Traditional knowledge or folk knowledge is that knowledge which is possessed by the people on different aspects of life. This is exposed on proverbs. A person having such knowledge is welcome by the society. It helps the common folk in their day to day life. Today, man has developed science so to say its pick point. The scientists are challenging to keep the life immortal through scientific experiments, trying to settle in the moon and mars and measure the depth of the earth etc. On the contrary they are also in search of Sanjeebani, the airports of the demon king Ravana and Puspaka Vimana he was using as described in the great epic or purana. All these efforts are being taken by the elites which do not concern to common people or the folk.

Even today, they are limited to their traditional knowledge. We the so called elites cannot get any reasonable reply from them if we ask them in this regard. They are not interested to know the modern science but they give more emphasis on traditional knowledge acquired from their ancestors. In case of illness the people prefer to seek the help of the ojha (village priest) and the traditional physician the vaidya. Even they use the local medicinal herbs or plants known to them. So far as the agriculture is concerned the common folk depend on some traditional techniques. Watching the situation of environment, condition and colour of clouds on the sky they expect rain and other natural incidents which they have been experiencing from long past following their ancestor generation after generation. While purchasing cattle the common people apply their traditional knowledge to select good one so that they have not to repent later. To keep the body and health free from disease, to avoid from ill eye and to save from witch craft in the case of children these people take certain traditional preventive.

It is interesting to note that the folk sayings particularly the proverbs prevail among the people sometime act as the base of their traditional knowledge. Most of such proverbs are the outcome of the past experiences of the common folk. Watching and experiencing certain events or getting a particular result out of it, such proverbs or folk sayings are created by some wise man of the society who ultimately is left behind the curtain and nobody knows him, but the proverbs created by him and work as powerful knowledge among the common people or folk. Such proverbs are not only the treasure of knowledge but teach the people how to face the problems in time.

This paper deals on how the common folk acquire knowledge from such folk sayings and prepare themselves to face any situations. Discussion will be made mainly on the proverbs prevail in West Odisha. This region of the state of Odisha has its own identity so far as the culture and tradition particularly the folk culture and the language spoken by the people are concerned. The original inhabitant of this region is mainly the scheduled Tribes and Castes who have still kept their culture and tradition intact. However, they are influenced by the migrated upper castes in some respects. Most of the proverbs prevail among the people of West Odisha are the creation of some wise migrated people. It does not mean that the original inhabitants can not create or use proverbs. Knowledge in the form of proverbs creates confidence in the mind and manner of the common folk. These people though do not get opportunity to acquire knowledge from books, yet from oral tradition they gain knowledge which fulfill their needs and solve certain problems may be of social, economical, health and hygiene etc. even the elites also use these folk sayings to enrich their knowledge acquired from books.
Much has been told by the scholars on proverbs. Nothing new is to be said by this scholar. However, it will be better to quote a few definitions on proverbs before coming to discussion. “A proverb is a terse didactic statement that is current in tradition... or as an epigram says, ‘the wisdom of many and wit of one.’ It ordinarily suggests a course of action or passes judgment on a situation. (1) Proverbs are the concentrated wisdom of the ages, the dark saying of wise man”. (2) “To attain the rank of a proverb, a saying must either spring from the masses or accepted by the people as true. In profound sense, it must be Vox populi.” (3) “Proverbs are short sentences drawn from long experience” (4)

According to Dr. Krishnadev Upadhyaya, proverb is like that to put the ocean (Sagar) in a jar (Ghaghar). Perhaps this could be the shortest definition of proverb. “The importance which folklorists give to this genre of folk speech is evidenced by the numerous volumes of proverb and riddle collection which exist in the many languages of India”. (5) Keeping in view of this popular genre of folk literature on one of its aspects the traditional knowledge an attempt has been made to discuss in this paper. Such proverbs to be discussed may be divided in to five categories such as agricultural and environmental, society and family matter, traditional therapy, health and hygiene, satirical, cattle.

