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**Korean Media  
Consumption in Manipur:  
A Catalyst of Acculturation  
to Korean Culture**

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# KOREAN MEDIA CONSUMPTION IN MANIPUR: A CATALYST OF ACCULTURATION TO KOREAN CULTURE

Marchang Reimeingam\*

## ***Abstract***

*Korean media consumption among young people in Manipur acted as a catalyst to adopt Korean culture, a blend of Western and Korean culture, in the recent decade. The emergence of Korean media is a corollary to the banning of satellite Hindi TV channels, except Doordarshan, and screening of Hindi movies in theatres and at home in the state by insurgents in the valley. The adoption of Korean culture is widely prevalent irrespective of a household's economic background, education level, religion, occupation and ethnicity. These people have been motivated by the Korean media, especially movies and dramas. They adopted some components of Korean culture such as food, hair style, make-up, movies, clothing and language that suited and fascinated them though many of them do not know the country of origin, i.e. South Korea, of these cultural features. People of Manipur are open to new or modern cultural adoption, but they have also retained their inherent culture.*

## **Introduction**

The paper studies the process of acculturation as people come in contact with a new dynamic culture that appears to have greater attraction than the indigenous culture. The roles of information and communication technology like the media, CD/DVDs, internet, mobile and other forms, i.e. mass media exposure, in the process of acculturation into Korean cultural values among the young people of Manipur<sup>1</sup> are studied. These people are increasingly adopting South Korean culture, Korean culture hereafter, a blend of original Korean and modern cultures. This acculturation is the subject of the study. The drivers, specifically the media and other electronic forms, of acculturation into Korean culture are identified.

Culture is a collective programming of the mind (Geert, 1984) that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a person as a member of the society (Stocking, 1963). It influences individual behaviour and social and economic development. Culture, in the era of globalization, does not have limited boundaries. It is becoming less a matter of locations than of hybrid and creolized cultural meanings and practices that span global space. It is a hybridised product of interactions across space and is increasingly thought of as carving routes rather than possessing roots. It is a constellation of temporary coherence or knots in the field of social space that is the product of relations and interconnections from the local to the global. Culture changes as people interact with others. Pak (2006) viewed that people undergoing a cultural change process have been conceived as going through acculturation. Acculturation is a psychological change induced by cross-cultural imitation (Powell, 1883). It is the "phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1935; 1936). Berry

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(2006:27) defined it as a “process of cultural and psychological change that results from the continuing contact between people of different cultural backgrounds”. The phenomena of acculturation could be one dimensional, assuming that people lose their original culture as they acquire a new culture. It could also be bi-dimensional, assuming that people acquire a new culture without losing their original culture (Berry, 1980 as cited in Sam, 2006).

Lakey (2003) noted that various modes of communication such as mass media consumption, correspondence and daily telephone conversations, potential for interpersonal interactions, social gatherings, association membership, ethnic composition in the neighbourhood and aspiration to speak a language better are involved in the process of acculturation. Mass media play a significant role in the process of acculturation. Graves (1967) asserts that exposure to mass communication media serve as the principal channel for acculturation. Masgoret and Ward (2006) established that various forms of mass communication including television, radio, newspapers and magazines and internet can help in the process of learning other cultures and their cultural values and norms. Family, peer groups, schools, work organizations, living environment and also the media are the main places and agents of acculturation.

The paper mainly attempts to validate the notion and practice of Korean culture among the young people in Manipur arising largely due to media exposure in a globalised world. The adoption of Korean culture is studied in relation to their social, economic, cultural, behavioural and psychological factors. Those who have adopted Korean culture are referred to as Koreanised persons (KP).<sup>2</sup> KP are the youth who are in the stage of energetic, economically productive, challenging, high aspiration, and care-free phase, and most importantly in the prime time of their life. Are they feeling negative towards their own physical features including their looks or culture or race? Are they thinking that their known Korean culture, which is a mixture of western culture and some Korean features, is superior to or more attractive or appealing than their own culture? Developmental gap between Manipur and Korea in terms of people's attitude, economy or cultural outlook possibly explains the phenomenon. However, this study attempts to explain and find some reasons for this phenomenon with the limited available field survey data.

