UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL MESSAGES IN AMUL ADVERTISEMENTS

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Abstract: With the upcoming general elections and the political situation being quite vibrant in the year before elections, the **objective** of this research is to analyse how the cartoons play a role in political communication and also analyse what the advertisements are trying to tell the audience on the various political issues the cartoons depict. In order to achieve this, all the political cartoons from June 2018 to December 2018 will be analysed through the method of semiotics. This research will also adopt the methodology of semiotics and signs in order to analyse the message provided by the cartoons. The findings of the research are that the cartoons serve two purposes that are of political communication and advertising; however advertising is camouflaged and not put in an obvious manner.

Keywords: Political Communication, Advertisement, Cartoons, Mass Media, Amul.

INTRODUCTION

Amul cartoons have flooded newspapers and even research for many years because of the unique political messages that it seems to give to the public. It has always been considered as one of the more important aspects of political communication. By political communication the researcher means the spread of political information in a way which influences the citizens of the country.

The researcher aims to understand political messages in *Amul* cartoons. By political messages the researcher means the messages the cartoons give which is related to politics and the political system in anyway. It includes politically affiliated economic cartoons, political rivalry, defence matters, current affairs related to politics etc. *Amul* cartoons are selected from

the *Amul* website wherein all the popular *Amul* cartoons of the year 2018 are archived from which political cartoons are selected.

All the political cartoons from June 2018 to December 2018 will be analysed through the method of semiotics.

Types of Political Communication

Political communication can be done in numerous ways; for example, Driscoll et al (2015) talks about how political communication can be integrated across all platforms and how social media can be used for the same. However, cartoons as a form of political communication can be seen very regularly in newspapers and even online media. Probably one of the most recognisable cartoons in India would be R.K. Laxman's '*Common Man*' followed by *Amul* ads. What makes the *Amul* ads very recognisable is the *Amul* girl who was created in 1967.

Gurevitch et al (2009) talks about how old and new media relationships and how television and new media is currently changing the landscape in terms of politics. It also highlights whether such relationships causes the media to have less useful content in terms of politics. *Amul's* focus has always been print media over the years and hence giving more importance to old media.

Cartoons and Political Communication

Zumeta et al (2016) analysed the various themes and graphic humour in the publication Egin which is a newspaper in Spain. This research states how humour is key in most political cartoons. We also find humour being used in *Amul* cartoons to make the ads more appealing to the public.

Mhamdi (2017) has analysed various social media cartoons in relation to the Arab Spring of 2011 in Tunisia with the help of semiotics. This research carefully analysed the cartoons by giving historic background to the various cartoons and also doing a semiotic analysis of the same.

Kaur et al (2015) analysed certain comic books in the Hindi language and how it is relevant to the post-colonial culture of India, *Amul* also being a part of the post-colonial era of India, one would like to analyse whether it holds any Indian cultural values in its political cartoons.

Objective

With the upcoming general elections and the political situation being quite vibrant in the year before elections,

-The objective of this research is to analyse how the *Amul* cartoons play a role in political communication.

- To analyse what the advertisements are trying to tell the audience on the various political issues the cartoons depict.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher is using the qualitative methodology of semiotic analysis in this research. Berger (2000) defines semiotics as a science of signs and can be the analysis of any signs such as text, facial expressions, colour and much more. The researcher will focus on the aspect of denotation and connotation as described by Ferdinand de Saussure who is a Swiss linguist and is also credited as the founder of semiology.

Denotation is seen as the literal meaning of the text or image whereas the connotative meaning focuses on hidden meanings and also cultural meanings. Denotative meaning of the cartoons will concentrate on the literal meaning of the cartoon which can be understood at first glance. Connotative meaning will look at the cartoon through the eyes of cultural and subliminal messaging that we see in the cartoons including how the cartoon has advertised itself without being obvious or prominent.

ANALYSIS

Figure one was published on June 2018 and is related to the North Korea-United States Singapore Summit 2018.

This summit was a historic summit as it was the first time a leader of North Korea met with a leader of the United States, according to the two leaders the summit went very well and the main aspect was to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula. This comes after US fears of North Korea being able to launch a nuclear attack on South Korea or the US in case a war arises between the two countries as the Korean War which took place in the early 1950s is still in an armistice and no peace treaty was signed.

Following Saussure's denotation, one can see that the two leaders seem to be happy with the ongoing summit and share bread lathered in *Amul* butter. It also shows a plush room with a sofa and a small coffee table. One can also see that Trump has a rather mischievous look on his face. One thing which is very noticeable is the cartoon figures of the two leaders are the most recognisable because of their iconic haircuts.

The connotative meaning of the cartoon lies in the copy which reads 'Singapower Treaty?' Over here one has to pay careful attention to the use of 'power' and '?'. The question raised by the cartoon here in terms of political communication is that is Trump like US has always done in the past asserting his control over the less powerful North Korea. It could also mean that rather than peace the two leaders are really signing a treaty which hints at who is more powerful. Trump's smile says it all as it definitely looks like Trump has the upper hand, as we are talking about the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula not the US. This deal is rather one-sided in that regard. Though the US stated that it would stop US soldiers training with South Korea, what is that in relation to denuclearisation?

