

Importance of Political Cartoons in Newspaper

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Abstract – India is blessed with a great number of good talented flourishing cartoonists with political awareness, sense of satire and original draftsmanship. They typically combine artistic skill, hyperbole and satire in order to question authority and draw attention to corruption, political violence and other social ills. A good political cartoon makes you think about current events, but it also tries to sway your opinion toward the cartoonist's point of view. The best political cartoonist can change your mind on an issue without you even realizing how he or she did it.

Unlike many countries, India is a place where for generations politicians actively enjoyed seeing themselves in cartoons. However, thirst for political cartoons among newspaper readers with different languages has increased very much. There is hardly a paper today, which does not carry a cartoon, whether it is good, bad or indifferent. Just to satisfy the reader's expectation and habit, sometimes embarrassingly poor efforts get into the columns of the paper.

The paper will begin with the assumption of the importance of political cartoons in the newspapers now days. A detail study in this context shows an overview about political cartoons as a means of print media communication and the contribution of art of political cartoons by great cartoonist of India.

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INTRODUCTION

The original meaning of "cartoon" comes from the Italian "cartone," meaning "big paper," and referred to a drawing made on paper as a full size study for artwork. The cartoon art form began with 'caricatura'. A caricature - from the Italian caricare, to load or exaggerate - is a drawing that gives weight to the most striking features of its subject for comic effect. The great Italian masters such as Leonardo da Vinci, Annibale Carracci and Gian Lorenzo Beniniplm , all drew caricatures.

A cartoon is a form of expression, or communication that refers to several forms of art, including humorous captioned illustrations, satirical political drawings, and animated film. Originally, the term referred to full-scale drawings for various forms of fine art, such as frescoes and tapestries. From the mid-nineteenth century it acquired the meaning of a pictorial parody, humorous and often satirical in its portrayal of social and political events.

Cartoons have played an important role in shaping the world from fine art to political commentary and entertainment as we know it. A cartoon is endorsed by a newspaper and is definitely a questioning and decisive piece that at times may even be biased. Now days, Political cartoons are requisite for print media communication as they play an important role in our daily lives. Political cartoons are satirical and

make an observation about a situation on political issue or event. It touches upon issues that may not be suited for commentary by the editor. It is a visual medium that engages the audience, helps them understand and interpret the political, social and economic scene in the country and the world. A good political cartoon makes you think about current events, but it also tries to sway your opinion toward the cartoonist's point of view. The best political cartoonist can change your mind on an issue without you even realizing how he or she did it. Political cartoons can be very funny, especially if you understand the issue that they're commenting on. Political Cartoons can be seen in newsmagazines and on political websites easily.

However, Cartoons add special value to the newspaper because despite advances in photography and animation technologies, cartoons still command their own place in newspaper. Cartoons have ever-lasting impact on the minds of readers. Political cartoons are inspired by the situations around the cartoonist, what he sees and believes are portrayed through the sketches which he creates. A Cartoonist is required to understand the political scene and make a commentary on the situation. The Cartoonist is required to make an informed decision on his cartoon that will appear the next day in newspaper. The political cartoons lately have gained much importance and have a raised standing in a newspaper. Cartoons help the readers

to understand the mood of the country benefit people.

The history of political cartoon is older than the history of newspapers themselves. In Italy, in the sixteenth century, cartooning or caricature emerged in rebellion to “high art” and its wish for prestige with possibly the first cartoons having been painted by Leonardo da Vinci in his study of caricature. While caricature was meant to be a quick, impressionistic drawing that exaggerated prominent physical characteristics to humorous effect, it has also been said to bring out the subject’s “inner nature”. Caricature then, was an early example of graphic satire that could be used as an instrument of suppression, oppression or emancipation, which “allows the artist to comment on current events and political perspectives”. Development of printing techniques and evolution of newspaper in the 19th century lead cartoonists to get their work published in the newspapers.

The content of any political cartoon can be discussed as follows:

Symbolism: Cartoonists use simple objects, or symbols, to stand for larger concepts or ideas. After you identify the symbols in a cartoon, think about what the cartoonist intends each symbol to stand for. Symbolism is important even when people are unsure of how they feel and are unable to decide on the cognitive perspective of their take on issues; studies have indicated a certain level of emotional response to the issue at hand.

Exaggeration: Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or exaggerate, the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point. If we study a cartoon in detail, any characteristics is always seem overdone or overblown. (Facial characteristics and clothing are some of the most commonly exaggerated characteristics.) Cartoonists use exaggerations in size, emotions, and shape of a person or object for effect.

Labeling: Cartoonists often label objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for. Cartoonist execute the different labels the particular person or object which appear in a cartoon.

Analogy: An analogy is a comparison between two unlike things that share some characteristics. By comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one, cartoonists can help their readers see it in a different light.

Irony: Irony is the difference between the ways things are and the way things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists often use irony to express their opinion on an issue. When one look at a cartoon, one can find any irony in the situation the cartoon depicts.

