



शोधामृत

(कला, मानविकी और सामाजिक विज्ञान की अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहकर्म समीक्षित, मूल्यांकित, त्रैमासिक शोध पत्रिका)

ISSN : 3048-9296 (Online)

3049-2890 (Print)

IIFS Impact Factor-5.375

Vol.-3; issue-3 (July-Sept.) 2026

Page No- 111-123

©2026 Shodhaamrit

DOI- 10.71037/Shodhaamrit.v3i3.16

<https://shodhaamrit.gyanvidya.com>

Author's :

1. Mohit Yogi

Research Scholar, Department of
Journalism and Mass Communication,
Central University of Haryana.

2. Dr. Neeraj Karan Singh

Assistant Professor, Department of
Journalism and Mass Communication,
Central University of Haryana.

Examining Representation of Tribal Community in Indian Regional Cinema : An An Empirical Study

Abstract : Indian cinema is not limited to Hindi films, but it also has a rich diversity of regional films. These reflect local languages, cultures, traditions, lifestyles, and social realities. Early studies suggest that regional cinema shows a close connection with local narratives, socio-cultural traditions, and beliefs that make it a more authentic portrayal of tribal and marginalised communities. However, Hindi cinema has frequently represented them as stereotypes, exoticism, and simplified narratives that fail to capture the diversity and complexity of their identities. This study aims to examine how Indian regional cinema represents tribal communities, especially the Banjara community. The study adopts a community-based perspective that focuses on how the Banjara community perceives, interprets, and evaluates their representation in regional films. The study uses a quantitative research approach, and scheduling will be conducted to collect data from respondents. The selected regional film is Rukma. The snowball sampling technique will be used to select respondents. This study is going to address an important gap in films and cultural studies by providing an interpretation of the tribal community on their representation.

1. Introduction : The origin of Indian cinema can be traced nearly six months after the first cinematography exhibitions organized by the Lumière Brothers (Kumar, 2000). Indian cinema is not limited to popular or Bollywood cinema; rather, it encompasses a rich diversity of regional cinema. Regional cinema means films that are made in Indian languages apart from Hindi, such as Gujarati, Punjabi, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Bhojpuri, Assamese, Rajasthani, Haryanvi, and others. Barman (2024) in his study said Regional cinema also refers to the soul of the region. Its themes, stories, culture, and identities emerge from the people's everyday life, experiences, and surroundings (Barman, 2024). Regional cinema is closer to the reality of the region or indigenous communities, as it reflects the local languages, culture, how people live, their customs, eating habits, their beliefs, practices, and also social issues. According to Barman (2024), most of the time regional

Corresponding Author :

Mohit Yogi

Research Scholar, Department of
Journalism and Mass Communication,
Central University of Haryana.

cinema helps to learn about a region, community, their history and struggle. Cinema has played an important role in preserving the culture and traditions of a region or community by visually representing their day-to-day practices (Jabara, 2022; IGNOU, 2017).

In this paper, the researcher aims to examine how Indian regional cinema represented tribal communities, especially the Banjara community. According to Boro (2025), Indian cinema has historically misrepresented or underrepresented these tribal communities. Such portrayals often depend on stereotypes, exotic representations, or limited narratives that do not fully reflect the complexity and diversity of tribal identities.

The term tribe originated from the Latin word “tribus,” which means “A group of persons who share a common ancestry, culture, and social identity” (A & Dhingra, 2017). The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1911, states that a tribe can be described as a group of families sharing a common name, dialect, and territory, connected through a shared social and cultural identity. According to D.N. Majumdar (1961), a tribe is a group of families sharing a common name, language, and territory, whose members follow similar social customs, marriage rules, occupations, and systems of mutual support and responsibility. According to the 2011 census, there are almost 700 tribes in India notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, found across different states and Union territories of the country. The tribal communities found in India are Chenchus, Gonds, Monpas, Santhals, Bhils, Minas, Banjara, Koragas, Khasis, Nagas, Saoras, Great Andamanese, etc stretched over different states.

One of the communities that is often represented in Hindi cinema is Banjara. The origin of this community is from the Mewar region of Rajasthan. This community is known by different names in different states of India, such as Gor Banjara, Baladiya, Gour Rajput, Rajput Banjara, Ladaniya, Labana, Nayak, Lambadi, Lambani, Brinjari, Labhani, etc (Malhotra & Bose, 2016; Lal, 2016). Their way of living and costumes make them different from others. They wear tinkling jewellery and colourful dresses. They were also known as traders as they moved and carried goods from one place to another (Sachdev, 2012). They have been represented in many Hindi films such as “Caravan (1971), Seeta aur Geeta (1972), Banjaran (1992), Lamhe (1991), Karan Arjun (1995).

This study examines the Banjara community and its representation in regional films. Popular media often represents tribal communities simply and stereotypically, which reduces the richness and diversity of their identities while ignoring their contributions to society (Gupta, 2023). In contrast, this study adopts a community-based perspective to analyse how regional films provide more nuanced, culturally rich, and more accurate representations of tribals. According to Mantiri & McCann (2024), mainstream audiences and tribal communities may interpret and understand cinematic representation differently. Therefore, it is important to study the reception of tribal communities in cinema to understand whether these representations are accurate and authentic or promote stereotypical images or there is misrepresentation. Hence, it is important to move beyond studying representation alone and also examine how tribal audiences perceive, interpret, and respond to these portrayals in relation to their own identities and lived experiences.

