

Moral Communications Through Proverbs Related to Elephants and Tuskers

(This analysis is based on 15 proverbs related to Sri Lankan elephants and tuskers)

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Introduction

Concerning folklore, there are important characteristics that could be studied in different manners. “Listening Skill “ is one of the main characteristics of folklore. Apart from the above, based on people, being ancient, authority of ignorance and commonplace, not written, knowledge that folklore has, preserving culture are prominent characteristics of folklore.

Among the main features of folklore, proverbs play a major role. It is identifiable that proverbs always transmit morals to the society. In ancient village society, “folklore” is one of the main communication methods, which was used to transmit morals to the villager. “Communication is very important when a person is living with another one. Communication assists not only to build up social relationships, but to morally upgrade the society as well. “John Deev”

“Proverbs” are a medium which helps to provide interesting advice in the manner of communication. It teaches morals to everyone in society irrespective of their age. The Elephant has achieved a special place among all the animals in the world. The word, “Elephant” is derived from Greek language. “phant” stands for “big” in Greek. Elephants have outnumbered other animals in Sri Lanka by its’ importance. Elephants have been given prominence in Sri Lankan customs, rituals as well as in cultural presentations. In folklore, poetry and prose, historical narrations and in legendary stories as well as in religious, political and diplomatic relations, elephants and tuskers have equally played a major role.

When proverbs which are related to folklore are observed, it is apparent that they have created a profound communication with their usage of elephants and tuskers to communicate morals. It is clear that proverbs have been used to create artistic rational skills to strengthen interpersonal skills through moral communication. When folklore related to elephants and tuskers are studied, it is apparent that they are a very powerful segment of living beings. It is a phenomenon to be found not only in Sri Lanka, but around the globe as well.

“In most parts of South Asia, Elephants and heavy rains are inter-connected. In Sumatra, villagers believe that elephants cause lightening. The tribes around the lake “Moba” in the country of “Batak”, believe that tusks and trunks of the elephants cause lightening. In ancient Rome, elephants were

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considered as sacred animals and they were the heroes of Roman war legends...”“Withana , Kumara ; Gamini , Ali Aththu, 2004 , (Pg.181)”

Hence, it is clear that elephants and tuskers are also a culturally important segment of living beings. In folklore too, they have simply become an important segment.

“The artistic communication which is evolved around micro groups is considered as folklore,” says Dan Ben – Amodi (1972). It is apparent from this definition that micro groups are a powerful factor when prominently studying proverbs in folklore.

Proverbs are able to clearly manifest “Man Mind” and “Man Consciousness” On the other hand, the proverbs which occur in the folklore, are a manifestation of creative communication of villagers in the old days. Proverbs related to elephants and tuskers direct people towards morals by creating emotions in them related to taste, humor and sarcasm. This is significant of proverbs. “Communication” is the action of well reception of a message. The receiver can thoroughly grab the message if the medium is well created. Hence, due to the inclusion of the following factors, proverbs could be known as an interesting medium of communication.

1. Brief nature
2. Metaphoricalness
3. Creating something unknown out of something known
4. Application of figures of style like: Sarcasm and Humor
5. Using of very close examples

“Morals” are a set of social standards for the human mind as well as externally for a person’s well behavior, for the welfare of society. This research will focus on how to communicate morals through proverbs related to elephants and tuskers.

Methodology

The main method of this research is Content analysis. It is done by the aid of 15 proverbs related to elephants and tuskers.

Research objectives

The main objective of this research is to study how the morals are communicated by the proverbs related to elephants and tuskers. Apart from that, there are sub-objectives as follows:

- To study on elephants and tuskers
- To study on proverbs
- To study on morals

Research problem

How to communicate morals through proverbs related to elephants and tuskers?

