

# The Rhetoric of Bengali Proverbs and Sayings on Conventional Moral Education for Children in Bangladesh: Sustainability Perspective

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## Abstract

From time immemorial, in traditional Bangladesh, proverbs and sayings were used as a tool for inculcating conventional moral education which was playing a very important role in dealing with any disaster and in building the necessary resilience, for children, in particular. Perhaps it supports the belief, that the more developed is a country or society, the less resilient are the generations. On the other hand, the more people live in natural disaster-prone areas, in developing or underdeveloped countries, the more resilient they are. Again, just being resilient to natural calamities does not make people with high morale. It requires the presence of 'moral and values education' in overall education. The philosophers, intellectuals believe that civic education or conventional moral education should be considered as important resources for value education. Folk values do not mean fairy tales or clinging to old ideas. Folk values are apparently what makes a person humane and learn from the environment around them, from the people in the environment, which they use for the benefit of themselves and others. Bengali folklore has the treasure trove of these values in every branch of its genres, proverbs and sayings, can be a powerful tool to communicate with children. This paper is a part of a series of papers, where the author's efforts are to investigate a holistic approach on how 'folk values and wisdom' generated from our rich folklore can be used as a 'tool' to best implement into formal or non-formal primary education in Bangladesh for reviving our declining sustainability and help building the pro-sustainability attitude and the sustainability wisdom to the future generation.

**Keywords:** Bangladesh, Folk values, Moral education, Primary Education, Pro-sustainability attitude, Sustainable development.

## Introduction

The major objective of this paper is to develop a mapping based on the generally acknowledged Principles of Sustainability (namely kindness, modesty, simplicity, resilience, patriotism, naturalism) which will also evaluate the contexts of folklore that will be compatible with the children. This mapping will establish a link amongst the three main components of sustainability. At the same time the paper aims to investigate the possibilities of implementing 'folk values' generated from our folk genres, as a best means or tool to intertwine between building moral values into our future generation that relates to sustainable development. Following

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this paper, a series of papers will be developed to investigate how 'folk values and philosophy' that are generated from the genres (mostly proverbs, sayings, poems, and stories) of Bangladeshi rich folklore, can be used as a 'tool' that can fit into formal or non-formal primary education in Bangladesh for reviving our declining sustainability and help to build the pro-sustainability attitude and the sustainability wisdom to the future generation.

To develop the qualities/values of sustainability management is often regarded as the greatest of education in Islam (Hussain and Ashraf 1983: 29) as development of values are considered to be the very basis for sustainability. Values education in Islam, is an integral part of education which reinforce the sensibility into the learners and it is governed by their spirituality (Siregar, 2021) and deeply felt ethical values in their attitude towards life, their actions, decision and approach to all kinds of knowledge. In Bangladesh, education at all levels has been replaced with a culture that encourages competition, profit-making usage of science and technology and thriving consumption. Education has become a commodity rather than a value. Hence, we are experiencing global degradation and destruction of the natural and social environment as consequences. Social degradation refers to social injustice and conflicts, and unsustainable demographic trends (Rhaman, 2011). Unwise utilization of technologies is socially and environmentally harmful for a community in terms of depleting biodiversity, deteriorating ecosystem health and climatic changes.

When my skilled migration visa application for Australia was refused on the first attempt, my migration agent wrote me an email explaining every possible detail of the reason for the refusal. Knowing how heartbroken it would be for me, she ended her email saying, "when one door shuts, another open". This was just not a mere proverb, saying, or sentence to console. What she wrote rather brought new hope, strength, and enthusiasm for my successful second attempt. Soon after we moved to Australia, we adopted a new lifestyle after a struggling culture shock. On our usual family dinner, when kids were fussy and were dropping foods secretly under the dining table, my usual instinct told the kids, "You will be beaten by 70 snakes, for every single piece of food you are wasting". Out of no surprise, they started multiplying the pieces of foods they were hiding, with 70, and stopped throwing food under the table. This surely worked on me while I was a young kid, albeit little evidence of the existence of 70 snakes after death. Some proverbs and beliefs stay in our lives with no sheer evidence of reality and are carried by generations. They remain not as outworn sentiments from an earlier age but as a rule of conduct. This incident has opened an avenue for me to renew the traditional beliefs and values that were instilled in me by my parents and to pass them on to my

children. The important part that strikes in my mind is that those proverbs or sayings will be merely kept as a text in historical records if they are not used or practiced in our everyday lives, which I have observed a significant decline in past decades. From European courtrooms to African legal rituals, they use proverbs for the same purpose. The case usually will be won, not by the man who knows the most proverbs, but by the man who knows best how to apply the proverbs he knows to the problem at hand (Arewa & Dundes, 1964). Another famous Bengali proverb can represent this milieu,