The objectives of this study are to examine how people of the tribal community perceive their representation in the regional films. It also aims to assess authenticity and cultural accuracy regarding the tribal community in regional films. The study uses audience reception theory as a theoretical framework. The selected film that is shown to the tribal community is Rukma (2016). The methodology used is quantitative, with scheduling as the data collection tool, and the snowball sampling method is used to select respondents.

Although there is increasing research on regional cinema, the existing study on the representation of tribal communities is from a researcher's perspective. There is still a major gap in examining the perspective of tribal audiences on their representation in films, especially through a quantitative approach. That's why the concept of representation becomes important in

the study of tribal communities, as their voices and perspectives are often missing from mainstream media. This leads to the construction of their identity by outsiders, resulting in partially distorted representations. This study contributes to film and cultural studies by moving beyond textual or production analysis and focusing on how tribal communities interpret their representation in films. This highlights the gap between representation and reality, and raises the voices of tribal communities on their representation. The study not only examines the authenticity, stereotypes, and cultural accuracy of cinematic representation, but it also challenges dominant narratives and promotes a more inclusive and community-oriented understanding of representation.

2. Literature Review : Raja Harishchandra, directed and produced by Dadasaheb Phalke, is often considered the first Indian regional film. Regional cinema is different from mainstream national cinema as it often focuses on local cultural, language, and social realities of a specific region. This local connection provides an opportunity for regional films to represent unique experiences, struggles, and achievements of tribal communities. It provides more close portrayal, unlike mainstream national cinema, which often presents them in a generalized or stereotypical manner (Schleiter & Maaker, 2019). Moreover, regional cinema often includes local dialects, traditions, and beliefs. This creates a more authentic representation of stories, culture, etc, allowing deeper relatability to particular community audiences (Fidelis, 2024). This culturally and localised approach of regional cinema challenges the dominant narratives often seen in mainstream cinema and provides an alternative platform to encourage self-representation (Andayani et al., 2021; Ullah & Mukhtiar, 2025). In India, the term “regional cinema” refers to making a difference between films made in regional languages and Hindi cinema, reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of Indian national cinema (Barman, 2024). Each regional film industry is shaped by its own audiences, traditions, culture, and performance styles, making every regional cinema unique rather than part of a single category. Quadros and Kharkar (2025) explain that regional cinema promotes cultural freedom, social change and influence audience perceptions by breaking prejudices and creating awareness about regionalism. As cinema influence audiences in understanding caste, gender, class, religion, language, and also regional identity. According to them, its impact is closely connected to the cultural development of a region. It can also positively influence communities by encouraging social interaction and strengthening community connections (Quadros and Kharkar, 2025). Singh (2023) also states that regional cinema plays an important role in educating and bringing change in society. Goswami (2025) in his study states that regional cinema such as the Marathi film “Swaas” raised public discussion and awareness about social issues and solutions. By representing real-life success and failure, regional cinema inspires viewers and influences society's views (Goswami, 2025).

Representation is an important concept in media studies, referring to explaining how media creates and communicates meaning through different forms of content. Stuart Hall (1997) states that representation is not only a neutral reflection but an active construction of reality. According to him, media does not simply mirror the world, but it selects, organises, and presents meanings that shape audience understanding. His theory explains that representation works through language, symbols, and discourse, which are influenced by the power structures present in society (Hall, 1997). This highlights that marginalised communities such as tribals are often represented through dominant social and ideology perspective that may not reflect reality. In the context of cinema, filmmakers act as cultural creators whose narratives can either strengthen existing stereotypes or challenge them (Karmakar & Pal, 2024).

Representation in regional cinema means the way people, culture, places, and identities are represented on screen. By representing local dialects, costumes, customs, rituals, food, and landscape in a more nuanced manner, creating stronger sense of realism and authenticity (Quadros and Kharkar, 2025). Instead of showing stereotypes, regional cinema reflects everyday

realities. According to Quadros and Kharkar (2025), regional cinema is closely associated with regional culture because it mirrors the regional languages, cultural practices, and social issues found in different parts of India. Films made in Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, and other regional languages often present realistic depictions of social life that connect strongly with the people of those regions. Regional cinema provides more detailed and realistic representation of different cultural groups and their unique challenges, including tribals (Rani, 2024). Divakaran (2017) also states that regional cinema is rooted in specific linguistic and cultural settings and has great potential to present authentic stories, due to its close connection to local narratives and socio-cultural realities.

Most of the regional cinema reflects local socioeconomic and cultural aspects. It represents local traditions, customs, and languages that align with reality, and these factors help strengthen cultural and linguistic identity (Saxena, 2023). For example, Malayalam films portray detailed Kerala culture, and Bengali films also highlight more nuanced West Bengal culture. These films not only educate and make audiences aware but also create a sense of cultural pride (Quadros and Kharkar, 2025).

On the one side mainstream Indian cinema has historically ignored marginalised communities and portrays them through the lens of pity or exotic stereotypes. But regional cinema has taken a strong stand to show a greater ability to explore their social realities and lived experiences in a more nuanced way (Pandey & Gaur, 2025). This nuanced approach to representation also extends to tribal communities. Offering more authentic and community-oriented representation, instead of the generalized portrayals commonly seen in mainstream cinema (Pimpliskar, 2026; Sharma, 2024). This evolving trend in cinema draws attention to understanding tribal identity as diverse and multidimensional, influenced by culture, social and historical factors rather than reducing it to a single stereotypical image (Sharan, 2022). Whereas mainstream or Hindi cinema, popularly known as Bollywood, has contributed to creating simplified and stereotypical portrayals of Adivasis (Tribals). It often presents them as “other”, thereby reinforcing these perceptions among wider audiences (Rekhari, 2010).