This cartoon aptly portrays how US has been using its power against countries to gain an upper hand. Though one cannot sympathise with the happenings in North Korea, US involvement in various other issues like the Iran and Iraq issues can also be summarised using this cartoon. They try to tempt the leaders with incentives or scare them with sanctions and when things turn south they tend to assert their power to make the country abide by their rules.
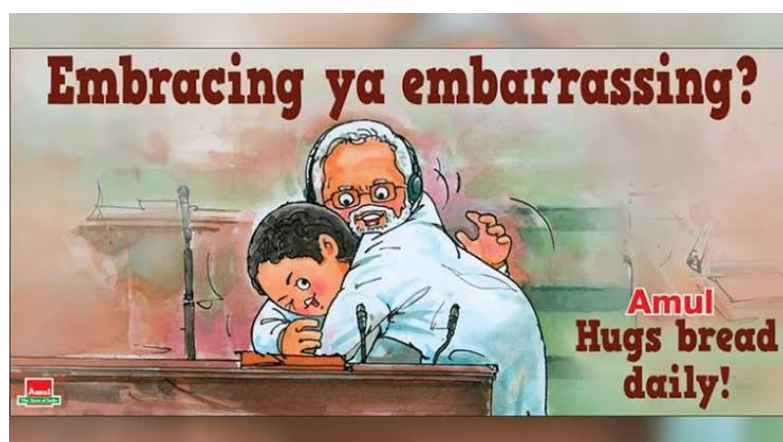

Figure two was published on July 2018 and is related to Rahul Gandhi hugging Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Parliament.

In July 2018 Rahul Gandhi made headlines in what seemed like a PR stunt when he hugged Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Parliament. Though, the question was whether the hug was heartfelt or a political stunt.

The denotation of the cartoon is quite simple when one looks back at the incident. Rahul Gandhi has a mischievous smile and he also winking whilst hugging the PM. This denotes the time when Rahul Gandhi winked at his fellow Congressman Jyotiraditya Scindia after the hug, though in the cartoon it is shown as happening simultaneously with the hug. The tagline 'Embracing ya embarrassing?' is quite denotative of the fact that most people realised that it was a political stunt and it was more an embarrassment to Rahul Gandhi. We can see the PM also looking taken aback but at the same time not hugging back because he realises it is a political ploy.

The connotative meaning could be seen as the fact that the cartoonist definitely believe that this was a PR stunt and chose to make Rahul Gandhi wink at the same time as the embrace as they felt that's what would be probably going on in his mind even at the time of the embrace though he made it look sincere. The copy 'Hugs Bread Daily' is also a clever trick to make the audience aware that *Amul* is not like Rahul Gandhi who only for the sake of political gain hugs Modi once, and *Amul* butter sincerely hugs bread daily.

This cartoon is very clearly mocking PR stunts not only by Gandhi but also outlining the kind of stunts that go on in Indian politics to win voters over. The communication over here seems to be that PR will always play a vital role in politics and political campaigns and we cannot keep blind faith in politicians or fall for such stunts. This stunt was rather obvious as most media covered it negatively but what about other stunts done by politicians who are not so obvious?

Figure 3 represents the political situation than took place in July 2018 when fake news was spreading through WhatsApp criminalising some men as kidnappers. These men were beaten to death by a mob.

Fake WhatsApp forwards stole the media scene in July 2018 when numerous men lost their lives around the country due to mobs reacting to the forwards which accused them of being kidnappers. WhatsApp had to take a call and now one can see a ticker to differentiate forwarded messages from actual ones. WhatsApp also had to take steps to make sure such news did not disseminate.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon seems to be that the *Amul* girl is discouraging people from falling prey to such forwards and also discouraging people from sending such messages. The ban sign on the phone also adds to the message that such things should not be encouraged. We can also see the tagline 'WhatsAppening to forwards?' questioning the people and the government as to what is situation at play. There are also envelopes leaving the phone in the cartoon.

The connotative meaning is that the envelopes signify forwarding of messages as these days we hardly associate envelopes with the postal system. The tagline 'App ka favourite butter' is the play on the Hindi word '*aap*' which means you, and merges well with what is being conveyed as the political message.

The cartoon is basically discouraging the forwarding of fake news and also urging people not to take action when receiving such news. The people who lost their lives or got injured in the process can be sympathised with as they died because of no fault of their own.

Figure 4 represents the infamous Rafale deal which is an ongoing corruption accusation in India. The cartoon was published on July 2018.

The Rafale deal is in regard to Rafale aircraft which could be used by the Indian force; however this deal has been stuck since 2014 as the UPA government under Defence Minister AK Anthony was unable to acquire sufficient funds to buy the aircraft. After the NDA government took over, the price of the aircrafts supposedly went up and a rather clandestine deal with France had occurred which made the Opposition doubt whether the money is going into the pockets of the ruling party and businessman Anil Ambani whose company took part in the deal. There is also a huge controversy over some of the key papers regarding Rafale going missing.