Agriculture is the main source of income of the people of this area and rain is the only hope for good crops. The people were and are depending on traditional knowledge for which they used to follow the guidelines mentioned in some proverbs. A bumper crop is possible on balanced rain. Observing the conditions of the weather, clouds on the sky and some peculiar situation on the sky the peasants expect heavy rain or apprehend less rain. The following proverbs indicate the situation and make the people aware of the facts. For example,

\[
\text{Purbe Ardul Pachhime Ravi} \\
\text{Thik Janithibu Sedine Dhui.}
\]

It means that when the rainbow it seen on the East and the Sun-setting in the West on than day heavy rain is a must. Accordingly the peasants keep themselves alert and plan for cultivation. On the contrary another proverb says, if the whole sky is not covered with clods on the forth moonlight day in the month of \text{Sravan} and air blows from the South it is apprehended that there will not be balanced rain during the season and people are advised to go out in search of work to meet the day to day life. The proverb is like this:

\[
\text{Sravana Masara Adya Chauthi,} \\
\text{Chariadu Jadi Megha Naghoti,} \\
\text{Dakshina Digaru Bahai Baa,} \\
\text{Bhuga Tupa Dhari Bidesha Jaa.}
\]

Regarding cultivation of sugarcane and paddy it is mentioned in a proverb that sugarcane grows in case of lucky farmer and paddy grows for unlucky one. Indirectly it has been advised that a farmer should try to grow sugarcane to maximum height but not the paddy. Paddy crops get fall down if grow more in height which leads to loss, where as sugar cane grow more height provides more juice out of which more gur is collected. Thus the farmer gains the traditional knowledge. The proverb is like this:

\[
\text{Karmiar Kusher Badhe} \\
\text{Akarmiar Dhan Bdhe.}
\]

In another such proverb it has been told regarding yielding good crop of brinjal. Brinjal is a vegetable which can be used in many items. It should be ploughed twelve times and digging for eight times. The proverb in this regard is quoted below.

\[
\text{Ath Kuda, Bara Bihida}
\]
Baigan Phale Muda Muda,  
Pudei Khae Bamhan Budha.

It is a general practice of mother-in-law in the family that she never shows sympathy to the daughter-in-law in spite of her hard labour and attempt to satisfy all where as if the daughter does a little, she is sympathized more. A proverb in this regard is quoted below.  
Kuti Kandi Baha Daldala,  
Sankhli Pachhri Jhi Mala.

Husking of paddy by the daughter-in-law is a hard work where as winnowing husks is the lighter work done by the daughter. Instead of the daughter-in-law, the daughter is sympathizing. Of course not all the mother-in-laws of Indian family do this. Some are quite considerate, affectionate and sympathetic towards the daughter-in-law which is rarely found. A proverb in this regard is quoted below.  
Sas bahar gali,  
Rati khaan birhi chakuli.

As discussed in the previous proverb the mother-in-law harasses her daughter-in-law but this proverb proves their comprising relation. Let us examine another proverb in which discrimination in behavior or treatment to a brother and brother-in-law.

Aela re Maijhir Bhai  
Ghina Jhuri Ghina Dahi.  
Aela re Andarar Bhai,  
Chaerdinu Ghare Adhia Nain.

When her brother comes, the sister entertains him with good food like fish and curd etc. But in case of husband’s brother it is reported that rice is exhausted since last four days. This is happening in the society. No doubt being a guest the brother of the wife should specially be treated. But it does not mean that the husband’s brother be neglected. A proverb quoted below warns a mother to be careful after the puberty of her daughter.  
Jhi Badhbar tak Pindhitha ,  
Baha Aibar tak Khaitha.

The above proverb teaches a mother that her daughter may use as much as ornaments she likes till puberty and lead a peaceful or happy life till the daughter-in-law comes. Affection, love and care of a mother for her child particularly for her son is immeasurable and incomparable. She always looks her son as a child and takes care of his food etc. For which the daughter-in-law is not so serious. Rather she cares for his earning. Keeping in view of such condition a proverb says:  
Maa Dekhe Peta/ Maepo Dekhe Anta.

It means the mother always thinks whether her son eats fully or not where as the daughter-in-law is more concerned on his earning. In this connection another proverb describes the mental condition and emotion of the mother. The mother neither can depend upon the son nor on the daughter because one day the daughter goes to her in-laws house. On the contrary the son gradually comes under the control of his wife. As a result the mother gradually becomes pessimist and expresses her feeling through the proverb quoted below.

Jhee Janam Kari Juen k Dia  
Puo janam kari Baha k Dia.

It means the daughter is to be given to the son-in-law and son to daughter-in-law. Likely the feeling of old man as described in a proverb is also pessimistic. In many cases
the old man is supposed to be an unwanted member of the family and counts the days for death. A proverb speaks the very truth.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ghar baluche Jaa} \\
\text{Gad Baluche aa.}
\end{align*}
\]
That the house means the members of the family want the death of the old man and the graveyard is ready to welcome.

