

LAUGHING AT THE MARGINS: HUMOUR AS SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN ITANAGAR OKM

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This article analyses the Arunachali film Itanagar OKM as a case study of comedy as a social movement and a mechanism of cultural resistance. The film employs satire, irony, and humour to examine dominant narratives surrounding identity, politics, and marginalisation in Arunachal Pradesh, a region that has historically experienced socio-political and representational erasure in Indian media discourse. This research employs critical discourse analysis, drawing on theories of humour and resistance, indigenous media studies, and counter-public discourse, to investigate the film's portrayal of bureaucratic inefficiency, cultural stereotyping, and political alienation. The film's humour serves as a form of counter-public discourse, providing an alternative means of knowledge production that challenges prevailing representations of Arunachali identity. The findings demonstrate that Itanagar OKM exemplifies how comedy in rural media functions as a means of subaltern communication, facilitating social critique and local action in the context of cultural and political marginalisation. This study contextualises the video within the larger framework of comedy as a political tool, thereby contributing to the developing scholarship on the intersections of media, humour, and indigenous resistance.

Keywords: humour, resistance, counter-publics, satire, indigenous media, Arunachal Pradesh

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Introduction

For those from less fortunate backgrounds, comedy is a tool for establishing meaning and a way of resistance. Particularly in poor groups, comedy has always been fairly beneficial in terms of power dynamics balance. This is a subtle tool for resistance; it lets people without direct access to institutional power question conventional knowledge, point out contradictions, and speak out for other narratives. Beyond mere enjoyment, scholars agree that comedy is an important political action that may challenge hierarchies, reinterpret social issues, and assist to generate alternative meanings (Billig, 2005; Kuipers, 2008). For the underprivileged groups, comedy offers a tool of coded resistance and lets criticism be expressed in ways that may otherwise be stifled. Scott (1990) in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* claims that subordinate groups could create "hidden transcripts" to subtly express dissent inside the dominant story. Since its supposedly lighthearted character helps them to dodge political reprisals or censorship, hidden transcripts find a good platform in humour. Laughing at the same time allows poor communities to establish solidarity, therefore strengthening their common concerns and generating a collective identity (Weaver, 2001). Comedy's capacity to uncover social conflicts amply illustrates its subversive force. As Bakhtin (1984) imagined the carnivalesque, laughing can momentarily question conventional hierarchies. Bakhtin contends that by providing a domain in which power structures are laughed at and degraded, carnival laughter generates a conceptual space for the study of alternative social systems. Sometimes comedy helps to reestablish indigenous agency and parody colonial power in postcolonial environments (Bhabha, 1994). Comedy is quite important in modern indigenous media since it enables one to question historical injustices as well as current social exclusion.

Study of humour as a political critique has been done in Western settings, including stand-up comedy and late-night political satire. Still, the function of comedy in indigenous media and regional filmmaking is rather undervalued. Political satire in mainstream Western media has been closely examined by global media studies for its capacity to question

power regimes, especially in democracies where humourists function as "watchdogs" of political integrity (Gray, Jones, & Thompson, 2009). Comedy generally appears in grassroots filmmaking, oral storytelling, and community-driven digital work under distinct constraints; it also serves diverse purposes in indigenous and regional media.

Mainstream films and TV in India have generally neglected or misrepresented the experiences of Northeast Indian communities, therefore fuelling assumptions that present the area as a conflict-torn border or an exoticised periphery (McDuié-Ra, 2016). Usually limited to single representations, northeast Indian identities fall short in adequately capturing the richness of local histories, politics, and cultures (Misra, 2011). Independent and regional filmmakers have turned increasingly to comedy for self-representation and opposition. Rising locally produced films and digital media has allowed Northeast Indian people to share their own stories utilising comedy to challenge assumptions, restore indigenous identity, and question governmental institutions.

Though comedy is growing in significance in indigenous media, little academic research has been done on its uses in regional Indian films. Research on Indian humour and satire has primarily concentrated on Hindi-language films and urban stand-up comedy, even if regional humour and indigenous comic traditions remain mostly neglected (Chadha, 2017; Abnett, 2020). This study bridges the current vacuum by analysing the function of humour as a social movement in *Itanagar OKM* (directed by Tashi Wangchuk), a film combining satire and irony to attack government, bureaucracy, and cultural representation in Arunachal Pradesh.

