

# Exploration of Connection Between Culture, Corporate Communication and Consumption With The Help of Focus Groups: An Empirical Study

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## INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour is described as the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour and environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives. The field of consumer behaviour studies deals with how individuals, groups and organisations select, buy, use and dispose off products and experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. According to Walters & Paul, "Consumer behaviour is the process whereby individuals decide what, when, where, how and from whom to purchase goods and services". Consumers process brands and marketing promotions for meaning as well as for information. Interpretation of brands and marketing promotions is a problematic issue for both consumers and marketers. First, consumers construct different meanings than what brand sponsors may have intended. Furthermore, different types of consumers construct multiple meanings, depending on personal background, contexts of consumption and multiple frames of reference. This issue of brands, ads, and promotions possessing several potential meanings has significant implications for marketing theory and practice. Traditionally, positioning has been conceptualised as a relatively stable set of consumer perceptions (or meanings) toward a brand, in relation to competitive alternatives. However, in today's complex social conditions, brands and ads may come to signify many meanings other than the dominant (or preferred) meaning or intended positioning desired by marketers, which could be formed due to difference in nature of message interpretation and information processing by the socially and culturally highly disperse consumers. Consequently, the marketers do not get the desired result as per their investment in marketing efforts and the poor returns may affect the balance sheet and overall financial health and shareholders' value of the company.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Cicero has been given credit for having used the word culture in its non-agricultural meaning: "Philosophy is the culture of the soul". This humanistic definition of culture allowed Man to raise himself above the animal kingdom. Culture meant civilization and opposed barbarism. This idea of culture prevailed upto the 18th century giving birth to Pascal's "honnête homme" tradition, and is well alive today in the Liberal Arts. With Kant (1790), the word Kultur was expanded to include Man's mastery over nature. The fundamental dichotomy between culture and nature is also present in structural anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques* (1955: 220, 264). Culture is still associated with civilization, but with an ethnographic tag to it. It now includes the body of knowledge, beliefs, arts, moral, law, traditions, and customs developed by societies (Tylor, 1871) Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) discovered more than 160 definitions of culture. All these definitions, however, share some common denominators: culture is learnt; it is transmitted and shared. In marketing, and particularly in consumer behaviour, culture represents all values, ideas, attitudes, and symbols that shape human behaviour and artefacts (Engel, Blackwell and Kollat, 1978). Culture underlies social values and norms, as well as consumer motivations. The transmission of cultural values from one generation to the next, through family, social class and reference groups is part of the socialization process of individuals. Culture has an intra-group levelling effect and is an inter-group differentiating factor.

Culture manifests itself through thoughts, values, institutions, traditions, and the artefacts of society. Researchers have focused their attention on language, object symbols, material possessions, beliefs, and values as manifestations of culture (Sojka and Tansuhaj, 1995).

Research on cross-cultural advertising appeals is generally conducted by pairing countries to test for differences in several values portrayed in advertising to determine the most effective methods (Zinkhan, 1994). Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) conducted perhaps the largest and most referenced test of cross-cultural advertising appeals using Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimensions and Pollay's (1983) list of common advertising appeals on 11 countries. Pollay (1983) developed a list of 42 common appeals by drawing on previous advertising literature and

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values research in other disciplines. Albers-Miller and Gelb, however, did not examine Russia because of the lack of Hofstede dimensional measures.

Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) used six coders from various countries (i.e., Taiwan, India, France, Mexico, and two from the United States) to relate Pollay's appeals to Hofstede's dimensions. The coders were instructed to relate each appeal to one end of a single cultural dimension or to indicate that the appeal related to none of the dimensions. Appeals retained for their research were ones for which at least four of the six coders indicated the same hypothesized relationship.

Cross-cultural studies have mainly used value instruments in assessing the attitudes of respondents. Examples include the Rokeach Value Survey, the List of Values (LOV), and the Values and Lifestyles (VALS 2) (e.g. Kahle, Beatty and Homer 1989; Mager and Wynd 1993). Other methods are the use of focus groups, content analyses and field observations (e.g. Gregory and Munch 1997). In this study, there is a need to use a tried-and tested model of culture so as to establish more accurately, the influence of culture on consumer behaviour.

