided a meeting ground to men who believed in their language as a distinctive entity'. These literary men also reconstructed the history of their languages, and in Munshi's opinion, as

most of them were Hindus, they 'naturally fell back upon the pre-Khalji period for creating a proud historical background' (7). Munshi here voiced his interpretation of the way in which regional/linguistic identities developed among English-educated Indians in the colonial period.

Such a cultural movement, however, was also accompanied by political ambition, Munshi argued. Now particular linguistic groups had begun to demand the exclusion and discrimination of other linguistic groups within the area. On the basis of his observation, Munshi concluded that linguism had 'all the characteristics of an intolerant nationalism' (8). He also pointed out that linguism claimed not only the area in which a particular language was spoken, but demanded the annexation of 'as much extra territory on any claim, linguistic, geographical, or economic that could possibly be bolstered up' (12). Munshi's critical analysis of the cultural and political movements of linguistic groups is rather striking, especially in view of his own involvement in literary associations for the Gujaratis, such as the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad and the Gujarat Research Society,[30] as well as his own writings on Gujarati history and culture, in which the glory of Gujarat in the past was depicted. Although he mostly had the example of Marathi speakers in mind while describing linguism here, he was equally critical of a similar movement by Gujarati speakers when it gained momentum in the 1950s, as shown later.

It is noteworthy that when the establishment of Gujarat University was proposed in the late 1940s, Munshi weighed in with his opinion that the principal medium of instruction in this institution should be Hindi instead of Gujarati. In fact, the question of the medium of instruction attracted much attention from the people involved in its foundation. Due to the strong influence of the nationalist movement and Gandhi's ideas in this region, they were unwilling to adopt English as the medium of instruction. While the natural choice in this context would be Gujarati and in fact the majority of the opinions received by the Gujarat University Committee supported this view (*Report of the Gujarat University Committee* 1949: 6), Munshi disagreed with this. He contended that the acceptance of a provincial language as the medium of higher education would 'foster provincial exclusiveness, stimulate disruptive forces and undermine national progress' (91). He also argued that for a period of five years, English should be permitted as an optional medium, again taking a practical attitude in regard to the status of the language. Munshi further reasoned that the adoption of Gujarati as a medium of instruction was not suitable because it had 'no literature of scholarship in the essential branches of knowledge' (90). In the end, the Gujarat University Act of 1949 stipulated that the university could exercise its power to promote the use of Gujarati and/or Hindi as the medium of instruction and that the courses and examinations in the medium of English could be discontinued after ten years (Dongerkery 1957: 147).

In the latter half of his booklet on linguistic provinces, Munshi focused on the example of Bombay province. He emphasised the historical, cultural,

and economic unity of Gujarat, North Konkan, and Bombay city, and claimed that they could not be separated from each other (Munshi 1948: 18–51). For instance, he cited various sources to argue that 'Bhilli and Khandesh' were 'dialects of Gujarati' and that Konkani was a dialect 'allied to Gujarati' (20–8), criticising the stance of those who proposed that United Maharashtra absorb what Munshi believed to be non-Marathi-speaking areas.

Munshi described in detail how the Gujaratis contributed to the growth of Bombay city and the position it occupied in various Gujarati activities. If this city was handed over to Maharashtra, Munshi argued, Bombay would lose its multilingual character, its economy would be seriously affected, and its non-Marathi-speaking majority would be subjected to the political domination of 'aggressive linguism' (50). Finally, Munshi argued that if Bombay province was to be divided, Bombay city should be made into a centrally administered area (57–8). Having lived and worked in Bombay for most of his life, it must have been difficult for him to imagine Bombay as part of a linguistic state for Marathi speakers. At the same time, he was fully aware that Bombay could never be part of a linguistic state for Gujarati speakers, in view of the preponderance of Marathi speakers.

Ironically, in spite of his criticism of linguism, Munshi's words and actions in this regard were often interpreted quite differently by his contemporaries. The terms he used in his writings and speeches, such as 'Maha Gujarat' and 'Gujaratni Asmita', were often considered as slogans to promote Gujarati identity and advocate the foundation of a separate state for the Gujarati people. His long association with the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad and other Gujarati associations, coupled with his dramatic depictions of Gujarat's history, convinced some of his peers that he favoured the establishment of 'a hegemony of the Gujarati-speaking people' (*Report of the Gujarat University Committee* 1949: 115).

Munshi, in his *Pilgrimage to Freedom* (1967), explained his intention in using the expression 'Maha Gujarat':

> The word "Maha Gujarat" was brought into vogue by me at the Karachi session of the Gujarat Literary Conference (1939) as a convenient description for Gujarati-speaking people living in all parts of the world outside Gujarat. Later on, the word was used to indicate the transfer of Gujarati-speaking people in Kutch and Kathiawad (Saurashtra) to the Province of Bombay. It was in that sense that the word "Maha Gujarat" was used by the Maha Gujarat Sammelan held in Bombay, over which I presided.
>
> (Munshi 1967: 234)

Thus, even though he attributed to this word different meanings according to the context, he never meant by it a separate state for the Gujarati speakers. In his essay on 'Maha Gujarat', published in *Gujaratni Asmita* (1939),

Munshi stressed the impossibility of defining Gujarat in terms of territory. He even argued that Maha Gujarat could not be defined by language either, for those whose ancestors migrated, for example, to Maharashtra or Karnataka centuries before might not be able to speak Gujarati though they were still Gujaratis (Munshi 1939b: 166).

In spite of his own criticism of the idea of a separate state for the Gujarati speakers, Munshi found some people misusing this word:

> As linguism grew aggressive, the word 'Maha Gujarat' was appropriated by the linguistic chauvinists of Gujarat as a rallying slogan for a separate State for Gujarati-speaking people. The irony of it was that I was asked to head the movement which the word popularised by me never intended to convey; naturally I declined to do so and also parted with the Gujarat [*sic*] Sahitya Parishad after 30 years of active association. I was considered by some parties to have betrayed the cause, which I never supported.
>
> (Munshi 1967: 234–5)

Munshi, while using the term 'Gujaratni Asmita',[31] never tried to endorse what he described as linguism. According to Munshi, Gujarat Consciousness to him meant a 'local aspect of all-India consciousness' (Dave et al. IV 1962: 43–4). He had worked for the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, he emphasised, to keep Gujarat Consciousness 'moored to the all-India linguistic harmony'. In the 1955 session of the Parishad during its golden jubilee, Munshi maintained that Gujarat Consciousness, as expressed by the younger generation, was 'all too anxious to cut off the moorings' (44). He had resisted the linguistic redistribution of states, which he considered a 'linguistic Balkanisation of the country', and yet he was fighting a losing battle (Munshi 1967: 234–5). He soon gave up his leadership of the Parishad, which was now dominated by those pursuing ideas of Maha Gujarat that diverged from his own (Dave et al. IV 1962: 44; *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society* 1961: 2A).

As examined in the next chapter, the Bombay state was bifurcated into Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960 after much debate and several deadly incidents in Bombay and Ahmedabad. Even after the birth of Gujarat State, Munshi continued to bitterly observe the development of 'linguistic parochialism' within Gujarat. In a letter to Nehru, written in 1961, Munshi wrote that in most states, anyone who had a 'national attitude' had come to be considered 'as good as a reactionary' and that Gujarat was no exception (Munshi 1967: 235). Elsewhere he also pointed out that the Gujaratis in the linguistic state of Gujarat showed their dislike for English and Hindi, which, in his opinion, proved their intolerant attitude (Dave et al. IV 1962: 40).

In this regard, one can look back at his *Gujarata and Its Literature* (1935), in which he observed that nationalism had been 'the most powerful sentiment inspiring Gujarata since 1930' and also 'wonderfully blended with Gujarata-consciousness' (Munshi 1935: xvii). Gujarat during the nationalist

movement, he argued, had emerged as the 'embodiment, the voice, the spirit of triumphant Aryan culture as expressed through modern conditions' (xv). Munshi wanted 'Gujaratni Asmita' to be part of Indian nationalism. He apparently did not consider that there could be any serious contradiction between the two (Chandra 1992: 153; Skaria 2001: 279).

Importantly, *Gujarata and Its Literature* also quoted in its preface the words of a famous Parsi poet, Ardeshir Framji Khabardar (1881–1953), which Munshi translated from Gujarati into English. Khabardar sang: 'Where lives a single Gujarati there is Gujarata for ever. Where Gujarati is spoken, there is Gujarat for ever and for ever' (Munshi 1935: xvii). Here 'Gujarat' does not imply a fixed territory, and Gujarati speakers are expected to maintain and develop their Gujarati identity anywhere. One can also remember a significant presence of Gujarati-speaking communities in various parts of the world, especially those involved in mercantile activities. If Gujarat meant the territory where the Gujarati speakers resided, as expressed in this poem, this territory can never be confined to a limited area in western India. 'Gujarat' in Munshi's imagination sometimes even echoed this idea as we have seen in his initial usage of the word 'Maha Gujarat' discussed above.

Once this Gujarat state was formed, in spite of his strong criticism of 'linguism', Munshi's words and writings were incorporated into the official story of the Maha Gujarat movement that led to the creation of a separate state of Gujarat (Chokshi and Trivedi 1989: 311). He is today known as the writer who depicted glorious Gujarat throughout the past, articulated 'Gujaratni Asmita', and contributed ideologically to the creation of Gujarat state in its present form.

Conclusion

The debates on the Gujarati language articulated by high-caste literati during the late nineteenth century were in large part inherited by their successors in the following period. The rise of nationalism and Gandhi's strong influence on Gujarati society, with his thorough criticism of English-language education and communication and his insistence on using one's own mother tongue, however, brought significant changes. Gandhi also advocated the use of a simple form of the Gujarati language and tried to develop its literature for the 'people', which had a strong impact on the intellectuals of his time.

The rise of nationalism under Gandhi's leadership also encouraged the Gujarati elite to take an active interest in the question of the national language. Gandhi's choice of Hindustani/Hindi attracted support from a wide range of the Gujarati elite, and yet there were different opinions among them on which form this language should take, as Munshi's dialogues with Gandhi illustrate. Such differences often reflected divergent ideas of nation and national identity. The debates on the national language were further

accompanied by a series of discussions on the relationships between the national language and regional languages and between language and territory. Gandhi's ideas of language were interpreted and appropriated in various ways by the Gujarati elite, and were to be incorporated into their discussions on language, literature, and language policies after independence.

