THE MIGRANT AND THE MEDIA
Roles, challenges and potential of ethnic media

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INTRODUCTION

Multiculturism, ethnic diversity, migrants and ethnic media are increasingly common features in many societies – arising from both diversity within countries and growing global migration. New Zealand’s migrant’s history and current pro-immigration policies have attracted a number of ethnic groups from across the world contributing to a diverse society with Auckland boasting more cultural diversity than London (Tapaleao, 2014). Currently Asians form the fourth largest ethnic group in New Zealand with Chinese and Indians being the top two minorities in this group (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

Evidence shows that mainstream media in New Zealand does not fully address the communication needs of these ethnic groups nor does it represent them in a balanced way (Robie, 2009). This is where ethnic, migrant, diaspora media play an important and supporting role by providing an alternative to an increasingly homogenised mainstream media. For ethnic communities, access to such media gives them an avenue to understand more clearly issues affecting their community, a stronger sense of identity and social cohesion and a connection to a perceived transnational community. While there is an increasing concern that mainstream media fails to reflect migrant issues and concerns, a plethora of migrant media exists in parallel that helps fill this gap (Williamson and DeSouza, 2006). Auckland alone has a vibrant ethnic media scene with media spread across print, radio, and web. Its strong Pacific Islands population, for instance, has created a lively media scene with a strong radio and online media presence contributing to the creation of a distinctive cultural diasporic identity (Papoutsaki and Strickland, 2008).

With this background, this essay explores the function of different migrant media in New Zealand drawing examples from across the board with a particular focus on Indian media. This includes traditional media (i.e. print, TV, magazine
and radio), and online media. In this, the traditional communication networks of ethnic community and religious associations and their use of web, films and events is also taken into consideration. By exploring the role, challenges and potential of ethnic media, this essay seeks to understand how these media represent the diverse voices of migrant groups, in addition to providing content relevant to their needs as migrants (i.e. content that counterbalances the mainstream host culture as it is represented in the mainstream media).

**KEY CONCEPTS**

Traditional media or old media as it is alternatively known usually refers to media that were in existence before the advent of digital communication and the internet. These encompass print – newspapers and magazines, television, radio (Logan, 2010; Steele, 2009). Logan observes that old media are for the most part mass media. This brings into play another concept - mainstream media. Chomsky (1997), in his article in Z magazine defines mainstream media as those media disseminated via the largest distribution channels, therefore representing what the majority of media consumers are likely to encounter. It also denotes those media generally reflective of the prevailing currents of thought, influence, or activity (ibid). In contrast, ethnic media are “media that are produced by and for (a) immigrants, (b) racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, as well as (c) indigenous populations living across different countries” (Matsaganis, 2011, p.6 [emphasis in original]).

This essay takes a more liberal view of media. This is because the traditional sense of media does not effectively cover all avenues of communication that an ethnic group utilizes in its quest to maintain cultural integrity. To understand this approach, it might help here to turn to McLuhan and his definition of media. Federman explains:

> Right at the beginning of Understanding Media, McLuhan tells us that a medium is ‘any extension of ourselves, i.e. anything from which a change emerges’. And since some sort of change emerges from everything we conceive or create, all of our inventions, innovations, ideas and ideals are McLuhan media (2004, p. 2).

Taken in the context of this paper, culture manifests itself in many ways beyond the scope of traditional media like print or TV. Examples would include dress, dance, religious functions and events. All of these contribute to maintaining cultural identity and therefore must be considered in order to understand migrant communities’ efforts to remain connected to their native culture.
Research by Elias and Lemish (2008) showed the host country media shape and spread negative stereotypes of immigrants, and exposure to them causes feelings of alienation among immigrants towards the host society and fosters their social segregation. Indications are that mainstream media in New Zealand falls short in communicating about ethnic groups and matters. According to Hollings' (2007) analysis of the 2006 New Zealand census data, 82 per cent of journalists are European, with Māori at 12 per cent, Asians at 4.8 per cent and Pasifika at 1.8 per cent. Robie (2009) believes this situation has contributed to an apparent decline in the quantity and quality of Asia-Pacific coverage in New Zealand media.