In a study that made a tremendous impact on the research field, Hofstede (1980) conducted a massive study of IBM employees across forty countries, and came up with four cultural dimensions that effectively segmented these employees from various countries according to the way they behave in the work situation. These four dimensions are individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity and power distance.

Researchers have since used these results by Hofstede in areas other than the organisation-work context (e.g. Lynn, Zinkhan and Harris 1993; Nakata and Sivakumar 1996). The issue of individualism-collectivism has especially garnered much interest (Kim et al. 1994), and has been tried and tested in various situations among people across cultures (e.g. Yamaguchi 1994; Triandis et al. 1986; Matsumoto, Kudoh and Takeuchi 1996).

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The present study aimed at understanding the purchase decision-making pattern among various communities in India. The research questions are:

- How do cultural profiles in terms of language or religion or both influence purchase behaviour? And if they really influence, what are the areas of purchase behaviour, which get influenced by the cultural differences?
- How people from different cultures interpret corporate communications (mainly print and audio-visual advertisements)?
- Do people from different cultures like same pattern of advertisements in terms of symbols, language, endorser, copy pattern etc.?
- How do people make a purchase decision based on advertisements and other promotional campaigns? Is it different for different cultures?
- Do all the above questions generate same answers for the four product categories selected for research viz. FMCG (mostly personal care like soap or shampoo and daily consumption products like detergent or toilet cleaner), Consumer durables (mostly electronic appliances like television or refrigerator), Garments and Jewellery and other fashion accessories?

For the survey, the respondents were chosen from three linguistic groups viz. Bengalis, Marwaris and Gujarati and three religious groups viz. Hindus, Muslims and Jains and focus group technique was used. A focus group is defined as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research. Focus groups are discussions in which the moderator supplies the topics and monitors the discussion. The purpose is to gather information about a specific or focused topic in a group environment, allowing for discussion and interaction by the participants. Focus groups can be used as the sole source of data or as a complement to another research method such as a survey. This type of interviewing is particularly suited for obtaining several perspectives about the same topic. "Focus groups provide an excellent opportunity to listen to the myriad voices, explore issues in depth, and obtain insights that might not occur without the discussion they provide" (Palomba & Banta, 1999, p.196). According to the late political consultant, Lee Atwater, the conversations in focus groups "give you a sense of what makes people tick and a sense of what is going on with people's minds and lives that you simply can't get with survey data" (Taylor and Broder 1988).

For the current research, focus groups representing all the linguistic and religious ethnic communities under consideration were selected and assembled in order to discuss and comment from their personal experience on the probable influence of cultural traits on purchase behaviour. In addition to this, the focus group study also aimed at studying whether different cultural groups interpret the advertising and other promotional campaigns in the same manner or not. This knowledge is essentially required to study the effectiveness of promotional tools in

multicultural Indian market, which is important for the marketers to decide whether to have standardised or customised approach in marketing communication. The reason of choosing this method is also for tapping the unexpected findings that could only result from an interactive session as that of focus group. The researcher had selected four product categories viz.

- FMCG: mostly personal care like soap or shampoo and daily consumption products like detergent or toilet cleaner.
- Consumer durables: mostly electronic appliances like television or refrigerator.
- Garments.
- Jewellery and other fashion accessories.

