

# Cultural Significance of Select Proverbs of Shimla District in Himachal Pradesh

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## Abstract

Himachal Pradesh is a hilly state in northern India with a rich cultural heritage and diverse folklore tradition. Its folklore is an embodiment of its cultural practices reflecting the beliefs, values, and customs of its equally diverse communities. Folkloric traditions of the state encompass a wide range of cultural expressions including oral traditions, music, dance, rituals, and festivals. These cultural practices have been passed down through generations and serve to preserve the cultural identity of the communities of the state. Folk wisdom and practical knowledge embedded in traditional practices are communicated through various modes, and the folkloric form of proverbs is a popular, practical, and convenient way of transference and comprehension for the masses. Proverbs serve not only as precepts for the people and cultural manuals for posterity, but they also help in the preservation and growth of a language. This paper seeks to analyse the cultural significance of a few selected proverbs as repositories of folk wisdom and culture in Shimla District of Himachal Pradesh. Although, researchers in the past have attempted to study various other performative forms of oral traditions, such as folk dance, folk songs, and folk theatre of the district, yet verbal genres, such as proverbs have remained largely unexplored in English Studies. The proverbs selected for the present study are collected from the elderly villagers of Shimla District using various folkloric methods of interaction, informal conversation, and participant observation. The selected proverbs in this paper have

been transliterated as per the International Organisation for Standardization 15919. The literal meaning of the words have then been provided in English for better understanding. Subsequently, the proverbs have been translated into English for their contextual analysis and interpretation. Efforts have been made, wherever possible, to provide an idea of the rhythm of the original proverbs by using certain rhetorical devices such as internal rhyme and alliteration.

**Keywords:** Folk wisdom, Folklore, Culture, Tradition, Orality, Proverbs.

## Introduction

Folklore generally refers to the traditional customs, rituals, beliefs, stories, songs, and sayings that are passed down from generation to generation within a community. Since the coining of the term folklore as a branch of popular antiquities by William John Thoms in 1846, the term folklore has been defined variously. Most folklorists, however, differ on the definition of folklore; some prefer the 'lore' in defining folklore, while others focus on the 'folk' element. 'Folk' broadly means the people and 'lore' is the material(s) or knowledge that is created, possessed, and communicated by the folk community. Alan Dundes, in *The Study of Folklore* (1965) defines folk as "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is—it could be a common occupation, language, or religion—but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own . . . traditions which help the group have a sense of group identity" (2). By this definition, any group of people—literate or non-literate; traditional or modern; folk or elite; from past or present, who share a common occupation, religion, language, or certain other common characteristics, can be designated as folk, and

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the knowledge thus produced and shared by them as folklore. In *A Dictionary of English Folklore* (2000), folklore is defined as “something voluntarily and informally communicated, created or done by members of a group (which can be of any size, age, or social and educational level); it can circulate through whatever media (oral, written or visual) are available to this group; it has roots in the past but also present relevance; it usually recurs in many places, in similar but not quite identical form; it has both stable and variable features, and evolves through dynamic adaptation to new circumstances” (Simpson & Roud 130–31).

The scope of this paper is limited to a few proverbs of Shimla District of Himachal Pradesh within the verbal forms of its folklore. Proverbs are the most common genre of folklore. They are short and pithy sayings that express a general truth and piece of wisdom. Proverbs convey the popular sentiments of the people and are fruits of the experiential wisdom of a society. What people gain from an experience is preserved and retold in a quick and witty manner, the experience in oral culture is thus “intellectualized mnemonically” (Ong 35). They communicate thought-provoking truths and philosophy in pithy form. Proverbs are born in a culture and reflect the prevalent values and practices of the culture. *A Dictionary of English Folklore* defines proverbs as “Short, crisply structured sayings widely known in a community, which convey traditional observations on human nature and natural phenomena, moral judgments, mockery, warnings, etc. Though circulating orally, their wording is fairly stable; they generally display formal devices including alliteration, rhyme and assonance, rhythmic phrasing, balanced opposition, and parallelism” (Simpson and Roud 286). The American folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand opines that “Proverbs are short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and that has been handed down orally from generation to generation. The aspects of traditionality and currency will always have to be established before a particular text can, in fact, be called a proverb” (1253). In this regard, Jan Vansina believes that “all oral sources are not oral traditions. There must be transmission by word of mouth over at least a generation” (28). Preservation of proverbs is important for any community and they also serve as a goldmine for cultural, linguistic, literal, anthropological, and psychological enquiry.