3. Research Objectives and Questions

1. To examine how people of the tribal community perceive their representation in the regional films.
2. To know the authenticity and cultural accuracy regarding the tribal community in regional films.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How do people of the tribal community perceive and interpret their representation in regional cinema?
2. How culturally accurate and authentic is the tribal community represented in the regional cinema?

1.2 Hypothesis

Hypothesis: Tribal audiences perceive their representation in regional cinema as authentic and accurate.

4. Methodology : The study employs a quantitative method to systematically examine the perception of selected tribal communities of their representation in regional cinema. Scheduling is used to collect data, that has a set of questions. Respondents are selected through the snowball sampling method. The selected regional film Rukma (2016). This study uses audience reception theory. It suggests that audiences understand and interpret media content differently depending on their socio-cultural background, as supported by Ien Ang (1985) in her influential work *Watching Dallas*. This perspective challenges the idea of passive audiences and instead emphasizes that audiences interpret the same media content in different ways. Also, most of the studies largely focus on textual and production-based analysis, neglecting audience-based evaluations (Ferdinanda et al., 2025).

5. Findings

5.1 Age distribution of respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage Respondents
18-30	16	32%
31-45	19	38%
46-60	9	18%
Above 60	6	12%

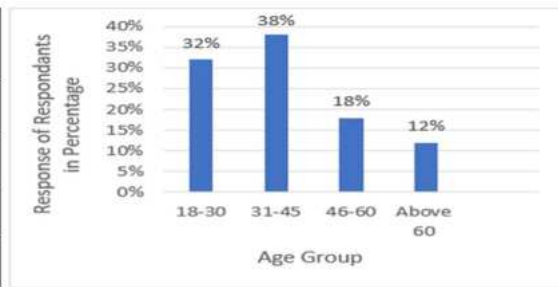


Table 5.1 shows the different age groups of the respondents from the Banjara community. It illustrates the age structure of the survey respondents based on four categories. The most represented group is the 31-45 age category (38%), made up of 19 people. The second most represented group is the 18-30 age category with 32% (16) of the respondents. Those who fall into the 46-60 age category account for 18% (9), while those aged above 60 form the least represented category with 12% (6). Overall, from the graph above, the information provided indicates that younger and middle-aged individuals (18-45) are more represented than the other age groups in the survey.

5.2 Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage Respondents
Male	29	58%
Female	21	42%
Others	0	0%

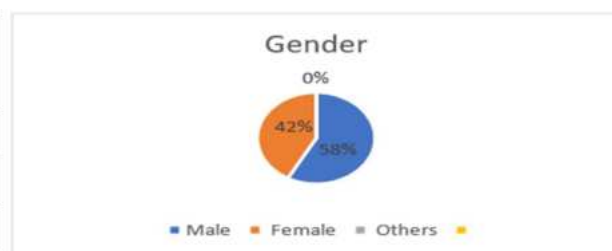
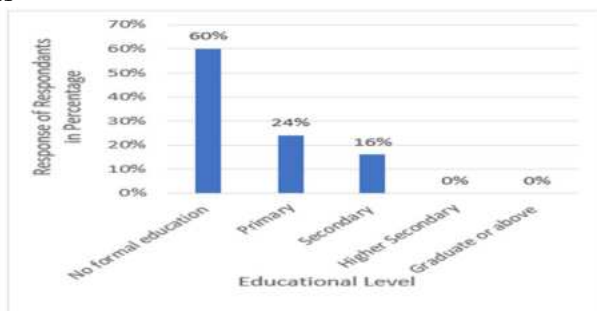


Table 5.2 shows the data on the gender distribution of Banjara community respondents. The data shows that out of the total 50 respondents, 29 (58%) are male and 21 (42%) are female. No respondents have identified themselves as “other”. This data also shows that male participants are more than female participants. But there are enough female participants and not overshadowed by the males. Both male and female respondents are necessary for the study as it helps to understand how both genders male and females, are represented in the films.

5.3 Education Qualification of Respondents

Education level	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
No formal education	30	60%
Primary	08	16%
Secondary	12	24%
Higher Secondary	0	0%
Graduate or above	0	0%

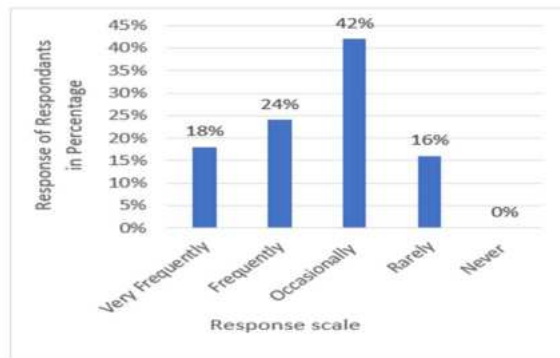


The data in Table 5.3 present the educational qualifications of the Banjara community respondents. A majority of the respondents are not educated, as per the data. Out of the total 50 respondents, 08 (16%) went to primary school, and 12 (24%) of respondents went to secondary school. No respondents have chosen the options “higher secondary” and “graduate or above,” which shows the condition of education in the community. According to the data, out of 50, only 20 respondents went to school, but they never completed their higher

education. This educational qualification data is concerning, as it indicates that one of the major tribal communities still lags behind in educational attainment.

