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# Gastronomic E-enterprises in Assam: A Comprehensive Study of Online Food Businesses

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PIYUSH GUPTA<sup>1</sup> AND DR. AMITABH DEY<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*This study provides an in-depth analysis of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam, India, with a specific focus on online food businesses. Its objective is to investigate the emergence, growth, and operational dynamics of these digital platforms within the culinary industry. By utilizing mixed-methods research, including surveys, interviews, and secondary data analysis, the study examines the characteristics, challenges, and opportunities associated with gastronomic e-enterprises. The findings provide insights into market trends, consumer behavior, and the digital strategies adopted by culinary entrepreneurs in Assam. The study also highlights the challenges faced by online food businesses in Assam, including logistics, payment gateways, and consumer trust. Finally, the research identifies several digital strategies employed by culinary entrepreneurs, such as social media marketing, food blogging, and online ordering systems. The results of this study can inform policymakers, investors, and culinary entrepreneurs on the development and sustainability of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam and beyond.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### (A) Background and Significance of the Study:

The culinary landscape is undergoing a significant transformation with the advent of gastronomic e-enterprises, particularly in regions rich in cultural and culinary traditions like Assam, India. As consumers increasingly turn to online platforms for food-related services, understanding the dynamics of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam becomes crucial for various stakeholders, including policymakers, entrepreneurs, and consumers.

Assam is known for its diverse and unique culinary traditions, including the culinary practices of indigenous communities like the Bodo, Karbi, and Mishing tribes. However, the potential marketability and visibility of these culinary traditions through online platforms remain

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<sup>1</sup> Author is a Research Scholar & Assistant professor at Royal School of Travel and Tourism Management, The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati, India.

<sup>2</sup> Author is a Principal at Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Guwahati, India.

relatively unexplored. This study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by comprehensively examining gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam, specifically focusing on online food businesses. The significance of this study lies in its ability to shed light on the opportunities and challenges faced by culinary entrepreneurs in Assam's digital marketplace. By exploring the emergence, growth, and operational dynamics of online food businesses, the research will provide insights into the market trends, consumer preferences, and digital strategies employed by culinary entrepreneurs.

Moreover, the study's findings will contribute to the promotion and preservation of Assam's culinary heritage. By identifying the market potential and marketability of Bodo, Karbi, and Mishing tribe culinary traditions through online platforms, the research can offer valuable recommendations for showcasing and commercializing these unique food products. This, in turn, can lead to enhanced cultural tourism, economic development, and empowerment of local communities.

Ultimately, this comprehensive study aims to inform policymakers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders about the dynamics of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam. It highlights the importance of leveraging digital platforms to promote and sustain Assam's rich culinary traditions, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation in the digital era.

## **(B) Objectives and Research Questions**

### **a. Objectives**

**Objective 1:** To assess the market potential and marketability of Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribe culinary traditions through gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam.

**Objective 2:** To identify the challenges faced by online food businesses in Assam.

### **b. Research Questions**

- What are the consumer perceptions, preferences, and willingness to engage with Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribe culinary products through online platforms?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of online food business owners and operators regarding the challenges they face in Assam?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **(A) Overview of gastronomic e-enterprises and online food businesses:**

The paper authored by Gheorghe, Tudorache, and Nistoreanu in 2014 explores the emerging trend of gastronomic tourism within the contemporary tourism landscape. Gastronomic tourism,

which involves travel motivated primarily by the desire to experience and enjoy unique culinary experiences, has gained significant popularity in recent years. The authors discuss how food has become a central aspect of travel experiences, with tourists increasingly seeking authentic and diverse culinary encounters. Through an analysis of gastronomic tourism's characteristics and impact on destinations, the paper highlights the potential economic, cultural, and social benefits it can bring to both tourists and local communities. By shedding light on this growing trend, the authors contribute to the understanding of how gastronomy plays a crucial role in shaping contemporary tourism practices and consumer preferences.

**(B) Emerging trends and opportunities in the digital food industry:**

Radha, Devi, and Smith in 2021 presents an intelligent classification system for the development of e-enterprises. Published in the proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Advanced Computing and Communication Systems (ICACCS), the study focuses on leveraging artificial intelligence techniques to classify and categorize e-enterprises effectively. By employing advanced computing methods, the authors aim to provide insights into the diverse landscape of e-enterprises and facilitate decision-making processes for stakeholders involved in their development. The intelligent classification system outlined in the paper offers a systematic approach to understanding the characteristics and requirements of different types of e-enterprises. This research contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field of e-commerce and serves as a valuable resource for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers striving to navigate the complexities of the digital business environment.

