

A Psychological Study on the Effectiveness of Sri Lankan Folk Culture in the Socialization Process

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1. Introduction

The socialization process of a person starts with the experiences that they are exposed to in their childhood. This has even been proved by modern psychological theories; especially Albert Bandura through his Social Cognitive Theory. Since stories are used as a major form of education that is given to a child, they have a great influence on the socialization process. When considering the Sri Lankan context, the stories that are related to children are mostly the folk stories. These folk stories can be mainly divided into two types on the basis of their nature; folk comedies and folk heroic stories. The objective of this study is to examine how the Sri Lankan folk story culture is being used to make the socialization process effective and to examine how the ideologies of the tradition and culture and qualities like bravery, critical thinking, and gumption are transmitted through these stories. Therefore, a careful analysis shows that despite the contextual differences these stories are placed, they still have an appeal to the modern reader in the socialization process and in transmission of ideologies and patriarchal feelings.

2. Literature Review

Although many studies have been done to prove the importance of the Social Cognitive Theory in accessing the socialization process of the children, no evidence can be found that this theory has been used to prove how the socialization process happens in Sri Lanka through the folk stories. Therefore, this can be considered as a unique study that focuses on an area that has not been investigated before.

3. Research Methodology

In this paper, the Social Cognitive Theory has been used as the primary literary source and the selected folk stories; king *Kekille*, *Andare*, *Mahadanamutta* and the legends of *Dutugemunu*, *Madduma Bandara* and the queen *Vihāramahādevi* will also be used as primary sources of this study. The content of these stories will be comparatively and philosophically analysed to examine how they are transmitted and to assess how they help the socialization process of children.

4. Results and Discussion

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory exemplifies that in addition to learning through conditioning, people learn through imitation which is proved by his famous '*Bobo doll experiment*.' He concludes that children observe, imitate and model what they are being associated with and adapt to the social and cultural environments. According to Bandura, there are some characteristics of models; they are real, symbolic, prestigious, powerful, competent and especially they perform tasks well. Since the children are constantly exposed to these folk tales in their childhood, they naturally try to imitate the characteristics that are being exemplified in these stories and adapt themselves to the social and cultural setting of the country. For example, these three folk comedies; king *Kekille*, *Andare* and *Mahadanamutta* have been used in this study to highlight their impact on the socialization process. Even though they are categorized as folk comedies, they influence the critical thinking ability of the children. Heroic stories such as the legend of king *Dutugemunu*, *Madduma Bandara* and the queen *Vihāramahādevi* are also being used in this study. The story of king *Dutugemunu* influences heroic personality characteristics of children as he defeated king *Elāra* and united Sri Lanka. Although women are traditionally perceived to be suppressed, the story of Queen *Vihāramahādevi* reveals how women had heroic characteristics in the history. The story of *Madduma Bandara* who was a child hero can be used to improve the brave personality characteristics of the children.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

When considering the above-mentioned Sri Lankan folk comedies and folk heroic stories, it becomes clear that they are aimed at giving the children an intellectual and moral education. Although the above-mentioned comedy stories portray unintelligent, ignorant, and gullible characters, they are not expected just to create rough humour. They are crafted in a manner that they give a moral lesson to children exemplifying behaviours and traits that one should not cultivate within oneself.

On the other hand, their heroic stories as it has been mentioned above are aimed at developing courage, patriarchal values and bravery within a child. Therefore, it becomes clear that these stories are not being used merely for aesthetic purposes, but also with an educational and socialization value like Bandura explicitly states in his Social Learning Theory.

It seems that the ancestors of the Sri Lankan society have understood the importance of the early cognitive stage of a child and has crafted and chosen the stories to give children ideal examples to develop their personality and abilities.

6. References

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