

Ethnic Advertising Practices in Assamese Language Television Channels

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Abstract

The increased number of ethnic media in Assam, especially the Vernacular Television channels, has opened opportunities for different brands to communicate with ethnic consumers directly. This proposition led to a new advertising dilemma for the brands. Whether to target ethnic audiences with the pan India advertisements, dub the ethnic language, or create a new commercial targeting the audience? The majority have just dubbed their pan-India advertisements in the vernacular language. Only regional brands are using ethnic spokespersons and ethnic symbols in their advertisements. The present study primarily describes the level of ethnic advertising practices in the vernacular TV channels in Assam. It aims at assessing the level of ethnic advertising across the product categories, the status of spokespersons and brand categories. Moreover, the study also put lights on the satisfaction level of audiences with the ethnic advertising practices.

Keywords: Ethnic Advertising, Vernacular Medium, Assam, Brand, Celebrity spokesperson, Ethnic Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing plays a pivotal role in any economy. It is a dynamic concept of doing business and is continuously evolving. It has moved from a production-oriented philosophy to a consumer-oriented one. Such a shift is highly visible in marketing communication as well in the Indian context. India is a large country geographically as well as demographically. It has around 400 million middle-class population with increasing purchasing capacity (World Data Lab, 2021). Thus, India is an attractive destination for marketers. However, the Indian market has specific unique characteristics, namely population diversity, linguistic diversity, ethnic, cultural, religious, as well as social variation, and others. This diversity creates complexity for marketers. The deeper they want to penetrate, the they face more diversity. However, such complexities have not caused deterrence for marketers in entering the far-flung corner of the country. They have converted this challenge into an opportunity with the help of a localization strategy (Yadav & Singh, 2012; Panigrahi, 2017). Localization strategy, as defined by Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA), involves a process of making a product linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target market (Esselink, p. 4, 2000). It is a strategy to design and offer products and services which suit the target consumer linguistically and culturally.

Marketers extend their standard products to the target consumer by localising the communication aspects of marketing. They adopt ethnic advertising practices to communicate their intended messages. Ethnic advertising is a process of integrating the linguistic and cultural aspects of the target consumer in promoting products and services (Koslow et al., 1994). It is a practice of bridging the communication gap between the brand developed within and the target audience. Ethnic advertising helps the brand to integrate different aspects of the culture of the target market. It assists the brand in building a culturally sensitive image. In short, the alignment of marketing communication with inherent cultural traits results in positive change in the behaviour of the consumer (Kushwaha, 2017).

The state of Assam comprises various ethnic communities with distinct languages as well as dialects. These communities have reflected their cultural sensitiveness on many platforms. They have student unions, political parties, literary societies and others representing their ethnic identity. All these groups strive at preserving as well as promoting different tenets of the culture, to which they belong. The most important element of the culture is language. Vernacular language plays a dominant role in symbolising the unique identity of these ethnic communities. The Assamese language is one of the dominant vernacular languages spoken by 48.37% of its population. The Census 2011 states that out of 31205576 population, 15095197 speak Assamese as a mother tongue (Census India, 2011). At the same time, most ethnic communities either use it as a second language or a third language. Perhaps owing to the economics associated with the size of the speakers and sensitivity to culture, many Assamese Television channels have come into existence. At present, there are many Assamese Language TV channels catering for the need for news and entertainment of audiences in the state. As of 31st December 2022, there are 17 Assamese TV Channels. These are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Assamese TV Channels (As of 31st December 2022)

Sl. No.	Category	Name of Channel	Date of launch (YYYY.MM.DD)
1	News	Prag News	2001.03.04
2	News	News Live	2008.01.21
3	News	DY365	2008.10.30
4	Entertainment	Rang	2009.10.01
5	Entertainment (Music)	Ramdhenu	2011.10.01
6	Entertainment	Rengoni	2013.06.03
7	News	North East Live	2013.09.30
8	Entertainment	Jonack	2014.07.13
9	News	Pratidin Time	2015.04.01
10	News	Assam Talks	2015.05.25
11	News	News18 Assam-North East	2016.06.24
12	Entertainment (Movies)	Indradhanu	2017.04.15
13	Infotainment	DD Assam	2020.05.04
14	News	ND24	2021.03.01
15	News	NKTV Plus	2021.03.14
16	News	DA News Plus	2021.15.04
17	News	Pratham Khabar 24X7	2022.04.15
18	News	NB News	2023.02.03

Source: Secondary sources.

These TV channels have created marketing communication opportunities for marketers like never before. Through these media, Advertisers are delivering marketing messages to Assamese consumers directly.