The paper begins by identifying the problem and is followed by the methodological framework of the study. Then the notion of popular Korean culture is briefly discussed before mapping the role of Korean media consumption as a catalyst to adopt Korean culture in Manipur using secondary data. It is followed by presenting the findings of the field study that validates the prevalence of acculturation into Korean culture, due to media exposure and consumption, among the young people in Manipur. Finally there is a brief concluding remark.

## **Problem Statement**

Most of the studies on acculturation deal with migrants. Without migrating to Korea, people of Manipur came into contact with Korean, especially South Korean, culture through media, including electronic forms, and soon the young people began to follow lifestyles, customs, aspirations, values, etc. that are different from their own. The culture of Manipur may be questioned, reassessed and sometimes replaced with a different viewpoint or way of doing things. As the people become familiar with the way

of life and traditions of Korea, they began to imitate and adopt and could, for example, develop new life-styles, social protocols, and/or a different way of understanding the world around them. The younger ones are adopting the foreign culture more easily not only because of modern media but also because of their peer groups with whom they interact through social networks; however, older people are finding it much harder to change their habits, language or values.

With the improvement in communication technology, the process of acculturation does not have a specific and definite culture; it could be Western, Middle-East or even Far East. The present study tries to understand the process of acculturation into Korean culture. Geographically, Korea and the state of Manipur in India are far apart and do not share a common boundary. Despite this, in recent years, young people in particular from Manipur have followed the trends among Koreans imitating their behaviour with regard to consumption, hairstyle, makeup, dressing, fancy mobile handsets, Korean movies and other things. They are increasingly fond of Korean movies and television channels that have altered not only their living style but also their communication, such as texting in Korean language. Those who adopt Korean culture are easily distinguishable from those following their original culture. The Korean and Manipuri cultures are different. The Korean culture which is depicted in the media and other electronic forms is to a large extent a mixture of modern western and eastern culture. However, unconsciously young people considered or perceived it as Korean culture. They are not following the traditional/original/inherent Korean culture but the modern blended Korean culture.

### **Scope, Objectives and Research Questions**

The study shows the extent of Korean cultural influences through print media and also movies/serials etc. in the lives of people of Manipur. Technology improvements, besides increasing migratory phenomena, enhance access for the middle income groups to the print media, the visual media such as TVs, CDs/DVDs and also the audio media, stimulating the interest in acculturation processes and psychosocial behaviour. The objective is to study the nature of Korean media consumption by the young people of Manipur that act as a catalyst and stimulant of acculturation into Korean, specifically South Korean, culture. The main research question is how and why the young people of Manipur are adopting Korean culture. How do media (television and other electronic variants) play a vital role in the adoption of Korean culture? A hypothesis is that consumers who love Korean media have a higher tendency to adopt Korean culture.

### **Methodological Framework**

The present study is about the adoption of Korean culture by the young people of Manipur, which is facilitated by the media and social network peer groups. In order to establish the reasons for adopting Korean culture – such as dressing style, which is in fact a modern blend, hair style or even facial appearance – data from secondary sources to formulate the basis of the study and from primary field survey to substantiate and validate the practice of Korean culture are used. A field survey was conducted covering 150 people who have adopted Korean culture during April 2013 with a reference period of the preceding one year from the date of survey using a semi-structured questionnaire. A personal interview and schedule method was adopted. The survey adopted a snowball sampling

method. Later, using SPSS, a simple cross tabulation was generated. Statistically, the data in the form of ratios are analysed and interpreted starting from their basic social profile to the extent of acculturation to Korean culture.

The sampling design adopted in the study is a snowball (chain or referral) sampling method. The snowball sampling technique procedure, according to Goodman (1961), is that the informants nominate or refer different informants in the population through their social network. Following Goodman's snowball sampling procedure, in the study, initially some people who admired and practise Korean culture were identified through some individuals who were drawn from a random sample from a given finite population. They formed the group of initial informants. The informants were asked to recommend others who might also be willing to participate. They refer or nominate other prospective informants through their social networks thereby forming a chain of informants. Some hesitated to participate and were eventually ignored. The referrals were relied upon to discover additional informants who were relatively low-profile or hidden and unevenly distributed across the population in Manipur. Some of the referrals were dropped considering the distance and travel budget.

