

Title : A Study on Inception and Growth of Cartoons in Print Media

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Abstract:

The research primarily aims at studying the beginning and growth of cartoons in print media, with our focus limited to India. Cartoons here include various forms like political satire, comic strips, gag cartoons, etc. The researchers will take into consideration different types of print media including mainly newspapers and magazines. Even after the emergence of new media and the trend of animations and graphics, cartoons in print still hold a special position. The paper highlights the impact and influence of these cartoons on the people of different ages and classes. An emphasis has been given on the current state of these cartoons in print; its use and effectiveness in the present scenario. The obstacles faced by the cartoon culture in print and the reasons for its decline have also been discussed. Also, a few potential solutions have been suggested at the end. This is a qualitative research and uses both primary and secondary data. For secondary data collection, old interviews, different websites, old research papers, articles and journals have been used. On the other side, primary data has been collected through a questionnaire answered by 122 participants, consisting of the people who are a regular audience of print media. This was mainly to determine the current trend and the way people perceive these cartoons in the present times.

Objectives:

- To understand the growth, the influence and the current status of cartoons in Print Media
- To determine the challenges standing as obstacles for these cartoons and the cartoonists
- To identify the solutions to enhance the effectiveness of these cartoons in present era

Keywords: Inception, Growth, Cartoons, Print Media

Definitions of Keywords:

Inception: Inception here refers to the origin and the beginning of Cartoons.

Growth: Growth can be defined as the development process and the changing trends over the years.

Cartoons: It refers to the single or multiple panels of illustrations and caricatures conveying a story or a message in a satirical or humorous way.

Print Media: Print media includes all the forms of mass media in printed format including newspapers, magazines, tabloids, etc.

Introduction:

Cartoons have always been an essential part of print media, especially newspapers and magazines. They are used to convey a message or an idea in different and indirect ways. This research aims at understanding the origin of cartoons in print media along with its current status. The researchers also tried to determine the challenges for these cartoons in print, based on a thorough analysis of all the information gathered. There are various types of cartoons including mainly political satire, comic strips and gag cartoons. Political satire, also known as editorial cartoon, is used to comment on any ongoing political situation. Comic strips consist of more than one panel. It generally has a humorous plot with the punch line at the end. Gag cartoons are generally a single-panel cartoon with a humorous tone to it. These are the most common forms of cartoons in print. Ever since its beginning, cartoons have been known to be impactful and effective among the audience. It has also proved to make revolutionary remarks at times. However, its status has declined a bit with the time. Nevertheless, it still has a great significance in print and holds an irreplaceable position. The paper discusses the use and effectiveness of the same in the present scenario. The research is a qualitative one and makes use of both primary and secondary data. For primary data, a questionnaire was circulated among the general public, mainly consisting of the people who stay connected to the print media platforms. A total of 122 participants answered the questionnaire, which helped the researchers to get an approximate idea of

the popularity of these cartoons in the current era, along with its impact and perception among the people. For secondary data, the researchers mainly studied the historical documents stating the history of cartoons and the old interviews of some renowned cartoonists and illustrators. The latter was to get a picture of what's going on behind the scenes and also to acknowledge the challenges faced by the cartoonists. Apart from these, secondary data has been collected through old research papers, case studies and articles. Along with the challenges, the researchers have also mentioned a few potential solutions at the end. These solutions focus on maintaining and enhancing the worth of cartoons in various print media platforms.

Research Methodology :

Research Design

This is a qualitative research and the researchers have used both primary and secondary data. For primary data collection, a questionnaire was distributed among the general public, consisting of the people who are a regular audience of the print media. This was to realize the popularity of the cartoons and the way they are perceived in the current scenario. Coming to the secondary data, historical articles have been used to understand the origin and growth of the cartoons. Old interviews of some renowned cartoonists and caricaturists form the basis of our analysis of the challenges and the solutions for an enhanced growth of cartoons in the print.