5.4 Films watching habits of banjara respondents.

Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Very Frequently	5	10%
Frequently	16	32%
Occasionally	21	42%
Rarely	8	16%
Never	0	0%

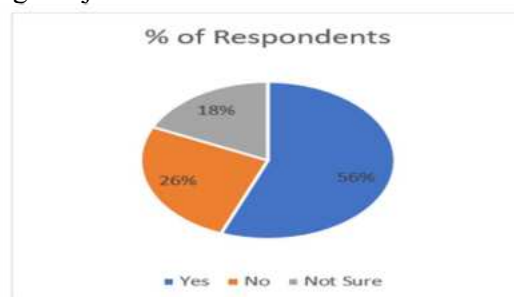


The data in Table 5.4 highlight the film-watching habits of the Banjara community and their exposure to the cinema. It is important to know how much Banjara community members consume cinematic content. Out of 50 respondents, only 5 (10%) said that they watch films very frequently, and 16 (32%) chose the frequently option. Out of the 50 respondents, 21 (42%), which is approximately half of the respondents, said they only watch films occasionally. There were only 8 (16%) of the respondents who said they rarely consume cinematic content. No respondents said that they never watch films; this indicates that every respondent is exposed to cinematic content even if it is once in their lifespan.

So, according to this data, 21 (42%) of the respondents are regularly consuming cinematic content, but on the other hand, there were only 8 (16%) who responded that they rarely watch films. Watching films very frequently and frequently doesn't mean they are watching them daily; they watch films weekly or monthly. The responses by 21 (42%) respondents say they watch films occasionally, which implies that it is a situational and not habitual behavior. The data suggest that the respondents have a fair amount of exposure to cinematic content.

5.5 Exposure of respondents to the films featuring Banjara characters?

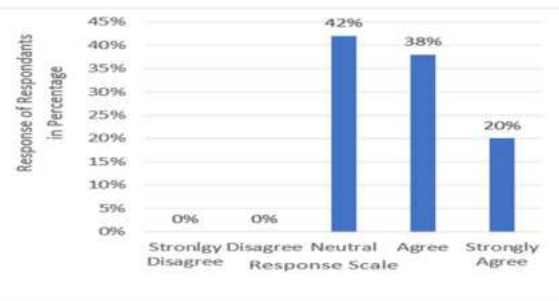
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	28	56%
No	13	26%
Not Sure	09	18%



The data in Table 5.5 depicts the exposure of Banjara community respondents to films featuring Banjara characters. This data shows how many of the respondents have already watched films in which there is a character that resembles their community. Out of the 50 respondents, 28 (56%) said that they are already exposed to films that feature Banjara characters. 13 (26%) respondents opted for the option "No", which indicates that they have never seen films in which Banjara characters are featured. 09 (18%) respondents opted for "not sure," indicating that they are not sure about their exposure to the films featuring Banjara characters.

5.6 Perception regarding the realistic representation of social realities of their community in the regional film.

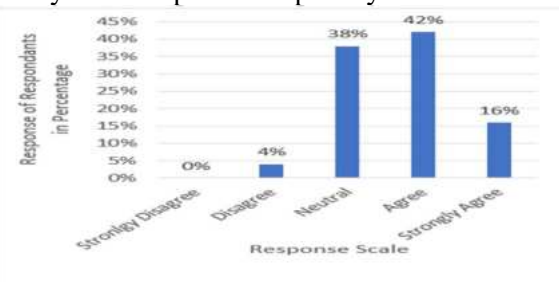
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Neutral	21	42%
Agree	19	38%
Strongly Agree	10	20%



The data in Table 5.6 show the perception of Banjara community respondents regarding the representation of their social realities in the regional films. Out of the 50 respondents, none selected “Strongly Agree” or “Disagree”. This shows that none of the respondents had a negative perception regarding the representation of their social realities in the films. There were 21 (42%) of the respondents who chose the “Neutral” option. Out of the total 50 respondents, 19 (38%) and 10 (20%) chooses option Agree and Strongly Agree. Suggesting that they had a positive perception regarding the representation of their social realities. For them, representation is accurate and realistic.

5.7 Level of personal identification with the lifestyle and experiences portrayed in the film.

Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	2	4%
Neutral	19	38%
Agree	21	42%
Strongly Agree	8	16%

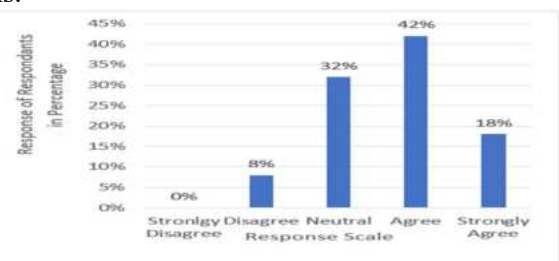


The data in Table 5.7 examines whether Banjara respondents feel that the lifestyle and daily life experiences portrayed in the films reflect reality and it relates to them. Out of the 50 respondents, none of them had selected “Strongly Disagree,” and only 2 (4%) had opted for “Disagree”. That means only 2 respondents think that representation in regional films does not relate to their lifestyle and their daily life experiences. On the other hand, 19 (38%) had selected “neutral”. Out of 50, 21 (42%) of respondents selected “agree,” and 8 (16%) selected “strongly agree”. This indicates that they agree that regional cinema reflects the lifestyle and daily life experiences which resembled to the reality, and Banjara respondents relate to it.