This research investigates using *Itanagar OKM* as a case study of comedy acting as a social movement in Arunachal Pradesh. Providing a satirical critique of government, bureaucracy, and cultural representation, the film serves as a critical substitute for dominant national narratives that have historically excluded the region. Arunachal Pradesh has faced systemic marginalisation, political underrepresentation, and cultural stereotyping in Indian mainstream discourse, much as other parts of

Northeast India (Baruah, 2020). Often depicting the area as a security danger or as an "exotic" other, policy and media help to reinforce the marginalisation.

Itanagar OKM challenges the daily bureaucratic realities of the state by means of sarcasm, absurdity, and humorous exaggeration. Emphasising the inefficiencies that Arunachali people encounter in their contacts with state institutions, the film presents government officials as sloppish and apathetic. Simultaneously, it reveals the inconsistencies in national integration narratives that often overlook or skew the actual experiences of Northeast Indian people. The film subverts the political and media narratives that have usually excluded Arunachal Pradesh by using comedy to draw attention to contradictions. Emphasising how comedy functions as a means of resistance and cultural assertion, this essay examines the narrative, characters, and comic devices of the movie utilising critical discourse analysis. Using critical discourse analysis helps one to investigate the production and negotiation of power relations inside media texts (Fairclough, 1995). This approach especially in regard to Itanagar OKM enables one to investigate how the comedy confronts conventional narratives about government, cultural identity, and Arunachal Pradesh's perspective inside the Indian nation-state.

This paper positions the film amid more general discussions on comedy as a political instrument and as tool for indigenous media activism. Emphasising the role of comedy as a tool for social critique, identity development, and political participation inside poor communities, this research compares Itanagar OKM with similar cases of humour-based resistance in indigenous and regional media globally.

Research Questions

The primary research questions motivating this work are:

1. How may Itanagar OKM subvert the sociopolitical systems of Arunachal Pradesh?
2. How does the film challenge the accepted narratives about the Northeast?
3. How might the movie advance the more overall goals of comedy in indigenous media and cultural activism?

In tackling these problems, the study links with multidisciplinary research on comedy and power (Bakhtin, 1984; Scott, 1990), indigenous media and counter-publics (Ginsburg, 1991; Fraser, 1990), and regional films as a tool of cultural resistance (Baruah, 2020).

Humour, Resistance, and the Politics of Representation

Humour as Political Resistance

Operating under what Bakhtin (1984) defines as the carnivalesque a kind of social inversion where hierarchies are momentarily suspended through laughter humour is as a communication act both amusing and disruptive. The Carnavalesque's ability to create a parallel environment in which dominant forms of power are mimicked, ridiculed, and symbolically inverted therefore allowing the vision of different social configurations. This kind of perspective helps one to understand the goal of comedy in disadvantaged and subaltern communities where direct challenge to authority is sometimes received with repression.

In Itanagar OKM, comedy reveals sociopolitical problems and exposes bureaucratic inefficiencies, therefore undermining accepted power structures. The film reveals the dysfunctionality of Arunachal Pradesh's government by means of humour and absurdity, therefore rendering government officials as either corrupt, uninformed, or oblivious to the concerns of regular people. This is in line with Bakhtin's perspective of laughter as a means of revealing the fundamental contradictions in the "official" cosmos and so collapses through comedy, the film exposes the daily struggles of Arunachali people by exaggerating and mocking the bureaucratic apparatus, therefore providing spectators with a cathartic means of protest. But as much as a means of entertainment or social criticism, comedy may also be a tool for political survival. James C. Scott's (1990) notion of the "hidden transcript," whereby subordinate groups oppose dominant power structures without direct confrontation by techniques of humour, irony, and coded discourse, informs this work as well. Usually using humour, satire, and subversive acts, the "hidden transcript" is the way by which oppressed populations construct alternative modes of communication that which lets them question authority and avoid direct punishment. Unlike the "public transcript," which reflects the official, state-sanctioned discourse, the

"hidden transcript" stays buried in daily resistance actions and usually surfaces via comedy.

Comedy becomes a vehicle for such hidden transcripts in Itanagar OKM, allowing Arunachali filmmakers to attack the state machinery without engaging in public political protest. The almost humorous images of government inefficacy in the film's excessive approach help to explain its critique and ensure that its political message is not missed and appeals to more viewers. This strategy matches historical and contemporary cases when oppressed communities have kept acceptable deniability while parody of tyrannical systems using comedy.

