

MANGO PICKLE - Comic series on growing up in Indian middle class family

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Introduction

I grew up in a Indian middle-class family – the kind where you squeeze the toothpaste get to the last little bit, use the soap until it's so tiny it could evaporate and use the empty Bournvita jars for storing pulses and grains. In essence, we made sure wastage was minimal and went all out to repurpose any item before deeming it 'garbage.'

Trust me when I say that a middle-class family knows how to use items in the most creative ways.

For instance, an old T-shirt never makes its way to the garbage bin unless it completes its rightful duties as a household mop cloth. Bonus points to extra creative families like mine, who turn old clothes to rugs and cushions. Old pots and buckets are made to

breathe a new life as planters. Newspapers don't just serve the purpose of delivering news – they can be used table lays, notebook covers, shelf liners, and as an occasional housefly swatter.

Now an educated adult, I am rather glad and thankful for the upbringing my parents have given me. This mindset has made me more thankful for things bestowed to us by mother nature – the roof over our shelter, the clothes we buy with every changing season and more importantly for the food that we require to survive.



Aim

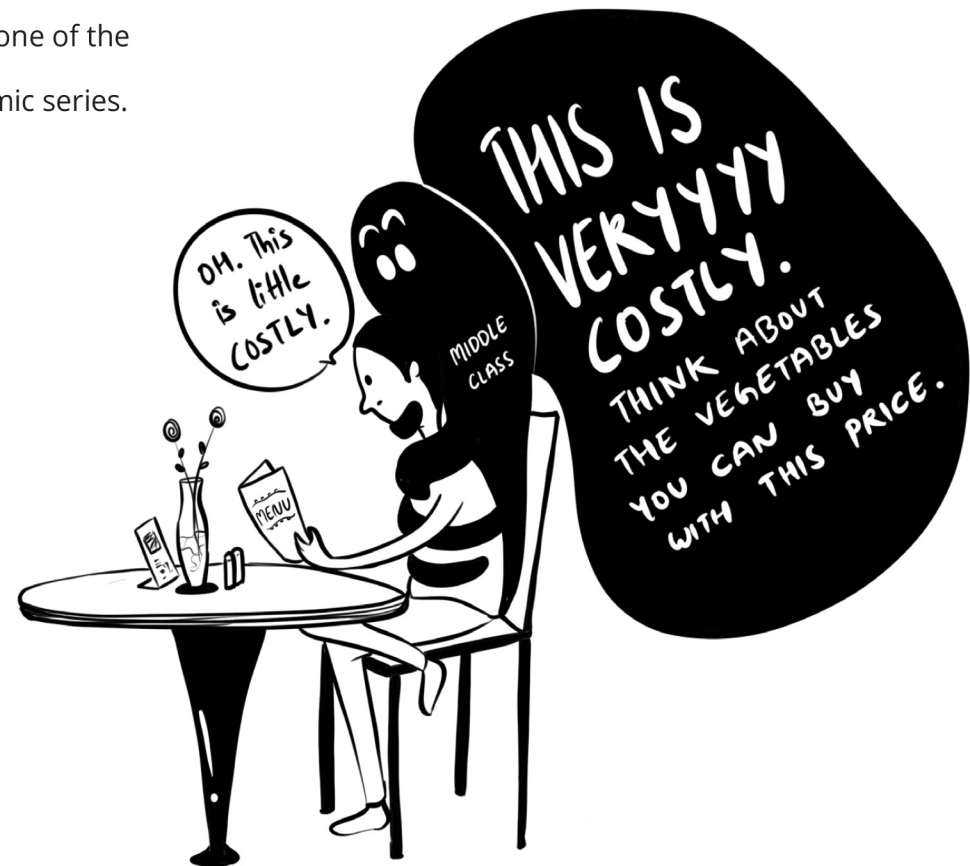
There are uncountable events happen every day in life of middle-class people. Being in the family has its unique charm. we don't dream of having a luxury car, getting few extra pieces of paneer in our dish is good enough.

My objective is to explore some of these events and I want to present them in funniest way possible through comics. I think comics offer a personal expression for the creators and entertainment for the audience.

Something that I love about comics is that it doesn't need any specific genre, anyone can make comic inspired by anything. I want to express my views about what's its like growing up in an Indian middle class

family. The comics will highlight the ironies and not so ordinary scenarios that runs in Indian families and in society. I want to create something that can allow us all to relive those memories together in the most hilarious way.

Bringing smiles to peoples faces is one of the most important purpose of this comic series.



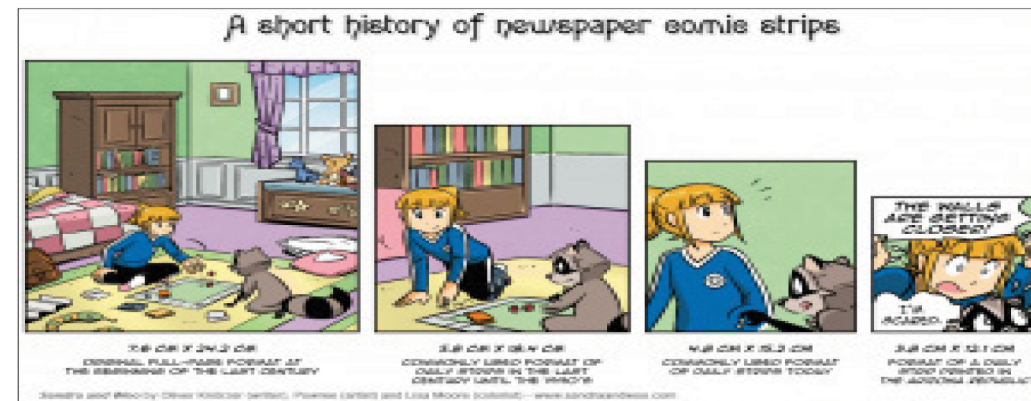
Objective

When I was little, my father always use to encourage me to read the newspaper for general knowledge of course “You should know what’s happening in the world” he would say every time. So, I would pick up the newspaper and the first thing I would do is search for comics and back then I didn’t even know I could draw, but still, I used to enjoy myself reading those comics.

Nowadays media and news has moved online and newspapers are dying off. Luckily for newspapers, they have comic strips to hold the public’s interest. Comic strips have been used in newspapers for decades to provide a creative way to acknowledge current events, voice opinions, and entertain readers while keeping them up to date with the news.

Comic strips make readers think about the opinions said and issues in our society. Since comic strips have always been such a huge part of the act of reading a newspaper, why not make my series for a newspaper.

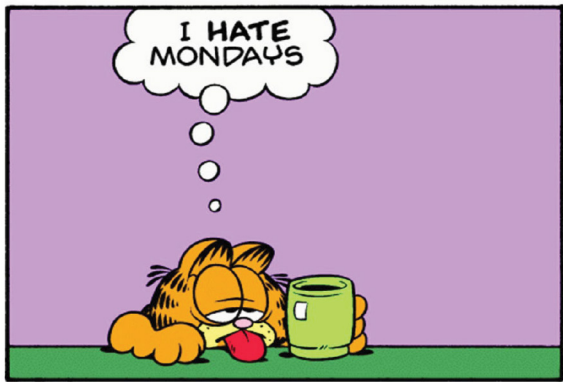
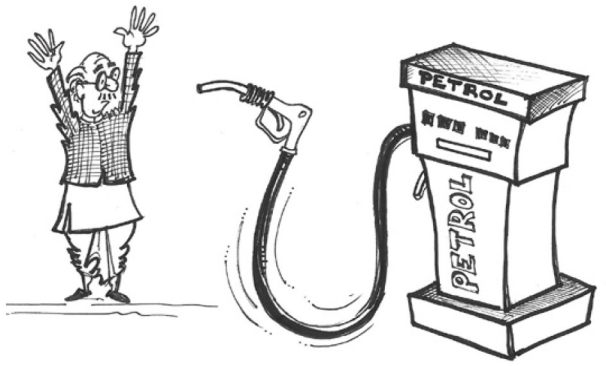
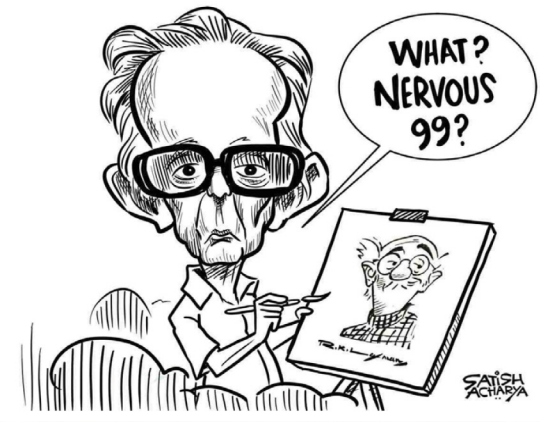
For instance, this comic strip addresses the issue of the size of comic strips in newspapers.



Sure the comic strip is dramatic, but it proves a point. Comic strips have been impactful in our culture especially when it's talking about politics. To this date every day, we see a small comic on a political issue in India.

Newspaper comic strips are an important source of daily entertainment for readers of the newspaper. The main ideas or events in comic strips often reflect those situations in real life with which the reader can relate

"No matter how bad the news, no matter how grim the headlines, you could always count on a smile from at least one corner of the daily newspaper: The comics."



Background Study

“Catering to the needs of majority of population is never a bad idea.”

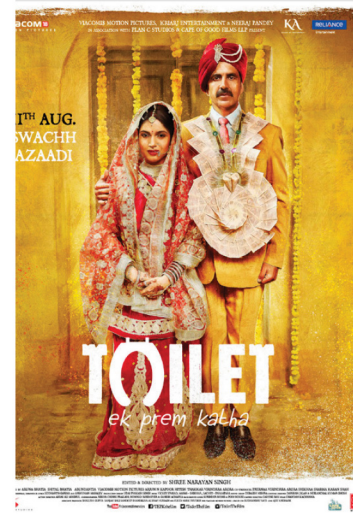
Do you know why no one likes Indian soap operas? I'm pretty sure your answer will be that “they don't connect to real life” and neither does most of the Indian cinema. But things are changing.

Gone are the days when success of a movie/soap used to rely on big stars, exotic locations and designer costumes. Now people in India no longer want to escape from the miseries of their lives.

Stories from narrow lanes and shabby houses of small towns connect them often more swiftly. Nothing is more exciting than finding characters on the screen speaking

the same dialect or having the same accent as ours. For decades, India's vast middle class population has been a key engine to drive the economy, contributing to the growth of several sectors.

Success of movies like Toilet: Ek prem katha, Bareilly ki Barfi, Shubh Mangal Saavdhan is making Indian middle class family a new trend. Films portraying larger than life characters and watching stories revolving around NRIs and businessmen was like unwinding ourselves



You can't have continental for a long time, at the end of the day you will be craving for ghar ka khana.

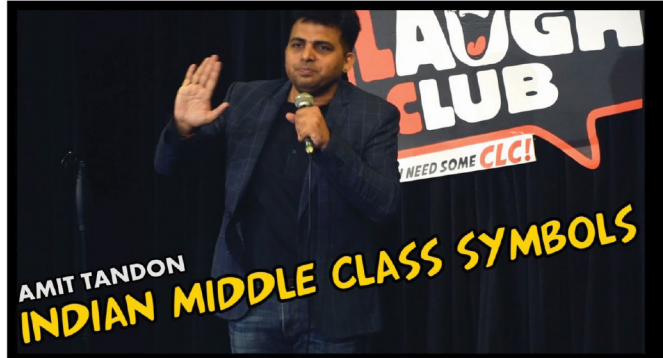
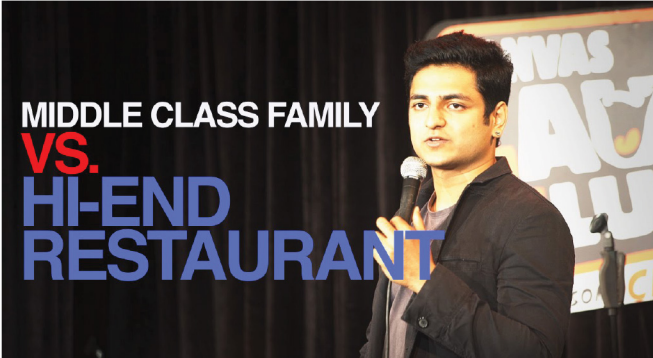
Socially - conscious films about middle-class India are rising popularity among Indian Audience. A large section of India's movie-going population is middle-class, so stories which depict life as a middle-class Indian are relatable and people have started appreciating more such TV series and movies which can be connected.

