

A Study on the Perception of Selected Ethnic Communities Toward Communication Media : An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Purpose : Ethnographic marketing is an emerging area in the field of management. In a world marked by growing multiculturalism, media plays a significant role in the dissemination of information. Marketers are required to know the nature of the perception held by ethnic communities toward media. This is essential to provide tailored media content to respective targeted communities. Hence, the study was carried out to know the perception of ethnic communities toward communication media.

Design/Methodology/Approach : The study was conducted using an exploratory research design on a sample of 1,200 units comprising 400 respondents from three ethnic communities selected, namely Bodo, Mishing, and Rabha. The study used a convenience sampling technique, and data were collected by a structured interview schedule. Attitudinal statements were used to record the responses. Multiple discriminant analysis was used for data processing.

Findings : The study found that the Rabha community associated media with advertisement as a platform for choice alternatives of products and as an informer of offers. The Bodo community perceived media as the news channel through which information is circulated, but it is not always deemed to be authentic. Finally, the Mishing community perceived media as the educator of people, as the mobilizer of public opinion, and as the provider of information on the latest trends.

Practical Implications : As ethnic communities form significant segments of target markets today, the findings are vital inputs for marketers to suitably use the right media for communication in the right perspective. It will consequently facilitate in providing tailored media content to respective communities being targeted by the stakeholders.

Originality/Value : Although studies on consumers' perception toward communication media are available, studies on the specific ethnic communities in the specific geographical region identified are rare. The research findings will go a long way in enlightening academicians as well as marketers who are related to this area and, thus, find it novel. Furthermore, people from the field of anthropology and mass communication may get vital inputs on the behavior of ethnic communities toward media.

Keywords : ethnicity, media, perception, discriminant, advertisement

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Media has had its origin since the inception of civilization. It is instrumental in the survival and growth of societies. It also plays a significant role in the progress of any civil society. The term media has its origin in the Latin word “medium,” which implies the ways, channels, or means used to exchange

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thoughts or ideas among individuals and groups. It is considered as one of the important pillars of democracy. With the world moving toward multiculturalism, many ethnic communities maintain unique sub-cultural identities but form a broader part of the national culture. As an integral part of the present-day global market, media helps in initiating and maintaining an inclusive development of all segments of society. Media can further uplift the socio-economic status of social groups. In a world that is in transition, with the help of a technology-intervened marketing environment, media becomes even more effective. This is possible with the use of a wide variety of modes of media, particularly satellite and internet communication.

Currently, technology has enabled marketers to target niche segments with the help of tailored media communication cum persuasion. It has also made the marketing task easier and less time-consuming. Consequently, the world is moving toward a segmented market with the right target audience. This is further facilitated by the emergence of prominent ethnic populations with their respective significant sizes. About 448 million social media content users globally propelled India's digitalized marketing environment (Data Reportal, 2022). Besides the increase in the use of new age media, other forms of mass media are still popular, and their usage level differs with the variety of geographical regions, locations, and respective habitation of ethnic groups that reside.

The North Eastern part of India is a hub of cultural and ethnic vivacity. Among 635 tribal groups in India, the North East itself has over 200 ethnic groups, speaking different dialects (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2017). In Assam, ethnic groups such as the Bodo, Kachari, Dimasa, Deori, Mishing, Rabha, Garo, Karbi, Tiwa, and many others have settled and provided a rich heritage to the broader culture of the state. This diversity pertinently provides scope for marketers and policymakers to target each growing ethnic group different from the mainstream population. This is possible through the use of a variety of mass media and customized commercial appeals.

Research Problem

Today, ethnic communities have seen a significant surge in population growth and, therefore, can be treated as distinctive market segments. With the emergence of technological advancement in the field of media, the perception and usage of different media among ethnic communities are having a remarkable effect. As a result, marketers require knowledge about their perception of media. Such information is essentially needed to get a better view of the target community and to understand their preference toward various household products and services. This is essential to communicate with each target audience in a customized way.

Review of Literature

For this study, a few prominent research papers published in journals, organizational reports, and articles were reviewed. They were selected because they met the inclusion criteria of the paper in some way.