Notes

1. *Jame Jamshed*, 2 October 1885, in *RNP* (3 October 1885), p. 9. *Rast Goftar* (18 October 1885) also expressed a similar opinion. *RNP* (24 October 1885), p. 9.
2. *Gujarat Mitra*, 15 November 1885, in *RNP* (21 November 1885), p. 12; *Gujarat Mitra*, 6 December 1885, in *RNP* (12 December 1885), p. 7.
3. Although I also looked at *Gandhijino Akshardeh: Mahatma Gandhinam Lakhano, Bhashano, Patro Vagereno Sangrah* (henceforth, *GA*), the Gujarati version of the *CWMG*, and added some words from them when I found it necessary to do so, I mostly quote his words from the *CWMG* in this book. As to *Hind Swaraj* and *Autobiography,* from which I often quote in this chapter, I used Gandhi (2010) and Gandhi (2018) as they have detailed annotations showing the difference between the Gujarati texts and English texts and between different editions of the English texts. Gandhi often checked the English translations of his Gujarati writings done by others when they were published in his journals and books. For the comparison between Gujarati and English texts of Gandhi's major writings, see Sharma and Suhrud 2010; Suhrud 2012, 2018. On the critical analyses of English translations of Gandhi's works, see also Parekh (1986).
4. There was also a story of a Parsi journalist who tried to interview Gandhi in English soon after his arrival in Bombay. When this journalist asked Gandhi a question in English, Gandhi asked him why he spoke English in spite of the fact that both of their mother tongues were Gujarati (Kalelkar 1960: 3–4).
5. Gandhi also explained the reason for founding his ashram in Ahmedabad in his *Autobiography*. One of the reasons was his Gujarati identity. Other reasons were his expectation that Ahmedabad would be 'the most favourable field for the revival of the cottage industry of hand-spinning' and his hope that financial help from 'wealthy citizens' would be available there. For details, see Gandhi (2018: 607–8).
6. This paper was originally started by Indulal Yagnik in 1915 and taken over by Gandhi in 1919. Its Hindi edition started later. Gandhi also took up the editorship of an English paper, *Young India*, from 1919 (Gandhi 2018: 724–5; Yagnik I 2011: 283; *CWMG* XV: 419–20; XX: 530). These papers continued until 1931 and then he began to publish other papers from 1933, namely, *Harijan* (English), *Harijanbandhu* (Gujarati), and *Harijan Sevak* (Hindi).
7. On Gandhi's ideas on the national language, also see Gandhi 1956; Lelyveld 2002.
8. On the debates on Hindustani/Hindi/Urdu in North India during this period, see, for instance, Orsini 2002; Gould 2004: 173-5.
9. On Gandhi's ideas on education, see, for example, Gandhi (1962). His ideas on language are closely related to his ideas on education, including those on 'basic education'.
10. This section incorporates some of the ideas presented in my earlier publications (Isaka 2000; 2004a; 2008). V. Sebastian (2009) addressed similar questions and focused on in particular Gandhi's role in the standardisation of the the Gujarati language.

11. Gandhi quoted a few paragraphs from the same book also in his speech at the Second Gujarat Educational Conference mentioned above (*CWMG* XIV: 12–3).
12. In fact, Gandhi read four volumes of *Sarasvatichandra* in 1922 when he was imprisoned (*CWMG* XXIII: 149–50).
13. Gandhi expressed these opinions in a foreword to K.M. Munshi's book on the history of Gujarati literature. Not surprisingly, Gandhi was rather critical of Munshi's decision to write this book in English as expressed in his letter to Munshi in 1934, when he read the manuscript of the book (*CWMG* LX: 19).
14. The following sections are based on Isaka (2012).
15. Munshi's life and works have been examined by scholars from different perspectives. Recently, he has attracted the attention of scholars investigating the historical development of Hindutva/Hindu nationalism. For instance, his involvement in the reconstruction of Somnath Temple has been studied in some of these works. See van der Veer 1994: 146–52; Davis 1997: 210–20; Mukta 2002: 63–9; Bhagavan 2008a, 2008b. Also see Thapar's analysis on different narratives of Somanatha (Somnath), including those of Munshi (Thapar 2004: 188–97).
16. For details of Munshi's life, see Mehta et al. 1947; Dave et al. 1957–62; *Munshi at Seventy-five* 1962; Sheth 1979; Kulkarni 1983; Sharma 2008. He also wrote a few autobiographical works, both in Gujarati and English.
17. The English translation of *Gujaratno Nath*, entitled *The Master of Gujarat: A Historical Novel*, was published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in 1995 (Munshi 1995). Recently, a new translation of the trilogy by Rita Kothari and Abhijit Kothari was also published (Munshi 2017, 2018, 2019).
18. The enduring popularity of these works can be gleaned from the following comment by Meghnad Desai (1940–), the well-known Gujarati economist.

    > A more general consciousness of being a Gujarati came from reading K.M. Munshi's novels. It is hard now to describe what a thrill it was to read *Gujarat No Nath*. Almost everyone I knew in my family circles had read it more than once. … The sheer power of his style, his ability to build up Patan as some great capital city, the grandeur of his characters – Munjal, Kaak, Kirtidev and Manjari – made me proud to be a Gujarati. (Desai 1998: 14)

19. Munshi in his writings often used diacritical marks (for example, *Gujarāta*), which I omitted in this book.
20. In the same year, he also delivered a series of lectures at the University of Bombay entitled 'The early Aryans in Gujarata', which was later published as a book (Munshi 1941). I have examined his notion of Aryan culture elsewhere (Isaka 2004b).
21. Other features were the joint family, the conjugal life, the Varnasramadharma, the idea of Aryavarta, and 'historic continuity as implied in the sacredness attributed to Vedas' (Munshi 1939a: 7). These descriptions of Aryan culture suggest that Munshi had been influenced by the ideas of Dayanand Saraswati (1824–83), the founder of the Arya Samaj (*Munshi at Seventy-five* 1962: 174).
22. *The Glory That Was Gurjaradesa, Part III, Imperial Gurjaras* was part of a series on the history of Gujarat, though only Part I and Part III were published (Munshi 1943; 1944). In 1955, a revised edition of Part III was published as *Glory That Was Gurjaradesa (A.D. 550–1300)* in two volumes (Munshi 1955).
23. He was the Agent-General of the Government of India in Hyderabad State in 1948, the Minister of Food and Agriculture between 1950 and 1952, and the Governor of Uttar Pradesh between 1952 and 1957. In 1959, he resigned from the Congress yet again and joined the Swatantra Party, which elected him as its Vice-President.

24. For instance, the Bhavan started educational institutions for teaching Sanskrit (*Bharatiya Vidya* 1939: 102–3). Later it also started other programmes to propagate Sanskrit. Munshi also contributed to the foundation of the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad in 1951 (Sastri 1962: 130–42).
25. However, after about a year, Munshi had to give up this journal, when the Collector of Banaras ordered the editors to deposit a security. Following Gandhi's advice, Munshi refused to comply with this order (*CWMG* LXIII: 282; Munshi 1940: 143; Munshi 1967: 212).
26. The Congress Assembly Party consisted of those elected to the Assembly on the Congress tickets, including non-Congress members such as Ambedkar (Austin 1972: 22).
27. In fact, Ayyangar, during the debate in the Assembly, confessed that he had felt a 'pang' while accepting the conclusion that English should be 'given up in due course' and in its place they should substitute Hindi (*Constituent Assembly Debates* IX 1966: 1317). His perception of Hindi clearly differed from that of Munshi. However, together they played a leading role in formulating these provisions (Fujii 1994).
28. It seems that the word 'Hindustani' was included here partly as a compromise with those who still supported Gandhi's ideas on the national language, including Nehru.
29. On these amendments, see Austin 1972: 305; *Constituent Assembly Debates* IX 1966: 1466–7.
30. The Gujarat Research Society was founded in 1936 to encourage research on Gujarat. Munshi was one of its founding members (*Journal of the Gujarat Research Society* 1939: 56–9; 1961: 2C).
31. According to Munshi, he took the word 'asmita' from *Yogasutra* and started using it in his own way from the early 1910s (Munshi 1939b: 165).

6 The formation of Gujarat state

Those familiar with the literature on the Indian empire may have come across the name of Sir John Strachey and the following famous statements from his Cambridge lectures in 1884 (which were later revised and published). He boldly stated that 'there is not, and never was an India, or even any country of India, possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious' (Strachey 1888: 5). He went on:

> It is conceivable that national sympathies may arise in particular Indian countries; but that they should ever extend to India generally, that men of the Punjab, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, and Madras, should ever feel that they belong to one great Indian nation is impossible. You might with as much reason and probability look forward to a time when a single nation will have taken the place of the various nations of Europe. (8)

In the present context, these words might seem to be little more than a typical imperialist statement. However, as Ramachandra Guha points out, not a few Indians after independence feared that India as a single undivided nation might not survive (Guha 2017: xxv). Having noted such scepticism, Guha argues that 'the real success story of modern India lies not in the domain of economics but in that of politics'. In his opinion, the fact that India remains a single (and largely democratic) nation should 'compel our deeper attention' (xxix).

There are many possible reasons for India's survival as a single nation, but one of them can be found in the way its federalism functions, with the states possessing enough power to assert their regional interests and identities. In this regard, the creation of linguistic states after independence has had a significant effect. It has acted, again in the words of Guha, as a 'largely constructive channel for provincial pride', thus proving that it is 'quite feasible to be peaceably Kannadiga—or Tamil, or Oriya—as well as contentedly Indian' (196–7).

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The final chapter of this book examines the debates that took place in postcolonial Gujarat on the issue of linguistic states, especially the question of whether a separate state for Gujarati speakers should be created. It looks at how attitudes towards the relationship between language, people, and territory evolved during that time. The formation of Gujarat state in 1960 is now often portrayed in the official discourse as if it was the most 'natural' course of events. Yet in reality, the process of reorganisation was far from straightforward. Accompanied by much confusion and conflict, the creation of Gujarat state was trailed by voices of dissent throughout.[1]

Map 6.1 Gujarat and India at present.

Debates over the linguistic reorganisation of states[2]

As discussed in previous chapters, Gujarati intellectuals in the late nineteenth century became familiar with ideas of 'nation' and attempted to apply them at a regional level. They made efforts to reform 'their' language and develop 'their' literature, with reference to Western examples. The idea that Gujarat belongs to Gujarati speakers (and Gujarati speakers belong to Gujarat) also began to spread among them. Yet, while there was a demand for the creation of United Maharashtra among the Marathi-speaking elite from the late nineteenth century, there was no active movement of the Gujarati-speaking elite calling for a separate province prior to independence.

It should be noted here that when the Gujarati-speaking elite referred to 'Gujarat' during the colonial period, they sometimes meant what was considered as the Gujarati area within the Bombay Presidency. However, they could also mean both this area and the Gujarati areas within the princely states of western India, including Saurashtra and Kutch, though the forms of language spoken there were evidently different from the 'standard' form of Gujarat. Furthermore, the city of Bombay was often included in conceptions of 'Gujarat'.

It is undeniable that, as Narmadashankar's famous poem, 'Jay jay garvi Gujarat' suggests, Kutch was often absent or marginalised in the ideas of Gujarat articulated by the Gujarati-speaking elite in the 'mainland' during the colonial period (Ibrahim 2012: 70).[3] However, at the same time, 'mainland' Gujarat, Saurashtra, Kutch, and Bombay city were closely linked with each other through economic networks and also through educational and cultural activities and elite networks under colonial rule (Chapters 1, 2, and 3).

In the early twentieth century, the geographical boundary of Gujarat began to attract more attention from the elite as the discussions on linguistic provinces became more active. *The Journal of Gujarat Research Society*, which began to be published in 1939 by the same society (founded in 1936), clearly stated that it would publish 'all branches of knowledge relating Gujarat, Kathiawar and Cutch' (*Journal of the Gujarat Research Society* 1-1, 1939). Soon the same journal defined the meaning of the word Gujarat, specifying that it encompassed 'Kathiawar, Kutch, and outlying areas' (*Journal of the Gujarat Research Society* 5-2, 1943). K.M. Munshi, in his booklet entitled *Linguistic Provinces and the Future of Bombay* (1948), included a map which shows the limits of 'Maha Gujarat' based on the claims of the Gujarat Research Society, though he projected this Gujarat as a 'division of the Province of Bombay' and not as a separate province (Munshi 1948: 20). Gujarat in this map not only includes Saurashtra and Kutch, but also the coastal areas up to Bombay city (Munshi 1948: Map I). Gandhi in fact had already used the word 'Maha Gujarat' in the early 1920s to refer to the area containing Gujarat in the Bombay Presidency, Kathiawad (Saurashtra), and Kutch (*CWMG* XXIV: 172: *GA* 24: 159).

