

BLOW  HORN



**ILLUSTRATED BY  
NIRBHAY JAVANI**




GOODS CARRIER





# PREFACE

*This book is made as the final outcome of my university project. It documents the various aspects of an age old folk art form of India, 'Truck Art' that makes journeys through the dusty highways. People beyond them don't appreciate the rich culture, the hard work of the painters, and the sentiments of the truck drivers attached with these trucks. The aim is to make people embrace this beautiful art by taking it forward and not limiting it.*



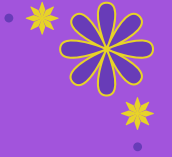
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# INTRODUCTION

*Truck art has been around for a really long time. It is one of those typically Indian things that most often overlook and consider ordinary. "Horn OK Please" could be considered as the mantra of the Indian highway, and different versions of the phrases are written on the back of every truck on the road in India today. Horn ok please, depicts that one should blow horn in order to get an ok to overtake.*

*It is also believed that the trucks during the British rule in India used to have small light bulb at the rear. So, during night, if a vehicle behind the truck had to overtake, the driver would blow the horn. Then the truck would look whether any vehicles are coming from front. If the road is clear, the truck driver would switch that light bulb above the word "OK" signalling the permission for the vehicle behind to overtake.*



HODAN  
HODAN

OK  
OK

PLEASE  
PLEASE



# SYMBOLISM

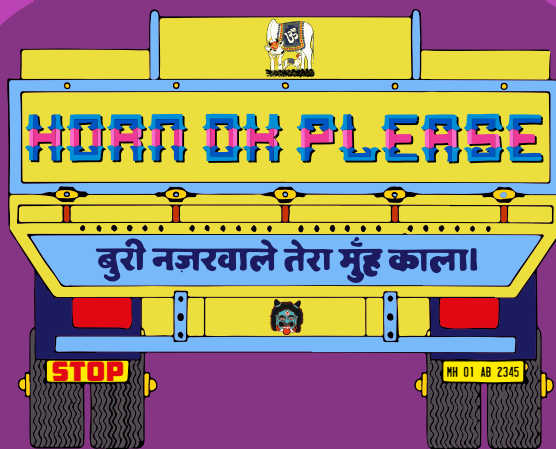
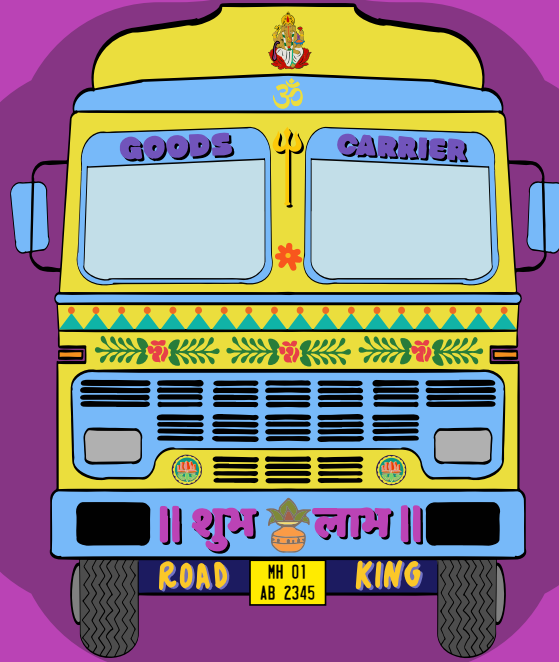
*Indian truck art is filled with religious, political, regional, mythological, cultural and national symbols and pop cultural references.*

*The symbols differ from truck to truck and can be unique or common among other trucks.*

*One can easily identify the truck driver / owners ethnic background by the truck art*



# HINDU

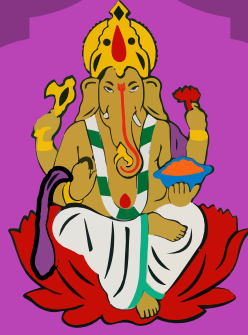






### OM Symbol

It represents the sacred sound of OM. It is a symbol of oneness in Hinduism and other world religions.



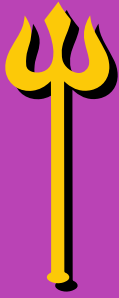
### Lord Ganesh

The elephant-headed Hindu god of beginnings, who is traditionally worshipped before any major enterprise



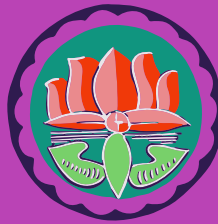
### Kalash

Kalash represents abundance and wisdom. It is viewed as an auspicious object in Hinduism. It consists of a metal pot filled with water and topped with a coronet of mango leaves and a coconut.