This age of entertainment has young audience having exposure to world class subjects. It is not surprising to know why they have discarded Indian soap operas. Today web series representing more to a slice of life in their stories.



Even many stand-up comedians take this topic a lot these days as this topic is realtable and they feel connected to most of the audience.

Growing up in an Indian household is eventful. The Indian middle class is unapologetically thrifty and is capable of some serious jugaad and we are proud of it. From stuffing your bag with all those tiny shampoo bottles and shower caps to filling your plate with sandwiches, idlis, croissants, and parathas at the free breakfast buffet, we have all been there!



Inspiration

So many Indian artists have their way of expressing Indian culture and its quirks. Some of the artists are not only expressing their feelings but also trying to break certain stereotypes.

Sailesh Gopalan, a 21-year-old design student from Mumbai have made a comic series named Brown Paperbag about what it's like growing up in an Indian family.

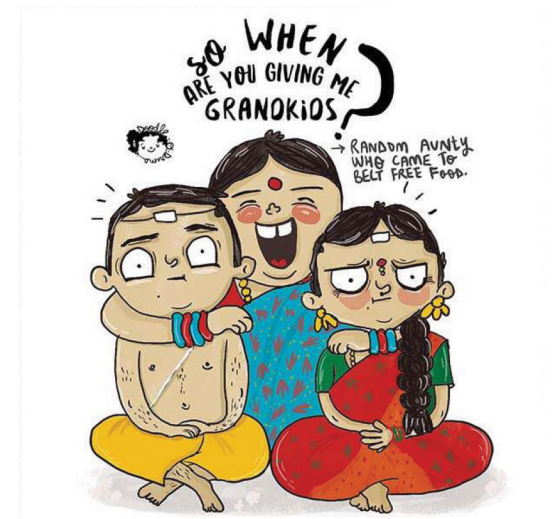
Monika Tata is doodling the drama of daily life. She is talking about body shaming, feminism and colour politics. Similarly there are so many other artist who are taking insipartion from Indian context.



By Sailesh Gopalan



By Monika Tata (DoodleDrama)



Old newspapers double up as covers for books



By: Vishnu NS

There's ALWAYS more toothpaste left in the tube



www.scrollroll.com

Neatly tearing a gift wrap to save it for later



www.scrollroll.com

Vishnu NS made a series on "14 Things That Happen Only In Indian Middle Class Homes". He said in one of his interviews "Growing up in a middle class home in India is an "interesting" experience. There are many things that middle class folks do which are pretty unique and frankly speaking, defy all logic to an outsider".



By - Sumouli Dutta



By: Alicia Souza

Similarly, Alicia Souza is making comics on her day-to-day things, mostly her relation with family and friends. Suresh Eriyat a well-known animator of India, he makes quite interesting hand-drawn sketches of his life including his wife and other scenarios.



By - Suresh Eriyat

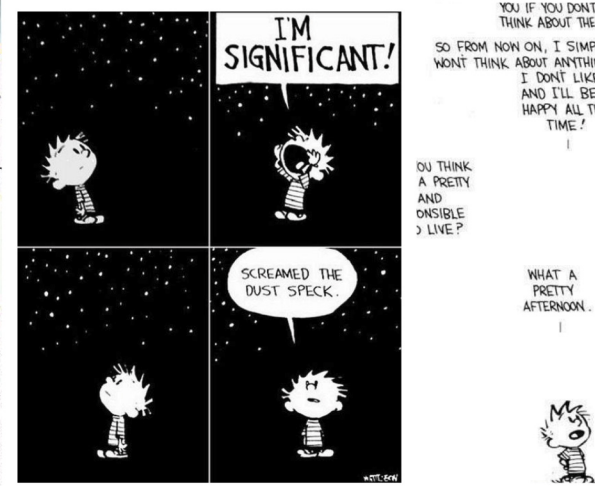
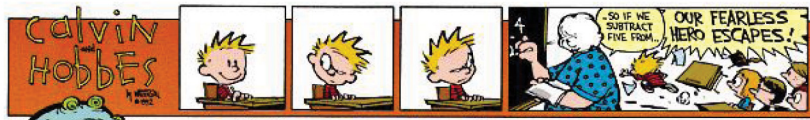
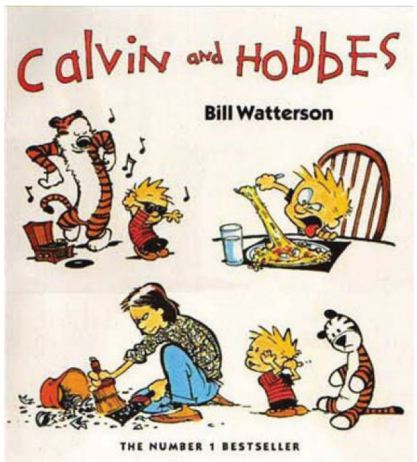
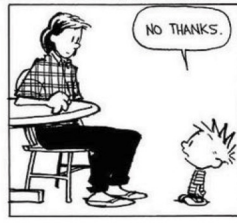
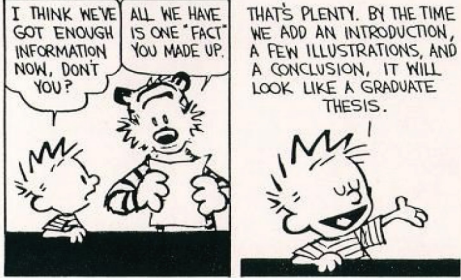


My biggest inspiration when it comes to making use of space and adding humor to every comic is Calvin and Hobbes series.

Calvin and Hobbes is a daily American comic strip created by cartoonist Bill Watterson.

Till this date Calvin and Hobbes comic strip is very popular because of its theme, humor, illustrations and much more. Watterson stopped drawing Calvin and Hobbes at the end of 1995.

In the comic series Calvin is highly intelligent, though without any selfdiscipline or concentration, a six year old boy with a vivid imagination and a habit of getting into trouble and adventure. The comic centers around Calvin's life, his troubles, and his adventures, with Hobbes alongside him as his companion.



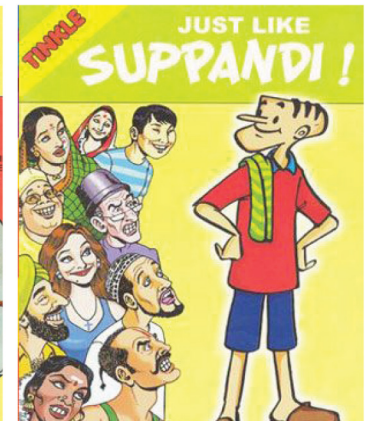
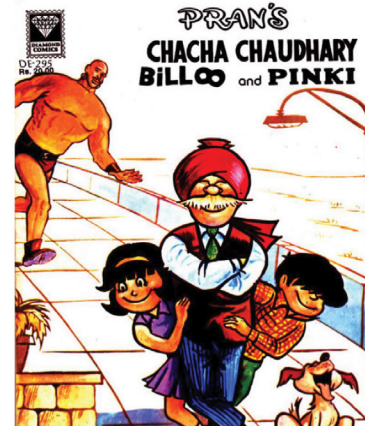
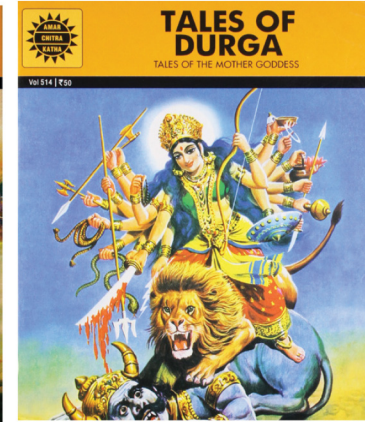
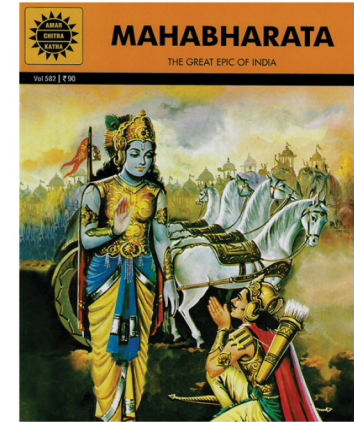
Content

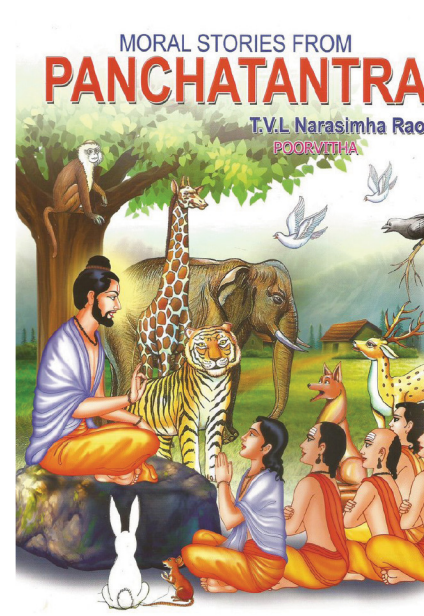
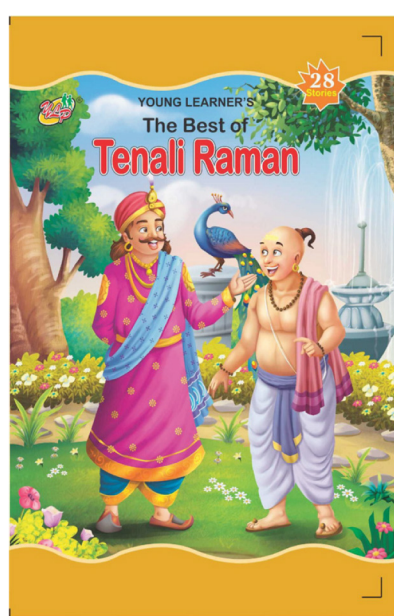
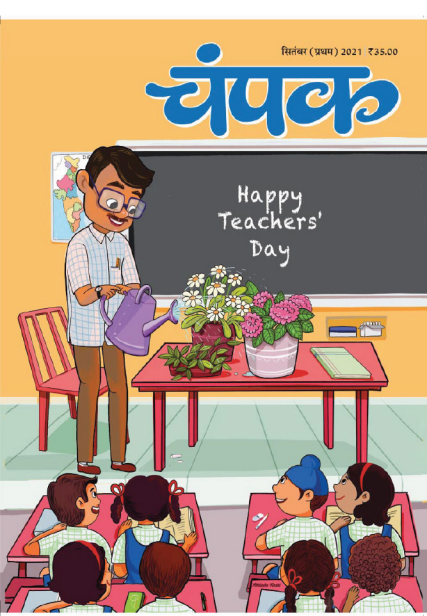
India is a store house of stories; we grew up reading and listening to some truly beautiful and amazing stories. The western world of mythology simply cannot compete with what we have in terms of themes and style.

While most of us grew up with the likes of Archie and Jughead Jones, Tin Tin, Asterix and Obelix, the Indian comics also had its share of readership as they humorously portrayed the general issues of the middle class in India.