He even argued that Kathiawad was '"little" (*nanun*) Gujarat' and that people in Kathiawad were also Gujaratis.

This does not mean, however, that all the people in the territory thus defined, especially those in Kutch or the tribal communities in South Gujarat (or more precisely, the southern part of the current Gujarat state), had actually developed a sense of belonging to Gujarat by then. It should be also noted that the territory of Gujarat drawn on Munshi's map even includes areas that were claimed by the elites of other linguistic groups. As long as there was no reorganisation of the provinces and princely states, however, the border of 'Gujarat' could remain undefined and ambiguous.

As briefly discussed in the last chapter, the Congress had already accepted the principle of linguistic provinces in 1920 and organised provincial committees accordingly in the territories of British India. These Congress provinces, however, did not include the territories under princely states. Even after independence, the Indian government under the same Congress continued to hesitate to reorganise provinces on the basis of languages. One reason for this was the experience of Partition. The new government had become cautious of taking any step that might encourage subnational identities and separatist movements. Both the Linguistic Provinces Commission (Dar Commission), appointed by the Constituent Assembly in 1948, and the Linguistic Provinces Committee (JVP Committee), appointed by the Congress in the same year, did not support the formation of provinces on the basis of linguistic considerations (Chapter 5).

The appointment of the Dar Commission and the JVP Committee, however, reflected the strong demand for the formation of linguistic provinces among the elites in some regions, including the Marathi-speaking elite. In fact, various social and political organisations in the Bombay Province began to actively discuss the question of linguistic provinces in response to this situation. In 1948, a meeting of some Congress members of the Bombay Legislature passed a resolution that declared their support for Samyukta Maharashtra (United Maharashtra), which included Bombay. In the same year, B.R. Ambedkar, the then Minister of Law in the Government of India, individually submitted a memorandum to the Dar Commission in which he strongly objected to the idea of making Bombay city a separate administrative unit. He argued that Maharashtra and Bombay were 'one and integral' (Ambedkar 1948: 39–40), though he later changed his opinion and argued that Maharashtra be divided into four states, one of which would be Bombay city, which he proposed calling Maharashtra City State (Ambedkar 1955: 21).[4] The Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad, an organisation formed in 1946, also submitted a memorandum, demanding the creation of Maharashtra state and insisting that Bombay city be part of Maharashtra.[5]

A few organisations in Bombay city, such as the Indian Merchants' Chamber and the Bombay Committee, however, presented their strong objections to the inclusion of Bombay in Maharashtra to the Dar Commission. The Bombay Committee, claiming to represent different communities in

the city, argued that the creation of new provinces should be postponed in the wider interests of the country. They contended that if the reorganisation of provinces on a linguistic basis was unavoidable, Bombay should be constituted as a separate province 'on the strength of political, economic, strategic and cultural considerations and its cosmopolitan and multilingual character' (Bombay Committee 1948: 26). This organisation, dominated by Gujarati industrialists and businessmen, also stressed that Bombay owed its development to 'all communities, such as Parsis, Gujaratis, Cutchis, including Khojas and Memons, Maharashtrians, Canarese, Tamilians, Telugus and Christians, including even the foreign settlers' (9). It expressed the opinion that the Marathi speakers actually constituted only 36 per cent and that, from the viewpoint of trade, commerce, and industry in the city, the dominant language was Gujarati (16–7).

The Dar Commission also received a memorandum on this issue from K.M. Munshi, who published it as a booklet entitled *Linguistic Provinces and the Future of Bombay*, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although he was totally against the linguistic redistribution of states, he also tried to define the territory of the Gujarati speakers to refute the claims of the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad. He was especially concerned by the latter's claim that Bhili, Khandeshi, and Konkani were dialects of the Marathi language and that the areas where these 'dialects' were spoken should be included in Maharashtra (Munshi 1948: 19–22). Munshi's attempt to define the Gujarati-speaking territory as a counterargument to the demand for Samyukta Maharashtra shows that the idea of associating language with territory was often adopted even by those who opposed the linguistic reorganisation of provinces.

Similar discussions can be found in a memorandum submitted to the Dar Commission by the Gujarat Research Society. One of the sources they used to prove the legitimacy of their claim was Grierson's *Linguistic Survey*. According to the Gujarat Research Society, Grierson 'copied and tabulated' linguistic affinities 'impartially and without political motives' (Gujarat Research Society 1948: 8), unlike other sources that were used by the leaders of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement. This also shows how the ideas of language, linguistic community, and territory presented by colonial authorities were appropriated by regional elites and incorporated into their political and social arguments in postcolonial India.[6]

While the debates on linguistic provinces thus went on, the integration of princely states continued steadily in western India under the initiative of the central government's Ministry of States (Wood 1984; Menon 1985). The princely states in the Deccan and 'mainland Gujarat', including Baroda, were merged into Bombay state between 1948 and 1949 (Menon 1985: 205–10). More than 200 princely states in Saurashtra were unified into the United State of Kathiawar in 1948, which was soon renamed the United State of Saurashtra. In 1949, a few other princely states in the peninsula that had not yet become part of this union were added to it (175–98). One of

these states was Junagadh, whose ruler had tried to join Pakistan, but had been forced to leave his state for Karachi due to the rise of popular agitation (Menon 1985: 124–50; Guha 2017: 49–50). Kutch state was merged into India in 1948, becoming a Chief Commissioner's province under the central government in the following year (Menon 1985: 30).

In the 1950s, the government was forced to revise their policy towards the linguistic redistribution of provinces. A well-known Gandhian activist, Potti Sriramulu, began a fast-unto-death in 1952 while demanding a separate state of Andhra for the Telugu speakers (King 1998: 112–4; Mitchell 2009: 1–2). The news of his death on 15th December after 58 days of fasting was immediately followed by violence, processions, destruction of railway property, the stoppage of trains, and looting in various towns and cities in Madras state. These disturbances resulted in police gunfire and deaths. In reality, as Lisa Mitchell's research shows, some of those shot dead did not have any interest in the Andhra movement, let alone any intention of sacrificing their lives for the creation of a Telugu state. Yet everything was incorporated into a 'single narrative' (Mitchell 2009: 189–212). The widespread disorder was read by journalists, politicians, and historians alike as 'irrefutable evidence of the collective will of the people' (2). Facing this situation, Nehru declared the formation of Andhra state, the first linguistic state created after independence. The success of this movement became an example for those demanding their own linguistic states, indicating that the central government would act once public support was actively demonstrated.

Soon after the government announced the creation of Andhra state in 1952 (the state was founded in the following year), the Chief Minister of Bombay state, Morarji Desai, decided against moving the Official Languages Bill in the Legislative Assembly. This was a response to the strong opposition from members of the Congress (*The Times of India* [henceforth, *TOI*], 30 December 1952: 1). Having observed the sudden change of the central government's policy on linguistic states, politicians in Bombay found it rather 'untimely' to decide the official language/s of Bombay state at this point. The reorganisation of states might, after all, take place in western India too.[7]

In 1953, the Indian government appointed the States Reorganisation Commission, chaired by S. Fazl Ali, to re-examine the issue of linguistic states in an attempt to avoid further disturbances. This commission received 152,250 memoranda from all over India and conducted interviews with more than 9,000 people in different parts of the country (*Report of the States Reorganisation Commission* 1955: ii). Based on this commission's report, a large-scale reorganisation of states, mainly on a linguistic basis and mostly in southern India, was to be conducted in 1956.

While the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad again submitted a memorandum to the committee to demand the creation of Maharashtra, which included Bombay city (The Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad 1954), the Bombay Citizen's Committee, previously known as the Bombay Committee, also repeated its objection to its inclusion in Maharashtra (Bombay Citizens'

Committee 1954). Among the members of the committee were leading figures in Indian commerce and industry, such as Purshottamdas Thakurdas, J.R.D. Tata, and Rameshwardas Birla. The members of the committee consisted mainly of Gujarati-speaking Hindus, Parsis, Marwaris, and Muslim mercantile communities from Gujarat (Stern 1970: 45–6). Along with the Bombay Citizens' Committee, several other organisations in Bombay and Gujarat expressed their views that the present Bombay state should not be divided on a linguistic basis, and that, if it were to be divided, Bombay should form a separate administrative unit.[8] These organisations included the All-India Sindwork Merchants' Association, the Parsi Federal Council, the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee, the Maha Gujarat Sima Samiti (the Great Gujarat Boundary Committee), and the Indian Merchants' Chamber.

Among these groups, the All-India Sindwork Merchants' Association, which claimed to represent the Sindhi residents of Bombay, including a large number of immigrants from Sind following Partition, stressed the fact that they had already been deprived of their homeland in 1947 due to Partition. In their view, only a separate state of Bombay city with its 'cosmopolitan and multi-lingual character' could provide them with the opportunity for the 'full and free development' of their life 'unfettered by any linguistic domination'.[9] The Parsi Federal Council was composed of various Parsi associations of Bombay, and it was of the opinion that the formation of a Maharashtra that included Bombay was not desirable in the larger interests of the Indian Union and particularly in the interests of Bombay city.[10] The Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, which avoided expressing its view on Bombay at the time of Dar Commission, this time openly opposed the inclusion of the city in Maharashtra under its president, S.K. Patil, who was a Maharashtrian Brahman (Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee 1954; Phadke 1979: 112–3). However, the organisation was in fact divided in this matter; there were also members within the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee who supported the Samyukta Maharashtra movement. The Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee and the Maha Gujarat Sima Samiti jointly prepared a memorandum, in which they asserted that the general consensus of opinion in Gujarat favoured the continuance of the existent composite state of Bombay (Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee 1954; Maha Gujarat Sima Samiti 1954).

The States Reorganisation Commission noted in its report submitted to the government in 1955 that along with the Samyukta Maharashtra movement, some Gujarati-speaking leaders were pressing for the formation of a separate state. Yet, it found this demand rather weak. It observed:

> Alongside the Samyukta Maharashtra movement there has also grown up a demand for the formation of Maha Gujarat by uniting the States of Saurashtra and Kutch with the Gujarati-speaking areas of Bombay.

> This demand, however, cannot be regarded as pressing, because, by and large, the Gujarati-speaking people would now seem to be content to remain in the composite State of Bombay, if it continues more or less as at present constituted.
>
> (*Report of the States Reorganisation Commission* 1955: 112–13)

The lack of interest among Gujarati elites in the creation of a separate state was evidently related to their attachment to the city of Bombay. They worried that the division of Bombay state would have negative repercussions, economically and socially. The Gujarati-speaking elite of Bombay city, including K.M. Munshi, and those in Gujarat with strong links to the city, especially in trade and commerce, preferred not to split Bombay state. For them, 'Gujarat' as a region did not necessarily have to take the form of a separate state.

In this regard, it is also worth stressing once again the unique position occupied by Bombay city in western India. When the Congress leaders created the Provincial Congress Committees in 1920, each was allocated a 'Congress province'. These provinces were formed on a linguistic basis in principle. However, the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) was created separately for Bombay city, along with the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) with its headquarters in Pune, and the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) with its headquarters in Ahmedabad. It was also officially recognised that Bombay city was an area for both Marathi and Gujarati speakers (*Report of the Thirty-five Session of the Indian National Congress, 1920*: 109). From the Congress' viewpoint, it was difficult to ignore the economic dominance of Gujarati-speaking communities such as the Parsis, Vaniyas (including Jains), and the Muslim trading communities – the Bohras, Khojas, and Memons – in this city.