There exists great debate over the size of a focus group. Some experts believe that the ideal size for a focus group must be between six and twelve people since according to them, this size of a group encourages participants to contribute their ideas (Crabtree & Miller, 1999), whereas others in opinion of restricting group size from eight to twelve members. (Blackburn, 2000; Fern, 2001) Whatever may be the ideal size of a focus group, it is necessary to maintain a balance between too-small and very-large groups. In case of very small group, one or two members may easily dominate the whole discussion or the discussion may fall flat if too few people have anything to contribute. Another problem is that the session may lapse into serial interviewing and hence lack energy. Too large a group lacks cohesion and may break up into side conversations, or people may become frustrated if they have to wait their turn to respond or to get involved. If people are brought together because they have common experiences to discuss, the risk looms large of not getting much new information when there are too few people in the group. On the other hand, even if numerous people are invited in the hope that they will bounce ideas off each other so that a "bigger, more expansive" answer or explanation emerges, still there is a danger of diminishing returns where too many participants add nothing new. Hence for the present study, all the groups under consideration were of ten people except one, which had seven members. The logic of using different group size will be explained later. The next issue is regarding homogeneity of the group. Just like size of focus group, this issue is also quite debatable, although there has been a growing consensus among the researchers to use homogeneous focus groups. They believe that a focus group consisting of participants having same demographic, socio-cultural and economic profiles could easily avoid conflicts and wayward interactions (Mazella, 1997; Forrest, 2002; Puchta, 2004). Although the project objective will determine who is included in the focus group (Greenbaum, 1988), the focus group participants should be comfortable talking to each other. A relatively homogenous group is useful, not only for the openness of participants, but also to allow for an easier interpretation of the outcomes. The number of groups is also a relevant issue. There is no fixed number of groups required. For the present research, two differentiation parameters viz. linguistic ethnicity and religion were chosen as primary factors, which were further differentiated in gender and age. Economic factor was not taken as differentiation parameter for which all the participants were selected from upper and upper-upper income groups thus maintaining the homogeneity of income factor. In total, seven groups were formed, out of which six focus groups were homogeneous with respect to linguistic ethnicity and religion. Three groups consisted of only Bengalis, Marwaris and Gujaratis respectively considering linguistic ethnicity as sole differentiation parameter whereas the other three groups had members of Hindu, Islam and Jain religion respectively, thus considering religion as the only differentiation parameter. All these six groups had 10 people, who equally belonged to 2 gender and 5 age groups viz. 18-25, 25-35, 35-45, 45-60 and above 60. This means each group had equal number of men and women for all the 5 age groups. In all such cases, when one cultural factor (linguistic ethnicity or religion) was chosen as differentiation parameter, the other one was not considered. This means that for first three linguistically homogeneous groups, religion was not at all considered. So respondents were chosen as per the linguistic ethnicity according to the ratio of age and gender mentioned earlier. In the same way, for the next religiously homogeneous groups, linguistic ethnicity was not at all considered.

But, for these homogeneous groups, groupthink could be problem. Groupthink, a term coined in 1952 by William H. Whyte in *Fortune*, is a type of thought demonstrated by group members who try to minimise conflict and reach to a unanimous decision without considering individual opinions or even rationally testing or evaluating the so-called consensus. By doing so, the members try to suppress the opinions or concepts outside the comfort zone of unilateral thinking, which may compel the group members to make hasty, irrational and self-comforting decisions (Janis, 1972). Hence, the last group was intentionally made heterogeneous by including a mix of people from various religion and linguistic ethnic communities. The group was supposed to have 9 members considering 3 different linguistic ethnic and religious groups each, but had to be restricted to 7 due to unavailability of Bengali

Jain and Marwari Muslim people. Gender and age were not considered individually for this case, since had they been considered, it would have been a case of 7 ethnic-religion factors, 2 gender groups and 5 age groups together, which would have increased the group size abnormally. So, the details of seven groups are:

<b>Group 1: Only Bengalis</b>				
Group Members	Linguistic Ethnicity	Religion	Age	Gender
1	Bengali	Not	18-25	Male
2	Bengali		18-25	Female
3	Bengali		25-35	Male
4	Bengali		25-35	Female
5	Bengali	Considered	35-45	Male
6	Bengali		35-45	Female
7	Bengali		45-60	Male
8	Bengali		45-60	Female
9	Bengali	Separately	Above 60	Male
10	Bengali		Above 60	Female