In India, the term proverb is understood variously as *Lokokti* or *Kahāvat* in Hindi, Maithili, Marvari, Dogri, and Punjabi, *Probāda* in Assamese and Bangla, *Kahāut* in Bhojpuri, *Kahevata* in Gujrati, *Thufingi* in Mizo, *Mhaṇa* in Marathi, *Pazhanchollu* in Malayalam, *Gāde* in Kannada,

*Sūbhāṣitam* in Sanskrit, *Paḷamoḷi* in Tamil, and *Sāmeta* in Telugu. Across all cultures, it is understood and defined as the expression and the experiences (*ūkti*) of the folk (*lok*) (Sarma 28-29). Lokokti is sometimes used interchangeably with the term *kahāvat*, like the proverb with the saying in English. Generally, folklorists use these terms interchangeably to depict human knowledge, experience, and understanding expressed in brief, pithy, and witty statements for present and future references. Many studies have been made in India to unearth India’s rich and diverse oral traditions to prevent it from passing into oblivion. *Himācal kī Lokagāthā: Lokokti* (1964) by Dhyan Singh Kutehriya, *The Tribal Culture of India* (1976) by L. P. Vidyarthi and Binay Kumar Rai, *Folklore of Himachal Pradesh* (1984) by Dr. Gautam Sharma Vyathit, *Folktales from India* (1991) by A. K. Ramanujan, *Ancient Indian Magic and Folklore: An Introduction* (2001) by Margaret Stutley, *Lok Sāhitya* (2010) by Dr. Rajesh Shrivastav ‘Shambar,’ *Himācalī Lokokti Saṃgrah* (2012) edited by Meena Sharma, *Oral Traditions and Cultural Heritage of Punjab* (2016) by Surjeet Singh, *Lok Sāhitya kī Bhūmikā* (2019) by Krishnadev Upadhyay and *Folk and Folklore of Assam* (2020) by Julfikar Hussain are a few of the texts that explore the folklore of India, particularly proverbs and sayings. Despite these valuable studies, more research is warranted in this area. This brief study of proverbs from Shimla District in Himachal Pradesh attempts to further the discussion on the proverbs of Himachal Pradesh.

### A Study of Selected Proverbs of Shimla District

A proverb is known by different names in the Mahasuvi Pahari dialect of Shimla District as *Anēūṇō*, *Anēūṇā*, *Kāvat*, *Bakhnāṇē*, and *Anāṇē*. All these terms refer to the experiential learning and knowledge of the community expressed in the form of a mnemonic structure so that it is easy to transmit and recall. The proverbs selected in this paper were collected by interacting with the elderly people of the district. These were transliterated into the Roman script, followed by the literal meanings of words and translations into English. The Pahari alphabets have been transliterated according to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 15919). In this paper, the literal translation of Pahari words predominantly utilizes the base form of words, with tense and number variations employed in the formulation of the proverbs. These proverbs provide clear insights into the pragmatic wisdom of the people of the district and an attempt has been made to understand their cultural significance through a brief analysis of their usage and context.

The first Pahari proverb from Rohru Tehsil at the literal level advises people to eat with restraint and not

be gluttonous, while in its wider application, it warns against the vice of greed.

*Ākhī bōlā khāu-khāu, pēt bōlā kimdē jāu.*

Eye say eat-eat, stomach say where go.

Eyes said eat some more, stomach said where do I go.