One of India's best-selling comic book series, Amar Chitra Katha was started by Anant Pai in 1967. The comics were based on Indian history and mythology, giving young readers a delightful read of India's past.

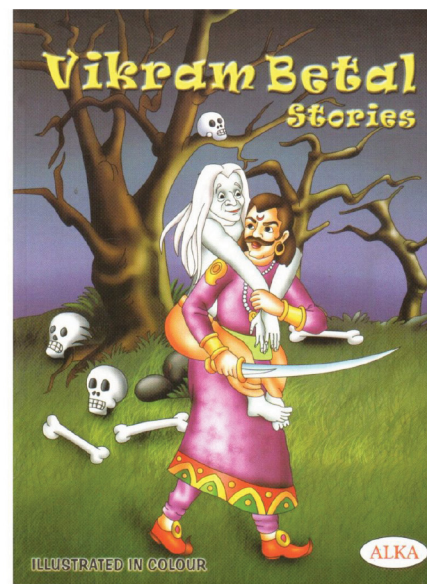
Pran Kumar Sharma, popularly known as Pran, created Chacha Chaudhary in 1971. The basis of this character was drawn from Indian family tradition. Every family had a wise elderly person who would resolve every issue of the household and community at large with his own punch of humor.





Champak was different from the mainstream comics as it had puzzles, jokes, brain teasers and other activities in addition to the usual stories.

A ghost resting on the back of a King narrating amusing stories made Vikram Betal a real page-turner. With a refreshing plot and characters, it garnered the praise from hundreds of loyal readers.



Raj Comics was the Badass of Indian comics. The characters were dark, diabolical, and dangerous. There was action, blood, gore, and dark storylines. The language they used was violent, the action real, and the illustrations – top class.

Themes

When it comes to themes, the most important question is what type of content should I use in my comics? Comics have been written in a variety of styles and genres, to suit every taste. Some of the many genres to be found in today's comics are:

- Superhero
- Manga
- Slice of life
- Humor
- Non-fiction
- Fantasy
- Horror

It can be:

- Facts and Myths (Akbar Birbal, Panchatantra)
- Purely entertainment (Champak)
- Hidden message (Tenali Raman)
- History/ Informative (Amar chitra katha)
- Supernatural (Nagraj)
- And so on...

My main comic content will revolve around relatable scenarios and Slice of life with humor. As my concept of the comic will revolve around middle class family Rather than showing different scenarios through different characters, it will be better to keep the characters of the comic constant throughout the strips as we have seen in most of the comics.



After a brief study about the content of the comic, I came to the final four themes.

- Common Scenarios
- Superstitions
- Myths vs Facts
- Hypothetical

Each will involve different situations.

As I want to keep my characters same throughout the series, I will be making a typical Indian family in my comic series. All the situations and scenarios I will show with them. It will help me connect better with my audience.

Common
Scenarios

Superstitions

Myths vs facts

Hypothetical

Common Scenarios

- MOM And her OCD For Cleaning
- Godrej ki Almira h
- Sunday is Bank day
- Never order Salads
- Homeopathy
- Tupperware
- And so on....

Hypothetical

Common Scenarios:-

There are some typical desi middle class things that we often do, for example, Every mom in the house has obsession with cleaning and it's a universal medical condition that typically found in Indian moms. From never ordering salads to always trusting Homeopathy medicines, Every day is an adventure in a common middle-class family.

Superstitions:-

Common examples of superstitious beliefs in India include: a black cat crossing the road symbolizes bad luck. All of us have been brought up with a set of weird superstitions and most of them simply defy logic. From flipping upturned chappals to not cutting nails at night to avoiding non-veg on Tuesdays and Thursdays to hanging nimbu-mirchi in front of our vehicles for safety, we desis have been following age-old practices because our nanis-dadis told us to do so without offering any logical explanation.

Common
Scenarios

Superstitions

- Touchwood
- Right hand itching
- Black cat crossing
- Nazar
- And so on, ...

Myth vs Facts:-

Most of Indian myths are simply senseless and originate out of people's blind beliefs but there are some that carry a scientific reason backing them up. For example there's a saying not to go near Peepal tree at night as peepal trees are said to have scary ghosts residing in them at night. The logical reason behind this lies in Class 3 biology book. Although Peepal is known to produce oxygen at night as well, it is nothing compared to the amount of carbon dioxide it releases after sunset. If a person sleeps under a massive peepal tree at night the CO₂ inhaled by him will cause him to feel suffocated, thereby giving the illusion of being "possessed by a ghost".

Common
Scenarios

- Peepal Tree at Night
- Nimbu and Mirchi
- Don't sweep in evening
- Don't say milk before traveling

Myths vs facts

→ And so on...

Hypothetical

Hypothetical:-

The whole concept of this theme will revolve around any hypothetical situation like what if parents had super powers what would that be and how they are gonna use it.

What if furniture starts talking suddenly in your house. What would they say and how they gonna react to crazy Indian family.

Calvin and Hobbes comics had the whole interplay between the two title characters, but only Calvin can see Hobbes that he's alive and thats what gave the strip its unique personality that remained mostly untouched during its decade-long run.

Common Scenarios

Superstitions

- If parents had superpowers
- Invisible pet
- Talking furniture
- Ghost in house
- And so on....

Hypothetical

Initial Ideation

1. For the initial ideation, I started writing every scenario that came to my mind that will fit in certain themes (Common scenario, Hypothetical, Superstitions, and MythsFacts).
2. Then I choose just one simple scenario of "How a person eats Parle-G" from the theme of the common scenario and started making a rough sample without finalizing any final character.
3. I wanted to exaggerate every move of the character to give the essence of how bad it feels when our beloved Parle-G sadly drowns in a hot glass of milk/tea.