The denotative meaning we can acquire from the cartoon is the face that the *Amul* girl is standing on a jet as if it were a horse and the copy saying 'Pass or Rafail?' which clearly indicates whether the deal is a failure as the Indian Air Force could not acquire these aircrafts in so many years because of political agenda.

The connotative meaning could lie in the fact that the aircraft is in a way personified to be a be a horse and the copy reading 'Eat at Jet Speed' this could mean that unlike the Rafale deal, you can always use *Amul* butter to eat your breakfast and the girl on the aircraft signifies that *Amul* has already acquired that jet speed that the Indian government couldn't acquire for ages.

The Rafale deal seems to be never ending and the courts seem to be indecisive about it currently. The cartoon clearly tries to communicate the situation of our armed forces just because of corrupt politicians and businessmen who want to put money in their pockets.
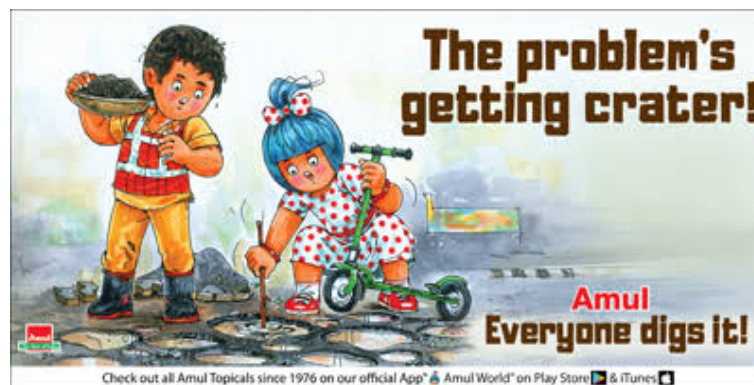

Figure 5 represents the growing pothole issue in all urban cities of India. The cartoon was published during the monsoon season of July 2018.

Potholes in cities especially during the monsoon are a huge problem in India. It is not only problematic because it results in an uncomfortable ride, but also because many motorists have lost their lives because of the same. The problem with potholes is mainly that the Municipal Corporations fill up potholes during the non-monsoon seasons with stones and asphalt which easily comes off when the first rains come in. This makes driving in rain, especially riding on two-wheelers a tedious task during the monsoon season where visibility is already low during heavy showers.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon seems to be that the road worker and the *Amul* girl are shocked by the state of the road and the road worker seems to be only filling it up with stones and fine gravel. The *Amul* girl on her scooter is looking at the depth of the pothole. The simply and catchy tagline 'The problems getting crater' signifies the greatness of the problem of the craters on the road.

The connotative meaning lies in the fact that the copy 'Everybody digs it' signifies that unlike the craters on the road, everybody can dig into *Amul* butter as that what it is meant for. It also

asks the municipal corporations to take a call and fix the roads as they are meant to be smooth and easy to drive on.

The pothole issue has still seen no betterment in major cities and even small towns in India. Potholes cause unnecessary traffic which not only causes pollution and more physical damage to roads but is also a huge burden on the Indian economy as workers are lying stuck on the road rather than at work.
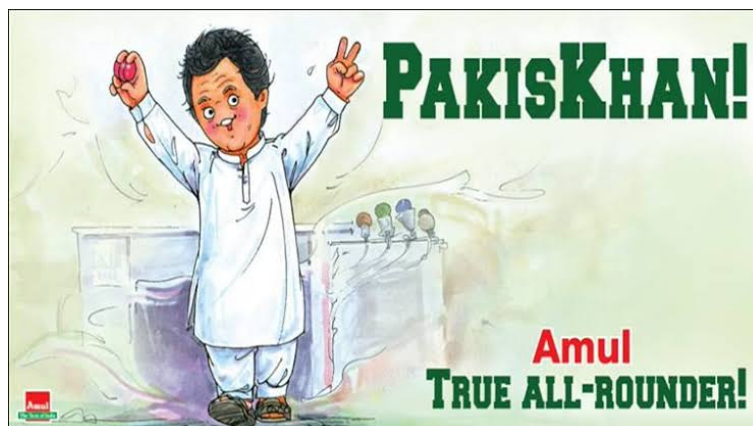

Figure 6 represents the time when Imran Khan was all set to be sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Pakistan. The cartoon was published on July 2018.

Imran Khan after a controversial election in Pakistan was finally being sworn in as Prime Minister. Though opinion polls prior to the elections showed the Pakistani Muslim League (N) to be the most favourable party, Imran's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf surprisingly won by being the single largest party at the national level. This lead to many people believing that he votes were rigged.

The denotative meaning can be seen as the politician being happy by his victory and celebrating with a peace sign. The tagline 'Pakiskhan' is the play on the word Pakistan and implies that now it is Khan's Pakistan for the following five years. The Prime Minister's leg which seems to be moving forward could also imply that he is dancing in victory. There is also a ball in his hand which refers to him being a former Pakistani cricketer.