*Gronthogoto biddha ar  
porohosthey dhon  
nohe biddha, nohe dhon  
holey proyojon*

Knowledge in the book  
wealth in hand  
not a knowledge, not a wealth  
if necessary

(Knowledge confined in books and wealth in other people's hands, are useless.)

Proverbs and sayings are conventional wisdom which is aesthetically pleasing and memorable. They get traditionally accepted by repetition of use over the time. Unfortunately, this widespread proverbial tradition is missing in many nations including Bangladesh. One of the major aims of this paper is to re-establish the appropriate use and practice of our age-long proverbial treasures, through informal education, from a very primary level. It is of no use of knowing hundreds of words in your vocabulary unless you know how to put them into a sentence during your communication.

### **Folk (proverbial) Values into Conventional Moral Education**

Values are defined as the fundamental principles that give guidance to a person to evaluate the merits and demerits of a thing. Our values are those principles and qualities that matter to us, which are really important to our sense of well-being. On one level, values are the ideas and beliefs on which we base our decisions. They are like an invisible DNA, made up of our sense of right and wrong, that structure our choices. So, our values are our beliefs (Anielski, 2009). Values are normative standards by which human beings are influenced in their choice among the alternative courses of action which they perceive. Certain basic or minimalist sets of values are necessary for collective survival: righteousness, forgiveness (do no harm), justice, constraints (abstinence), respect, belief in multi-culturalism, responsibility, courage, patriotism, honesty, compassion etc. (Derek, 2002). Therefore, education for sustainability that includes values education required for sustainable development as well as acquiring skill for becoming self-reliant; for values education is “..an attempt on the part of individuals and society to transmit to the succeed

ing generations their accumulated store of the knowledge of arts, values, customs and their ideals of life as a whole as well as their experiences in various fields which should help the younger generation in carrying on their activities of life effectively and successfully” (Ahmed, 1990:1). In cultural context of Bangladesh, the scale of natural resource use depends on people’s values. Thus, integrating folklore in primary education is, rather, essential to our children for understanding the natural and social environment around us and for connecting our knowledge with our concerns about nature, ecology and other people.

Folklore has been the most famously used tool to inculcate morals and values in children across the time in every nation. Much of the folklore has been created especially for children that serve them from birth (Jaffro, 2003). ‘Folklore’ has been translated as ‘wisdom of nation’ (Mailybaeva, 2015) that reflects the nation’s morals and manners, people’s lifestyle, knowledge of life, nature, cults and beliefs. All the genres of folklore, such as fairy tales, legends, epics and shezhire were widely used as great techniques in children’s education (Hartwick, 2008) taking into account the level of development of imagination, mentality and the use of visual combined techniques with imaginative, expressive language. The lessons often embedded in proverbs make them tools for moral education (Kwesi, 1999). Lynne Hamer’s one of the FIVE approaches of folklore in education has been to study folklore in schools, that is, how students and teachers form folk groups and create culture independent of or despite official culture. Kindergarten students and elementary school kids can learn about morals, traditions, beliefs, practices and attitudes of traditional community’s inhabitants and other grassroots groups through contact with folk creation (Gasouka & Arvanitidou, 2014). Alan Dundes, who was a graduate in teaching of English from Yale University has urged in one of his English education journals that K-12 teachers use folklore as an instructional tool to develop tolerance, and to use the students’ own cultural traditions to enhance learning (Dundes & Bronner, 2007). He called on teachers to rely on raw oral lore ‘performed by children for other children’. He was famous, in fact, for requiring his own college students to collect items of folklore that they would then describe and interpret. In this essay, he provided socio-psychological perspectives that can be used to interpret folk material. Dundes pointed to children’s folklore, not as something to be repressed, but rather to be exposed as only folklore can, issues of sibling rivalry, puberty, and parent/child relations. He distinguished folklore, as evidence, from the use of other materials, because it is autobiographical ethnography, a people’s own description of themselves. He evaluated what children typically relate in folklore to areas of special concern or anxieties that are expressed more readily in folklore than in everyday conversation.