<b>Group 2: Only Marwaris</b>				
Group Members	Linguistic Ethnicity	Religion	Age	Gender
1	Marwari	Not	18-25	Male
2	Marwari		18-25	Female
3	Marwari		25-35	Male
4	Marwari		25-35	Female
5	Marwari	Considered	35-45	Male
6	Marwari		35-45	Female
7	Marwari		45-60	Male
8	Marwari		45-60	Female
9	Marwari	Separately	Above 60	Male
10	Marwari		Above 60	Female

<b>Group 3: Only Gujaratis</b>				
Group Members	Linguistic Ethnicity	Religion	Age	Gender
1	Gujarati	Not	18-25	Male
2	Gujarati		18-25	Female
3	Gujarati		25-35	Male
4	Gujarati		25-35	Female
5	Gujarati	Considered	35-45	Male
6	Gujarati		35-45	Female
7	Gujarati		45-60	Male
8	Gujarati		45-60	Female
9	Gujarati	Separately	Above 60	Male
10	Gujarati		Above 60	Female

<b>Group 4: Only Hindus</b>				
Group Members	Religion	Linguistic Ethnicity	Age	Gender
1	Hinduism	Not	18-25	Male
2	Hinduism		18-25	Female
3	Hinduism		25-35	Male
4	Hinduism		25-35	Female
5	Hinduism	Considered	35-45	Male
6	Hinduism		35-45	Female
7	Hinduism		45-60	Male
8	Hinduism		45-60	Female
9	Hinduism	Separately	Above 60	Male
10	Hinduism		Above 60	Female

<b>Group 5: Only Muslims</b>				
Group Members	Religion	Linguistic Ethnicity	Age	Gender
1	Islam	Not	18-25	Male
2	Islam		18-25	Female
3	Islam		25-35	Male
4	Islam		25-35	Female
5	Islam	Considered	35-45	Male
6	Islam		35-45	Female
7	Islam		45-60	Male
8	Islam		45-60	Female
9	Islam	Separately	Above 60	Male
10	Islam		Above 60	Female

<b>Group 6: Only Jains</b>				
Group Members	Religion	Linguistic Ethnicity	Age	Gender
1	Jainism	Not	18-25	Male
2	Jainism		18-25	Female
3	Jainism		25-35	Male
4	Jainism		25-35	Female
5	Jainism	Considered	35-45	Male
6	Jainism		35-45	Female
7	Jainism		45-60	Male
8	Jainism		45-60	Female
9	Jainism	Separately	Above 60	Male
10	Jainism		Above 60	Female

<b>Group 7: Heterogeneous</b>				
Group Members	Linguistic Ethnicity	Religion	Age	Gender
1	Bengali	Hinduism	Not	Not
2	Bengali	Islam		
3	Marwari	Hinduism		
4	Marwari	Jainism	Considered	Considered
5	Gujarati	Hinduism		
6	Gujarati	Jainism		
7	Gujarati	Islam	Separately	Separately

Focus groups can be of different types depending on the subtle variations incorporated into the standard procedure such as Dual-moderator group, Two-way focus group, Duelling-moderator group, Respondent-moderator group, Client-participant group, Mini-groups and Telesession groups. These variations are necessary as members differ widely across various groups and some amount of variation helps in eliciting a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context. For the present research, two of such variations in focus groups were used as mentioned below. It may be understood from the description that both the formats were used for all the



groups except one with all Bengali people, for which only the first format was found out to be sufficient due to proficiency of researcher in the language of discussion.

**Two-way focus group:** For all the groups, this was used in the middle course of discussion, where a section of the groups discussed about the advertising copies they have watched and heard while the other section monitored and evaluated the key verbal and visual expressions used in the ad copy and the corresponding responses of the other group. The same process was repeated for other set of ad copies with role reversal.