Statement of Problem

Ethnic advertising has become a tool for the marketers of international, national as well regional brands. It helps in more precise communication with the target audiences. However, such practices lack uniformity. Brands are only dubbing and translating the message in the Assamese language, and a few integrate other aspects of the culture. At the same time, a few brands are also using ethnic models or celebrities in their advertisements. These reflect diverse practices within ethnic advertising. The present academic exercise aims at exploring these practices systematically on the Assamese Language TV Channels.

Review of Literature

To arrive at the researchable problem and to identify the problem areas to be investigated, it is felt appropriate to undertake an extensive review of literature for the purpose. It is observed that ethnic advertising is one of the attractive areas for marketing research. Various researchers have attempted to understand and identify different aspects of ethnic advertising.

Sierra et al. (2012) observed that ethnic identification with an advertisement tends to enhance attitude towards the brand, attitude towards advertisement, attitude towards model (actor), and purchase intention towards an advertised brand. Ethnic identity positively influences elements of the advertising hierarchy of effects. Advertisements with ethnic cues tend to attract positive responses from the target audience having higher ethnic consciousness. They tend to patronise products advertised in ethnic media (Lau & Lee, 2018). Moreover, strong self-referencing is observed among ethnic minority groups when exposed to the advertisements endorsed by the model representing their ethnicity. This produces a favourable attitude towards the advertisement, the model in the advertisement, and purchase intentions (Lee et al., 2002). Furthermore, the use of ethnic language in the advertisements increases the perceptions of the target audience about the advertiser's cultural sensitivity. This in turn positively influences the target audience towards advertisement (Koslow et al., 1994). In a similar study, it is observed that ethnic consumers favoured advertisements with ethnic cues more than without any. They found that visual cues are more effective than textual ones (Khan et al., 2015). Ethnic advertising is primarily targeted at a particular group of audience. In the process, it also gets exposed to the audience not targeted. A comparative study found that target ethnic groups have a more positive attitude toward advertisements and brands than non-targeted ones (Run & Butt, 2010). Ethnicity is a viable variable for targeting the audience. Rasyid (2019) observes that ethnic female minorities show more self-reference to the advertisements representing their ethnicity. The ethnicity of the spokesperson in the advertisement also influences the target audience differently. In one study, it is found that US female consumers generate higher trust when Asian models are used in place of Caucasian models in cosmetic advertisements (Lee & Childs, 2021). Furthermore, ethnic and religious minorities stimulate different consumer responses to advertising (Roessner et al., 2021). It is found that minority endorsers tend to get negative responses owing to religion, not ethnicity. Ethnic advertising primarily uses ethnic media but may not be limited to it. In the United States of America, English media is found to be adequate to reach ethnic audiences. In Canada, owing to the rise in visible ethnic minorities, the Government is itself playing an important role in promoting and expanding ethnic media (Jin & Kim, 2011).

The observations made reflect the importance of ethnic advertising in influencing the target audience of a particular ethnicity. However, a study has also found the effectiveness of multi-ethnic embedded marketing communications. Multi-ethnic marketing communication enables more effective access for ethnically varied millennial consumers in modern society (Licsandru & Cui, 2019). They also found that mono-focussed messages do not stimulate the ethnic millennial's multicultural identity.

The above-reviewed literature reveals the existence of much work focusing on various facets of ethnic advertising. However, the researchers could not find a body of work focusing on the levels of ethnic advertising in the public domain. Therefore, the present study explores the different levels of ethnic advertising and its relationship with various defined variables like product categories, spokespersons, and brand categories concerning the ethnic media in the state of Assam. The findings of the present study would fill up that vacuum and create a new stock of knowledge.

Level of Ethnic Advertising

Ethnic advertising integrates ethnic cues of targeted ethnic communities. It generates self-referencing amongst the target audience with the brand, spokesperson and the whole advertisements. It will help in building a positive attitude and purchase intentions. The consumers in Assam have access to all kinds of media, be it English, Hindi, or any Vernacular Media. This has been possible owing to the penetration of Television Sets and Satellite Channels throughout Assam. The marketers targeting pan-India

consumers use either Hindi or English Media. They use ethnic media to target the ethnic communities of a particular geographic region. Similarly, they are using vernacular TV channels, Print and other media to reach the target audience.

