ABSTRACT

The progressive middle class social movements of the 1950s and 1960s discarded comics as a frivolous medium, bereft of rational thinking, and propagated ‘serious art’ to be exploited for national integration. In the early 1970s, the middle class suddenly discovered the format of comics as a persuasive source for dissemination of the national culture. The scholars, like McLain and Chandra, have analysed the historical connections between the extraordinary rise of Indian comics and the reconstruction of the national imaginary in the historical period of 1970s. In absence of the televisual image, the format of comics provided an effective alternative for the middle class to reinvent itself into a new class with new values and norms.

The comic book *Chacha Choudhury* is implicated into the cultural politics of the Indian middle class, highlighting the middle class’s gradual shift from the socialist state to the imperatives of the market. The comic book, as a form of public culture, is involved in the construction of the hegemonic identity of the Indian middle class. The format of comics is exploited as a ‘pedagogic enterprise’in order to acquaint the culturally uprooted children with the ‘Indian’ ethos. However, the rhetorically advocated project of disseminating the national culture, through reinventing the format of comics, came to be seen as the cultural politics of the urban middle class. In the comic book *Chacha Choudhury*, the urban middle class is hegemonically represented, leading to the marginalisation of the other classes. Through the serialized panels, the urban middle class is visualized as a national representative social group, reconstructing the political categories of ‘nation,’ ‘citizenship’ and ‘common man.’