Part I: Re-Reading *Punch* Magazine

Anu Sugathan

The Emergence of Comic Art and Graphic Narratives in India

Introduction

Print culture was one of the main practices which emerged during the years of colonial rule in India. The print media in India was started by the British, the first newspaper being *Bengal Gazette* (1780) which was established by James Augustus Hicky. Subsequently, a number of other newspapers followed, like *Indian Gazette*, *The Madras Courier* (1785) and *The Bombay Herald* (1789). Political cartoons began to appear and were published by English-owned and indigenous native-owned newspapers such as *Bengal Hurkaru* (*Bengal Chronicle*), *Indian Gazette*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *Sulav Samachar* (see also Abrol's chapter in this volume). However, it was the British humor magazine *Punch* (1841) that shaped the cartooning tradition in India as well as in other colonial enclaves in different parts of the world. Although *Punch*-inspired comic magazines and newspapers flourished at a global scale in the nineteenth century with its presence felt in China, Japan, Egypt, Turkey, the Arab nations, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia, the Indian versions of *Punch* and their countless derivatives arose due to its proximity (mostly in the political and the cultural spheres) with the British empire. For these reasons, following the British *Punch*, several vernacular *Punches* and comic newspapers emerged and eventually secured an integral place for cartoons (political/editorial cartoons) in newspaper culture.[1] The cartoons that emerged as cultural commodity and a product of colonial modernity expanded their locus from newspapers, magazines and periodicals to albums, booklets and advertisements. In the course of time, Indian cartoons successfully established a distinctive style and pattern of their own.

The comic strips and comic books can be considered as the by-product of political cartoons and humor magazines. The comics medium's connection to the development of urban societies and the idea of urbanity is

---

1 Ritu Khanduri (2014) talks about the influence of British *Punch* in the emergence of newspaper cartoons in India (see Khanduri, *Caricaturing Culture in India*). The British *Punch* modelled on *Le Charivari* has its history of counterfeits as a result of centralization of publishing market in Europe (see "The Transnational Circulation," 2014).

crucial in analyzing the growth of comics. By the late twentieth century, comic books have been a constant presence in the middle class and urban households. Popular comic books by publishers like Indrajal Comics, Amar Chitra Katha, Diamond Comics, Raj Comics, Manoj Comics, and so on were mainly created for the English-educated, urban middle-class children. However, the 1991 economic liberalization resulted in a heightened public interest in comics with India's economic engagement expanding on a global scale. This led to the formation of new companies, new marketing techniques, and eventually an increased online presence and comic conventions which contributed further to elevate the status of comic art in India. A new feature of comic art emerged with the publication of Indian graphic novels which became prominent in the first half of the twenty-first century. The urban cities as the place of comics medium's origin have maintained a deep influence over the content and the production of comic books and graphic novels.[2]

As a matter of fact, the episodes which historically pertain to the production of Indian cartooning shed light on the limited readership, the significance of urban space and the socio-political background associated with the visual-verbal forms of representation. A brief study of the development of comic art in India then can be employed to trace how the cities or urban spaces, which emerged significantly during the colonial period, and the social and political forces that shaped the emergence of comics and graphic novels as a cultural product can question and problematize the idea of modernity and liberalism circulating in India since the colonial times. The aim of this chapter is to trace the print history of comic art in India from cartoons and humorous drawings of newspaper tradition which emerged during the colonial rule in the 1800s to the later postcolonial English language comics and the regional comics of the 1970s and 1990s. The final part of the chapter deals with the Indian graphic novels which became relevant in the 2000s. The humorous drawings, political cartoons, comic strips and books as well as graphic novels have been rallied as a vantage point to understand the socio-cultural practices, political engagements, patterns of globalization, transnational corporations and transnational flow of cultures which have contributed to

---

2   The use of the term 'graphic novel' is an outcome of a conscious effort by the publishing community to accord it a serious and an elevated status as opposed to comics which are generally assumed to be associated with juvenile themes/contents. For the details on the coinage of the term, see Richard Kyle's 1964 column "The Future of 'Comics.'"

newer visual forms in India. However, the linguistic and cultural diversity within the Indian subcontinent put certain limitations to this kind of analysis and the chapter does not extend itself to cover all the regional particularities and distinct flavours which can be found in India. By focusing on the print history of comic art in India, I propose to trace broad connections among various visual-verbal narratives – cartoons, caricature, comic strips and books and graphic novels – to provide an understanding of the differences, the similarities and the inter-related patterns which exist between them.

Vernacular *Punches*, Humor Magazines, Cartoons, Comic Strips and Newspaper Culture in India

The origin of visual art and graphic storytelling is often traced back to the ancient cave paintings, tapestries, frescoes, rock art, woodcut forms, lithography and others which have existed as a form of communication and been found as inherently present in the fantastical, political/war, folk and mythological tales. The visual narrative or graphic story telling tradition in India has been in existence in various forms like petroglyphs, Indian murals, the *kalighat* paintings of Bengal, the *madhubani* paintings of Bihar, the *pattachitra* picture scrolls of Orissa, the *kalamkari* art of Andhra Pradesh, the *patua* picture recitation of Bengal, *Pabuji ki Phad* or the *Phad* painting of Rajasthan among others. However, the comic art in India came into being in the nineteenth century when cartoons and caricatures appeared in the print media during the colonial rule. Although some of the earliest cartoons appeared in the 1850s in British-owned newspapers like *Bengal Hurkaru* and *Indian Gazette*, they were not able to establish a big impact in India like the later cartoons and caricatures which appeared in the Indian and Anglo-Indian versions of *Punches* that were modelled on the British cartoon-based weekly named *Punch* (1841).[3] That is to say, the cartooning and comics tradition in India began distinctly in the colonial era with the publication of different indigenous versions of the humor

---

3 British *Punch* and other English owned newspapers often stereotyped the oriental subject. Cartoons became an artistic and cultural tool used for validating colonial domination through humor. Cartoons like John Tenniel's "The British Lion's Vengeance on the Bengal Tiger," "Justice," "The Indian Juggle," John Leech's "The New Year's Gift," and E T Reeds' "The Delhi Durbar" use visual tropes of animals and deformed bodies that reinforce negative racial and hegemonic stereotypes.

magazine *Punch*. As a satirical magazine, the British *Punch* introduced the modern meaning of the term "cartoon" as a visual form of wit and humor.[4]

Fig. 1: *The Indian Charivari*. May 16, 1873. Calcutta. Source: Partha Mitter. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 1850-1922: *Occidental Orientations*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, 140.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the production of several cartoon albums and comic newspapers or periodicals such as The *Delhi Sketch Book* (1850-1857), *Indian Punch* (1859), *The Indian Charivari* (See Fig. 1; Calcutta, 1872-1880) and other vernacular *Punch*-style comic newspapers and magazines such as *Parsi Punch/Hindi Punch* (Bombay, 1854-1930), *Oudh Punch* or *Avadh Punch* (Lucknow, 1877), *Delhi Punch*, *Punjabi Punch*, *Urdu Punch*, *Gujarati Punch*, *Purneah Punch* (Bengal) and

---

4   The term cartoon was given to a drawing that represents satire, parody or humor by British magazine *Punch* when it published a bunch of drawings under the title "cartoons" and particularly John Leech's "Cartoon, No. 1: Substance and Shadow" (1843). Later the term was also used to refer to animation. The British *Punch* was inspired by the French satirical newspaper *Le Charivari* (1832) and its first issue was titled, *Punch: The London Charivari* (for further details see also Abrol's paper in this volume).

Basantak (Calcutta, 1874-1876).[5] The circulation of cartoons and caricatures during the colonial times established a lasting relationship with India's print media culture, especially through newspapers. Cartoons since then have always found an important space in newspapers despite them being circulated in the form of albums and booklets.