In Assam, marketers practising ethnic advertising uses ethnic media as a base and add other ethnic cues to influence the consumer. These are 'ethnic language', 'spokesperson', and 'ethnic/cultural symbols'. Based on the above observation, we propose ethnic advertising practices targeting ethnic consumers to be of 4 levels. These four levels are constructed by keeping ethnic media as the base. Integration of other cues in the advertisement will enhance the level of ethnic advertising. The first level of ethnic advertising uses only ethnic media in delivering the marketing message. The second level uses any one of the above-defined ethnic cues and the media. The third level of ethnic advertising practices uses a paired combination of either ethnic Language and ethnic Spokesperson, or ethnic Language and ethnic Symbols, or ethnic Spokesperson and ethnic Symbol, along with the ethnic media. The highest level will include all the elements of ethnic advertising practices. Below is the diagrammatic representation of the four levels of ethnic advertising.

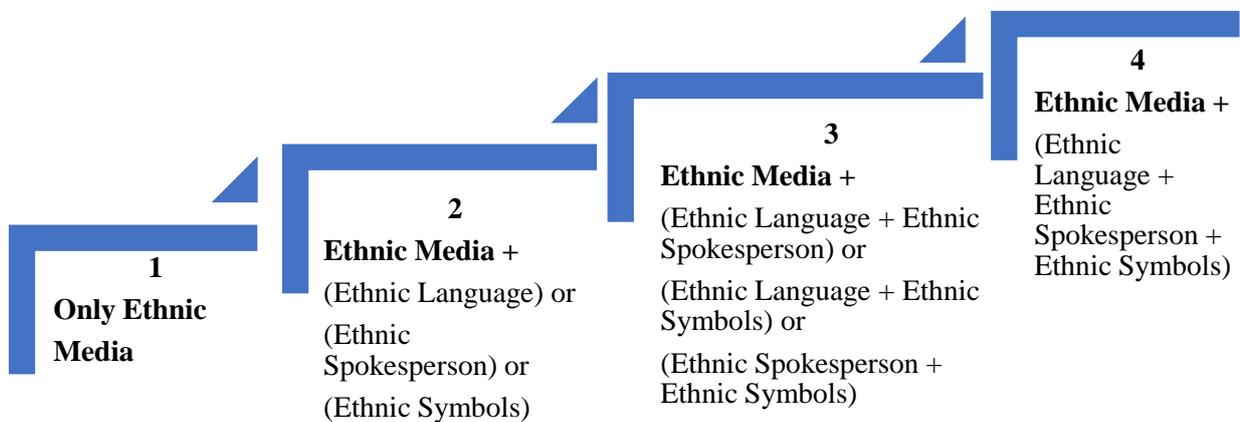


Fig. 1 – Level of ethnic advertising

Source: Primary Source

Consumer Product Categories

The market is cluttered with products and services satisfying the needs and wants of society. These products are either industrial products or consumer products. Industrial products are consumed by the industries while consumer products are by individuals or households for personal use. Industrial products are materials and parts, capital items, supplies and business services. Based on buying habits, consumer products are convenience, shopping, speciality, and unsought product (Blythe, 2005; Kotler & Keller, 2016). These consumer product categories are discussed below briefly:

- **Convenience Products** are usually purchased frequently and immediately without much effort. Customer involvement in the purchase of such products is the lowest. It includes staples, impulse goods, and emergency goods.
- **Shopping Products** generally require little time and effort from the consumers. Consumers tend to compare the products to suitability, quality, price, and style. Examples are clothing, home appliances, fixture and fittings, furniture, and others.
- **Speciality Products** possess distinct characteristics or a unique brand identification for which consumers are willing to spend more effort. A few examples are Apple iPhone, Mercedes Benz, Harley Davidson, Tesla, and others.
- **Unsought products** are those products either consumers are not aware of or are less interested in or avoid. The prime examples are insurance products, market-linked investment products, Water purifiers, and others.

Based on the consumer product categories and level of ethnic advertising, we hypothesised that:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the level of ethnic advertising across the product categories.

Categories of Spokespersons

The spokesperson or the model in the advertisements plays a pivotal role in delivering the message to the target audience. Marketers have the liberty to use celebrities or anyone to act as a spokesperson. However, this liberty gets influenced by many factors like the financial viability of the marketers, Product Life Cycle, Market completion, and others. The use of celebrities comes with the benefits like instant brand credibility, brand introduction, star brand value, brand differentiation, and inspiring celebrity confidence (Erdogan, 1999; Olenski, 2016). The use of non-celebrities too comes with benefits. It enhances consumers' self-referencing and doesn't overshadow the advertisement and the advertised brand. Irrespective of the celebrity or non-celebrity status of the spokesperson, in ethnic advertising, the ethnicity of the endorser plays a vital role. In practice, advertisers are using celebrity spokespersons representing the target community as well as those not representing. Therefore, we classify the spokesperson into two categories, i.e. celebrity spokesperson and non-celebrity spokesperson targeting ethnic audiences.