Universe of the Study

The universe of this research study includes the different kinds of cartoons including political satire, comic strips, gag cartoons,

and so on. Various types of print media have been taken into consideration for the study, with the main focus on newspapers and magazines. As a source of primary data, the researchers distributed a questionnaire among the general audience of the print media, which formed a major part of our study. The study population was chosen through purposive sampling method. Apart from this, secondary data has been observed to design the background of the study and outline the inception and growth of cartoons.

Sampling

The sampling technique used for choosing the participants to fill the questionnaire is purposive sampling. Considering that the study revolves around print media platforms, the researchers selected few people who are regular readers of print media, mostly consisting of the media students. This was to ensure the effectiveness of the study so that even with limited participants, we get results that can be generalized for all. A total of 122 participants filled the questionnaire.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the major entity being analysed in a study. In this study, the researchers have mainly used three things for a thorough analysis. First is the historical documents, which give a base to the research and allows the researchers to study the beginning of cartoons in India and in the world. Secondly, the questionnaire filled by the participants helps to analyze the current status of cartoons in print. At last, the old interviews by various renowned cartoonists and caricaturists have been analyzed to determine the challenges in the field.

Sources of Data Collection

As already mentioned, the research makes use of both primary and secondary data.

a. Primary Data

Primary data is the first-hand data collected by the researchers. In this case, the data collected with the help of the questionnaire makes up the primary data.

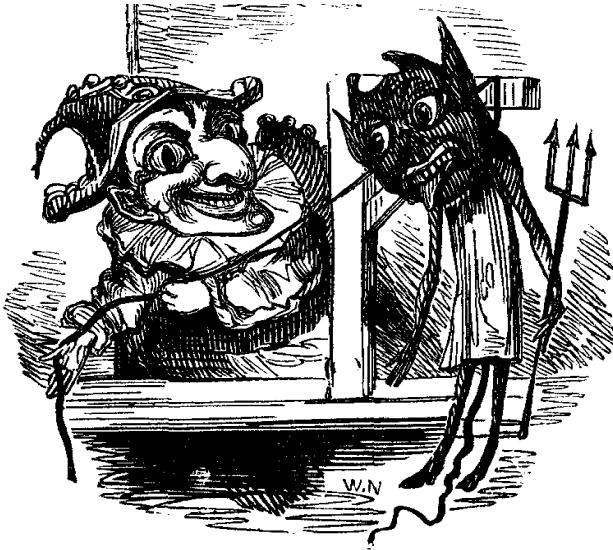
b. Secondary Data

Secondary data consists of the already-existing data. Here, the secondary data includes historical documents, old interviews, news articles and previous research papers.

History of Cartoons:

In the very beginning, the newspapers were handwritten and had limited content. With the advent of new technology, new ways for presentation of newspapers came into existence. Now, if we talk about magazines, it came only after the newspaper. When the magazines came into existence, technology was already well-developed. Cartoons began to be designed in newspapers and magazines with the help of computers and technology.

In the 1800s, various different forms of cartoons were published in illustrated magazines. During the period 1815-1840, the cartoons reflecting social issues were in trend. However, these cartoons were not published in regular newspapers or magazines. It was only in 1843, when the *Punch* magazine presented a cartoon highlighting the socio-political situation of that time, that the cartoons became a part of the print. This could be termed as the beginning of the cartoons in the print media as we see today.



First cover of Punch magazine hanging the Devil from first cover in 1841

Launched on July 17, 1841, *Punch* magazine is considered to bring a revolutionary change in the field. Although illustrations and caricatures were used previously as well, it was only due to this magazine that we started referring to these illustrations as cartoons.

Till the 19th century, these cartoons were only the illustrations used for humor in magazines and newspapers. However, things changed afterwards. Now, although they still focused on humor, they began representing serious issues ongoing in the society with the help of irony and satire. While discussing the history, it is worth mentioning that political cartoons have always been one of the most famous types of cartoons among the audience. And, the history of political cartoons go back to the 18th century. Although the word cartoon was not in use at that time, the concept of political satire was introduced way back then. It was the renowned artist William Hogarth, who began depicting the ongoing political issues through his pen and brush.