5.8 Perception regarding authenticity of language and dialect used in the film.

The data in Table 5.8 show the perception of respondents regarding the authenticity of language and dialect used in the regional films.

Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	4	8%
Neutral	16	32%
Agree	21	42%
Strongly Agree	09	18%

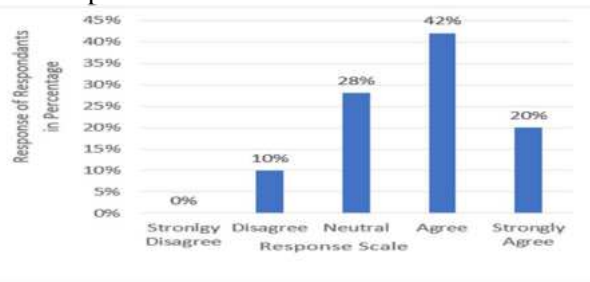


Out of the total 50 respondents, none of them selected “Strongly Disagree,” and only 4 (8%) selected “Disagree”, so there are only a few respondents who consider the language and dialect used in the film to be not authentic. There were 16 (32%) respondents who opted for the neutral option. They opined that language and dialects relate to reality, but they are exaggerated and do not match the accuracy. Out of the total 50 respondents, 21 (42%) and 09

(18%) opted for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree,” respectively. These 30 respondents consider the language and dialect used in the film to be authentic and relatable to reality.

5.9 Accuracy of dress, customs and traditions represented in the film.

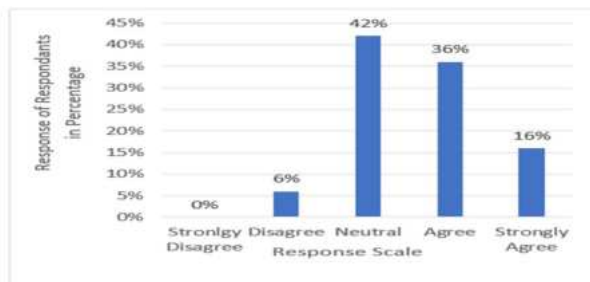
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	5	10%
Neutral	14	28%
Agree	21	42%
Strongly Agree	10	20%



The data in Table 5.8 show the perception of respondents regarding accuracy in representing clothes, customs, and traditions in films. There were no strongly disagreeing responses; however, 10% of the respondents disagreed. Out of the total 50 respondents, 14 (28%) chose “neutral” as their option. This large number of neutrals suggests that they agree with the fact that dress, customs, and traditions shown in films are accurate but there is some inconsistency. 21 (42%) of respondents selected the option “Agree,” and 10 (20%) of them selected “Strongly Agree”, indicating that, according to 31 respondents, the representation of clothes, customs, and traditions in regional films is accurate.

5.10 Perceived accuracy in the portrayal of the social and cultural life of the community in the film.

Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	6%
Neutral	21	42%
Agree	18	36%
Strongly Agree	8	16%

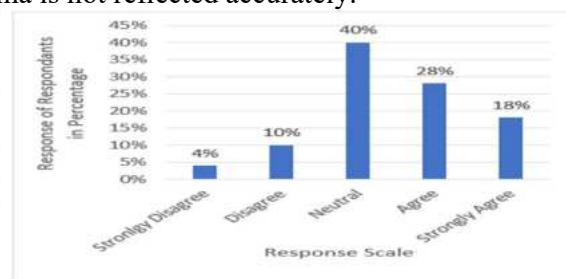


The data in Table 5.10 show the perception of respondents regarding the portrayal of the social and cultural life of the community in the regional films. None of the respondents selected the option “Strongly Disagree”, and only 3 (6%) selected “Disagree”. This shows that only 3 of the respondents opined a negative perception regarding the portrayal of the social and cultural life of the community in the film. While out of the 50 respondents, 21 (42%) chose neutral as an option. 18 (26%) chose “Agree,” and 8 (16%) chose “Strongly Agree”, opining that the social and cultural life of the community is accurately portrayed in the regional films.

5.11 Perceived reflection of the true identity of the community in the film.

The data in Table 5.11 show the perception of respondents regarding the representation of the true identity of their community in the regional film. Out of 50 respondents, 2 (4%) chose “Strongly disagree” and 5 (10%) of respondents opted “Disagree”. So, only 7 respondents think that their true identity in regional cinema is not reflected accurately.

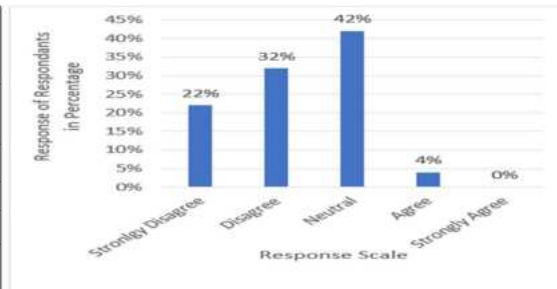
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	2	4%
Disagree	5	10%
Neutral	20	20%
Agree	14	28%
Strongly Agree	9	18%



While 20 (40%) respondents opted for the “Neutral” option, this suggests that films represent true identity but also miss some important aspects of their identity. Out of 50 respondents, 14 opted for “Agree,” and 09 (18%) opted for “Strongly Agree”; they opined that the representation of their identity is accurately reflected by regional films.