### Trishul

The Trishul is the divine weapon of Lord Shiva, one of Hindu mythology's three primary deities.



### Lotus

Lotus is a sign of spiritual communion with God. It is also a sign of fertility and enlightenment

## ॥ शुभ लाभ ॥

### Shubh Lābh (Translation)

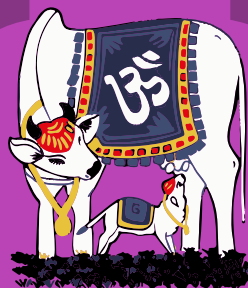
Shubh refers to the good things that occur in life and lābh refers to the profits that we gain.

## बुरी नजरवाले तेरा मुँह काला।

*Buri nazar wāle, terā muh kālā.* (translation)

It means,

"Hey you, the one who has kept an evil eye on me and my work, may your face/ identity/ personality be turned black and shamed or insulted.



### Cow and a Calf

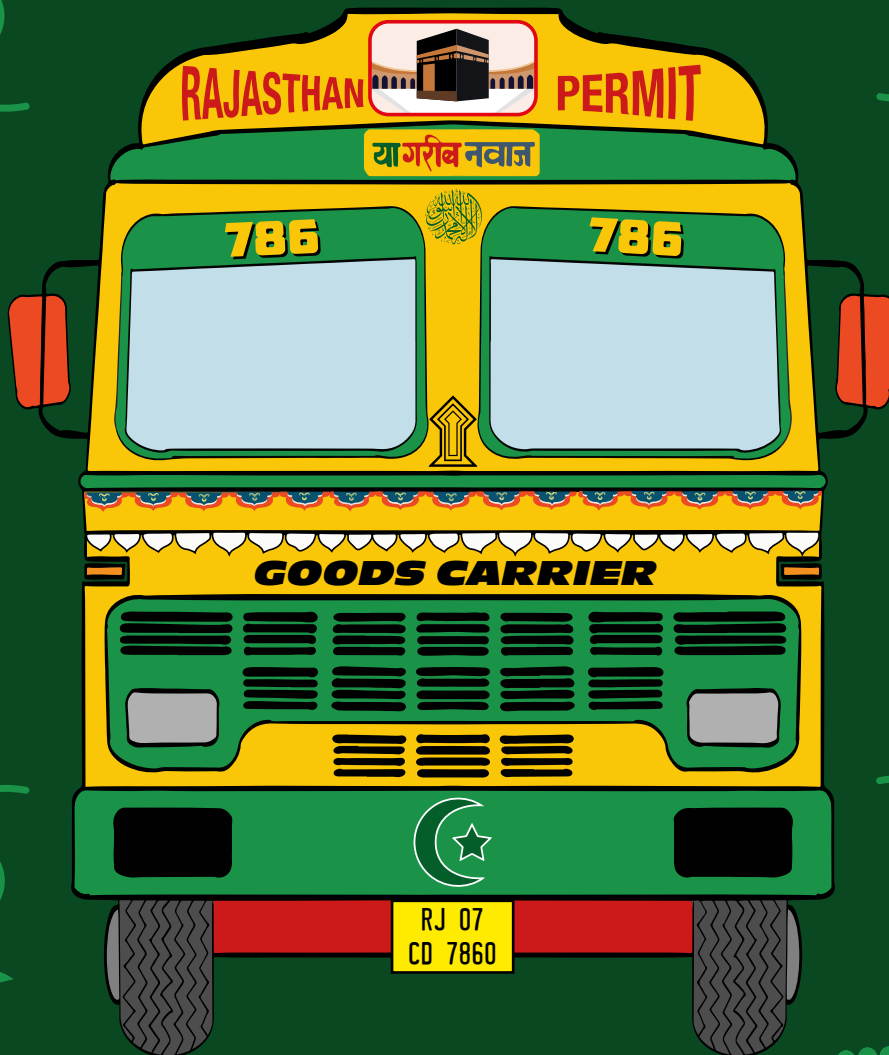
One of the oldest icons on the truck. In earlier days, it used to be a political sign. Other connotation can be protector. Protector can be the owner, who is protecting the driver.