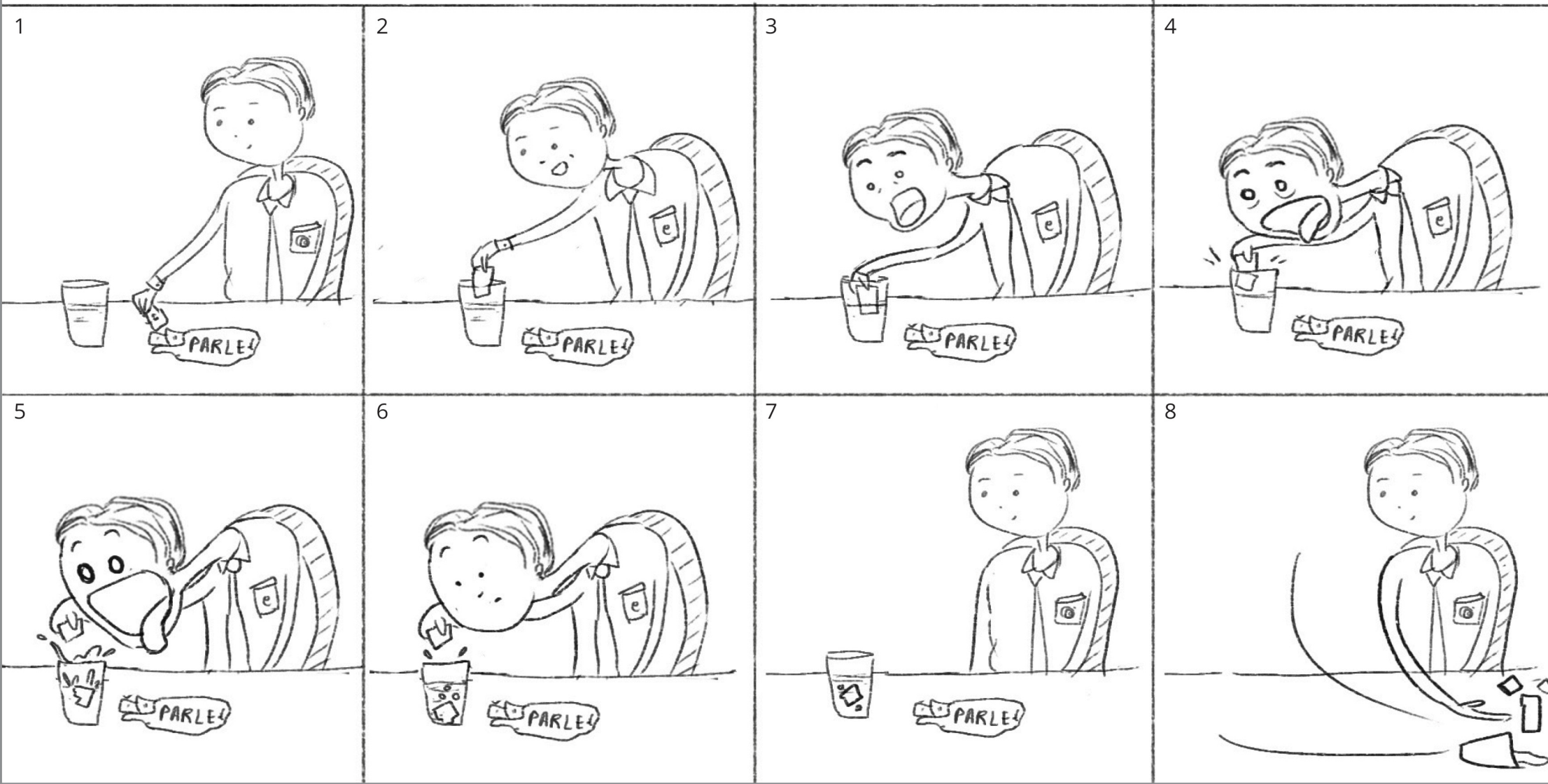


Rough story board



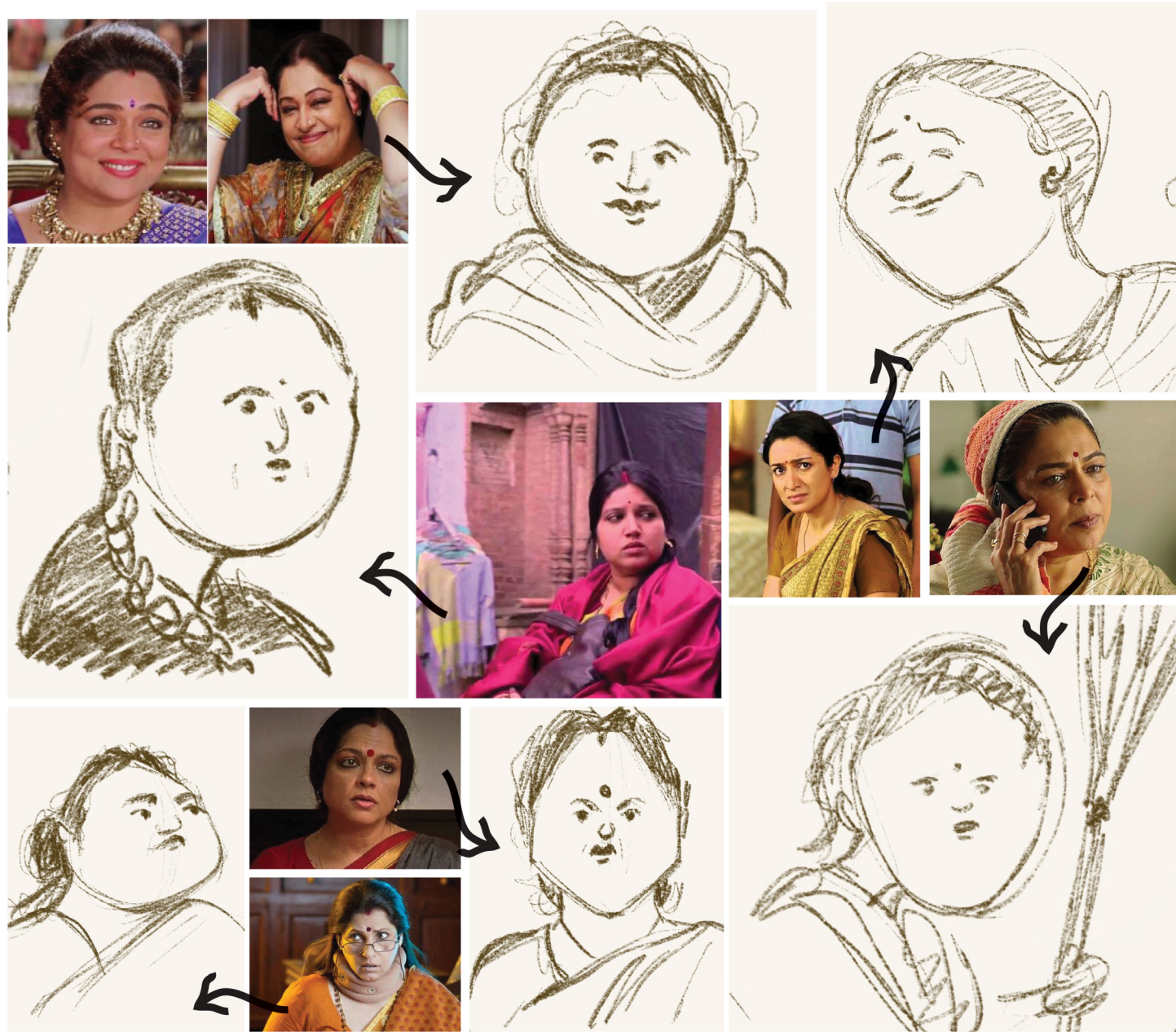
Expression exploration

HOW TO EAT PARLE-G :-



Character's Exploration

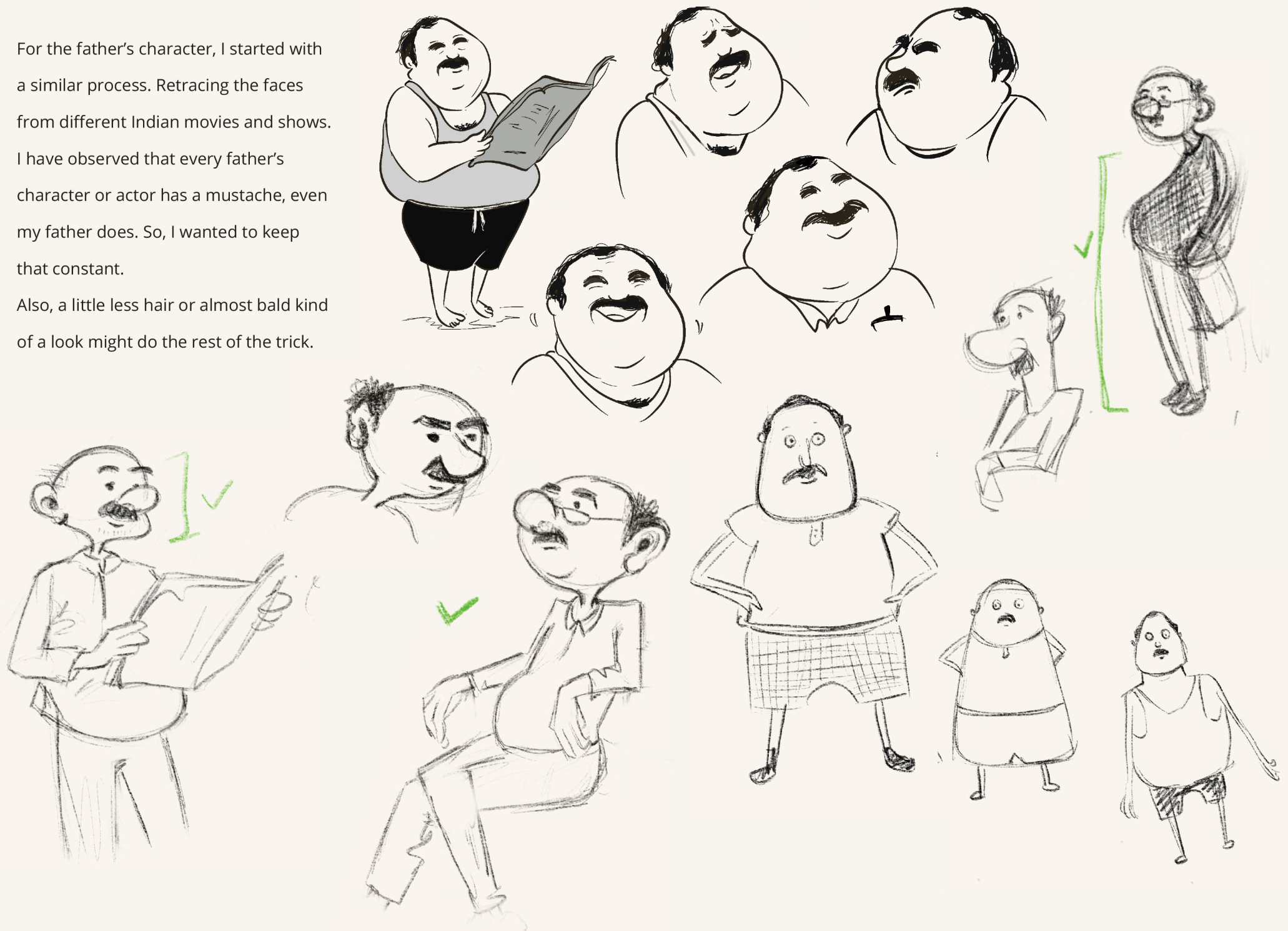
When I started with mother's character, I wanted to come up with typical Indian mother's face. So, I started remaking faces from different movies and shows. Also taking my mom as a one of the reference.

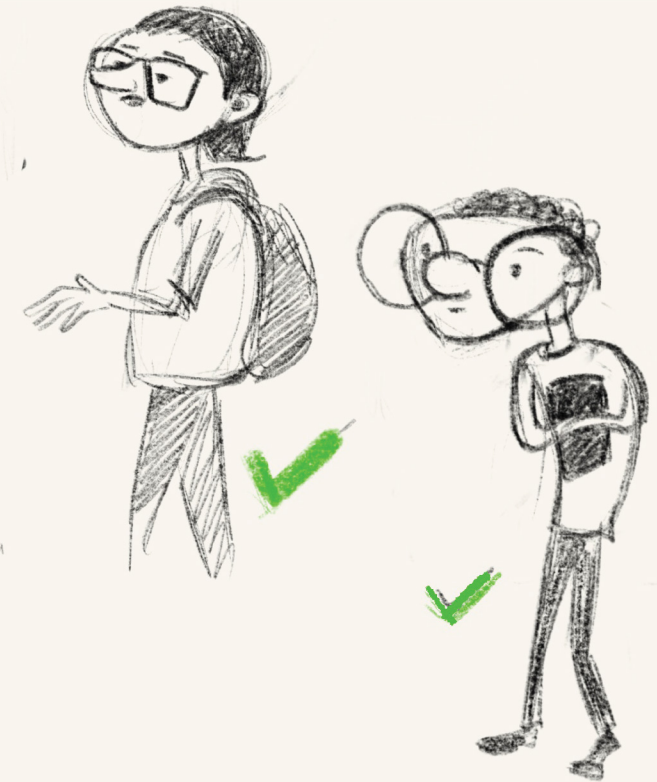




I wanted keep some things constant like glasses and uncombed hair but I did try some other variations too.

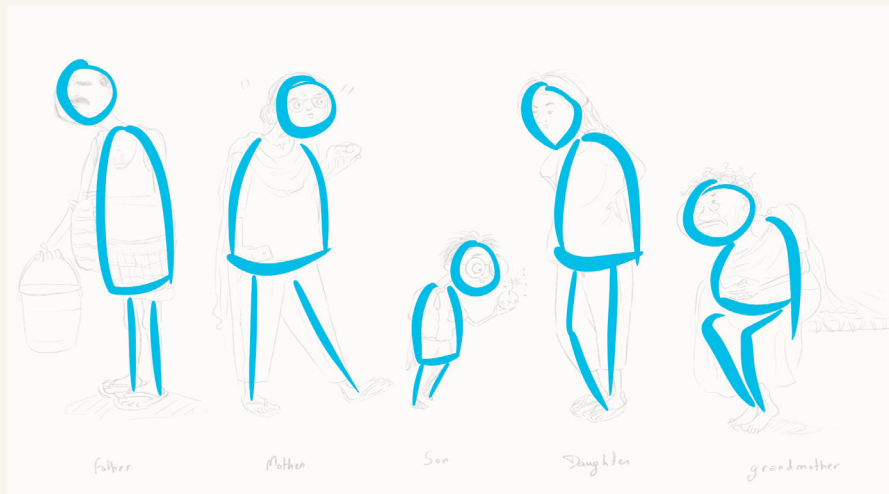
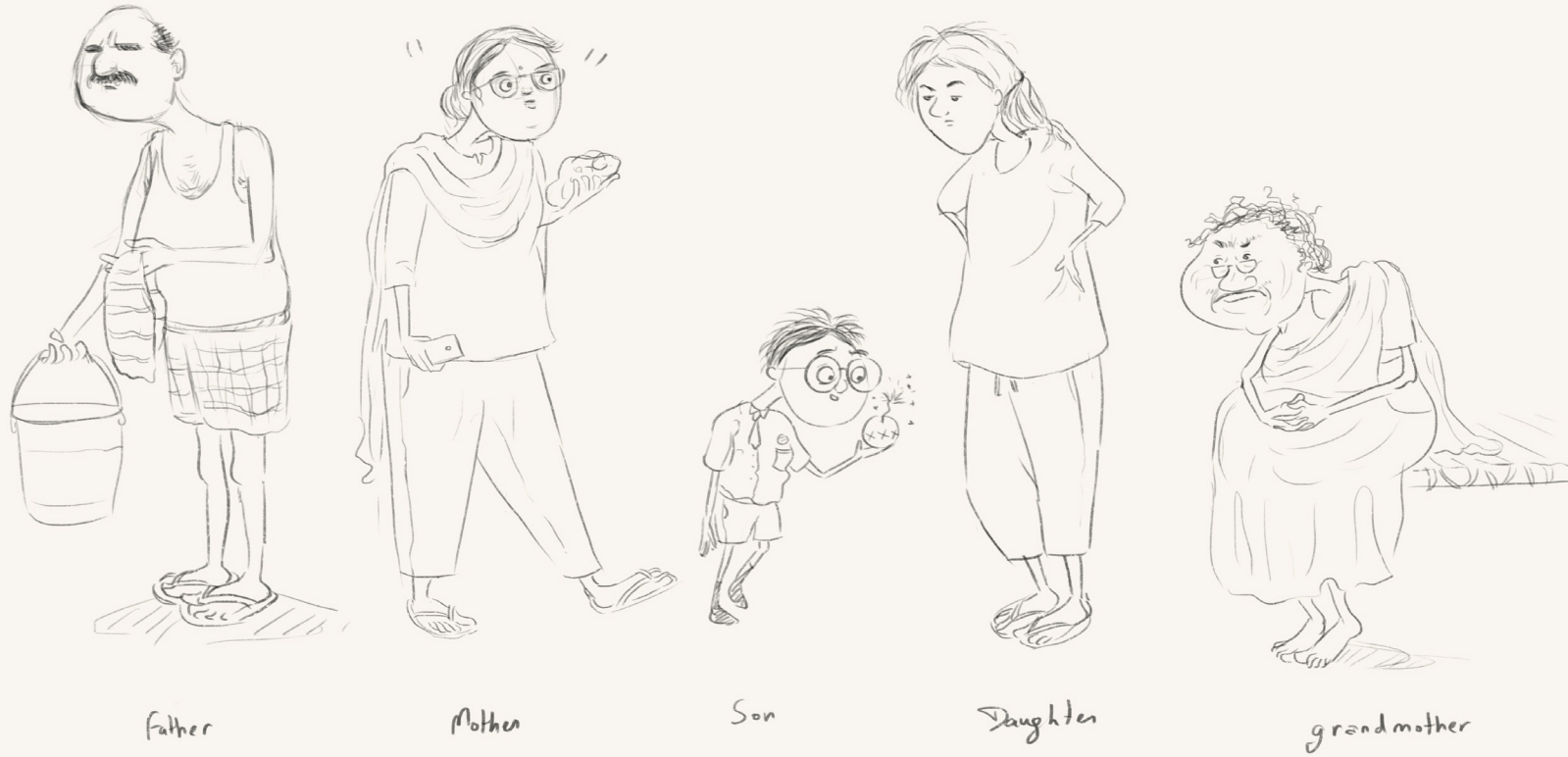
For the father's character, I started with a similar process. Retracing the faces from different Indian movies and shows. I have observed that every father's character or actor has a mustache, even my father does. So, I wanted to keep that constant. Also, a little less hair or almost bald kind of a look might do the rest of the trick.