The English proverb nearly equivalent of this local saying is, 'Eyes are bigger than the stomach,' and implies that 'Excess of everything is bad.' Everything in life should be enjoyed in moderation as there is no end to greed. One can eat to satiate one's hunger, but excess of food can cause sickness. Any appetite that is overindulged leads invariably to disorder. The proverb appears to be embedded in the frugal lifestyle of the people based on the old reality of the hills when resources and food were scarce. The proverb advocates moderation and discipline as character attributes and the judicious use of resources as a way of life. Pahari life in this proverb is characterised by seeking contentment and shunning greed.

*Kharō āamḍī tā mōr bōlāi, uṭmūḷō āamḍī tā cōr bōlāi.*

Straight walk then peacock say, bent walk then thief say.

If you walk with head high, they call you a peacock, if you walk with head bowed, they call you a crook. (Jubbal Tehsil)

This proverb says that if you walk in society with your head held high, people think of you as vain and arrogant. On the other hand, if you pass by with your head down, the same people will consider you as a person who has something to hide, like a crook. The proverb implies that irrespective of what one does in life, people will have an opinion about it. It is more common than not for people to judge others regardless of what they do. The proverb from Punjab, "*Duniyā dē amḍrē kujh nā kujh tāḥ hōvēgā*" (There will be something or the other in the hearts of the people), similarly observes human predilection for providing unsolicited attention, passing remarks, and gossiping, which target individuals. Both proverbs, however, urge people to be their authentic selves and not pay undue heed to what others say. Being true to oneself is quite a Pahari trait and while the opinion of others may be considered but it is not always accepted. The informant emphasised that people will ultimately only do what they think is right. This characteristic is often mistakenly referred to as the hill person's simple-mindedness or stubbornness.

*Lāiyā dārī nī lāgadī.*

Put on beard no grow.

A put-on beard does not grow. (Chopal Tehsil)

This proverb says that just as a fake beard cannot grow, similarly, maturity and wisdom cannot be faked. The beard in many cultures symbolises experience and wisdom. The proverb underscores the fact that wisdom and learning come with time and experience and cannot be forced or impersonated. As a Punjabi proverb says, it takes time for a bush to become a tree, this proverb also points towards the respect that people have for elders and for their learning and practical wisdom. The Pahari community values the importance of authenticity, age, and experience. Beards also symbolize strength and masculinity, and the proverb seems to caution that pretence of strength is soon exposed. A proverb from Kullu District of Himachal Pradesh also highlights this deep respect for lived experience as a basis of wisdom:

*Pauḷō dō kē kaurē zē kauḷō dō nā hōē?*

Literate of what do if experience of not is.

What will you do with education, if you do not have experience?

This proverb underscores the idea that bookish knowledge has limited value and needs to be complemented by real-world experience to be truly meaningful and effective. It reflects the importance of balancing theoretical knowledge with the wisdom of praxis. It also highlights the cultural emphasis on practicality and the indispensable role of experience in personal and professional growth. Both the proverbs reflect a cultural value system that prioritises practical experience and the wisdom that comes with age and time. They suggest a societal structure where knowledge is earned through real-world application over time. This emphasis on experience likely stems from a traditional agrarian society where practical skills and knowledge were essential for survival and success.

*Biatālī mihā nā maurī, bālī mihā taurī.*

Within envy from die, outside envy get through.

Envy within the family destroys, envy outside the family inspires.