The connotative meaning is in fact that we can see that the ball means that Imran Khan has now dominated Pakistani politics the same way he once dominated Pakistani cricket as an all-rounder. The copy 'True All-Rounder' also implies the *Amul* is the true all-rounder in the dairy industry unlike Imran Khan whose political victory was questionable. This could be put forward in a politically correct way by the fact that the 'True All-Rounder' on first reading seems to refer to Imran Khan until we realise *Amul* is written above it.

This cartoon brings to perspective the Pakistani elections which is very crucial in terms of Indian politics as well. The person, who gets the chair in Pakistan albeit through military support, always defines what the relationship with India-Pakistan would be. *Amul* also slyly

implies the military involvement in the elections and that the elections are riddled in controversy. This matter though is handled very carefully and lightly as the two countries already have a hateful political relationship which they haven't been able to get past even after 71 years of independence.

Figure 7 represents the invitation of Indians such as Navjot Singh Sidhu, Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev and Aamir Khan for Imran Khan's swearing in. The cartoon was published on August 2018.

Imran Khan had invited Kapil Dev, Navjot Singh Sidhu, Sunil Gavaskar and Aamir Khan to his swearing in ceremony in Pakistan on August 2018. Sidhu was quick to accept the offer which threw him into much controversy as he also called Imran Khan 'a man of character'. Most of the players were supposedly friends of Khan during his cricketing career. This was a again a political stunt to show that Imran Khan is looking for peace with India.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon is that everyone including the inviter and the invitees look very happy receiving the invitation, we can see that Sidhu is doing his iconic dance in the background as he was the most enthralled by the invite. It is also made to seem that Khan with his golden thumb of butter has spread butter over the invitation to entice the invitees. The tagline 'Guest Match Special' refers to most of them being cricketers.

The connotative meaning can be seen in the fact that Khan seems to be the most happy with his golden thumb which could signify that he is using his influence in cricket to make a political statement and further attempt to gain India's trust. The copy 'Invite your neighbours' also is a sublime advertising message which says that if you want to invite your neighbours over, do it with *Amul* butter.

The cartoon shows how politics is makes even the most non-political thing such as sports and encapsulates it into the political atmosphere. This is especially true of India-Pakistan relations and how even during the time of utmost animosity it is not politicians who are most affected but other non-political persons such as Pakistani actors and such.

Figure 8 refers to the fall of the rupee on September 2018 to an all-time low against the dollar. It was published on September 2018.

The rupee had fallen to an all-time low against dollar with $1 equaling Rs.72.45. It had dropped at an astonishing 13% since January 2018. The value of rupee has been highly unstable in market making inflation skyrocket over the years. Even common food products such as milk have inflated over Rs.2 over a span of a few years.

The denotative meaning of this cartoon is the dollar looking happy and stable above the wall whereas the rupee is falling. The *Amul* girl seems shocked at this and the popular Hindi song '*Dola re Dola re*' which is considered to be a rather poignant song seems to be used to represent how the rupee has fallen against the dollar.

The connotative meaning seems to be the use of the word 'dollar re' referring to the fact that it is comparison to the dollar and the lack of dollar bonds in India which is causing this issue. And when we look at it historically it is the Americans who forced us to de-value the Indian currency so that India could acquire food grains to feed its population. The copy 'Always high value' is also a good advertising gimmick which talks about how unlike the rupee the value of *Amul* will never fall down.

The rupee seems to be struggling throughout the years with inflation being the norm in the country. The cartoon expresses this in a way that *Amul* has been the same since such a long time but the prices have changed so much over the years.
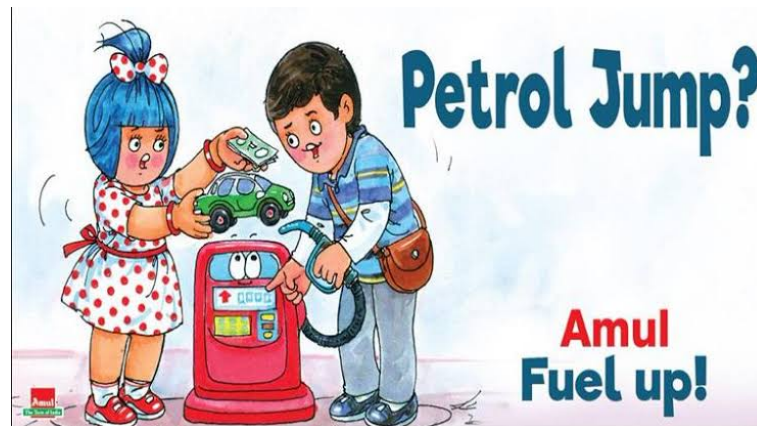
Figure 9 talks about the hike in fuel prices on September 2018 which saw violent protests across the country.