More or less, it was the seed for the trend of political cartoons.

Let's move ahead to the next form of cartoons that has created a special space in the heart of the audience, ie, comic strips. 'The Yellow Kid' by Richard Felton Outcault, published in New York Journal - American on February 16, 1896, is widely considered as the first comic strip in a regular newspaper. However, this wasn't in multiple panels. On October 25, 1896, in an episode named as 'The Yellow Kid and his Phonograph', the comic strip appeared in the newspaper in multiple panels, the way we see it today. Five separate scenes were used. This is what made historians declare this as the day when the comic strip was officially born. Although there are other debates related to the beginning of comic strips in the newspapers, above mentioned is the most accepted concept.

Soon after, there was competition among the newspapers in terms of the use of these cartoons. It became an essential part of the print media. During the World Wars, cartoonists gave a patriotic edge to their cartoons. Later, many comic publications came into existence that led to the enhanced use of cartoons. Newspapers and magazines began to have a special space for cartoons in their front pages and in the children's corner.

Coming to India, it is believed that the cartooning in India began as a resentment towards the rule of the colonial government in the country. The *Punch* magazine in London used to print cartoons portraying colonial rule in different ways. It is said that it triggered the feelings of the Indian and they felt humiliated. In retaliation, the Indian

publications began publishing cartoons that reflected their dissent towards the Britishers. The trend of cartoons began in India in the 1850s. The vernacular counterpart of the *Punch* magazine in India also took a major part in this.

Colonial Bengal has also contributed significantly to the beginning and development of these cartoons. The first Bengali cartoon was published in the newspaper *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in 1872. It was the first vernacular-language newspaper in India to publish a cartoon.

Cartoons became a common part of the print very quickly. And, it won't be wrong to say that the hatred towards colonial rule was the reason that triggered the birth of cartoons in India, especially political cartoons. These cartoons played a major role in the independence movements.

In the 20th century, when the freedom struggle in India was at its peak, the newspapers had a great role in raising the feeling of patriotism among the people. This was majorly backed by these cartoons which showed the British administration unfairly ruling over the Indians. This is how the cartoons became an essential part of the print in India. Even after the Independence, these cartoons held their positions quite well.

Importance of Cartoons:

Although it seems just like a form of entertainment, cartoons have always been of utmost importance to the people and serve a greater purpose. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. The importance of cartoons can be drawn clearly from whatever has been discussed so far. To summarize, below mentioned are a few

pointers that will give a clearer picture about the significance of cartoons.

- Helps to give out a message or convey a story
- Uses a visual way of presentation that creates a greater emphasis
- Helps in creating awareness and spreading social messages
- Points out the ongoing socio-political issues
- Makes up a special part of journalism
- Gives voice to the common people
- Delivers message in a creative way that hooks the audience
- Acts as a source of entertainment

As mentioned time and again, cartoons are the essence of the print media. It is one of those things in the newspaper which catches the attention of the readers quite easily. People may not read newspapers or magazines only to see the cartoons. However, we cannot deny the fact that cartoons do influence the readership of a newspaper in one way or the other. This will be analyzed further in the later parts.

Another major factor that makes cartoons stand out from other content is that it doesn't force any opinion on the readers. It gives the freedom to the readers to interpret the message on their own. Also, unlike the normal news content, it gives the artist a chance to portray something that's more than just news. It gives leniency to the artists to reflect what they think.

Literature Review :

According to Delson, Candace (1994). Cartoons are a type of illustration, sometimes animated, typically in a non-realistic or semi-realistic style. The specific meaning has evolved over time, but the

modern usage usually refers to either: an image or series of images intended for satire, caricature, or humor; or a motion picture that relies on a sequence of illustrations for its animation. Someone who creates cartoons in the first sense is called a *cartoonist*, and in the second sense they are usually called an *animator*.