Siji (2021) studied the role of social media usage on consumers and its usefulness in online purchases. The study used a sample of 500 respondents, and data were processed by multiple regressions. The study found that social media had an encouraging effect on purchase intention, and the time spent on social media depended on the ability of social media to connect with users. Jude and Peter (2021) conducted a study to establish a relationship between media and emergencies among the rural people of Nigeria. It was a descriptive study on a sample of 857 respondents. The study found that rural people primarily depended on social media during emergencies as a cost-effective way of communication. In their research work, Padival et al. (2019) tried to identify the factors that impacted consumers toward advertisements through social media. The study used a sample of 217 respondents, and data were processed by a partial least square approach. It was revealed that creativity and informative content impacted the attitude of consumers toward advertisements through social media.

Saji (2018), in a study, tried to know the motivation of users and the value given to the news disseminated. The study used 352 respondents, and data were processed by a multi-dimensional scaling technique. The findings revealed that a segment of respondents sought simplicity of language and authenticity of news published. The other segment was tilted toward biased political news and a range of coverage of news items. Hall and Gamble (2018) conducted a study on rural media habits in a sample of New Zealand. The study was exploratory in nature on a sample of 820 respondents. The study found that print media strongly impacted rural communities, and media was used primarily for gathering information related to work and livelihood. However, mass media such as radio and television were used for entertainment. In a study, Bhatt and Singh (2017) tried to know the television viewing habits of specific rural women in Uttarakhand. The study used a sample of 100 respondents using a convenient sampling method. The study found television as one of the most popular sources of entertainment. Further advertisements through it influenced the purchase habits toward apparel and food items.

In their research paper, Choudhury and Hazarika (2017) tried to explore the role of different forms of media on the socio-political culture of Assamese society. The study used secondary data, and content analysis was used to present the data. The study found that among the different forms of media in Assam, print media plays a remarkable role in shaping the socio-political environment, especially with the circulation of vernacular medium newspapers. Sharma (2016) studied the impact of social media on the tribal youth population of Northeast India. The study was based on secondary data with the use of content analysis. The study found that due to limited telecommunication connectivity in the Northeast, the digital movement was slow, especially in comparison to the rest of India. It was felt that social media could provide opportunities to empower the young generations with dedicated digital literacy.

Tukachinsky et al. (2015), in their research paper, tried to understand the influence of racial ethnicity on television viewing habits in America. The study was conducted on 345 popular television shows and used the content analysis method. The study found that ethnic consumers' behavior was distinct from that of mainstream consumers and had unique ways of consuming specific media. Khan et al. (2015), in their study on major Chinese supermarket areas in Australia, tried to understand the influence of media on rural ethnic people. It was an exploratory study on a sample of 120 shoppers that used multiple regression analysis. The study revealed that advertisements on cultural heritage and programs influenced rural ethnic consumers toward a specific brand.

Rajeshwar (2015), in his research, studied media habits and the impact of media on a specific tribal population of Maharashtra. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 respondents using a convenient sampling method. His research revealed that the tribes of India have gained significant self-confidence in their way of living. With the extensive coverage of different ethnic groups by media, their knowledge of agriculture, forest, culture, and lifestyles has also been enhanced. Malecki (2003) conducted a study on digital development in rural areas of America. It was an exploratory study where content analysis was used on available secondary data. The study revealed that social interactions through the Internet are more popular than the other modes of media. Rural people, including children, were fond of internet-based activities.

Cleveland et al. (2012) conducted a study on Lebanese consumers to establish a relationship among culture, religion, values, and media habits. The study identified causal relationships among the variables considered and concluded that ethnocentric media could be considered a powerful tool for adopting a tailored linguistic approach to persuading ethnic consumers. Jeffres et al. (2011), in their study, tried to understand the perception of ethnic groups on their group being portrayed in the media. The study used a sample of 304 respondents from Midwest America. Data were processed using multiple regressions. The study revealed that media is correlated with perceived values. Television viewers were found to be highly cognizant about group identity and the way they are depicted in the mass media.

Mendiratta and Mehta (2011), in their online research work, made an effort to know how people are influenced to get involved in social campaigns. They also tried to ascertain the most effective media that can stimulate people.