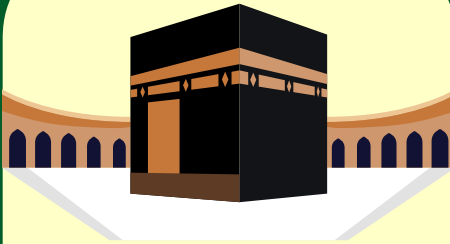


### Nazar Battu

The mug of a sharp toothed demon with matted hair believed to ward off the evil eye.

# MUSLIM





#### **The Kābā**

The Kābā is a building at the center of Islam's most important mosque, the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is the most sacred site in Islam.

## या गरीब नवाज

#### **Yā Garib Nawāz (Translation)**

Gareeb Nawāz is a Muslim Boy name. It has multiple Islamic meanings but the most popular meaning is generous or philanthropic (person)



#### **The Shahādā**

The Shahādā is an Islamic oath, one of the Five Pillars of Islam. It reads: "I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God."



#### **Sujud Tilawa**

Used in the Quran to indicate when the reader should perform sujud, the act of low bowing or prostration in worship of God.

# 786

#### **786**

In Arabic literature, there is a numerology equation in which words and abjad letters converted into numbers gives 786 as a conversion of the words which literally means in English: "In the Name of Allah (i.e. God) the Compassionate the Merciful"



#### **Star and crescent**

The star and crescent was associated with the Ottoman Empire and later came to commonly symbolize Islam, especially in the Western world before attaining more universally Muslim connotations.



SIKH





#### **Ik Onkar**

*Ik Onkar are the first words of the Mul Mantar and also the opening words of the Sikh holy scripture Guru Granth Sahib. It is used to represent the "One Supreme Reality" or "One God."*

**WAHE GURU**

#### **Wahe Guru**

*In Sikhism, Waheguru is the most widely used name for God, describing the Supreme Being as a universal, genderless deity. The term Waheguru is derived from a mix of Punjabi and Sanskrit roots; wahe meaning "wondrous" in Punjabi, and guru which translates from Sanskrit as "teacher" or "remover of darkness."*



#### **The Khanda**

*The special Sikh religious symbol is made up of three images: The Khanda, which is a double edged sword. This represents the belief in one God. The Chakkar, like the Kara it is a circle representing God without beginning or end and reminding Sikhs to remain within the rule of God. Two crossed kirpans representing spiritual authority and political power.*

# COMMONLY FOUND





**Indian Flag**  
Indian Flag is painted as it is a pride of India and Indians.



**Bengal Tiger**  
Bengal Tiger is the national animal of India.

**PRIYA  
RAHUL**

*Names of the loved ones*



**Peacock**  
Peacock is the national bird of India.



**Taj Mahal**  
The Taj Mahal is one of the seven wonders of the world. So, truck drivers get it painted on their trucks as they believe that their trucks are as unique as the Taj.