**Dual-moderator group:** The researcher is a Bengali-speaking person with just-manageable knowledge in Hindi and Urdu and no working knowledge of Marwari and Gujarati language. For the groups involving Marwari and Gujarati people and even for the other groups, the language of discussion involved these languages also in most of the cases. Hence, this concept had to be used, where the researcher although still acting as a moderator was supported by another person familiar with at least one of these languages. In case of the group involving only Gujarati people, researcher took help from one Gujarati person. For other groups (except for the group involving only Bengali people), it was required to take help from one Marwari person conversant both in Marwari and Hindi language since it was apparent to the researcher from his experience that Hindi would have been lingua franca for any linguistic heterogeneous group and even in case of linguistic homogenous group of Marwaris, since the young Marwaris generally feel more comfortable speaking in Hindi language. For all such cases, the researcher was following the excitement level and non-verbal communication of the participants along with verbal one, to whatever extent it was possible, whereas the other one noted down the important points and also ensured that the topics in the basic checklist were discussed. For all the focus group discussions, a comfortable place was chosen. In some cases, the place happened to be home of one of the participants whereas for other cases, it was a choice of researcher unanimously accepted by all the group members. For all the cases, the room was examined to check whether all the facilities were in proper place. It was also required to check all the materials or equipments required for each discussion (For list of the materials or equipments required for each discussion, refer to APPENDIX-I). Precautions were taken to check factors like humidity, ventilation or temperature as well as closing doors or windows urgently needed to eliminate noise and other distractions. The researcher had taken necessary back-up plan for possible power-cut (For detailed list of activities, refer to APPENDIX-II)

In each case, the researcher began the process with a short introduction, which included:

- Brief welcome to all the participants that included gratification and gratitude on behalf of the researcher. " Overview of the topic, which was impact of cultural orientation in interpreting marketing communication and final purchase decision.
- Candid explanation of the purposes of the focus group, which in this case was a necessary part of doctoral thesis of the researcher.
- Guidelines or ground rules which were used to lay ground rules such as speaking one at a time or cautioning not to use any derogatory remarks.
- The description of various other factors like occasional use of recording devices, the presence of other helping person apart from moderator only (whenever it was required), vowing to maintain confidentiality, and above all the role of the moderator.
- Reassuring the participants about the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation.
- Introducing the co-moderators and explaining how and why these group members were invited to participate.
- Stating the purpose of note taking and recording.
- An opening question that served as an icebreaker providing each participant an opportunity to speak and have the chance to introduce themselves to the group.

Once introductions are complete, the researcher guided the discussion, using an outline of questions and sub-topics aided by a set of advertisements in the form of print clippings mounted on a board and also some audio-visuals with the help of DVD player. Questions to be asked in focus group discussion should be concrete, specific, focused, simple, and open-ended, going from the more general to the more specific (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). They should also be ordered by their importance to the research project. Many researchers suggested using questions such as "what prompted you," "what influenced you," or "what features" in place of "why" (Kreuger, 1994). It was remembered while designing the focus group process that questioning and probing during the discussion must not be a serial or structured interview; rather it should be a discussion of a specific but loosely held topics that could lead to the core objective of the discussion. Hence, questions were primarily used to start and guide the discussion followed by appropriate practical aides to ensure that all focus group members could enjoy and participate. Out of allotted time of around 1½ hour for focus group discussion with key questions and

topics, 3 topics were discussed, the title and specified time duration of which are mentioned below:

Serial no. of topic	Time duration	Name of topic
1 <sup>st</sup>	30 minutes	Relationship between cultural profiles and interpretation of advertisements
2 <sup>nd</sup>	20-25 minutes	Culture-linked purchase decision-making pattern
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Around 30 minutes	Interconnection of cultural profiles, advertisements and purchase decision in case of selected four categories