(Jubbal Tehsil)

This proverb is an astute observation on the dual function of the feeling of envy, jealousy, and competition—one leading to ruin and the other to progress. It says that envy of family members within the home sows discord, but envy of people outside the home can lead to healthy competition, hard work, and growth. This is a valuable piece of advice and the proverb is a powerful commentary on the complexity of human emotions in varied circumstances. When the family members compete, it generally results in dispute,

enmity, rivalry, and disintegration of familial bonds. This rivalry can potentially impact family unity and prospects if left unaddressed, which can further lead to feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression in the family members, thus impacting their overall wellbeing and ability to form healthy relationships. This discord among the members can result in lack of co-operation and co-ordination, lack of respect for each other's perspectives, and lack of healthy social skills in developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships within and outside the family. Healthy competition, on the other hand, encourages innovation, efficiency, and consequent economic growth contributing to overall progress and prosperity. External competition can expose family members to different perspectives introducing them to new ideas. The proverb thus emphasises the negativity of jealousy and the positivity of healthy competition. The proverb is embedded in the community's emphasis on family being the primary unit and the importance of amity within it. It chiefly urges people to adopt a suitable emotional approach within and without the family fold.

*Ōṛā                      paulē      bīgānē      sīmū.*

Boundary stone    beyond    other    furrow.

The land beyond the boundary stone belongs to others.  
(Jubbal Tehsil)

The literal meaning of this proverb conveys that the area beyond the boundary stone, *ōṛā*, does not belong to one. It indicates a clear division of ownership by stating that the land beyond the boundary marker is not available for the person who stands this side of it. Besides emphasising the importance of land in the hilly areas, this proverb also reveals an existing cultural practice among the Pahari community of Shimla District. In Jubbal Tehsil, there exists the traditional practice of dividing ancestral land by placing a stone, called an *ōṛā*, to mark the boundary. This marker had social sanction and was duly respected by the brothers after the division of land, so that they could live side by side peacefully and without rancour. In the villages of the area, when an ancestral land is divided, each field is apportioned based on its ability of growing quality produce which further depends on the quality of land. As ancestral property and scarce landholdings are a common cause of serious family disputes, to ensure equitable distribution of land the boundaries in each field are redrawn and the boundary stone is placed. Once the boundary is marked by the *ōṛā*, the land on the other side becomes '*bīgānī*,' or alienated and one cannot lay claim to it in future.

All this is done under the supervision of five nominated village elders, commonly referred to as *Pamc*. Although, the mechanism of the *Pamc* does not have legal

backing, yet traditionally, it holds the symbolic status of being *Parmēśwar*, i.e., Almighty. The five members are sometimes called *Pamc Parmēśwar* due to their ascribed judiciousness and general acceptability. It is believed that the divine speaks through the *Pamc* at such times. The proverb highlights the values of acceptance and acknowledgement of the wisdom of elders, who, by virtue of their experience, attain moral and social authority in matters of great importance. It exhibits the Pahari predilection of recognising and reposing faith in traditional ways rather than on modern rules of addressing delicate situations.

*Dāī            rī    mihā,            māh            naī            tā            kūḷath*  
*hī            pīhā.*

Kinfolk of envy, black gram not then horse gram  
only grind.

If you don't have black gram then grind horse gram to keep up with your kinfolks. (Jubbal Tehsil)

This humorous proverb repeats the idea of comparison, competition, or keeping up with the Joneses in society. It says that we should keep pace with kinfolks and do things expected of us to avoid adverse comments and gossip. Failing to follow traditions or neglecting one's duty, however inconvenient or hard, draws unfavourable comparisons and brings disrespect. The proverb comments on relational dynamics by creatively linking it with traditional food items of Shimla District. The first half suggests the intricacies of human bonds, the second mentions two pulses both of which have cultural significance in the lives of the Pahari community.

This proverb was casually said by an informant in a natural context as he worked briskly in his fields. He said that, although, he had no time to work in the fields, yet he was there trying to rush through the work to keep pace with his kinfolks and neighbours. He said that if he neglected to do so then they would unnecessarily mock him and his ancestors, and cause harm to the reputation of his family. The proverb references the *varā*, a culturally significant food item of the region. *Varā* is mostly cooked in Shimla District on festivals and religious occasions. The savoury snack is generally made of blackgram (urad gram) and it involves a long process of soaking, de-skinning, grinding, seasoning, shaping into small balls or rings, and frying. Horse gram paste can be used similarly, but it has less umami flavour than blackgram.