Islam believes, Folklore is the vehicle of Ethnological studies in Bangladesh

(Islam, 1985, p. 361). Folklore programs in schools and after-school programs will bring young people in touch with their communities, their ethnic identities, the authentic cultural expressions of their own families and others through direct participation and ethnographic methods using photography, video, radio, audio recordings, exhibitions, festival, and residencies with tradition-bearers. Countries across the world have taken initiatives to bring folklore into an interdisciplinary field of study or utilize folklore as a valuable resource for primary, secondary and tertiary level. Some of the pioneers are China, Italy, Kazakhstan, USA, Canada, and Australia. The education system in Kazak has paid significant attention on identifying the theoretical basis of formation of valuable relationship of young school children and they have clarified the content and essence of the concept of 'value' through folklore (Mailybaeva, 2015). In their work 'Formation of modern world view of moral values of school children through the folklore education of Kazakh people' has given an evidence of how the scholars in this field shared their views of the importance of folklore in formation of moral values and authors own theoretical expression of genres of folklore that can be integrated in children's education.

The conventional moral and civic educations do not get their proper application or justification unless they are included in the customs of a nation. That is to say, until the teaching of ethics, of humanity, is limited to the textbook, and used as a tool to pass the exam only, it will not be reflected in real life. Rhaman states that both formal and non-formal education are indispensable to changing peoples' attitudes in order (for them) to be able to assess and address sustainability concerns in a holistic manner. The contributions of education to sustainable development, one of the key requirements, that are highlighted including the need for a new vision for education, one that seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future (Rhaman, 2011). Further cited from my Pir (spiritual guide) Shah Sufi Hazrat Muhiuddin Mujaddidi, whom I am one of the thousand followers, that children should be prepared from an early age to succeed in each of the aspects of life. Values for managing each aspect of life needs to be instilled in order to equip students with the 'right' attitude for successfully managing all aspects of life. In this regard, he firmly believes that values education is pivotal in equipping the young generation with values to sustain themselves, with others as well as their environment. He argues that values instilled in 'hearts' do generate and guide emotions while only knowledges are unable to guide emotions. He further elaborates that the 'head' (knowledge) needs to work together with the 'heart' (values) to attain sustainability, as sustainability is a product of science as well as values. Hence, he stresses that there are millions of people with knowledge however, the world is still on a path of destruction and not on the path of sustainability as knowledge alone is not enough for sustaining relationships with others and with the environment.

## Socio-cultural Aspects of Proverbs in Our Lives

Proverbs are short, concise sayings in common use which express some obvious and familiar truth or experience in sticking form (Frank, 1977). Some synonyms often used for the word proverb are saying, sentential, maxim, aphorism, adage, motto and epigram. Proverbs are characterized by conciseness of form and by memorable and striking rhetorical techniques, such as Alliteration, Rhyme, Metaphor and simile, Repetition, Ellipsis, Proverbial phrases, Antithesis, Puns and Parallelism. However, it is hard to maintain the difference when it comes to the use in real life scenarios; the leaves, for example, are individual but hold the different branches of the same tree.

Proverbs are universal. It is generally considered to be the folk wisdom of the common man in every distinctive nations or communities. From Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, Romans to modern age, proverbs became widely applicable to a variety of situations based on everyday observations of life and natural phenomena. A wide known Turkish proverb says, *"He who does not listen to proverbs remains screaming for help"*; according to Russians, *"For the sake of proverb, a peasant walks to Moscow"*; and the Yoruba of Nigeria would say, *"The man who knows proverbs reconciles difficulties"*. Societies where proverbs are intensely used also recognise their high aesthetic value, their role as discourse ornaments. The proverb is a *lamp of the word* among the Arabs and an *ornament of speech* in Iran. According to the Somali, proverbs *'put spice into speech'*. The Igbo believes that, *proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten*, implying that words are hard to swallow without a proverb lubricant. The proverb's vitality in speech is marked by the observation among the Yoruba that it is *'the horse of conversation- when the conversation droops, the proverb picks it up'*. (Walter K. Kelly, 1989)