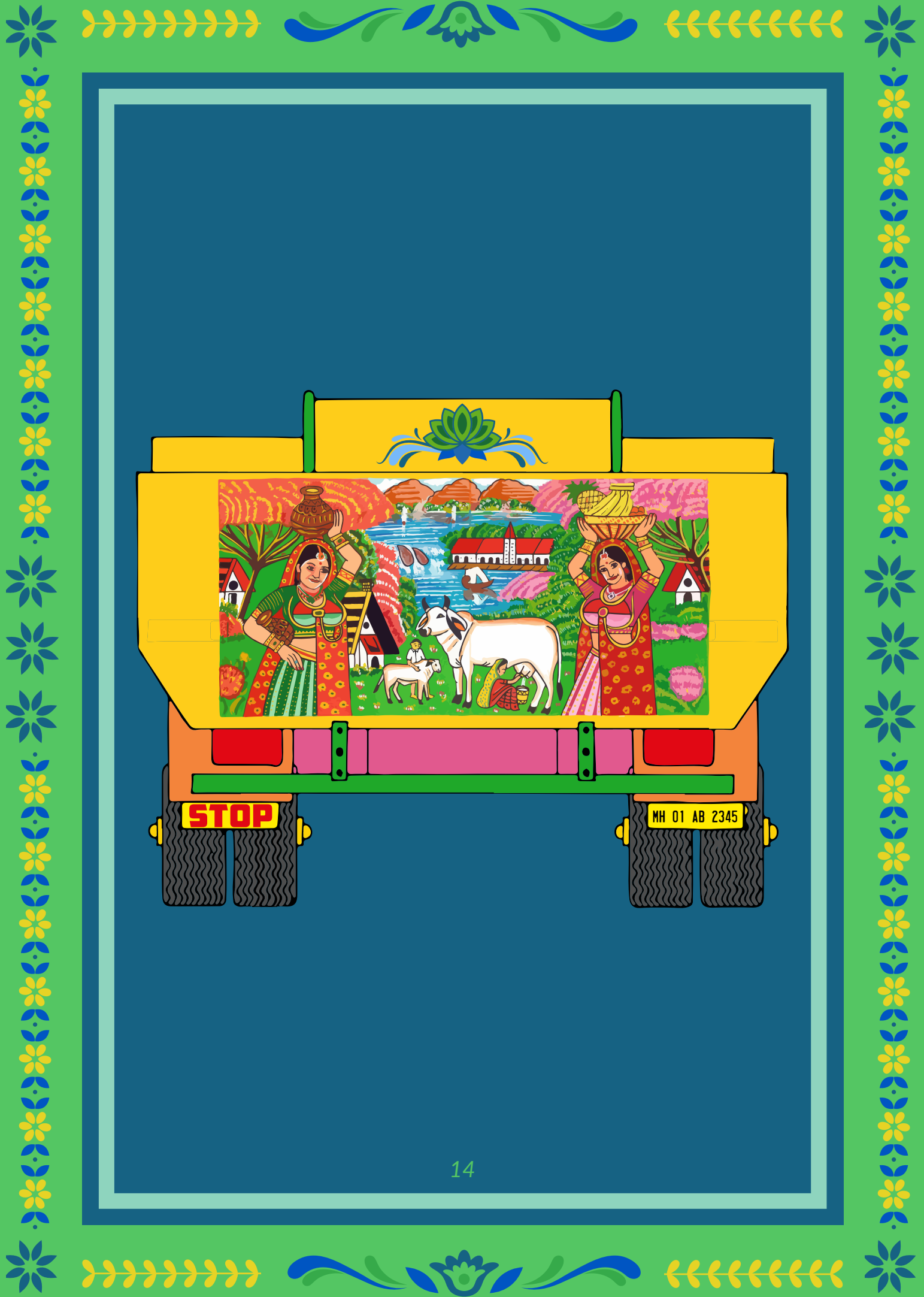


**Nimbu Mirchi**  
It consists of seven chillies (mirchi) and a lemon (nimbu). Hanging it outside houses, shops, or cars is a very common Indian ritual. It is used as an offering to Alakshmi, the goddess of misfortune.

# MOBILE CANVAS

*Photographs are printed and graphs are made on it. Using those graphs, sketches are portrayed on a plastic sheet and holes are made on those plastic sheets. These are then printed on the actual surface of the truck. Once the sketch is final, the colour is filled. Colours are either filled according to the reference or as per the truck artist's judgement.*







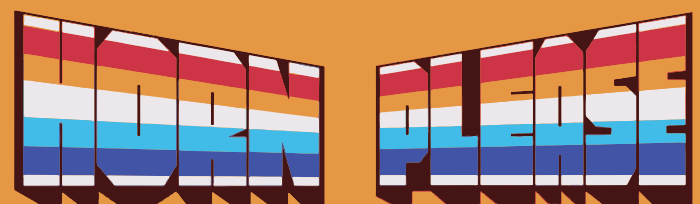
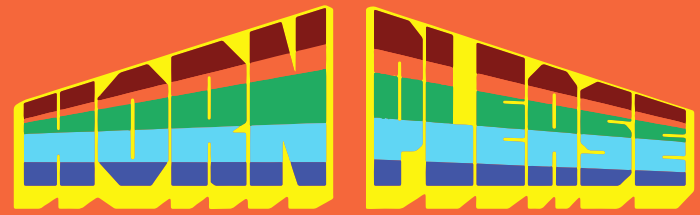
# TYPOGRAPHY

*Every Truck Artist has their own unique typography and hand lettering style. They have embellishments and little ornamentations coming along with it. Even though the letters are hand painted, the fonts are very straight making no mistakes. They also accurately make use of 3D lettering and drop shadows.*