Based on the above discussion, we propose 2nd hypothesis:

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the level of ethnic advertising and celebrity status of the spokesperson.

Brand Categories

A brand is an offering from a known source (Kotler, 2000). It may be a name, term, design, symbol or any other characteristic that helps a marketer differentiate its product and services from other marketers (Branding, n.d.). In other words, a brand is an identity that brings distinctness when compared with other brands. A brand can be categorised in many ways. Yohn (2017) classified brands into nine categories based on distinct characteristics of the brand. These are:

- Disruptive brands challenge the existing way of things and introduce newer ideas that significantly change the market.
- Conscious brands aim at producing a positive impact on society, the environment and the user's life.
- Service brands aim at providing consistently high-quality services to the consumer.
- Innovative brands introduce technological breakthroughs.
- Value brands persistently provide quality products or services at lower prices focusing on affordability.
- Performance brands deliver superior and dependable products.
- Luxury brands offer high-quality products at a premium price.
- Style brands focus on the look and aesthetic feel of the products or services.
- Experience brands aim at providing a richer product experience to the consumer.

Somma (2015) categorised brands into 21 categories. These are Personal brand, Product brand, Service brand, Corporate brand, Investor brand, NGO brand, Public brand, Activist brand, Place brand, Nation brand, Ethical brand, Celebrity brand, Ingredient brand, Global brand, Challenger brand, Generic brand, Luxury brand, Cult brand, Clean slate brand, Private brand, and Employer brand.

For the present study, we will be classifying the brand based on its Geographic popularity of recognition. These are regional brands, national brands, and global brands. Regional brands are those brands that are popular and recognized within a particular geographic region. In the present study, the regional brands are those brands recognized within the geographic boundary of Assam. The national

brands are the brands that are known throughout India. Global brands are those brands whose recognition and popularity cross the national boundary. These brands are widely recognized and have markets in many countries.

Based on the above discussion, we propose the third hypothesis:

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the level of ethnic advertising across the brand categories.

The researcher also attempted to understand the level of satisfaction of audiences concerning the use of ethnic advertising aired on select Assamese TV Channels. Accordingly, we proposed the following additional hypotheses:

- Ho4.1: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction across the gender concerning the use of ethnic language in advertising on select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho4.2: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction across the gender concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertising on select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho4.3: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction across the gender concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho5.1: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences across the Age concerning the use of ethnic language in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho5.2: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences across the Age concerning the use of ethnic spokesperson in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho5.3: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences across the Age concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho6.1: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different educational qualifications concerning the use of ethnic language in advertising on select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho6.2: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different educational qualifications concerning the use of ethnic spokesperson in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho6.3: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different educational qualifications concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertising on select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho7.1: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic language in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho7.2: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic spokesperson in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho7.3: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertising in select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho8.1: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic language in advertisements on select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho8.2: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertisements on select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho8.3: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements on select Assamese TV Channels.

The selected TV channels are nine in number. Therefore, each of the hypotheses stated above further has nine hypotheses for each TV channel.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is exploratory as well as descriptive in nature. It is exploratory because the researchers have explored and made an attempt to identify the level of ethnic advertising practices in the Assamese TV Channel. The level of ethnic advertising practices in Assamese TV Channels is four-level as stated before. The researchers recorded the data of 120 brands advertised in the select Assamese Language TV channels from January to March 2023. The data recorded were about product categories, spokespersons, brand categories, and the level of ethnic advertising in the respective advertisements. The older TV channels have the potential to reach wider audiences because of their length of operation. Thus, the first 50% of the Assamese TV channels from each category have been selected based on the date of their launch. Accordingly, six news channels and three entertainment channels are selected. The selected news channel are Prag News, News Live, DY365, North East Live, Pratidin Times, and Assam Talks; entertainment channels are Rengoni TV, Rang TV, and Ramdhenu TV.