Family honour is paramount to the people here and many social functions and customs are based on this concept, particularly within the Rajput community. Upholding the name of the family is thus a vital duty, and if someone neglects or is unable to maintain the family reputation, they are considered worthless and a

blot on the family name. This can exert a deal of pressure on the people, especially on men, in the quite patriarchal Pahari culture.

*Dūjā rī pīṭhī, gāhē rā nagārā.*  
Other of back on of kettledrum.  
To play kettledrums on someone else's back.

(Jubbal and Shimla Urban Tehsils)

The English proverb, "He who lives on borrowed money does not know the value of a penny" captures the idea conveyed in this proverb in a different context. This proverb is found variously in Jubbal and Shimla Urban Tehsils of Shimla District. *Nagār* or *Nagārā* is a traditional musical instrument like a kettledrum, which is generally played in religious ceremonies and rites of passage rituals, and events like birth, marriage, and death. *Nagārā* in different areas can take different shapes—in some places it consists of a pair of two comparatively small semi-circular drums, which requires two persons—one to carry it on his back and, the other to play on it with the help of two wooden sticks called *damāmaṭī*. The paired instrument is carried along with the revelling procession of a festival, fair, wedding ceremony, funeral, and the like, whereas, the single big drum is stationary and beaten with a long stick, *baiṇā*, by a single player.

The proverb suggests that the person who carries the *nagārā* labours on two counts, that of bearing the weight of the drum and the force of the beating sticks. On the other hand, the player has no such burden and enjoys playing the drum. The proverb thus means to enjoy at someone else's expense. It signifies that people who live off the labours and resources of others do not appreciate their value till they themselves have to carry the metaphorical drum. It is frequently said by parents to children who do not understand the responsibilities and hard work of the parents that make their life enjoyable. The proverb condemns parasitic behaviour and encourages people to appreciate and realise the worth of what others do for them. The proverb underlines the value of hard work in the Pahari community in which people are expected to exert themselves and contribute to the family and society in a responsible and constructive manner.

Somewhat similar sentiments seem to be expressed by a proverb popular in the adjoining Sirmaur District of Himachal Pradesh: *Ōkī kai kānōm gāṣī ṭhāriyau uchārṇī*, which in English translates to "Firing a gun from someone else's shoulders." The proverb encapsulates the opportunistic or cunning behaviour of individuals who attempt to get their way through manipulating others. Both the proverbs talk about *Dūjā* and *Ōkī* respectively, referring to "other" or "someone else." If the first one condemns parasitic behaviour and

underlines the value of hard work, the second proverb condemns manipulative behaviour and emphasizes the importance of accountability. The former encourages people to appreciate and realise the worth of what others do that makes their life comfortable, whereas, the latter proverb from Sirmaur District implicitly values honesty and straightforwardness. While Himachali culture, like many rural cultures, emphasises community and interdependence, these proverbs reinforce the importance of individual responsibility and ethical conduct. While both proverbs reflect common human experiences, the specific images they use have roots in the local culture. Kettledrums play a significant role in Shimla's cultural and religious traditions, while the "firing" metaphor connects to Sirmaur's history which is marked by struggles, including conflicts with the Gurkhas, Sikhs, and the British, as well as the Pajhota Movement against the princely state.

*Parāi ākhī dhīṣō tau āpaṇī bhāanyō kaurī.*  
Other eye see then own gouge do.

If you can see with other's eyes then gouge out your own eyes.

(Theog Tehsil)

The above proverb says that if we blindly follow others and do not apply our own minds, it is as good as not having our own brains. This happens when we see things from someone else's perspective and cannot discern truth or reality for ourselves. The proverb cautions against being swayed by the perspective or thoughts of others, which makes us vulnerable to being blindsided and manipulated. We cannot behave like sheep and follow others unquestioningly. If we could see with others' eyes, there would be no need for our own eyes, similarly, it is foolish to mindlessly accept what others say or think. Eyes, in the proverb, thus take on the connotations of discretion, intellect, vision, and perspective. It asks people to trust their own judgement, believe in their instincts, and have faith in their skills. The proverb also advises that we should make use of the available resources to be self-sufficient and independent.