**HORN PLEASE**

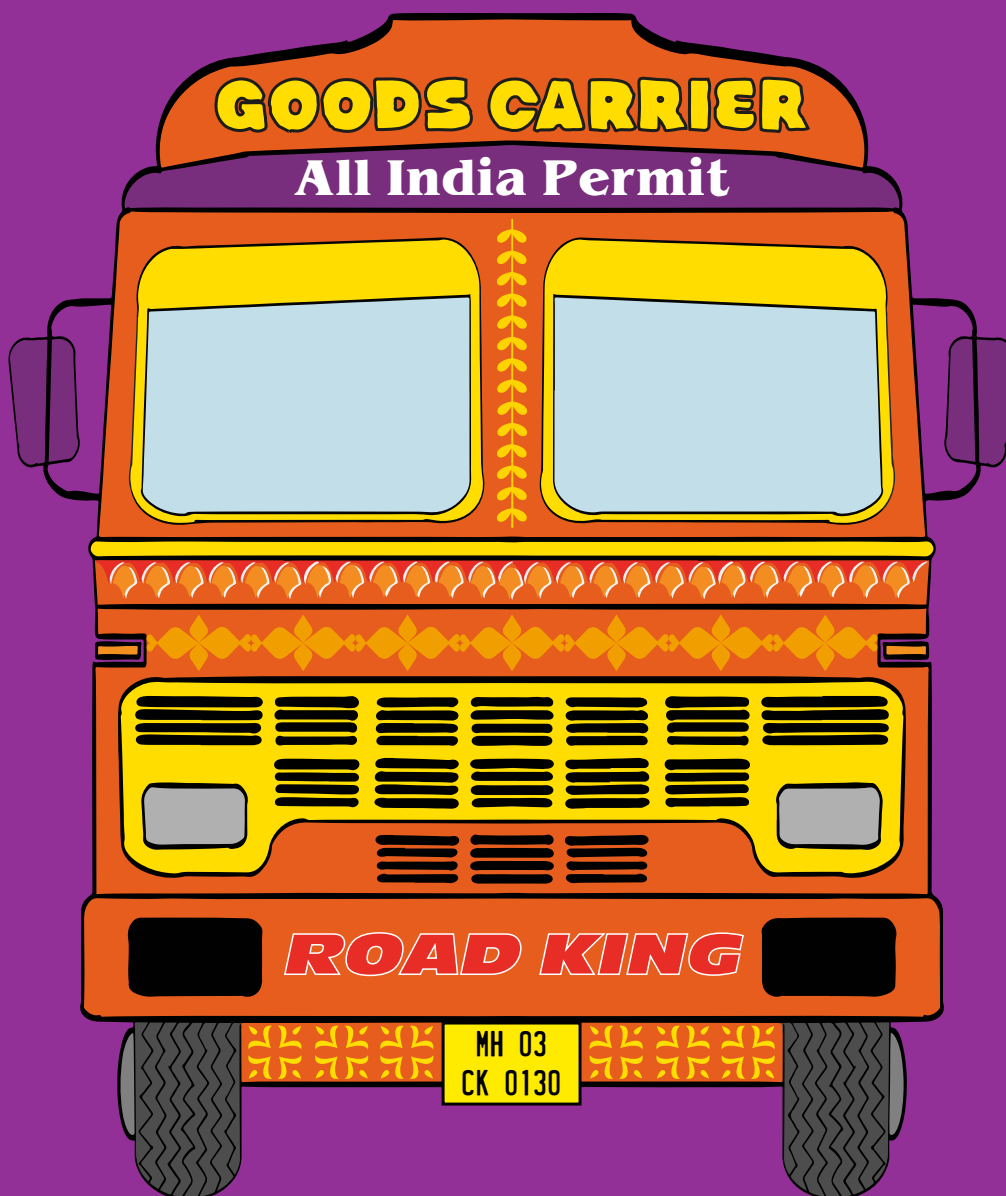
**HORN PLEASE**





TRAFFIC RULES  
& REGULATIONS

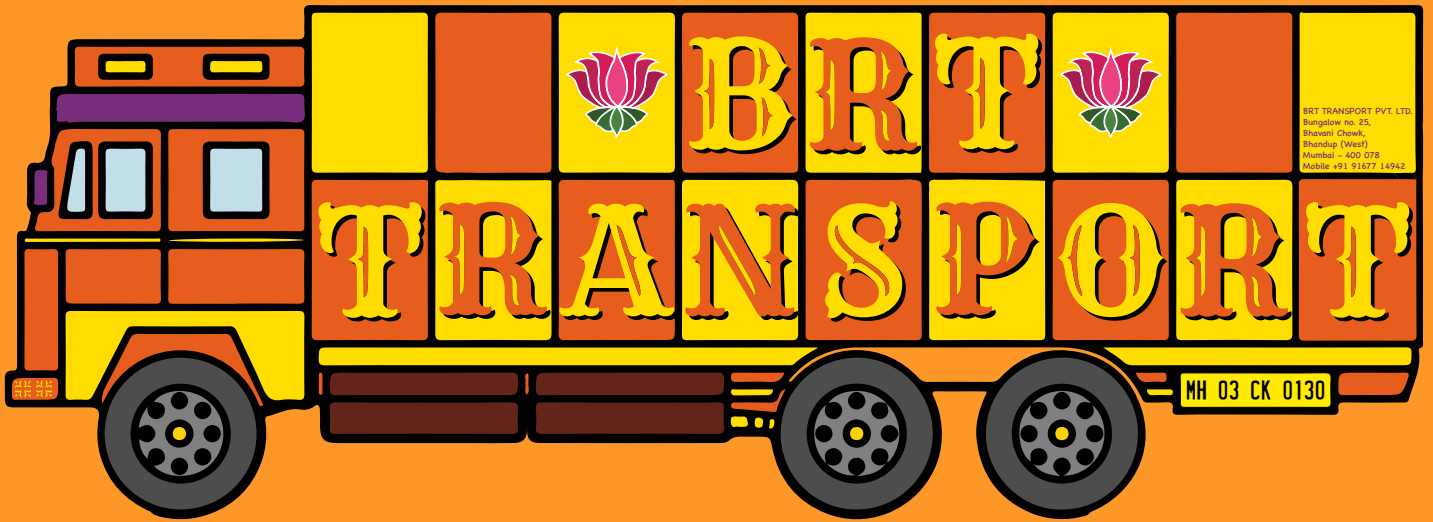
As per the traffic rules and regulations, trucks are supposed to have 'All India Permit', 'Goods Carrier' and 'License Plate' on the front of the truck.



Maximum speed of the truck is mentioned on the back if its a big truck or trailer. You will also find 'HORN OK PLEASE' at the centre with some floral designs & patterns around it. As per the traffic rules, one can only overtake from the right. That's why, "Stop" signal on the left mudguard and license plate on the right one. Important information is painted if a truck or tanker is carrying inflammable or radioactive materials.



*On the side, you can find the license plate and the name and the address of the owner of the truck.*



BRT TRANSPORT PVT. LTD.  
Bungalow no. 25,  
Bhavani Chowk,  
Bhandup (West)  
Mumbai - 400 078  
Mobile +91 91677 14942

# FUNNY RHYMES AND QUOTES

*One can find catchy, humorous, sometimes brave and philosophical rhymes/couplets painted on the trucks.*

*These can be majorly in English, Hindi, regional languages or English Transliteration of the original quote. One of the most popular one is “Maa Ka Aashirwad” - Mother’s Blessing*



## समय से पहले भाग्य से ज्यादा कभी नहीं मिलता ।

"Samay se pehle bhagya se zyada kabhi nahi milta."  
We never get anything before time and it  
will never be more than what is in our luck.

## सोच कर सोचो साथ क्या जाएगा ?

"Soch kar socho saath kyaa jaaega?"  
