

Cultural implications in Bhojpuri Folk Proverbs With Reference to Kashika

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Abstract

Folk proverbs and sayings mirror the culture and language of the people, it is an important part of the culture of human language. In fact, the main purpose of this research article is elucidations of Bhojpuri folk proverbs, which embody various facets of life, social experience, attitudes and tastes, mental and ethical and aesthetic beliefs and principles. Proverbs in different languages due to different historical conditions express similar thoughts in different ways, thus reflecting the different social structures and lifestyles of the peoples. Moreover, this article deals with the analysis of systematic and methodological value of using proverbs in Bhojpuri.

A proverb is observed as the product of people's cultural and social experience and it is fixed in the language as a stable unit, in which immediate constituents maintain its lexical-semantic meaning, but as a unity it has a secondary nomination. Proverbs reflect people's specificity of outlook and attitude.

Keywords: Bhojpuri, proverbs, cultural implications, Kashika – Varanasi region.

Introduction

Proverbs are not only the manifestation of people's nature, wisdom, understanding and thinking but also reveal various aspects of social experience, attitude and taste, mental, ethical, and aesthetic values and the most importantly cultural values of the place. It also reflects the

mindset of the people, lifestyles, belief and superstitions. Basically, the study of proverbs is called paremiology (from Greek παροιμία - paroimía, "proverb") and can be dated back as far as Aristotle (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). Many attempts at definition have been made from Aristotle to the present time, ranging from philosophical considerations to cut-and-dried lexicographical definitions" (Meider, 2004, p. 1).

Meider (1985: 119) has defined the proverb as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation". An Iranian scholar H. Mollanazar (2001: 53) has conveyed his own notion about the proverb as "a unit of meaning in a specific context through which the speaker and hearer arrive at the same meaning." Linguist N.R. Norrick (1985, p.78) has proposed the following definition for the proverb: "The proverb is a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with general meaning, a potential free conversational turn, preferably with figurative meaning."

In proverbs the rich historical experience of the people, the ideas connected with work life and culture of the people are reflected in its crude form. Consequently, proverbs are special expressions which have many expressive dimensions.

The New Oxford Dictionary of English gives the following definition of proverb "short, pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice." *Encyclopedia Britannica* has a definition "Succinct and pithy saying in general use, expressing commonly held ideas and beliefs." It is also said that "Proverbs are part of every spoken language and are related to such other forms of folk literature as riddles and fables that have originated in oral tradition. Comparisons of proverbs found in various parts of the world show that the same kernel of wisdom may be gleaned under different cultural conditions and languages."

Famous paremiologist A. Dundes gives more detailed definition of a proverb: "A proverb is a traditional saying that sums up a situation, passes judgment on a past matter, or recommends a course of action for the future" (*Encyclopedia Britannica online /britannica.com*). Some

proverbs state a fact, such as “Honesty is the best policy”. We agree with the Georgian linguist M. Rusieshvili, who remarks that the basis of the proverb is figurativeness; it displays deep cognition and inner conception of the universe by mankind. It differs from general knowledge by providing a stable image of inner deep opposition of the universe, preserved in the language through centuries.

According to Mieder (1998: 21) “proverbs contain the practical wisdom of a culture it has accumulated through the centuries. They deal with social situations and their uses are manifold: to strengthen our arguments, express certain generalizations, influence or manipulate other people, rationalize our own shortcomings, question certain behavioral patterns, satirize social ills, poke fun at ridiculous situations” They do not just describe situations and actions but appeal to our beliefs, feelings, wisdom and culture.

Research Method

This research basically employs qualitative descriptive method to identify, analyze and to explain phenomena of social and cultural values in Bhojpuri proverbs related to flora, fauna and social relations. These traditional proverbs are collected from some websites on Google.

Bhojpuri

Bhojpuri serves as a regional language, spoken in sections of north- central and eastern India. It is spoken in the neighboring region of the southern plains of Nepal. Bhojpuri as a language is also spoken in Guyana, Suriname, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago and Mauritius. As for the decision of the government of India, during the enumeration of census, they had disagreed and estimated Bhojpuri to be a dialect of Hindi. However, presently, the government of India has contrived to grant Bhojpuri a statutory status as a national scheduled language. Bhojpuri is being split when sharing vocabulary with Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, and other Indo-Aryan language of northern India. The literature in Bhojpuri was more tilted and inclined towards the humanitarian sentiments and conflicts. Its folk lore, and folk culture are revived by the eminent presence of writers, poets, politicians, and actors. Like other languages Bhojpuri also has figurative touch in many contexts.

This present study is grounded on Bhojpuri spoken in Varanasi region also known as **Kashika**.

Analysis of the Cultural implications in Bhojpuri Folk Proverbs

Like the proverbs in other languages, Bhojpuri proverbs also focus on moralistic and cultural functions and how the competence of the vernacular people in the use of proverbs reflects the possession of cultural wisdom, collective wisdom; social experience, gained knowledge and cognition of environment stimulate developing treasures of language units - proverbs, sayings and idioms. Here, we can consider and analyze the following proverbs in perspective of cultural implications:

1. *Sautin ke khees kathauti par*

Literal Meaning: Man's second or co-wife's anger on wooden platter (used for kneading flour)

Semantic Kernel: Taking revenge (or getting angry) from some innocent person for the fault of some other person.

