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Growth potential of Indian comics among Varanasi high school students

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Abstract---The adequacy of comics has never been estimated in Indian Comics. Nonetheless, past research viewed comics as having materiality and multisensorial qualities, vital for most purposes and domains, particularly for understudies' learning. Teaching a dry graduate course with most traditional methods has been too dull to reinforce concepts taught in the classroom. However, it must be of well-crafted content based on abstractions of real-life events. This study advocates the use of comic books to promote mental and physical well-being in the face of the increasingly complicated digital world we live in. Methods of abstracting the content and enhancing the narratives in awareness, benefits, and potential of Indian comics are provided. The study was developed and experimented with high school students. The results have proven several interesting facts about the impact of technology on the Indian Comics Industry and its desirability as an excellent healthy entertainment with associated benefits.

Keywords---comics, ICT, Indian comics industry, learning, wellbeing.

Introduction

A digital comic, or a novel in a comic-strip format, uses sequential art to tell a story just like a comic book but has complex plots with its beginning, middle, and end, and the main character that develops through conflicts and climax. Every component of a comics panel contributes to the interpretation of the contents, and as a result, it speaks of the elite readers. (Petrovic, 2010; Hughes & Morrison, 2014; Cohn 2014). There are many different kinds of graphic novels, including

Manga (the Japanese style comic), superhero adventures, personal narratives or 'perzines,' fiction and non-fiction, and many more. When digitized, a comic book is considered to reach a wider audience with the help of technology and social media. In studying digital comics, narratives for learning can be operationally defined as a series of respondents' real-life experiences, given in order and established connections between them. The experiences must be filtered, abstracted, and enhanced to produce solid learning content. This study examines methods in abstracting the narratives and improving them with the help of technology to understand the need to boot the Indian Comics Industry. Digital comics have the capability to mitigate one of the numerous challenges associated with teaching and studying difficult education courses. To do so, the students' approach toward the narratives must first be analyzed and then evaluated for their effectiveness. That way, it may demonstrate that technology is a permissible and valid learning instrument that can be used in the form of teaching materials, assignments, or any other physical learning artifacts at the conclusion of the process. Also, it unfolds the possibilities of the growth of the Indian Comics Industry and the personnel associated with it. Talents such as artists, illustrators, Inker, Scriptwriter, Colourist, Publisher, Bookseller/retailers, supply chain personnel, and ultimately the readers to be benefitted by improving the overall approach of the Indian Comics Industry.

Materials and Methods

When digitized, advanced comics can be furnished with intelligent strategies and upgraded designs highlights (for example, transforming), which thus assist with diminishing vagueness in understanding the subjects learned. It has revitalized the ages of understudies and researchers. They are envious sci-fi perusers that cause comics to recover their notoriety and have individuals understand their effect (Smetana, Odelson, Burns, and Grisham, 2009; Downey, 2009). Comics can convey information that is sometimes difficult to articulate with words (Refer to an example in Figure 1).

Figure 1
(Image courtesy: Indusverse Comics)



An Example- Comics Carries Meaning and Becomes a Supportive Way to Check if readers' Interpretation is Acceptable.