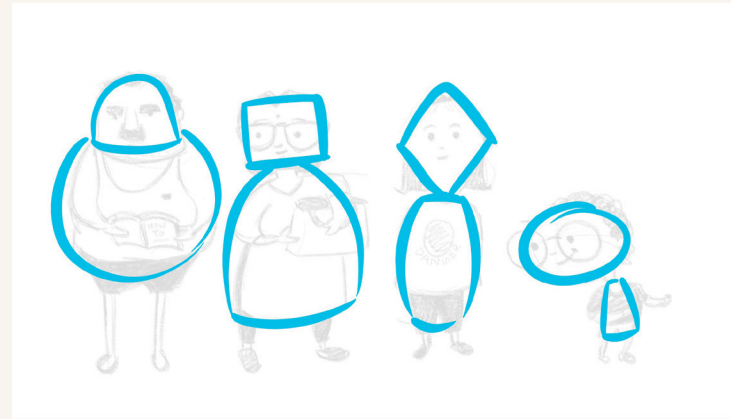
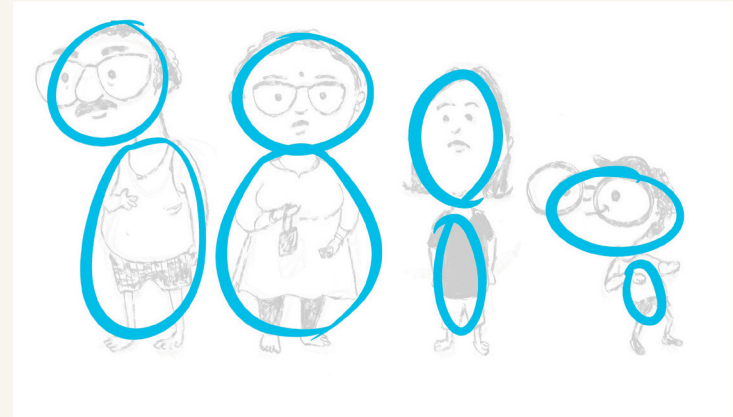
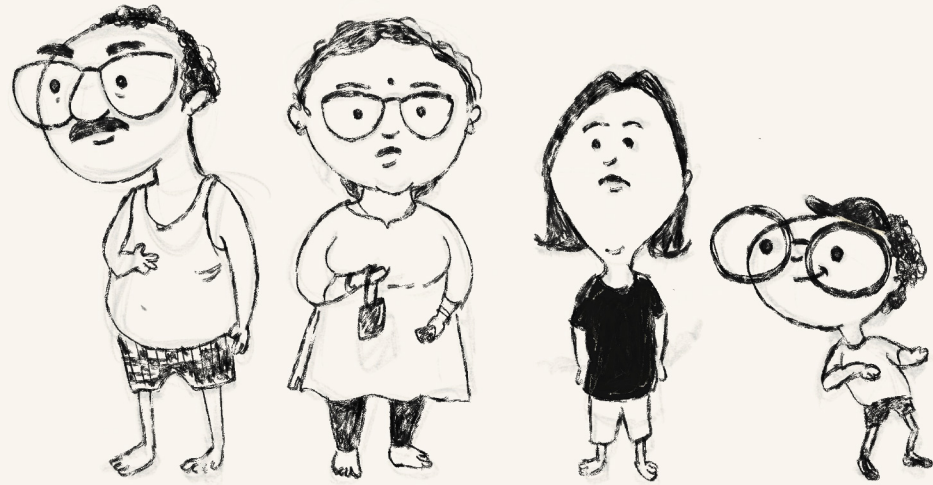


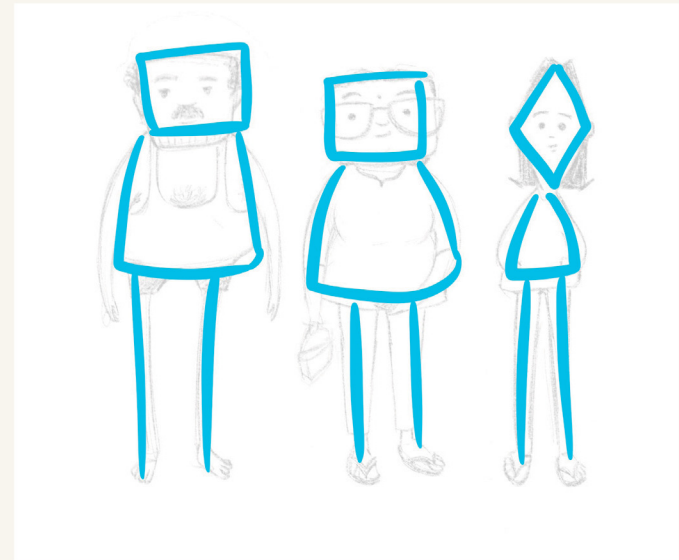
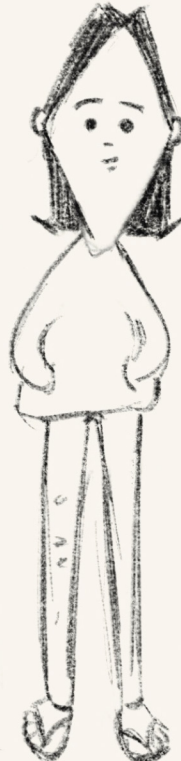
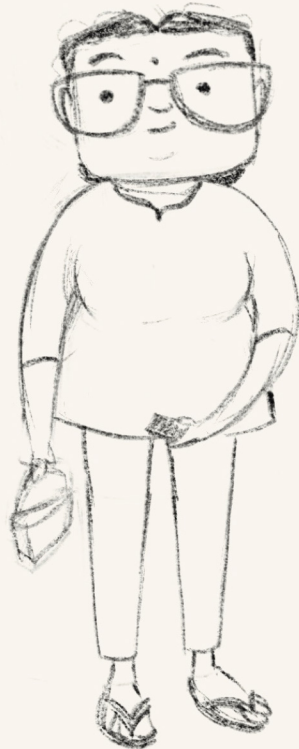
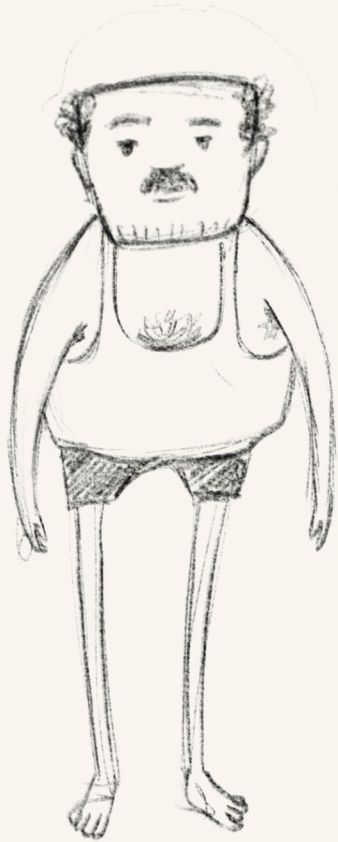
My comic family would have one elder kid around 15 years old and a younger one around 7 years old.

I wanted to include at least one grandparent. I think it's very important to make it more relatable. Every typical Indian family is incomplete without grandparents and their constant comments on everyday life.



I tried to use basic shapes for my characters. I did a lot of experiments by changing different shapes and sizes of the head and body. I wanted to be sure as these characters would repeat throughout the series. The characters should be simple and impactful.





Introduction to Final Characters

This is an introduction pannel. After many trials and errors, I came up with these final characters.



Personalities



Name - SHANTI DEVI
Age - 45 years old

Her Personality:

- Talkative
- Super Caring
- OCD for cleaning
- 24/7 Work
- Super Extrovert
- Very Sensitive
- Kind hearted

Name - Mr AANAND
Age - 50 years old

His Personality:

- Strict but not everytime
- Had a Rough Past
- Hardwork and honest
- Loves to buy Vegetables
- Bad in expressing his feelings
- Saves money
- Need no technology

Name - CHANCHAL KUMARI
Age - Unknown

Her Personality:

- Keen Observer
- Often talks to herself
- Interfering nature
- Tells stories
- Apply funny logics
- Doesn't like "Shanti Devi"
- Always angry
- Over Strict



Name - DIBBI (PRIYA)
Age - 15 years old

Her Personality:

- Zero patience
- Can be annoyed easily .
- Intelligent
- Play sports
- Scared to talk to boys
- Protective nature
- Sensitive and caring



Name - TOTU (RAVI)
Age - 7 years old

His Personality:

- Annoying
- Mischievous
- Hates school
- Scared of Spiders
- Wants a pet
- Loves to eat sweets
- Good heart

Some comics in progress

I took "How Indian moms make noodles" as my first comic. Taking my mother as inspiration, she has her way to make anything Indian, whether it's a Chinese recipe or Italian. She never reads the actual recipe, she just follows her own "Hing ka Tadka" every time, and voila! Food is ready.



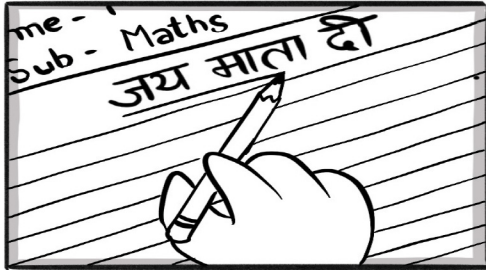
DESI CHOWMIN



This one is about our school days, especially when there's an exam. As I was quite bad in my studies, I remember writing "Jai Mata Di" on every answer sheet thinking god will help me to go through this horror. Funny as it sounds, it did happen gladly I passed all the time.



EXAM DAYS



I never really understood my mom's obsession with any Tupperware product. I lost once the Tupperware bottle and believe me that was the worse day of my life to this date.



EVERYBODY PANIC!

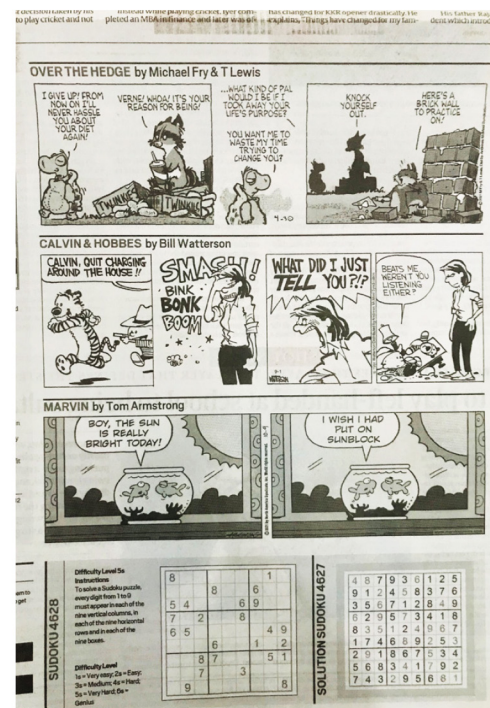


HOW COULD YOU

Newspaper - Comic sizes

Comic strip formats vary widely from publication to publication, so that the same newspaper comic strip may appear in a half-dozen different formats with different numbers of panels, different sizes of panels and different arrangement of panels.