Other areas where mainstream media falls short in this respect include tendencies to single out negative aspects of migrant communities and failing to reflect the lives and concerns of these communities. Williamson and Desouza (2006) believe that due to a drift towards media becoming overtly commercial, the focus has shifted from rigorous reporting to sustaining advertising. A fallout of this is the inclination to ignore ethnic groups other than to support dramatic tabloid headlines (ibid). Lincoln Tan, who contributes opinion pieces and stories on race relations and ethnic communities to the New Zealand Herald, adds:

"It is my experience that mainstream media do not make much effort to cultivate relationships with ethnic communities, and simply exploit them for out of context sound-bites without actually representing their views." (quoted in Williamson and DeSouza, 2006, p.22)

This is where ethnic media plays an important, supporting role. Migrant media’s increasing visibility and influence, not only within their diasporic contexts but also across the wider society they operate, open up new and alternative ways for expression and representation while at the same time they challenge the established hierarchies of control over cultural resources within “western mediascapes” (Bailey et al., 2007, p. 2). For ethnic communities, access to such media gives them an avenue to understand more clearly issues affecting their community, a stronger sense of identity and social cohesion and a connection to a perceived transnational community (Shi, 2005; Spoonley and Trlin, 2004).

The existence of migrant media cultures is not a new phenomenon. Migrant and diaspora press has, over a century’s history of circulation and diasporic and ethnic radio, established a vibrant presence in urban and multicultural settings for several decades now. Ethnic, multicultural and diasporic television is also
making a mark in urban mediascapes. Diasporic media production includes material produced locally, nationally and transnationally and consumed locally and translocally (Bailey et al, 2007; Haiderali, 2003).

Migration involves the loss of the familiar, including language (especially colloquial and dialect), attitudes, values, social structures and support networks – affecting sense of self and cultural identity (Bhugra and Becker, 2005). To counter this, migrants form communication networks and participate in activities that allow them to connect with other members of their ethnic group in an effort to maintain their cultural identity. Media forms an important part of this journey.

Media plays a key role in the public representation of societal relations and the play of cultural power through various representations, inviting members of its audience to construct a sense of identity i.e. who we are in relation to others and in relation to who we are not (Cottle, 2000). Spoonley and Trlin (2004) observe that these media, especially those that are locally based in the community, speak directly to their audience and their message is not filtered or constructed by mass media. Because migrant communities tend to be on the margins of two cultures and two societies which are “never completely interpenetrated and fused” (Park, 1969 quoted in Huang, 2004), they often create mechanisms of “coping with the apparently contradictory needs to integrate in the latter and to maintain aspects of their distinct identity and contact with the former” (Tsagarousianou, 2002 quoted in Huang).

While ethnic media help preserve migrants cultural heritage, relive feelings of nostalgia and strengthen the sense of intra-group solidarity, they also play an important role in providing a ‘safe place for these ethnic cultures to thrive, whilst at the same time providing an entrée for newly arrived immigrants who wish to adapt to their new environment’ (Mahtani, quoted in Spoonley, 2004, p. 12). Research by Papoutsaki and Strickland (2008) showed that the under/mis-representation of the Pacific Islands population in the New Zealand mainstream media means that many Pacific Islands people are turning to Pacific diaspora media such as the Pacific Radio Network to listen to their stories from their perspective but also to listen to mainstream news not only from a Pacific perspective but a Pacific news style too (Richards, interview with Papoutsaki, 30/5/08).

Monteiro and Cruickshank (2006) research on the media of Chinese, Indian and South African communities in New Zealand and how they are used to negotiate the immigrants’ roles and identities within their adopted country indicated that such channels provide a credible source of knowledge to immigrants for their particular needs, depending on their level of integration. Tsagarousianou (2002) adds another dimension by stating the significance of ethnic media to the process of formation of diasporic identity at the local level – by attracting an audience based on a certain familiarity of their homeland while contributing to the construction of a new hybrid culture as well.
The importance of ethnic media can be summed up in what Riggins describes as ‘the media imperative’, stating, “What better strategy could there be for ensuring minority survival than the development by minorities of their own media conveying their own point of view in their own language?” (Riggins, 1992, cited in Cormack, 2007, p. 5). Riggins goes on to describe the five key aspects of minority media. The first is the media imperative - the need that minorities have to express their own values and culture in the media. The second is concerned with the limits of media power i.e. that the long term effects of ethnic minority media is a moderate degree of preservation which represents a compromise between total assimilation and total cultural preservation. The third is minority media in the political context, referring to minority representation in the public sphere and its recognition on a national platform. Fourth is minority empowerment which stresses the differences and uniqueness of the minority. Finally, the fifth aspect is minority control of the media for the benefit of the community i.e. media that is in financial and administrative control of the minority and which should be designed in response to the informational needs and preferences of the community.

Ethnic media successful in effectively representing their communities are those that are able to display and manage all the five aspects. However, a variety of challenges ranging from investment to size of ethnic media relative to other media and even size of the community it represents, make this proposition difficult. This often results in ethnic media existing on the sidelines and in some cases lose viability (Matsaganis, 2011).