Cohn (2013, 2014), who developed a visual language concept for the cognition of comics, has claimed that digital comics could establish parallels between how readers comprehend sequential images and understand other communication modalities. Some readers cannot invoke images from texts they read; thus, they depend on comics' visual cues. Such ascribes would eventually assist them with drawing in and thinking out about the case. There has been an assumption that understudies were frequently not propelled by basically seeing texts in the reading material. They arranged illustrations before perusers. Graphical representation is faster to peruse than a composition novel. Comics have been professed to be more alluring, requesting, persuading, and less undermining because of the utilization of the photos. The image and pictures given in a firmly constructed storyline can help understudies arrive at a comprehension of the substance, yet learn new jargon words, progress with the account, and backing for text understanding (Prensky, 2001; Hassett and Schieble, 2007; Thompson, 2007; Hughes and Morrison, 2014). For extra focus, Downey (2009) declared that comic pictures support understudies in signifying "specific topical implications, purposes or thoughts" Downey, E. (2009). *Graphic novels in curriculum and instruction collections. References & User Services Quarterly*. 49(2). 181-188. Comics often provide the readers with a large number of interactions since the readers carry on with a limited number of lives while reading the comics. (Griffin, Homsy and Stelzig, 1985). Smetana, Odelson, Copies, and Grisham (2009) additionally have examined the utilization of comics in showing English and presumed that the visual idea of comics gave a setting rich, exorbitant interest climate for securing new jargon, logical help, and signs to the importance of the composed story, assist with demystifying the text, and increment cognizance. They additionally guaranteed that comics urge understudies to peruse and get higher request thinking abilities (examine, decipher, and make). This is because the images in comic books empower understudies to uunravelfacial and body articulations, the

representative implications of explicit pictures and stances, allegories and metaphors, and other social and education subtleties. This is the reason today; numerous colleges have broad assortments of unique comic artistry for academic investigations. The three are language specialist, spatial, and relational pieces of insight (Lytga and Lyga as referred to in Downey, 2009). The utilization of shadings, lights, shadows, and lines in the pictures also impacts the story's tone and mindset (Smetana et al., 2009).

Figure 2
(Image courtesy: Holy Cow Entertainment)



An Example- The usage of lights, shadows, and lines carries the meaning and sets the story's narrative and mood.

These are the parts considered in arranging correspondence, so comics accept a significant factor in the innovative redesign. Nevertheless, the effect of digital comics depends much after interfacing with content in a creative, progressive solicitation (Cary, as alluded to in Smetana, Odelson, Burns-through, and Grisham, 2009). This is the impetus behind why the substance age has been included freely in this investigation, in which verified experiences were gathered to provide an expert convincing report. Regardless of the apparent advantage of comics, there is still some hesitance to acknowledge comics as a 'commendable' read and that the understudies should peruse 'genuine' books (Hughes and Morrison, 2014). Because of this hesitance, the usage of comics has fundamentally been an out-of-school try. Even though there is some advancement where college libraries started to set up a corner in the library for Comics, Graphic Novels, and Manga assortments, their consideration in classes has been amazingly lethargic regarding the world and practically none in India. However, the way that it is advancing and subsequently expanding in the instructive market is a decent sign for comics. Be that as it may, comics, then again, have never been estimated as far as their learning viability. Comics have been viewed as having materiality and multisensorial qualities, significant for most purposes and regions, mainly for understudies' learning. In the long run, this will hurt students and people who are trying to learn, because they won't be able to figure out how effective it is. This is because comics have possibilities, yet bouncing into them without appropriate approval will prompt disappointment – both for comics and technology. Hence, estimating the adequacy of comics (both hard copy and

digital), which were created consistently with post-covid-19 times, and utilizing a deliberation technique, could test the reality of the case and cure the circumstance. Concerning estimating the technology's viability, this article resolves the topic of methods to gauge the benefits and understand the possibility of growth prospect of Indian Comics. Which medium do readers prefer to read comics? What is the role of technology in the Indian Comics Industry? Is there any benefit perceived by the readers/non-readers from comic book reading? What is the need for an hour to boost the market of comic books in India? By addressing the inquiries, the study to gauge the adequacy of comics according to the learning viewpoint, in light of the prospect of its growth and need for an hour.