Study area

15 proverbs were selected for the research:

01. Like the blind person, telling the appearance of an elephant.
(*Kanaa aliyage hati kiwwa wage*)
02. Like pulling the tusker by a needle.
(*Idikatuwen athun adinna hadanawa wage*)
03. Can't bathe even a worn out elephant in "Koraha" (a small earthen vessel in the Sri Lankan kitchen)
(*Weharunu athawath koraha naawanna barilu*)
04. Like touching the tail of an elephant after letting it go.
(*Atha yanna arala waligen alluwa wage*)
05. Like the wood apple swallowed by an elephant.
(*Atha gilla diwul gediya wage*)
06. Like an elephant who is trying to trample a plantain tree.
(*Atha kehel gas peralanna wage*)
07. Who needs to see the footsteps of an elephant by using spectacles?
(*Ali giya adi paara balanna kannadi oneda?*)
08. Like closing ant holes despite having paths used by elephants.
(*Ali giya adi paarawal tiyeddi kuubi giya hill wahanna wage*)
09. Having Bulls after having Elephants.
(*Ali madiwata harak*)
10. Like going in the sky taking a tusker.
(*Athek aran ahasin giyai kiwwa wage*)
11. Can an elephant be tightened by a "Nelum hooya"? (A stem of Lotus flower)
(*Aliyaku nelum huyakin banda hakida?*)
12. Like feeding an elephant with "Atu kos" (a Sri Lankan curry made out of Jack Fruit)
(*Athata atukos dunna wage*)
13. Like Lion's roar for the tusker.
(*Athata sinhanaadaya wage*)

14. Like taking care of tuskers.

(Athun balanna se)

15. Like asking a person whether he urinated after getting trampled by a tusker.

(Atha peguwama muththarath pahaunada ahawa wage)

The above proverbs were used as the area of study of the research. In this research, mainly the manner in which the morals were communicated could be identified in several methods: “Enlightening the society by a person”, this could be identified as a powerful defining factor.

Use of elephants for Language in proverbs

Proverb Number	Subject matter	Presentation of the elephant
01	Blind person	Describing the appearance of an elephant.
02	Needle	Pulling elephants.
03	Bathing in “koraha” (a small earthen vessel in the kitchen)	A worn out elephant.
04	Tail of the elephant	Elephant
05	Woodapple	Elephant
06	Plantain trees	Elephant
07	Ant holes	Paths used by elephants
08	Spectacles	Paths used by elephants
09	Bulls	Elephants
10	Going in the sky	Oh dear a tusker!
11	Nelum hooya (A stem of Lotus flower)	An elephant
12	“Atu kos “ (a Sri Lankan curry made out of Jack Fruit)	An elephant.
13	Lion’s roar	Tusker
14	Taking care	Tuskers
15	Urinated.	Getting trampled by a tusker.

Communication of morals through proverbs

Proverb number	Advice	Moral
01	Just because somebody has heard of something unknown, he/she can't describe it.	It is humorous to see people trying to explain something, which they don't know, but they are pretending that they know it.
02	To do some big task with an inappropriate object.	To do what is appropriate for the relevant thing.
03	Even though the time has passed, some things are unchangeable.	Every action should be given its' due relevance.
04	Getting involved in something big when it is almost finished.	It is not possible to get involved in things, which are out of control even at their final stage.
05	It is not possible to judge anything, based on the external appearance.	Should not get deceived by external appearance.
06	To get involved in things which are appropriate for one's self.	Inappropriate actions will cause others to laugh at.
07	To find out in respective ways, about the good and bad which are already visible	Being fair before good and bad.
08	Even though there are massive faults, which have occurred, being unaware of it and paying attention to trivial faults.	Correction of massive faults should be done first.
09	Despite having a problem, another problem comes in to occurrence.	To confront with exhausting problems, which are not colliding with each other.
10	Stating something unbelievable with much belief.	Unbelievable facts lead to humor.
11	To do appropriate things for the suitable tasks.	Inappropriate things cannot be done.
12	Not to reach in inappropriate manner for some actions.	Right things should be done for the right person, at the right time.
13	The powerful become glamorous before the most powerful.	Roars of the powerful are not enough before the most powerful.
14	To do more difficult and hard tasks.	To be extra careful during hard times.
15	Someone asks questions about a problem soon after it happens.	To be mindful about place and time when asking questions.

Conclusion

Tactful mind, patience, courage, to do good and refrain from doing wrong and to make good decisions, are some of the morals profoundly communicated through proverbs related to elephants and tuskiers.

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