Layout varies depending on whether you're doing a daily comic strip layout or a Sunday comic strip layout. Each format has certain size restrictions and limitations.



Daily Comics

- A daily comic strip layout is **limited** in space.
- The most common strip size that cartoonists use to draw is a horizontal strip that's about **4 x 13 inches**.
- A daily strip is usually carried on a standard newspaper page, often **alongside other strips** and non-comics matter (such as crossword puzzles).
- It is usually printed as either a **horizontal strip** (longer than it is tall) or a box (roughly square) in **black and white**, although in recent years syndicates have offered daily strips in color, and newspapers with the ability to print it as such have done so.

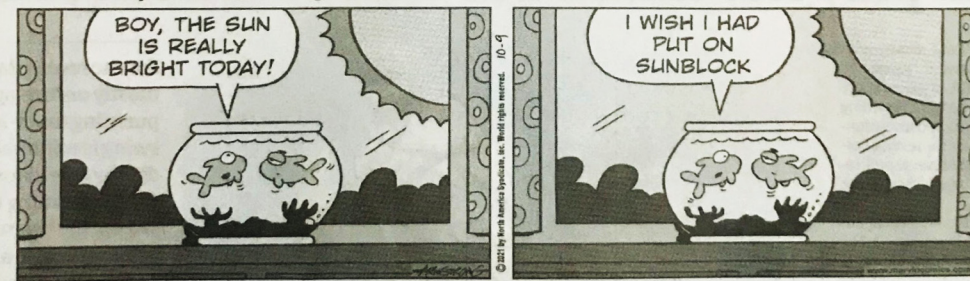
OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4628

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

8								1
		8			6			
5	4			6	9			
7	2		8					
6	5					4	9	
		6		1	2			
		8	7			5	1	
		7		3				
	9							8

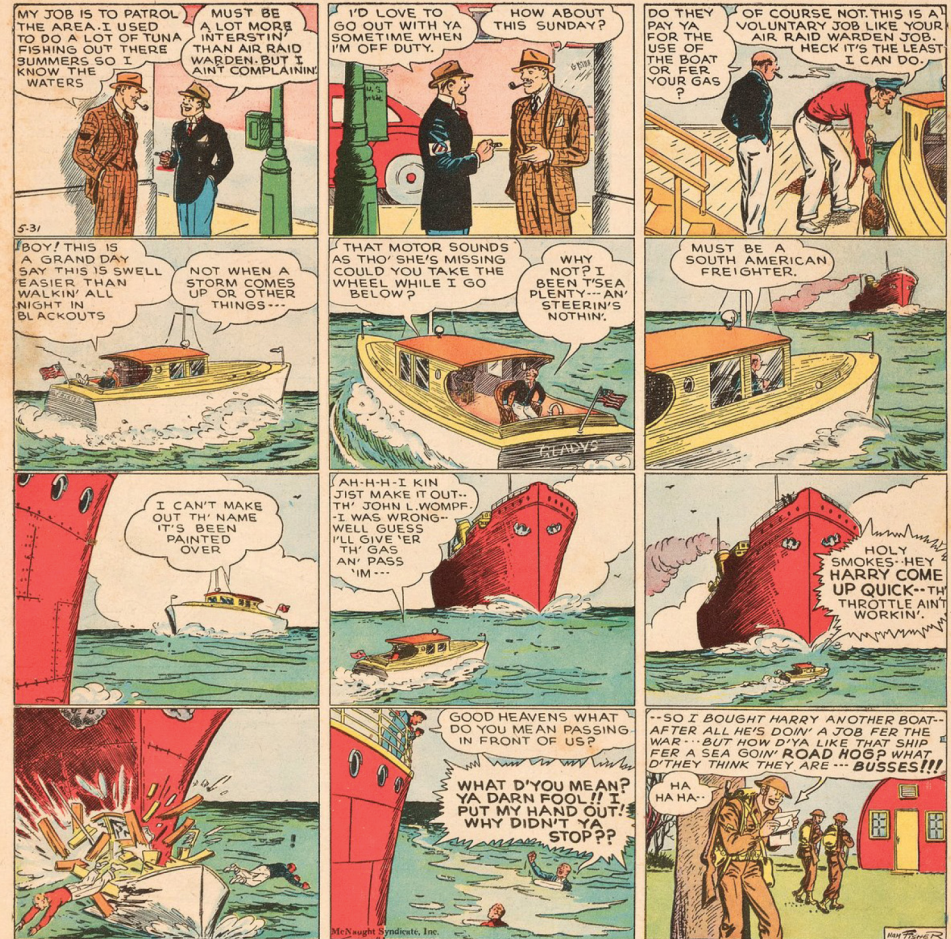
SOLUTION SUDOKU 4627

4	8	7	9	3	6	1	2	5
9	1	2	4	5	8	3	7	6
3	5	6	7	1	2	8	4	9
6	2	9	5	7	3	4	1	8
8	3	5	1	2	4	9	6	7
1	7	4	6	8	9	2	5	3
2	9	1	8	6	7	5	3	4
5	6	8	3	4	1	7	9	2
7	4	3	2	9	5	6	8	1

Weekend Comics

- Sunday comic strip layout sizes are **typically bigger** than the dailies.
- The Sunday features are also **horizontal** and reduced down to fit on a newspaper or magazine page, but they're not reduced as much as daily strips.
- They're usually drawn at around **20 x 14 inches** and then scaled down to fit the size that runs in the newspaper.
- There is a much **greater variety** in Sunday strip formats.
- Sunday strips are usually **in color**, published in a special newspaper section, the Sunday comics section.
- Comics sections usually come in **one of two sizes, full page or tabloid.**

JOE PALOOKA by HAM FISHER



Consistency

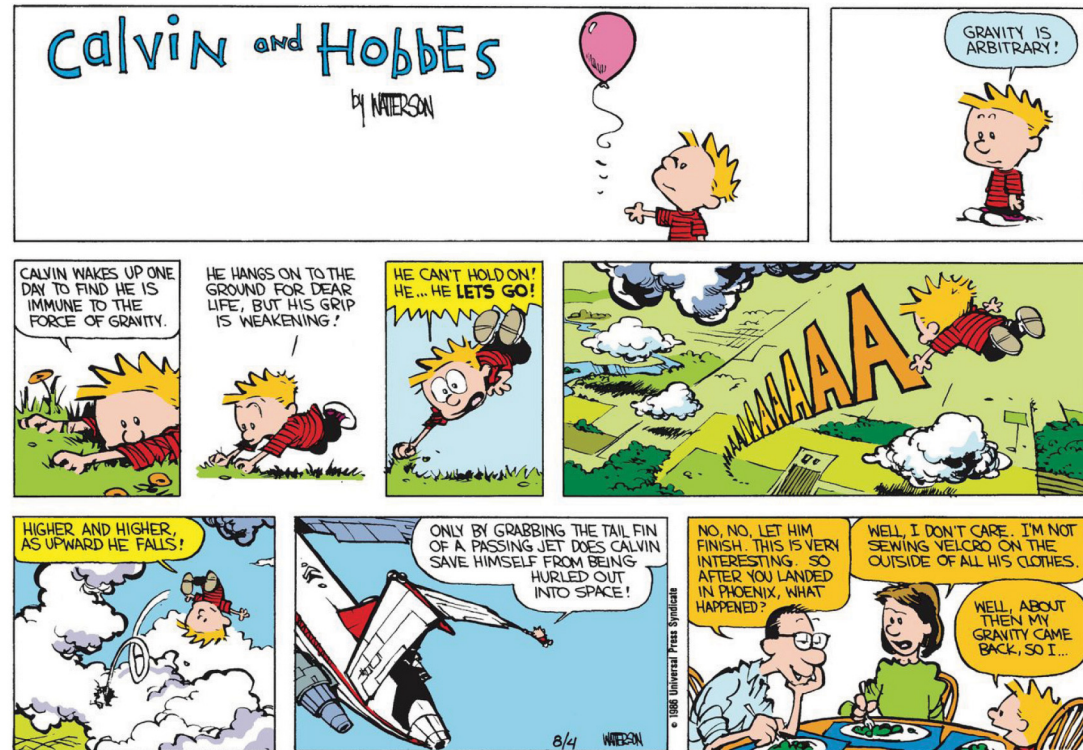
I have to keep some things constant as it will be easy for people to recognize them. If I keep on experimenting on every frame with different titles and styles, it will become impossible to make these comic strips connect to one another.

Things to keep constant:

- Size
- Title
- Font



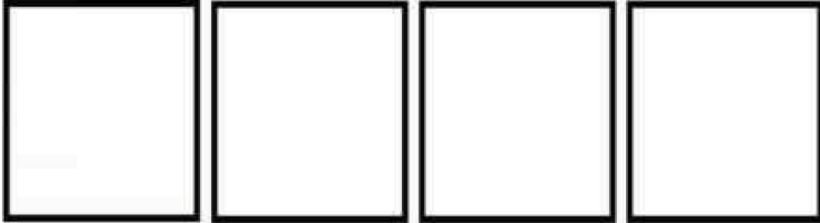
Daily Comic Strip



Weekend comic strip

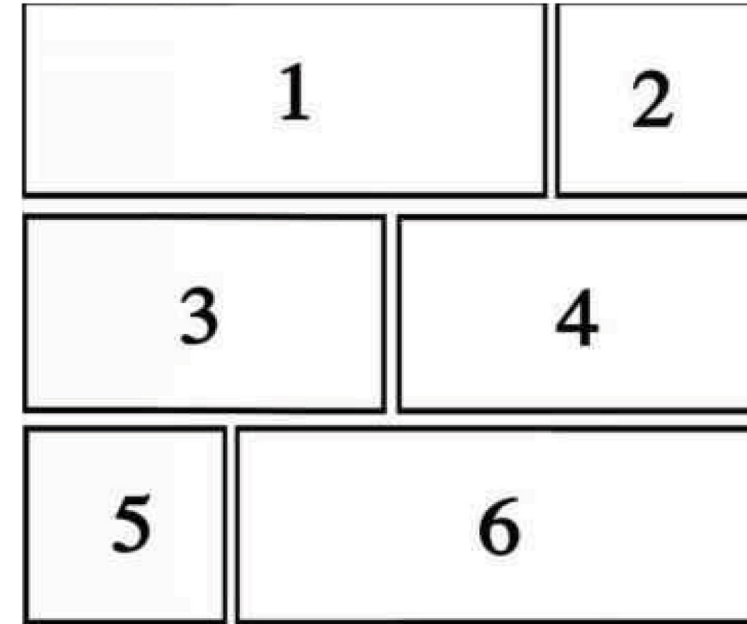
- **Size**

Daily comic strip layouts are usually horizontal so they can scale down to fit in a newspaper.



This will be the basic layout for the daily comics. The pannels will keep on changing from 2 pannel comic strip to maximum 6 pannels.

Sunday comic strip layouts are also horizontal but are larger than the dailies.



This will be the basic layout for the weekend comics. The pannels will keep on chaning from 6 pannel comic strip to more that 10, depending upon the story.