The introduction of English language and printing culture in the colonial period as part of modernity led to the unification of Indian intelligentsia which diminished and overshadowed different local and regional cultural practices.[6] As Partha Mitter puts it,

> To take the example of Bengal, the *bhadralok*[7] took full advantage of the opportunities offered by this new learning. It gave them access to world literature and Enlightenment values. Bengali, the vernacular language of the region, benefited from colonial culture as it underwent modernisation at this time, with the development of a new simplified script and a unified language, which could be disseminated by means of print technology. *Punch*, which became available in Bengal soon after its inception, could thus be ensured of a ready market in this bilingual milieu. (quoted in Harder and Mittler 50)

Thus, there was a considerable increase in literacy among the elites, the colonial middle class, who were primarily from the urban parts of India. This is due to the processes of urbanization and modernization maintaining close ties with the colonial patterns and attitudes in India. The unequal treatment based on class (and caste, see footnote 7) had led to the arrival of modernity into the limited arena of public spaces that were primarily bourgeois or elitist. However, Mr. Punch who was linked to the European tradition of Pulcinella of the *commedia dell'arte* – a popular puppet show in Britain (Punch and Judy) – was appropriated by the colonial Indian *Punches* which evoked a style familiar to Indian sensibilities and culture. Collectively, the vernacular magazines and newspapers in colonial

---

5   The cartooning tradition in India was shaped during the British rule as influenced by the British *Punch* (Mitter 1997; Hasan 2009; Harder and Mittler 2013; Khanduri 2014). Here see also Abrol's chapter in this volume.

6   Institutions associated with academic art were under Raj patronage, however, modern innovations such as print technology flourished independently of the colonial government.

7   The new 'gentleman' or *babu* class of Bengalis mainly from the upper caste segments who acquired English education and administrative positions during the British rule in India and formed a colonial middle class having an elitist social status and a hybrid identity belonging to both the native and the Western world. The British *Punch* mocked English educated Bengali elites particularly through the creation of the character Baboo Jabberjee. For further details on *bhadralok* in colonial times, see Aryendra Chakravartty's "Understanding India: Bhadralok, Modernity and Colonial India" (2018).

India and the growing readership of English language books, newspapers, and magazines "helped forge a common political vocabulary" (ibid 51). Hence, through the circulation of Indian versions of comic newspapers and magazines, a common national fervour emerged in the colonial India that questioned and ridiculed colonial authority by primarily making use of humor.

In the early 1900s, India was an important market for the then proprietors, William Bradbury and Frederick Mullett Evans, of *Punch*. They knew that the cartoon images needed to be changed to increase the marketability among the readers of the colonies, particularly in India which was considered a market with great potential. In attesting to this approach, a cartoon by Bernard Patridge was produced in 1901 which was titled 'Partners' that shows "Britannia dancing with Colonia." This was a strategically informed business move to gain Indian readership and the attention of local agents which point towards "the collective nature and politics of visual production" (ibid 176). However, the proliferation of the indigenous versions of *Punch* cast doubts on the marketability of single edition of the English *Punch*. So, the British Mr. Punch was adapted by the vernacular press to expose colonial politics in India. As Khanduri notes, "[r]egional in their distribution and produced by Indian proprietors, these vernacular versions in colonial India mark an important moment in which cartoons became integral to political critique in the public sphere" (ibid 179).Various titles such as *Kannauj Punch* (Urdu weekly), *Rafiq Punch* (Urdu weekly), *Etawah Punch* (Urdu daily), *Avadh Akhbar* (Urdu newspaper) and *Avadh Punch* (See Fig. 2; Urdu newspaper) from North-West Provinces produced visual satire in the Urdu language with a circulation from 400 to 700 copies. Outside the North-West Provinces, Gujarati comic newspapers like *Gujarati Punch*, *Gup Shup* and *Hindi Punch* recorded a circulation of 3400, 1400, and 800 copies respectively. Khanduri also claims that the "[c]irculation of the vernacular Punch versions was shaped by government offices, library and individual subscriptions" (ibid 182). The presence of the British *Punch* in India and the proliferation of vernacular versions of the *Punch* in the colonial times reveal the transnational flow of cultures. During this period, graphic satire drew inspirations from across and beyond the cultural and linguistic borders. Thus, the visual language in its interaction with other cultural contexts produced a newer visual vocabulary which served as an amalgamation of European and Indian traditions (enriched further from the folk and local patterns). Indian art under the British rule interacted with Western concepts and, at the

same time, maintained the search for what would be uniquely an Indian identity. Indian colonial art reflected various responses to the Western influences that questioned "the colonial powers' claims to superiority based on a doctrine of cultural difference" (Mitter 8). Indians, however, also judged Indian colonial art by the same standard employed by European critics. For example, Travancore (present-day Kerala) painter and artist Raja Ravi Varma was often criticized in post-independent India for the use of European realistic techniques in his paintings. Such views did not take into account the cultural context of the Indian artists and, moreover, Indian art was constantly judged in comparison to the European model and standards. For example, Bengali artist Gaganendranath Tagore's paintings were compared to those of Picasso's. This view completely neglects the cultural experience and the meaningful cultural context of the Indian artist that has influenced the creation of his works. In fact, there was no attention paid to the cultural encounters and Indian art was treated as inferior. Therefore, within the context of colonialism, culturally, the borrower has been assigned an inferior position. So, Indian art during the colonial era was often deemed plagiarized, as opposed to being influenced or inspired by European art traditions. Later on, the political cartoons in Indian newspapers managed to carve an individual style for themselves by copying cartoons of *Punch* and David Low, as has been remarked by Indian political cartoonist R K Laxman (Khanduri, *Caricaturing Culture* 162). The comic books largely produced comic strips influenced by the style of Raja Ravi Varma and Western models where realism was combined with the conventions of American and British comics. The twenty-first century, with the experimentation in graphic novels, saw the use of traditional art styles like the *patua* scroll art, Gond art, etc. into the sequential narratives of the comics medium to bring about a new visual grammar and to establish a distinctly Indian identity to the genre. Such practices also reveal the identity struggle which came with the exposure to European art forms and inconsistencies in terms of acceptance and resistance to the Western comics tradition. However, I contend that the cultural transformations of Western art patterns by Indian artists within the confines of colonial domination gave Indian art an identity of its own in terms of the content, cultural production, and cross-cultural elements. This is established when, despite the claims about vernacular *Punches* as sub-standard, the British closely observed and monitored the published content of the indigenous versions of *Punch* which tactfully made sarcastic retorts and frequently exposed British government's hypocrisy about the use of humour.

Several vernacular comic newspapers published during the colonial times, around the 1850s, brought out the duplicity of British imperialism through cartoons that dealt with British policies through stark humour and criticism. This resulted in the proscription of certain cartoons and the surveillance of vernacular press (vernacular *Punches* and newspapers like *Agra Akhbar* and *Oudh Akhbar*) by the state under the Vernacular Press Censorship Act of 1878. Since vernacular *Punches* acted as unofficial spokespersons of the public, the colonial government put them under surveillance. The British government hired English-educated Indians to put surveillance on the vernacular press by means of translating and surveying them. The British claimed that the vernacular press misunderstood liberty as a mode to criticize the colonial government. The question remained, if natives borrowed and learned from the British-style *Punch*, how can it pose a challenge to the colonial government which wanted their subjects to adopt modern habits? Nevertheless, the vernacular versions of *Punches* became a tool of colonial modernity used to subvert colonial politics in the nineteenth and early twentieth century India. The vernacular *Punches* were cast aside as "nonsense," "upstart *Punches*," that misunderstood the values of liberalism propounded by the colonial government (Khanduri, *Caricaturing Culture* 59). However, vernacular *Punches* became the framework for political cartoons in India that questioned the nature of governance and liberalism through humour. That is to say, the cartoons and vernacular *Punches* of the colonial times initiated a long period of cartooning in India. As a satirical form, cartoons always questioned (and still questions) the nature of governance and liberalism through humour. It also paved the way for a newspaper culture in India that contains political or satirical cartoons.

The middle class in India, who were the main consumers of newspapers, emerged during the time of British rule. In the cities, the middle class emerged as a consequence of the new economy (port cities developed by the British for the purpose of trade and monopoly) which was established by the British administration. Around the same time, the middle class in the rural areas were getting determined on the basis of land distribution system. The Indian middle class majorly emerged in urban areas like Calcutta (present-day Kolkata), Bombay (present-day Mumbai) and Madras (present-day Chennai) where the British had settled their presidency to exercise their political control and institute economic extractions. These places then paved the path for the process of modernization, as it unfolded, in India. In order to rule, the British elite began to interact with

Sun to sabi jabaan me bai tera fasana kya; kebti bai tujhko khalq-i khuda ghaibana kya.