Grounded theory research is likely to start with a query or maybe merely the gathering of qualitative data. The researcher becomes aware of ideas or concepts when they examine the data obtained. These ideas/concepts are said to "emerge" from the data. The researchers assign codes to those ideas/concepts that explain them. As additional data is collected and examined, codes can be classified into higher-level ideas and categories. These categories might form the basis of a new theory or hypothesis. Thus, grounded theory differs from the usual scientific research methodology. The researcher selects an existing theoretical framework, generates one or more hypotheses based on that framework, and then gathers data to test the hypotheses' validity. The study started with exploratory research by identifying students from classes 9 and 10 from Varanasi. This was specific to identify the approach of more than 12 years and less than 16 years old generation towards Indian Comics Industry to gauge the impact of technology and prospect of Indian Comics in future. The reason to select such an age group is to understand the younger generation's mindset towards comics. 60 students participated in the study voluntarily. A qualitative interview was conducted with the individuals for the awareness of Indian Comics, Preferred language to read in, the format of comics (digital/Non-digital), and Time Spent on social media with the use of digital devices/devices every day, Values perceived from comics reading.

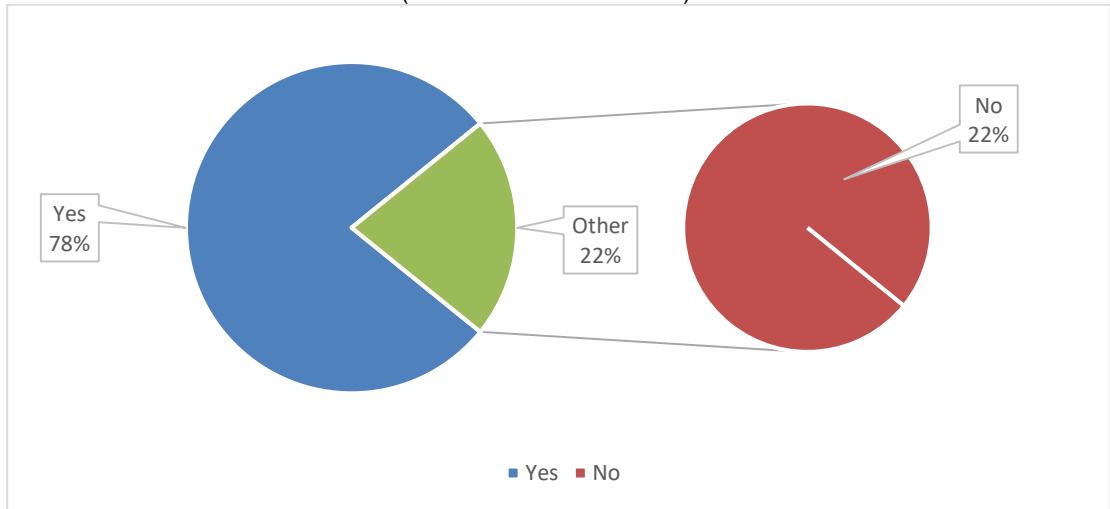
Results and Discussions

Results revealed that students between the ages of 12 and 16 had never had the chance to read Indian comics in their physical or digital form, which led to the conclusion that this was the case. The characters, Shaktiman, Krish, and Chacha Chowdhry, have been introduced through the use of multimedia presentations, despite of being such characters from the reading world. Another perceived possibility is that the rising prominence of English as a language of teaching in schools has had an influence on the medium of instruction selected by students. The vast majority of people who have studied in English generally prefer to read in the same language. Which somehow is the need for an hour to be understood by the publishers and content generators. If given the option, student volunteers have gladly agreed to try reading hard copy comics instead of wasting their time on digital media. The students who took part in the comic book reading exercise expressed appreciation for their mental and physical well-being as well as for the activity itself. In developing students' knowledge of the importance of their mental and physical health and wellbeing, the awareness movement has been successful in increasing student comprehension. Indian Comics were introduced at the same

time, serving as an alternative to healthy enjoyment while also delivering benefits to the public at large.

Are you aware of "COMICS"?