Another means of understanding the role of ethnic media in a broader societal context is via Browne’s (2005) eight structural elements. Of these, five are relevant to understanding how ethnic media help maintain cultural identity. These are:

**1) OPERATIONAL GOALS**
What is the main raison(s) d’etre of the media outlet?
How do these priorities affect minority participation in the public sphere?
Are these priorities likely to be attractive to other minority groups and to the mainstream?

**2) MEDIA OBJECTIVES**
What are the goals of the minority media and which of these appear predominant?
Is the goal maintaining links with the ancestral homeland or preserving, restoring or advancing the use of minority language?
Is the media aligned with providing and/or restoring a sense of pride in the community’s achievements (cultural, social, political, economic) or is it leaning towards combating negative stereotypes, especially those provided by mainstream media?
Does the media help indicate how minorities and mainstream can / do work together?
Does it serve as a source of information on employment, healthcare, education, financial aid and more or does it illustrate that ethnic minorities are capable of operating media services?

3) MEDIA SERVICE AND COMMUNITY LINKS
Does the service have a community board?
Does the service involve the larger minority community to participate in selecting goals and priorities?
Does the service conduct audience research?

4) PRIMARY AUDIENCE
Do the media cater to their own minority groups or other minorities as well?
What demographics make up the primary audience?
How do the media establish and maintain contact between media and audience?

5) PROGRAMMING
Where is the focus: Information (news, talk shows), education (language lessons, history) or entertainment (music, dance)?
Is the programming participatory and/or representational?

Using publicly available information from sources such as websites, news articles, and personal communication with media distributors the latter part of this chapter attempts to evaluate ethnic media primarily based on Browne’s frameworks and using the Indian community in New Zealand as an example.

INDIA IN NEW ZEALAND – DIVERSITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Contrary to popular belief, Indians are not newcomers to New Zealand. The first recorded Indian migrant was a Bengali sailor who jumped ship in 1809 and lived with the local Māori (Bandyopadhyay, 2006). Over the latter half of the 19th Century a number of Indians landed on the shores of New Zealand and this was the beginning of an Indian diaspora. However, it was the Punjabi and Gujarati families (who migrated before World War II) that established the South Asian community in NZ (Leckie, 2010). This early migration of Indians was influenced by family, kinship ties and patronage of sponsors and is often known as chain migration. As a result, in these initial phases, the Indian diaspora in New Zealand was fairly homogenous - both socially and economically (Bandyopadhyay, 2006).

The wave of post-war immigration of Indians to western nations reached New Zealand in the late 1980s when the focus of immigration polices changed from its traditional ‘white New Zealand’ approach to more skill based immigration. This influx of new immigrants changed the composition of the Indian community (Bandyopadhyay, 2006). Another aspect, which affected this homogeneity, was the migration of Indians from Fiji due to the first military coup of 1987 (Zodgekar,
2010). As expected, migration patterns brought about demographic, social and cultural changes in the Indian ethnic group.

Though classified as the Indian ethnic group in the census, the Indian community is not homogeneous as evident from its religious and linguistic diversity. The diversity of the home country is reflected in the composition of the Indian ethnic group in New Zealand. As per the 2006 census, 54.68 percent claimed Hinduism as their religion, 16.75 percent were Christians and 10.81 percent were Muslim (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). This is vastly different from the original immigrants who were largely Sikh and Hindu. Linguistically also, more than 90 percent of Indians can speak English, of which 29.29 percent speak only English, while the rest are bilingual (Zodgekar, 2010). Other languages which feature are Hindi (41.95 percent), Gujarati (10.03 percent), Punjabi (8.59 percent) along with Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Konkani, Marathi and Sindhi in smaller percentages (Zodgekar, 2010; Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

When it comes to their identity, we find that migrant Indians are well versed in the art of cultural bricolage. Bricolage, as popularized by Claude Levi-Strauss, is the process of taking the materials at hand and using them in an improvisational fashion. Applied to cultural studies, it can be seen as a process one uses to articulate identity in a globalized world, i.e. skillfully handling and putting together different fragments of culture (Knepper, 2006; Fuchs et al, 2010). Understanding a migrant’s perception of identity requires us to view it as the co-existence of these various fragments – personal and communal. Personal includes one’s individual perceptions and that of the family while communal alludes to elements like the wider society, traditions, discourses and societal constructs (Fuchs et al, 2010).