'Do listen to what tales are being told about you; by what various names people call you behind your back,' 25 June 1891. The story of poverty-stricken Indians pleading for relief from the government. The man in boots and bow-tie symbolizes British colonialism. In this picture, a woman—'Hind'—draws his attention to the poverty-stricken child. The artist manages to bring out the disdain and indifference of the man marked 'England'; of equal interest is the clothing of the seven Indian figures. The Urdu verse is by the poet Insha.

Fig. 2: *The Avadh Punch*. 25 June, 1891. Lucknow. Source: Mushirul Hasan. *The Avadh Punch: Wit and Humour in Colonial North India*. Niyogi Books, 2007, 40.

the local population which led to the formation of a local bourgeoisie who benefitted from the infrastructure, trade, job opportunities and educational institutions set up by the British officers. As a result, the Indian middle class[8] was made up of people who worked in the administrative, commercial, agricultural, the press, and industrial sectors, among others. They actively participated in the socio-political and cultural forms of the country which paved the way for modernization. The emergence of the

---

8   The British rule in India brought about changes in land and legal policies, introduced Western education, technological advancements, capital enterprises, etc. which gave rise to the middle class in India. For more details on Indian middle class and its further development, see B B Misra's *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times* (1961), Pavan K. Varma's *The Great Indian Middle Class* (2007), and Sanjay Joshi's *The Middle Class in Colonial India* (2010).

Indian middle class came to be concurrently associated with the ideas of liberalization and reforms as well as advancement of educational and economic activities.[9] According to Robert S. Peterson, the Western-educated Indians who worked as government officials for the British "formed one of the first middle classes in Asia and were collectively called *babu*" and "those of the babu class were some of the first to read newspapers and seek out more secular forms of entertainment. The lifestyles of the babu," Peterson continues, "were among the visible signs that India was changing, and they became the subject of many early satirical prints and drawings (*kalighat*) that made fun of their colourful eccentricities" (Peterson 113).

Thus, the newspaper cartoons as commodities gradually emerged from the notion of colonial modernity with the establishment of print technology and the printed materials creating a heterogenous public culture essential to the experience of urban modernity. That is, apart from technologies of mobility (such as railways) and the establishment of industrial sectors, the printing press was a symbol of colonial modernity that transformed the urban public culture (which also indicated the British domination of life in the colonial metropolis). Subsequently, the print culture became vibrant in major colonial cities with growing Indian readership of linguistic variety. The introduction of English language and print culture in the colonial period as a part of modernity led to the unity of Indian intelligentsia of Western literate that served to overcome "local and regional differences" (Harder and Mittler 50). Thus, newspapers and newspaper cartoons became closely associated with the urban landscape and constructed the focus on the city to engage in public discourses.

By the early twentieth century, political cartoons began to find an integral place in Indian journalism as well as in various humour/cartoon magazines. By this time, the Swadeshi movement had picked up the pace reflecting nationalistic sentiments and agendas. Mahatma Gandhi's newspaper called *Indian Opinion* (1903-1914) published cartoons that criticized the colonial government, particularly through the reproduction of cartoons from *Hindi Punch*. One of the early cartoonists to publish political cartoons and caricatures in the 1910s and 1920s is Gaganendranath Tagore (1867-1938). His three volumes of lithographic collection of caricatures/cartoons are namely *Birupa Bajra* (1917; Indian Publishing

---

9　The emergence of middle-class society was also affected by the factors of religion, caste, gender, and region.

House), *Realm of the Absurd* or *Adbhut Lok* (1917; Vichitra Press) and *Naba Hullod: Reform Screams* (1921; Thacker Spink & Co.). His art and cartoons reflected the hypocrisy in modern colonial Indian society and *Bhadralok's* Western affectations. Another earliest cartoonist is the Tamil poet Subramania Bharati (1882-1921), who published political cartoons in the weekly known as *India* (1906). It was the first publication from Tamil Nadu to have political cartoons. In the 1930s, *chitravalis* (satirical cartoon/caricature albums) were published in various parts of India such as Baijnath Kedia's *Vyang Chitravali* (Calcutta), Sukhdeva Roy's *Vyang Chitravali* (Allahabad; present-day Prayagraj) and Shiva Narayan Mishra's *Svang Chitravali* (Kanpur) (Khanduri, *Caricaturing Culture* 8). The 1940s witnessed political cartoons on Indian independence and the accompanying in-house political tensions in various Indian English newspapers such as *Dawn*, *The Hindustan Times* (presently called *Hindustan Times*), *National Herald* and *The Leader* by cartoonists like Enver Ahmed and Ajmal. After India's independence, cartoonists like R K Laxman, Shankar, Kutty and others continued to satirize the newly formed government. The lampooning in cartoons was appreciated by the then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, who remarked "Don't Spare me, Shankar" in response to Shankar's cartoons while inaugurating the first issue of *Shankar's Weekly* (Devadawson 20).

Shankar, or K. Shankar Pillai (1902-1989), was the most popular cartoonist who left a deeper impression in the political cartooning tradition in India. He was a distinguished cartoonist who started one of the early satirical magazines in India known as *Shankar's Weekly* (1948-1975). Shankar drew cartoons for the newspaper *Hindustan Times* up until 1948 when he founded *Shankar's Weekly* (See Fig. 3). Shankar's weekly also produced many talented cartoonists and one such disciple of Shankar is Puthukkody Kottuthody Sankaran Kutty Nair (1921-2011), known as Kutty. After moving on from Shankar's magnum opus, Kutty captured the politics of the 1950s and 1960s in the *Hindustan Standard* (which folded/stopped publication in 1999). Other well-known cartoonists like Samuel (1925-2012; Thomas Samuel), Ranga (1925-2002; N. K. Ranganath), Abu Abraham (1924-2002; Attupurathu Mathew Abraham) and O. V. Vijayan (1930-2005) also began their journey in cartoons and caricatures through *Shankar's Weekly*. The political cartoonist E. P. Unny also got his cartoon first printed in *Shankar's Weekly* when he sent it as a response to a call for contributions. Later he worked with newspapers such as *The Hindu*, *Sunday Mail* and *The Economic Times*.

The mid-1970s became a grim period for cartoons as well as cartoonists. The national emergency in 1975 declared by Indira Gandhi, the fifth Prime Minister of India, censored the press and, as a result, many cartoonists were not able to create any work at all. This period also marked the closing down of *Shankar's Weekly*.
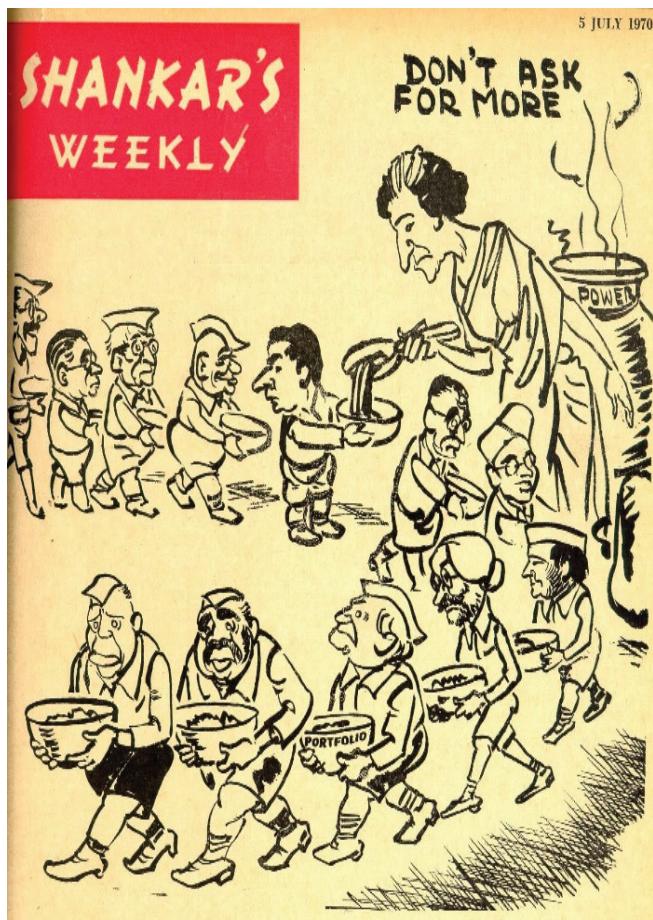
Fig. 3: Cover Image. *Shankar's Weekly*. July 5, 1970. New Delhi. Source: cartoonexhibition.blogspot.in/2010/11/blog-post.html.

