

Chapter-V

Folktales and Concepts of Morality in Assamese Society: An Overview

The main functions of folktales are entertainment and education. Elements of entertainment pervade the entire gamut of folktale and the pedagogical significance is dominant in a great number of these traditional tales. Folklore, since time immemorial has been instrumental in entertaining the common folk. At the same time it performs significant role as a mode of didactic and moral instruction. The elements of morals are introduced in the folktales to “inculcate general attitudes and principles, such as diligence and filial piety and to ridicule laziness rebelliousness and snobbishness” (Raum, O.F, in Bascom, *Contribution to* 58). As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, moral function should be one of the important functions of folktale as folktales bear some moral values within it and is called the moral tales by the common people. It is proclaimed that a folktale carries some moral values and moral teachings within it and circulates from generation by generation over years. Not necessarily all the tales, but most of the tales possess certain values; it may be moral, social or cultural values.

Text, texture and context are very much important in the study of folklore. Alan Dundes observed that, “With respect to any given items of folklore, one may analyze its texture, its text, and its context. It is unlikely that a genre of folklore could be defined on the basis of just one of these.” (Dundes, *Interpreting Folklore* 22). Here in the study to understand the functions of folktales, the social context of the selected folktales has been brought in to special focus. In different contexts the tales and myths of a particular community may express some different worldview. In case of context, diverse cultures

and subcultures of Indian society are responsible for the different narrative versions with different meanings that changes from region to region, culture to culture and from community to community (Das, 13- 20).

To examine the function of morality and the moral values in operative in the tales collected by Lakshminath Bezbaroa, it is mandatory to analyze the tales from not only the moral perspectives but also from the social and cultural perspectives. The social context of any narrative is very vital to the understanding of it. This fact has been also emphasized by great thinkers like Malinowski, Bascom and Alan Dundes. William Bascom has pointed out certain fundamental facts essential to the understanding of folklore. They include the time and place of creation and performance, the narrator, the audience, and attitudes and response of the people (Bascom, *Contribution to* 42).

Apart from the theoretical analysis of the moral values in folktales, the opinion and analysis of the common folk is very much important to justify the moral values in folktales. This chapter will discuss different perspectives of the common people from the Assamese language speaking society, irrespective of any social class. To develop this chapter an informal and unstructured interview was executed.

5.1. Concept of Morality in Assamese Society

Assamese society is a very complex society. It consists of many tribes, castes, languages and dialects, religions and beliefs, cultures and traditions. The seven states of the North Eastern region of India share some cultural and traditional commonness. They carry some familiar folklore and folk mannerism. Being at the heart of the India's Northeast, Assam is rich with two river valley cultures – Brahmaputra valley and Barak valley. Assam is situated in the centre of the North East of India, bordered by Nagaland

and Manipur on the East, Bangladesh and West Bengal on the west, Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan on the North, and Mizoram and Tripura on the South and southeast. The main language of Assam, Assamese is of Indo-Aryan Language family. It is home to a large number of tribes and castes, among which the major tribes and castes are Mishings, Karbis, Boros, Kacharis, Rabhas, Garos, Tiwas, Ahoms, Chutiyas, Kochs, Morans, Motoks and such and such. All these tribes and castes have their own rich language dialects, culture, tradition and folklore of itself. Before independence, the whole northeastern region including all the seven sisters' states was called the Greater Assam or the *Bor Asom*. Present Assam province has been carrying the significances of the then *Bor Asom* even today. The realm of folklore of the Assamese race encompasses all the consequences of the *Bor Asom* and for this, the greater Assamese culture is observed as the fruitful result of some social processes like assimilation, diffusion and acculturation etc among these various ethnic and migrated groups. Folklore and the oral tradition of the Assamese people are also the outcome of these types of social processes.

Discourse is a power politics in a social field attach to strategies of confrontation and domination. The process of analysis of the native voice through the sociological vision is the folklore discourse. According to Hastrup, native refers 'to the people who at some point are studied by the social anthropologists as inhabitants of a particular social space' (Cited in Brouwer, 1999). Here the people of Assam, the commoners of the central space of the North east India, are the native referred to.