For the Indian ethnic group in NZ it implies being able to shift between multiple cultural contexts – that of the home country (comprising of a multi-layered identity derived from religion, language, region and nation) and that of the host country. An Indian migrant finds it relatively easier to straddle multiple cultural contexts for two main reasons – one, that he is used to living in a culturally diverse setting owing to the basic composition of Indian society; two, his level of familiarity with negotiating between colonial and postcolonial aspects of life (Fuchs et al, 2010).

Indian ethnic identity from the Kiwi perspective is a more generalized version characterized by popular Indian cultural markers. Some examples of these are Bollywood, Indian food like Butter Chicken and festivals like Diwali. These are seen as an all-encompassing view of what it means to be Indian outside of India. While such a perspective recognizes and acknowledges the existence of

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1 Although Fiji Indians are also classified under Indian ethnicity in the New Zealand 2006 census, this paper does not take into account their cultural identity in detail. And though Fiji Indians are part of the audience for some of the ethnic media mentioned in this paper, its relevance and effect on maintaining their cultural identity is not covered. This is owing to their status as ‘twice-migrants’ (Friesen, 2008) and the intricacies involved with their combined Indian and Fijian ethnicities.
an ethnic minority, diverse cultural identities are co-opted and subordinated into what Bandyopadhyay calls a “hegemonic concept of national identity” (2006, p. 125-146). These diverse cultural identities are then reserved for the private sphere. Media provide space for ‘bricolage’ culture to be articulated in the face of hegemonic or dominant local cultures.

IN INDIAN ETHNIC MEDIA IN NEW ZEALAND

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

One of the longest running Indian media outlets in New Zealand is Radio Tarana, an Asia – Pacific radio station catering to the Indian community in New Zealand that has been around since 1996. Prime Minister John Key, in a letter to Radio Tarana on its 17th anniversary in 2012 reiterated its contribution to the Indian community in NZ saying:

Media outlets like Radio Tarana have an important role to play in bringing the latest news to your community. You also have an important role to play in helping the Indian community keep in touch with what is happening at home in India. We strongly value the contribution our Indian communities are making to our society and our future. We’re committed to ensuring your voices are heard at the highest levels (John Key, quoted in Radio Tarana’s 17th Anniversary paper, p.2).

Radio Tarana broadcasts in Hindi and has a listenership of 80,000 of which 59,100 listeners are in Auckland as per a 2012 T1 Research International Survey (Radio Tarana, 2012). Their listenership is not strictly Indian, with spillover from other Asia-Pacific communities like Fiji and Pakistan. Robert Khan, in his CEO report for 2011-12 mentions that Radio Tarana’s main intent is to promote diversity, bridge cultures, celebrate and showcase Indian culture (Khan, 2012, CEO report). They do this via programming that covers news (India, Fiji, local and world), Bollywood and devotional music, interviews, chat shows and sports. Radio Tarana is also actively involved with various community associations, events (local and international) and sporting bodies. This has led them to participate in events like Diwali celebrations, international shows like IIFA Bollywood film awards and cover sports like the Rugby World Cup 2011 (Radio Tarana, 2012). Radio Tarana has also set up a station in Wellington with similar content (ibid).

Other radio stations present in Auckland include Humm FM and Apna 990 in Hindi and Radio Spice in Punjabi. Community Radio is also available to minorities primarily in Auckland through Planet FM. Currently it features Indian language programs in Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Punjabi, and Tamil. Programs cover topics like news, art, culture, history, music, entertainment, religion and community updates. Tamil with ten programs, followed by Punjabi with seven, are the most active on community radio (Planet FM, 2012).
In the print realm, there are a number of newspapers that cater to the Indian community. *Indian Newslink*, *Indian Weekender*, *Indianz Outlook* are English language papers that cover local, Indian and international news of interest to the Indian community. The *Indian Newslink* and *Indian Weekender* claim readership from other parts of the world as a result of their online editions. All three are available to the reader free of cost from various outlets like grocery stores, restaurants, supermarkets, etc. *Indian Newslink* is the only one that claims distribution throughout New Zealand, while the other two are primarily Auckland based (Indiana Publications, 2010; Gupta, 2012; Indianz Outlook, 2012). There are also regional language papers that cater to specific communities within the Indian diaspora such as the *Kuk Punjabi Samachar* (Singh, 2012) (published in Punjabi) and *Pravasa Bharathi* (Pravasa Bharathi, 2012) (published in Telugu and English). There are also e-zines and online news websites such as *The Global Indian* (Angan Publications, 2012) (news from around the world focused on non-resident Indians and Indians living abroad) and *Punjabi Herald* (Singh Basiala, 2012) for Punjabi news.