For Gujarati-speaking intellectuals, Bombay was not only the centre of their political and economic activities but also a social and cultural nucleus. As discussed in previous chapters, elite families from different parts of Gujarat, including many high-caste Hindus, sent their children to Bombay to receive higher education or to look for job opportunities. The Gujarati publishing industry and various Gujarati social reform and literary organisations grew from the city.[11] The GPCC argued:

> The City [of Bombay] has, more than any other city in Gujarat, been the centre of Gujarati literary and cultural activities. In the early decades of the 19th century, the first Gujarati newspaper was founded in Bombay. Narmad, the founder of modern Gujarati literature, lived in the City, as also [*sic*] Govardhanram, the greatest novelist and Narsinhrao, the leading philologist and critic during the last fruitful years of his life; and so did several eminent scholars and literary men. The first Gujarati Literary Association—Buddhi Vardhak Sabha—was founded in the City in the middle of the last century, and a few years later, the

> Forbes Gujarati Sabha, the first society devoted to historical studies of Gujarat. The Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, a federal literary association for the whole of Gujarat, has its headquarters in the City.
>
> (Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee 1954: 15).

In this context, it was hardly surprising that the States Reorganisation Commission concluded that 'Gujarati-speaking people would now seem to be content to remain in the composite State of Bombay' in order to retain their historical and deep relationship with Bombay city. There were, however, some Gujarati groups in favour of the creation of a Gujarat or 'Maha Gujarat' consisting of the Gujarati-speaking areas in Bombay state and the princely states (including those in Saurashtra and Kutch, in spite of the linguistic and historical differences among these regions). They expected that without the Marathi-speaking elite, they would be able to hold strong social and political power in this new state.

One of the groups in favour of a separate Gujarat state was the Maha Gujarat Parishad, which had been founded in 1952 in Vallabh Vidyanagar, a town in Kheda district. It argued in its memorandum to the commission that the Gujarat region had been exploited historically by Maharashtra and that 'the common man of Gujarat' now felt that without the formation of Gujarat, his vital problems could not be solved (Maha Gujarat Parishad 1954: 56). As to the city of Bombay, however, it was also of the opinion that it should not be included in Maharashtra but should become a separate administrative unit.

Importantly, this memorandum discussed not just the issue of Bombay city but also concerns regarding the border areas between Gujarati- and Rajasthani-speaking territories and between Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking territories. Again referring to Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, which, it contended, 'stands still standard and is likely to remain so for a long time' (31), the memorandum tried to repute some of the territorial claims made by leaders of these neighbouring linguistic communities. It argued that Grierson recognised the Bhili and Khandeshi dialects as belonging to the Gujarati language and that the areas associated with these languages should thus be included in Gujarat. Similarly, the Jalor and Sirohi districts of Rajasthan should also be included in Gujarat, according to the view of this Parishad, as the languages spoken there were forms of Gujarati. The same argument was also presented by another organisation named the Charutar Vidya Mandal, based in Vallabh Vidyanagar in North Gujarat (Charutar Vidya Mandal 1952). The Dangs and the northern part of Thana district were Gujarati-speaking areas too, the Maha Guajrat Parishad further argued, again challenging the views of the Samyukta Maharashtra leaders.

The memorandum of the Parishad clearly proposed merging Saurashtra and Kutch, both of which had so far maintained their status as separate provinces, into a linguistic state of Gujarat once the latter was founded.

Explaining the history of the term 'Maha Gujarat', the Parishad argued that this term denoted the 'entire Gujarati-speaking region comprising Gujarat, Kathiawar, Cutch and other areas'. It further added that M.K. Gandhi had already used this term in the same way as early as 1924 (Maha Gujarat Parishad 1954: 58). It is clear that according to their idea of a separate state for Gujaratis, the inclusion of Saurashtra and Kutch in it was 'treated as self-evident' (Kapadia and Simpton 2010: 22).

The States Reorganisation Commission did note such demands for the formation of a separate state for Gujaratis by uniting the States of Saurashtra and Kutch with the Gujarati-speaking areas of Bombay state. Yet in the eyes of the commission, it could not be regarded as a 'pressing' request yet.

Having considered the situation in its historical and contemporary contexts, the States Reorganisation Commission concluded that Bombay state should be reconstituted as a bilingual state, with all the Marathi and Gujarati territories that had so far been outside of it included and with the Kannada region excluded and added to Mysore state. As the central government was generally unwilling to agree to the reorganisation of a state 'if the demand was made by only one of the important language groups concerned' (Brass 1990: 151), it seemed highly unlikely at this stage that Bombay state was to be divided into Maharashtra and Gujarat.

However, the central government, in view of the persistent demand from the Marathi leaders, suddenly rejected the recommendation of the States Reorganisation Committee. Instead, in November 1955, they proposed the formation of three administrative units: Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Bombay city. Ironically, this proposal was bitterly condemned by many Marathi leaders, who believed that Bombay city should be part of their state. They had forcefully called for the creation of a separate state of Maharashtra, but Maharashtra without Bombay city was not what they wanted. On 21st November 1955, one of their demonstrations against this 'three-state formula' resulted in a clash between demonstrators and police near Flora Fountain in the central part of Bombay city. The police resorted to *lathi* charges and the firing of tear gas shells before opening fire, leaving over a dozen people dead (*TOI*, 22 November 1955: 1; Phadke 1979: 135–8; Palshikar 2007: 55–60).

The police's use of firepower immediately intensified tensions between Marathi and Gujarati politicians. The supporters of Samyukta Maharashtra claimed that the Gujarat Chief Minister, Morarji Desai, represented Gujarati 'vested interests' and protected these at the cost of Marathi people. The debates over the status of Bombay began to be interpreted by supporters of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement as a fight between the 'Marathi masses' and the 'Gujarati capitalists'. In this context, questions such as which linguistic community Bombay 'originally' belonged to and whose interests should be protected in the city were hotly debated.

In January the following year, there were further police firearm incidents, again causing the loss of many lives. On 16th January 1956, the Indian

government announced the creation of the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat and the placement of Bombay city under central administration. This was fiercely criticised by Marathi leaders and a series of large-scale disturbances in the city ensued. Buses and trams were assaulted, and shops, offices, and houses were looted. A curfew was announced and large numbers of police were called upon to quell the riots (*TOI*, 17–23 January 1956). The situation was further complicated this time by the apparent targeting of Gujarati speakers. Gujarati shops and houses were attacked and many Gujarati residents were forced to move to safer places within and outside the city. According to an article in *The Times of India* dated 22nd January, 400 men, women, and children had sailed for Kutch-Mandvi the previous day, and another ship was to leave that day with over 600 evacuees. The booking offices of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company were crowded with people 'anxious to leave the city' (*TOI,* 22 January 1956: 1). Passenger trains leaving for Gujarat and Saurashtra were packed, with the majority of the passengers being women and children. The same article recorded that about 3,000 people had sought shelter at 'Kutchi Visa Oswal Jain Mahajanwadi'. These people, the article noted, comprised petty traders whose shops had been looted, their families, and those who had been compelled by 'unsocial elements' to leave their homes.

Soon after these disturbances, in a session of the Legislative Council, one of its Gujarati-speaking members argued that people in Bombay identified themselves as 'Bombayites', thus trying once again to emphasise the multilingual and cosmopolitan character of the city. He stated: 'We are Bombayites. We do not call ourselves Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, Kutchis or Kathiawadis but we call ourselves Bombayites' (*Bombay Legislative Council Debates* [henceforth, *BLCD*], Part II, 34.20 1956: 699). Their language and mode of living might be 'Gujarati', he contended, but they were 'Bombayites', not 'Gujaratis'. Attempts to stress this urban identity, however, attracted little attention in the contemporary political climate. The opinion of this member of the Legislative Council reflected a desire to differentiate between linguistic identities and those based on territories. It should also be remembered that many Marathi-speaking or Gujarati-speaking Parsis, Muslims, Christians, and Jews did not necessarily call themselves Maharashtrians or Gujaratis (for instance, see *TOI*, 23 November 1955: 5). Yet, it seems that in the face of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between linguistic identities and those based on territories.

In August 1956, the highly unstable situation in Bombay state caused the central government to once again change its policy on reorganisation. This time it decided that the territory of Bombay be reconstituted as a bilingual state, as originally suggested by the States Reorganisation Commission. As a result, the new Bombay state was to comprise the territories of the existing Bombay state minus the Abu Road *taluk* of Banaskantha district (which was to be merged into Rajasthan) and the Kannada region (to be merged into

Mysore), and plus 'Marathi-speaking' Vidharbha (then included in Madhya Pradesh)[12] and Marathwada (then included in Hyderabad), and 'Gujarati-speaking' Saurashtra and Kutch (*TOI*, 8 August 1956: 1).

Importantly, Kutch, with a large number of speakers of the Kutch language, a 'dialect' of Sindhi according to Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, was now added to this 'bilingual state' of Bombay as part of the Gujarati-speaking territory. As Sindh was now included in another nation, Pakistan, as a result of Partition, there was little chance that a separate state was to be created in India for Sindhi and Kutchi speakers even with a sizeable population of Hindu migrants from Sindh. As discussed before, in the colonial period, Kutch was categorised by contemporary leading Gujarati-speaking intellectuals and politicians as part of the Gujarat region. While the question of Bombay city attracted much attention at that time, it seems that relatively little consideration was given in the media and public debates to the position of Saurashtra and Kutch in relation to the bilingual state of Bombay and its potential impact on these areas.

The further mutation in the government's seemingly capricious policy in regard to the reorganisation of Bombay state led to more disturbances and police shootings, this time in Ahmedabad. These upheavals would have a considerable effect on the opinions of the Gujarati elite, and eventually lead to the foundation of the separate state of Gujarat.

The stories of martyrs

The government had decided to create a bilingual state of Bombay without careful negotiations with the political forces of Gujarat. It is therefore unsurprising that their announcement was received by Ahmedabad's elite with great shock and disappointment (Pathak, Parekh, and Desai 1966: 57; Phadke 1979: 189). In this bilingual state of Bombay, it was expected that Gujarati speakers would become a linguistic minority after the addition of Vidarbha and Marathwada (Sanghvi 1996: 147; Sinha 2005: 309). The previous proposal of the central government to create three administrative units – Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Bombay city – had been welcomed by the elite in North and Central Gujarat, if not in other Gujarati-speaking regions. The elite in North and Central Gujarat believed that their political and economic influence would be amplified if Ahmedabad became the capital of the new state (*TOI*, 18 January 1956: 1; Pathak, Parekh, and Desai 1966: 57; Pathak 1976: 124; Sinha 2005: 309). The fact that this previous proposal did not include the city of Bombay in Maharashtra also encouraged them to accept it. They were convinced that the welfare of the Gujarati community there would thus be protected.

On the morning of 8th August, an organisation called the National Students' Union held a meeting in Ahmedabad. Afterwards, students and others marched towards Congress House in the centre of the city to protest against the central government's decision to form a bilingual state.[13] When

the demonstrators assembled on the open ground in front of Congress House, the police opened fire, resulting in the deaths of several people. As to how and why the police opened fire, there were different narratives. *The Times of India* claimed that a peaceful protest spiralled out of the organisers' control and burst into violence, causing the police to resort to gunfire, tear gas, and *lathi* charges (*TOI*, 9 August 1956: 1). However, those involved in the Maha Gujarat movement argued that the police suddenly opened fire on demonstrators. They emphasised the brutality of the police and the Congress government behind it (Bhatt n.d.: 29–31; Yagnik III 2011: 450–1), even comparing this brutality to that of the colonial British government. According to records, some died on the spot and others died later in hospitals (*Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates* [henceforth, *BLAD*], Part I, 32.6 1956: 276; *TOI*, 9 August 1956: 1; Bhatt n.d.: 30; Kotval 1959: 15; Yagnik III 2011: 451).