"Men begin with acts, not with thought." Human actions are built of some traits giving rise to some models which are called the 'patterns'. A pattern is an orderly arrangement of components into a system. Universal patterns are the broadest and

abstract categories of behaviour shared by all people, including language, knowledge, social and political norms, supernatural beliefs, manufactures and art (Oswalt, *Understanding Our 2*). This learned, shared and patterned behaviour can be called 'culture' in one word and 'folkways' in the other. In a social context, culture involves the institutional means such as family, kinship, political and religious patterns, through which people communicate with each other. Human struggle for existence in groups and institutions, and by this struggle the entire group or the institution is benefitted by any kind of individual experiences. With the learning from any kind of live experience by the group, the primitive people adopted the same way for a same situation or purpose or a similar problem. And thus, a folkway comes up. The folkways control, support and accelerate the needs and purpose of life in a society. With the passage of time it is accepted very popularly and the younger generation learns it by 'tradition, imitation and authority' (Sumner, *Folkways 2*). The folkways are individually practiced as habit and in groups as custom; but originally, the folkways are gradual and unconscious process. In the history of human civilization, folkways are never signified as the conscious effort by the human. It is said before that in the primitive era human act first then thought and folkway is the mixture of the result of this action and the assessment of the thought. Eventually, folkway is that force for which society is a society in the course of time. Though folkways generated through unconsciously, it is exercised with a very conscious effort in a society as it is hired from the primitive ancestors of the human as the prevention or the solution of a situation. So, it can be said that the folkways are some earned and acquired beliefs. When this belief is used as tool for societal welfare, it is converted into mores and passing through the philosophical and ethical milieu, it becomes the source of art of living of the society.

Folkways, at first, naturally had the nature of the ways of the other animals. Later on it gets the control after modification through human principle, philosophy and ethics and folkways become the “‘right’ ways to satisfy all interests, because they are traditional, and exist in fact. They extend over the whole of life. There is right way to catch game, to win a wife, to make one’s self appear, to cure disease, to honor ghosts, to treat comrades or strangers, to behave when a child is born, on the war-path, in council, and so on in all cases which can arise. The ways are defined on the negative side that is by taboos. The “‘right” way is the way which the ancestors used and which has been handed down.”(ibid. 28). It confirms that life principle, philosophy, concept of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and the idea of morality all are the inventions of folkways.

As the entire Assamese society is the result of the social processes like acculturation, assimilation and integration of various tribes, caste, culture, tradition and religion, the concept of morality and the judgments of the moral values are also influenced by these social processes. On one hand Assamese society follows animism as their original religion, on the other hand the acceptance of the Vedic Hindu religion is also observed. The norms of the society are also differs from community to community and from culture to culture. For example, in the matrilineal societies the women bring the groom to her house; on the other hand in the patrilineal societies, for the men living in the house of his wife is called *Capaniya*, which is very derogatory term for men. Regarding sexual morality, in the context of Indian social system, it lies on the faithfulness of the wife or a married woman towards the husband is the basic concern. Marital status is regarded as a serious element for sexuality in the Assamese household and society and chastity of a woman is regarded the pivotal issue of the Indian value system. From the collection *Burhi Air Sadhu*, in the tales ‘*Kata Joa nak*

Kharani di Dhak and *Kanchani*, and *Nomal aru Sonpahi* from the collection of *Kaka-deota Aru Nati Lora*, women's struggle to protect their chastity is depicted very clearly. *Kanchani* reflects woman's extreme obedience and submissiveness to her husband. But in *Kata Joa nak Kharani di Dhak* the protagonist, the younger daughter-in-law defended herself very bravely.

As Assam is the abode of both tribal and non tribal populace, both tribal and non-tribal value systems are valid here in this region. In comparison to the non tribal Caste Hindu societies, in tribal societies women chastity does not matter so seriously and this fact reflects in some tales of this region. In the tales from the collection, *Kaka-deota Aru Nati Lora*, *Ek Sanyasir Katha*, *Petbhatour Katha* and from *Burhi Air Sadhu* *Cilonir Jiyekar Sadhu* the issues of woman chastity is ignored and the husbands easily and unquestionably accepted the women after they were abused mentally or physically by some other persons. So, the concept of morality is complex in the minds of the people of this complex society. It varies from community to community and culture to culture. The concept of morality in Assamese society is not constant.