The kind of censorship imposed during the Emergency period was similar to British censorship in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century on the vernacular press which was born out of colonial anxiety and objec-

tions over the newspaper contents of the native states. The reason for the imposition of the Emergency can be traced back to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's efforts to create a nation along the lines of secularism after India's independence in 1947. The middle class then was mostly comprised of government employees who contributed to nation building in political and economic ways. The Indian economy was already in shambles due to massive colonial exploitation and the partition of the subcontinent when Nehru took steps to build an economy that was under the control of the state and state-sponsored finances. However, the mixed economy model adopted by Nehru remained largely ineffective in achieving the concept of a welfare state. Also, access to power and independence remained restricted to a few, mainly the urban and rural capitalist class. As a result, the economic growth of the country began to decelerate by the 1960s. This led to widespread dissatisfaction among the public. Criticism began to emerge from several social groups, and political movements began to align against Nehruvian socialism. The right-wing critique of Nehru's ideals became very apparent when the idea of Indianness deeply rooted in Hinduism began to make advancements. It became difficult for the Congress party to sustain itself. After Nehru's death in 1964, Indian politics took a different turn. By the 1970s, various political and social groups were formed which sought separate demands and autonomy – for instance, the demand for regional autonomy in the case of Punjab and Kashmir. This was also the time when the Indian capitalist class grew stronger and had a different outlook towards foreign capital. For them, the socialist ideals of the government had led to economic disintegration. Due to the slackening of economic growth and price rises, the country became the site for various revolts and resistance. The government responded to such situation in a repressive manner and ultimately declared the Emergency in 1975. Such political events and economic reforms came under the scrutiny of the cartoonists as well. However, the Emergency period declared by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was largely marked by the suspension of freedom of expression, and imprisonment of political/social activists.

Despite the growing religious and political tensions of the following decades, the 1990s took Indian economy forward by means of economic liberalization and globalization. New economic reforms were introduced in 1991 which expanded Indian markets and foreign investments. The 1990s also opened up an increased space for enterprises, which resulted in the emergence of new entrepreneurs and businessmen who did not be-

long to the traditional capitalist class. Thus, with the advent of globalizati-
on, a new middle class emerged that participated in the global economy
either through work or through consumption. The nature and character
of the Indian middle class have changed remarkably from being a small
group of people who were seen as the product of colonial interaction
to the ones who settled in the urban centers. In the 1960s and 1970s
people began to find better opportunities both in the field of education
as well as jobs, and many migrated to cities to make their mark. For
instance, cartoonists and comics artists migrated to cities like New Delhi
and Bombay seeking better opportunities. Kutty, Shankar, and Laxman
are among those who migrated to the city in search of better education
and career prospects. Their cartoons reflect the changing urban landscapes
in their preoccupation with the characteristics of a city, be it the people or
the social and political environment that constitute the urban space. The
space captured by the cartoons convey to the reader the political situation,
specifically targeting the audience occupying the city space. For instance,
Laxman's depiction of Mumbai city, its roads, the *jhuggi jhopri*/slum area,
administrative offices, and other spaces in an English language newspaper
of a metropolitan city indicates that the newspaper mostly caters to the
English educated urban population. That is, the cartooning tradition in
India which has its origin in the cities has continued to maintain a lasting
relationship with its locus point in terms of its readership, content, and
production. This holds true majorly in the case of English language news-
paper cartoonists, creating political cartoons, based in the city of Delhi or
Mumbai (I have mentioned a few of them in this chapter but have not
delved into the regional language political cartoonists or editions which
lies beyond the scope of this chapter). However, with the coming of social
media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, cartoonists (both
professional and amateurs) from different parts of India can integrate into
a common space to showcase their cartoons.

Cartoonists like Ahmed (Enver Ahmed), Rajinder Puri, R K Laxman
and others drew pocket cartoons and editorial cartoons to express their
perceptions of the nation with regards to its development, identity, and
workings. Their cartoons dealt with themes like democratic values, go-
vernment policies, and social and political morality that affected the lives
of the common people. The political cartoons which generally appear on
the left most bottom half of the front page and/or editorial page are always
critical of the issues pertaining to current politics and the latest news.
Ahmed is famous for his *Hindustan Times* cartoon strip with the character

Chandu, an ordinary Indian, who became a vehicle for the cartoonist's sharp criticisms on national and international affairs. Laxman is considered to have created the metropolitan cartoons, the single panel, single column cartoons that are suggestive of a cosmopolitan identity. He became well known for his *The Common Man* cartoons created for the *Times of India*. The cartoonists like Sudhir Tailang, Mario Miranda, Vins (Vijay Narain Seth) and others contributed distinctive characters that reflected the identity of the country through the medium of cartoons. Manjula Padmanabhan became the first notable female cartoonist for her work, *Double Talk*, about an urban Indian woman named Suki. The later cartoons by artists like Ajit Ninan, N Ponnappa, Ravi Shankar, etc., started to rely on technological aids for their creation. Further, business cartoons made their appearance in the early 2000s. However, most cartoons today find more readership on the internet than newspapers. Some of the older cartoons are also preserved and made available to the readers in the form of digital archives. However, the earlier cartoons which obtained a considerable space in newspapers or periodicals have been reduced in size to smaller cartoons that often "appear in newspapers as a bonsai" (Unny 83). The cartoons, comic strips and comic books were at their peak in the early and mid-twentieth century. They gradually lost their public appeal because of India's economic engagement on a global scale which paved way for a rapid increase in the number of artists/works and opened doorways to transnational networks and emerging technologies.

The comic strips, which seem to have originated from political cartoons and humour magazines, were also in circulation along with the newspaper cartoons when the aforementioned political events took place in India. However, comic strips were not affected by those events as they were mainly created for the children with the intention to remain fun and instructional (thus remained non-controversial unlike the political cartoons). Although comic strips appeared as early as the 1900s in newspapers like *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and certain weeklies, they only became prevalent in the 1960s. However, the beginning of "the comic strip in India has yet to be pinpointed, partly because of problems associated with nomenclature, India's multiplicity of languages, and the different versions of comics history" (Lent, *Asian Comics* 268). It is also possible that "the multipanel strip had its origins in the humor magazines and the work of newspaper political cartoonists, who added pocket cartoons and strips to their workloads" (Ibid.). The cartoonists who popularized their characters in strips and single panel cartoons include Toms (V. T. Thomas), Narayan

Debnath, Mario Miranda, Pran Kumar Sharma, G. Aravindan, Abid Surti, Yesudasan (Chackalethu John Yesudasan), Madhan (Maadapoosi Krishnaswamy Govindan) and so on. However, as discussed above, the exact beginning of comic strips in India remains ambiguous due to its heterogeneous character in terms of its language as well as culture. Also, it is difficult to discuss the diversity in Indian cartooning given various styles, forms and dialects influencing Indian languages, Indian English language as well as the cultural practices. In relation to this, Khanduri states,

> [W]hen Kutty evoked prehistoric temple art in India, and when Raobail perceived no connection between Low and Laxman; it was a comment [similar] from other cartoonists in relation to Shankar's style. But these claims distancing Indian cartoonists from Low, from the West, and from English were equally if not more voluminously countered by a perceived lineage to Low and others in the West. Not to claim Indianness, or to dismiss such terms of engagement that lead to appropriation and provincializing, is agency too. It is agency from a vantage point that denies difference and claims similarity. Similarity is a thread linking the colonial and the postcolonial, and is one of the discourses on cartooning in India that circulates among practitioners. Needless to say, the process of recognition and alienation is shaped by a world that is a hodgepodge of sights and sounds. This fusion of glimpse, place, time, and perception gives new ways for thinking about global forms such as newspaper cartoons and how to sense modern life. For many in India, the first glimpse of the famous Low's cartoons was in an Indian newspaper [t]hat earned Low a place in the cultural memory of Indian cartooning. This perspective allows one to entertain the idea of moving beyond the notion of appropriation and recontextualization, and accommodate lateral stories and a (con)fusion of traces. The "Indian" in cartooning should account both for…[Indian artists] catching the imagination and cartoonist jobs in England, and for the fusion of cartoons that marks the styles of cartoonists in India. It is in this dual movement that a possible "Indian" can emerge (Khanduri, *Caricaturing Culture* 233-234).

The historical interactions, intermingling of various indigenous languages and borrowed English language have led to diverse cultural practices and a vague and hybrid sense of identity within India. Thus, the "dual movement" where the cartoons present an interaction between the receiver and the giver can be considered to offer an "Indian" identity to the art form.