For understanding the audiences’ satisfaction level with ethnic advertising practices, A survey was done with the help of a structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was based on the Likert-item scale. The instrument enquires about the satisfaction of audiences with the use of ethnic language, ethnic spokesperson, and ethnic symbols in advertisements on select Assamese TV Channels. Responses were classified into five categories with a specific score. These are, Highly Dissatisfied- 1; Dissatisfied- 2; Neutral-3; Satisfied-4; & Highly Satisfied- 5. The Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.972 was observed when a test was run to assess the internal consistency of the Likert-item-based questionnaire. It reflects the questionnaire adopted based on the Likert scale used for measuring the satisfaction level has internal consistency. 162 questionnaire has been collected from the respondents with different demographic profiles. Demographic profiles of the respondents are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Sub-variables	Frequency	Percentage
1. Location of Residence	Urban	103	63.6
	Semi Urban	25	15.4
	Rural	34	21
2. Gender	Male	91	56.2
	Female	71	43.8
3. Age (Years)	15-20	20	12.3
	20-30	61	37.7
	30-40	30	18.5
	40-50	25	15.4
	50 and Above	26	16
4. Education level	Under Matric	12	7.4
	X	6	3.7
	XII	14	8.6
	Graduate	43	26.5
	Post Graduate	69	42.6
	Ph.D	18	11.1
5. Profession	Government Service	13	8
	Private Service	50	30.9
	Business	22	13.6

Professional	8	4.9
Home Maker	10	6.2
Farmer	15	9.3
Student	44	27.2

Source: Primary source

Findings

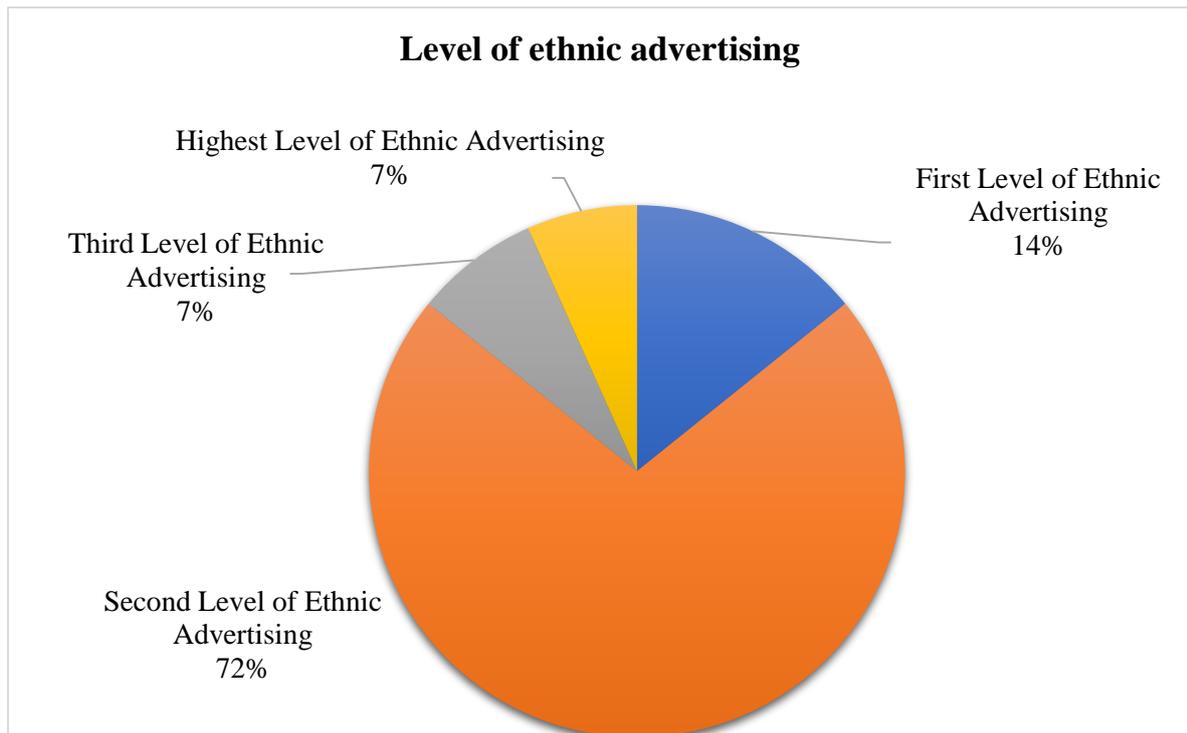


Fig. 2: Level of ethnic advertising practices in Assamese Television channels

Source: Primary Source

The vernacular Television media is one of the important media targeting ethnic communities. It gives marketers direct access to target them with the freedom to use a different level of ethnic advertising. The present study observes that only 7% of brands are practising the highest level of ethnic advertising. Equal numbers of brands are practising the third level of ethnic advertising. 72% of brands advertised adopted the second level of ethnic advertising. Out of this, 99% of brands use dubbed ethnic language along with ethnic media. 14% of brands advertised have not integrated any ethnic cues in their presentation.