Comedy as an Indigenous Community Survival Tool

Long reliant mostly on comedy as a survival strategy, indigenous people all around have negotiated colonial and postcolonial power relations using humour, irony, and satirical narrative. Comedy in indigenous cultures is not just a coping strategy but also an intentional method for resistance, identity preservation, and cultural continuity, as Smith (1999) and Weaver (2014) point out. Indigenous humour presents other points of view that encourage communal cohesiveness, therefore undermining the authority of colonial narratives.

Within Arunachal Pradesh, humour provides a subversive yet non-confrontational form of political critique. Comedy allows Arunachali people to voice their grievances without explicitly supporting aggressive action, which would be welcomed with official persecution considering the historical marginalisation of the area inside Indian political debate. The funny features of Itanagar OKM help to highlight the silliness of national integration programs and government initiatives usually ignoring the local socio-cultural reality of the region. Laughing at the inefficiencies of bureaucracy enables the characters in the movie and thereby, its audience reclaim agency in a normally depressing political climate. Furthermore, crucial in helping to demystify and humanise Arunachal Pradesh's political situation is the comedy of the film. Though most famous Indian stories depict Northeast India as a homogeneous and politically unstable region, Itanagar OKM presents a localised perspective challenging these preconceptions.

Using comedy to criticise government instead of resorting to direct political conflict, the film follows global trends in indigenous and regional media where comedy becomes a weapon for political critique without inspiring state-led repression or reaction. Moreover, comedy in Itanagar OKM acts as a common experience encouraging belonging. Indigenous comedy, as Weaver (2014) points out, is usually tightly anchored in shared cultural allusions and personal experiences. The funny moments in the film really speak to Arunachal Pradesh's intended audience whether in the form of exaggerated bureaucratic red tape, the absurdities of local government, or the self-deprecating humour of its characters since they reflect reality that is both particular and generally relevant there. Comedy thus strengthens Arunachali identity against prevailing national narratives and aids to increase social togetherness.

Satire as Mechanism of Agency and Resistance

Apart from challenging the cultural erasure of Arunachal Pradesh in national dialogue, the satirical comedy in Itanagar OKM exposes the ineffective government policies. Comedy has traditionally been one of the most effective tools for exposing power discrepancies and making authoritative figures seem stupid or weak. Satire in many aspects is a more accessible and frequent form of protest than direct political action since it allows people to engage with political criticism in ways that seem less threatening or violent. In the Indian context, satire has been used in movies, public events, and books to challenge power institutions without advocating total suppression (Abnett, 2020). Most mainstream Indian satirical content, however, has focused on issues relevant to metropolitan viewers, frequently neglecting the difficulties affecting Northeast Indian communities. Itanagar OKM breaks with this pattern and so recovers narrative agency by including Arunachali voices and experiences inside its satire.

The comedy in the film is particularly successful since it draws attention to government flaws that could otherwise remain unrecorded. For example, it shows significant disdain for the silliness of bureaucratic procedures meant to help the people but really create many obstacles. This confirms Scott's (1990) argument that subaltern comedy often stresses the "theatre" of power where political systems pretend to work effectively while, in fact, they are greatly flawed. Through comedy,

Itanagar 0 KM challenges audiences to see the flaws in administration in Arunachal Pradesh and, in many other underdeveloped parts of India. Moreover, the comedy in the film serves as a tool of introspection inside Arunachali society as well as a criticism of government. It mimics local social dynamics, political complacency, and cultural prejudices in a way that advances self-awareness and group discussion on needed reforms. This is in line with Bakhtin's (1984) theory that the carnivalesque interacts with spectators in a transformative process whereby new points of view reveal up via laughter, therefore subverting power.

As utilised in Itanagar 0KM, humour is a tool for resistance, a means of reclaiming narrative agency, and a survival strategy rather than merely a source of amusement. Inspired by Bakhtin's carnivalesque, Scott's "hidden transcript," and indigenous humour theories, this paper has illustrated how the film subverts dominant power systems using satire and irony, therefore articulating the political and cultural realities of Arunachal Pradesh. By making bureaucracy a target of ridicule, the film undermines the legitimacy of state institutions long marginalising the area. At the same time, it gives Arunachali people a forum to clearly and politically powerfully express their points of view in easily accessible form. Though through laughter, the comedy in Itanagar 0KM not only criticises the government narrative on Arunachal Pradesh but also guarantees that the opinions of its people are heard, therefore fostering regional identity and communal cohesiveness.