Apart from political cartoons, the comic strips were circulated through children's magazines since the early 1900s with *Ghuncha* (in Urdu, meaning bud), *Phool* (of Lahore, meaning flower) and others

Fig. 4: *Boban and Molly* cartoon strip. Source: V T Thomas. *Bobanum Molliyum* (Malayalam). Toms Publications, 2007, 34.

(Lent, *Asian Comics* 272). *Chandamama* (1947-2013) was another such magazine started in Telugu language by B. Nagi Reddy and Aluri Chakrapani (it was bought by a Mumbai-based company called Geodesic in 2007). In Bengal, illustrated children's magazines like *Balak* (1885), *Sakha* (1883), *Sathi* (1893), *Mukul* (1895), etc., came very early as a tool for the educational reformers "to counteract missionary influences" (Mitter 126). However, post India's independence in 1947, children's magazines were superseded by children's periodicals or supplements published by newspaper groups and government firms (Lent, *Asian Comics* 272).

Toms, who drew strips as well as single panel cartoon columns, is famous for his characters Boban and Molly (See Fig. 4) that he created based on two children from his neighbourhood (these cartoons were created in Malayalam language; one of the official languages in India). The cartoon column initially appeared in *Satyapeedam* weekly in 1950 and later *Malayala Manorama* weekly in 1961. There was a legal feud regarding the copyright issue of Toms' cartoons between *Malayala Manorama* and Toms after his retirement from the weekly in 1987 as he continued to publish his characters in another weekly called *Kalakaumudi*. However, Toms was granted the ownership of his characters in the end. Later on, he started a comic magazine called *Toms Magazine* and published his remarkable *Bobanum Molliyum* (Boban and Molly), a social and political satire under the veil of children's adventures.[10] Pran Kumar Sharma, who is best known for his character Chacha Chaudhary, also faced a similar copyright issue regarding his cartoon/comic characters as Toms with Diamond Comics. Pran Kumar Sharma's first strips were created on the characters *Dabu* and *Adhikari* (a teenager and a professor) in the 1960s in a Delhi-based newspaper called *Milap*. It was later published in *Children's Sunday Magazine* as well as two periodicals from Karnataka in Kannada language. In an interview with John A. Lent in 1993, Pran said:

> It was tough for me as foreign comic strips were cheaper and syndicated. American characters were popular all over the world. One thing that helped me was that my themes were local, such as Indian Festivals and Indian customs. Indians thought these strips were something of their own. My themes gave me some advantage. Bit by bit, I got a part of the market. (Lent, *Asian Comics* 269)

---

10 Apart from *Boban and Molly*, Toms also published other works such as *Unnikkuttan*, *Mandoos* and, *Kunjukkuruppu*. For further information see V T Thomas' *Bobanum Molliyum* (2007) and *Ente Bobanum Mollyum* (2015) available in Malayalam language.

However, his most popular strip was *Chacha Chaudhary* (1969; See Fig. 5), first published in the Hindi magazine *Lotpot* with the tagline "Chacha Chaudhary's brain works faster than a computer" (comic strip's tag line). The strip was later made available in both Hindi and English versions. Gradually, it got published into ten different languages in India. *Chacha Chaudhary* was also made into a TV series on Sahara One channel. His other famous strips include *Pinki*, *Shrimatiji* and *Billoo*. He also started a syndicate called Pran's Features in 1960 for the distribution and promotion of his works.

Fig. 5: Chacha Chaudhary comic strip in Hindi. Source: www.chachachaudhary.com/.

More and more indigenous characters began to appear in the 1960s. The Bengali cartoonist Narayan Debnath created *Honda* and *Bhonda* in 1962 for the children's magazine *Shuktara*. His other comic strips include *Shukti-Mukti*, *Bantul the Great* (the first Bengali superhero comic strips), *Nonte-Phonte*, *Bahadur Beral*, *Patalchand the Magician*, and *Black Diamond Indrajit Roy*. G. Aravindan is known for his comic strip or serial cartoon called *Cheriya Manushyarum Valiya Lokavum* (Small Men and the Big World; 1961-1973) published in a Malayalam weekly called *Mathrubhumi Azhchap-*

pathippu. The cartoon series is considered by some artists as India's first graphic novel. The cartoonists like E. P. Unny regards that Aravindan anticipated the new graphic novel genre way back in 1961. His other cartoon series include *Ramuvinte Sahasika Yathrakal* (Ramu's Adventurous Journeys) and *Guruji* (Teacher) with the same characters as in *Cheriya Manushyarum Valiya Lokavum.* Yesudasan started his career with political cartoons in Malayalam daily *Janayugam*. He edited the children's magazine *Balayugam*, and satirical magazines such as *Asadhu* (invalid vote), *Cut-Cut* and *Tuk-Tuk*. He also created cartoon columns for *Malayala Manorama* newspaper and *The Week* magazine. He is famous for his female characters Ponnamma and Mrs. Nair who appear as central characters in *Malayala Manorama* and *Vanitha* magazine. M. Mohandas created comic strips like *Ramu and Shyamu* and *Kapish* in collaboration with the Indian comic books pioneer Anant Pai. The comic strips were distributed through Pai's Rang Rekha syndicate. Mohandas also contributed to the creation of other famous characters like *Mayavi*, *Luttappi* and *Dakini Ammoomma*. Abid Surti became noted as a cartoonist with *Dabbuji* that he created in 1965 for Hindi daily *Dharmayug*. His other strips include *Inspector Azad*, *Shuja*, *Rang Lakhudi*, *Doctor Chinchoo Ke Chamatkar* and *Inspector Vikram*. However, his most popular character was Bahadur that he created for *Times of India* group which they published in Indrajal Comics. He also started AFI Features in 1971, a comic/features syndicate under the ownership of Advertising Films of India (AFI). Both AFI Features and Pai's Rang Rekha Features (1969) competed with King's Features that brought popular Western comic characters like *Mandrake*, *Tarzan*, and *Phantom* to India. Some of the other comics/features syndicates in India to generate comic strips, cartoons and children's features were Amrita Bharati and Indian Features.

Thus, the comic strips that are considered to have originated from cartoons essentially became a mass medium published in periodicals, magazines, newspapers, and books. However, there exists a distinction between cartoons and comics as an extension of the difference between the cartoonist and the comic artist. The comics historian and artist Bharath Murthy, in his essay *An Art Without a Tradition: A Survey of Indian Comics,* talks about the difference between cartoonists and comics artists. According to him, comics artists work as employees under a corporate system where they must be collaborative and produce work depending on the demands of the market. Whereas cartoonists leave a signature style on all their works. The entire work is created by one person and, therefore, belongs to him/her. They are given the status of an author for the works they

have produced. However, comics are produced on a large-scale basis often by large companies with mainly children as their target readers while cartoons which can be categorized as editorial cartoons, comic strips, etc., are created not only for the children with juvenile subject matter but are read by the adults as a form of satire on the socio-political scenarios. The next section of my chapter discusses the rise of comic books and later graphic novels to trace the continuities in the development of comic art in India that engages with newer formats and contents.

Comic Books and Graphic Novels

The comics culture in India expanded sporadically with the coming of comic books and since then, although experienced slackening with the shifting consumerism after the 1991 liberalization, it still sustains the scene with "[t]ransnational business and artistic collaborations, the emerging market in graphic novels and digital formats of print comics" ("Comicology" 187). In this section, I will discuss the comic books, their changing expressions and the advent of the long form genre called the graphic novel in India.