Data were processed using mediation analysis. The study found that type of media and brand shift had a direct affinity with the efficacy of social campaigns. In their research work, Makkar and Dhyani (2010) tried to identify the factors that impacted the media preferences among rural and urban consumers. The study used simple random sampling, and data were processed using factor analysis. The study revealed the diverse vehicles of media, in general, and specific electronic media, in particular, that guided consumers in the purchases made. They provided key inputs to marketers for the right media mix.

From the reviewed literature, it can be inferred that although studies on consumers' perception toward communication media are available, studies on the specific ethnic communities selected and in the specific geographical region identified are rare. As these three communities form a significant part of the population in the region, studies concerning their perception of media are quite vital from the perspective of several stakeholders. To address this existing gap, the research work has been undertaken.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Accordingly, the research work has been carried out to know the perception of selected ethnic communities toward media. In fulfillment of the objective, members of three ethnic communities, Rabha, Bodo, and Mishing, were considered. Furthermore, the question of interest is whether variations exist among the three ethnic communities under consideration and whether they can be differentiated regarding their perception of media. Accordingly, the hypotheses are framed as follows:

➤ **H01** : There is no variation among the three ethnic communities under consideration in terms of their perception toward the media.

➤ **Ha1** : There is a variation among the three ethnic communities under consideration in terms of their perception toward the media.

Research Methodology

This study adopted an exploratory cum descriptive research design. Fieldwork was conducted with a structured interview schedule. Primary data were collected for the Mishings, Bodos, and Rabhas from three districts of Assam, namely Majuli, Baksa, and Kamrup Rural, respectively. The study used a convenient sampling technique.

Sample Size and Selection of the Geographical Area

While selecting the sample size of the study, the Morgan formula was used, where the exact size was calculated as 384, 382, and 382 for Bodos, Mishing, and Rabhas, respectively. For the brevity of the study and to ensure that the research is more illustrative, a sample size of 400 respondents from each community was selected. The questionnaire was translated into the Assamese language to ease the process and overcome the language barrier during the data collection. As a part of the study, specific villages with a Mishing majority population, such as Mishing Saponi, Misa Mora, Bokajan, and Kalitpar Mishing Gaon from the Majuli district, were considered. Further villages with significant Bodo majority populations, such as Bangnabari, Dumunibagan, Onthaibari, Mayongpara, Kopsingpara, Madrijora, and Huduk, were considered from the Baksa district. Further villages with significant Rabha community presence, namely Tarabari, Bondapara, Siloguri, and Somoria, were considered from Kamrup rural district. The period of the fieldwork conducted was from August 2019 – July 2021.

Construction of the Attitudinal Statement

➤ **Step 1 :** As part of the initial groundwork, a total of 25 attitudinal statements related to probable perception toward media were generated. The perceptual statements were developed based on information gathered from an initial exploratory pilot study among respective community representatives in the field and secondary sources. They were administered on a test sample of 101 respondents, and answers were recorded on a 3-point rating scale. Data collected were administered using factor analysis for the sole purpose of data reduction and optimization of content validity so that the statements come to a manageable level. Consequently, a total of eight attitudinal statements on perception toward media were arrived at and suitably reframed in a customized manner. It is based on the commonly held perception of media among the ethnic communities under consideration.

➤ **Step 2 :** To establish reliability with respect to the scale used, Cronbach's alpha scores were extracted (as given in Table 1) and were above 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). A 3-point rating scale was used to measure the score on each attitudinal statement, where 3 denoted "agree," 2 denoted "neither agree nor disagree," and 1 denoted "disagree" for both Step 1 and Step 2.

➤ **Justification of the 3-Point Scale :** The use of a 3-point scale is supported for respondents who may not, otherwise, respond to more scaled options. Thus, acceding to such respondents, the chance of getting greater cooperation and return rates is more. Further use of such measures does not lead to a decrease in reliability and validity in a significant manner (Jacoby & Matell, 1971). Furthermore, when the focus of marketing research is on population averages rather than individuals, studies suggest that scales with fewer categories are adequate (Lehmann & Hulbert, 1972).