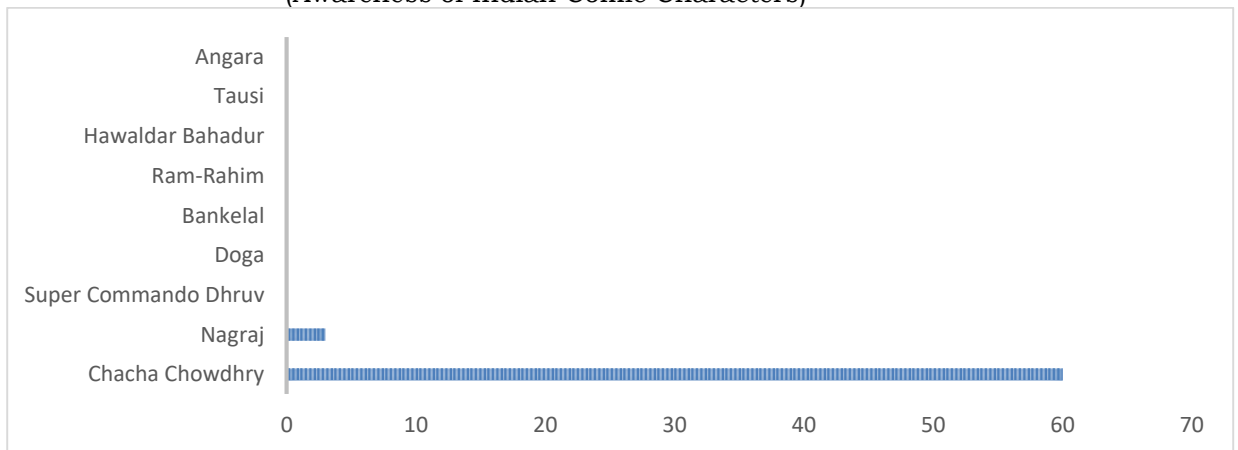
Figure 3
(Awareness of Comics)



Students of classes 9 and 10 were asked to participate in the study. The queries were towards understanding their awareness of the word "COMICS". 47 out of 60 have agreed that they are aware of the term comics. And 13 out of 60 are not aware as observed.

Have you heard/ watched/ read below Indian characters?

Figure 4
(Awareness of Indian Comic Characters)



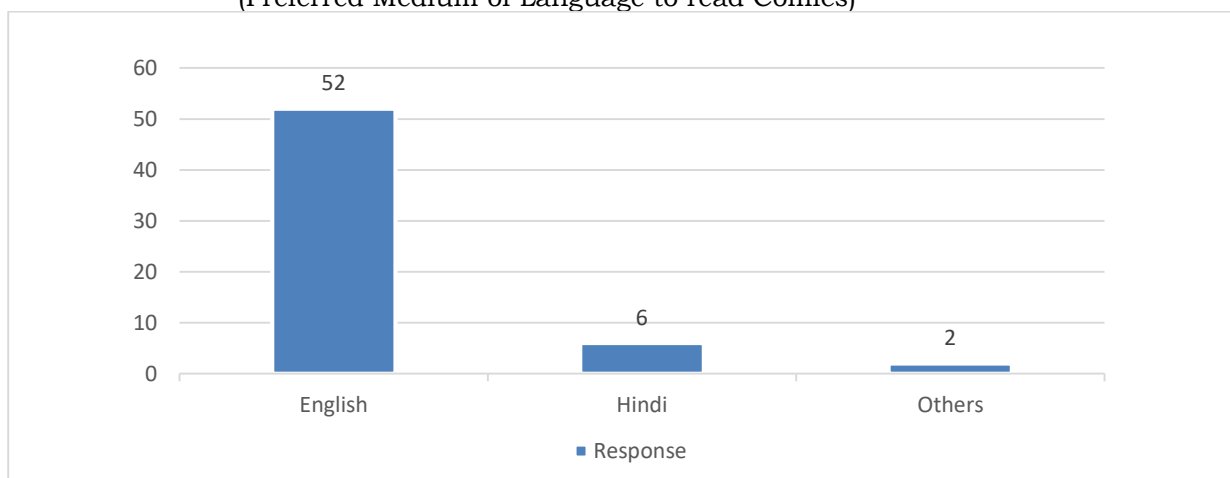
It was observed that the term "COMICS" had been introduced from audio-visual media in the majority. Not from print or physical form. Students said they had

been introduced to superheroes and other comic characters from Movies, TV, OTT platforms, etc. Less than 1% said that they had experienced hard copy comics by themselves. Chacha Chowdhry was the only known character that was observed. This is primarily due to the cartoon web series available on one of the OTT platforms, "Hotstar". However, this character used to be most popular among other characters in the past decades.