On September 2018 the price of petrol in Mumbai was over Rs.88 per litre of petrol. This is an increase of over 230% in a span of just 20 years. This in a way relates to the previous cartoon where the falling rupee also plays a vital role in the soaring of fuel prices. With numerous taxes on petrol and the US embargo on Iran, India is finding it very difficult to cope with its petrol prices.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon is the surprise the *Amul* girl is showing when for such a small car she is paying a lot for petrol. The pump operator seems to be looking at the gauge and having a look which says that nothing can be done about it. The pump itself looks to be happy maybe for the reason it is gaining so much more money for the hard-work it does every day. The tagline 'Petrol Jump' is rather simple and talks about how the petrol prices have jumped across the country.

The connotative meaning is the copy reads 'Fuel Up' under *Amul.* It refers to the fact that unlike the fuel prices, *Amul* prices are the same and at least one can fuel themselves up with energy with *Amul* butter.

The fuel price in India has stabilised but is still very high especially in metro cities. The cartoon doesn't look to give a glance into past or future of the issue but talks about the particular event this time. But, it does allude to the fact that the rupee falling and the increase of oil prices internationally is problematic in nature.
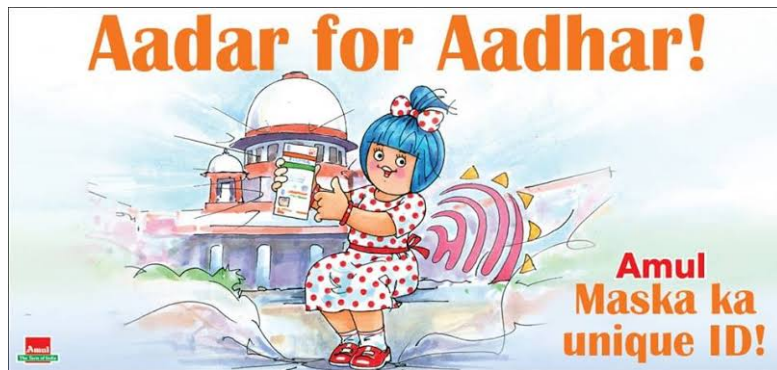
Figure 10 refers to the Supreme Court judgment regarding Aadhar on September 2018.

The Supreme Court took a key decision on September 2018 regarding the Aadhar card, a unique identity card in India. The card was facing much controversy earlier that year when the government made it compulsory to link the card with mobile numbers and bank accounts despite there being proof that the card was not secure. The Supreme Court came to a decision that the card is valid but doesn't need to be linked to everything. Only PAN Card, ITR, and subsidy schemes require the link of Aadhar and not mobile numbers, bank accounts or school or college admissions.

The denotative meaning is put forward in a way that the *Amul* girl is happy with the deciosion of the Aadhar and hence is displaying the Courts victory through her Aadhar Card. We can also see the logo of the Aadhar card in the background along with the Supreme Court.

The connotative meaning is that the Supreme Court has finally taken a decision on the card and the logo which looks like a rising sun seems to mean that the sun has finally risen on the Supreme Court which has a had good year in 2018 with a lot of key decisions being made. The copy 'Maska ka unique ID' seems to again take an advertising turn as *Amul* is trying to say that like Aadhar is a unique ID for people, *Amul* is a unique ID for butter.

The cartoon clearly reflects that it is happy with the court's decision and that the Aadhar issue has finally come to a close after much contemplation.
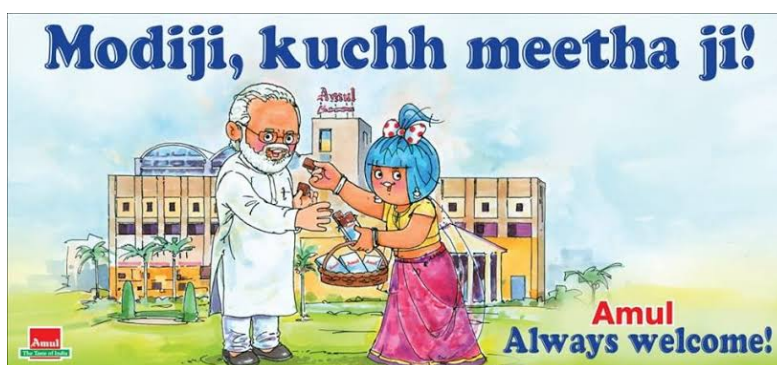

Figure 11 relates to when Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to inaugurate *Amul's* chocolate factory. The cartoon was published on September 2018.

When *Amul* opened a chocolate factory in September at Anand, Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to inaugurate the factory. This also led to the political message which PM Modi later gave stating that dairy farmers should undertake honey farming as well. In his speech he also talked about the importance of camel milk.

The denotative meaning of this cartoon is the fact that Modi and the *Amul* girl look happy and are sharing sweets. The *Amul* factory can be seen in the background. The *Amul* girl is wearing traditional Gujarati wear and the tagline 'Modiji, kuchh meetha ji' is put in a way that feels like the *Amul* girl is telling the PM to have something sweet.

The connotative meaning can be seen in the Indian tradition of eating something sweet before some important event portrayed in the cartoon. The copy 'Always Welcome' also tells us how *Amul* as a brand is always welcomed everywhere even by the Prime Minister himself.