Hypothesis testing is one of the essential elements of the present study. The Kruskal-Wallis H test was run at a significance level of 0.05 to test the Ho1. A P-value of 0.707 was observed, which was more than the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the level of ethnic advertising across the product categories. In other words, we fail to reject the Ho1.

We ran a Mann-Whitney U Test for testing the Ho2: There is no significant difference in the level of ethnic advertising and celebrity status of the spokesperson at a significance level of 0.05. The P-value was observed at 0.064, which is less than the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the Ho2.

Ho3 was tested with the help of the Kruskal-Wallis H test at a significance level of 0.05. The P-value is observed at 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the Ho3. In other words, there exists a significant difference in the level of ethnic advertising across the brand categories. Owing to the observation of significant differences and the presence of three group variables in Ho3, the Pairwise comparison for the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was Run as a post hoc test to locate the source of actual difference with a significance level of 0.05. The test revealed that a significant difference exists in the two pairs of brand categories. These identified pairs are 'Global brand – Regional brand' (P-value – 0.00) and 'National brand – Regional brand' (P-value – 0.00). However, this test also reflects no significant difference in the level of ethnic advertising when compared between the Global brand – National brand (P-value – 0.665).

Concerning the satisfaction level of the audiences, the median is observed to be 3, reflecting that 50% of the audiences have a satisfaction level ranging from neutral to highly satisfied for all the defined parameters. To understand the responses better, hypotheses Ho4.1 to Ho8.3 were tested and the results are interpreted as follows.

Hypotheses Testing and Interpretation

Mann-Whitney U Test has been applied at a 5% level of significance to test the Ho4.1, Ho4.2, & Ho4.3. While Kruskal Wallis H Test has been applied at a 5% level of significance to test the hypothesis Ho5.1 to Ho8.3. The results of the tests are interpreted below.

- Ho4.1: It is observed that the P value of Pratidin Time (0.240) is more than the predetermined statistical value at a 5% level of significance. Thus, we fail to reject the hypothesis concerning Pratidin Time. It is inferred that there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction across the gender concerning the use of ethnic language in advertisements aired in Pratidin Time. Moreover, the P value of Prag News (0.005), News Live (0.001), DY 365 (0.012), North East Live (0.001), Assam Talks (0.017), Rang (0.00), Ramdhenu (0.001) and Rengoni (0.004) is observed to be less than 0.05. It means the hypotheses concerning the above TV channels are rejected. Therefore, for these TV channels, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction across the gender concerning the use of ethnic language in advertising.
- Ho4.2: It is found that the P value of Pratidin Time (0.244), Ramdhenu (0.232), and Rengoni (0.168) is more than the statistical value at a 5% level of significance. It indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction across the gender concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertising on these TV Channels. However, the calculated P value of the remaining TV Channels i.e. Prag News (0.005), New Live (0.000), DY365 (0.034), Assam Talks (0.049), and Rang (0.021) is less than the predetermined statistical value. In other words, we reject the hypotheses.
- Ho4.3: It is found that the calculated P value of all the Select TV Channels except DY365 is more than the tabulated P value. Thus, for these TV Channels, we fail to reject the hypotheses. In other words, there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction across the gender concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements aired on select Assamese TV Channels except DY365. The P values observed are Prag News – 0.094, News Live -0.401, DY365 – 0.002, North East Live – 0.360, Pratidin Time – 0.699, Assam Talks – 0.228, Rang – 0.068, Ramdhenu – 0.189, & Rengoni – 0.133.
- Ho5.1: The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.012, News Live -0.045, DY365 – 0.037, North East Live – 0.014, Pratidin Time – 0.001, Assam Talks – 0.002, Rang – 0.023, Ramdhenu – 0.002, & Rengoni – 0.008. All the calculated P values are less than the tabulated value at a 5% level of significance leading to the rejection of hypotheses. Thus, it is inferred that there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among audiences across the Age concerning the use of ethnic language in advertising in all the select Assamese TV Channels.