Television has four main outlets when it comes to Indian language and content. The first is *Face TV* (formerly Triangle Television), which is a non-commercial, regional public broadcaster based in Auckland. Anyone can put a program on Face TV and individuals and groups can book a time slot to broadcast their programme with basis half hour charges. Airtime is allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis bearing in mind the need for equitable representation of all groups. For the Indian community it features content like Bollywood news and movies and Roopa, a locally produced talk show (Face Television, 2014).

The other two media outlets are Vision Asia and Konnect TV, pay television platforms that cater primarily to Indian and Fiji Indian ethnic groups. Vision Asia provides subscribers with a bouquet of 13 Indian channels in Hindi that include general entertainment, news, music, and movies. Also available are four regional language channels – one Punjabi and three Tamil channels. Content is broadcast directly from the channel partners to the Vision Asia satellite where it is stored for delayed telecast to match local prime time. As part of its service, Vision Asia provides subscribers with an entertainment magazine and program guide, featuring the latest news from the Indian film industry, general interest articles like travel and a special interview feature with local Indian personalities, called 20/20 (Vision Asia, 2012).

Konnect TV, established in Australia in 2007, offers similar service with a range of ten channels in Hindi and Punjabi (Konnect TV, 2014). Konnect also provides subscribers with a magazine and program guide (ibid). Apna TV is the latest entrant in this market. A free to air channel, it telecasts syndicated programming from a number of Indian television channels on its platform. However, most of these are older programs that have gone off air (Shafil Khan, 2013).

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2 Sky TV also provides subscribers with Indian channel Star Plus. However, it is not considered here as Sky does not come under the definition of ethnic media i.e. media produced by and for minorities.
ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR MEDIA USE

The New Zealand Indian Central Association (NZICA) was one of the first associations formed in 1926 with a view to fight discrimination and misleading information against Indian migrants and to foster harmony between Indians, Maori and European populations (NZICA, 2012; Ip and Leckie, 2011). Today in its modern avatar, the association is committed to conserve, promote and advance the interests, welfare and status of Indians in NZ (NZICA, 2012).

Linguistic social clusters have given rise to a number of associations such as the New Zealand Telugu Association (NZTA, 2012), Muth Tamil Sangam (2012), Auckland Malayali Samajam (2012) and Probasee Bengalee Association of New Zealand (PBANZ, 2012). The objectives of these associations include promotion of cultural and linguistic heritage, promotion of friendship between members of the association and New Zealanders, settlement of new migrants, liaison with similar communities in New Zealand and India and provision of information about their specific minority to interested people and organisations. Activities encompass festival celebrations, community gatherings, sports days and cultural celebrations.

Religious associations allow the Indian ethnic group to connect with people that share similar religious affiliations and who might not necessarily be from the same regional or linguistic background. Examples of these include the New Zealand Sikh Society (NZSSH, 2012), Shirdi Saibaba Sansthan of New Zealand (Shri Shirdi Saibaba, 2012) and Telugu Church of New Zealand (Facebook page). The aims of religious societies are more focused around religious discourse, prayer meetings and setting up of places of worship. Cultural associations also exist which are dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of art and culture. Some examples are New Zealand Carnatic Music Society (NZCMS, 2011) and Narthana Aalayam School of Indian Dance (for Bharatanatyam, an Indian classical dance; see facebook page). Trained students put up performances and international artists are often invited as well.

Associations are active over the internet and most have their own websites. They also keep members updated via email, newsletters, text messages and Facebook. Other modes of interaction involve events, meetings and gatherings. Cultural programs featuring music and dance and festival celebrations are the most popular events.

Movies form a cultural and lingual link for community members, especially youth (Mallam, S., personal communication, 15th August 2012). Screening of Bollywood films in NZ has gone mainstream with large cinema chains like Event Cinemas and Hoyts showing Hindi films. Independent distributors also buy rights to regional cinema like Ayngaran New Zealand (2012) for Tamil films and Desi Movies for Telugu cinema. Associations form the key contact between
the ethnic community and the movie distributors to communicate new movie releases to the public.

**ETHNIC MEDIA EVALUATION – MAINTAINING CULTURAL IDENTITY**

Comparing the above mentioned media vis-a-vis Browne’s structural elements, we find that traditional media like radio and print have a better grasp on achieving operational goals. By their very nature of being a more popular format of media, it is easier for them to work together with mainstream media and make their presence noticed. Radio Tarana is a good example of ethnic media gaining increased acceptance as part of the mainstream. Radio Tarana inclusion as a finalist in the 2012 New Zealand Radio Awards for ‘Outstanding Community Campaign’ illustrates this point.