Most of those who lost their lives in the police shootings on 8th August and afterwards were employees in local shops and factories, some of whom were apparently not part of the Maha Gujarat movement (Indulal Yajnik Papers,[14] subject file 95). Yet it was the deaths of young students which attracted the most public attention and were actively discussed in the political arena. The figures given by Chief Minister Morarji Desai in the Legislative Assembly record that 24 were killed in encounters with the police in Gujarat between 8th and 26th August 1956. Nineteen of these individuals died in Ahmedabad and five in other places where agitations also occurred (*BLAD,* Part I, 32.10 1956: 433–34; Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 95). Only five of these victims were students (*BLAD,* Part I, 32.10 1956: 439). The actual number of the students among the total number of victims might seem rather small in view of the contemporary and later narratives that stressed the deaths of 'innocent' and 'unarmed' young students. This is probably because stories involving students could be easily incorporated into a narrative that highlighted a genuine and powerful demand among the public for the formation of Gujarat state. Accounts of those who were not involved in the movement and yet died in the police shootings were, in contrast, difficult to relate to this narrative, even though they were also called '*shahids*' (martyrs) by leaders of the movement.[15]

It should also be noted that there were three Muslims among these 24 victims (Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 95, *Shahadat*: 27). The fact that there were Muslim victims was underlined repeatedly by the leaders of the movement in order to present an image of Hindu-Muslim unity. One of the leaders later argued in his memoir that the 'blood of Hindus and Muslims was spilled in the same place' and thus an 'atmosphere of Hindu-Muslim unity' pervaded in the movement (Bhatt n.d.: 31). Tales of 'martyrs' invoked the image of the nationalist movement. Gujarat as a region that was yet to attain the status of a separate state was equated with the image of a nation that had not attained independence. After the violence in Ahmedabad and

elsewhere, the memories of the freedom struggle were repeatedly referred to by the leaders of the Maha Gujarat movement, as discussed in more detail later.

The impact of what had happened in front of Congress House was felt widely in Ahmedabad and other towns in Gujarat. Immediately after the incident, the Ahmedabad Bar Association sent telegrams to Prime Minister Nehru and demanded an independent judicial inquiry into the 'wanton, indiscriminate, brutal and excessive police firing on innocent unarmed young students' (*TOI,* 9 August 1956: 9). It also appointed its own inquiry committee to gather information (Kotval 1959: 16; *TOI,* 9 August 1956: 9). Workers joined the movement soon after by observing a *hartal* (strike) (*TOI*, 10 August 1956: 1). The protests and unrest that followed were not confined to Ahmedabad and spread to other cities in Gujarat, such as Baroda, Rajkot, Nadiad, Kalol, Jamnagar, Surat, and Amreli (Bhatt n.d.: 37; Pathak, Parekh, and Desai 1966: 58; *TOI,* 9–14 August 1956). The leaders of the movement included those of the Praja Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and student organisations such as the Maha Gujarat Vidyarthi Samiti (Students' Committee). In these agitations, the use of firearms by the police was severely criticised along with the central government's decision to create a bilingual state of Bombay.

The images attached to these deaths often overlapped with those used in relation to the fatalities of the nationalist movement. In both cases, the deceased were seen by the supporters of the movements as 'martyrs' who dedicated their lives to their 'homeland'. For instance, on 9th August, a day after the incident, students and leaders gathered in the Gujarat College compound, which housed a memorial to a college student named Vinod Kinariwala, who had been shot dead by the police on the same date in 1942 during the Quit India movement (Gujarat College n.d.). A poem written by the famous nineteenth-century poet Narmadashankar Lalshankar, with a well-known phrase 'Jay jay garvi Gujarat', was sung. The poem was quoted again and again in this movement to enhance the image of Gujarat as a separate territory with its own history, as symbolised by Siddharaja Jayasimha (r. 1094–1143), a Rajput king of Chaulukya at its height. Narmad's description of Gujarat as Mother and his association of Gujarat with various Hindu religious sites, which added the notion of 'sacredness' to this land, also echoed with the slogans of the movement. Within the Maha Gujarat movement of the twentieth century, his ideas of Gujarat were selectively used to rationalise the establishment of Gujarat state with a clear administrative boundary. Indulal Yagnik (1892–1972), a famous Nagar Bahman social and political activist, attended the meeting in the Gujarat College compound, and felt that he was listening to the 'new state anthem of the new Gurjar state' (Yagnik III 2011: 456).

It is evident that the leaders of the Maha Gujarat movement were trying to legitimise their demand for the formation of a Gujarat state by referring to the 'great sacrifice of the martyrs'. Yagnik wrote that the 'ground

consecrated by the blood of martyrs' became 'a place of pilgrimage for the people of Gujarat' as well as 'a place of inspiration for the new struggle' (Yagnik III 2011: 460). The stories of the martyrs were repeatedly recalled to reinforce the movement's claim and to characterise their campaigns as moral acts. For instance, on 13th August, which was declared to be the *Shahid Din* (Martyrs' Day), the Maha Gujarat Vidyarthi Samiti organised a march towards Congress House (*TOI,* 14 August 1956: 1). On 15th August, Independence Day, the same organisation held a flag-hoisting function on the Law College grounds. It was, according to *The Times of India*, witnessed by 10,000 people, mostly students (*TOI*, 16 August 1956: 7). A mother of a student who had been shot dead by the police exhorted the students not to let the sacrifice of her son go in vain. On 19th August, the Maha Gujarat Vidyarthi Samiti called on students, workers, and others in Ahmedabad to observe a *janata* curfew (people's curfew) and stay inside their houses (Yagnik III 2011: 473). The Praja Socialist Party and Communist Party, along with the Textile Workers' Union, asked workers to also observe a hartal on the same day (*TOI,* 19 August 1956: 9). It was known that on this day, the GPCC was to discuss and accept the government's decision to form a bilingual state of Bombay. They would then hold a public meeting, where Morarji Desai, the Chief Minister of Bombay state, was to make a speech. The janata curfew turned out to be extremely successful, forcing the Congress to cancel the public meeting as there was no audience (Bhatt n.d.: 50–3; Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 65; *TOI*, 20 August 1956: 1).

On 23rd August, the students organised a torchlight procession and paid homage to the 'martyrs' at Congress House once again (*TOI*, 24 August 1956: 7). The next day was declared to be 'Mahagujarat Day' and 'Narmad Day', and again meetings were arranged by the students and others, in which their demands for the formation of Gujarat and for a judicial inquiry into the police shootings were repeated (*TOI*, 25 August 1956: 8).

Significantly, the deaths in the police shootings in Ahmedabad not only contributed to the growth of the Maha Gujarat movement but also diverted public attention from the 'battle for Bombay', that is, the conflict between the Marathi and Gujarati communities over the status of Bombay city. The Government of Bombay state had tried to project itself as the protector of peace and of the people, especially after the January 1956 attacks on Gujaratis by Maharashtrians in Bombay city. However, now the same government was criticised by both Maharashtrians and Gujaratis for having attacked the people.

On 9th September, the Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad (MGJP) was founded and Indulal Yagnik became its first president. According to *The Times of India*, about 1000 representatives of various citizens' committees from Gujarat, Saurashtra, and Bombay city gathered and announced that they would carry on a 'non-violent and constitutional' movement for a separate state of Gujarat (*TOI,* 10 September 1956: 7). The Parishad declared

itself as a body independent of all the existing political parties and included people of various political shades (Pathak, Parekh, and Desai 1966: 59–60).

Along with the demand for the formation of a separate Gujarat, the MGJP also insisted that a judicial inquiry be held into the police shootings of August 1956. In his speech at the public meeting held on Law College grounds to publicise the foundation of the MGJP, Yagnik stated that the 'big leaders of today' would be obliterated, while the memory of martyrs would remain immortal in the hearts of the people 'so long as the waters of the river Sabarmati flow into the ocean' (Yagnik III 2011: 489). He then gave a call to fight the coming elections on the basis of Maha Gujarat. Here again the stories of martyrs were presented to cast the creation of a linguistic state as a historical necessity.

Yagnik, in another meeting, promoted the idea that the Gujarat state was a concept passed on to them by Gandhi himself. Yagnik also referred to the name of another well-known Gujarati leader, Vallabhbhai Patel (Sardar Patel), who, Yagnik stated, had believed at the time of the formation of the state of Saurashtra (1948) that only one dream remained – the creation of Maha Gujarat (Yagnik III 2011: 488). Thus, the names of prominent nationalist leaders were used to add further weight to the struggle to establish Gujarat state. In reality, Patel was one of the members of the JVP Committee, whose report, published in 1949, strongly opposed the creation of linguistic provinces. However, the leaders of the Maha Gujarat movement wove a discourse where they were striving to fulfil the dreams of Gandhi and Patel, who were no longer alive. Nehru and the Congress government at the time were characterised as denying the wishes of these visionaries by refusing to facilitate Maha Gujarat.

The MGJP tried to project itself as a representative body of the Gujaratis as a whole, but in truth its supporters were largely those in North and Central Gujarat. The elite in South Gujarat, Saurashtra, and Kutch showed relatively little interest in this movement (Phadke 1979: 189; Wood 1984: 82–3); its success would likely mean the loss of Bombay city for them and the dominance of Ahmedabad over these areas. The foundation of a united political organisation for Maha Gujarat was nevertheless an important step towards the bifurcation of Bombay state.

In October, the MGJP held a public meeting in Ahmedabad on the same day that Nehru was to address a public meeting in this city. Here again, the memory of martyrs was used effectively to attract public attention. A big map of Gujarat with its borders lined with electric lights, was placed behind the dais. Twenty-five lamps with ghee were placed on the dais and lit by woman volunteers in the memory of the 25 martyrs (Yagnik III 2011: 493, 499). Along with the hymn of Narmadashankar, songs about martyrs were also sung, and the 'grief reached its climax' (Yagnik III 2011: 500). The Gujarat depicted by Naramadashankar was reinvoked against this backdrop. The MGJP's meeting was apparently a great success, attracting much larger crowds than Nehru's meeting (Bhatt n.d.: 72–9; Yagnik III 2011: 501).

On 1st November a bilingual state of Bombay was established. The campaigns for the formation of Maharashtra and Gujarat both continued. In 1957, the Congress lost a significant number of seats in the Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. These results threw the future of the bilingual state into question. Most of the seats in western Maharashtra went to the candidates supported by the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (SMS), the main organisation behind the Samyukta Maharashtra movement (The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti 1956). In the city of Bombay, the seats were shared almost equally by the Congress and the SMS. In Gujarat, the Congress won on the whole, though in Ahmedabad district, the MGJP-backed candidates gained more seats than the Congress in the assembly election (Pathak, Parekh, and Desai 1966: 66, 76, 136; Sirsikar 1995: 40–1; Sanghvi 1996; 148–9). Even though the Congress still won as a whole in Bombay state, the results were a stark warning for them regarding the future of this bilingual state.

A further development was observed in November of the same year. A meeting of the representatives of the SMS and the MGJP took place to discuss the possible forms of their future states. The MGJP accepted the claim of the SMS that Bombay city should be included in Maharashtra, while at the same time demanding safeguards be instituted to protect resident Gujaratis from discrimination (Phadke 1979: 258). The MGJP also suggested that financial support be provided by Maharashtra for Gujarat, as the latter, without Bombay, would find it difficult to balance its budget. As far as these organisations were concerned, the 'battle for Bombay' was no longer an obstacle for the bifurcation of Bombay state.