All the group members were also given note pads so that they may write, if they feel, any word or phrase that could elicit their opinions. It was also required to identify and tone down any kind of dominance shown by any group member out of garrulous habit or sheer expertise so that quiet or shy group members could be encouraged to contribute on their own. Sometimes, it was even necessary by asking less vocal members verbally or by using eye contact to solicit their opinions if they agreed or disagreed. Once the group started responding to each question, the researcher probed for more information and asked follow-up questions to elicit more discussion. Listening is very important to moderating a focus group. The moderator should make a conscious effort to actively listen, focus on listening rather than talking, make eye contact with each participant as they speak, and be familiar with the questions and objectives of the project (Greenbaum, 1999, p. 131). Hence, the researcher not only listened with rapt attention, but also expressed positive gestures so that the members also could understand his involvement. Good time management was also quite crucial. For this, the researcher designed a tentative plan and continuously checked the length of discussion needed for each question, topic or sub-topic and section as a whole with the time limits allotted in the plan. Focus group sessions continued for around 2 hours. In the mean time, there were served refreshments without disturbing the flow of the discussion. Once all the questions, topics or sub-topics and sections have been covered, the researcher concluded by giving a summary of the major points in the discussion and asking the group for feedback on that summary, which continued for around 20 minutes on an average for various groups. The sessions ended with warm thanks from the end of the researcher. For the whole discussion process, the researcher had to remember the qualities common to good focus group moderators, which are mentioned below:

- Understands group process
  - Curious
  - Good communicator
  - Friendly with sense of humour
  - Interested in people
  - Open to new ideas
  - Good listener
- (Krueger, 1998)
- Quick learner
  - Friendly leader
  - Knowledgeable (but not all-knowing)
  - Excellent memory
  - Facilitator (but not performer)
  - Good listener
  - Flexible
  - Empathetic
  - Big picture thinker
  - Good writer

(Greenbaum, 1988)

Other important moderating skills include good time management, diplomacy, awareness, control over personal reactions, and energy (Albrecht, Johnson, & Walther, 1993; Krueger, 1998b; Krueger, 1993; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). "Moderating a focus group might seem easy, but it requires mental discipline, careful preparation, and group interaction skills" (Krueger, 1993, p.73). As the focus group involved the interaction of different participants, it was found difficult to gather the information generated during the course of the discussion in a quantitative manner and hence qualitative analysis techniques were found out to be best. Therefore, the analysis of focus group data entirely relied on proper observation and judicious understanding of the notes taken.

The key ideas in the notes were summarised, which were further examined to comprehend participants' choice of words in the context of group dynamics, and also consistency and coherence of perceptions, attitudes and opinions among group members within and in between.

For the research, observation followed by corresponding manual note taking was mostly used. Sometimes, the discussion was also handwritten, point-wise and even verbatim. In certain cases, audio recording was taken after an approval from every participant.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

All the seven groups had discussed on various topics as per the guideline. The discussions were held in between the month of February and September. The findings are described below according to the main three topics discussed earlier.

### **Group 1: Only Bengalis**

The participants more or less agreed on the point that the cultural profiles do influence the interpretation of advertisements. Most of them liked the Bengali ad better, although some of them did not like those audio-visual advertisements, which were shot in Hindi and later dubbed in Bengali. Older people confessed that they were inclined towards buying products advertised in Bengali, although younger ones did not support that. Although religion factor was kept aside, still the group opined that Hindu and Muslim Bengalis have different occasions to buy most, which are *Durga Pujo* and *Id* respectively. It was also found out that purchase decision of garments and jewellery is more individuality-oriented although the purchase for any special occasion, say wedding gift is more collective. Some especially the older ones mentioned *Akshaytritiya* as their preferred time to purchase jewellery, although some also pointed out the growing trend among Bengalis to purchase jewellery items during *Dhanteras*, a festival popular among North Indians.

### **Group 2: Only Marwaris**

All the participants showed uncanny resemblance in their opinion on almost all the topics irrespective of age and gender. They informed that they prefer Hindi to English or other language. Their purchase decisions are collective and they buy items like garments mostly before *Diwali*, *Holi*, *Teez* or *Gangaur* and in case of jewellery, before *Dhanteras*. Some of them even mentioned that kids and teens also want to wear new garments just like their Bengali friends during *Durga Pujo*.