Proverbs or sayings can articulate in a different form comprising similar significance and they determine state of people's relationship in different stages in life. A Bengali saying 'Boshonter kokil' comes in a form of aphorism where, Boshonto is Spring, Kokil is Cuckoo. In Bangladesh, Cuckoo only comes in Spring and the situation symbolises someone's state of relationship that fake friends come only in good times. In another instance, *Su-shomoye bondhu botey onekei hoy / O-shomoye hay hay keu karo noy* where su-shomoy is (in good times), bondhu is friends, onekey is many; o-shomoy is (in bad times), hay hay is regrettably ; keu karo noy is (no one at all). The lexical translation would be 'Many are friends in the good time, alas, no one at all'. This has universally spoken by people as 'A friend in need is a friend indeed' in every nation's own form. Such as, the Scotch proverb counsels not amiss, Try your friend afroe ye need him; He that would have many friends should try few of them (Italian); Give out that you have many friends, and believe that you have few"



(French).

Having said that, in this day and age, in which many of our educational endeavours may be characterized as ‘value-free’, we could do worse than revitalize an important part of the western liberal-education tradition (Frank, 1977). Like other forms of rhetoric, proverbs may be used as ‘impersonal vehicles’ for communication. But their best use may be as what Kenneth Burke calls, ‘equipment for living’. As such they still have a vital relevance for modern man in the presentation and preservation of ethical values.

### **The Magic of Proverbs and Saying in Bengali lives, Hence Sustainability**

The day to day sentiments, that is very rationally known to us, can be presented through proverbial sayings, in a totally artistic form, comfortably articulated that gives us confidence and a positive vibe in our thoughts. Folklore has a kind of trust and validation, the ability to show reality through fantasy. A feature of Bengali proverbs or sayings is that almost every verse carries a special message of morale or lesson for life. Proverbs are used in all nations of the world, in all cultures. A kind of confidence and acceptance for respective proverbs is naturally formed in the human mind. Proverbs explore veracity in front of people with examples. It has its use everywhere in human life which includes our everyday conversations, arguments, praises and humiliations, advices and instructions, warnings and consequences, guidance’s and disciplines, agreements and statements. When two people are arguing, we often use a Bengali proverb ‘Ek hatey tali baje na’ (clapping with one hand doesn’t make sound) or (it takes two to make a quarrel). As soon as the proverb is said, the thought that comes to the third person is about the involvement of the both parties. They both deal with their actions as they choose to embark on their part. The allegations of the two parties then analysed impartially. Proverbs carry underlying meanings beyond the general perception that prompts a voice of confidence from the core of the human mind.

Learning from oral traditions is an important element in the process of expanding perspectives on the history of the development of education for sustainability precept and practice (Regan, 2000, p. 10). It is argued that all beliefs and values have sprung from verbal face-to-face communication and are held in human memory, particularly by rural societies. Orality is, therefore, creations beyond the reach of literates (Rosenberg, 1991, p. 27). The oral tradition in Bangladesh includes local proverbs, folk song, folk stories, religio-spiritual discourses and wisdom on the environment (Khonar Bhachan), all this verbally translated knowledge helps people to understand and relate to other fellow human beings and to their natural environment. (Regan, 2000) argues that proverbs (sayings providing easily remembered succinct), for example, are one aspect of the oral tradition that helps develop

people's reasoning power and skills, and embody the wisdom and experience of people lacking written records in a concise, quotable and often amusing form.

Adoption of our folk philosophy and the pro-sustainability lifestyle has become part of culture in Bangladesh, especially for the rural folks. The popular culture is a cluster of wisdom (Hossain, 2006) that has answers to social, economic and environmental queries. Bangladesh has rich proverbial local knowledge which is highly observed in people's day to day living and decision making – hence, sustainability. 'What is (al) lotted cannot be blotted', 'to do or die', 'cut your coat according to your cloth', 'where there is a will, there is a way', 'failure is the pillar of success', 'grasp all, lose all', 'avarice begets sin, sin begets death', 'necessity knows no bounds', 'money is not all', 'man is the slave of his environment', 'there is no happiness without sorrow', 'values know not how to compromise with immorality', 'take the bad with the good', 'every time has its knowledge', 'when you are losing your patience, try a little more patience', 'to live longer eat less, foolish is s/he who over-eats', 'desire for too much is ruining' are some examples that are common in the oral tradition of rural folks. These proverbs are considered as 'sustainability wisdom' in Bangladesh, for they convey a sense of values that belong to the universal human conditions (Afzal, 1986). Primary schools' program will apply lessons of how we learn from the stock of local knowledge as indicated above in order to build spirituality for resiliency under all circumstances including the impacts of climate change. The people of Bangladesh use such proverbs drawing on their spirituality to build resilience in order to combat the negative impacts of climate change. (Adger, 2009) argues that the local knowledge embedded in the proverbial oral traditions displays a commitment to undertake active measures in order to cope with any unnatural climate change consequences.