Regional Film as Public Counterpoint

Knowing how regional film, especially indigenous filmmaking, functions as an alternative site of knowledge production demands an awareness of Nancy Fraser's (1990) concept of counter-publics. Underprivileged people, according to Fraser, develop counter-publics to question accepted wisdom and offer forums for alternate points of view. In the case of Northeast Indian film, films such as Itanagar 0KM offer a platform for indigenous voices to challenge prevailing narratives and assert self-representation, therefore functioning as counter-public commentary.

Subaltern voices are sometimes muffled inside dominant systems of power as Spivak (1988) famously questions in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

Mainstream Indian media has always ignored the voices of Northeast Indian people, therefore helping to sustain their position as peripheral subjects inside the national consciousness. But regional films, especially those from Arunachal Pradesh, actively challenge this erasure by setting venues where indigenous experiences are not merely expressed but placed at the centre. Investigating the role of indigenous media as a venue of cultural activism, Ginsburg (1991) argues that indigenous filmmakers offer a strong weapon for retrieving twisted or suppressed stories. Ginsburg claims that rather than depending on images pushed from outside sources, indigenous media allows individuals to create their own identities and histories. Arunachali films challenge accepted narratives by means of humour, satire, and localised storytelling, thereby expressing this form of media activism through which one may claim regional identity even though they are still in their early years.

Northeast regional films thus provide a main tool for opposition against representational marginalisation. By stressing the daily reality, challenges, and aspirations of local communities, these movies act as counter-public texts questioning hegemonic media portrayals and disturbing the homogeneity of Bollywood and national news media (McDuie-Ra, 2016).

Arunachal Pradesh, Media Representation, and Cinematic Resistance

The Politics of Northeast Indian Representation

Mainstream Indian media has long disregarded, misrepresents, and stereotypically presents Northeast India. Over the history of the nation, this view has remained constant. Misra (2011) points out that political and cultural marginalisation has been experienced by Arunachal Pradesh as well as a good part of the area, which is shown in the limited and often false representations of the state in the media. Usually presented in dominant national discourses, Northeast India is consistently reduced to a set of simplistic clichés. These clichés centre Northeast India as either an exoticised periphery populated by "tribal" people frozen in time or as a militarised borderland beset by conflict. These representations support the continuous "othering" of the area, hence strengthening the idea that Northeast India exists apart from the mainstream of Indian national psyche. These depictions show

Arunachal Pradesh as a military borderland in a highly prominent way. The state is usually presented inside a national security paradigm that gives the presence of the military more importance than the expansion of the civilian population because of its crucial geopolitical position on the border with China. From this point of view, the people of Arunachal Pradesh are relegated to the position of obliging subjects caught between the expansionist aspirations of China and the territorial concerns of India. Consequently, a language emphasising nationalistic and security-oriented rhetoric often ignores the socio-political issues the people are facing, which could range from the neglect of infrastructure to discrimination based on identity (Baruah, 2020).

Conversely, the Indian media also practices exoticizing Arunachal Pradesh and the people who call it home. In Bollywood movies and tourism documentaries, the Northeast usually presents as an unspoiled paradise. While neglecting the daily reality of the people who live there, these representations highlight the beauty and cultural "unicity" of the area (McDuie-Ra, 2016). Under this type of portrayal, the Arunachali people are presented as "ethnographic subjects" instead than as active participants in the sociopolitical scene of the country. Their thoughts, difficulties, and goals are rarely highlighted in India, which helps to explain their cultural "others" status there. Two major narratives help to explain Arunachal Pradesh's ongoing obscurity in national political debate. These stories speak of the militarised borderland and the exotic edge. Policies affecting the area are often implemented without enough local participation, and the lack of sophisticated coverage in mainstream media marginalises the opinions of Arunachali people even more. Conversely, the rise of regional and independent films has started to challenge these dominant images by offering diverse narratives reflecting indigenous voices and viewpoints.

Itanagar OKM and the Representation of Governance and Identity

At its essence, *Itanagar OKM* is an indictment of Arunachal Pradesh's government. It accomplishes this by stressing the inherent inefficiencies, contradictions, and absurdities in the local government's bureaucratic systems. The film highlights the discrepancy between political elites and the daily suffering that many people experience by showing government officials as either corrupt or comically inept. By use of parody, the film

emphasises how often Arunachal Pradesh's government operates under a system of neglect and performative policymaking. In this regard, bureaucratic processes are more of a barrier than they are of a means of delivering real public service. The way the movie shows bureaucracy is in line with the worldwide political satirical traditions, which employ comedy to draw attention to the discrepancy between official rhetoric, and the reality people really live with. Itanagar OKM uses absurdity and exaggeration to expose the ineffectiveness of municipal power in the same manner that Charlie Chaplin's 1940 film *The Great Dictator* attacked fascism and Armando Iannucci's film *The Death of Stalin* (2017) criticised Soviet bureaucracy.