Stereotypes and Caricature: Stereotyping is common in cartoons, it’s in a stereotype that the cartoonist tries and explains and simplifies a largely applicable point of view. It promotes a point of view, for example, all cricket matches are fixed. Although offensive it makes a strong point which can be debated upon, it opens grounds for discussion.

But a cartoon goes beyond trying to explain how this is achieved or not. In either case it is opinionated and blunt. So even though it is biased, the cartoon provides one, grounds for responding and even arguing back.

In India, political cartoons were used to propagate ideas and change. The vernacular press and political cartoons became mediums to convey change and information. Many freedom fighters used this platform to convey their thought, not just for freedom, post freedom struggle as well. Artists like BabaSaheb Thackeray and R.K.Laxman commented on the various happenings in independent India. The emergency is an example in the Indian context where cartoonists played a greater role in putting out opinions. Editorials were curbed and could not present their point of view. Cartoonists are gifted with a talent to depict any situation with a flare of humor and sense of laughter in it. Cartoonists seemed to be on pro level when it gets down to bringing smiles on faces of the readers, be it even while depicting the tragic situations.

India has been gifted with many such talented folks and they have been loved and adored by people for several decades. When we talk about a separate and unique zone of cartoonists, illustrators and humourists, R.K. Laxman would definitely be among the bests. He was born in 1921 and received several awards like Padma Vibhushan, Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Art and Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism.

He is best known for his creation ‘The Common Man’, which is a symbol of all this the Indian common man goes through has created a cult following for the man and his maker. R K Laxman, a political/social cartoonist has brought in the woes of the common man to the readers through The Times of India and has brought politicians, bureaucrats and just about everyone to the front page. The man continues to appear in a daily comic strip titled “You Said It” in The Times of India since 1951.

When we talk about our Country’s best cartoonist, we cannot forget the name of K. Shankar Pillai who is better known by his pen name Shankar. K. Shankar Pillai, is highly celebrated Indian cartoonist. He is credited as the father of political cartooning in the country. He started Shankar’s Weekly, India’s Punch in 1948 and never looked back. The cartoonist was born in the year 1902. His magazine took off in style and was always among the top demands. But during

emergency he had to close down the magazine after which he devoted his niche to making children laugh. He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1976 and is also remembered for the setting up Children's Book Trust and Shankar's International Dolls Museum.

Mario Miranda is another popular and respected cartoonist among all the big names. He was Born in 1926. Based out of Loutolim in Goa, he was posthumously awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2012. His works appeared in The Times of India, The Economic Times and other Mumbai-based dailies. But it was his works published in The Illustrated Weekly of India that got him the accolades he deserved.

Vijay Narain Seth (pen name Vins) is a well-known Indian cartoonist and illustrator. He always considered Mario Miranda as his mentor and was also the first Indian cartoonist to be appointed in Reader's Digest magazine, which became a turning point in his life. His works are part of a permanent collection at the International Cartoon Museum and the Karikatur & Cartoon Museum in Basel, Switzerland. His works have appeared in several newspapers and publications around the world.

O. V. Vijayan was an Indian author and cartoonist best known for his novel Khasakkinte Itihasam. He was an important figure in modern Malayalam literature and also belonged to the 'second generation' of editorial Indian cartoonists in. His book of cartoons called Ithiri neramboke, Ithiri Darshanam (A Little Pastime, A little Vision) was published in the year 1990.

Cartoons make an integral part of newspapers, conveying messages or expressing public opinion immaculately. They are also considered as the pictorial overture or introduction to any key event or personality and the readers love them. India is blessed with a number of good talented flourishing cartoonists with political awareness, sense of satire and original draftsmanship.

CONCLUSION

This review provides an overview of political cartoons in print media. The impact of cartoons is widespread on our lives and how we use them in our conversation, in our dealings even in beliefs we have. Cartoons have over the years helped establish and sustain our attention to political satire and look at the lighter side of thing without reducing it to a laughing matter.

Cartoons as an art form are definitely staying on the front pages and editorial pages of newspapers. As we all know that political cartoons are an important part in any newspaper. Political cartoons adorn a

small part of a newspaper often in a corner but it has a huge impact on the readers. A cartoon conveys a lot of information in very few words. The emotions behind the political cartoons are genuine and although harsh, are taken with a sense of humour.

We can also see that India has a number of famous cartoonists who have contributed a lot in the field of cartoon. However, this research aims at highlighting the role of cartoons in the newspapers. Editorial pages although important, have a low readership, cartoons however have not just a fan following but have a high recall value which keeps issues alive.

Cartoonists like RK Laxman are legends not because of the paper they associate with rather because of the cartoons they put out. The maker of the Common Man, R K Laxman is an inspiration to many; the great old man of political cartooning is ageing and still continues to keep his readers interest. The Times of India also owes Laxman for highlighting issues that are lost in a country. A detail study in this context shows an overview about political cartoons as a means of print media communication and the paper will begins with the assumption of the importance of political cartoons in the newspapers.

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