Towards the mid-twentieth century, comic books became part and parcel of middle-class households. They were subscribed to mostly weekly or monthly, for children, along with the daily newspaper at a reasonable price as they were printed in colored paper of low quality. The proliferation of Indian comic books started in the 1960s and reached its peak during late 1980s and early 1990s. The first Indian-produced comic book appeared in 1964 and was published by the *Times of India* (leading newspaper of India) group when they came up with Indrajal Comics which targeted a readership of English-educated children in the urban areas. The Indrajal Comics initially published the series based on Lee Falk's American comic strips *The Phantom*. Later, Indrajal Comics included various other King Features comic strips and the popular Indian hero comic strips called *Bahadur*. The most popular comic books are the Amar Chitra Katha series ("Immortal Picture Stories") started in 1967 by Anant Pai (aka "Uncle Pai" to children), who also worked as an editor of Indrajal Comics prior to that – this was criticized by many scholars such as Aruna Rao, Deepa Sreenivas, Karline McLain, Nandini Chandra and Ritu G. Khanduri for its biased depiction of Indian heritage and stereotypical portrayal of women. Amar Chitra Katha (ACK) was started with the mission to educate children

who were unaware of their own roots and Indian culture due to the English education system adopted by Indian schools (mainly in urban regions). It included stories from Indian mythology, epics, folklores, and biographies of various notable figures. Apart from ACK, Anant Pai and India Book House (IBH) also came up with *Tinkle* in 1980. Both Amar Chithra Katha and *Tinkle* were published in English and later translated to many regional languages of India[11] (there is also a reading that ACK was first published in Kannada and not in English). In the 1990s, with the launch of various regional comics, the comic books industry experienced a growing demand for comics in regional languages compared to the English language comics. Champak, Diamond Comics, Raj Comics, Manoj Comics, etc., are some of the comics publishers (and titles) which were widely popular among children for their famous characters such as Chacha Chaudhary, Nagraj, Doga, Crookbond, Bhokal and so on (See Fig. 6). However, after the economic liberalization in 1991, there was a notable shift in consumer behaviour, leading to a significant decline in comic book sales. This decline can be attributed to the growing influence of television, video games, and the internet during that period.. By the early twenty-first century, comics creators (new entrants and old ones) came up with new companies and strategies to elevate its status.

Multimedia interactions, online presence and comic conventions gave comics new exposure. Several new comics and graphic novels published by, for example, Gotham Comics, Vivalok Comics, Vimanika Comics, Campfire books among others continued (and continues) to enter the market in the 2000s. The earlier Indian comics like Chacha Chaudhary, Amar Chitra Katha, Champak, and others have also been made available in electronic versions which can be easily accessed through mobile phones, PCs, and tablets. Thus, with the help of modern technology, a collection of comics was converted into digital form and distributed online, thereby making it easier to access. The new media platform – digital comics, web comics, vlog, and blog – has led to the democratization of the publication arena wherein comic/graphic artists (amateurs, enthusiasts, and professionals) have found a convenient space for artistic self-expression. As Khanduri puts it, "[in] this new moment, the more successful brands ACK and Diamond Comics also re-invent themselves by morphing into digital comics and exploring animation films. For struggling brands

---

11 ACK was published in twenty Indian languages while *Tinkle* was available in eight languages.
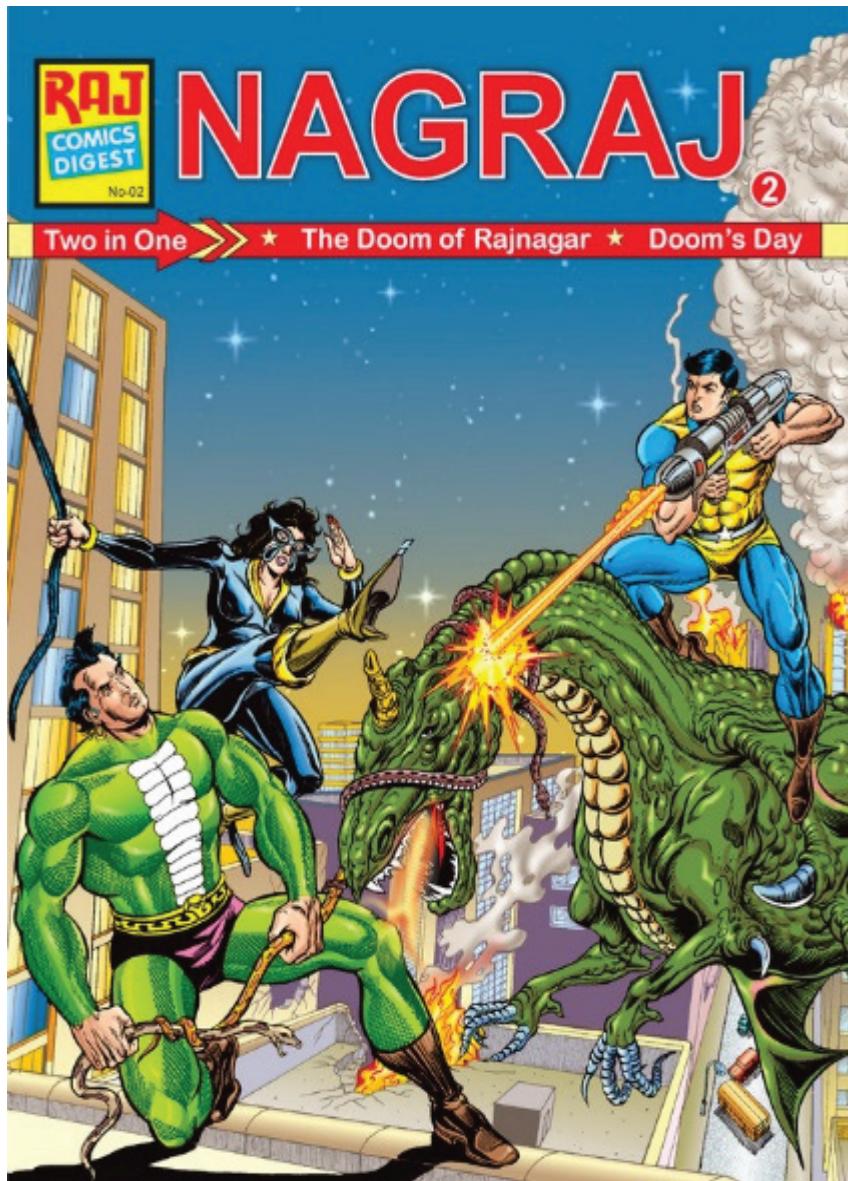
Fig. 6: Front cover of Raj Comics Digest No. 2. Source: www.rajcomics.com/index.p hp/49002/40001/english-comics/nagraj-digest-2_56039e3f68f8a-detail.

such as Raj Comics, the digital interface might provide a new lease of life"
("Comicology" 187). The publication sector no longer remains a specific
industry run by companies with the intention of making profit. Its modes
of operation have undergone radical changes which has made it relatively
easier for the new entrants, both individuals and groups. Bharath Murthy
co-founded Indie Comix Fest, an annual event for independent comics
creators to showcase their self-published comics/graphic novels and zines.
He also publishes comics anthologies under *Comix India* magazine.[12] The
World Comics Network (World Comics India[13]) started by the political
cartoonist Sharad Sharma work towards the promotion of *grassroots comics*
– artists, journalists, activists, cartoonists, and students who believe in
the communicative potential of comics medium collaborate to inspire
and create comics, often produced by the common people from the remo-
te and marginalized areas of India. The annual Comic Con festival of
India,[14] which was launched in 2011 in New Delhi, gave opportunities to
new writers and publishers and diminished the gap between the artistes
and publishers by bringing them together on the same platform. The
Comic Con since then has been able to draw attention and receive good
responses from the audience. New companies started bringing out comic
books and graphic novels with more serious subjects (aimed at an adult
readership), like Manta Ray (now obsolete and titles sold under Studio
Kokaachi), Level 10 Entertainment,[15] Holy Cow Entertainment,[16] Studio
Kokaachi,[17] and Orange Radius.[18] Several publishers like Penguin books,
HarperCollins, Navayana, Phantomville Press, etc., have found a market
in the graphic novel genre in India and are actively promoting its circula-
tion.[19] Some comic book-inspired characters were recently adapted into
animated TV series such as *Motu Patlu* (2012) which was made into an ani-
mated feature film called *Motu Patlu: King of Kings* in 2016. Digital comics

---

12 Here see, for example: https://comixindia.org/?v=c86ee0d9d7ed.
13 These are available online at: https://www.worldcomicsindia.com/.
14 For further details see: https://www.comicconindia.com/.
15 Cf. http://www.level10comics.com/.
16 See https://www.holycow.in/.
17 See: https://kokaachi.com/.
18 For further information see: https://orangeradius.com/.
19 After the economic liberalization of 1991, both global and domestic markets opened
    publishing houses in India. International publishing houses set up branches in India
    like Penguin India, HarperCollins India, etc. and made inroads into the Indian market
    in terms of production, consumption, and distribution. Independent publishers also
    expanded in the post-liberalized phase of the last two decades.

or e-comics, web comics, motion comics, comics blogs, and websites (such as, for example, Comicology, Comics Byte[20]), online stores (e.g. Flipkart, Amazon, Infibeam), comics apps (as, for instance, Comics Circle, Graphic India, Raj Comics), Facebook pages, several comics fan sites, etc., form the new comics industry. It also points to the considerable progress India has made in the field of comic art today.