Budget limitations and snowball sampling research technique did not allow for tracking of people who are living in peripheral areas and could have formed a good sample to represent the population. The design is such that it has left out some of the prospective people who might otherwise be keen on Korean culture. The non-homogeneity, i.e. the different ethnicity, of the population in Manipur would yield different results on the taste, value and practice of culture which would ultimately raise the sampling error. The study is brief in scope and coverage and is limited to a form of pilot study covering a small sample size. The nature of the present research design i.e. snowball sampling, cannot represent a large population. As a consequence, the finding from the field study cannot be generalized for the population of Manipur. Some of the referred respondents did not want to respond due to some consideration or the other which creates a sampling error.

## **Popular Korean Culture**

It is important to trace the origin of the popular Korean culture, which is commonly known as Korean wave, before examining the Korean media consumption in Manipur. Korean culture became popular across the globe in the recent decade. The Korean wave is known as Hallyu or Hanryu in Korean (Shim, 2006; Park, 2006). Hallyu is an intensive and extensive wave of popular Korean culture (Yecies, 2008). It describes the rising popularity of Korean popular culture (Shim, 2006 and Lee, 2011). Korean wave refers to the spreading South Korean popular culture including films, soap operas, computer games and popular songs throughout Asia and beyond, reinforcing Korea's growing reputation as an Asian hub for 'cultural industries' (Kim, 2007). So the Korean wave refers to the significantly increased popularity of South Korean culture across the globe. It is relatively a new phenomenon that originated in East Asia. Ravina (2009) elaborated that the Korean wave refers to a surge in the international visibility of Korean culture consisting of two forms of media i.e. television serials and pop music (Korean pop or K-pop). Besides this, Korean feature films and other musical forms are also part of the Korean wave phenomenon. Jang and Paik (2012) have described the popularity of Korean popular culture across the world ranging from television dramas, movies, popular music (K-pop), dance (B-boys), video games,

food, fashion, and tourism to language. Incidentally, Korean pop music became very popular across the globe with the latest example of "Gangnam style" by Psy.<sup>3</sup>

Kim (2007) remarked that the success and popularity of a series of Korean films, soap operas and pop idols in Korea have caught the imagination of people in neighbouring Asian markets. The new term "Hanryu", the Korean wave, has evolved in this context. The term "Korean wave" was coined in China in mid-1999s by Beijing journalists surprised by the fast growing popularity of Korean entertainment and culture in China. The Korean wave that started in China with pop music and television soap operas has spread across the world. Ravina (2009) noted that it began in East Asia in the 1990s and has come more recently to the United States, Latin America, Middle East and parts of Europe. Dator and Seo (2004) wrote that the success of Korean wave stems from the dynamic young Korean generation with its blossoming creativity and imagination which is a result of the country's economic prosperity and political democracy. Additionally, Yang (2012) establishes theoretically and empirically that Korean wave has evolved due to globalisation, modernity and cultural proximity. Modernity describes the rise in popularity of the Korean wave, which is hybrid in nature and consists of forms that are mainly from western popular culture and content that is mostly traditional.

Kim (2007) identified various external and internal factors contributing to Korean wave during the boom in Korean cultural products. The external factors include Asian economic expansion and media boom, global capitalism and consumer culture. The internal factors cover basically the Korean domestic situation such as the economic crisis of 1997 which caused the search for foreign markets, a paradigm shift in cultural policy (lifting of censorship<sup>4</sup>) and the rise of people with creativity and talent. The economic crisis turned out to be a catalyst in raising the export of cultural products to foreign markets extensively. Under the influence of globalisation, cultural differences are disappearing as a global culture, markets and industries become more intensely connected. In the 1990s, Asian economies were opening up and experienced rapid development. Cultural products were increasingly exchanged with the rise of the Asian economies. The younger generation raises its aspirations to consume modernity with the rise in income. They become more adventurous in their consumption behaviour and more willing to purchase foreign products. Thus they are easily influenced by modern consumption behaviour. The emergence of young consumer groups in Asian countries is another factor behind the Korean wave.