**(C) Digital strategies employed by culinary entrepreneurs:**

The 2019 study by Kawarazuka and Goswami delves into the dynamics of potato value chains in Assam, India, with a focus on identifying opportunities and constraints for women's participation. Through empirical research, the authors illuminate the gendered aspects of potato value chains, shedding light on the challenges and barriers faced by women in accessing and benefiting from these chains. Their findings underscore the importance of adopting gender-responsive approaches to enhance women's inclusion and empowerment within the potato value chains. The study offers a set of recommendations aimed at policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to address the identified constraints and capitalize on opportunities to promote gender equity and women's economic advancement in Assam's potato sector. By highlighting the significance of gender-sensitive interventions, the research contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive agricultural development and gender equality in rural contexts.

**(D) Challenges faced by online food businesses:**

The 2017 article authored by See-Kwong, Soo-Ryue, Shiun-Yi, and Lily explores the perspectives of F&B (Food and Beverage) business owners regarding outsourcing to online food delivery services. Published in the *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce*, the study delves into the motivations, challenges, and experiences of F&B businesses as they engage with online food delivery platforms. Through qualitative research methods, including interviews and surveys, the authors provide insights into the factors influencing F&B business owners' decisions to outsource their delivery services. Additionally, the article discusses the benefits and drawbacks perceived by these owners in utilizing online food delivery services, offering valuable insights for both practitioners and academics in the fields of e-commerce and food industry management. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics between traditional F&B establishments and digital platforms in the context of the modern marketplace.

The 2022 paper by Thakura and Sharma investigates the implications of India's "Vocal for Local" campaign on imported brands. Presented at the International Marketing Conference II iMarC2022, the study examines how this initiative affects both domestic and foreign brands in the Indian market. Through an in-depth analysis of consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing behaviors, the authors explore the campaign's impact on the market landscape. By elucidating the motivations behind the "Vocal for Local" movement and its influence on consumer attitudes towards imported products, the paper provides valuable insights for marketers and policymakers. This research contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the promotion of domestic industries and the challenges and opportunities faced by global brands in India's evolving consumer environment.

**III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH****(A) Study Design and Methodology:**

The study on gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam will employ a mixed-methods research approach to comprehensively explore the landscape of online food businesses. This approach combines quantitative and qualitative methods to gather both numerical data and in-depth insights from various perspectives.

**a. Quantitative Method:**

**Surveys:** A structured survey will be conducted to collect quantitative data from online food business owners and consumers in Assam. The survey will capture information on business

characteristics, digital strategies, market reach, consumer preferences, and challenges faced.

**Data Analysis:** Statistical analysis techniques, such as descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, will be used to analyze the survey data and derive quantitative findings.

**b. Qualitative Method:**

**Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with online food business owners, consumers, and relevant industry experts. These interviews will provide rich qualitative data on the operational dynamics, challenges, and strategies employed by gastronomic e-enterprises.

**Content Analysis:** The interview data will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to market trends, consumer behavior, digital strategies, and challenges faced by online food businesses.

**c. Secondary Data Analysis:**

Existing data sources, such as reports, industry studies, and market research, will be analyzed to gather additional insights into the gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam. This will supplement the primary data collected through surveys and interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of the online food business ecosystem.

**d. Ethical Considerations:**

Ethical guidelines and informed consent protocols will be followed throughout the research process to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants' data.

The study will adhere to ethical standards for research involving human subjects and will obtain necessary approvals from relevant ethics committees, if required.

By employing this mixed-methods approach, the study aims to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a holistic view of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam. The combination of surveys, interviews, and secondary data analysis will allow for a comprehensive analysis of market trends, consumer behavior, digital strategies, and challenges faced by online food businesses. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the online food business ecosystem in Assam and inform recommendations for the development and sustainability of gastronomic e-enterprises in the region.

**(B) Sample Selection and Characteristics:**

The sample selection for the study on gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam will involve identifying and recruiting participants from the online food business ecosystem in the region. The sample will consist of online food business owners/operators, consumers, and relevant

industry experts. The selection process will aim to ensure diversity and representativeness across different types of online food businesses and target markets within Assam.