The cartoon doesn't directly depict the political messages that Modi talked about during the inauguration but the entire fact that the PM came down to the factory is a politcal message in itself.

Figure 12 refers to the great decisions made by the Supreme Court during the year of 2018. The cartoon was published on October 2018.

The Supreme Court of India made gravely important decisions throughout 2018 with landmark judgments being passed in cases such as the Aadhar case, repealing of Section 377 which criminalised homosexual acts, decriminalisation of adultery and even asking the *Sabarimala* temple to allow the entry of women. The Supreme Court also legalised passive euthanasia which allows patients who are terminally-ill or are in comatose state to stop receiving medical treatment in order to hasten their death as they have lost the will to live.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon is that a rather proud *Amul* girl is shaking hands with a judge so as to signify that she is happy with hard-work the Court has put in during the year. The tagline 'Our courts reign supreme' is also a play on the word Supreme Court saying that the court is supreme after all.

The connotative meaning is that the copy 'Fair and square' relates to *Amul* being fair and square just like the Supreme Court judgments. There doesn't seem to be many connotations in this cartoon as it plainly wants to congratulate the Supreme Court.

The cartoon is plain and wants congratulate the Supreme Court and in a way says that at least the third organ of democracy is functioning the way it's supposed to despite the other two being embroiled in controversy.
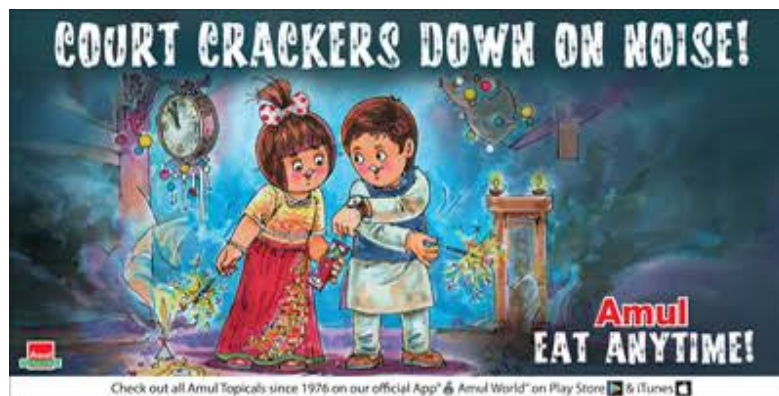

Figure 13 refers to the court imposing certain rules in the sale and use of crackers during Diwali. This cartoon was published on October 2018.

The Supreme Court took steps last Diwali to reduce pollutions in India because of Diwali firecrackers which leads to bad air quality all across the country. The court said only 'low polluting' crackers which have permissible decibel limits and emission norms would be allowed. The Court also restricted the time one could burst crackers between 8pm and 10pm.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon is that the *Amul* girl and the boy are enjoying Diwali with crackers which seem to be of the 'low polluting' type. The time also seems to be just before 10pm and hence the boy is showing the girl the time so as to make sure they stop on time. The tagline 'Court Crackers down on Noise' is a pun on the fact that the court cracked down on cracker noise.

The connotative meaning lies in the copy 'Eat anytime' which speaks about the fact that unlike the crackers you can use *Amul* butter at any time during Diwali. There also seems to be smoke in the air which gives a message that pollution will still happen and hence we need to be careful. There are also lights and *diyas* to signify the setting of Diwali.

The cartoon clearly says that the court's decision was good so as to control pollution especially in cities such as Delhi and Ghaziabad. The cartoon also communicates to the audience that it is necessary to follow this rule not only because it is prescribed by the court but also to save major cities from irreversible pollution damages.
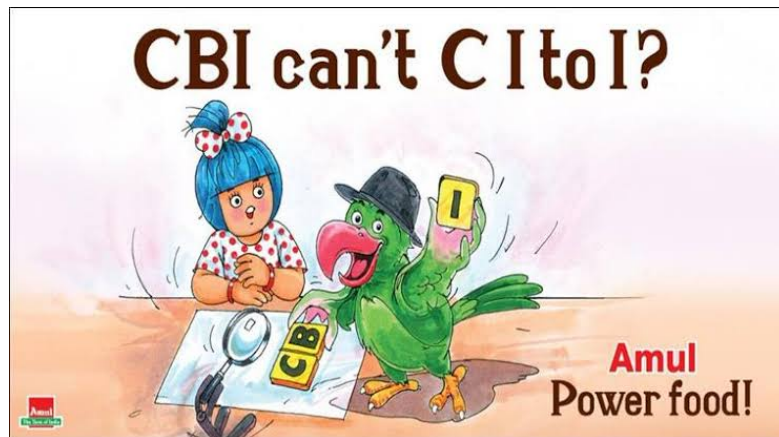
Figure 14 refers to the controversy surrounding the Central Bureau of Investigation when it charged its own Special Director Rakesh Asthana for bribery. The cartoon was published on October 2018.