The twenty-first century also saw the rise of graphic novels in India with the publication of Sarnath Banerjee's *Corridor* (2004) by Penguin Books India. *Corridor* is often considered to be the first Indian graphic novel, but, in fact, Orijit Sen's *River of Stories* (1994) published by Kalpavriksh preceded it. *Corridor* could capture more attention nationwide as well as worldwide as it was published by Penguin Books. Therefore, it was Banerjee's work that grabbed a place for graphic novel in the Indian bookstores. The name 'graphic novel' (adapted directly from the British/American usage) itself suggests a demarcation from the comics genre, which encapsulated a wider audience to its share (nationally and internationally), and mostly addresses and critiques the socio-political and cultural issues of India through their content.

The Indian graphic novel has carved a niche for itself as a genre that deals with serious subject matter, away from themes such as humour, fantasy, and superheroes, and has entered the field of Indian academia. For instance, *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability, Incidents in the Life of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar* (2011; written by Srividya Natarajan and S. Anand and illustrated by Durgabai Vyam and Subhash Vyam) is an Indian graphic novel which has been included in the syllabus of various Universities such as University of Delhi, University of Calcutta, Goa University, Christ University, and others (See Fig. 7).

Graphic novels are being promoted along with comics at Comic Con which has helped popularize the genre. Both graphic novels and comics have a growing youth and adult readership in India as well as among the Indian diaspora abroad. The expensive medium of the Indian graphic novel is mainly created to reach the English-educated public of India and the global market. Graphic novels are not mass-marketed in India due to pricing and relatively small number of readers. The peripheral status accorded to forms like the Indian graphic novel has its roots in the unequal

---

20 Cf. http://www.comicology.in/ and https://comicsbyte.com/, respectively.

treatment of citizens on the basis of caste and gender.[21] This unequal treatment of citizens reduced the idea of modernity and liberalism to limited, mainly bourgeois spaces.
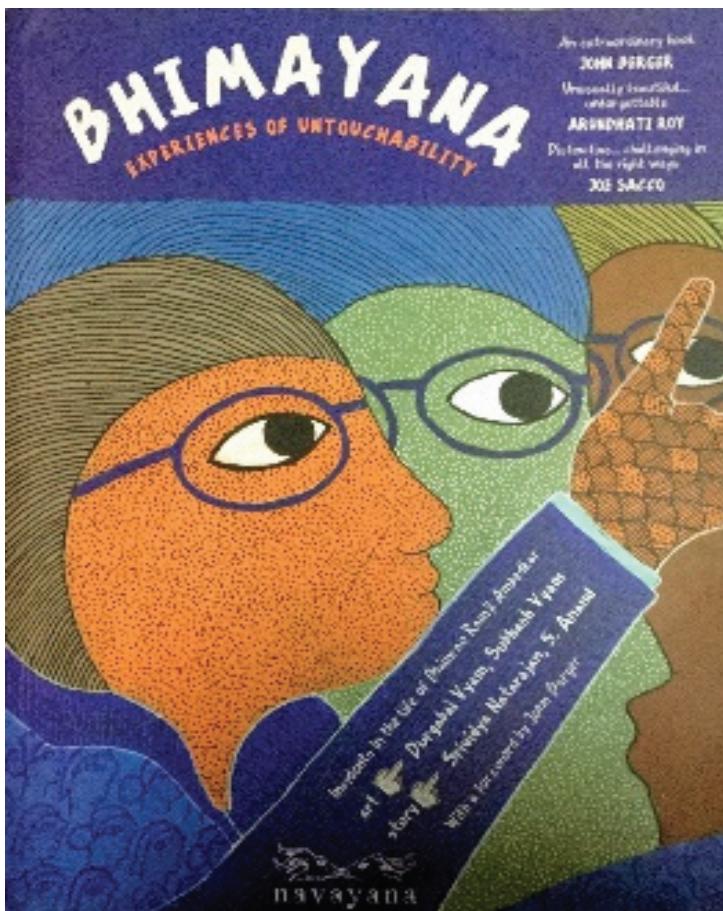

Fig. 7: Cover image. *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability, Incidents in the Life of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*. Text by Srividya Natarajan and S. Anand, and art by Durgabai and Subhash Vyam. Navayana, 2011.

---

21 During British rule, the Brahminical Hindu codes along with colonial system served to homogenize the colonial subject in a gendered context which prevails even in the present times. For details see Kanchana Mahadevan's "Colonial Modernity: A Critique."

In 2012, a group of five graphic artists including Orijit Sen, Sarnath Banerjee, Vishwajyoti Ghosh, Parismita Singh and Amitabh Kumar came together with an anthology on comics, and they called it *Pao: the Anthology of Comics*, Volume 1.[22] The Pao board, along with the Pao members, brought together various artists and writers who contributed to this anthology. This initiative can be considered as a turning point in Indian comics culture as it shows a shift from the production aspect to a more artistic engagement with the comics form. Another such anthology is *This Side That Side: Restorying Partition* (2013) curated by Vishwajyoti Ghosh, and it is a collection of partition stories from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India by the authors and artists of the respective countries. Several such anthologies and graphic novels are being published, featuring new and emerging talents as well as stories.

Conclusion

Cartooning tradition in India began in newspapers and periodicals, and further expanded the art form with newspaper cartoons, comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels. From English language comics to regional comics of the 1970s and 1990s, the twenty-first century set the stage for more innovative long form narratives in Indian comics culture. According to Emma Dawson Varughese, "the 1980s witnessed a new wave of Indian writing in English," linguistic diversity being one of the key features (Varughese, *Reading New India* 13). She states that, from the 1990s, India experienced a growing expansion in enterprises which opened new economic and employment opportunities for middle class Indians. Indian writing in English also underwent a change in terms of its style, narration, and content as a result of India's presence in the global economy and its increased involvement with the rest of the world. According to Varughese, the graphic novel genre is a form of writing that emerged with the formation of a 'New India' in the late twentieth century (Varughese, *Reading New India* 17).

In many ways Pramod K Nayar's *The Indian Graphic Novel: Nation, History and Critique* offers the first consolidated and detailed discussion of Indian graphic novels and views graphic novels as a new mode of

---

22 The word 'Pao' is taken from the Portuguese language meaning bread which is very commonly used in several regions of India.

#

of the old and the new, traditional and the modern, and past and the present played out in the Indian graphic novel medium to revive, commodify and acquire a unique structure of narratives. The experiments with new comics and the long form graphic novel suggests a growing visual literacy in India.

Bibliography

Banerjee, Sarnath. *Corridor: A Graphic Novel*. Penguin Books India, 2004.

---. *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers*. Penguin Books India, 2007.

Chacha Chaudhary Comics. *Chacha Chaudhary Comics*, www.chachachaudhary.com/. Accessed 15 February 2018.

Chakravartty, Aryendra. "Understanding India: Bhadralok, Modernity and Colonial India." *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 45, issue. 2, 2018, pp. 257-285.

Chandra, Nandini. *The Classic Popular: Amar Chithra Katha, 1967-2007*. Yoda Press, 2008.

Devadawson, Christel R. *Out of Line: Cartoons, Caricature and Contemporary India*. Orient Blackswan, 2014.

Ganguli, B N. "The Indian Middle Class – Its Future." *The Economic Weekly*, 15 Oct. 1955, www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/1955_7/42/the_indian_middle_class_its_future.pdf.

Harder, Hans and Barbara Mittler, editors. *Asian Punches: A Transcultural Affair*. Springer, 2013.

Hasan, Mushirul. *The Avadh Punch: Wit and Humour in Colonial North India*. 3rd edition, Niyogi Books, 2009.

Indian Charivari. *H. Daumier*, www.daumier.org/57.0.html. Accessed 22 December 2017.

Joshi, Sanjay, editor. *The Middle Class in Colonial India*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Kerala Cartoon Academy. "Shankar." *Online Cartoon Exhibition*, 11 May 1012, cartoonexibition.blogspot.in/2010/11/blog-post.html. Accessed 22 December 2017.

Khanduri, Ritu G. "Comicology: comic books as culture in India." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2010, pp. 171-191.

