



## Comics as a Learning Tool of Indian Tradition

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** *This paper attempts to identify the role of comics in the literary tradition of India. It presents an overview of how comics try to influence children and adults. Comics had the disadvantage of having been considered as lowbrow literature. They were looked down and people who associated with them were scorned. This trend has changed steadily. Initially, comics gained acceptance by its inclusion into the realm of children. Later, comics became a part of popular literature and increasingly it has been deemed fit to join the mainstream literature. This paper attempts to explore the possibility of comics as a tool for educating moral values and development in language learning.*

*The uniqueness of comics as stories with visual images makes it a great medium to be used for the instruction of moral values in children. Similar to play-way method of education, comics showcase moral values in an attractive package. This charm of comics can be very effective when applied to the education of second language learners. Learning a new language can be made more palatable with the aid of visual imagery and simple sentences. This paper is an attempt to state the possibilities of comics as a visual and literary aid to children and adults.*

### INTRODUCTION

Comics in India have been perpetuating the rich and varied cultural tradition. In the beginning, comics were wholly a medium of entertainment with no educational purposes. This was changed by the customization of comics suitable to the Indian milieu. For the first time, comics were seen as reader friendly material by children and adults. Comics came to be viewed as literature.

### COMICS AS VISUAL LITERATURE

The aim of literature is twin fold. It seeks to entertain and educate. Comics embrace this dual role with ease. The fun side of comics entertain the readers. The text educates the readers. With the use of minimal words, comics are able to captivate the readers' attention. Hence, it makes sense to group comics under visual literature.

### UNIQUENESS OF COMICS

Visual images are the strength of comics as they provide a visual treat along with the stories. The human mind can process images faster than text. Images have powerful significance in terms of assimilation of information in one's memory. When the written word is associated with images, information is easier to remember.

The text in comics undergoes a drastic reduction from conventional narratives. The sentences are short and crisp enabling reading comprehension in readers and language learners. Ultimately, the whole narrative process of storytelling is enhanced and readers are able to retain the gist of the stories far more than a mere book.

### ORIGIN OF COMICS IN INDIA

In India, comics were introduced in a leading newspaper in the late 1960s. One can trace the origin of comics right back to the time of the age old paintings left by our ancestors. With the advent of publications like Amar chithra katha, Chandmama and Tinkle, the literary realm of India was revolutionised. With the adaptation of the tradition of India into the medium of comics, it was firmly established as literary and art form.

### ROLE OF MYTH AND MYTHOLOGY

Comics in India draw from various sources of Indian ethos and culture. They are customized to suit the readers of India. Indian epics and mythology have been one such rich source. The epics and myths have been interpreted creatively in various comics. Indian Mythology has outdone itself by its adaptation to comics. It has currency and appeal even in modern times. Indian culture is enriched by the values and morals showcased in mythology. They instruct one on how to lead a good life. Comics and myths blend in beautifully to present children with knowledge in their developmental years.

### WESTERN COMICS

The Western comics thrive on the concept of superheroes fighting for justice, most often using violence. This type of characterization made comics popular enough that they were adapted to the silver screen. Characters from Marvel comics like Batman and Spiderman are some examples. Similarly, Indian comics found their Western superhero parallels in mythical characters fighting for justice and formed the basis for quite a number of movies. For example, there have been quite a number of animated films based on the comics like Chotta Bheem, Balganes and Krishna. It was a refreshing change for the Indian readers as they could relate more to these mythical characters.

### COMICS AND CHILDREN

Comics in India occupy an integral part in the developmental years of children. It promotes reading in children from an early age. In addition they introduce and thereby aid in instilling moral values in children in an entertaining manner. J.R. Kokandakar(2008) has stated how the instruction of moral values could be done for children.

"The first rule of moral training is to suggest and invite, not to command or impose. The best method of suggestion is by personal example, daily conversation and the books read from day to day. These books should contain, for the younger student, the lofty example of the past given, not as moral lessons but as things of supreme human

interest" (56)

According to him, comics can be considered as an excellent mode of inviting the young readers to be schooled in the country's culture, tradition and ultimately the moral values imparted in them. The introduction of comics to children at an early age helps in cultivating the habit of reading. It ensures that children develop a taste for literature. It encourages the power of imagination in children and paves the way to think creatively.

### COMICS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Language learning through comics is feasible especially for second language learners. Indian comics steeped in Indian mythology and tradition provides a familiar terrain for the learners. For example, an Indian native will be able to recognise the cultural elements portrayed in comics and would be motivated to engage in the learning process of a second language like English. It can be an effective tool in classrooms to aid the teachers in the instruction of students.

### CONCLUSION

Indian Comics have contributed a lot to the literature of the world. It serves as an eye-opener for understanding the rich culture of Indian tradition in the international level. It helps to effectively instill moral values in children at an impressionable age and thereby prepare them to lead a fruitful life. It also aids in language learning and development in children as well as adults.

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