5.12 To assess whether the portrayal of community in regional film is simplified and less detailed.

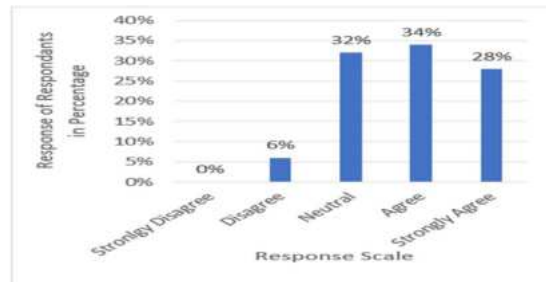
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	11	22%
Disagree	16	32%
Neutral	21	42%
Agree	2	4%
Strongly Agree	0	0%



The data in Table 5.12 assesses whether the portrayal of the Banjara community in regional film is oversimplified and presented in a less detailed manner. Out of the total 50 respondents, 11 (22%) chose “Strongly Disagree,” and 16 (32%) chose “Disagree”, reporting negatively on the simplified and less detailed representation of the community in films. While 21 (42%) a large number of respondents opted “neutral” as their option, according to them, the representation is not simplified and less detailed, but they also argue that the representation is more detailed. Out of 50 respondents, 2 (4%) selected “Agree” and none of them went for “Strongly Agree”, so only 4% of respondents support the statement. And 27 respondents opine that the statement is incorrect.

5.13 Perception regarding representation of traditional aspects of the community than present-day realities

Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	6%
Neutral	16	32%
Agree	17	34%
Strongly Agree	14	28%



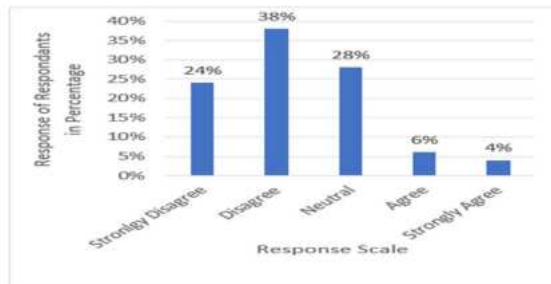
The data in Table 5.13 show the perception of the respondents regarding the representation of traditional aspects of the community over present-day realities. Out of 50 respondents, none of them has selected “Strongly Agree,” and 3 (6%) of them have selected “Disagree”. This shows that there are only 3 respondents who disagree with the statement, and they opine that present-day realities are shown more than traditional aspects. While 16 (32%) have opted for the “Neutral” option. Out of the total respondents, 17 (34%) agree with the statement and 14 (28%) strongly agree with the statement that cinematic representation is more focused on traditional aspects of the community than present-day realities.

5.14 Perception regarding portraying dramatic aspects of the community more than everyday realities.

The data in Table 5.14 show the perception of Banjara community respondents regarding emphasizing of dramatic aspects of the community more than everyday realities while portraying them in films. According to the data, there are only 2 (4%) of the respondents who strongly agree with the statement, and 3 (6%) of them agree with the

statement that cinema emphasises more on dramatic aspects rather than reflecting the reality of the community.

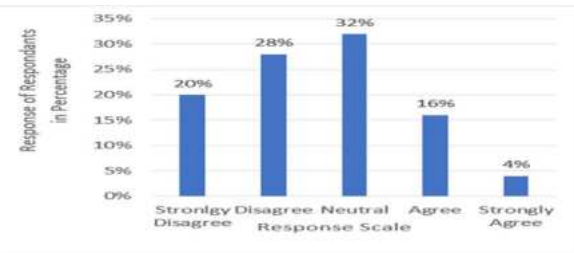
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	12	24%
Disagree	19	38%
Neutral	14	28%
Agree	3	6%
Strongly Agree	2	4%



On the other hand, the neutral category accounts for 14 (28%). Out of 50 respondents, 12 (24%) of them are strongly disagree, and 19 (38%) disagree with the statement focuses on the dramatized aspect instead of reality.

5.15 Perceived perception regarding whether the representation gives limited attention to the diversity within the community.

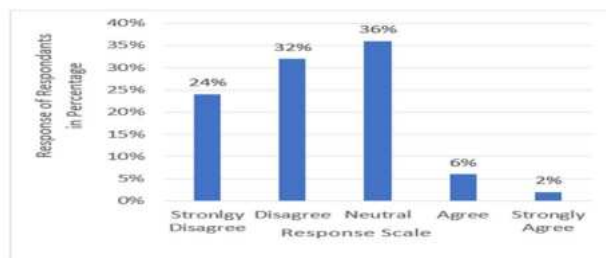
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	10	20%
Disagree	14	28%
Neutral	16	32%
Agree	8	16%
Strongly Agree	2	4%



The data in Table 5.12 present the perception of Banjara community respondents regarding whether the representation gives limited attention to the diversity within the community. From the data in the table, it can be seen that 20% strongly disagree and 28% disagree with the statement. Implying that almost half of them do not agree with the statement that regional films give limited attention; instead, they were positive about the portrayal of diversity in regional films. There were 16 (32%) of the respondents who opted for the “neutral” option. While 8 (16%) agreed with the statement and 2 (4%) strongly agreed with the statement, they opined that regional films give limited attention to the diversity within the community.