---. *Caricaturing Culture in India: Cartoons and History in the Modern World*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

---. "The Shadow of Doubt: India, Pakistan, and Vulgar Cartoons in 1947." *The Diplomat*, August 14, 2017, https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/the-shadow-of-doubt-india-pakistan-and-vulgar-cartoons-in-1947/. Accessed 7 July 2021.

Kyle, Richard. "The Future of 'Comics.'" *Richard Kyle's Wonderworld 2*, November 1964, www.thecomicbooks.com/misc/Richard%20Kyle%20The%20Future%20of%20Comics.pdf. Accessed 12 October 2021.

Lent, John A, editor. *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*. University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

---. *Asian Comics*. University Press of Mississippi, 2015.

Mahadevan, Kanchana. "Colonial Modernity: A Critique." *Indian Literature*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2002, pp. 193-211.

McLain, Karline. *India's Immortal Comic Books: Gods, Kings and Other Heroes*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

Misra, B. B. *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times*. Oxford University Press, 1961.

Mitter, Partha. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*, 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Murthy, Bharath. "An Art Without a Tradition: a Survey of Indian comics." *Marg: A Magazine of the Arts*, vol. 61, no. 2, December 2009, pp. 38-53.

Natarajan, Srividya et al. *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability, Incidents in the Life of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.* Navayana, 2011.

Nayar, Pramod K. *The Indian Graphic Novel: Nation, History, and Critique*. Routledge, 2016.

Peterson, Robert S. *Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels: A History of Graphic Narratives*. Praeger, 2011.

Punch. https://www.punch.co.uk/. Accessed 10 February 2021.

Raj Comics, www.rajcomics.com. Accessed 20 February 2018.

Rao, Aruna. "Goddess/Demon, Warrior/Victim: Representations of Women in Indian Comics." *Themes and Issues in Asian Cartooning: Cute, Cheap, Mad, and Sexy*, edited by John A. Lent, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999, pp. 165-81.

---. "From Self-Knowledge to Superheroes: The Story of Indian Comics." *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*, edited by John A. Lent, University of Hawaii Press, 2001, pp. 37-63.

Sreenivas, Deepa. *Sculpting a Middle Class: History, Masculinity and the 'Amar Chitra Katha' in India.* Routledge, 2010.

Stoll, Jeremy. "Comics in India." *The Routledge Companion to Comics*, edited by Frank Bramlett et al., Routledge, 2017, pp. 88-97.

Thomas, V T. *Bobanum Molliyum* (Malayalam). Toms Publications, 2007.

---. *Ente Bobanum Molliyum* (Malayalam). National Book Stall, 2015.

Unny, E. P. "The Indian Cartoon." *Indian Media Delusion and Reality: Essays in Honor of Prem Bhatia*, edited by Asha Rani Mathur. Rupa & Co., 2006, pp. 276-84.

Varma, Pavan K. *The Great Indian Middle Class*. 2nd ed. Penguin Books India, 2007.

Varughese, Emma Dawson. *Reading New India: Post-Millennial Indian Fiction in English*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

---. *Visuality and Identity in Post-millennial Indian Graphic Narratives*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Appendix

The list of comic book/cartoon magazine titles from India and their contents (This is not a complete list; there are still many others that are not included):

S. no.	Comic Books/magazines/periodicals	Timeline	Publisher or Publishing house	Characters/Contents
1	Chandamama	1947-2013	Geodesic Limited	Indian mythology, folklores, etc.
2	Indrajal Comics	1964-1990	*The Times of India* owned by Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd	*The Phantom*, *Mandrake the Magician*, *Garth*, *Bahadur*, etc.
3	Amar Chitra Katha	1967	India Book House (IBH) and ACK Media	Indian mythology, folk tales, historical leaders and events.
4	Feluda Comics	1965	*Sandesh* magazine edited by Satyajit Ray's family; Puffin Books	Danger in Darjeeling, Murder by the Sea, The Criminals of Kailash, A Bagful of Mystery, etc.
5	Tinkle	1980	India Book House (IBH) and ACK Media	Suppandi, Shikari Shambu, etc.
6	Champak	1969	Japan Press Group	Cheeku, Meeku, short stories, etc.
7	Lotpot	1969	Mayapuri Group	Motu Patlu, Chacha Chaudhary, etc.
8	Diamond Comics	1978	Diamond Comics Pvt. Ltd.	Chacha Chaudhary, Billoo, Pinki, etc.
9	Nutan Comics	1970s	Nutan Pocket Books	Meghdoot, Mama ji, Muni Chacha, Amar Akbar, Bhootnath, etc.
10	Target	1979-1995	Living Media	*Detective Moochhwala*, *Granny's Gupshup*, *Gardhab Das*, etc.
11	Raj Comics	1986	Raja Pocket Books	Nagraj, Doga, Super Commando Dhruva, Parmanu, Inspector Steel, etc.
12	Manoj Comics	1980s	Manoj Comics	Ram-Rahim, Inspector Manoj, Crookbond, illustrated stories, etc.
13	Tulsi Comics	1980s-2004	Tulsi Pocket Books	Jambu, Angara, Tausi, Yosho, Mr. India, etc.
14	Fort Comics	1990s	Book Fort, Delhi	Chaurangi Lal, Gufina, Jangaru, Sando, etc.
15	Muthu Comics	1971	Prakash Publishers, Tamil Nadu	Steel Claw, The Spider, Iron Man, etc.

S. no.	Comic Books/magazines/periodicals	Timeline	Publisher or Publishing house	Characters/Contents
16	Lion Comics	1984	Prakash Publishers, Tamil Nadu	Tex Willer, Captain Tiger, etc.
17	Rani Comics	1984	ThinaThanthi group of Publishers	Cowboy stories, detective stories, etc.
18	Balarama	1972	Malayala Manorama Publications Limited	Mayavi, Luttappi, Suthran, etc.
19	Poompatta	1964	P. A. Warrier and Pai Company	Undaappikkal, Kaloolu, etc.
20	Balabhumi	1996	Mathrubhumi Publications	Magic Malu, Kunchoos, Master Tintu, etc.
21	Balamangalam	1980-2012	Mangalam Publications (India) Private Limited	Dinkan, Saktimarunnu, etc.
22	Toms Magazine	1980s	Toms Publications	*Boban and Molly*, *Unnikuttan*, *Mandoos*, etc.
23	Radha Comics	1980s	Radha Pocket Books	*Shaktipura*
24	Sudden Muanga Comics	1976-1990s	Laisaizawk's (Lalsangzuala) comic books	Sudden (cowboy)
25	Gotham Comics	1998	Gotham Entertainment Group LLC	Spider-Man India, X-Men, Superman, etc.
26	Virgin Comics	2006-2008	Virgin Comics LLC	Devi, Snake Woman, Sadhu and Ramayana 3392 AD
27	Liquid Comics	2008	Gotham Group	Chakra: The Invincible
28	Freelance talents	2006	Founded by Mohit Trendster (NGO and Publication House)	Educational books, Kavya Comics (comics poetry), World Comics & Graphic Novels News (e-paper), Indian Comics Fandom (magazine), Freelance Talents Comics, etc.
29	Vivalok Comics	2001	The Viveka Foundation	The Santhals, The Sunderbans, etc.
30	Kriyetic Comics	2007	Self-publishing venture	Graphic art, graphic novels, etc.
31	Campfire books	2007	Steerforth Press	Graphic novels, graphic biographies, classics, etc.
32	Vimanika Comics	2008	Vimanika Edutainment Pvt. Ltd	Moksha, Shiva – The Immortal, The Sixth – Legend of Karna, etc.
33	Indian War Comics	2008	Self-publishing venture created by Delhi-based Merchant Navy officer Aditya Bakshi	Heroic life of the Indian soldiers
34	Sufi Comics	2009	Banglore based independent venture started by Mohammed	Islamic traditions and history

S. no.	Comic Books/magazines/periodicals	Timeline	Publisher or Publishing house	Characters/Contents
			Ali Vakil & Mohammed Arif Vakil	
35	Level 10 Comics	2010	Level 10 Entertainment	*The Rabhas Incident, Shaurya, Daksh*, etc.
36	Chariot Comics	2012	Independent Comics Publishing House	VRICA, Zombie Rising, etc.
37	Yomics	2012	Yash Raj Films Studios	Yash Raj Films (YRF) movies