Adler, John; Hill, Draper (2008) point out the concept originated in the Middle Ages, and first described a preparatory drawing for a piece of art, such as a painting, fresco, tapestry, or stained glass window. In the 19th century, beginning in *Punch* magazine in 1843, cartoons came to refer – ironically at first – to humorous illustrations in magazines and newspapers. Then it also was used for political cartoons and comic strips. When the medium developed, in the early 20th century, it began to refer to animated films which resembled print cartoons.

According to Adler & Hill 2008 In print media, a cartoon is an illustration or series of illustrations, usually humorous in intent. This usage dates from 1843, when *Punch* magazine applied the term to satirical drawings in its pages, particularly sketches by John Leech. The first of these parodied the preparatory cartoons for grand historical frescoes in the then-new Palace of Westminster. The original title for these drawings was *Mr Punch's face is the letter Q* and the new title "cartoon" was intended to be ironic, a reference to the self-aggrandizing posturing of Westminster politicians.

Cartoons can be divided into gag cartoons, which include editorial cartoons, and comic strips.

Modern single-panel *gag cartoons*, found in magazines, generally consist of a single drawing with a typeset caption positioned beneath, or—less often—a speech balloon. Bishop 2009 explain Newspaper syndicates have also distributed single-panel gag cartoons by Mel Calman, Bill Holman, Gary Larson, George Lichty, Fred Neher and others. Many consider *New Yorker* cartoonist Peter Arno the father of the modern gag cartoon (as did Arno himself). The roster of magazine gag cartoonists includes Charles Addams, Charles Barsotti, and Chon Day.

Bill Hoest, Jerry Marcus, and Virgil Partch began as magazine gag cartoonists and moved to syndicated comic strips. Richard Thompson illustrated numerous feature articles in *The Washington Post* before creating his *Cul de Sac* comic strip. The sports section of newspapers usually featured cartoons, sometimes including syndicated features such as Chester "Chet" Brown's *All in Sport*.

Editorial cartoons are found almost exclusively in news publications and news websites. Although they also employ humor, they are more serious in tone, commonly using irony or satire. The art usually acts as a visual metaphor to illustrate a point of view on current social or political topics. Editorial cartoons often include speech balloons and sometimes use multiple panels. Editorial cartoonists of note include Herblock, David Low, Jeff MacNelly, Mike Peters, and Gerald Scarfe.



Joha Leech, *Substance and Shadow* (1843), published as *Cartoon, No. 1* in *Punch*, the first use of the word cartoon to refer to a satirical drawing

Comic strips, also known as *cartoon strips* in the United Kingdom, are found daily in newspapers worldwide, and are usually a short series of cartoon illustrations in sequence. In the United States, they are not commonly called "cartoons" themselves, but rather "comics" or "funnies". Nonetheless, the creators of comic strips—as well as comic books and graphic novels—are usually referred to as "cartoonists". Although humor is the most prevalent subject matter, adventure and drama are also represented in this medium. Some noteworthy cartoonists of humorous comic strips are Scott Adams, Steve Bell, Charles Schulz, E. C. Segar, Mort Walker and Bill Watterson.

Discussion and Findings:

In the pursuit of recognizing the current trends of these cartoons, the researchers distributed a small questionnaire to 122 participants. The participants mainly included the people who are into reading from print media platforms. The survey was to find out the way people perceive these cartoons in today's scenario.

Out of 122 participants, 117 participants strongly believe that cartoons are not only a great source of entertainment but also a successful means to deliver a message. Also, a good majority of these participants think that cartoons are catchy and hook their attention easily. On a very interesting note, there were a few participants who claimed that cartoons are one of the major attractions for them in the print media.

When asked about which kind of cartoons they like the most, 59.8% of the participants kept the political satire at the top, followed by 23.8% who said that they like comic strips the most. Apart from these two at the top, the rest of the participants chose illustrative cartoons, gag cartoons, and the other forms of cartoons.