In August 1958, with the Congress still in power and the bilingual state of Bombay still intact, the MGJP began a series of demonstrations over issues surrounding the erection of martyrs' memorials. This activity encouraged the central and state governments to revise their policy on the reorganisation of states with even greater urgency.

The foundation of Gujarat state

After the general elections in 1957, the influence that the MGJP had established in Ahmedabad and several other parts of Gujarat began to decline, to the relief of the Congress-led state government. The membership of the MGJP rapidly decreased (Kotval 1959: 21). In the Legislative Assembly by-elections, two seats previously held by the MGJP went to the Congress. In the Local Boards elections held in 11 districts, the Congress secured 360 out of 390 seats, while the MGJP won as few as 11 (Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee 1958; 3–4). It was this situation that compelled the MGJP to revive large-scale demonstrations in 1958, with the erection of memorials for the August 1956 martyrs as their cause.

The first series of campaigns known as *khambhi* (memorial) satyagraha were begun on 8th August (Bhatt n.d.: 144–52). In public meetings preceding

this, the leaders had repeatedly criticised the 'unjust', 'undemocratic', and 'atrocious' rule of the Congress and invoked the memory of the martyrs in a passionate tone (Kotval 1959: 24–9; Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 69). Yagnik, for instance, associated the proposed memorials with holiness and spiritual power, and painted their erection as a holy act. According to the reporters sent by the Criminal Investigation Department, he argued that these memorials were like idols and that the police would not be able to touch them (Kotval 1959: 28). A person who touched them, Yagnik said, would experience burning pain. Indulal further declared that they would not resort to any violent method, and if troubles occurred and their blood was sprinkled on the martyrs' memorial, they would be most blessed (28). In public meetings, slogans such as 'Mahagujarat Zindabad (Victory to Maha Gujarat)', 'Shahido Amar Raho (Make the martyrs immortal)', and 'Shahid Smarak Banana Hai, Bhulo Mat, Bhulo Mat (We have to erect the martyrs' memorial. Don't forget, don't forget)' were shouted (Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 69, 76).

On 8th August, which was declared by the leaders of the MGJP to be 'Shahid Din', a large number of demonstrators marched towards Congress House, where the memorials were erected – one on a traffic circle opposite the building and the other on the footpath near Sardar Bhavan (*BLAD,* Part II, 6.4. 1958: 215–6; Kotval 1959: 31; Yagnik III 2011: 640). The authorities initially did nothing. This was interpreted by the demonstrators as a victory and their meeting that evening attracted a large crowd. In the words of the official commission later called to investigate the cases of police gunfire that came to occur, the memorials held a 'sentimental significance' for a large number of citizens. The District Magistrate observed that people constantly gathered round the memorials and women offered prayers, which resulted in congestion on the road and required the authorities to take some action (Kotval 1959: 40). The stories of martyrs again acted as a magnet for public attention, encouraging the leaders of the Maha Gujarat movement to place further pressure upon the central and state governments.

Without warning, the memorials were removed by the police in the early hours of 12th August. This government decision triggered serious disturbances in the city. A curfew was soon imposed and again there were cases of police shootings between 12th and 15th August, resulting in the deaths of three people. Two of these were Muslims, and their deaths again contributed to stories of Hindu-Muslim unity (Kotval 1959: 108–12; Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 69). Yagnik, as the leader of the MGJP, began a seven-day fast as a protest against the dismantling of the memorials (*TOI*, 13 August 1958: 1).

The next agitation, referred to as *smarak* (memorial) satyagraha, soon followed (Bhatt n.d. 153–63). It was conducted from 17th August on a smaller scale but for a longer period. Each day, several satyagrahis marched towards the place where the martyrs had been shot, which was now in the curfew area, to be arrested by the police. For example, on the first day, Yagnik and six others crossed the curfew line and were arrested (*TOI*, 18 August 1958: 1).

The smarak satyagraha was continued by volunteers from various Gujarati-speaking areas for 226 days until 1st April 1959 (Bhatt n.d.: 217–94). As in the case of Andhra, all these disturbances and deaths were built into a 'single narrative leading to the formation of a separate state' (Mitchell 2009: 190, 203–12).

Interestingly, the central and state governments took a markedly different attitude towards this upheaval compared to their stance in 1956. Soon after the police shootings in 1958, the then Chief Minister of Bombay state, Y.B. Chavan, publicly stated that no democratic government could take pride in causing deaths and injuries by firing upon the people (*TOI*, 22 August 1958: 5). He stressed that he had in fact asked the police not to open fire for as long as possible and apparently claimed to be the 'saddest man' in the state following the violence. In his words, there was no intention on the part of the government to hurt people's sentiments or to show any disrespect towards their 'martyrs' (*BLAD,* Part II, 6.4 1958: 216). Two months later, the Bombay government appointed Justice Kotval to hold an inquiry into these cases, a striking contrast to the 1956 response, where Morarji Desai had dismissed the demand for a judicial inquiry (M. Desai, II 1978: 69).

A change in attitude towards the demonstrations and deaths was observable in the central government too. In one of his letters to the Governor of Bombay state in March 1957, Nehru expressed the view that the people were excited not because of the formation of the bilingual state but because of 'the firings and the deaths and also the lack of any expression of regret and sympathy'. Nehru also mentioned that he had met Chavan at the time and told him frankly that the Bombay government lacked the human touch and this hurt people 'even more than any actual occurrence' (*Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* 37 2006: 322–3). By 1958, both the central and state governments found it necessary to show a more sympathetic attitude towards the victims of the police shootings. The widely publicised disorder and violence had already greatly damaged the governments' reputation and legitimacy. The coming general elections in 1962 also had to be considered. In view of this situation, the Congress leadership unsurprisingly amended their approach to the 'martyrs'.

This change on the part of the Congress was further facilitated by the development of the close relationship between the SMS and the MGJP. On 16th August, the Executive Committee of the Bombay City, SMS, decided to organise a rally in front of the Council Hall. This would take place two days later and protest the removal of the martyrs' memorials and police shootings in Gujarat (*TOI,* 17 August 1958: 1). The next day a mass meeting was held in Bombay under the same organisation to observe 'Maha Gujarat Day'. S.M. Joshi, General Secretary of the SMS, presided over the meeting and declared that the SMS would send volunteers from Maharashtra to participate in the smarak satyagraha in Ahmedabad (*TOI,* 18 August 1958: 1). Around the same time, some leaders of the SMS announced a plan to erect a martyrs' memorial at Flora Fountain in Bombay, commemorating those

killed in the police shootings in November 1955 (*TOI*, 17 August 1958: 1; 18 August 1958: 1).

In the eyes of some Gujarati politicians who did not support the Maha Gujarat movement, the alliance between the SMS and the MGJP was rather puzzling. One Gujarati member in the Legislative Council pointed out that not long prior to this, the leaders of the Maha Gujarat movement were busy condemning Maharashtrians for their alleged involvement in the 1956 Bombay city disturbances, where Gujaratis had been attacked and their shops looted (*BLCD,* Part II, 6.3 1958: 119). However, the previous conflicts between Gujaratis and Maharashtrians over the city of Bombay were now allowed to recede into the background.

At the end of 1959, the Indian government finally decided to divide Bombay state into Maharashtra (in which Bombay city was included) and Gujarat. Some of the border areas claimed by both Maharashtra and Gujarat, for instance, the Dangs district, were included in Gujarat. Chief Minister Y.B. Chavan later described this decision as being 'in the nature of compromise', implying that these areas were given to Gujarat because the latter gave up its claim to Bombay (*BLAD*, Part II, 10.9 1960: 394).

In March 1960, the Bombay Reorganisation Bill was presented to the legislature in Bombay State for discussion. Before the debates started, Chavan read out the 'Statement of Government Policy'. This assured its residents that the cosmopolitan character of Bombay city would be preserved and that special attention would be paid to its development (*BLAD*, Part II, 10.9 1960: 391). The fact that such assurances had to be made suggests that the non-Marathi population in the city held deep concerns about the birth of Maharashtra.

Congress leaders in Maharashtra began to weave the martyrs celebrated by the leaders of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement into the official discourse of the state. For instance, Chavan, who was to become the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra, now confessed that he had in fact supported the idea of a unilingual state of Maharashtra even when the central government decided to form the bilingual state in 1956 (*BLAD,* Part II, 10.9 1960: 392). In 1961, Chavan publicly paid homage to the shahids in the Samyukta Maharashtra movement when the SMS laid the foundation stone of a martyrs' memorial near Flora Fountain on 21st November, the same date on which the police had opened fire in 1955 (*TOI*, 22 November 1961: 1, 7).

In Gujarat, the change in the government's position was slow compared to Maharashtra. In the Legislative Assembly, which was dominated by the Congress, the issue of the erection of a martyrs' memorial was raised without further action for several years. Despite this, the Shahid Smarak Samiti (Martyrs' Memorial Committee) continued to ask the government to allow them to erect a memorial in front of Congress House (Bhatt n.d.: 213–4). On 8th August 1966, ten years after the incident, the MGJP organised a movement to demand the erection of a memorial, and yet it failed to attract much public support (Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 128;

TOI, 9 August 1966: 1, 9). At last, in 1967, negotiations began between the government and the Shahid Smarak Samiti through a former leader of the Maha Gujarat movement, Brahmakumar Bhatt, who had by then become the General Secretary of the GPCC (Bhatt n.d.: 214). The passing of over a decade and the security of Gujarat's steady industrial and commercial development even without Bombay city allowed Congress leaders to make this concession. Their interpretations of the Maha Gujarat movement and the deaths related to it could be safely revised. Permission was given for the Samiti to erect a memorial on the footpath in front of Congress House.

On 19th September 1968, the memorial's inauguration ceremony was held – the same day as Gandhi's birthday according to the Vikram calendar (Bhatt n.d.: 216; Yagnik III 2011: 653). Compared to its counterpart in Maharashtra, this memorial was notably smaller. It consisted of a base inscribed in Gujarati and English with the following word: 'In the sacred memory of the martyrs who have fulfilled our dream of Maha Gujarat'. The statue above the inscriptions was that of a man holding a torch in his right hand and a book in his left, which clearly invoked the image of a student. The ceremony was presided over by Indulal Yagnik as a representative of the Shahid Smarak Committee in the presence of the General Secretary of the GPCC (Brahmakumar Bhatt), the Minister of Education as the representative of the state government, and other officials (Bhatt n.d.: 216). The families of shahids also attended the function. The state government had at last agreed to absorb the stories of martyrs into official discourse.

In 1961, the Gujarat Legislature named both Hindi and Gujarati as the official languages of the state (*The Gujarat Official Language Act*, 1960). As the inclusion of Hindi in the official act suggests, it was widely accepted by the Gujarati elite as the official language of India and thus as a language whose development they should promote. Yet, there is no doubt that Gujarati was the main official language of the state; Gujarat was and continues to be widely understood as a state for Gujarati speakers.