Regarding health and hygiene and folk therapy many important and worthy proverbs prevail among the common folk. These people mainly depend on the medicinal herbs on which they trust and cure diseases. Besides on sorcery, branding, some rituals they believe more. They prefer the \textit{ojha} or village priest and \textit{vaidya} but not the doctor. From such proverbs the folk acquire knowledge which they apply whenever necessary. Regarding treatment of diseases they follow the directions mentioned in such proverbs. Many times they get good result. Let us examine a few proverbs in this connection.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dine Duna Rati Una,} \\
\text{Sakhalpuake Khankhana.}
\end{align*}
\]

It means one should take full-belly food at lunch but nearly half at dinner. As a result the bowl on the next morning is cleaned and makes a man smart for the whole day. A proverb says, if someone uses turban on the head throughout the day and massages oil under the feet in the night a \textit{vaidya} or physician will never be called for him. Rather he may make jokes with the \textit{vaidya}. The proverb is –

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mude Pagdi Pae Tel} \\
\text{Baid Sange Karbu Gel.}
\end{align*}
\]

Another proverb speaks on taking food. In this regard four persons are chosen according to their eating. The minimum a person takes the maximum he maintains sound health.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ek Bel Khae Jugi,} \\
\text{Dui Bel khae Bhogi,} \\
\text{Tin Bel Khae Bania Bahman,} \\
\text{Chaer Bel Khae Rogi.}
\end{align*}
\]

It means that a \textit{Jogi} or saint takes food once a day, taking twice a day one can enjoy the life. The \textit{Baniya} or the traditional medicine expert and a Brahmin take thrice a day as they are able to digest but who takes four times a day invites diseases.

It has been mentioned in a proverb regarding health. What should one do to keep himself well and not to do which creates harm.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Khai Challe Badhe Bayu,} \\
\text{Khai suile Badhe Ayu,} \\
\text{Khai Basle Badhe Pet,} \\
\text{Khai Khale jamar Bhet.}
\end{align*}
\]

One should not walk after eating as it creates gas in the bowl. It is better to sleep after meals as it extends the longevity. After taking food nobody should sit to avoid fat and bally to enlarge. On the other hand if somebody eats and eats he or she has to meet the Yama, the God of Death.

The more a child is massaged with oil the more he or she retains good health as the paddy ripens properly under water.
Tel Pacha Puo / Pain pacha Dhan.

A good number of proverbs on castes are prevailed in this region. The intension of such proverbs is to criticize a caste by other caste. These proverbs generally speak on the nature of different caste.

There are some proverbs which are mainly satirical. Some proverbs make a wayward, ill character, shrewd and egoist person naked & thus bring him to the right path. Lets us take one such proverb, as example:

\[
\begin{align*}
Kuta & \text{ pushe kuta / kuta mare kuta} \\
Ek & \text{ kuta sashur gharen juen} \\
Ek & \text{ kuta bahen gharen bhae} \\
Ar & \text{ ek kuta je pusputar rahe.}
\end{align*}
\]

In this proverb four persons have been compared with dog. One is dog who pets dog & one who kills dog. Another one is a dog who settles in the house of father-in-law. One is dog who stays for long in sister’s house & adopted son is also a dog. The widow and the divorce ladies are generally considered as the curse for the village. In fact in many cases such ladies are found to be dangerous. Nobody can control them as they have no husbands. They know everything of the village. Watching their activities and character a satirical proverb has been created they have been compared with some animals. The proverbs is

\[
\begin{align*}
Gachh & \text{ mal mal pipal patar} \\
Jhar & \text{ mal mal tengta,} \\
Gaon & \text{ mal mal raandi chharri} \\
Paen & \text{ mal mal jarda.}
\end{align*}
\]

As the leaves of peepal tree tremble in normal air, the lizard tries to expose itself the jarda a small fish plays on the upper level of water; likewise the widow and divorce ladies like to expose themselves anywhere and everywhere which some people dislike.

It is known that even the beasts are aware about good or bad for them. In case of man if we look into we can observe that the man’s body and mind are the source of qualities sand knowledge. The message of proverb is valueless for an animal but much more valuable for man who acquires knowledge and wit from it. In all aspects of life proverbs provide raw knowledge which is applied by man in due course. Whether primitive or civilized the man may be, he is rational. What the man realized from experience and presented in proverb form for should not be dismissed or ignored as mere sayings. Proverbs for folk knowledge discussed above are in fact the knowledge acquired from oral tradition. Proverbs are the treasure of knowledge which makes a man a man.

REFERENCES