- Ho5.2: All the calculated P value is greater than 0.05. It means that we fail to reject the hypothesis. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences across the Age concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertisements in all the selected Assamese TV Channels. The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.446, News Live -0.706, DY365 – 0.274, North East Live – 0.653, Pratidin Time – 0.304, Assam Talks – 0.723, Rang – 0.408, Ramdhenu – 0.465, & Rengoni – 0.385.
- Ho5.3: The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.005, News Live -0.000, DY365 – 0.011, North East Live – 0.000, Pratidin Time – 0.000, Assam Talks – 0.000, Rang – 0.001, Ramdhenu – 0.004, & Rengoni – 0.010. All the calculated P values are less than the tabulated value at a 5% level of significance leading to the rejection of the hypothesis. In other words, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among audiences across the Age concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertising in selected Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho6.1: The calculated P values of all the TV channels are observed to be lesser than the tabulated value of P at a 5% level of significance. The calculated P values observed are Prag News – 0.004, News Live -0.000, DY365 – 0.002, North East Live – 0.010, Pratidin Time – 0.003, Assam Talks – 0.022, Rang – 0.001, Ramdhenu – 0.005, & Rengoni – 0.004. Thus, we reject the hypothesis. It means, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different educational qualifications concerning the use of ethnic language in advertisements in all the select Assamese TV Channels.
- Ho6.2: Only the calculated P value of News Live (0.098) is greater than the tabulated value of P at a 5% level of significance. For the rest of the TV channels, the calculated P value is less than the tabulated P value at 5%. The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.004, DY365 – 0.002, North East Live – 0.010, Pratidin Time – 0.003, Assam Talks – 0.022, Rang – 0.001, Ramdhenu – 0.005, & Rengoni – 0.004. In other words, we fail to reject the hypothesis concerning News Live. However, for the rest of the Channels, the hypotheses are rejected. It means, for these TV channels, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different educational qualifications concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertisements.
- Ho6.3: We fail to reject the hypotheses concerning TV Channels, Prag News (0.113), Assam Talks (0.170), & Ramdhenu (0.127), as their calculated P value is greater than the tabulated P value. For these TV channels, there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different educational qualifications concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements. For the remaining TV channels, as the calculated P value is less than the tabulated P value at the 5% significant level, we reject the hypotheses. Their calculated P values are News Live- 0.006, DY365- 0.019, North East Live- 0.005, Pratidin Time- 0.001, & Rang-0.031. Thus for these groups of TV channels, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different educational qualifications concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements.
- Ho7.1: The calculated P values of all the TV channels are less than the tabulated P value at the 5% significance level. The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.005, News Live -0.006, DY365 – 0.000, North East Live – 0.002, Pratidin Time – 0.001, Assam Talks – 0.000, Rang – 0.000, Ramdhenu – 0.000, & Rengoni – 0.000. It means we reject the hypothesis. In other words, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic language in advertisements in all the selected Assamese TV Channels
- Ho7.2: The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.199, News Live -0.035, DY365 – 0.000, North East Live – 0.004, Pratidin Time – 0.001, Assam Talks – 0.000, Rang – 0.000, Ramdhenu – 0.014, & Rengoni – 0.003. Only the calculated P value of Prag News is more than the tabulated P value

at the 5% level of significance, leading to failure to reject the hypothesis. It means there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertisements aired in Prag News. For the rest of the TV channels, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertisements.

- Ho7.3: The calculated P value for the DY365 (0.080), Pratidin Time (0.074), Rang (0.240), & Rengoni (0.207) is found to be greater than the tabulated P value at 5% significance level. Thus, we fail to reject the hypotheses concerning these TV channels. It means, there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements aired on DY365, Pratidin Time, Rang, & Rengoni TV channels. However, for the rest of the TV channels we reject the hypotheses as their calculated P value is lesser than the tabulated P value at a 5% significance level. The calculated P values of these TV channels are Prag News – 0.000, News Live - 0.016, North East Live – 0.009, Assam Talks – 0.034, & Ramdhenu – 0.014. For these TV channels, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences with different professions concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements.

- Ho8.1: The calculated P values for the TV channels are Prag News – 0.286, News Live -0.001, DY365 – 0.013, North East Live – 0.529, Pratidin Time – 0.541, Assam Talks – 0.455, Rang – 0.064, Ramdhenu – 0.888, & Rengoni – 0.121. It reflects that only the calculated P value of News Live and DY 365 is less than the tabulated P value at a 5% level of significance. The hypotheses for these two TV channels are rejected. In other words, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic language in advertisements aired on News Live and DY365. For the rest of the TV channels, we fail to reject the hypotheses as the calculated P value is more than the tabulated P value at a 5% level of significance. Thus, there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic language in advertisements aired on these TV channels.