5.2. Folktale and Morality: Peoples' Perception

Folktales constitute the largest orally circulated folklore genre. Assam and the greater part of the north-east India is a prosperous province of both tribal and non tribal folktales. A century ago, the field of Assamese folktale achieved the scholarly accomplishment of Lakshminath Bezbaroa. He also realized that the children are the architect of the future society and the literature for them should contain glorious stories of the heroes and heroic deeds and these stories should reflect self control, patriotism, moderation of atrocities. (Mibang, *et.al* (Edt), *Tribal Studies* 76). Aiming at these

objectives in children literature, he collected and compiled the Assamese Folktale collections namely *Burhi Air Sadhu* (1911), *Kaka-deuta aru Nati Lora* (1913) and *Junuka* (1913) that have served as the principle depository for the recorded folktales of great Assamese speaking groups in Assam.

Entertainment is not only for time pass; it should reflect the society in which we used to live. Folktales are basically told for entertainment and for amusement. From the structure and the theme of a folktale and skill of telling the tale genuinely tells a different tale about folktales that primarily these tales are used as a tool of entertainment and told by adults to the children and adult audience as well. William Bascom (1981) interprets folklore itself as a concept of “escape mechanism” (55), by which reveals “man’s attempts to escape in fantasy from the condition of his geographical environment and from his own biological limitations” (ibid. 55). These folk narratives are generally full of violence, cruelty, brutality and bigotry and having descriptions of bawdy, erotic and incestuous scenes. From this point of view there is also scope to regard that, these folktales are meant for the adults basically. For the concern of productive socialization, these violence, cruelty, brutality and bigotry etc. in the folktales, fantasies and classical mythologies are to be utilized as lessons.

When a child listen to a folk, fairy or fantasy tale he or she is immediately transported to another world where there is good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly and he or she had to catch the good, right and the beauty as the other negatives are socially rejected concepts.

Assamese folktales are fictional events having great moral and social importance with the experiences earned from peoples’ daily life such as religion and rituals, agriculture, adventures with animals - domestic and wild, interaction with

human companion and supernatural beings, relation with the local environment etc. After the analysis of the three Assamese folktale collections by Lakshminath Bezbaroa, it is observed that all the tales perform the function of amusement and entertainment. Apart from the above mentioned functions, folktales play the important function of imparting some didactic messages. Even though, folktales are considered as moral tales from the complex theoretical and philosophical viewpoint, but from the perspective of common folk they cannot be called moral, due to the prevalence of the disagreeable elements like revenge, violence, cheating etc. Tales like, *Tikhor and Cuti-bai*, *Numaliya Po**, *Panesoi*, *Dui Budhiyok*, *Bor Cor*, *Lotkon*, *Sarabjan*** and so on, completely fail to fulfill the function of moral teaching directly. The characters or the protagonists of these tales involve in some trickery, dishonesty to satisfy their earthly desire. Thus, in the eyes of common men they fail to set any moral standards.

*** *Numoliya Po* (The Youngest Son)**

Once there was an old couple. In their old age, they had a baby boy born to them. The old man went to a *ganak* and asked what should be the name of their baby. The *ganak* suggested the name 'Nomal'. For fear of forgetting the name, the old man repeated the name loudly on his way back to home. But, after a while he made a mistake and 'Nomal' became *nemel* which meant 'don't release'. At that moment a merchant was just about to lift the anchor to release the boat for sailing in the river. When the old man was passing by uttering '*nemel-nemel*', they thought that he asked them not to release the boat and they enquired the reason. But the old man thought that if he answered the question he would forget the name. So, instead of answering the query of the merchant he decided to keep on chanting '*nemel-nemel*'. Then the merchant got angry and

the old man was beaten up by the boats men. Being beaten up unexpectedly, he forgot '*nemel-nemel*' and started repeatedly uttering *nohobor hol* –meaning 'something unexpected'. Like this, incident after incident occurred before him as a result, he again forgot his son's name and changed by *sitotkoi itohe sora*—meaning 'the second seems a cut higher than the first'. In each incident he was beaten badly for his foolishness.