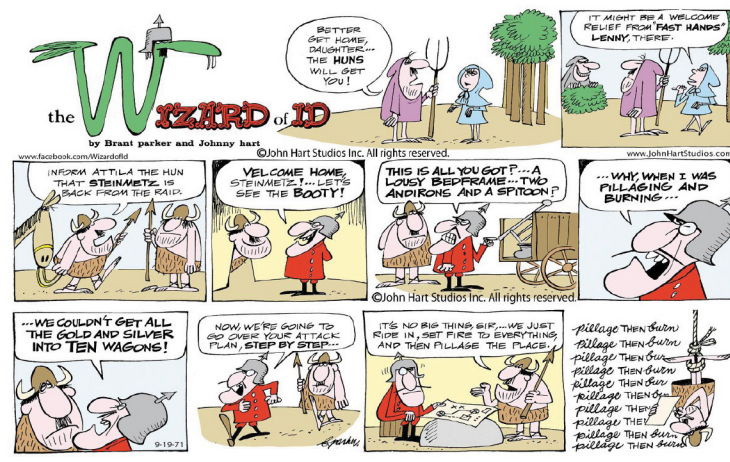
2 panel format



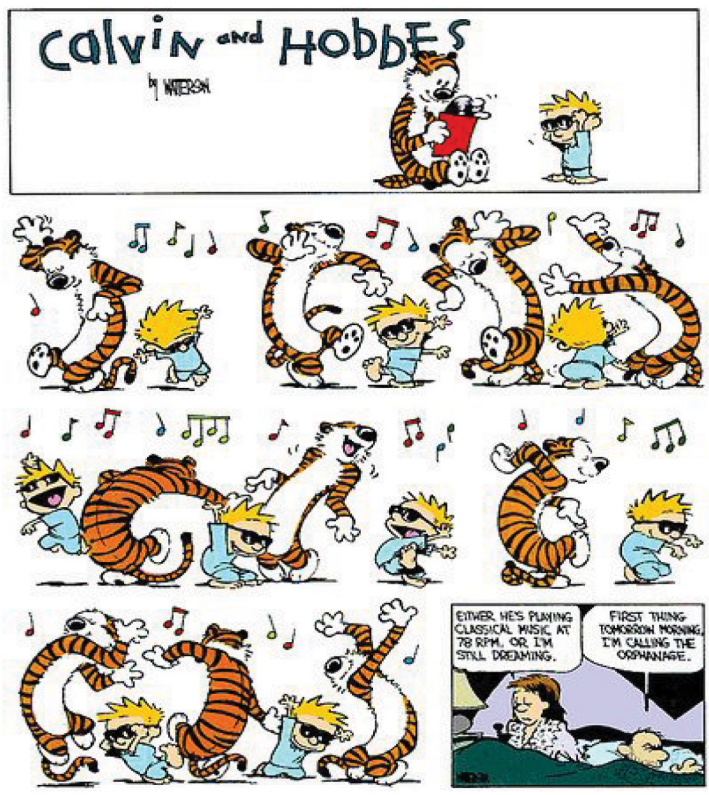
3 panel format



4 panel format



Half page format



Full page format

Research in Layouts for the Newspaper

When Sunday comic strips were first introduced, each strip filled an entire newspaper page. Then that was cut to a half-page. Then it was reduced further, but Sunday strips still kept the same half-page dimensions.

It was just up to the paper how MUCH of each strip should be printed and at what size. To help with this task, various “formats” were invented to allow comic strip panels to be jumbled into two-row, three-row and fourth-row reconfigurations. Certain panels were designated “non-essential” and had to be written under the assumption that they might not be used.

There were some cartoonists that did their best writing camouflage to attempt to disguise the

throwaway panels, but it was a wasted effort. Other cartoonists wouldn't even try, wasting the panels on obvious filler content and making the whole trick very obvious. However, the method by which this was done differed from comic to comic.

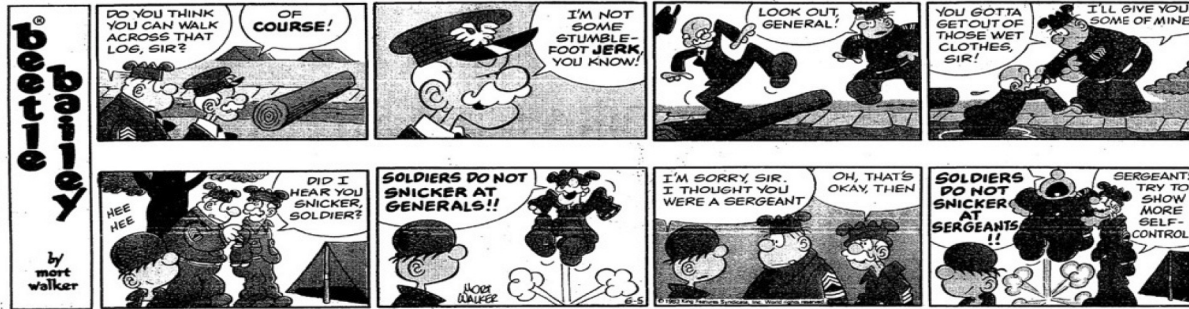
CALVIN FORMAT

Used by: Calvin and Hobbes (early years), For Better Or For Worse, BC, Cathy, FoxTrot (first decade), Luann (first decade).



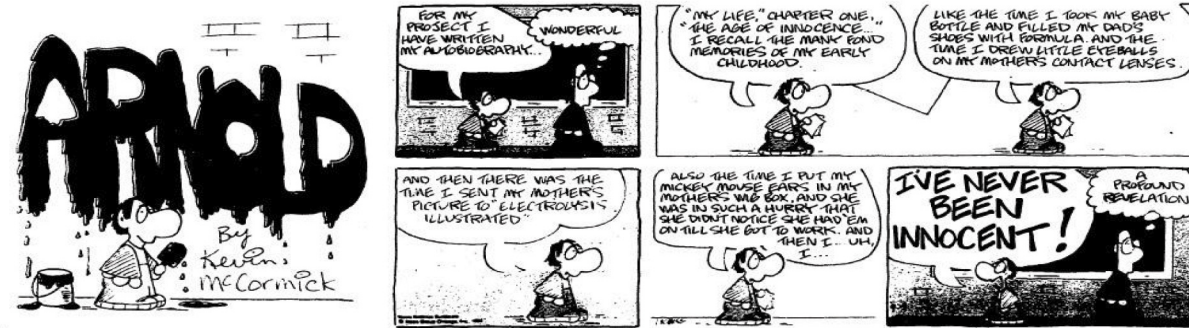
DOONESBURY FORMAT

Used by: Doonesbury, Hi & Lois, Beetle Bailey, Hagar The Horrible, Archie



ARNOLD FORMAT

Used by: Arnold, Outland, The Family Circus, Tiger, Mutts, The Boondocks, nearly every comic strip produced from 2000 onward



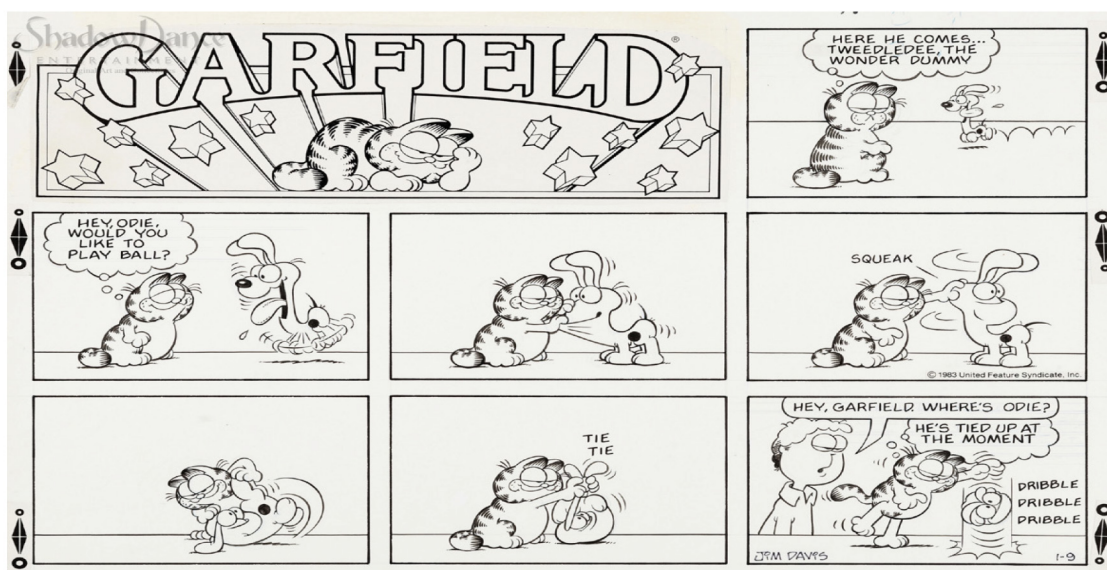
HALF-CALVIN FORMAT

Used by: Judge Parker, Rose Is Rose, the Scancarelli years of Gasoline Alley



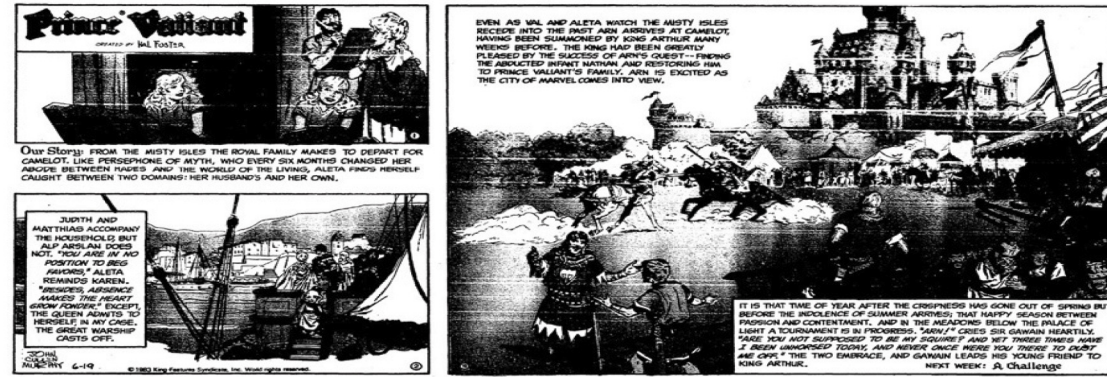
GARFIELD FORMAT

Used by: Garfield, Peanuts, Blondie, Amazing Spider-Man, Tank McNamara



PRINCE VALIANT FORMAT

Used by: Prince Valiant, Mark Trail, the Star Wars strip



FUNKY WINKERBEAN FORMAT

Used by: Funky Winkerbean



Title for the comic

After spending quite some time on this I came up with the title. I wanted to keep the name that will not only compliment the comics but also gives a quiet sense of what this comic is about. Giving the essence of the Indian spices and culture that we all inherit.

“Mango” was the first word that got finalized quite soon. As mango is a very popular fruit among us and it comes in so much variety, the kind of same way we differ from one another but stays bound by the same thread. Also, Mango in Hindi translates “AAM” which is “Common” in English. Common is something which my comic stands on. The life of common people.

Then to compliment the Mango, with added spices and some funny conflicts of Indian middle-class family what would be better than the word “Pickle”. “Pickle” is made with raw Mango with added spices and oil. This is a popular condiment in Indian cuisine.

So, “MANGO PICKLE” got finalized.

MANGO
by Divya Saur
PICKLE

Also, a logo would do the rest. As the name suggest, a typical Indian Handi (Pot) filled with mango pickle kept on a piece of cloth.