This proverb consists of words which imply the culture of Bhojpurians such as the word 'sautin' and 'kathauti'. The term 'sautin' indicates that in Bhojpuri culture more than one wife can be kept by a man, and 'kathauti' is a wooden platter used to knead flour for a big family. It is also termed as 'kathwat', it is more spacious than a normal steel platter. The literal meaning of the proverb is a co-wife releases her anger on wooden platter while kneading flour as she tosses it hard, and the wooden platter collides against the ground. But the semantic kernel is **Taking revenge (or getting angry)** from some innocent person for the fault of some other person. So here the actual meaning is imbibed in co-wife's kitchen activity. Therefore, it is demonstrated that even a single word can have cultural implication.

2. *aage naath na paachhe pagahaa, binaa chhanh ke kude gadahaa*

Literal Meaning: No rope in the nostril, no tether behind, ass jumps without rope-check (*donkey's front and rear legs are tied with rope so that it cannot jump or move far*).

Semantic Kernel: A person without any liability or responsibility is as reckless as an unhindered ass!

The proverb (2) has the cultural implication that how the cattle (e.g. cow, buffalo, ox) are kept under control by putting rope in the nostril and tethering by neck. Similarly, to control an unhindered ass it becomes necessary to tie front and rear legs so that it cannot jump and move far away. Here, **rope in the nostril** and **tethering** stand for liabilities or responsibilities and **cattle or ass** stands for reckless persons. If a person doesn't bear any responsibility, s/he becomes careless and irresponsible. Therefore, it is required to have some liabilities which make our life balanced and thoughts under control.

3. *lub lub kare bahruriyaa ke jeev, kab hatihan saasu je chaati gheev*

Literal Meaning: Daughter-in-law is tempting, when her mother-in-law moves away so that she can lick clarified butter.

Semantic Kernel: Waiting for the guard to move away before attempting theft.

The proverb (3) implies the relationship of daughter-in-law and mother-in-law in Bhojpuri community. The proverb denotes the sense that the daughter-in-law is afraid of her mother-in-law even when she wants to eat something of her own taste. She tempts and waits for her mother-in-law's absence from the place.

4. *maan se paan na khaaye , gumaan se pattal chaate.*

Literal Meaning: One doesn't eat paan (betel) with respect, lick the leaf-plate with pride.

Semantic Kernel: A selfish person doesn't value when given respect but ready to do anything for self-interest.

Proverb (4) denotes cultural value of 'paan' (betel or betel leaf). Betel is considered or stands for 'respect' and 'auspiciousness' in Bhojpuri culture, if a person is served with 'paan', it means he is greeted with respect and if he is not greeted with betel, he is not shown respect. This proverb denotes the character of a selfish person who doesn't value respect given by others but is ready to do anything for his own sake. The term 'pattal' used in this proverb denotes the culture of eating in leaf-plates during any auspicious functions or occasions.

5. *baba ke dhiyawaa lugari aaur bhaiyaa ke dhiyawaa chunari*

Literal Meaning: For father's sister tattered clothes, and for brother's sister colorful clothes.

Semantic Kernel: Father's sister is not as respected and loving as the son's sister (daughter).

Proverb (5) indicates the culture of making difference between father's sister (aunt) and son's sister (daughter). Examples of such differences can be seen even now in Bhojpuri community. Father's sister is not so welcome in her brother's house.

6. *ek poot ke poot aaur ek aankh ke aankhi naahi kahal jaalaa*

Literal Meaning: Single son and single eye are equal to none.

Semantic Kernel: Single son is not considered enough for a family.

Proverb (6) implies that Bhojpuri people consider that more sons in the family make it stronger.

More than one son means more than one source of income which helps in the growth of family in all perspectives.

7. *beti ka betawaa aaur bhains ka padawaa ek barabar holaa*

Literal Meaning: Daughter's son and buffalo's calf are equal.

Semantic Kernel: Daughter's son is considered as useless as buffalo's male calf.

Proverb (7) implies another shade of relationships in of Bhojpuri culture that how daughter's son is not considered as worthwhile for the daughter's own parents as for her in-laws' family.

Conclusion

An insightful study of these proverbs shows that Bhojpurians in Varanasi were and are well acquainted with the relationships in the family, terms with the members and the customs and conventions. They are also aware of nature and animals. These proverbs beautifully project the true picture of the manner, depth of relationship, the variety of cultures of the society concerned. Thus, Bhojpuri proverbs reflect rich moral and philosophical observations of the people too. But what matters most is its natural colour and quality of poetic taste and sensibility which has survived even today in the age of computer and technology. Culture is not a thing to be produced instantly; it came into existence after passing through numerous obstacles. Prof. Humayun Kabir rightly defines Indian culture: *Culture, on the other hand, is the resultant of such organizations and expresses itself through language and art, through philosophy and religion, through social habits and customs and through political institutions and economic organizations.*

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