*Saiṇā bōlau ērēō, dēū bōlau chērēō.*  
Elderly man say work, *dēvātā* say scatter.

An elder speaks through experience, a *devta* speaks through divine performance. (Nankhari Tehsil)

This is one of the most common proverbs spoken in Shimla District showcasing respect for age and divinity which is deeply ingrained in its culture. It says that an elderly person speaks from his first-hand experience and a village deity speaks through divine indication. The

authority of the elders relies on their experience and the power of the deity is acknowledged by their followers' faith and reverence. This proverb has two parts—one advocating the importance of experiential wisdom and the other demonstrating the religious aspect of folk culture. The first part focuses on the wisdom of the ancestors which is based on their life experiences, and the second part brings out the religious practice of seeking answers from the deities in the Pahari community. To understand the second part of the proverb, it is necessary to understand the referent of the village deity and the context in which the referent exists. It is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the Pahari people of Shimla District and provides a glimpse into the deific tradition of the hilly area. Nearly every village of Shimla District has its own local deity called *Dēvtā* or *Dēō*, and *Dēvi* in the feminine form. The deity is worshipped and believed to be a force of unity, prosperity, and security for the villagers. Devotees go to the deity in times of both joy and distress. They interact with the deity through their chosen intermediaries, the *gur* or *mālī*, as they are known in most parts of Shimla District. They are somewhat akin to channelling mediums, shamans, or priests. In many places, when people seek guidance from the deity in the form of a message, a divine revelation, a remedy, or an instruction, it traditionally asks the seekers to arrange grains of rice in three or five tiny mounds. The *gur* turns away as the seekers silently project their wish or prayer on to one of the rice mounds in their thoughts. Then the devotees ask the devta/devi to turn around and scatter one of the piles of rice grains to indicate their mind. This process is called *chēranā*. The deity communicates its will through the *gur* who scatters one of the mounds with his hands and the seekers surrender to the deity's judgment with a deep sense of gratitude. By respecting the deity's wisdom, the village sustains its belief and heritage, and ensures the perpetuation of the folk practice.

This authority of the village deities is based on their divinity. Rooted in oral traditions and folklore, the devta cult is embedded in the collective consciousness of a culturally rich community. This includes myths, legends, and oral narratives passed down through the generations. People believe that the deities derive wisdom and power on account of their divine intuition or a mystical connection with higher spiritual spheres. These beliefs are associated with the historical and mythological experiences of the concerned village. This proverb is a classic example of folk wisdom and folk beliefs stitched into one unit.

The dissemination of traditional wisdom is one of the prime functions of proverbs, irrespective of its cultural context. In the preceding proverb, the image of an elderly man is used as a metaphor for practical wisdom itself.

The same referent is used in a proverb of the culturally different region of Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh:

*Syāñēyā rā galāirā, kanē āmvaḷē rā*  
Elder of say, and Indian gooseberry of  
*svād, bādā-lē āōām yād.*  
taste, afterward come remember.

The words of elders and the taste of amla are recalled later. (Mandi District)

This proverb draws a parallel between the initially unappealing but ultimately beneficial nature of both the advice of elders and the taste of the Indian gooseberry. Just as the amla fruit, known for its health benefits, is sour at first bite but leaves a sweet aftertaste, similarly, the counsel of elders might appear unpleasant or outdated to the younger generations, yet its value and truth become apparent through experience over time. These proverbs emphasise the wisdom derived from distinct metaphors taken from local knowledge and beliefs. The Shimla proverb draws a parallel between the authority of the elders and the deities. Elders derive their wisdom from accumulated experience and the deities represent a supra-realm of knowledge—the divine expressing their will through miracles, prophecies, or other manifestations. The Mandi proverb uses the metaphor of the amla fruit to illustrate the delayed appreciation of advice and wisdom. This proverb focuses on the process of understanding, emphasizing patience and the importance of reflecting on past experiences.