Yet ambiguities persisted in regard to the relationship between linguistic communities and state boundaries. For instance, Bombay city continued to be a multilingual city with a prominent presence of Gujarati speakers, especially in economic activities. In the words of Sujata Patel, Bombay 'became firmly integrated within the state of Maharashtra and its ethnic and cultural heritage' after the state's formation and started being redefined both politically and in people's imaginations (Patel 2003: 5). Yet the continuing existence of a sizeable non-Marathi urban population led to the rise of political groups strongly against this situation. In 1966, Shiv Sena, a regional party of Maharashtra, was founded by Bal Keshav Thackeray, whose father was an active leader of the SMS. Thackeray started publishing a Marathi weekly, *Marmik* (Essence), in 1960, in which he claimed that Bombay was still not in the hands of Marathi speakers. The city, he declared, had been invaded by non-Marathi speakers. In particular, he deplored the presence of South Indians in the city, who, in his view, deprived the former of their

Figure 6.1 The memorial for the 'Martyrs' in Maha Gujarat Movement (Photo by the author, Ahmedabad, 2009).

jobs (Gupta 1982: 61; Lele 1995: 190; T. Hansen 2001: 46; Palshikar 2007: 238; Prakash 2010: 231–5). Shiv Sena claimed to represent the interests of Marathi speakers irrespective of class differences and succeeded in obtaining support from a wide range of Marathi residents. Shiv Sena later changed their target and attacked Muslims and North Indians, whom they also portrayed as 'outsiders'.[16]

Shiv Sena and another party, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, founded in 2006 by Raj Shrikant Thackeray, a nephew of Bal Thackeray, continuously attempted to marginalise 'outsiders'. Paradoxically, these efforts in fact

demonstrate that the multilingual and multicultural aspects of Bombay (or Mumbai, as it was renamed in 1995 under the state government consisting of the BJP and Shiv Sena) survived, despite such attempts to suppress them.

Needless to say, it was not Bombay city alone that continued to be a multilingual space. If we look at Gujarat itself, the 2011 Census shows that 86 per cent of the state population considered Gujarati as their mother tongue, inferring that the rest considered other languages to be their first. The presence of Kutchi and Sindhi speakers should be remembered here. However, the perception that the 'majority' of the population in Gujarat speak Gujarati has been repeatedly reinforced in official state discourse (Chokshi and Trivedi 1989: 326; Kothari 2010: 172). As Rita Kothari argues, what is implicit here is an elision of other languages by representing them as a 'departure from the norm'. Her study on the Sindhis in Gujarat vividly depicts the impact that this dominant perception of the state and language has on the way people choose the languages they use (Kothari 2009, 2010).

The idea of Gujarat as a state for Gujarati speakers has led some sections of the population there that have been marginalised to demand a separate state for themselves. For instance, some leaders in Kutch, where a sizeable population speak Kutchi or Sindhi, have been arguing that Kutch should be a separate state. This is partly due to the manner in which this region has been 'peripheral to the political life of modern Gujarat' (Simpson 2010: 81). The discontented elite there have advocated the need to have a 'separate political and administrative identity, free from "step-motherly" Gujarat' (81).

We can also note that some sections of the adivasis in South Gujarat, whose mother tongues are considerably different from Gujarati (despite being often described as 'dialects' of Gujarati), have presented the idea of creating Bhil Pradesh (Bhil state). This state should be formed, in their view, for the tribal communities in South Gujarat as well as for those living in different territories within other neighbouring states, that is, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.[17] Such a move challenges the notion that Bhil language is a 'dialect' of the Gujarati language and thus its speakers should be part of Gujarat state. There is also a move among Dalit writers to challenge or 'bypass' the dominance of standard Gujarati. Some Dalit writers find English useful for this purpose and try to present their works in this language. For them, standard Gujarati can be seen as a symbol of their suppressed and marginalised position in the region. They feel that 'being translated into English' allows them to 'bypass local politics' where the dominance of high-caste elites continues to be felt (Kothari 2007, 2013).

The idea of Gujarat for Gujarati speakers has the potential to promote an exclusive attitude towards non-Gujarati speakers. In Gujarat, there is no political party equivalent of Shiv Sena that endorses the protection of the interests of 'natives' from 'outsiders'. Yet a recent incident in which non-Gujarati labourers from North India were attacked on a large scale[18] indicated the potential power of this idea over residents in certain conditions. It should also be noted that with the recent rise of Hindu nationalism in this region,

we sometimes come across the perception that Muslims are essentially Urdu speakers. This notion stresses the difference between Hindus and Muslims not only in terms of religion but also of language (Ghassem-Fachandi 2012: 130).[19] In reality, many Muslims in Gujarat speak the Gujarati language and religious identities do not necessarily determine which language/s one should speak or does speak in daily life. The stories of martyrs who died for the Maha Gujarat movement actively emphasised 'Hindu-Muslim unity', thereby in a certain sense acknowledging Gujarati-speaking Muslims.[20] Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the position of Muslims remained marginalised within colonial and postcolonial conceptions of Gujarat and Gujaratis. Within recent years, this feature appears to have become even more prominent with the increasing influence of Hindutva ideology.[21]

In contrast with Muslims, Parsis continued to be associated with the Gujarati language, especially with what is known as 'Parsi Gujarati'. However, in reality, the influence of this 'dialect' declined greatly even among members of the community. The use of English in both public and private spheres became widespread among the Parsi elite in urban areas, due to their close relationship with colonial rule and their high social and economic positions as a result of that relationship.[22] The dominance of high-caste Hindus in Gujarati literary circles further facilitated this development. Today, Parsi Gujarati is even considered an endangered language by linguists (Modi 2011: 1–5).

The status and power of the Gujarati language as a symbol of the state and an identity-marker of its population will not be easily shaken. Yet we should remind ourselves that the equation of Gujarat (which is associated with a fixed territory) and Gujarati speakers in its present form is a largely modern development. The linguistic situation will never be as simple as a single ideological stance. As this book has illustrated, the categories of languages are always ambiguous and open to questioning, redefinition, and reconstruction. Many 'languages' and 'dialects' continue to be used concurrently by the residents of the same region. Moreover, people constantly move across the borders of the states, bringing languages with them. Language choices too can be dynamic; different languages/dialects are often used by the same people for different purposes, and the mechanisms behind their choices can evolve according to their status and environment. The relationship between languages, people, and territory is never static.

Conclusion

In Gujarat, the demand for a separate state of Gujarati speakers gained momentum only in the late 1950s. Mercantile and other networks connected different parts of Gujarat with each other and the world, and had a deep relationship with the city of Bombay. This made it difficult for the Gujarati elite to imagine a separate state of Gujarat without Bombay. Yet, as the movement to create a separate state of Maharashtra intensified, some

sections of the elite in North and Central Gujarat began to demand the creation of a separate state with Ahmedabad as its centre. Finally, Bombay state was bifurcated in 1960 and the state of Gujarat was born.

In the official discourse of the Gujarat state, its foundation is projected as a 'natural' consequence of the people's will. In reality, however, the story of its creation does not feature a straight and clear path to success. It is certainly not the tale of the fulfilment of an age-long dream held close by Gujarati speakers. Debates on issues of language inevitably continue, and people will go on negotiating with the idea of Gujarat as a place for Gujarati speakers in a highly complex linguistic reality.

Notes

1. This chapter is based on Isaka (2015b). The ideas presented in my earlier publications (Isaka 2011; 2015a) are also incorporated into some parts of this chapter.
2. On the process in which linguistic states were founded, see King 1998; Sarangi 2009; Sarangi and Pai 2011; Kudaisya 2014, 2017.
3. On Kutch and its relationship with 'mainland Gujarat', see Ibrahim 2008, 2010; Kothari 2010; Simpson 2010.
4. Ambedkar's ideas of the reorganisation of states are analysed in detail in Pai and Kumar 2014; Godsmark 2020.
5. 'Memorandum Submitted by the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad's Deputation to the Linguistic Provinces Commission on 4th November, 1948' (Maharashtra's Case n.d.: 29-39). On the Samyukta Maharashtra movement, see, for example, Stern 1970; Phadke 1979; T. Hansen 2001; Palshikar 2007.
6. On the way in which Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* contributed to the shaping of regional languages and cultures in different parts of India, see Majeed (2019b).
7. The Bill that was to be moved in the Legislative Assembly at that time chose Hindi as the official language of Bombay state above the district level. This idea had already provoked a strong opposition from the members of the Assembly who feared that the regional languages would receive a 'severe setback' (*TOI*, 30 December 1952: 1).
8. 'Resolutions Passed by Organisations in the City in Support of the Memorandum Submitted by the Bombay Citizens' Committee', Purshotamdas Thakurdas Papers, subject file 383, NMML. Also see Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee (1954).
9. 'Resolutions passed by organisations in the city in support of the Memorandum submitted by the Bombay Citizen's Committee', Purshotamdas Thakurdas Papers, subject file 383, NMML.
10. Ibid.
11. On the significance of Bombay for the intellectual and cultural activities of the Gujarati speakers, see Mallison 1995: 76–87; Shukla 1995: 88–98; Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee 1954: 13–18.
12. Although Vidharba was not included in Bombay State in the recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission, it was included in the bilingual state of Bombay when its foundation was decided by the government in August 1956.
13. This demonstration and the subsequent development of the Maha Gujarat movement were described in detail in memoirs written by the leaders of this movement. See, for example, Bhatt n.d.; Khambholja 2004; Yagnik III 2011.

14. In publications and records in English, Indulal Yagnik was also written as Indulal Yajnik.
15. Among the victims, there was even a central government officer who was originally from Madras and who had come to Ahmedabad only two days before. Later a booklet entitled *Shahadat* (martyrdom) was published by those involved in the movement to record the details of the people who had died in the disturbances in August 1956 (Indulal Yajnik Papers, subject file 95, *Shahadat*: 14; Yagnik III 2011: 498).
16. This can be compared with a similar development in Bangalore. Bangalore has been a multilingual and metropolitan city like Bombay, and yet has been 're-territorialized' by the people who lay 'increasing claim to the city as a regional, rather than a national or international metropolis' (Nair 2009: 372).
17. For instance, see the article entitled 'BTP demands separate Bhil Pradesh for tribals' (*TOI*, 5 January 2019).
18. In this incident, after it was reported that a girl from a family of Thakor, a high caste in this region, had been raped by a migrant labourer from Bihar, attacks on non-Gujarati workers began in some areas. The media reported the 'mass exodus of workers' from Bihar, UP, and MP from Gujarat due to this incident (*TOI*, 9 October 2018).
19. On the idea of Gujarat and the Gujaratis projected in contemporary politics of Hindutva, see, for instance, Yagnik and Sheth 2005; Ghassem-Fachandi 2012; Ibrahim 2012; Jaffrelot 2016. There are many significant works on the riots/pogrom in Gujarat after the Godhra incident in 2002 that this book cannot fully cover.
20. Even recently, when the family members of the 'martyrs' were invited and honoured in one of the functions organised to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Gujarat state in 2010, a Muslim named Gulam Mohammad Gulamhusain Momin was invited too. He was, according to an article in the newspaper, a relative of one of the martyrs (*The Hindu*, 2 May, 2010).
21. There have been literati who continued to write their works in Gujarati in Pakistan, mainly in Sindh, even after Partition. The stories of Gujarati-speaking Muslims in Pakistan can be compared with those of Sindhi-speaking Hindus in India, as discussed by Gopika Jadeja in her forthcoming article.
22. For details of the Parsi elite in colonial and postcolonial India and their use of English, see Kulke 1978; Luhrman 1996; Palsetia 2001.

Conclusion

This book has explored how ideas of language were expressed by the literati in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Gujarat. In the process, it has traced how certain ideas of language, linguistic communities, and linguistic territories rose to the fore. The agents behind these debates were those educated in the institutions for higher education introduced in the colonial period. For them, English was not only the language of rulers but also of modernity. Possessed with this knowledge and with their self-perception as leaders of society, they began to take a keen interest in redefining 'their' language, Gujarati.