After these severe beatings the old man reached home in utter agony. In home he expressed all the incidents in front of his wife and also told that he forgot the name of their son suggested by the astrologer and this made her very depressed. But to cheer him up she talked to him about their cultivation. As a part of their discussion of cultivating the tiny corner plot with young seedlings she said a sentence that, "this could be your *Numoliya* cultivation." When the old man heard the word he got remembrance of his son's name Nomal and he thought that his wife already knew their son's name and uselessly she sent him to the astrologer. As a result he showered blows on his wife's back for all the harassments he got. After all these the old couple named their son as Nomal.

**** *Sarabjan* (The All-knowing One or The Know-all)**

Once, in a remote village, there lived a farmer called Phoring. His wife was a very selfish type of woman. They had no kids. In a rainy winter day Phoring said to his wife that he wished to eat *pithas* (cakes) instead of regular meal. But the wife said that there was no *Boradhan* required for making *pithas*. And she suggested him to borrow some *Bora-dhan* from the neighbourhood. Phoring then thought of a plan to get some *Bora-dhan* and went out wrapping his body with an *Eriya* shawl. On his way he noticed his neighbour was getting his *Bora-*

dhan separating the grain from the stalks. Phoring went near to the place where the work was in progress and started talking about some trifling things. Suddenly he pretends of a severe stomach pain and because of the pain he started rolling on the *Bora-dhan*. After rolling there for a while he got up and went home saying that he got some recovery. Reaching home he shook his *Eriya* shawl and hence collected a lot of *Bora-dhan* that had stuck to his shawl.

At night after her husband had gone to the bed taking dinner, she prepared the cakes. She made a lot of *pithas* and ate most of them. Before going to bed she woke up her husband and made a deal that whoever gets up first in the morning, would have one third of the *pithas* and the other person would have the remaining two third. He agreed and went to sleep again. Next morning, keeping on mind the bargain made at night on the *pithas*, none of them seemed to wake up. Finally, Phoring got up as he had a lot of work to do. Seeing him rise from the bed, the wife remind him that he would get only the one third of the *pithas*. When Phoring sat down to have his share of *pithas*, he surprised that only a very little amount of *pithas* were there in the pot. Then *Phoring* happened to see the bamboo platter hanging on the wall where there were the imprints of the uncooked *pithas*, he counted the marks and found it sixty. After taking his share he uttered a rhyme disclosing the exact number of cakes that his wife had eaten. The woman felt ashamed and was also greatly surprised at her husband's capacity to see the hidden truth. When she went to fetch water, she told her fellow village women about the extra ordinary power of her husband Phoring. Soon the news spread over the village and Phoring came to know as the *Sarabjan*, the know-all. In the mean time a villager was looking for his cow that

was missing for some days. Fortunately, Phoring saw the cow behind his house and he directed the villager to find his cow accordingly. After this incident Phoring's capacity was undoubtedly accepted.

At that time in the king's palace, a precious necklace was lost, and the king having heard of the *Sarabjan's* fame, called him upon to investigate the matter. Phoring was very much frightened by this incident. He knew that if he failed to find the necklace he would be killed. However he went to the palace and was treated very well with delicacies like curds, molasses and *komal-chawl*¹. The fact was that the king had two wives, one of them was called '*Hadoi*' and she was the person who had stolen the necklace. So, she was peeping at him when he was taking snacks and heard him exclaim, "*Ha! Doi! (Alas! Curds!) Relish the taste today, for no one knows what the king will do tomorrow.*" Phoring talked to himself in his fear and anxiety, but when he uttered '*haa doi*' the queen thought that the *sarabjan* must know her name with the help of his extraordinary power. So, she went running to his feet and confessed that she was the person who had stolen the necklace. Phoring then assured that he would not reveal her name but she should restore the necklace to the royal cash box. The queen did accordingly and when the king asked for the necklace in the next morning Phoring told that the necklace was to be found in the royal cash box and the necklace was found accordingly. Later the king tested Phoring twice for his extraordinary capacity, but he was saved by sheer of good luck.