Both proverbs highlight the cultural value of respecting elders. The Shimla proverb elevates the elders to a position of authority next only to the deities, reflecting a deep reverence for their knowledge and experience. The Mandi proverb, while acknowledging the initial resistance one might feel towards the advice given by the elders, ultimately underscores the importance of learning from their guidance. Both proverbs further emphasize the importance of time and experience in gaining wisdom. However, they differ in their approach to the source of wisdom. The Shimla proverb distinguishes between earthly and divine wisdom, acknowledging the existence of knowledge beyond human experience. The Mandi proverb, on the other hand, focuses solely on the wisdom derived from human experience.

The wide acceptance of these values in the larger context is apparent from various proverbs from distinct geographies. Another proverb from Shimla District and one from Ropar District in Punjab are illustrative of this:

*Āpaṛā piṭēō āhāi ōru, dujā rā piṭēō dēāi pōru.*  
Own beat come here, other of beat go away.

When we beat our own children, they come close; when we beat others' children, they go away. (Shimla District)

*Apnā mārē suṭē chāmvē, dujā mārē siṭē dhupē.*

Own hit throw in the shade, other hit throw in the sun

When we hit our own, we toss them in the shade; when we hit others, we toss them in the sun. (Ropar District)

These two proverbs offer fascinating glimpses into culturally specific approaches to teaching discipline and social dynamics. The nuances in their imagery reveal different perspectives on the consequences of correcting one's own children versus those of others. Both proverbs acknowledge separate treatment through diverse metaphors. The Shimla proverb uses the idea of physical proximity—"they come close" versus "they go away"—to suggest that one's own children, even when disciplined harshly, remain close, perhaps to seek comfort or understanding. Disciplining other people's children, however, leads to distance, likely out of fear or resentment. The focus here is on sanguinity, and the resilience of family bonding and the emotional belongingness within it.

The Ropar proverb, on the other hand, employs the metaphor of shade and sun. To "Toss them in the shade" when disciplining one's own children implies a degree of protection and care available to them, even within the act of harsh correction. Conversely, 'tossing them in the sun' when dealing with other people's children suggests exposure, vulnerability, and a lack of the same protective promise. This proverb highlights the different levels of care and concern afforded to one's own offspring compared with those of others.

The common thread between these proverbs is the acknowledgment of differential treatment accorded to two sets of children. The Shimla proverb, however, emphasizes the emotional response to discipline—closeness versus distance—while the Ropar proverb focuses on the degree of care and protection offered during correction—shade versus sun. Both proverbs reflect a culturally ingrained understanding of familial responsibility and the complexities of social relationships when it comes to disciplining and punishment. They serve as a warning to assume a more guarded approach to intervening in the affairs of other families, which may be unwarranted and unwelcome.

## Conclusion

The foregoing discussion of the proverbs of Shimla District of Himachal Pradesh explores the societal ways and beliefs in the region and paints a picture of some of the dominant values in the Pahari community. They are seen to be self-sufficient, judicious, practical, traditional, and industrious. These proverbs also show that individuals often bow to societal expectations of them for the sake of family honour and their devotional beliefs.

In conclusion, it may be reiterated that folklore fosters community bonding and social, moral norms. It is also a tool to inquire about the past and link it to the present as folkloric traditions are "understood as reflecting both past and present in a single breath" (Vansina xii). Ancestral wisdom is a product of the collection and passing down of experiences and observations over generations. To preserve it for posterity, these were often coded mnemonically so that it could be communicated and recalled easily. Folklore justifies a culture and its rituals and traditions for successive generations and prevents the alienation and distancing of the present generation from its own past. It is important to enrich one's knowledge and communication with the proverbs in one's language to preserve these oral traditional and ethical codes as a part of one's cultural inheritance.

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