Local programming and content also has an edge in terms of greater connect with audience and facilitating increased participation. Radio and print score well on this aspect of Browne’s framework. This is a drawback for Vision Asia, Konnect TV and Apna TV as they have no control on content. However, since they supply prime Indian content in Hindi and regional languages in an audio visual format, they are in an ideal position for preserving and advancing the role of Indian languages, achieving Browne’s media objective. A Vision Asia subscriber of the Tamil channels had this to say: “Many thanks and good luck to VISION ASIA for linking us together and bringing our traditions and culture from India to our homes here in New Zealand” (Kinger, personal communication, 22nd August 2012). Films, especially those in regional languages have the same benefit.

Another aspect of Browne’s media objectives achieved by traditional ethnic media is building a ‘national level’ pride in being Indian. An example of this would be Indian Newslink’s Business Awards which reflects the significant contributions that the Indian business community makes to NZ (Indiana Publications, 2012).

Associations are useful in that they promote and keep alive the diversity of the Indian community. Their reach however is limited since most of them are regional and not large enough to affect changes on a national level. And while they support the media objectives as specified by Browne, they do not feature significantly in the political context as described by Riggins. However, by virtue of being community driven, they are highly participatory and are effective barometers of ethnic community sentiment, helping build media and community links. Some associations like the NZICA endeavour to make a difference on a larger platform. An example of this would be a session conducted by the NZICA on security concerns following violence in South Auckland, with representatives from the Labour and National parties and Manukau City Council in attendance (NZICA, 2008).
CHALLENGES TO ETHNIC MEDIA

Like all mass media, ethnic media also function as an economic enterprise with a dual objective: delivering professional and informational services to the community and generating revenues to sustain and expand itself (Zhou and Cai, 2002). A number of challenges hinder this goal.

In general, ethnic publications are often at disadvantaged positions compared with the mainstream press. Zhang and Xiaoming (1999) list these out: (a) they tend to serve a small and scattered market, which makes it difficult to generate financially viable figures in circulation and advertising income; (b) their potential audiences often face the pressure of cultural assimilation by default or design and (c) they also tend to face greater censorship pressure from the local government and the public majority, since the ethnic minorities are often regarded as aliens representing foreign interests.

With a multitude of ethnic media in the market, intra-ethnic competition for advertising and readership/viewership/listenership is inevitable. In the ethnic media market, most media are available free of cost to the community resulting in little or no subscription revenue and hence advertising sales generate most or all of the revenue. This results in a scenario where a number of ethnic media catering to one ethnic group compete for a share of the same advertising pie.

Compounding this is the clear lack of information - on the part of the government, media agencies and the ethnic media. Martin Pouwels, Director of NZ based ethnic media agency Niche Media [NM] observes, “The ethnic markets and communities are not well understood by the marketing managers from corporates, government departments and advertising agencies, so we face an immediate up-hill battle to get them to invest any budgets with the ethnic media companies” (Pouwels, personal communication, 25th March 2013). Reflections of this can be seen in low budgets allocated to ethnic media by media agencies or in seasonality of ethnically focused advertising, e.g. a focus on advertising to the Chinese community during the Lantern festival or to the Indian community during Diwali.

This perhaps can also be attributed to the lack of ethnic media focused research information such as readership/viewership/listenership figures, which media planners traditionally use to make media plans. Most ethnic media in New Zealand are not large enough to feature in existing research like the Nielsen Media Research National Readership Survey (NRS). NM understanding this gap has taken certain steps to address the issue. Pouwels further adds:
Niche Media has done a lot of work in developing systems that bring together a lot of data and information about these communities, the media companies and the markets and make this available at the fingertips of industry decision makers; however this does not seem to be enough to encourage an equitable percentage of budgets being allocated to these media. This is the main reason NM has decided to make a major investment in developing a survey with an independent research company on “ethnic media consumption habits”. We will then be able to clearly identify what percentages of the communities depend on these “ethnic media companies” to stay informed on a daily/weekly basis and what percentage of them read traditional media for information” (ibid).

Different ethnicities often mean different languages, which often mean fragmented audiences. This is reflected in ethnic media with a highly fragmented media market. Auckland Regional Migrant Services (ARMS) Chief Executive, Mary Dawson says the last decade has seen a big rise in Auckland’s ethnic media and the role they played getting information out to new migrants from over 160 ethnic backgrounds (Auckland Regional Migrant Services, 2012).

Ethnic media is also regional in nature, often catering to a community within a specific geographical spread. This makes it difficult to buy ethnic media ad space on a national scale, increasing decision complexity for media planners choosing where to spend ad budgets. Zhang and Xiaoming however point out that versatile new media technologies, especially the internet, offer special advantages to ease problems faced by ethnic media giving them larger geographical reach and ability to cater to fragmented audiences at comparatively lower costs.

