

Political Crises and Political Cartoons: Which Comes First in India's Constitutional Amendment Bill?

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Abstract

Political crises are often represented in print media through the lens of political cartoons and memes. This paper explores the question “Do editorial cartoons only address situations that are already in the international arena or can they set off predicaments using the power of their own graphics?” Perhaps both, not, or either/or?

Cartoons are graphic forms of communication that transmit a meaning in a nonverbal way, although words are often included as labels or captions. They depict timely events in drawings that exaggerate, minimize, satirize, or passively express the opinions of their illustrators.

Graphics are emotional. Editorial cartoonists can impact social opinion with their drawings in a way that writers cannot because they can, in a picture, capture the significance of an incident or a movement at a specific moment or overtime. Cartoons are influential for many readers because they are easier to read, more quickly grasped and engender emotions that bond readers to the message expressed in the graphic. Of course, people who don't agree with the illustrator's point of view will also respond emotionally and negatively. Whatever the reaction, the graphic illustrator can communicate with both information and opinion and educes sentiments more impactful than mere words (Bostdorff, D. M. (1987).

Political cartoons are graphic translations of specific incidents of social thinking that can trigger collective responses. These cartoons are created by artists who combine the skills of artists and political analysts. These artists observe and interpret the happenings in their home societies or in the global arena, and then characterize these occurrences in cartoons or other memes. “A picture is worth a thousand words.” (Barnard,1921). Pictures can make complex and complicated circumstances more accessible to readers. Political cartoonists often simplify, in a single drawing, many layers of situations that appear unexpected, volatile and unpredictable but, are in fact organic and systemic. Visuals can also image veiled and underlying details about contexts that, presented in the spoken or written word or in raw actions, might be missed or dismissed. Pictures cause visceral reactions that seize attention, emotion and understanding unlike printed text. For this reason, cartoons are sometimes met with anger, denial, grief. Readers, at times, reject an illustration, because it reveals aspects of events that no one wants to acknowledge. At other times, readers find a portrayal of events as prescient and defining.

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Few editorial cartoonists aim to instigate crises. Because national and global audiences have a plethora of adversities to survive, cartoonists don't need to be sources of chaos to generate material. Although editorials, both print and graphic, might aggravate or arouse a crisis, most journalists write about or illustrate an extant situation. In India, the citizenship amendment act (CAA) divided the Hindu and Muslims. Did the CAA increase the political crisis or did the resulting editorial cartoons inflame the conflict. This paper will discuss the matter.

Keywords: Crisis, politics, India