Conversely, this movie focuses on the daily ridiculousness of local bureaucracy that is, the endless paperwork, the indifferent government officials, and the convoluted administrative procedures upsetting common people. Western political satire, on the other hand, usually targets centralised governmental authority and is not this. One of the most successful comic devices used in the film is irony, which draws attention to political contradictions. For example, the politicians in the film offer grand platitudes about progress and development, but their real policies still stray greatly from the needs of the people. This is a mirror of the political discourse that Arunachal Pradesh's government engages in, where government projects usually have little effect in producing significant change. By highlighting these paradoxes using comedy, this movie not only provides entertainment value but also instructive value for its viewers. It does this to inspire critical participation with the power systems running their life.

Humour as a Tool to define one's Arunachali Identity apart from its Critique of Government

Itanagar OKM questions the way the Arunachali people are portrayed as helpless victims of the Indian government. Northeast Indian groups are often shown in the popular media as either passive recipients of governmental policies or as politically inert. This representation is really bad. This film challenges the conventional wisdom by showing people who are not only aware of their sociopolitical reality but also engage in comedic rebellion against the absurdities of bureaucratic processes. The movie's primary protagonists are active participants

who negotiate the system with humour, sarcasm, and tenacity rather than helpless or deferential victims of it. By use of comedy, which acts as a sort of resistance, they can show their agency in ways that contradict dominant ideologies. This is in line with Scott's (1990) idea of the "hidden transcript," in which the subaltern challenges authority by means of comedy and satire, therefore acting as instruments. This avoids direct confrontation. By use of jokes connected to governance, these characters expose the flaws in the system while also maintaining control over their own stories.

Furthermore, the way the movie shows daily life in Arunachal Pradesh offers a much-needed substitute for popular representations of the area, which either romanticise or totally overlooks the state. Rather than depending on clichéd images of tribal culture or beautiful scenery, the film *Itanagar 0 KM* centres on modern socioeconomic concerns including corrupt officials, economic challenges, generational rivalries, and political frustrations. Thanks to its genuine portrayal, which is mixed with humour, the movie can instantly appeal to Arunachali viewers. Simultaneously, it questions viewers from all throughout the nation to reconsider their impressions of the area.

Humour as a Vehicle of Communication

For a long time, humour has been known as a potent subversive weapon that helps underprivileged groups question accepted systems in an interesting and logical way. Acting as a kind of "soft" resistance helps communities to highlight social injustices and systematic defects without necessarily calling for direct confrontation. Comedy is used in *Itanagar 0KM* to draw attention to the inefficiencies of bureaucratic procedures, to ridicule political corruption, and to underline Arunachal Pradesh's geographical isolation from the main scene of Indian society. Billig (2005) claims that the funny aspects of the movie help to turn often difficult and frustrating events into times of group laughing, therefore strengthening the audience's sense of solidarity. Especially, Scott's (1990) idea of the "hidden transcript" helps one to understand the subversive power of comedy. Scott claims that by using humour, irony, and satire as their main methods of communication, subordinate cultures usually create their own coded techniques of challenging dominant power structures. This "hidden transcript" helps opposition

to show itself in ways that might not always be immediately clear to those in positions of power. It is buried beneath the words of official speakers. In the case of Itanagar OKM comedy functions as a kind of covert transcript, criticising the shortcomings of the government while preserving a degree of plausible deniability that makes it difficult for authorities to completely discount or censor the material covered in the show (Scott, 1990; Weaver, 2014). Moreover, Bakhtin's (1984) "carnavalesque" theory offers even another perspective on how humour questions power relations. When Bakhtin compares carnival to a brief suspension of social conventions, where laughter is used to challenge authority and traditional hierarchies are destroyed, he is meaning something like this. The critical picture of political elites and bureaucratic incompetence in the movie reflects this carnivalesque heritage (Kuipers, 2008). Simultaneously, the movie use comedy to momentarily shift current power relations and empower common people via laughing.