### Concept Mapping: Children with Sustainability Wisdom Through Proverbs and Sayings

Proverbs and sayings in child-lore or children's literature, are not just mere stories of kings and queens or fairy tales. In every branch and genre of child-lore comprises the art to mould the child's emotional worlds from clay, the science of growing a tree from seed. Expectations left from one generation to next through the passage of that lore. I have forgotten many formulas of graduation, but I fondly remember the poem:

*Sokale uthiya ami mone mone boli  
Sharadin ami jeno valo hoye choli  
Adesh koren jaha more gurujone  
Ami jeno sei kaj kori bhalo mone.*

I wake up in the morning and  
I pledge to do good all day long  
What my elders advise me  
I will graciously adhere to with  
utmost respect



Myself, as a five years old little girl, were very delighted to have the foundation of understanding of what is Bhalo Manush (Good Human), Bhalo Kaj (Good Deeds), Bhalo Chinta (Good Thoughts), Gurujon (Respect to the elders) deliberately pass down through few verse of a poem. Even today, the sheer story of the liar shepherd boy warned me of the consequences of telling lies. Deep down my mind I am still terrified by the 'tiger of my mind' not the 'tiger in the forest'. The magic of child-lore lies here. The illustration formed in a child's mind lasts for many years, even for a lifetime. Just as a bedtime song or lullaby takes child's body and mind through an illusion and puts them into sleep, so a rhyme, story, legend or a mere proverb can snatch the necessary supplies from the child's mind, which is able to take place in their mind in perpetuity. Children possess a strong imaginative power. Since their minds are soft, they can be easily moulded and influenced. When a story or proverbial sentence describes an event of reality, they can easily relate to those proverbs, stories and realities by imagination. As a result, the lessons they learn from that proverb or story last long in their lives. However virtual learning alone does not have a very fruitful long-term effect if it is not practiced or real-life. Same goes for skill-based education, which is much more effective in real life than knowledge-based education

### **Translation in Mapping**

The factual or literal meaning and the functional significance of proverbs in our daily life are different from one another. That is, many proverbs or sayings have differences in lexical or etymological terms and the intellectual sense. On the other hand, many wise sayings relate closely to proverbs by having most of their characteristics except grammatical form. This cognitive denotation desires to be accentuated when communicating with children through proverbs or sayings. The magical treasures of Bengali proverbs are used in the conversation of praise, condemnation, argument, sarcasm, humour, encouragement, advice, comparison and almost every aspect in our everyday life. These proverbs and sayings make any statement more powerful, widely acceptable and more interesting. This paper attempts to analyse a few of the well-practiced proverbs amongst hundreds and how it relates to Bengali proverbs and aspects of sustainability and how they can be communicated with children in the classroom in primary level.

Proverbs may contain material or tangible existence and non-material or intangible existence. In both cases they can be illustrated to children with familiar products that coexist in their daily lives. Identify the 'verb' or 'action' and 'consequences' from the sentence that will amalgamate with sustainability aspects. Author has considered the mechanisms while translating and mapping those proverbs with sustainability: Phonemic content, meaning of morphemes involved, English equiva

lent for the 'sense' of the whole proverb (Charles & Preston, 1946). Texture of a language cannot be translated (Islam, 1985) as every language has its very own style of interlacing the words whereas text has the flexibility for literal or free translation. Therefore, the author did not take any attempt to show Bengali grammatical classes by means of the translation and rather a literal and a free translation was applied in each text unit. The literal translations appear as specific units corresponding in each case to a specific text unit. All text units are positioned according to their places in the sentence. The meaning units, however, is corresponding with a text unit, in the literal translation according to their corresponding position. The meaning units are specific approximations of the Bengali meaning, in terms of each particular Bengali context. Thus, for example, the conjunctive suffix -e is not always rendered by English -ing or by any other constant from (Ferguson & Preston, 1946). The conjunctive suffix -ey, -er is not always translated by any other constant form, rather according to its specific English equivalent for the context in which it appears. These are the pronominal correlatives in Bengali characterized, in general.