The issue at CBI was that Special Director Rakesh Asthana was booked for accepting bribes worth Rs.2 crores to settle a case involving meat exporter Moin Qureshi. This is also because of an interal power struggle between Rakesh Asthana and Alok Verma who both started pointing fingers at each other on corruption charges. Alok Verma was given time to prove his allegations against Asthana after the latter was charged.

The denotative meaning is that the *Amul* girl looks shocked at the parrot that is holding an 'I'. There is a magnifying glass to denote investigation. The parrot doesn't seem as shocked as the girl maybe because it found something in its investigation. The hat also signifies that the parrot is an investigator.

The connotative meaning is in the tagline 'CBI can't C I to I' is a pun on the word eye-to-eye and talking about the fact that there is a lot of internal tensions. The parrot holding the 'I' signifies the internal investigation that was going on within the CBI. The copy 'power food' is also a pun on the word power feud, and states that *Amul* unlike the power feud in the CBI *Amul* is a power food with any doubt or feuds and is the best butter.

The CBI issue brings to light how an apex organ in our political system is also not safe from corruption and feuds. These aren't the kind of things one would want to see in such bodies and *Amul* portrays that in their cartoon as the girl is shocked by what is going in the CBI.

Figure 15 refers to the US midterm elections which happened on November 2018 wherein the Democrats got majority at the House of Representatives.

Midterm elections are general elections in the United States which happens when the President is in the middle of his term that is two years after he is elected. 35 of 100 seats are contested in the US Senate and all 435 seats are contested in US House of Representatives. The Democrats gained 40 seats in the House of Representative while the Republicans gained two seats at the Senate. However, because of the Democrats majority at the House of Representatives the federal trifecta wherein the Republicans controlled executive as well as the legislature ended. The Democrats had a greater power at the legislature now.

The denotative meaning of this cartoon is that Trump seems to be worried and counting the winnings and losing of the elections. He seems to be in a rather worried state as the Democrats are winning. There seems to be the White House in the background to signify American President. The tagline 'Democratheek Hai' is a pun on the word Democratic meaning that the Democrats are okay in this election.

The connotative meaning is that the copy 'Get the bigger share' is in relation to how one must get the bigger share of *Amul* butter just like the Democrats got the bigger share at the House of Representatives.

The midterm elections is shown as a positive thing as Trump is really questioned and he can no longer take a unchecked decisions in the Congress. *Amul* really feels that this is the right way for the midterm elections to have gone.
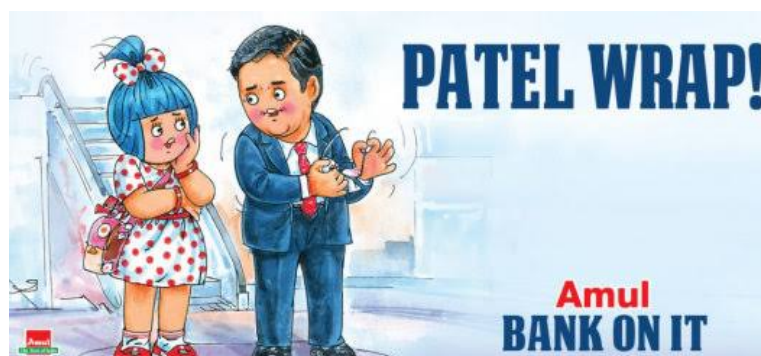
This cartoon is referring to the stepping down of RBI governor Urjit Patel on December 2018.

RBI Governor Urjit Patel cited personal reasons and resigned as Governor on December 2018 after having the shortest tenure of any RBI Governor. Patel was made Governor after former Governor Raghuram Rajan was denied a second-term. Many believe the resignation to be because of the escalating differences between the Governor and the government. Though he was commended by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley for his work, some others like Raghuram Rajan saw this as a sign of protest.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon is that the *Amul* girl is looking quite sad and in a way seems to be looking at Patel with great respect with an amount of regret that he is stepping down. Patel looks taken aback by the girl's reaction and the tagline 'Patel Wrap' tells us that the cartoon is about him resigning.

The connotative meaning of the cartoon is the fact that Patel is shown with the glasses in his hands alluding to the fact that his term is over, the same way one removes their glasses when they are about to call it a day or finish extensive work and reading. The copy 'Bank on It' is also an advertising strategy in a way saying that you can always bank on *Amul* as it isn't going to resign any time soon.

The cartoon shows Patel in a positive light and doesn't really emphasis the growing tensions between RBI and the government which in a way is good tribute to Patel without all the drama surrounding his resignation.

Figure 17 refers to the Congress Party winning elections in three states of India and hence putting BJP under pressure for the 2019 General Elections. The cartoon was published on December 2018.

Congress had a much needed victory wherein it won the elections at Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. This was a much needed victory for them as the 2019 General Elections is coming up and getting the security of three states gives them better chance to win.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon is that the Congressmen are enjoying *Amul* butter with toast after their victory. The hand with the tricolour refers to the Congress logo. We can also see the shapes of the three states on the tablecloth in gold whereas two other states which they have a good hold but not majority are in shown in pink.