Comedy as well as Counter-public Commentary

Fraser's (1990) theory of counter-publics holds that underprivileged people create alternate forums where they can share their own stories and challenge received wisdom. In this regard, Itanagar OKM serves as a counter-public platform offering Arunachali voices a different media venue to address their own sociopolitical concerns. According to Misra (2011) and McDuié-Ra (2016), the movie boldly presents a counter-narrative challenging national images of Arunachal Pradesh and its people. The movie therefore questions the erasure of the area in popular Indian media.

This is in line with the results based on studies on indigenous media undertaken by Ginsburg (1991), which claims that indigenous filmmakers form a necessary site of cultural resistance. Through the use of indigenous media as a platform, Ginsburg thinks historically underprivileged people have the capacity to recover their stories and declare their identities in ways that challenge the general portrayal of them. By its comedy and satire, Itanagar OKM supports this kind of media action (Ginsburg, 1991). It does this by challenging the preconceptions and distortions that national media supports and by offering an honest and reflective picture of Arunachal Pradesh.

Thinking through the Politics of Regional Cinema and Representation

It is almost difficult to overestimate the influence of regional films on political debate and cultural identity. Regional films have become even more important sites for self-representation and resistance, even if Bollywood still rules Indian cinematic narrative. Through highlighting local viewpoints and lived experiences, films from Northeast India have progressively tackled the region's historical marginalization in recent years (McDuie-Ra, 2016; Baruah, 2020). This has been achieved by capturing the local points of view and experiences. Itanagar OKM is a major part of this larger movement since comedy offers a way to engage with concerns related to government, identity, and representation. Particularly those people who might not ordinarily engage in traditional political debate, this movie's clever technique makes its political critique more approachable to a greater audience. Using comedy to deliver its critique guarantees that its audience will not only hear but also remember its message. When all is said and done, laughing is a ubiquitous force entering the communal consciousness and having a more long-lasting effect on political critique (Billig, 2005).

The Prospect of Comedy in Regional Film Production

Comedy will be a major tool for addressing sociopolitical issues as regional film grows. This is especially true in cases whereby obvious opposition is greeted with suppression. Satire's potency resides in its capacity to highlight inconsistencies; challenge received wisdom and unite several oppressed groups. Movies like Itanagar OKM show, according to Smith (1999), that comedy is an active and strong tool for cultural opposition rather than just a passive type of entertainment. Furthermore, as digital channels and social media keep growing, regional films have more chances to be seen by far larger audiences. Independent filmmakers from the Northeast now have a stage thanks to online streaming platforms, therefore releasing them from the historical exclusion of conventional Bollywood distribution systems. The availability of internet streaming services makes this feasible. More general debates on issues of representation, government, and identity have emerged as a result of films like Itanagar OKM being seen by viewers outside of their immediate proximity thanks to this democratising of media space (McDuie-Ra, 2016).

The last reason is that Itanagar OKM is a great example of how humour may be applied as a kind of cultural protest, political critique and counter-public debate tool. By means of satire and comedy, the film questions the ineffectiveness of the government, questions the accepted wisdom about Arunachal Pradesh and advocates an alternative story of indigenous identity. This not only generates entertainment but also helps to empower people by giving a forum where voices from underprivileged groups may be heard, recognised, and rewarded (Fraser, 1990). Comedy will always be a vital instrument for negotiating power relations and opposing cultural oblivion even if media environments are continually changing and growing. Comedy gives communities who have been excluded for a long time a means of survival, feedback, and self-determination via the media of film, digital media, or even simply plain storytelling. Itanagar OKM is a film as much as a message, a challenge, and a call to laughing in the face of adversity. It is a monument to the ongoing ability of comedy as a tool for political and social transformation (Bakhtin, 1984).

Conclusion

This study has shown that Itanagar OKM is a kind of comedy reflecting a social movement for counter-public conversation. The film employs comedy and satire to boldly and politically charged revealing of indigenous identity. It also questions political systems, looks at hegemonic narratives, and opposes hegemonic dominating narratives. In this framework, comedy functions not just as a type of entertainment but also as a deliberately planned and carried out tool for cultural opposition. When underprivileged voices are able to challenge power structures, engage in political critique, and reclaim their own narratives in a sociopolitical environment where direct resistance is sometimes met with suppression or neglect, they are able to participate in political change (Scott, 1990; Bakhtin, 1984; Smith, 1999).

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