The mean score of the derived responses from the field study was calculated to get the most agreeable perception of the respondents. It has been calculated in the manner given below:

The weighted mean of the statement (*S1*), that is, "media provides information on latest trends in the market" of the Rabha community: $(1 \times 51 + 2 \times 168 + 3 \times 181)/400 = 2.33$.

In the manner as cited, the weighted mean score has been derived for the other statements of the selected ethnic groups. The statements with their mean score and corresponding standard deviation with respect to different ethnic groups have been presented in Table 2. Consequently, multiple discriminant analysis was administered (Goswami, 2013) using SPSS software. Discriminant analysis is applicable when beforehand information on group membership exists (Malhotra, 2019). In the current study, distinct segmentation is available for the Bodo, Mishing, and Rabha ethnic communities, and discriminant analysis is justified. In the analysis, the predictor

Table 1. Reliability Test Score

Sl. No.	Statements	Cronbach's Alpha
S1	Media provides information on the latest trends in the market.	0.845
S2	Media is an effective tool to educate people.	
S3	Media does not always circulate authentic information.	
S4	Media is all about market offers and discounts.	
S5	Media is a tool to mobilize public opinion.	
S6	Media basically means the news channels.	
S7	Media gives a choice for multiple alternatives.	
S8	Media is a way for market advertisements.	

variables were eight specific perceptual statements toward media, as given in Table 1. The frequencies of agreement, neither agreement nor disagreement, and disagreement against the attitudinal statements were analyzed for this purpose. A rating of 1 denoted “disagreement,” 2 denoted a neutral position, that is, “neither agreement nor disagreement,” and a rating of 3 denoted “agreement” to the statements.

Data Analysis and Results

An examination of the mean score (as per Table 2) indicates that perception toward media, in terms of attitudinal statements such as “media provides information on the latest trend,” “media educates the people,” “all information through media may not be authentic,” and “media is a mobilizer of public opinion” has brought the two communities, that is, the Rabhas and Bodos much closer. Perceptions of media such as “media provides choice alternatives,” “media is about advertisement,” and “media informs on offers and discounts” has brought the two communities, that is, the Mishings and Bodos, much closer. On the other hand, perceptions such as “media means news channels” and “media informs on offers and discounts” have set apart the three communities with wider standard deviation.

The pooled within-groups correlation matrix (as per Table 3) does not indicate any significant correlation between the perceptual statements with the ethnic groups and is on the lower side, and the issue of multicollinearity is quite negligible.

Table 2. Group Means and Group Standard Deviation

Sl. No.	Statements	Mean			Standard Deviation		
		Rabha	Bodo	Mishing	Rabha	Bodo	Mishing
S1	Media provides information on the latest trends in the market.	2.33	2.37	2.48	0.69	0.77	0.68
S2	Media is an effective tool to educate people.	2.41	2.45	2.92	0.66	0.75	0.27
S3	Media does not always circulate authentic information.	2.28	2.31	1.87	0.73	0.80	0.78
S4	Media is all about market offers and discounts.	2.80	2.51	2.46	0.40	0.52	0.69
S5	Media is a tool to mobilize public opinion.	2.32	2.35	2.67	0.72	0.72	0.53
S6	Media basically means the news channels.	2.48	2.89	2.18	0.52	0.32	0.92
S7	Media gives a choice for multiple alternatives.	2.76	1.73	1.71	0.43	0.75	0.46
S8	Media is a way for market advertisements.	2.84	2.07	2.06	0.47	0.72	0.51

Table 3. Pooled Within-Groups Correlation Matrices

Statements	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
Media provides information on the latest trends in the market.	1.00	0.16	0.09	0.36	0.27	0.04	-0.25	0.04
Media is an effective tool to educate people.	0.16	1.00	0.48	-0.02	0.03	0.15	-0.03	-0.04
Media does not always circulate authentic information.	0.09	0.48	1.00	0.01	0.03	0.34	-0.04	-0.06
Media is all about market offers and discounts.	0.36	-0.02	0.01	1.00	0.22	0.02	-0.08	0.01
Media is a tool to mobilize public opinion.	0.27	0.03	0.03	0.22	1.00	-0.01	-0.10	0.05
Media basically means the news channels.	0.04	0.15	0.34	0.02	-0.01	1.00	-0.03	0.10
Media gives a choice for multiple alternatives.	-0.25	-0.03	-0.04	-0.08	-0.10	-0.03	1.00	-0.02
Media is a way for market advertisements.	0.04	-0.04	-0.06	0.01	0.05	0.10	-0.02	1.00