Two other challenges of note are brand marketing awareness and increasing scope and type of advertising beyond in-community advertisers. Noronha’s (leading author) observations enabled by her professional engagement in the sector over a 12 month period showed that a number of large media agencies are unaware of the ethnic media options available in the market. Those that are well-known and popular, such as Radio Tarana and Indian Newslink, have been around for a substantial period and are involved in activities that promote their brand; such as Indian Business Awards as in the case of Indian Newslink. A content analysis of ethnic media in British Columbia, Canada discovered a large portion of advertising in ethnic media came from in-community businesses. English language advertisers specifically came from sectors such as finance, automobile and retail (Murray, Yu and Ahadi, 2007). A comparison of ads in New Zealand ethnic media also reveals a similar trend. This trend can be tied in to earlier challenges of lack of information and brand promotion. Another reason could be that ethnic minorities are not seen as ‘regular folk’ in advertising, despite the growing reality that they also have spending power (Mahtani, 2001).
ETHNIC MEDIA – UNDERUTILIZED POTENTIAL

Migrant communities and their identities are constantly debated and re-imagined, creating and recreating themselves through transformation and difference (Karim, 2003; Hall, 1990). Media play an important role in this process, as migrant people depend on various forms of communication and media in order to sustain a sense of shared identity.

Ethnic media, as an alternative to mainstream media, are essential to the health of civic society and make a crucial contribution to promoting and sustaining social movements (Williamson and DeSouza, 2006). Lalley and Hawkins (2005) further add that seeing our own views expressed beside those of others helps us gain a greater sense of public investment in our communities. Having representation in media is important for migrant groups, in that it provides a platform for the community and a bridge to that community for others. Representation is also important as it helps avoid the development of inequalities in migrant communities who may otherwise become socially and economically disadvantaged (Singh, 2006). This highlights an important potential of ethnic media – that of integration of migrant communities into larger society.

Going mainstream for traditional media is a relatively easier journey as compared to alternative media and will help ethnic voices reach a larger audience. In these cases the opportunity exists for such media to accurately promote the life and stories of ethnic communities to a wider audience and also support endeavours such as preserving ethnic culture (Williamson and DeSouza, 2006). However, a note of caution here would be to balance the diversity of content versus the perception of the migrant identity by the majority. In their quest to be recognized as mainstream and drive advertising revenues, ethnic media run the risk of being less representational, especially if they overlook the diversity of their primary audience and cater to a more generalized view of being ‘ethnic’.

One positive consequence of in-community advertising in ethnic media is the support that these media provide ethnic businesses. Most of these businesses tend to be small medium enterprises (SME’s). Immigrant entrepreneurship provides a mechanism to integrate immigrants into the mainstream of the host society, and is often perceived as an acceptable form of socio-economic self-help. Additionally, in New Zealand entrepreneurship has been seen as a solution to alleviate the high rate of unemployment in migrant communities after their initial entry into the country (New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils, 2014). SME’s usually do not have the budgets to advertise in mainstream media. Ethnic media provide an economically viable option in such cases. By providing an avenue for ethnic SME’s to advertise their service and grow their business, they support the growth, prosperity and integration of ethnic communities.
IMPACT OF ETHNIC MEDIA CHALLENGES AND UNDERUTILIZATION ON CULTURAL IDENTITY

Media provides an important source of information through which we gain knowledge about our nation, and our attitudes and beliefs are shaped by what the media discerns as public knowledge (Mahtani, 2001). In New Zealand, diversity reportage in traditional media falls short of the mark for a country with such a diverse population. New Zealand studies on mass media about diversity of journalists, low quantity of ethnically focused articles and negative stereotyping all support this standpoint (Robie, 2009; Nairn et al, 2011; Chambers, 2009; Spoonley and Trlin, 2004). While it is clear that mass media does not adequately support ethnic communities in voicing their ideas, concerns and viewpoints, how do the challenges facing ethnic media affect their ability to do the same?

In the early days, ethnic media were often started as a mission rather than a viable financial operation; financed mostly by community businessmen through individual or collective investment and usually aimed at providing a community service rather than generating profits. In contemporary times such a practice has become increasingly difficult, owing to the level of investment required (Zhang and Xiaoming, 1999). Financial viability and survival then, are the greatest threats to ethnic media in NZ. With revenues from advertising difficult to obtain in the current scenario, sustaining ethnic media becomes challenging.

Solutions to this lie in education and government support. Education is an endeavour that all parties involved – government, media agencies/corporates and ethnic media, must undertake. With the survey instituted by Niche Media, ethnic media is taking a step ahead in this direction. Corporates and media agencies must make a conscious effort to understand minorities and make diversity a key ingredient in their media plans.