Now, the survey gave us a very interesting yet disturbing fact. The researchers found out that 91% of people think that cartoons are very relevant and act as the heart of the print media. However, what's unfortunate was the fact that only 29.5% said that they come across these cartoons on a regular basis. Meanwhile, 66.4% of people claimed that they see these cartoons only sometimes and the remaining 4.1% mentioned that they find these cartoons only on negligibly rare occasions.

Do you think cartoons and illustrations are effective in delivering a story or a message?

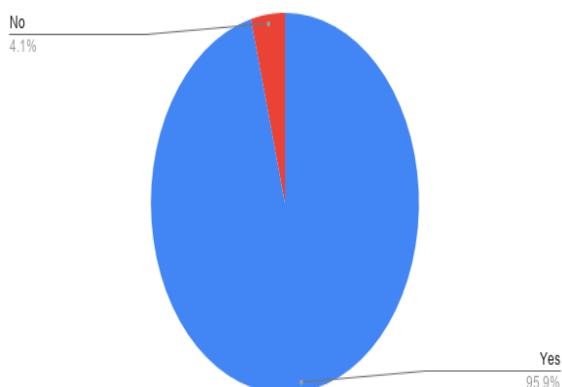


Figure No: 1 Effective in delivering a story or a message

Do you think cartoons in print still hold a relevant position in today's era?

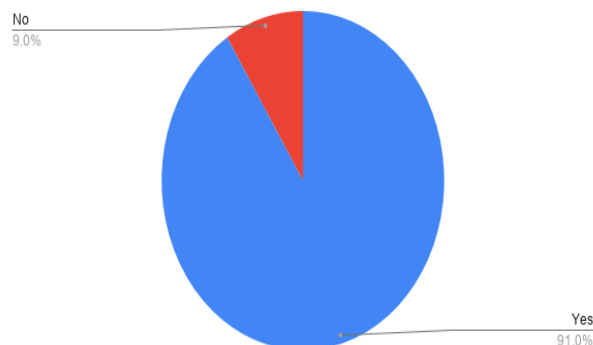


Figure No: 3 Do you think cartoons in print still hold a relevant position in today's era?

How often do you come across cartoons or illustrations in these print media platforms?

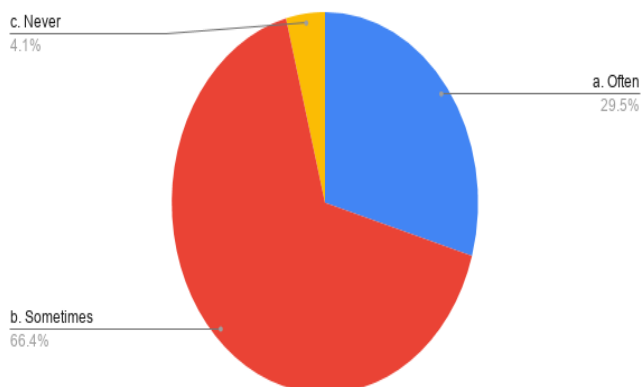


Figure No: 2 How often do you come across cartoons or illustrations in these print media platforms?

Which type of cartoons or illustrations do you come across the most?

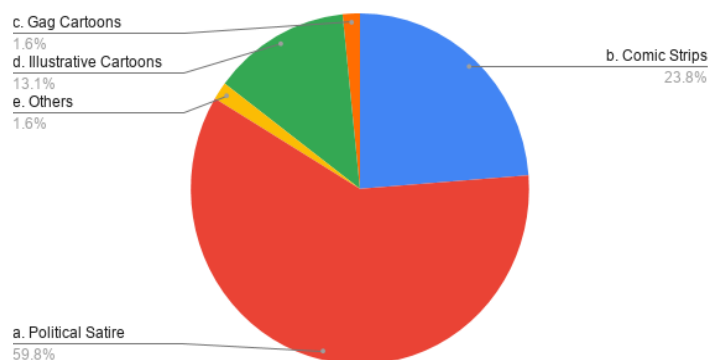


Figure 4: Which type of cartoons or illustrations do you come across the most?