Table 4. Wilks' Lambda (U-Statistics) and Univariate F - Ratio

	Statements	Wilks' Lambda	F	Sig.
1	Media provides information on the latest trends in the market.	0.99	05.06	0.006*
2	Media is an effective tool to educate people.	0.87	89.98	0.000*
3	Media does not always circulate authentic information.	0.94	40.74	0.000*
4	Media is all about market offers and discounts.	0.93	44.90	0.000*
5	Media is a tool to mobilize public opinion.	0.95	35.03	0.000*
6	Media basically means the news channels.	0.83	125.16	0.000*
7	Media gives a choice for multiple alternatives.	0.57	448.55	0.000
8	Media is a way for market advertisements.	0.71	241.31	0.000

Note. With 2 and 1,197 *df*.

Table 5. Canonical Discriminant Function

Fcn	Eigen Value	Percent of Variance	CUM Pct	Canonical Corr		After Fcn	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
					:	0	0.275	1541.30	16	0.00
1	1.496 ^a	76.60	76.6	0.77	:	1	0.686	449.53	7	0.00
2	0.457 ^a	23.40	100.0	0.56						

Note. ^a The first two canonical discriminant functions were applied in the analysis.

Based on the outcome of multiple discriminant analysis, the significance attached to the univariate *F* - ratio (as per Table 4) indicates that when the predictors are considered on an individual basis, the perceptual statements framed differentiate between the three groups in a significant manner.

A null hypothesis of equality among group centroids was assumed, and to test it simultaneously, both functions were taken into consideration. According to Table 5, the 0 below “after function” denotes the inclusion of all the functions. The value of Wilks' Lambda arrived at is 0.275. It results in a chi-square test score of 1541.30, with degrees of freedom of 16 and with a significance value of 0.00 with $p < 0.05$ level that proves to be significant. Thus, the two functions, in a marked way, discriminate among the three ethnic groups. And interestingly, on the removal of function 1, the Wilks' Lambda linked with function 2 is 0.686, which is beyond the 0.05 level that also proves to be significant. Therefore, the second function also contributes significantly to the group differences.

As three ethnic groups were considered for the study, two functions at the most are possible outcomes. The eigenvalue associated with function 1 is 1.496, accounting for 76.60% of the variance explained (as per Table 5). Apparently, as the eigenvalue is large or the first function, it is possibly superior. Function 2 has a comparatively smaller eigenvalue of 0.457 and has an explained variance that accounts for only 23.40%.

For the explanation of the results (Table 6), a reference to the standard canonical discriminant function coefficient helps in a major way, along with the structure correlation and certain plots. The standardized coefficient indicates a higher coefficient for the media perceptions (that is, “media provides choice alternatives” as 0.73, “media is about advertisement” as 0.54, and “media informs on offers and discounts as 0.28) on the first function. And for the second function, it has a comparatively greater coefficient for the media perceptions (that is, “media educates the people” as 0.71, “media provides information on latest trend” as 0.002, and “media is a mobilizer of public opinion” as 0.25 on function 2.

An equivalent contention is arrived at by an inspection of the structure matrix (as per Table 7). To facilitate the

Table 6. Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

Statements	Standardized	
	Function 1	Function 2
Media provides information on the latest trends in the market.	0.079	-0.002
Media is an effective tool to educate people.	-0.360	0.714
Media does not always circulate authentic information.	0.386	-0.414
Media is all about market offers and discounts.	0.276	0.010
Media is a tool to mobilize public opinion.	-0.175	0.246
Media basically means the news channels.	-0.089	-0.654
Media gives a choice for multiple alternatives.	0.734	0.222
Media is a way for market advertisements.	0.544	0.219