**a. Online Food Business Owners/Operators:**

The sample will include a range of online food businesses operating in Assam, such as restaurants, cloud kitchens, home-based food businesses, and food delivery platforms.

The selection will consider factors like business size, years of operation, geographical location, and representation of Bodo, Karbi, and Mishing tribe culinary traditions.

Sampling methods like purposive sampling and snowball sampling may be employed to identify and recruit participants from various segments of the online food business sector.

**b. Consumers:**

The sample will include a diverse group of consumers who have engaged with online food businesses in Assam.

Participants will be selected based on demographic factors such as age, gender, occupation, and geographical location.

Convenience sampling or random sampling methods may be used to reach out to consumers through online surveys, social media platforms, or local community networks.

**c. Industry Experts:**

Industry experts, including food industry consultants, researchers, and policymakers, will be selected based on their expertise and experience in the gastronomic e-enterprise sector.

Experts may be identified through professional networks, academic affiliations, and relevant publications.

## **IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

### **(A) Characteristics of Gastronomic E-enterprises in Assam:**

**a. Business Models:**

**Online Delivery Platforms:** These e-enterprises primarily focus on facilitating online food ordering and delivery services, connecting consumers with restaurants, cloud kitchens, and home-based food businesses.

**Cloud Kitchens:** These virtual kitchens operate solely for online orders and delivery, without any dine-in facilities.

**Online Marketplaces:** These platforms enable home chefs and food entrepreneurs to showcase

and sell their culinary products directly to consumers.

### **b. Culinary Traditions:**

**Assamese Cuisine:** Gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam often showcase the rich and diverse Assamese cuisine, including traditional dishes, snacks, and desserts.

**Bodo, Karbi, and Mishing Tribes:** Some e-enterprises focus on promoting and commercializing the culinary traditions of the Bodo, Karbi, and Mishing tribes, offering unique tribal delicacies and traditional recipes.

**Digital Strategies:**

**Online Presence:** Gastronomic e-enterprises have a strong online presence through websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms to attract and engage customers.

**Online Ordering and Delivery:** They provide user-friendly interfaces for online ordering and efficient delivery services to ensure a seamless customer experience.

**Social Media Marketing:** These businesses leverage social media platforms to showcase their culinary offerings, engage with customers, and promote special deals and offers.

**Customer Reviews and Ratings:** Online food businesses encourage customers to provide feedback and ratings, which play a crucial role in establishing trust and attracting new customers.

### **c. Target Market:**

**Local Consumers:** Gastronomic e-enterprises primarily cater to the local population of Assam, including residents and office-goers who seek convenient and diverse food options.

**Cultural Tourists:** With Assam's rich cultural heritage and tourism potential, e-enterprises also target tourists interested in exploring the authentic culinary traditions of the region.

### **(B) Analysis of the findings**

**To what extent are you interested in exploring culinary offerings from the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes?**

Majority of respondents, comprising 60%, express a strong interest in exploring culinary offerings from the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes, categorizing themselves as "Very Interested." This indicates a significant level of enthusiasm and curiosity among the surveyed individuals towards experiencing the unique cuisines associated with these tribes.

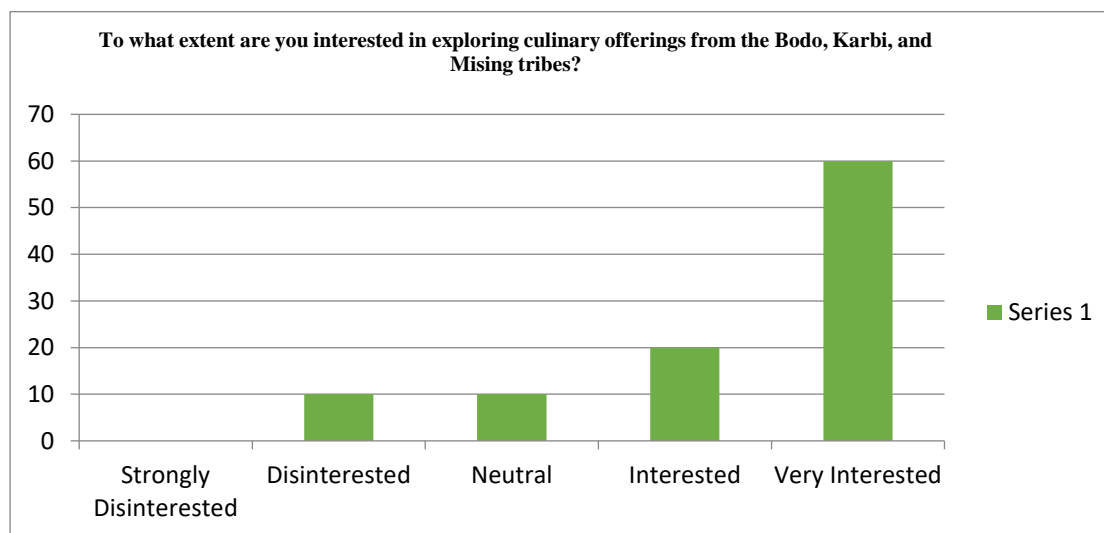
Following closely behind, 20% of respondents indicate being "Interested," suggesting a notable level of curiosity and openness to exploring these culinary traditions further.



