



## WEBCOMICS IN INDIA: FORM AND FUNCTION

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### ABSTRACT

*Underground Comix, otherwise seen as anti-mainstream comics, was a rage during the 1960s and 70s in the United States and the United Kingdom. What started off as pornographic comics (Tijuana Bibles) made by anonymous artists in the late 1920s and 1940s featuring characters from mainstream comics, slowly evolved into a huge phenomena countering culture and its practices. Thanks to Fredric Wertham, who rose to fame with his Seduction of the Innocent, the birth of Underground Comix was around the corner. The mainstream comic industry fearing public backlash, financial loss, and dip in popularity due to Fredric Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent, brought Comics Code Authority in 1954, imposing self-censorship on its comics. Underground Comix came to the forefront at that time, and it was all that mainstream comics were not. This Underground Comix, right from its very origin, has served different purposes, has catered to most types of audiences, touching upon various subjects that the mainstream comic industry shied away from. It was the go-to form for artists to take a dig and be critical of various issues and practices. With this as the context, this article contends that webcomics in India—similar to the Underground Comix of the US and the UK—came into being due to the ennui of mainstream comics, especially Amar Chitra Katha (ACK). It perceives Indian webcomics as a version of Underground Comix, and brings forth the form and function of Indian webcomics. It also discusses the role of internet and social media platforms in popularizing webcomics in India.*

**KEYWORDS:** *underground comix, webcomics, counter-mainstream, social media, internet*