Table 7. Structure Matrix

Statements	Function 1	Function 2
Provides choice alternatives.	0.698*	0.207
Media is about advertisement.	0.512*	0.159
Information on offers and discounts.	0.224*	0.015
Media means news channels.	0.033	-0.673*
Media educates the people.	-0.223	0.408*
All information may not be authentic.	0.130	-0.306*
Mobilizer of public opinion.	-0.142	0.249*
Provides information on the latest trends.	-0.061	0.078*

interpretation of the results, the greater coefficients variables for a function specifically identified are grouped together. Asterisks are used to show the groupings. Thus, media perceptions such as “media provides choice alternatives” with a coefficient of 0.698*, “media is about advertisement” with a coefficient of 0.512*, and “media informs on offers and discounts” with a coefficient of 0.224* for function 1 marked with asterisks account for the fact that such variables have greater coefficients for the first function in comparison to the second function. These variables have affiliation primarily with function 1.

On the other hand, perceptions such as “media educates the people” with a coefficient of 0.408*, “media is a mobilizer of public opinion” with a coefficient of 0.249*, “media provides information on latest trends” with a coefficient of 0.078* possess asterisks for the second function as the coefficients of the identified variables are larger for the second function than for the first function. These variables are associated with function 2, as highlighted with the asterisk symbols.

However, perceptions such as “media means the news channels” with a coefficient of -0.673* and “all information in media may not be authentic” with a coefficient of -0.306* have negative coefficients for function 2. But they have positive coefficients for function 1, that is, 0.033 and 0.130, respectively. However, if reference is made to Table 2 (related to group means), it can be inferred that the Bodos have the highest mean score of 2.89 and 2.31, respectively, on these two perceptual statements.

On examination of Table 8, it has been found that function 1 is dominated by the Rabhas with a coefficient of 1.699, and they are followed by the Bodos and the Mishings with coefficients of -0.580 and -1.119, respectively.

**Table 8. Canonical Discriminant Function at Group Means
(Group Centroids)**

Ethnic Group	Function 1	Function 2
Rabha	1.699	0.172
Bodo	-0.580	-0.900
Mishing	-1.119	0.728

Table 9. Classification Results ^{a, b}

Ethnicity			Predicted Group Membership			Total
			Rabha	Bodo	Mishing	
Original	Count	Rabha	354	25	21	400
		Bodo	66	305	29	400
		Mishing	9	126	265	400
	%	Rabha	88.5	6.2	5.2	100.0
		Bodo	16.5	76.2	7.2	100.0
		Mishing	2.2	31.5	66.2	100.0
Cross-Validated ^a	Count	Rabha	353	26	21	400
		Bodo	66	302	32	400
		Mishing	11	126	263	400
	%	Rabha	88.2	6.5	5.2	100.0
		Bodo	16.5	75.5	8.0	100.0
		Mishing	2.8	31.5	65.8	100.0

Note. ^a A total of 77.00% of original grouped cases have been correctly classified.

^b A total of 76.50% of cross-validated grouped cases have been correctly classified.

On the other hand, function 2 is dominated by the Mishings with a coefficient of 0.728. They are followed by the Rabhas and the Bodos with coefficients 0.172 and -0.900, respectively.

The classification results (as per Table 9) based on analysis of the sample indicate that $(354 + 305 + 265)/1200 = 77.00\%$ of the cases are correctly classified. Leave-one-out-cross-validation correctly classifies only $(353 + 302 + 263)/1200 = 76.50\%$ of the cases.

The above analysis reveals that the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, it can be stated that variation exists among the three ethnic communities under consideration in terms of their perception of media.

Discussion

A multiple discriminant analysis was conducted to predict whether a consumer belonged to a specific ethnic community under consideration, namely Rabha, Bodo, or Mishings. Predictor variables were the selected perceptual statements toward media. Mean differences were detected in a significant way for all the predictors on the dependent variable. The multiple discriminant functions revealed a significant association between groups and

all the predictors. Accordingly, based on the analysis of the data collected from the extensive fieldwork, notable findings for the respective ethnic communities have been revealed. Among the members of the Rabha community, media is perceived as an advertisement, as a provider of scope for choice alternatives, and informer of offers and discounts. However, language is one of the common barriers among older people to understanding advertisements. Among the members of the Bodo community, media is perceived as a news channel, and the community members hardly evaluate products before purchase. They commonly feel that the information circulated through media may not always be authentic. Among the members of the Mishing community, the media is perceived as an educator of people, as the mobilizer of public opinion, and as a provider of information on the latest trends. News in media is not always taken as authentic. Advertisements are often misunderstood due to a lack of knowledge of language and technology, but they easily trust any media movements.