A smaller portion of respondents, accounting for 10%, express a "Neutral" stance. This group might require additional information or exposure to these culinary offerings to form a stronger opinion.

Lastly, 10% of respondents state they are "Disinterested." While this proportion is relatively small, it signifies that there is a minority within the surveyed population who may not find exploring these culinary traditions appealing or relevant to their interests.

Overall, the data reflects a predominantly positive reception towards exploring the culinary offerings from the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes, with varying degrees of interest among respondents. This information could be valuable for businesses or organizations seeking to promote or develop gastronomic ventures centered around these indigenous culinary traditions.



### **How likely are you to purchase authentic Bodo, Karbi, or Mising tribe cuisine through an e-commerce platform?**

45% of respondents indicate they are "Very Likely" to purchase authentic Bodo, Karbi, or Mising tribe cuisine through an e-commerce platform. This suggests a strong inclination and readiness among a significant portion of respondents to engage in purchasing these culinary offerings online, reflecting a high level of interest and enthusiasm.

20% of respondents express being "Likely" to make such purchases, indicating a notable but slightly lower level of confidence compared to the "Very Likely" category.

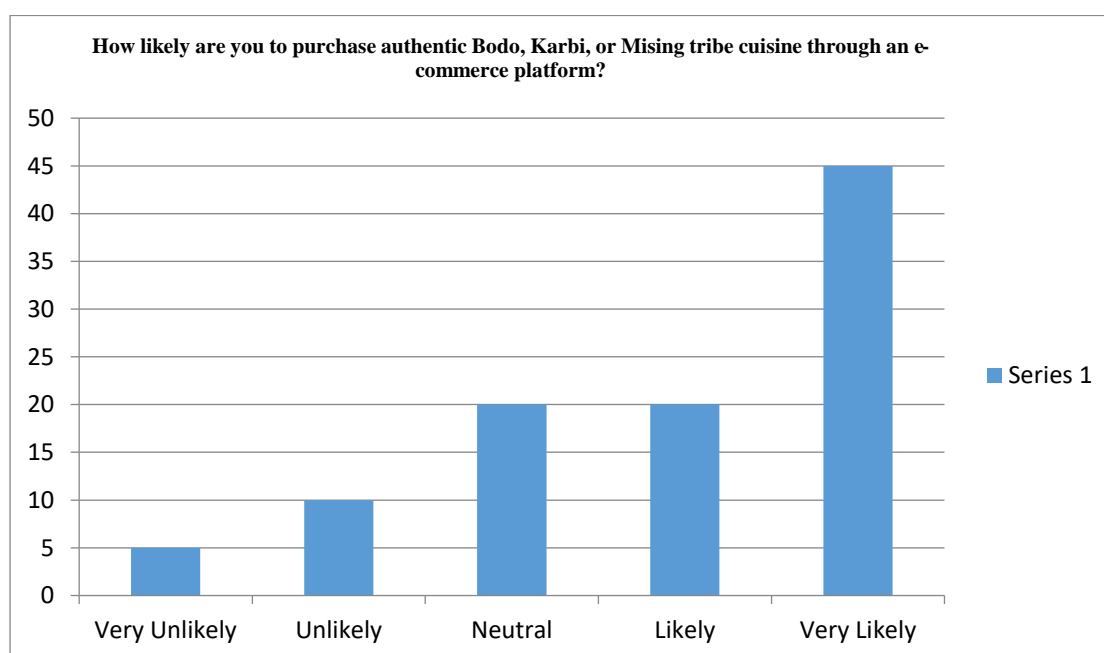
20% of respondents are categorized as "Neutral," suggesting a lack of strong inclination one way or the other. This group may require more information or reassurance regarding the authenticity and quality of the products before making a decision.