More specifically, according to Kim (2007), the origin of Korean wave can be traced back to 1997, when the Korean TV drama called "*What Is Love All About*" was broadcast on state-run Chinese television, China Central Television. Ju (2007) has remarked that the boom of Korean pop culture, which originated from China, actively penetrated and spread rapidly in neighbouring Asian countries including Southeast and Central Asia from 2000 to 2002. Hanryu or Hallyu has become a word to describe the wide popularity of Korean pop culture among its neighbours in Asia such as China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore and so on (Kim, 2007). Ju (2007) further writes that with the increase in the popularity of Korean wave, there would be a greater tangible Korean economic effect on the the Asian region. Kim (2007) writes that a CD on Hanryu, which became a big hit, was made as part of the Culture and Tourism Ministry's effort to promote Korean culture in China and contained Chinese language songs performed by famous South Korean singers to appeal to local people. So the Korean

wave also originated through the government's promotion of Korean cultural products for foreigners not directly related to the Korean diaspora.

Korean popular culture consists of new forms and patterns of cultural production and consumption (Jung, 2009). It has generated a new category of cultural production (Ravina, 2009). It is spreading among non-Korean fans and critics in Asia and other countries (Yecies, 2008). It is popular even though it may not be as original or authentic as people might think, because it is transnational and hybrid and also involves combinations of local and foreign elements at multiple levels (Jung, 2009). The transnational part with multiple connections and interactions linking communities across the borders of nation-states, and the hybridity part with cultural flows and cultural mixture are embedded in the process of Korean wave. Park (2006) and Ryou (2007) wrote that the success of Korean wave is also due to the ability of Korean culture and media industry to translate Western or American culture to fit Asian tastes. Korean culture is a hybridisation of many cultures, which are influenced by and intermingled with other cultures. Korean wave becomes more hybrid as a new dimension is added through transnational cultural flows and cultural mixture. It is not a true Korean wave; rather it is a hybrid of traditional Korean culture and western culture in general and American culture in particular. The Korean pop culture is a fusion of westernised modernity with just the right amount of Asian sentimentality. The effects of Korean cultural fusion are different across societies and countries. The effects could be in their language, culture or even consumption.

The Korean pop-music industry has been booming since the early 1990s after Korea liberalised its cultural policy and economy. Moreover, the Korean wave has been expanding to food, fashion, travel and living. Hwang (2009) noted that the spill-over effect of the Korean wave has attracted non-Koreans to take notice of Korean food and language. According to Jung (2009), many fans of Korean TV dramas talk about the physical attractiveness of Korean actors and actresses and their modern and glamorous fashion, make-up, and hairstyles. Lee (2011) pointed out that Asian people are fascinated by not only Korean music and drama, but also its films, food and fashion. This is exactly what is happening in Manipur among the young people.

### **Korean Media Consumption in Manipur**

Korean culture penetrated into Manipur through the media with the development of IT, liberalisation and globalisation. Young people of Manipur are fascinated by the popular Korean stars after observing them in movies and dramas. Media can and do influence societies, cultures and identities (Lee, 2011). Media in the form of print and electronic (still and motion) act as a mechanism to disseminate information on social, economic, political, security and cultural aspects. The advancement of technology has changed the consumption pattern of media. Information is quickly transmitted and available through television, internet, disks, newspapers, magazines, books etc. Communication has become easier and quicker with the increased use of mobile phones and computers.

Television (TV) channels play a vital role in the process of acculturation in the case of young people of Manipur. The Korean TV channel called Arirang, which is an international channel founded in 1996 in Seoul in South Korea, is very popular in Manipur, as also KBS World, a South Korean television channel operated by the Korean Broadcasting System. Kim (2007) wrote that it was launched by the

Korean International Foundation in 1997 as the only international English language broadcasting company in Asia. The channel, operated by the Korea International Broadcasting Foundation, presents diverse and interesting programmes on culture, language, living style, education, documentaries, movies, entertainments, sports, news etc. about South Korea. It aimed to promote tourism, business and foreign relations. Besides television programmes, there are various Korean movies, dramas, serials, music and songs, fashion, cuisine, tradition, hospitality and so on available in soft copy and CD/DVD form through the internet as well as video parlours. Every video parlour in Manipur sells or rents out Korean movies and serials. Korean movie discs are widely available at a cheap price in Manipur. The extensive demand for such products has influenced their lifestyle ranging from the use of Korean cosmetics, dressing, food etc. to language, resulting in acculturation into Korean culture.