(These two tales are only a very good piece of narratives, but could not found any moral value on the basis the previously discussed Principles of Morality. The second is

¹ A particular snack made of rice

a fine narrative on the good fate of an individual, but found no any moral values in it. In the first one, there is the evidence of domestic violence that is suffered by women without any fault.)

Folktales through its plot and action provide some universal knowledge such as 'tit for tat', 'slow and steady wins the race', 'never stop trying even if you fail', 'Virtue is its own reward', 'United we stand, divided we fall'. These themes are universally applicable to all irrespective of minor or adult, young or old, men or women and people from any caste, class or of any religious belief. The stories have universal impact on the children as in the imaginary fantasy world of folktales miracles happen in the lives of good people, omens come to the bad people and creatures such as demons and wicked animals and toughest hurdles are overcome by honesty, hard work, wit, courage and intelligence. The belief and trust that a child developed through the medium of folktales can easily determine the personality of that child long through his or her lifetime.

The *Mekurir Jiyekar Sadhu* contains two parts one is the tale of the cat and the other is of the cat's daughters. There are many traits in the tale which are established as immoral tasks such as stealing fish by the cat; cheating the cat by not giving it its earnings; carrying off the cat's elder daughter by the water fairy without her consent; feeling jealous for co-wife. Yet there is a moral trait in the second part of the tale that is the merchant realized his fault and accepted his abandoned wife and the boys again. According to the theory of Mill's utilitarianism, moral actions are those actions that decrease the pain and provide the ultimate pleasure. In this tale the merchant's realization can be regarded a moral action.

Animal tales are purely for entertainment. The tale of the monkey and the fox is all about cunning trickery and revenge is the prime traits observed in this tale. No such

moral attributes are noticed here; since this tale can be discussed under the theory of 'moral subjectivism'. As this theory explains the concept of 'right' and 'wrong' subjectively, the justification of the moral value of this tale can be established through the subjective perspective. Here the revenge of the fox also can be said moral action from the character's perspective because the monkey deserves the punishment for the corruption he performed.

Generosity is a noble virtue. In spite of his prosperity, the youngest son is yet loyal to his father, the old man. The father has become the king having reconciled with each other. There is a proverb, "Tit for Tat". The four brothers are punished with death in the hand of their own brother because of jealousy.

According to a musician, Tapash Pratim Bora, from Golaghat, in the tale of the *Dhora Kauri Aru Tipoci Carai*, the Warbler is an innocent creature and the Raven on the other hand is a wicked one. For its generosity and simplicity the warbler can get rid of the cruel Raven. And the wicked Raven at last has to die for its own wicked activities. The tale teaches us about the worst result of bad activities. When he was asked about the moral value of the tale of the flower girl, he said that the moral of this folktale is that without mutual help and understanding nothing is possible. For the successful completion of an event this mutual help and understanding is very much important. Nature sets example of this and this folktale represents the fact.

Padmadhar Gogoi of Golaghat, a retired high school teacher opined that the *Cilonir Jiyekor Sadhu* might be suitable example of moral tale. According to him it goes without saying that this folktale is having a good moral lesson in it. An implicit beauty lies in the presentation of the judgment day in respect of the seven destitute women. The merchant had condemned all his wives but the youngest one, having

known of their mischievous act. Their inhuman behaviour is no longer accessible to a civilized society. The youngest wife is an honest woman, worthy of credit. It proves that her generosity is surprisingly the price for a prosperous life. This great moral value might be an asset to our young children.

There is a proverb, “Virtue is its own reward.” It is very much appropriate on the Tale of the Frog, *Bhekulir Sadhu*. By sparing the life of the frog, the old man has shown his kindness. By virtue of his kindness, he is achieving a good life in the end. There is a saying, ‘United we stand, divided we fall’. The frog could defeat the king for being united with all creatures of the jungle. This might have an impact on the psychology of the children (Mina Das, Goalpara)

According to a primary school teacher, Rashmi Chiring, Dibrugarh, the familial relationship represented in *Rakshyas Pundit-II*, imparts a good moral lesson. The younger brother’s love and devotion only to his elder brother brings him back to life which according to Rashmi Chiring sets a good example for human life. In case of *Tikhor aru Cuti-bai*, she indirectly supports the act of Tikhor by saying that without the application of his practical wit, poor people like them can’t survive in the society.