Give a thought to the thought, what you will take along when you will die?

## दम है तो क्रॉस कर, वरना बरदाश्त कर ।

"Dum hai to cross kar, varna bardasht kar."  
Overtake me if you have the balls, or else tolerate being stuck behind my a\*\*.

## अमीरो की जिंदगी, बिस्किट और केक पर, ड्राइवर की जिंदगी, क्लच और ब्रेक पर ।

"Amiro ki zindagi, biscuit aur cake par, driver ki zindagi, clutch aur break par."  
The rich feed on biscuits and cake, while the drivers feed on clutch and brake.



# PROBLEMS FACED BY TRUCK ARTISTS

- A painter might earn only ₹. 100-200 (£. 1-2) for painting a whole truck.
- There has been an increased use of vinyls and stickers as they are a cheaper alternative.
- Truck artists want their children to pursue other fields and take up corporate / government jobs as they pay well.
- Change in design of new trucks by the manufacturers is impacting the art form. As some manufacturers are providing pre-painted trucks. So there is no space for truck art in newer designs.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who helped and supported me to complete this project. A special thanks to my teachers Prof. Hugh Harwood & Prof. Kathrin Tinhof whose contribution in stimulating suggestions and encouragement, helped me to push my boundaries. Last but not least, many thanks to the truck artist and the truck drivers who helped me investigate, by guiding me through their knowledge and experiences. My thanks and appreciations also go to my parents for their support and also to my classmates who supported and guided me through my entire journey.*

VISIT  AGAIN