The connotative meaning lies in the tagline 'Haathland Victory' which is a pun on heartland. *Haath* is used because the Congress logo is a hand and *haath* means hand in Hindi. Also the three states are very much the heartland of India as they lie either in centre or just off-centre. The copy 'Maximum Votes' is also an advertising gimmick used to say that *Amul* still has maximum votes from India in terms of diary be it BJP or Congress in power.

Amul in this cartoon clearly portrays how important it is that Congress won in these three states and the fact that it is a huge victory in regard to the close proximity with 2019 general elections.

Figure 18 refers to Trump's partial shutdown of the federal government because he wasn't getting funds to build a US-Mexico wall. The cartoon was published on December 2018

Trump partially shut down the US government on December 2018 as he wasn't getting funds to erect a wall between USA and Mexico. Trump was very stubborn about getting funds and wanted the shutdown to last until he got his way.

The denotative meaning of the cartoon lies in the fact that Trump can be seen with a lock with the White House in the background and staring angrily and the camera implying he wants to shut down the government unless the wall is built. The copy 'Wallatile shutdown' is the play on the word volatile and also referring to the wall Trump wants to build.

The connotative meaning lies in the fact that he is holding the bricks for the wall beneath his feet probably signifying how he sees Mexicans as lower class people who are illegal immigrants. The copy 'Open it' signifies that unlike Trump *Amul* is very open and there are no walls to opening an *Amul* butter packet.

The cartoon is very much against Trump's moves and calls the entire thing volatile. We can see that the cartoonist is completely against the idea of a wall as it feels like a way of segregation and domination.

RESULT

All the cartoons have two elements to them: a) political communication and b) advertising. While generally the tagline had a denotative meaning which spoke directly about the current affairs at hand, the copy just below the brand name *Amul* was an advertising strategy in order to promote the brand.

The cartoons wanted to bring about a sense of humour to current affairs and the use of puns was very frequent for that purpose. The cartoons chosen where only political cartoons and hence we could see a sense of opinion towards the political event. Unlike journalism where one is generally asked not to take a stance, the stance of the cartoonist towards a particular current affair is very clear in these cartoons.

The researcher was able to determine that these cartoons use very simple signs like the recurring *Amul* girl, use of catchy taglines and copy and also very recognisable characters in most of the cartoons. For example, Modi's white beard, Trump's infamous hair etc. were used to bring about a recognition among the audience as to who they are referring to despite the cartoons being more of a caricature than a realistic rendition. The researcher also found that the most of the cartoons were applicable to the Indian context as *Amul* is a company based in India. There were very few cartoons focusing on International politics and even then it was highly focused on US politics with Trump appearing in all the US-related cartoons analysed.

There was also the recurrence of recognisable backgrounds such as that of the White House or Lok Sabha to add to the theme of the current affair that was being portrayed. The cartoons also placed their product which is *Amul* butter in some of the ads, especially those of celebration. This is to show that the *Amul* butter with toast is one of the best ways to celebrate.

The cartoon as stated earlier served two purposes those are of political communication and advertising, it is probably one of the more successful cartoons to serve these two purposes in a very original manner.

DISCUSSIONS

The researcher has found from the above cartoons that the use of humour in terms of puns and the use of current political affairs have greatly helped the *Amul* Brand get integrated into the household of the common people. Another series of cartoons which managed to become a household name was *'The Common Man'* by R.K. Laxman, but the difference lies in the fact that while R.K. Laxman focuses on political communication through humour, there is a sense of message or moral in his cartoons. *Amul* just puts forward its opinion of current events

without giving us a message which hits our hearts. It is a rather comic way of making the brand memorable because of their humorous cartoons rather than a way to mobilise the people. While taking this research forward one could easily analyse the impact the cartoon has on building brand image and brand knowledge among the public sphere.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the set objectives we have learned how these cartoons play a role in political communication by making the public aware of these issues as well as giving a humorous opinionated touch to the same. The political messages are put in a comic way with use of puns which the audience can easily associate with. When we look at what the cartoons want to tell the audience about the political affairs it covers, it is basically a way to associate these affairs with the brand and see how *Amul* is like this political affair or unlike it. For example, *Amul* used flaws of the various politicians depicted to tell the audience that *Amul* would never make such a mistake and is much more responsible.

These kinds of messages make the brand stand out more and also allow the people to enjoy a bit humour along with their dose of current affair knowledge. Certain cartoons such as that of the ban of firecrackers outside of a prescribed time during Diwali allow the audience who may not be a thorough newspaper reader go and search more about the news. It also acts as an archive of various current affairs over the years when people want to study them through the eyes of cartoons. The use of the recognisable *Amul* girl also adds to the recognition of the brand. In a way, it is a unique amalgamation of branding and political communication without making it obvious that the company's main objective is to advertise their brand. This camouflage within political affairs is what makes these cartoons unique and unlike any other as it is not only relatable but also serves a purpose to the brand itself.

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