Which medium do you prefer to read comics?

Figure 5

(Preferred Medium of Language to read Comics)



English is observed as the most accepted medium to read in. Given a chance to read comics, students have shown interest mostly in English 52 out of 60, 6 out of 60 in Hindi, and 2 in other languages. This shows the unawareness of Indian Comics due as they used to be available mainly in Hindi. Most parents prefer their children to study in an "English Medium" school, which somehow overshadows other languages like Hindi and any other language.

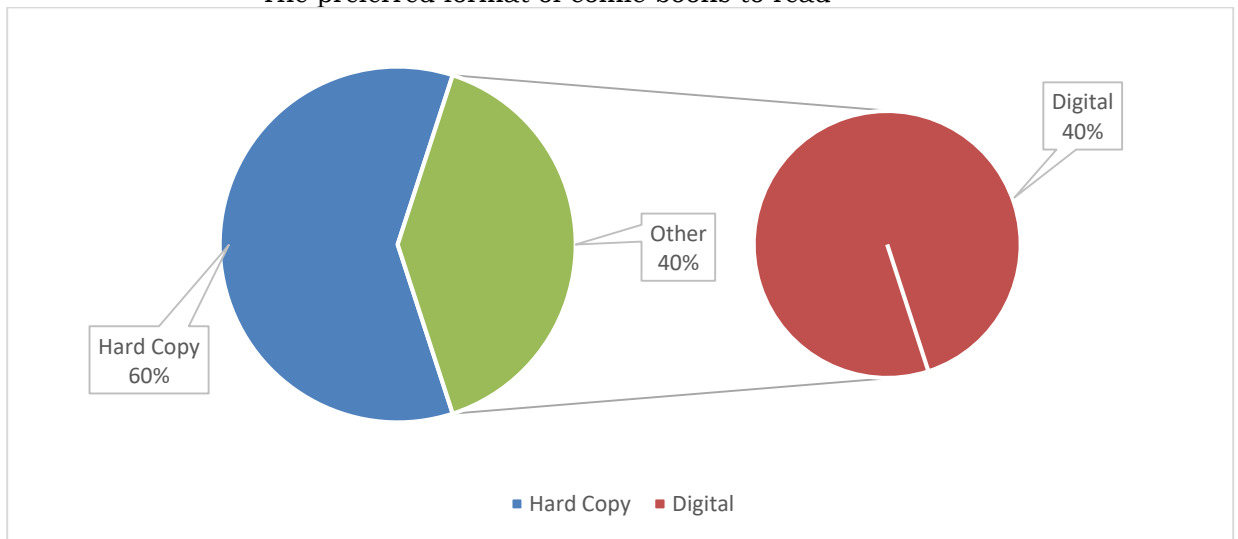
Very few students have said that they know Indian Comics are available in multiple languages like Hindi, English, and Bengali. Further, they also revealed that they had read foreign comics like "Goose Bump", "Multiverse of Madness", and a few more.

Figure 06:
Introduction of Indian Comics to Students of Focus Academy by Research Scholar Siddhartha Bose at Bhojubil, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India



Which format will you prefer to read comics in?