Literary circles in colonial Gujarat were dominated by highly educated, high-caste Hindus, especially those belonging to the Nagar Brahmans and Vaniyas (including Jains). This social composition, analysed in Chapter 3 of this book, is evident in the membership of the Gujarat Vernacular Society. The structure and activities of this society were based on similar organisations found in Europe. They enjoyed a close relationship with the colonial government and were heavily involved in educational activities, allowing the leading members to play a key role in defining the 'standard' and 'correct' form of the Gujarati language. Their beliefs also shaped perceptions of what constituted 'good' and 'useful' literature.

Alongside the dominant high-caste members of the literary circles were the Parsi elite. Despite their success in education, administration, business, and the press in western India, they remained marginalised within debates on the Gujarati language. The voice of the Muslim elite was even less heard than that of the Parsis. The dominance of high-caste intellectuals in discussions over the Gujarati language and literature continued to be unchallenged.

When in the late nineteenth century, the state and the leading intellectuals began to make attempts to define and disseminate the 'standard' form of Gujarati, it is not surprising that the language of the high-caste Hindus in and around Ahmedabad was chosen as the model. In the process, other forms, including 'Parsi Gujarati', were relegated to the status of 'dialect'. 'Parsi Gujarati' was regarded as a 'corrupt' form of the language, with 'peculiar' pronunciations, spellings, and the inclusion of many 'foreign' words.

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Towards the end of the nineteenth century, some high-caste intellectuals even began to advocate the Sanskritisation of the Gujarati language, trying to replace words of 'foreign origin' (Persian, Arabic, and English words) with Sanskrit equivalents. The high-caste literati were not entirely united in their attitudes, however. It is noteworthy that some aired critical opinions against Sanskritised Gujarati, suggesting that different ideas of language were constantly expressed and in competition even within dominant literary circles.

Along with issues of language, the same elite in late-nineteenth-century Gujarat took a deep interest in developing new forms of literature. They wrote poems and novels with famous English literary works in mind, for instance. These texts often reflected concepts of nation and nationalism that had been imbibed through colonial education and Western literature. A strong attachment to Gujarat and the Gujarati language began to be articulated in poems and novels, as can be seen in Narmadashankar's patriotic poem, 'Jay jay garvi Gujarat'. Yet the imagined territory that they depicted with this language continued to be ambiguous.

These literati further tried to define the literary tradition of Gujarat, again utilising theories of nation, national history, and national literature articulated in the West. In elite narratives, Gujarat's literary tradition was full of Jain literature and Hindu bhakti poems, reflecting the dominance of high-caste intellectuals. The widespread perception of Gujarat as the 'country of merchants' was also incorporated into their conceptualisation of Gujarati language and literature.

The late-nineteenth-century discussions had a significant impact on elite notions of language in the following period, which was characterised by the rise of nationalism and Gandhi. While organising social and political activities, Gandhi continuously presented his ideas on issues of language. His thorough criticism of the use of English for education and communication, and his advocacy of the mother tongue instead, evidently differed from the general attitude of the elite in the preceding period, who had a strong belief in the role of English education in modernising and developing society. Gandhi further urged intellectuals to have dialogues with the 'people' and develop literature for them. This corresponded with his advocacy of a simple form of Gujarati. It is not difficult to understand why Jhaverchand Meghani's works, especially his collection of folk stories and songs, were highly appreciated by Gandhi and attracted much attention from the 'Gandhian' literati.

In spite of Gandhi's emphasis on the importance of the mother tongue and encouragement of learning from the 'people', he took a great interest in spreading a standard form of Gujarati among those who spoke 'dialects' that diverged from it. Some of his arguments in this regard sound similar to those expressed by the leading high-caste intellectuals in the late nineteenth century. His strong criticism of Parsi Gujarati is one such example. His desire to define and spread standard Gujarati, however, came largely from

his wish for language to provide a tool of communication for a wide range of people; it did not come from the intention of following the example of nation states in the 'West'. He believed that a common language should be developed in Gujarat in order to unite people across communities and classes. In his view, the introduction of English education had created an unbridgeable gap among Indians, namely, the gap between the English-educated elite and everyone else. Therefore, although Gandhi's personal attachment to Sanskrit and his emphasis on its centrality to religious education sometimes made his ideas on language look similar to those of earlier high-caste intellectuals who advocated Sanskritisation, his viewpoint ultimately differed significantly.

Gandhi's unique approach to language issues is even more apparent in contemporary debates on the national language. Gandhi was convinced that Hindustani with two scripts should be the national language of India. In his opinion, this language was already used by a large number of people and was easy to learn even for non-Hindi speakers. In Gujarat, Gandhi seemingly obtained support for his choice from a wide range of elite. Yet, what Hindustani actually meant and how it should be developed remained debatable. K.M. Munshi, a leading intellectual of the Gandhian era, became involved in the deliberations on national language and literature under Gandhi's influence, and after independence played a crucial role in the Constituent Assembly debates on the official language of India. However, he openly expressed his disagreement with Gandhi's insistence on a simple and colloquial form of Hindustani. Munshi believed that the national language should be one that allows people to express their thoughts fully. For Hindustani to become such a language, he argued, there was no alternative except resorting to the use of Sanskrit words. According to his view, with the help of Sanskrit alone, they could make Indian languages (including Hindi and Gujarati) as powerful as European languages (Chapter 5). It is evident that Munshi's idea of a national language was based on his understanding of modern languages in the West. In spite of their difference of opinion, both Gandhi and Munshi directly or indirectly contributed to making Hindi the official language of the Indian Union after independence, even though this Hindi was not the same as the Hindustani advocated by Gandhi.

Interestingly, political leaders in Gujarat not only willingly accepted Hindi as the common language of India but also made it one of the two official languages in Gujarat state after its foundation in 1960. Its main official language is undoubtedly Gujarati, but the status of Hindi in Gujarat is striking in comparison with other linguistically based states. The decision of Gujarat state to accept Hindi as one of its official languages seems to suggest yet again the lingering influence of Gandhi in this region.

As the debates on regional languages and the national language progressed, a series of discussions on the relationship between language and territory developed among the literati in different parts of colonial India.

Gujarat enjoyed a unique position in these talks due to its mercantile networks that spread into western India and beyond, and the importance of Bombay city for Gujarati speakers. These factors discouraged the elite from demanding a separate state for their linguistic community. However, as other regions took up this demand, especially their Marathi-dominant neighbouring region, the Gujarati-speaking elite began to reconsider their stance. Marathi-speaking supporters of the idea of Maharashtra maintained that their new territory should include Bombay city and certain border areas. This gradually drew a counterargument from the Gujarati-speaking elite, who equally lay claim to these border areas while stressing at the same time the multilingual character of Bombay city. They also began to emphasise that Saurashtra and Kutch were integral parts of Gujarati-speaking territory, showing little attention to the geographical, linguistic, and historical difference between 'mainland' Gujarat and these areas. As the high-caste elite from 'mainland' Gujarat defined the Gujarat region and language throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods, the imaginary border of their Gujarat continued to be redrawn.

In the late 1950s, the Maha Gujarat movement, which demanded a separate state for Gujarati speakers, gained momentum. It was centred on the elite in and around Ahmedabad, whose political and economic influence, it was expected, would increase if a separate state was to be created. Once the Maha Gujarat movement became active, literary works of late-nineteenth-century Gujarat, written under the influence of Western nationalism were incorporated into its discourse. So too were various forms of rhetoric and symbols used in the nationalist movement. For instance, Narmadashankar's poem, 'Jay jay garvi Gujarat', passionately praising this region, was repeatedly cited in the campaigns. The names of Gandhi and Patel were referred to and satyagrahas and fasts were organised, invoking the memory of the freedom struggle. After some people were killed by police shooting during the demonstration in Ahmedabad in August 1956, these victims were projected by the leaders of the movement as 'martyrs' for Maha Gujarat. Although strong objections to the disintegration of Bombay state continued to exist among the Gujarati-speaking elite until the last, the state of Gujarat was formed in 1960. Once it was formed, the entire process until then was reconstructed as the story of the making of Gujarat state. Its creation was now projected as a natural and inevitable result of a people's long-held dream. Along with the stories of the formation of other linguistic states, this narrative was comfortably included in the larger saga of nation-building in independent India.

While this book has focused on those who played a leading role in defining the Gujarati language and an associated territory, it has also briefly noted how the same debates on language can unfold differently depending on one's perspective. When we focus on those who were marginalised in these debates – for instance, Parsis or the communities of Kutchi and Sindhi

speakers – the narrative becomes one of negotiation with a dominant force and resistance. Their stories need to be explored further elsewhere.

India has long been 'accustomed to a multiplicity of "tongues"' (Washbrook 1991: 180), as well as to a multiplicity of linguistic ideas and usages. The range of languages may be constrained by environment, but people choose, define, and reconstruct languages for themselves according to specific contexts, purposes, and strategies. Active and rich debates on language in Gujarat and India continue to thrive among diverse social groups and individuals and will do so into the future, constantly reminding us of the role of language as a symbol of power and identity.

Glossary

adivasi	a term referring to the tribal population; literally means 'original inhabitants'
ahimsa	non-violence
akhyan	narratives in verse
asmita	consciousness
bhajan	hymn, devotional song
bhakti	devotion to God
bhasha	language
Dalit	a term referring to the people formerly called the 'untouchables'; literally means the 'oppressed'
desh	country
diwan	Chief Minister of princely states
hartal	strike
itihas	history
janata	people
katha	story
kavi	poet
kavya	poem
kosh	dictionary
Krishna	a deity in Hinduism and one of the incarnations of Vishnu
lathi	a stick used as a weapon
Maha Gujarat	Great Gujarat
Maharaja	a ruler of a princely state; also refers to a head of the Vallabhacharya sect
mulla	a Muslim teacher, a man learned in Islam
nagarsheth	a head of a Jain community, a leading figure of a city
pandit	a learned man (mostly Brahman)
parishad	conference
pradesh	province, state
praja	people
Purana	a class of work containing mythological accounts and legends of ancient India

Pushtimarg	one of the Vaishnava sects; also called the Vallabhacharya sect; literally means 'path of fostering'
raj	rule; also refers to British rule in particular
rashtriya	national
sabha	society, association, meeting
sadhu	an ascetic, monk
sahitya	literature
samachar	news
samaj	society, association
samiti	committee
sammelan	conference
satyagraha	Gandhian style of non-violent protest or resistance; literally means 'holding on to truth'
shahid	martyr
swadeshi	'of one's own country'; also refers to a campaign advocating the use of products made in one's country
swaraj	self-rule
Vaishnava	a devotee of Vishnu
Vishnu	a deity in Hinduism
yug	age, era

Chronology

1820	Foundation of the Native School and School Book Committee (as part of the Bombay Education Society)
1822	*Bombay Samachar* (a Gujarati newspaper, originally *Shri Mumbaina Samachar*) started
1835	Two Elphinstone professorships endowed from a public fund
1848	Foundation of the Gujarat Vernacular Society
1854	Establishment of the first cotton mill in Bombay *Buddhiprakash* (a Gujarati journal) begins to be published by the Gujarat Vernacular Society
1857	Foundation of the University of Bombay
1861	First cotton mill in Ahmedabad opens Foundation of Gujarat Provincial College
1869	Birth of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (–1948)
1884	Foundation of the Gujarat Sabha
1885	Foundation of the Indian National Congress
1905	Foundation of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad
1915	Gandhi returns to India from South Africa
1918	Kheda satyagraha takes place
1920–22	Non-cooperation Movement
1930–34	Civil Disobedience Movement
1942	Quit India Movement
1947	India and Pakistan gain independence
1949	Adoption of the Constitution of India (enforced in 1950)
1953	Appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission
1956	Major reorganisation of states Foundation of the Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad (MGJP)
1960	Bifurcation of Bombay state Foundation of Gujarat state

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