The tale *Lotkon* is all about the adventure of a poor Brahmin Lotkon to get rid of poverty and to satisfy his wife. According to Durlav Ch. Gogoi, a retired higher secondary teacher of Salikihat, Golaghat, it is an interesting and amusing folktale. There is no any moral lesson in this folktale as it seems that the protagonist Lotkon used deceit, which is not encouraging by any way. But, he also commented that, from the incessant efforts of Lotkon to earn money and one may learn “if there is a will, there is a way.”

According to a Sanskrit teacher Tileswar Bordoloi, the son-in-law tale *Jowair Sadhu* is very valuable for teaching the younger generation the value of respect to the elders. In this tale, in spite of his night blindness, the son-in-law goes to the house of the father-in-laws in the evening even risking his life just to keep his words. Tileswar Bordoloi also gives insight on the fact that individual should have control over their self. The son-in-law falls in the trap of the thief only for his little control on his greed. This opinion is very similar to the western principle of morality that is the *Principle of Spirituality*. In the tale of the Night Blind, he opined that to keep promise should be one's admirable duty. In this tale, the person with the disability of night blindness had fallen in risk only to keep his promise to return the bullocks in time. Keeping the promise is also a moral duty and this tale presents it very nicely.

The *Bhut Aru Barhani* is an interesting tale and according to Mrs. Malarani Saikia Bora, a housewife observed that this tale possesses some moral teaching that is that one can overcome an adverse situation by application of one's wit and presence of mind. The priest in this tale overcame the terrifying situation created by the ghost with his presence of mind and for his wit he can achieve a good life. For the tale of the *Burha Burhi aru Shiyal*, She opined that this tale teaches that people should not cheat others, because cheating is not moral action and one should have to pay for this kind of immoral actions as the foxes had to suffer.

All the advices of the Kathabahi Burha are moral lessons, some valuable teachings for a successful life; like the young man, the protagonist of the tale. With maximum risk the young man tested the advices of Kathabahi and got the final result as explained. This is a highly suitable tale for children. They should learn these valuable

advices at the very young stage, to get benefit amidst the complications in their future life (Upen Tamuly, farmer, Kamarbandha).

The tale of the *Nimati Koina* is very amusing and interesting for children, as the tale is full of tactics to solve some complications faced by the innocent prince. A pre Primary teacher, Anjali Bora said that as a moral lesson or moral value of the folktale, it may be rightly said that nobility is the best policy. God helps him, who is always in right path. The wicked or the evil persons are seemed to be very powerful in the beginning. But, there is a definite end of their evil deeds and in the end they suffer in an extreme way. There is the reference of human sacrifice, which is horrible and not appropriate for the children.

In case of the tale of the *Pet-Bhatu*, according to Juri Das, Goalpara, student, there is no such event which may be ideal to children. The son of the king and the minister are bosom friends, which is very good. But, the lie told by the son of minister was not just at all. "To tell a lie is sin". The son of the minister uttered a lie for whichever reason, but his friend suffered a lot. However, in the last part, he was successful to take revenge upon the merchant in an exemplary way. Yet, this revenge was too horrible.

As the lesson 'Tit for tat' is there, so the tale is ideal for young children. There is also a message that one should show kindness to every being fair or ugly like the princess who met *Shiyal-Pagala* on road. For her kindness to the *Shiyal-Pagala*, an ugly creature, she got such a benefit which was even beyond to her imagination. (Bornali Rabha, Chaigaon)

The tale, *Planting of a Jujube Seed by an Old Couple* reveals that trustworthiness is rewarded. This is the moral lesson here in this tale according to a

farmer Khetek Phukan, Sibsagar. The king asks all his queens for the truth about his dinner. The queens do not refer the real truth to the king. They are not good but the youngest queen is honest and answers what is true. The king becomes satisfied with her. Sparing her life, he has punished all others to death.