5.16 Perception regarding the focus on costumes and appearance more than the real experiences of the community.

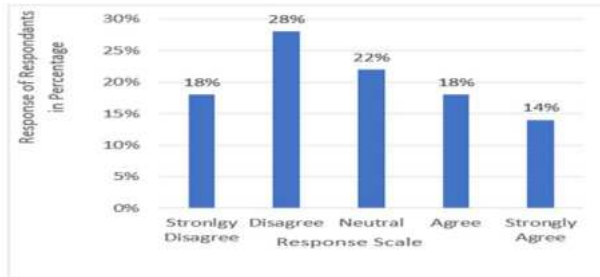
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	12	24%
Disagree	16	32%
Neutral	18	36%
Agree	3	6%
Strongly Agree	1	2%



The data in the table 5.16 shows the perception of the banjara respondents that the film focuses more on costumes and appearance of banjara community people instead real-life experiences of the community. Out of the 50 respondents, 12 (24%) says they are strongly disagree and 16 (32%) says they are disagree with the statement. A large number of proportions that is 18 (36%) of the respondents were neutral about the statement. But there were only 3 (6%) says they are Agree and 1 (2%) says they are Strongly Agree with the statement, they opine that films focus more on costumes and appearance more than their real-life experiences.

5.17 Perception regarding misleading portrayal of the community in some scenes in films.

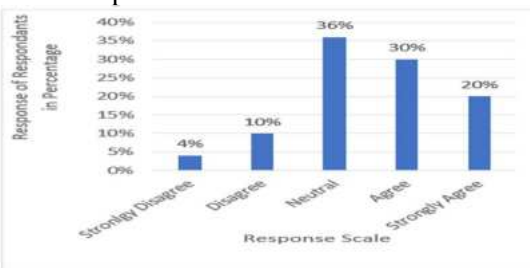
Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	09	18%
Disagree	14	28%
Neutral	11	22%
Agree	09	18%
Strongly Agree	07	14%



The data in Table 5.17 shows the perception of the Banjara respondents regarding whether some scenes or portrayals in film lead to a misleading understanding about the community. From the data, it is visible that 09 (18%) strongly disagree and 14 (28%) disagree with the statement. It implies that almost half of them, that is 24 (48%), do not agree with the statement. Out of 50 respondents, 09 (18%) of them chose “Agree,” and 07 (14%) chose “Strongly Disagree” as their option. They were satisfied with the statement that there are some scenes in the films that may lead to the misunderstanding of the community. And 11 (22%) of the respondents were neutral about the statement. Therefore, the majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

5.18 Respondent’s satisfaction regarding their overall representation.

Response scale	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Disagree	2	4%
Disagree	5	10%
Neutral	18	36%
Agree	15	30%
Strongly Agree	10	20%



The data in Table 5.18 show the perception of the Banjara community respondents regarding the overall representation of the community in regional films. 2 (4%) respondents say they are “Strongly Disagree,” and 5 (10%) disagree; they were not satisfied with their representation in the film. A large proportion of the respondents that is 18 (36%), were neutral about the statement. Out of 50 respondents, 15 (30%) chose “Agree,” and 10 (20%) chose “Strongly Agree”. Half of the respondents were satisfied with the portrayal of their community in regional films.

6. Conclusion : The present study examined how members of the Banjara community perceive their representation in regional cinema, with particular reference to the selected regional film *Rukma* (2016). This research moves beyond researcher-centred or textual analysis of representation; instead, it focuses on the perspective of the represented community.

The findings of the study indicate that the overall perception of the Banjara community respondents towards their representation is largely positive. The majority of the respondents agreed that the film accurately reflected their social, cultural lifestyle, community identity, and everyday experiences. Similarly, dress, costumes, language, and dialect represented in the film were perceived as authentic and relatable. These findings support earlier studies suggesting that because of its close connection with local dialects, cultures, and socio-cultural realities, regional cinema provides more authentic and relatable representations (Schleiter & De Maaker, 2019; Fidelis, 2024).

However, there were also relatively high proportions of neutral responses across several questions. Suggesting that the perceptions of authenticity are not uniform among all members of the community. The study also identifies that the majority of respondents argue that the film focuses more on traditional aspects rather than on present-day realities.

Suggesting that regional film needs to give greater attention to changing lifestyles and contemporary experiences of the community.

The study also provides important findings that the majority of respondents did not believe that the representation was simplified, lacking in detail, or that it was dramatic and primarily focused on costumes rather than real-life experiences. Similarly, many respondents agreed that regional film provides diversity within the community. Therefore, selected regional film perceived as moving beyond limited forms of representation, contrasting the study of Rekhari (2010) on mainstream cinema.

Overall, the findings of the study support the hypothesis that the tribal audiences perceive their representation in regional cinema as authentic and accurate. But at the same time, there were considerable neutral responses also, indicating authenticity should not be considered as completely accurate, and there is scope for improvement. This finding suggests that cinematic representation can be interpreted differently by different members of the same community (Hall 1997). The study highlights the importance of studying representation through a community-based perspective, instead of text-based or researcher-based analysis. It provides a more nuanced, more inclusive, and community-based understanding of representation.