10% of respondents deem it "Unlikely" that they would purchase authentic Bodo, Karbi, or

Mising tribe cuisine through an e-commerce platform, indicating some hesitancy or skepticism towards this mode of purchasing.

5% of respondents consider themselves "Very Unlikely" to make such purchases, representing a small but distinct minority who express strong reluctance or disinterest in purchasing these culinary offerings online.

These findings illustrate a predominantly positive outlook towards purchasing authentic tribal cuisine through e-commerce platforms, with varying degrees of certainty and reservation among respondents. This information could be valuable for businesses aiming to establish or enhance their online presence in promoting and selling indigenous culinary products.



### **How familiar are you with the culinary traditions of the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes?**

30% of respondents claim to be "Very Familiar" with the culinary traditions of the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes. This indicates a substantial portion of participants who possess a deep understanding and knowledge of these indigenous culinary practices, suggesting a strong level of engagement or exposure to the food cultures of these tribes.

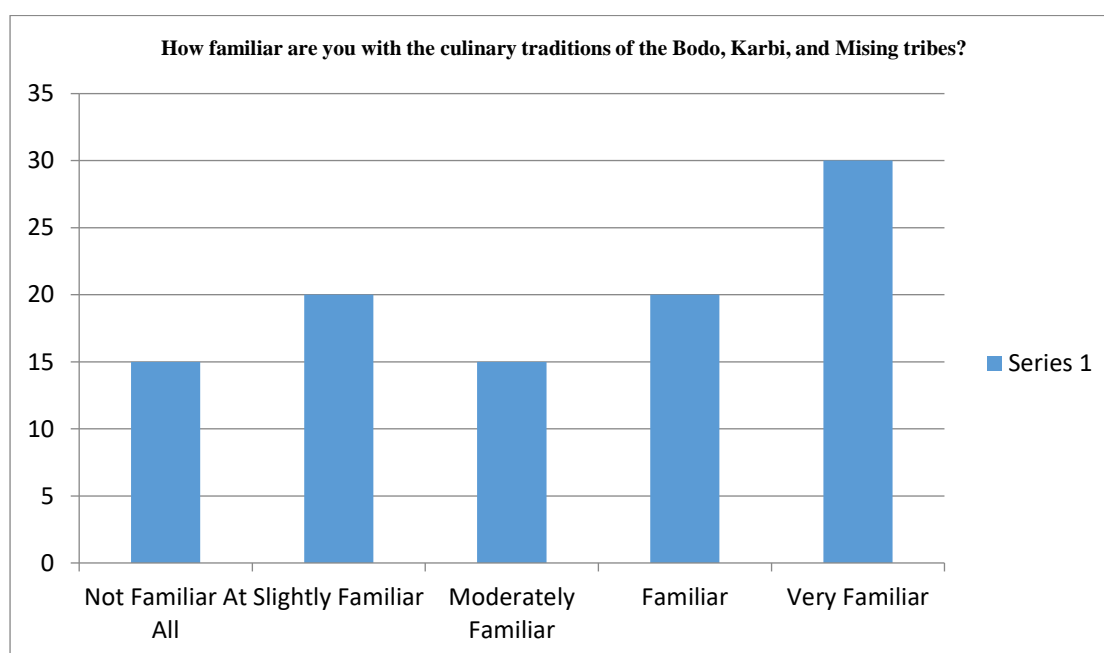
20% of respondents consider themselves "Familiar" with these culinary traditions, indicating a good level of knowledge and awareness, albeit slightly less extensive compared to those who are "Very Familiar."

15% of respondents express being "Moderately Familiar," suggesting a moderate level of knowledge or exposure to the culinary traditions of these tribes.

20% of respondents state they are "Slightly Familiar" with these culinary traditions, indicating

some level of awareness or familiarity, but with room for improvement or further exploration. 15% of respondents admit to being "Not Familiar At All" with the culinary traditions of the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes, indicating a lack of knowledge or exposure to these indigenous food cultures.

These findings illustrate a diverse range of familiarity levels among respondents regarding the culinary traditions of these tribes, with a notable proportion expressing high levels of familiarity. This data provides insights into the existing knowledge base among the surveyed population, which could inform educational or promotional initiatives aimed at raising awareness and appreciation for these indigenous culinary traditions.