Managerial and Theoretical Implications

Managerial Implications

The findings have certain managerial implications from the marketing perspective. They are discussed community-wise, as given in Table 10.

In Table 8, in the first column on the extreme left, the names of the various ethnic communities are given. The next column is named general implications (comprising the implications for the community in general in the use of media). The next column is named marketing implication (comprising of the implications for the community from the marketing perspective in the use of media), and the last column on the extreme right is named agents (that is, the people who may be used to spread the target message to the audience).

Table 10. Implications

	General	Marketing	Agents
Rabhas	Spread the message among the community members on the utility of media for educative purposes, the use of media as a mobilizer of public opinion, and develop lucid and customized message content according to local needs.	Use media for the promotion of the different brands of products and services; give detailed product information along with benefits and usage. Further information on the latest offers and discounts can be disseminated to market products and services.	Use opinion leaders, popular community film models, and political leaders suitably
Bodos	Spread the message on the use of media for a broader role, educative purposes, as a mobilizer of public opinion; highlight the positivity and right use of media, Censor Board of India guidelines to check yellow journalism and circulation of fabricated news.	Use media for market promotion of different brands; give detailed product information along with benefits and usage; highlight the right use of news channels to boost the trust level of the community; and educate on evaluation of products before purchase.	Use opinion leaders, popular community film models, and political leaders suitably
Mishing	Spread the message among the community on the broader role in the use of media; highlight the positivity and right use of media, Censor Board of India guidelines to check yellow journalism and circulation of fabricated news.	Use media for the market promotion of different brands; educate on the latest promotional offers and discounts; highlight the right use of news channels to boost the trust level; and educate on the need to evaluate products and services before purchase.	Use opinion leaders, popular community film models, and political leaders suitably

Theoretical Implications

The study brings to light significant inputs on the perception of selected ethnic communities toward media. The research findings will go a long way in enlightening academicians as well as marketers who are related to ethnographic marketing and add up to the existing literature. Further researchers from the field of anthropology and mass communication may get key inputs on the behavior of ethnic communities toward media.

Conclusion

Ethnographic marketing is an emerging area in the field of management. India is a country of diversity. Hence, there is a need to cater to pluralistic societies having multi-ethnic groups in a more customized manner. Consequently, there is a requirement to adopt an ethnographic marketing approach. The study on the perception of selected ethnic groups toward communication media tries to address a key issue on the role of media in the marketing of ethnic communities, namely Rabhas, Bodos, and Mishing. The findings provide key inputs beneficial to different stakeholders from various perspectives.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The study was conducted in a particular geographical area. Hence, the findings may have limited scope to generalize in a broader perspective. Furthermore, as the study pertains to a particular period, with time, there may be changes in the perception of communities toward media due to exposure to the external environment. Further studies can be carried out considering varied ethnic communities of other regions with analogous objectives. A comparative study on the perception of ethnic communities toward traditional media and new-age media can be another objective that can be considered. Finally, a study on the purpose and usage level of different modes of media may be another study that can be considered to be conducted on ethnic communities in the future.

Authors' Contribution

Pankaj Kumar Sharma conceived the idea of studying ethnographic marketing with reference to Assam, India, as this geographical region is rich in varied ethnic communities. Accordingly, Pankaj Kumar Sharma collected the existing literature from different sources. Based on the findings of the filtered literature, Shazeed Ahmed developed the research gap and generated concepts relevant to the study design. Shazeed Ahmed verified the analytical methods and supervised the study. The data collection were done by Pankaj Kumar Sharma in Assamese language, which was again translated into English. The numerical calculations were done by Shazeed Ahmed using SPSS 27.0. Pankaj Kumar Sharma wrote the manuscript in consultation with Shazeed Ahmed.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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