- Ho8.2: The calculated P value for the North East Live (0.030) & Pratidin Time (0.016) is found to be less than the tabulated P value at a 5% significance level. For these two tv channels, we reject the hypotheses. Thus there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertisements aired in North East Live and Pratidin Time. For the rest of the TV channels, the calculated P values are greater than the tabulated P value at a 5% level of significance. The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.473, News Live -0.479, DY365 – 0.410, Assam Talks – 0.131, Rang – 0.713, Ramdhenu – 0.100, & Rengoni – 0.193. For these TV channels, we fail to reject the hypotheses. In other words, for these TV channels, there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic spokespersons in advertisements.

- Ho8.3: The calculated P values are Prag News – 0.213, News Live -0.110, DY365 – 0.478, North East Live – 0.859, Pratidin Time – 0.407, Assam Talks – 0.426, Rang – 0.489, Ramdhenu – 0.241, & Rengoni – 0.006. It means, except for the Rengoni, the calculated P value of all the TV channels is greater than the tabulated P value at a 5% level of significance. Thus, we reject the hypothesis concerning the Rengoni. In other words, there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements aired in Rengoni. For the rest of the TV channels, we fail to reject the hypotheses. It means there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the audiences residing in varied locations concerning the use of ethnic symbols in advertisements aired on these TV channels.

Discussion & Implications

The level of ethnic advertising practices in the select Assamese Language TV channels is observed at a minimum level. Most of the advertisers are only dubbing the pan-Indian advertisements in the Assamese

language while ignoring the ethnicity of the spokespersons and cultural symbols of the target audience. In the long run, this may create discontent among the target audience. It may further develop a negative attitude towards the brand. Therefore, the brand targeting the ethnic audience of Assam should strive to move towards a higher level of ethnic advertising practices.

The level of ethnic advertising is a little higher among the advertisements using celebrity spokespersons (Mean Rank – 66.42) than the advertisements with non-celebrity spokespersons (Mean Rank – 56.82). However, the difference is statistically insignificant. In other words, the level of ethnic advertising vis a vis status of the spokesperson is the same. Furthermore, the post hoc test concerning Ho3 reflects that the regional brands practice a higher level of ethnic advertising than the national and global brands. This situation reveals the poor attitude of national and global brands towards ethnic advertising. Such practices may attract criticism from audiences and may harm brand equity. The test also uncovered a difference in the level of ethnic advertising across the product categories. However, the difference is statistically insignificant. Therefore, Advertisers should make a sincere attempt to enhance the level of ethnic advertising in their advertisements. Such an attempt has the potential of building a positive brand positioning and increasing brand acceptance by the target audience.

The study also establishes the level of satisfaction among the audiences concerning ethnic advertising practices on different TV channels is neutral. The majority of them are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with ethnic advertising practices. The test results of Ho4.1 to Ho8.3 also inferred that in the majority of the cases there exist significant differences in the satisfaction level of audiences on the ethnic advertising practices in different Assamese TV channels across demographic variables. It reflects the audiences' satisfaction level with ethnic advertising varies with the variation in their demographic profile like age, education level, profession, and location of residence. The variation in the level of satisfaction is also observed in different components of advertisements.

3. CONCLUSION

Advertising is a tool of communication that brings marketers and consumers closer. It helps in building the initial relationship between the consumers and the brand. However, ill-crafted advertisements may have a reverse effect on the relationship. Thus, marketers have to carefully design advertisements considering various aspects of the target audience, especially the media, language, spokesperson and ethnic symbols. Such a consideration on the part of the marketer will enhance the success rate of the advertising campaign.

In the present context, the marketers promoting their brand have to go a long way in adopting a higher level of ethnic advertising practices in the state of Assam. As of now only 72% of advertisements are found to have adopted only two parameters of ethnic advertising practices out of four defined parameters. And these two parameters are mostly ethnic media and ethnic language. In the long run, the consumers may come to the realisation that the brands are avoiding the ethnic spokesperson and their ethnic symbols in their advertising campaign in Assam. Such behaviours of advertisers may become detrimental to the development of the brand's relationship with the target consumer. If marketers want to establish their brand in Assam, they have to reflect positive attitudes towards the Assamese consumer. The positive attitude can be reflected through a higher level of ethnic advertising practices.

The present study divulges the contemporary condition of ethnic advertising practices in Assam concerning Assamese TV channels only. Therefore, it creates a future scope for research covering other media as well. Moreover, an empirical study covering the target audience vis-a-vis ethnic advertising practices has the potential to uncover newer facts. Ethnic advertising practices as a research theme have enormous scope for researchers throughout the world.

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