### **Group 3: Only Gujaratis**

The participants unanimously expressed their preference for Gujarati language although younger ones who have very little contact with Gujarat opted for Hindi also. *Navratri* is their most preferred time to purchase items like garments and jewellery although they also mentioned that nowadays they shop all through the year from the shopping malls and most of such purchases are unplanned.

### **Group 4: Only Hindus**

Since for this group, the linguistic ethnicity was not considered, the language of conversation was not limited to any one language and mostly it was mixture of Bengali and Hindi. It was found that they differ in their most preferred time of purchase and neither there was any consensus of preferred language. Some of them really wanted some rituals to be present in the advertisements, but the group differed sharply over the most prominent religion symbol although all of them loved to mention the use of Sindoor (vermillion) in the ICICI ad.

### **Group 5: Only Muslims**

All the participants agreed that *Id* is the main time when they purchase garments and jewellery. It was found out that the new generation does not really want to follow the religious instructions and wants to flaunt the same fashionable dress that their friends of other religions are wearing. The participants also mentioned about some specific items that they purchase during roza. They also were divided over the use of language; someone preferred Bengali whereas others preferred Urdu in writing and Urdu or Hindi verbally.

### **Group 6: Only Jains**

The participants commented that they do not want to differentiate solely on the religion factor, as according to them, Jainism had mingled with Hinduism greatly, with differences only in some food habits and rituals. It was also found out from them that the religion at present is mostly restricted among Gujaratis and Marwaris and these two communities have accepted social amalgamation of the two religions.

### **Group 7: Heterogeneous**

This group although smallest of all the groups was most vibrant. The members have disagreed on almost all the parameters ranging from most preferred language of advertisements to nature of decision-making. But it was apparent from the discussion that there really exists the influence of culture on the purchase decision-making,

which validates the objective of the current research.

## CONCLUSIONS

As has been found out from the study, the people of different cultural profiles possess varying purchase decision-making pattern. The study found out that there is strong influence of linguistic ethnicity and religious culture on interpretation of marketing communication and purchase pattern. Hence, "cultural marketers", a term being used to refer to all those marketers who want to consider the multi-ethnic profiles of customers should analyse and understand the differences in purchase behaviour among them and come out with proper marketing strategies catering to various linguistic, ethnic, cultural and demographic differences. A future study can also be undertaken where one scale may be constructed by doing factor analysis, which could be used to measure the differences among various other culture groups. Integrated Cultural Orientation Spectrum (ICOS) for each ethnic group is required to be found out in order to have a macro-level understanding of any culture.

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### APPENDIX-I

#### Materials/Equipments needed for each discussion

- A set of print advertisements in languages like Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu was collected from various newspapers and magazines. The advertisements were mostly of the four product categories although some other advertisements were also collected.
- A set of audio-visual advertisements in languages like Bengali, English, Gujarati and Hindi was collected from various websites in the form of MP3 and Windows Media Player. The advertisements were mostly of the four product categories although some other advertisements were also collected.
- 12 chairs arranged in a circle.
- Table to arrange snacks.
- Snacks for 12 people.
- Sufficient arrangement for drinking water.
- DVD player.
- Mounting board for displaying print advertisements.
- Tape recorder.
- Pad and pen for note-taking.
- Small digital clock (mobile handset enabled with stopwatch facility may also be used) for researcher to glance at required for effective time management.

### APPENDIX-II

#### Focus Group Site Preparation

- Arrange 12 chairs in circular formation for 10 participants, one moderator (i.e. researcher himself) and one assistant conversant in Gujarati, Hindi, Marwari or Urdu for different groups.
- Arrange for snacks for all the participants. Care must be taken regarding the choice of menu ; especially regarding vegetarian and non-vegetarian.
- Test tape recording equipment and DVD player and place them in proper place, preferably in centre of the circle.
- Arrange for alternative power source in case of power failure.
- Ask participants to turn off cell phones or at least keep them in client mode and not to receive or make any call or SMS.
- Inform participants where the toilets are and encourage their use before focus group gets started.