There is a proverb, “As we sow, so we reap” and the tale of the *Rajmantri aru Napit* reflects this. This seems to be a moral lesson for the young children. The barber is a victim of his own anxieties and wishes. His jealousy leads to the conspiracy against the lame man. And this conspiracy comes to an end before its extinction. This downfall might influence the mind of the young (Pori Deka, Karbi Anglong)

In the tale, *Eta Burha Aru Panch Putek*, it is found that generosity is a noble virtue. In spite of his prosperity, the youngest son is yet loyal to his father, the old man. The father has become the king having reconciled with each other thus, it very well supports the proverb, “Tit for Tat”. The four brothers meet their end with death in the hand of their own brother because of their jealousy (Maya Hazarika (Sibasagar).

Kakuli Dutta (Guwahati) criticizes the elements of violence immorality set in some of the folktales. Referring to *Tejimola* she comments that the representation of the step mother may have adverse effects in the social psyche. It may not be always true to all the step mothers and thus, generalization seems to be biased.

Minu Bora, a housewife, strongly disapproved of the social discrimination presented in the folk tales. In spite of the moral instructions they seem to uphold the elements of social discrimination especially in case of women. She argued that the system of polygamy commonly mentioned in the tales is unacceptable in the present social context. The concept of *lagee* and *alagee* is discriminatory.

Moral philosophy belongs from an idiosyncratic premise of human thought. There is a clear difference between the two concepts 'moral values' and 'moral teachings'. It is observed that people often confuse between these two concepts. So, when somebody is asked about the moral values of a tale, the answer very commonly comes out in the form of a moral teaching. During the field visit, it is experienced that people, highly educated or less educated always focuses on the moral lesson of a tale instead of the moral value.

5.3. Folktales as the Tool for value Education

Now a days, in our social environment, there is noticed delinquency of the young generation everywhere. In this situation value based education is very important to prevent the generation going astray and for this it is important to introduce the basic values and the ethnic values to their heart and mind. Folktales can help in building character, psyche and the mentality of the young generation as these folktales are loaded with values, morals, and traditional ethics within it. Folktales have the highest potentiality of shaping the character of the individual as it bears maximum values in comparison to the other folklore genres. Teachings of folktales make an individual responsible for his or her motherland and generate the sense of patriotism and the sense of morality. Reading or listening to folktales provide the scope of inculcating the qualities such as patience, modesty, humanity, friendliness, selfless service to the society, the spirit of sacrifice, adherence to truth, non-violence, faith in own culture and tradition.

Folktales carry the persistent patterns of virtues and vices from the very beginning. In these folktales, there is noticed a tendency to protect the children from going to astray by retelling and rewriting folktales in accordance with the prevailed

social and cultural norms and concepts. Like other folklore genres, folktale performs pedagogic functions. The power of education lies in making a person able to differentiate between good and evil and make the person wise enough to lead a life guided by wisdom. However, in the rapidly changing global world, the meaning of education also has been changing so far with the rise of the material competition. But, this material gain never be the aim of education ever. Folktales give traditionally the value based education generation after generation. Folktale gives us values, teaches us social conduct, strengthens the character and behaviour and provides the platform to succeed in the practical life.

Morality is an institution of human life, like religion. By this institution one can frame one's behaviour and conduct and also can judge others action as right or wrong, good or bad. The entire individual is having an independent and individual mind and feelings. People's feelings are very different from each other. But, unfortunately these feelings may be irrational and may be the result of selfishness, prejudices and cultural conditioning. So, to discover the truth, let the feelings be guided by reason. "This is the essence of morality. The morally right thing to do is always the thing best supported by the arguments." (Rachels *et.al. The Elements*, 11).

It is observed that in the mind of the common people, morality and folktale is very much identical. Common people have the opinion that all the folktales can somehow; provide at least some moral teaching. In the field, it is experienced that the common people cannot differentiate the concepts 'moral value' and 'moral teaching'. Their opinions and observations always move towards the moral teaching, when questions asked for any moral values hidden within a particular folktale. Unconsciously, they seem to understand the moral values of folktales and as a result

they put forward their understanding of the moral values as moral teachings. It is because of the adult nature of instructing the young. For this instinct of instructing the young, moral values or the concept of morality comes out as a moral instruction by the adults.