While going through various interviews that were taken as secondary sources for data collection, the researchers came across a few things that were pointed out by various renowned cartoonists and are quite notable. For instance, cartoonists like Paresh Nath, Satish Acharya and Balraj KN believe that there's lack of encouragement for cartoonists in making. Mr. Nath says that there's a very

limited exposure for cartoonists in print. He claims that there are very limited posts and openings for cartoonists in newspapers and magazines, which comes as a discouragement for the upcoming professionals.

Also, there's a common opinion from almost every cartoonist which clarifies that there's no job security in this field which again acts as a barrier for people to take it up as a full-time career. Lack of efficiency and professionalism in the budding artists came up as another universal opinion. This point was often boldly emphasised by the late cartoonist R K Laxman in his interviews with a few media houses including *India Today* and *Moneylife*.

In an interview with *The Wire* in 2015, a very interesting and powerful remark was made by political cartoonist E. P. Unny regarding the challenges faced by the cartoonists in the current era. He talked about segmented audience and violent disagreements. Compared with the past, he said that today people have become very intolerant. It is only usual for a person to agree or disagree with the message conveyed through a cartoon. However, the way people react to it these days is unacceptable. People only look towards the cartoons and the cartoonists they agree with while criticizing the ones who they think are wrong in their ideologies. According to him, unlike today, earlier if a person didn't agree with the message, s/he would simply say 'good cartoon but I don't agree with you'.

Conclusion:

After analyzing all the data and information, it won't be wrong to say that cartoons still hold a very vital position in print and are

here with us to stay. However, we also can't deny that its status has declined in the recent past. The research leads to the various challenges that stand as obstacles in the growth of cartoons in print. Below mentioned are few of these hurdles:

- Today the cartoonists have to limit themselves keeping in mind the restrictions and the consequences they might have to face. There are various cases where the artists have been arrested in sedition cases for their cartoons. Similarly, when a cartoonist works for a newspaper, s/he has to keep in mind that their messages must be in favour of the ideologies of the organization. All these bind the cartoonists.
- According to the results of the survey, it is evident that the frequent appearance of cartoons in print have declined. For obvious reasons, this would also cause the weakening of the significance of the cartoons in the print.
- Not just the number of cartoons but the number of efficient full-time cartoonists have also declined in recent times. It's not because the people are disinterested or inefficient; it's because they find it difficult to see their future as a cartoonist in print. Even after bearing the struggles and difficulties of the field, it is still difficult to look forward to a stable and secure future.
- The challenges mentioned above act as major discouragement to the

budding cartoonists. They do not find it worthy to spend their time and efforts on something that is not going to be appreciated. This again results in lesser and inefficient cartoonists.

These are a few problems that stand firmly in the growth of cartoons in the print media platforms. After acknowledging all these issues, the researchers tried to come up with few potential solutions that may help in overcoming these hurdles. Some of these solutions are as mentioned below:

- More job opportunities should be created for the cartoonists in the print. It will lessen the fear of job insecurity in this field. This would allow the budding cartoonists to take this up as a full-time profession and devote their time and efforts to it.
- More space should be given to these cartoons in the newspapers and magazines. It will widen the platform for the cartoonists to showcase their work.
- Now, this one might be a difficult thing to do but it's based on the interviews of the political cartoonists. The political cartoonists who work for a newspaper should be given the freedom to portray the truth they believe in. As in, they should not be forced to go with the ideologies of the organization.
- People tend to work better and more efficiently when their work is

appreciated. Same goes with the cartoonists. And, giving awards and prizes is one fine way to do that. Hence, there should be more awards and honours for the cartoonists. This is to boost their spirit and encourage them to do a better job.

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