In Manipur, the distribution of all Hindi satellite channels and the screening of Hindi movies were banned by the valley-based insurgents known as the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) in September 2000 (Akoijam, 2009), particularly in the valley districts. The RPF banned it because Bollywood was undermining the culture of Manipur. It considered Hindi films as a cultural imperialist media. At present, in Manipur, there is no screening of Hindi films in the theatres, no satellite Hindi TV channels and no Hindi songs on the radio. The only exceptions are the government-controlled Doordarshan (DD) channels. There is a strict warning that anybody found watching/telecasting any Hindi programmes/movies at home or in public would be severely punished by the insurgents. The insurgents have not banned non-Hindi channels/movies/songs.

This has resulted in the emergence of Asian movies, especially South Korean ones, as a popular medium. English movies along with Korean, Chinese, Thai and Manipuri movies are readily available in the state. The ban on Hindi movies has helped the growth of Manipuri films. The first Manipuri feature film called "Matamgi Manipur" was launched in 1972 (TNN, 2012). The 1979 Manipuri film called "Olangthagi Wangbadasoo", ran for 30 weeks at a movie theatre in Imphal called Friends Talkies, and broke the record of Hindi film "Sholay". Later in 2011 the Manipuri film "Phijigee Mani" was adjudged the best regional film at the 59<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards.

However, Manipuri films still could not come up to the standards of Bollywood productions, paving the way for the entry of Chinese, Korean and other movies to fill the wide gap created by the exit of Hindi films. This also coincided with the opening of India's economy, liberalisation, globalisation and India's Look East Policy to develop and link North East India with other Asian countries. Besides, the Moreh-Namphalong border trade between India and Myanmar facilitated the import of electronic goods from China, Korea and Thailand (Myint, 2003). The CDs/DVDs, mostly pirated, and containing movies, dramas, serials or music, originated from South Korea, and were part of the electronic goods imported from Korea.

Bollywood Hindi movies have been replaced by Hallyuwood, the South Korean movies, in Manipur. Hallyuwood is a combined word of Hallyu in Korean and wood in English (Yecies, 2008). Many hit movies in Korea are also popular in Manipur. Top Korean movies which are also equally popular in Manipur include My Sassy Girl (2001), The Classic (2003), The Brotherhood of War (2004), A Moment to Remember (2004), You Are My Sunshine (2005), A Frozen Flower (2008), Running Turtle (2009), Secret Reunion (2010), Chilling Romance (2011), War of the Arrows (2011), The Grand Heist (2012), Miracle in

Cell No.7 (2013) and many more. Popular Korean dramas such as Autumn Fairy Tale (2000), Winter Sonata (2002), Full House (2004), Dae Jang Geum (2005), Coffee Prince (2007), Golden Bride (2007), Smile You (2009), Full House Take 2 (2012) etc. are widely available as DVDs and broadcast through the Arirang and KBS TV channel in Manipur. Starting from early 2000's, South Korean television dramas like Four Sisters (2001) and Stairway to Heaven (2003) and South Korean movies such as My Sassy Girl and The Classic became very popular among the young in particular who eventually began to adopt the style of dressing and make-up of actors of these movies and dramas. This could be considered as the starting point of Korean acculturation in Manipur.

Youngsters are perhaps the main consumers of Korean media, mostly movies and dramas, as they are very fond of it. This phenomenon makes them the catalyst for adopting Korean culture. DVDs containing such movies or dramas, mostly pirated, are available in plenty in every video shop and in roadside kiosks at low prices of less than Rs 50 each. The posters and pictures of popular Korean actresses and actors are used as wall posters, mobile or computer screensavers and even as Facebook profile pictures.

This pattern gradually criss-crosses and influences the younger generation irrespective of race, class, ethnicity or religion, leading to the process of acculturation in which people of Manipur adapt to a new culture from Korea. This may eventually result in a new blended culture comprising of their original Manipur and Korean culture. Korean media consumption is not limited to young people alone or specific urban areas in Manipur. It is popular even among the older people. Older people are interested in Korean media not because of their fascinating style, but because of their content emphasising family and cultural values. However, the tendency to adopt Korean culture is stronger among the youth.