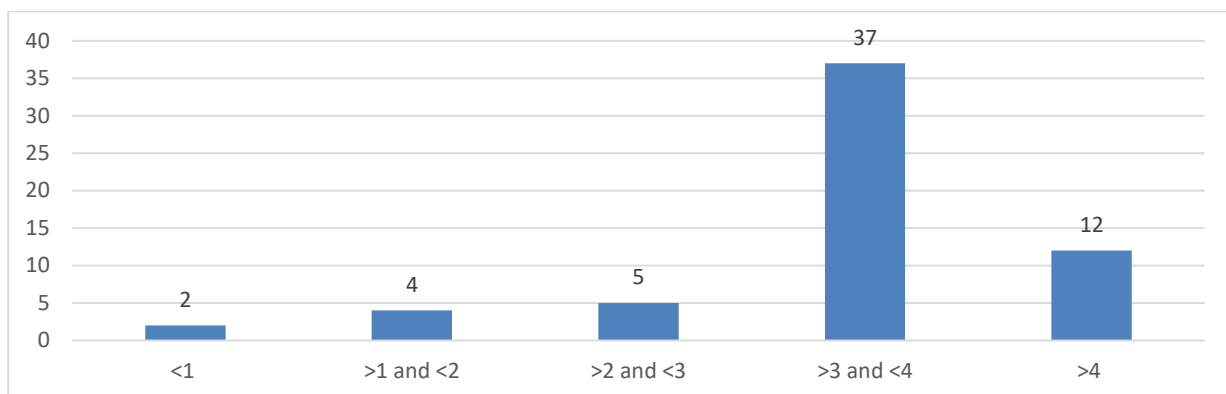
Figure 07:
The preferred format of comic books to read



The researcher introduced the hard copy of Indian comics, which were perceived by students positively as observed. Upon querying further about which format they would prefer to read comics, 36 out of 60 have agreed that they would like to experience the hard copy comic book reading. 24 out of 60 have shown interest in the digital format.

Time (Hour) spent on social media with the help of digital gadgets every day?

Figure 08:
Daily Time Spent in hours over Social Media



The researcher was keen to understand the impact of technology in social media in the young life of class 9 and 10, who are the future of India. It was observed that not a single student was untouched by the growing need for social media. 3 to 4 hours are being spent every day, as observed most by the students.

The researcher wanted to understand if there are any adverse effects of the usage of digital gadgets. To the surprise, students themselves have listed the issues arising from the excessive usage of digital gadgets. Amnesia, the strain on the eyes, and lack of concentration have been mentioned. They are just fictional characters however teach us a lot. A few examples are Aladin taught that nothing is impossible. Micky taught me to be a good person. Scooby taught me never to be afraid of screwing up. Tom & Jerry taught the value of friendship. Chip & Dale taught no matter how small; you can still rock. Richie Rich taught me never to be proud. Dexter taught science was fun. Mr. Bean taught us to make everyone laugh. The researcher has offered to cut short their time on digital media by an hour and invest that time in reading or, more precisely, in comic books. Students were found to have an affirmative response toward the comics. They have embraced the idea of comic reading as their entertainment is unaffected and has positive aspects like improvement in concentration, mental and physical wellbeing, and stress reduction. Besides, there is a lot to learn from the comic characters if observed keenly, which plays and motivates the individual unknowingly.

Conclusion

It was observed that young generations are not familiar with the Indian comic book characters. Business tycoons of the Indian Comics Industry should plan and strategize to engage more young generation. Proper endorsement, advertisement, and availability of Indian Comics to be considered. Along with the adults, young readers should be targeted by publishing Indian Comics in the English language

with proper supply chain management and the same marketing. Parents encourage their children to read, whether it is comics or any other literature of their choice of interest. However, it was recommended by the researcher that the human brain is keener towards the graphical representation of the tales. Hence, comics can be a preferred choice to read. Further study should be conducted because it tried to develop a hypothesis about Indian Comics and the young readers' approach towards them. The study has demonstrated that comics can bridge the gap of incomprehension. This experiment coverage is insufficient to demonstrate that comics are one of the most popular instructional materials. Due to the unawareness and unavailability of appropriate material, a substantial portion of this research focused on creating a compelling market for the target audience, which draws attention to that content appeal should be created by combining real-world experience. Bringing comic reading into the mainstream is a huge task. However, not impossible.

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