- X was marked for literal translation and Y for free translation.
- The text can be a word, or a sequence of words and when it consists of more than one English word, it is connected by hyphens (~).
- The sign (,) is used to indicate hemistich boundaries.
- The sign (/ /) was deployed in conjunction to multiple proverbs with similar significance.

### Proverbs in Mapping

1. *Porley dana matitey, 70 shaap ashbe katitey*

*X drop ~ food ~ on the floor, 70 ~ snakes ~ comes to ~ bite*

*Y Wasting food will bring upon you a deadly punishment on the big judgment day.*

(a) Verb / Action: Dropping food or wasting food

(b) Consequences: will be beaten by seventy snakes;

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: If you drop food particle or a piece of food to the floor and not being respectful, you will be bitten by 70 dangerous snakes after death. This is just not a proverb or sayings; this belief will help children to not be wasteful and also be respectful of the food and thankful for the privilege they are having the food.

2. *Dosher lathi , eker bojha // doshey miley kori kaj, hari-jiti nahi laj*

*X ten ~ stick ~ one ~ burden // ten ~ together ~ let's do ~ something, lose-win ~ no shame*

*Y Unity is strength // Many a little makes a mickle.*

(a) Verb/action: The first proverb doesn't contain any verb. This was consisting of two nouns with adjuncts and these proverbs are used in Bengali conversation as

nouns, not as a complete sentence. However, the second proverb with a similar expression and significance has a verb complimenting with an adverb.

(b) Consequences: achieve something big with total efforts, promote determination and persistence

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: In a group let's get together and do the job then whether we win or lose there's no shame. This is a morale booster for teamwork and social solidarity where today's children together will change tomorrow's world and keeps it sustainable.

3. *Aay bujhe baye koro*

*X income ~ according ~ spend ~ do*

*Y Cut your coat according to your clothes or spend within your means.*

(a) Verb/action: spend within

(b) Consequences: over exploit of resource will soon cause scarcity

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: This is considered a universally used proverb in different culture. A 5-11 years old child's mind can easily be mapped to the very deeper concept of sustainability which is, 'living within the limits to support ecosystems', encourage them to be modest in their real life. As an instance if you have a total of three meals for the whole day and with these three meals you have to satisfy your hunger all day long. But if you eat more than one in the morning, then if you feel hungry at the noon or night, you may not leave anything to eat. Again, if you have a faucet of water to meet your daily water needs and you keep it open for no reason, the faucet may run out of water and you will not get any when you really need it and be in trouble.

4. *Shoburey Meowa Pholey*

*X Patience ~ dessert ~ happened*

*Y The fruit of patience*

(a) Verb/action: patience

(b) Consequence: patience brings better result

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: One of the very well-known and important proverbs in Bengal. 'Shobur' denotes the word 'patience' or 'persistence' and 'meowa' is a very tasty dessert that takes a long time to make and therefore has an inherent connection to patience. Patience is a process through which the 'fruits' as in 'results' are always sweet, and when this proverb is properly explained to children, it certainly helps them become more tolerant and resilient in daily life.

5. *Jeebey doya kore jae Jon, sae Jon shebichey isshorey*

*X beings ~ kind ~ be ~ which, that ~ serve ~ God*

*Y A person who care for all creatures serves God*

- (a) Verb/action: kind to living and non-living being
- (b) Consequences: serves humanity, serves God
- (c) Sustainability aspect/s: The proverb is a combination of social and religious involvement together. The attempt to please God or the Creator exists in all religions. It is revealed through the proverb how easy it is to serve God by being kind to all living and non-living being, physical and non-physical being that includes a stewardship towards human, non-human lives, soil, water, air, biodiversity as well their cultural and spiritual tradition and heritage.