### **How likely are you to recommend Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribe culinary products from e-enterprises to friends and family?**

65% of respondents are "Very Likely" to recommend Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribe culinary products from e-enterprises to friends and family. This majority indicates a strong willingness among participants to endorse and promote these products, reflecting a high level of satisfaction and confidence in the quality and appeal of the culinary offerings.

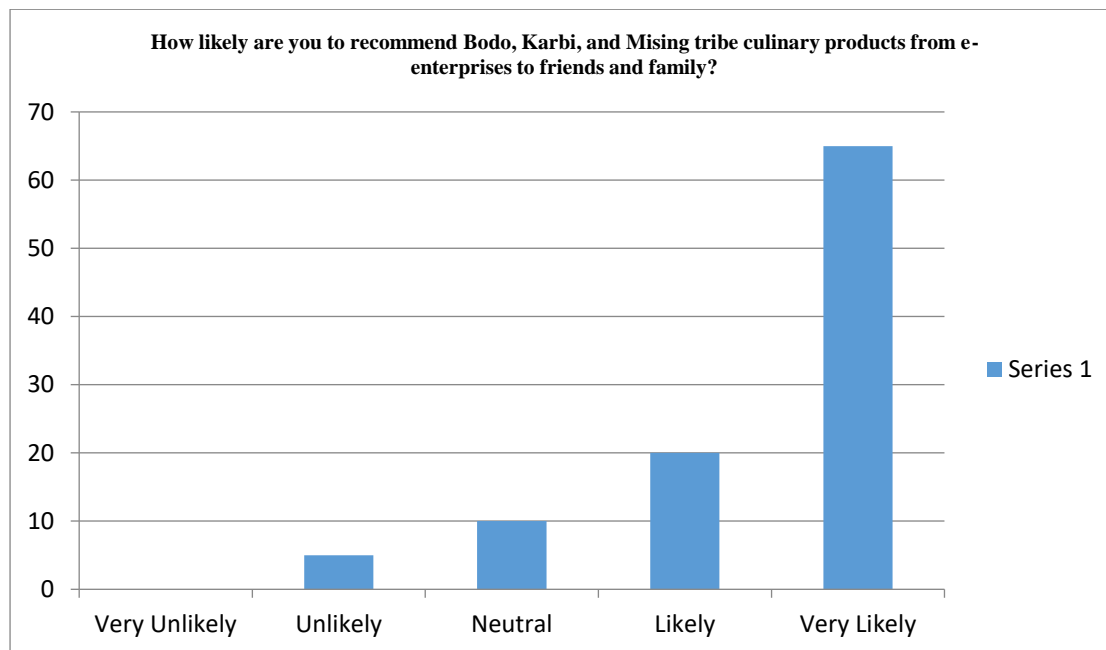
20% of respondents express being "Likely" to recommend these products, indicating a significant but slightly smaller proportion compared to those who are "Very Likely." This group also shows a positive inclination towards recommending the products to their social circles.

10% of respondents are categorized as "Neutral," suggesting a lack of strong inclination either way. This group may require more information or personal experience with the products before

forming a recommendation.

5% of respondents consider themselves "Unlikely" to recommend these products, indicating some hesitation or reservations about endorsing them to others.

These findings highlight a predominantly positive outlook towards recommending Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribe culinary products from e-enterprises, with a majority expressing strong likelihood of endorsement. This data underscores the potential for word-of-mouth marketing and positive referrals to contribute to the success and growth of e-enterprises offering these indigenous culinary products.



## **V. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ONLINE FOOD BUSINESSES**

### **(A) Challenges:**

In the realm of online food delivery, businesses grapple with a multitude of challenges spanning logistical, technological, regulatory, and competitive fronts. Timely delivery of food orders while preserving quality and freshness demands meticulous inventory management, streamlined transportation, and efficient last-mile delivery solutions. Packaging poses a critical concern, necessitating sturdy materials to ensure food safety and prevent spillage during transit. Meanwhile, the digital landscape presents its own set of hurdles, from developing intuitive websites and mobile apps to integrating secure payment gateways and mitigating technical glitches that could impede user experience. Regulatory compliance looms large, mandating adherence to stringent food safety standards, licensing requirements, and e-commerce regulations. Amidst this complex backdrop, fierce competition looms from established

aggregators and eateries, compelling businesses to carve out their niche through innovative culinary offerings, personalized services, or niche cuisine options, thereby striving to stand out in a crowded market.