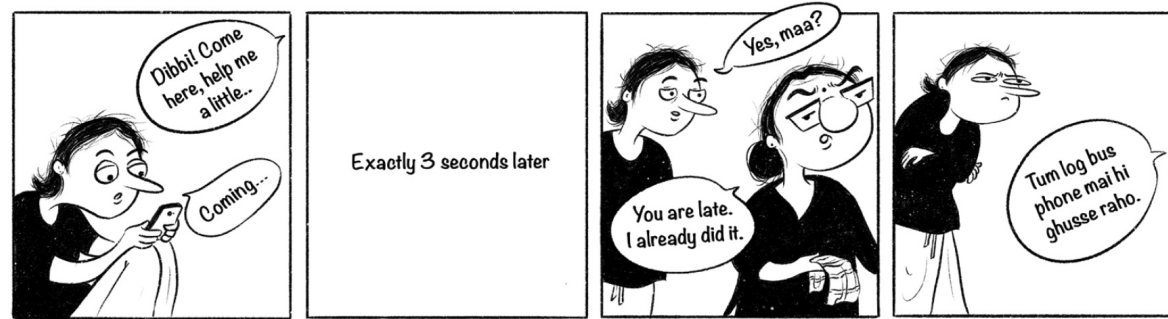


Font Experimentation

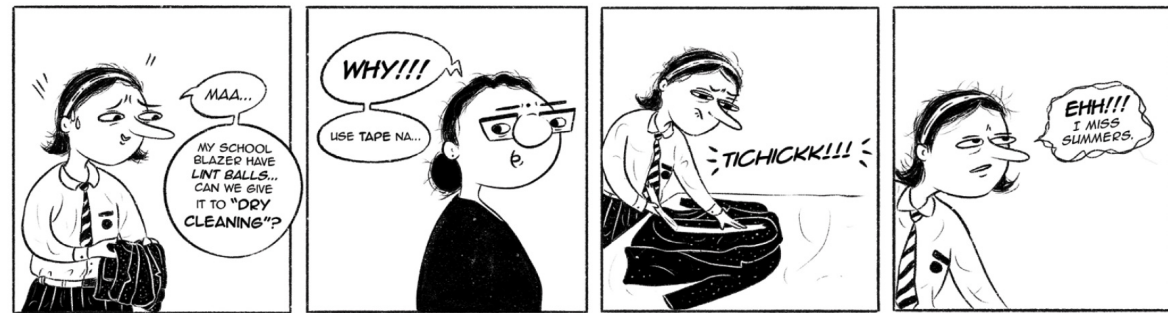
I tried writing it in the some of the comics but my writing kept on changing and as I have to keep the font constant throughout the strips, using some typeface would be better option for my comics.

Also, I did a lot of research on hand lettering but it turns out, it's not that simple. I might need a whole lot of time to learn on how to hand write my own comics.

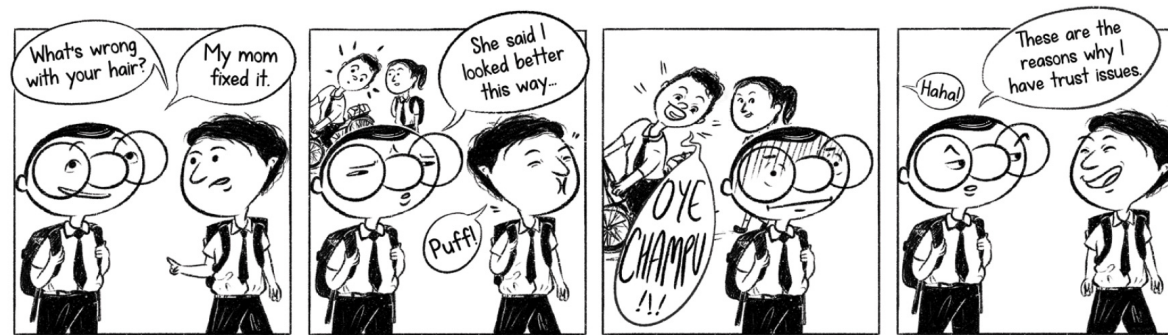
I experimented with some fonts like Noteworthy, Anime ace and KG. Noteworthy is a handwritten script typeface font. Initially I have used this font for few comics. Anime Ace 2.0 is freeware for independent comic book creation. KG is designed by Kimberly Geswein, KG is a hand drawn font family.



Font - Noteworthy



Font - Anime Ace



Font - KG

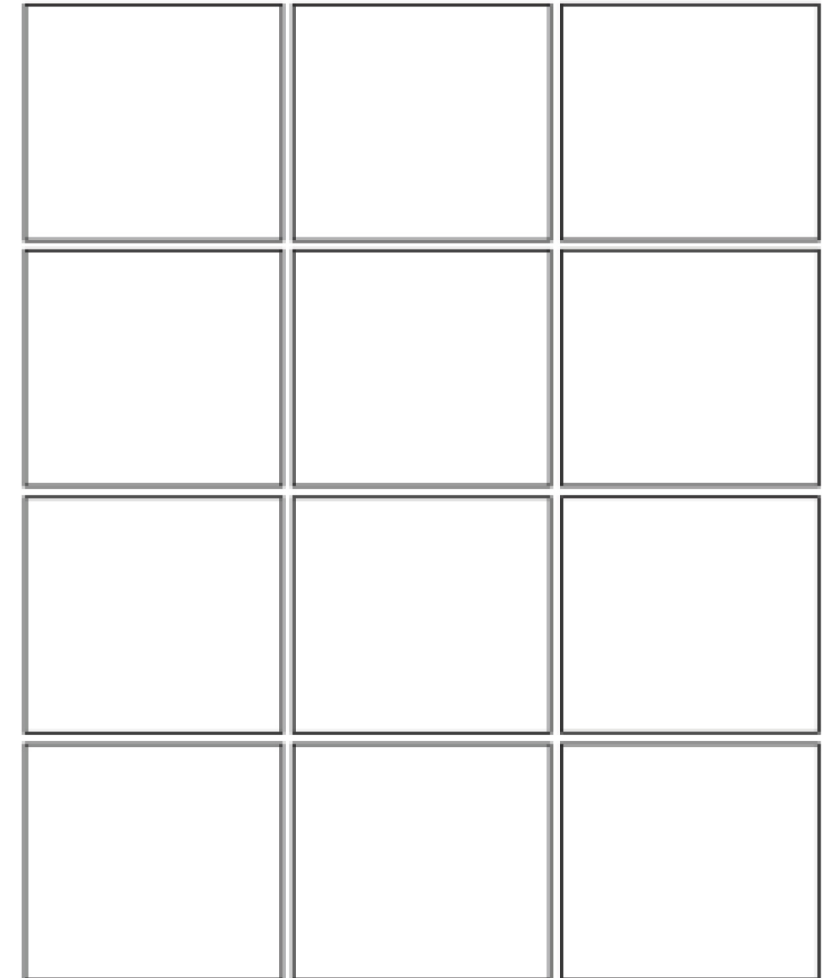
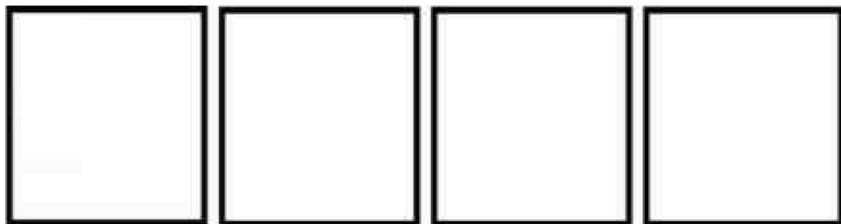
Final comics



Weekday Comic Strip
For daily pannel in newspaper
Size - 13in x 4in



Weekend Comic Strip
For half page in newspaper
Size - 13in x 8in



Weekend Comic Strip
For full page in newspaper
Size - 13in x 20in

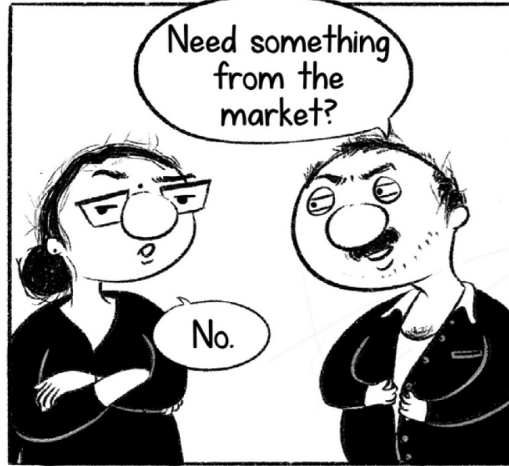
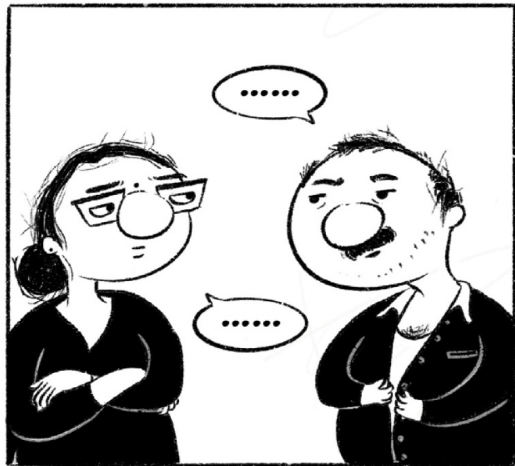


MANGO PICKLE by D-Gaur

Weekday Comic Strip
For daily pannel in newspaper
Size - 13in x 4in

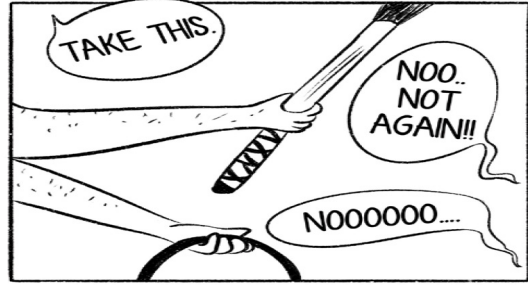
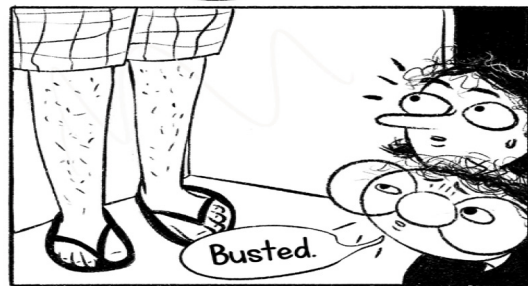
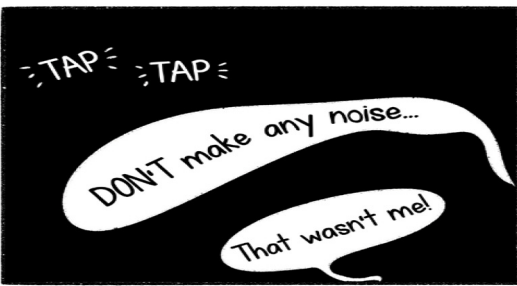
MANGO PICKLE

by Divya Saur



Weekend Comic Strip
For half page in newspaper
Size - 13in x 8in

MANGO PICKLE by Dinya Saur



Weekend Comic Strip
For full page in newspaper
Size - 13in x 20in

FOR MORE COMICS PLEASE
REFER TO THE FINAL
SUBMITTED PDF BOOK.

Learnings

When I started the project, I didn't know I would have to go through so many things. "Making comics is fun" I always thought. But as I went deep in making comics, it's lot harder than I expected.

Thanks to the amazing books out there, I got a lot of clarity - "Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art" by Scott McCloud, "Comics & Sequential Art" by Will Eisner, Humorous Illustration by Nick Meglin and so many more. I took reference to many graphic novels and comics. I refered to many comics that were published in the newspaper and to this date, most of them still continue to amuse the audience.

I realised that making comics is quite a complex task. The struggle of thinking about

the story and humor, that too for such fewer frames, the pressure of getting your audience to relate to it, was quite hard.

But in the end I learned a lot, did various experiments and also had lot of fun making this comic.

Future Scope

I will continue working on “Mango Pickle”, that’s for sure. I believe this topic has a lot of potential. I can introduce more characters like maids, friends, neighbors, relatives, and so on.

Currently, almost the whole comic revolves around common scenarios. I will try to work on more stories that will happen in different locations for example - What happens when a family takes a trip somewhere or goes shopping in a mall.

There are tons of things that I can add in the next comics. I can experiment more with colors, background, speech bubbles, etc. I will continue my study of designing comics by reading various books and by taking references of successful comic artists.

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Thank you!