6. *Shomoyer ek phor, oshomoyer dosh phor*

*X in time ~ one ~ stitch, un timely ~ ten ~ stitch*

*Y A stitch in time saves nine // Make hay while the sun shines*

- (a) Verb/action: Get things done on time
- (b) Consequences: you will never get the 'time' you lost already.
- (c) Sustainability aspect/s: Troubles will quickly multiply if you do not handle them at once. For a student, if homework is not done on time or an exam preparation is not done prior the exam, failure will be inevitable. You've got to get things done while the opportunity is ripe. If you want to reach the goal of your life, make the best use of your childhood and youth, so that your adulthood can be meaningful. Take a good care of your health before it's too late.

7. *Shokal shoy, shokal uthey – tar kori na boiddho lutey*

*X early ~ sleep ~ early ~ rise – that/those ~ wealth ~ no/not ~ robber ~ rob*

*Y Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy wealthy and wise*

- (a) Verb/action: early rise and early sleep
- (b) Consequences: sound health, sound life
- (c) Sustainability aspect/s: This proverb denotes the importance of discipline throughout someone's life. A sound health is the rudiments of a sound life that will bring wealth, happiness, and success individually and as a whole. Children in specific would be demonstrated the value of discipline to help them prepare for this complex world.

One of the most signified and popular proverbs in Bengali that was illustrated both rhymed (multiple sentences) and unrhymed (single sentence) form.

*Ek poysha jomaano mane ek poysha rojgar kora*

*X one ~ penny ~ saved ~ means ~ one ~ penny ~ earn ~ do (silent verb)*

*Y A penny saved is a penny earned.*

*or*

*Bindu bindu joley shindhu hoy      drops ~ drops ~ water ~ nation (shindhu) ~ be*

*Rai kuriye bel hoy*

*small moles ~ pick ~ large moles ~ be*

*Y Little savings makes a mighty sum*

*Drops of water make the ocean.*

*or*

*Choto choto balu kona*

*small, tiny grains*

*Bindu bindu jool*

*drops of waters*

*Gorey toley mohadesh*

*builds a nation*

*Shagor otol*

*or an ocean*

(a) Verb/action: small savings; little accumulative actions and efforts

(b) Consequences: every action counts in either achieving or destroying.

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: Every big achievement starts with a small beginning. Sustainability is an outcome of total effort locally and globally. To achieve sustainability, every little action count and it is important for the children to understand how sustainability is affected by what they do, what they use, what they eat. A small change in their attitude can bring big changes in their lives and to the world. One plant per student per year, can contribute against the global warming or a habit of little savings can prepare them to live life more economically, understand the economic value of wealth. On the contrary, a little negligence or wrongdoing may cause devastation to our social, economic and environment.

These proverbs and sayings encompass intense sensitivity and lifelong advice for the children for them to be brought up with a sense of timeliness, fear of wrongdoing, living simple and humble and building resilience and sense of responsibility.

## Conclusion

Values and ethics cannot be taught (Derek, 2002) by any formula or curriculum cannot be formed as numeracy-literacy. These intangible qualities always need informal composition and are integrated through practice. A child does not understand the difference between rich and poor, black and white, good and bad unless the perceptions come from the adults, either by listening to them or by seeing them doing. Values such as 'always speak the truth' or 'forgiveness is a great virtue' sleep in a 'sentence' until we get them used in real life. This 'empathy' needs to be created in them which they can feel and apply to those words of morality. Inculcating empathy through proverbs can be a valuable tool.

Bengali rhetoric's, say Khonar Bachan, was used as teaching materials in Bangladesh from generations to generations. This literature composed with the

innumerable proverbs with deal with most discourses on seasonality, agriculture, human wellbeing, poverty, stress, joy, sorrow, health, lifestyle, population, economy, agriculture, horticulture, biodiversity, technology, human etiquette ethics and behaviors, do's and don'ts with regards to environment, values and spirituality (Rahman, 2011). It is claimed that when we read the oral verses on agriculture, weather, seasons, wind or propitious moments of travel, we find the people who epitomised the vast and authentic knowledge of these subjects were pertinently called 'the product of time'. (Afaz & Sattar,1986) compiled over 1,000 oral verses covering the link between seasonality and agriculture, norms to be adhered to for achieving social, economic, technological and environmental sustainability. Folklore has been the most famously used tool to inculcate morals and values in children across the time in every nation. Much of the folklore has been created especially for children that serve them from birth (Jaffro, 2003). Teachers should not limit exploring their knowledge and ideas within the collected proverbs or sayings or stories of their respective areas in the classroom.

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