References :

1. Majumdar, D. N. (1961). *Races and Cultures of India*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
2. Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. SAGE Publications Limited.
3. Kumar, K. J. (2000). *Mass Communication in India* (4th Edition).
4. Rekhari, S. (2010). Jaisa Desh, Waisa Vesh? Explorations on the representations of Adivasis in popular Hindi cinema. *Studies in South Asian Film & Media*, 2(2), 107–117. https://doi.org/10.1386/safm.2.2.107_1
5. Sachdev, B. (2012). Incidence of ABO and Rh (D) Blood Groups among Banjara, a Nomadic Group of Rajasthan, India. *the Anthropologist/Anthropologist*, 14(1), 87–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2012.11891225>
6. Ang, I. (2013). *Watching Dallas*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315002477>
7. Lal, S. (2016). A HISTORICAL STUDY OF ORIGIN AND MIGRATION OF BANJARA TRIBE IN TELANGANA STATE. *International Journal of Current Research*, 10–40261, 40261–40267. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311562515>
8. Malhotra, S. P., & Bose, A. B. (2016). Problems of Rehabilitation of Nomadic Banjaras In Western Rajasthan. (2016). *Annals of Arid Zone*, 2(1). <https://ebook.icar.gov.in/index.php/AAZ/article/view/63111>
9. A, P., & Dhingra, V. (2017). UNDERSTANDING THE INDIAN TRIBAL LIFE AND THEIR ISSUES. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 5(7), 1588–1595. <https://doi.org/10.21474/ijar01/4873>
10. Divakaran, R. V. M. (2017, September 25). CULTURAL MINORITIES AND THE PANOPTIC GAZE: A STUDY OF THE (MIS)REPRESENTATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN MALAYALAM FILMS. <https://jecs.pl/index.php/jecs/article/view/10.15503.jecs20172.240.248>
11. IGNOU. (2017). Indian Cinema. In *Popular Culture*. IGNOU. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/16888>
12. Schleiter, M., & De Maaker, E. (2019). Media, indigeneity and nation in South Asia.
13. Andayani, S., Fatimah, E. R., Gunawan, G. S., & Kancanadewi, A. B. (2021). Social representation of Japanese characters in Zainichi film. *IZUMI*, 10(2), 398–410. <https://doi.org/10.14710/izumi.10.2.398-410>
14. Jabara, K. M. A. (2022). Ethnographic movies as artistic memory Anethnosemotic study for the Jewish character in the Iraqi short movie (Venice of the East). *GovariKurdistanî Bo LêkolîneweyStratîcî*. <https://doi.org/10.54809/jkss.vispecial.131>

15. Sharan. (2022). EXPLORING TRIBAL IDENTITY IN INDIAN LITERATURE: A FOCUS ON THE TRIBES OF KARNATAKA. *ShodhKosh Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i2.2022.6116>
16. Singh, B. (2023, September 26). Cinema going has increased among urban Indians over the past year. *Yougov.com; YouGov*. <https://business.yougov.com/content/47405-cinemagoing-has-increased-among-urban-indians-over-the-past-year>
17. Saxena, R. (2023). PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH HINDI CINEMA: AN EXPLORATION OF NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES. <https://ijeks.com/wpcontent/uploads/2023/10/IJEKS2-9-009.pdf>
18. Barman, V. (2024). REGIONAL CINEMA: A CULTURAL TAPESTRY. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 12(7). <https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2407333.pdf>
19. Fidelis, C. N. (2024). Cinema Guarani e Kaiowá: um estudo sobre a construção de sentido em filmes autorais indígenas. In *LA Referencia (Red Federada de Repositorios Institucionales de Publicaciones Científicas)*. <https://repositorio.ufms.br/handle/123456789/9235>
20. Karmakar, G., & Pal, P. (2024). Examining (in)justice, environmental activism and indigenous knowledge systems in the Indian film *Kantara* (Mystical Forest). *Socio-Ecological Practice Research*, 6(2), 117–130. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42532-024-00180-2>
21. Mantiri, O., & McCann, S. (2024). Reclaiming Narratives: Indigenous sovereignty in art and media. *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*, 5(3), 129–138. <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.04112>
22. Sharma, K. (2024). Narratives of Trauma and Resistance: A Representative Study of ‘Sengani’ in *Jai Bhim*. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i01.69674>
23. Boro, M. (2025). The Cinematic othering of Northeast India: Bridging the gap through representation. *Noesis Literary.*, 2(2), 17–31. <https://doi.org/10.69627/nol2024vol2iss2-02>
24. Goswami, R. (2025). Cinematic Narratives Of Concern: Global Perspectives In Public Discourse. *OrangeBooksPublication*. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=zFdCEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA2&dq=While+films+like+Kantara+and+RRR+have+achieved+national+acclaim,+the+mechanisms+through+which+regional+cinema+shapes+consumer+behavior+and+fosters+community+engagement+are+not+well+understood.&ots=ctcKh8y6jd&sig=70HbB6ypTL5TKH-dNCB2jSgsJO8>
25. Pandey, B., & Gaur, M. (2025). Antyodaya: the intersection of cinema and marginalized communities. *Journal of Communication and Management*, 4(01), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.58966/jcm2025411>
26. Quadros, R., & Kharkar, M. (2025). Exploring the Socio-Cultural influence of regional cinema on consumer perception and community development. *Journal of Informatics Education and Research*, 5(3), 1526–4726. <https://jier.org/index.php/journal/article/view/3874>
27. Ullah, U., & Mukhtiar, K. (2025). Cinematic Misnomers: Examining the effects of Pashto movie titles on the perception of Pashtun identity. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*, 3(1), 781–795. <https://doi.org/10.71281/jals.v3i1.139>
28. Pimpliskar, K. R. (2026). Representation of caste and gender in Khandeshi cinema. *Zenodo (CERN European Organization for Nuclear Research)*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18360069>

•