Sustainability to the average globalized student of architecture has sadly come to mean little more than a number of criteria in the construction and maintenance of buildings, leading to some form of Western certification, a green stamp of approval. However, sustainability and its techniques and modes of operation are only meaningful when attuned to the specificities of context that make them necessary. And when it comes to considering local theoretical bases, sources outside tried and tested, academically approved sources of information recording traditions are seldom sited. Albeit limited, these proverbs and local adages, such as Khanar Bachan use simple language and vocabulary to outline extremely practical and useful information with regard to agriculture, orientation of buildings and life in the subcontinent. For generations, these playful words of a poetess from the past and other proverbs from unknown authors passed down by word of mouth have been an unacknowledged basis for how we live and what works in our climate and context. Now in the context of a rethinking of the terms of a local brand of sustainable design, could these sources open up new avenues of understanding and Exploration?

This paper attempts to study proverbs from Khanar Bachan and related sources as a point of departure in the ongoing discussion on responsible, sustainable design in order to question whether the information contained within them can indeed contribute to designing for the subcontinent. It also addresses the larger question of whether these sources or instructions, practically referred to in everyday life can also be recorded as important theoretical sources, and the pros and cons of including them in the official body of knowledge. Overall, the paper will analyse the possibilities and limitations of trying to look at sustainability through informal, traditional sources of information and the qualities in them that helped them survive hundreds of years of changing trends.

**Key words:** Proverbs, Local, Sustainable, Instructions, Theory.