### **Findings from the Field**

The field survey covered a total 150 Koreanised persons in Manipur; out of that 33 per cent were males and the rest 67 per cent females.<sup>5</sup> The sample population consisted of persons in the age group between 14 and 30 years with a mean age of 20 years. The study shows that young people are really fascinated by Korean culture. For them, imitating or adopting Korean culture is an exotic life. It is a life full of lively activities enveloping Korean culture ranging from clothing, hairstyle, facial look, and food to movies and language. The study shows that as teenagers approach their youthful life they tend to practise or adopt Korean styles. However, it seems they gradually relinquish it as they grow older. The adoption reaches the peak between the age group of 18 to 21; however, it drops as they grow older.

Young people of Manipur are inclined towards Korean cultural orientation, which is influenced by mass media and peer groups. They adopt certain Korean cultural components that suit and fascinate them. It signifies that Korean culture is superior to theirs, and is more attractive and appealing than their inherent culture. For them, adopting this culture in clothing, hairstyle, facial look, food, movies and language is thrilling. The whole trend suggests that in Manipur people are liberal and ready to accept whichever is deemed a best fit. They choose Korean culture of their own free accord and in some cases, against their parents' wishes. For them, religion is not a major determining factor for adopting Korean culture. They form a group of youthful active people, married and single, male and female and differing in their degree of interest and adoption. While young people prefer Korean culture irrespective of their

marital status, as shown in Table 1, the degree of preference varies from person to person. All the married respondents like Korean culture. Also among single persons, 40 per cent exclusively like Korean culture and the rest want a mixture of Korean and other cultures such as Western, Japanese, Chinese or even Indian. There is no significant difference between the genders in the preference for Korean cultures (Table 2). For example, 45 per cent of the males, against 41 per cent of the females, exclusively want a Korean culture, suggesting young males like Korean culture as much as females.

**Table 1: Share (%) of Koreanised Persons (KP) by Marital Status and Cultural Preference in Manipur**

Cultural preference	Marital status				Total
	Never married	Unmarried	Single*	Married	
Korean	27.27	45.54	40.00	100.00	42.00
Western/Korean	9.09	32.67	25.52	0.00	24.67
Indian/Korean	0.00	5.94	4.14	0.00	4.00
Korean/Chinese	0.00	2.97	2.07	0.00	2.00
Korean/Japanese	4.55	0.00	1.38	0.00	1.33
Western/Korean/Japanese	9.09	1.98	4.14	0.00	4.00
Korean/Chinese/Japanese	13.64	0.99	4.83	0.00	4.67
Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese	0.00	0.99	0.69	0.00	0.67
Western/Indian/Korean/Japanese	4.55	0.00	1.38	0.00	1.33
Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese/Japanese	31.82	8.91	15.86	0.00	15.33
All (No.)	44	101	145	5	150

**Note:** \*Single – Never married plus Unmarried.

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

**Table 2: Share (%) of KP by Most Preferred Culture in Manipur**

Cultural preference	Male	Female	Person
Korean	44.90	40.59	42.00
Western/Korean	26.53	23.76	24.67
Indian/Korean	8.16	1.98	4.00
Korean/Chinese	0.00	2.97	2.00
Korean/Japanese	0.00	1.98	1.33
Western/Korean/Japanese	4.08	3.96	4.00
Korean/Chinese/Japanese	10.20	1.98	4.67
Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese	2.04	0.00	0.67
Western/Indian/Korean/Japanese	0.00	1.98	1.33
Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese/Japanese	4.08	20.79	15.33
All (No.)	49	101	150

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

Students, employed and unemployed adopt the culture as they are not only young but are driven by competitive behaviour to adopt prevalent styles. They adopt it irrespective of their family household income; however, affluent people are more likely to adopt it. The poor, middle class and the

affluent show an almost equal willingness and desire to adopt the supposedly attractive Korean culture. Nevertheless, the higher the household income, the greater the tendency to adopt Korean culture, perhaps because they can afford the “ingredients” such as cloth, cosmetics, facelift surgery, food, ornaments etc. relating to Korean culture. It is interesting to observe that about 80 per cent of those who exclusively prefer Korean culture have a household income of above Rs.10,000/- per month (Table 3). It is also striking that about 86 per cent of those who prefer a combined Western and Korean culture falls under this monthly income bracket.