**(B) Opportunities:**

**a. Market Expansion and Reach:**

Online platforms provide an opportunity to reach a broader customer base, including customers from different geographical areas within Assam and beyond.

Ability to cater to the growing demand for convenience and access to a wide range of food options through online channels.

**b. Targeting Niche Markets:**

Gastronomic e-enterprises can capitalize on the market potential of specific culinary traditions, such as the Bodo, Karbi, and Mishing tribes, by showcasing their unique dishes and traditional recipes.

Targeting specific dietary preferences or niche food categories, such as vegan, gluten-free, or organic food options, to attract customers with specific requirements.

**c. Consumer Insights and Data Analytics:**

Online platforms allow businesses to collect and analyze customer data, enabling personalized marketing strategies and improving customer experience.

Obtaining valuable insights into consumer preferences, ordering patterns, and trends to tailor offerings and optimize operations.

**d. Brand Building and Digital Marketing:**

Leveraging social media platforms and online marketing techniques to build brand awareness, engage with customers, and promote special offers or events.

Harnessing the power of influencer marketing and user-generated content to enhance brand visibility and credibility.

Understanding and addressing these challenges while leveraging the available opportunities is crucial for the success and sustainability of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam's online food business ecosystem.

## VI. CONCLUSION

### **(A) Summary of key findings**

Gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam are online food businesses that offer a variety of culinary products and services to customers through digital platforms such as websites, mobile applications, and social media. These businesses may include restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and food delivery services that operate solely or primarily through online channels.

Examples of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam include Zomato, Swiggy, Uber Eats, and Dineout, which are popular food delivery and restaurant discovery platforms. Additionally, there are several local online food businesses in Assam, such as Khorikaa, Missing Kitchen, Food Villa, and Kitchen of Spices, Banbati the flavours of Northeast, Nagameez: Ethnic Naga & Chinese Restaurant, Naga Kitchen that offer a range of Assamese and other regional cuisines through their websites and social media pages.

### **(B) Recommendations for the development and sustainability of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam.**

In order to foster the development and sustainability of gastronomic e-enterprises in Assam, several key recommendations emerge from a comprehensive study of online food businesses in the region. Firstly, there's a pressing need to improve the digital infrastructure, improving internet connectivity and technological capabilities to ensure smooth operations of these ventures. Investing in logistics is also paramount, enhancing transportation and delivery networks to guarantee timely and efficient delivery of gastronomic products to customers. Moreover, efforts to promote cultural awareness are essential, as increasing appreciation for indigenous culinary traditions can spur demand for authentic Assamese cuisine. Collaboration among e-enterprises, local producers, and governmental bodies is likewise crucial, facilitating streamlined supply chains, sustainable sourcing practices, and support for small-scale food producers. Finally, advocating for supportive regulatory frameworks is imperative, ensuring that gastronomic e-enterprises can thrive while adhering to necessary food safety and consumer protection standards. Through these recommendations, the gastronomic e-enterprises of Assam can flourish, enriching both the local economy and culinary landscape.

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**VII. QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. To what extent are you interested in exploring culinary offerings from the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes?
  - Strongly Disinterested
  - Disinterested
  - Neutral
  - Interested
  - Very Interested
2. How likely are you to purchase authentic Bodo, Karbi, or Mising tribe cuisine through an e-commerce platform?
  - Very Unlikely
  - Unlikely
  - Neutral
  - Likely
  - Very Likely
3. How familiar are you with the culinary traditions of the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes?
  - Not Familiar At All
  - Slightly Familiar
  - Moderately Familiar
  - Familiar
  - Very Familiar
4. How likely are you to recommend Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribe culinary products from e-enterprises to friends and family?
  - Very Unlikely
  - Unlikely
  - Neutral
  - Likely
  - Very Likely

5. Please rate the extent to which you believe logistical constraints such as transportation and delivery infrastructure affect the operations of online food businesses in Assam:
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
6. How much do you agree that inconsistent internet connectivity and technological infrastructure hinder the smooth functioning of online food businesses in Assam?
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
7. To what extent do you perceive regulatory hurdles and compliance issues as challenges for online food businesses operating in Assam?
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
8. How significant do you think the competition from traditional brick-and-mortar food establishments poses a challenge to the growth of online food businesses in Assam?
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree



9. Please rate the impact of cultural preferences and regional taste variations on the market acceptance of online food businesses offering diverse culinary options in Assam:
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree

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