While there is ample vocal support from government on the importance of ethnic media (Bhagwat-Chitale, 2013; Radio Tarana, 2012), it only amounts to lip service in the absence of increased government advertising budgets for ethnic media and government legislation to support the ethnic media industry. One example of government support for ethnic media is the multicultural policy of Canada. Through its official multicultural policy, many ethnic media outlets were funded in order to help maintain and enrich heritage and culture (Mahtani, 2001). Among the most successful attempts in Canada to foster a multicultural image is the example of CITY-TV, a Toronto-based television station that has gained both popular and critical acclaim (Dunn and Mahtani cited in Mahtani, 2001). Multicultural policy affects media representations of minorities in Canada because by law, Canadian media organizations are expected to reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada (ibid).
Biculturalism, the policy adopted by New Zealand has seen positive effects for Māori identity and associated ethnic media – with Te Reo Māori recognised as an official language; the Māori Television Service Act 2003, under which Māori Television was set up and 21 Māori radio stations across New Zealand set up as a result of a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1986 concerning allocation of radio frequencies (Māori Television, 2013; Māori Language Commission, 2012).

Estimates by Statistics New Zealand indicate that the growth of the Asian population will be the greatest, from the 2006 figure of 10 percent to 16 percent in 2026 compared to Pacific peoples from 7 percent to 10 percent and Māori from 15 to 16 percent (Ministry of Social Development, 2010). In such a scenario, given the role played by ethnic media in helping new migrants settle into their host country, its importance only increases (Spoonley and Trlin, 2004). Is a formal adoption of multiculturalism or perhaps cultural diversity by New Zealand, while ensuring the respect of the indigenous population, the tipping point to ensuring ethnic media’s recognition and growth?

CONCLUSION

The Indian identity is complex due to its multi-layered nature that is based on various elements including religion, region, language and ethnic group. Oomen (2000) points out that Indian practice is to recognize all major linguistic collectives as distinct entities, making India a multi-national state. Fuchs et al (2010) in their study on Christchurch Indians argue that identity is fluid and cannot be taken as something given, eternally fixed, inherent or inscribed. With Indian migrants, this is especially true given the multiple contributions to their identity and the differences in public and private identities. Bandyopadhyay captures it aptly when he says:

*In other words, they (Indians) live with multiple identities. And, as all identities are conjectural, each of these identities is continually reinvented, renegotiated and articulated in different social and political contexts. These identities do not displace each other, but reside concurrently in layered social consciousness. It is not that the diaspora has no sense of space, but that migrant Indians inhabit several carefully chosen spaces, some real and some imaginary (2006, p.146).*

With this background, how does ethnic media support an Indian migrant’s quest to maintain his cultural identity? The simple answer is no one media can. The Indian ethnic identity is not homogeneous and as such an Indian migrant has to interact with multiple media to maintain the different layers of his identity. Given a migrant’s perception of their identity in a given context, they will gravitate towards media that support their view at that point in time. For ethnic media, this makes it increasingly important that they keep a tab on the pulse of the Indian community and tailor their approach and content basis audience feedback.
and reaction. It is only when they are truly representational and participatory, that they will reflect an accurate picture of the Indian ethnic community to the majority.

The importance of ethnic media in maintaining migrant populations’ cultural identity is an established point. Spoonley and Trlin articulate this saying:

As an alternative for a variety of reasons – contact with a homeland, culturally sensitive media, help with settlement in New Zealand, intra-immigrant group business activity – the immigrant groups access alternative media which might be locally generated or come from a homeland (2004, p. 62).

The need of the hour then is to give ethnic media a level playing field in which to compete in the media market. What is also required to support this is more research. Mahtani (2001) recommends areas to consider: (a) research on media consumption and audience reception to media (b) unravelling the role of other identity markers, including gender, age, socio-economic status, religion, and regional differences in the consumption and production of media, (c) other methodological approaches (beyond content analysis) to study media-minority relations and its impact on identity formation, (d) studies that explore the relationship between identity formation, minority images and the variations within different minority communities and (e) a more precise examination of the role of ethnic media in combating negative portrayals of minorities in the media and in particular, how ethnic media affects the mainstream media.

As a way to achieve comprehensive results, Mahtani (2001) proposes that media researchers work more closely with media organizations themselves. Researchers might well be the bridge between corporates/media agencies, ethnic media and the government. Research combined with government support will go a long way in ensuring equitable representation of migrants in media and further encourage a vibrant ethnic media landscape.

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