**Table 3: Share (%) of KP by Household Monthly Income and Cultural Preferences in Manipur**

Cultural preference	Monthly household income (Rs.)					Total (No.)
	<5000	5001-10000	10001-15000	15001-20000	>20001	
Korean	0.00	20.63	23.81	41.27	14.29	63
Western/Korean	2.70	10.81	43.24	40.54	2.70	37
Indian/Korean	16.67	16.67	33.33	16.67	16.67	6
Korean/Chinese	0.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	3
Korean/Japanese	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	2
Western/Korean/Japanese	0.00	0.00	16.67	0.00	83.33	6
Korean/Chinese/Japanese	0.00	0.00	28.57	28.57	42.86	7
Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	1
Western/Indian/Korean/Japanese	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	2
Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese/Japanese	0.00	0.00	17.39	26.09	56.52	23
All	1.33	12.00	28.67	34.67	23.33	150

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

They are mostly educated, with a qualification of matriculation or above, and are more prone to adopt it as they can judge the merits of Korean culture. Koreanised people are not concentrated in a specific ethnic community. It is prevalent in all the ethnic groups such as Meitei, Nagas, Kuki, Mizo, Hmar and Vaiphei. This suggests that there is a process of Koreanisation across all ethnic groups in Manipur whether their native places are the hills or the valleys.

Surprisingly, all of them are not equally proud about their own ethnic group in terms of values, customs and traditions. However, most of them (66 per cent) are extremely proud of it (Table 4). There are a couple of reasons for this situation. They are young and do not understand the value of their own culture, tradition or ethnicity. Females possibly have a higher tendency, than males, to believe that they could accommodate the culture of other ethnic groups, perhaps through cross ethnic marriages.

**Table 4: Share (%) of KPs' Opinion on Their Own Ethnic Pride in Manipur**

Ethnic pride level	Male	Female	Person
Extremely proud	75.51	61.39	66.00
Moderately proud	10.20	14.85	13.33
Little pride	4.08	6.93	6.00
No pride but do not feel negative toward the group	10.20	16.83	14.67
All (No.)	49	101	150

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

Importantly, though they adopt or follow the behaviour and style of Korean culture, many of them do not know the country of origin of this culture, South Korea. One-third of them have no idea of the origin of Korean culture, (Table 5) indicating their ignorance and reluctance to know its origin. It also suggests the influence of peer groups in adopting Korean culture. About one per cent of them claim that it originated from North Korea. Around 65 per cent are aware of its origin. Females (72 per cent) have a wider knowledge and are more certain about its origin as South Korea in comparison with males (51 per cent). This is partly because women, unlike men, are more curious to learn the minute details of specific things.

**Table 5: Share (%) of KPs' Knowledge on Origin of Korean Culture in Manipur**

Gender	Knowledge of origin of Korean culture			All (No.)
	South Korea	North Korea	No idea	
Male	51.02	2.04	46.94	49
Female	72.28	0.99	26.73	101
Person	65.33	1.33	33.33	150

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

Although many of them do not know exactly the country of origin of Korean culture, they largely feel some sort of pride in adopting it. As many as 70 per cent of the respondents expressed pride in adopting it (Table 6). The other 30 per cent felt no pride in adopting Korean culture but do not feel negative or bad about it. This suggests that many of them are just adopting it for the sake of dressing, make-up or other lifestyles that appear to be good and attractive; it has nothing to do with Korean cultural values. The people are relatively liberal, and this creates freedom for adopting and practising attractive but socially acceptable ways of life. It is feasible due to the co-existence of different ethnic groups, with different cultural or traditional values, living under one administration. Living with family, in any type of residence, is not a major hurdle in adopting Korean culture. Only in a few cases, staying with parents impaired their liberty.

**Table 6: Share (%) of KPs' Opinion on Korean Pride in Manipur**

<b>Korean pride level</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Person</b>
Extremely proud	59.18	43.56	48.67
Moderately proud	10.20	14.85	13.33
Little pride	4.08	9.90	8.00
No pride but do not feel negative toward the group	26.53	31.68	30.00
All (No.)	49	101	150

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

In such situation, the adoption of Korean culture is not surprising. They opt for it voluntarily, perhaps as a supplementary culture, with some influences of different forms, and the society of Manipur largely respects their decisions because 83 per cent of them were not asked or compelled by anyone to discontinue practising it. More strikingly, in about 90 per cent of females, against 67 per cent of males, no one sought to stop or discontinue the practices. It seems women have relatively greater freedom, compared to males, as a fairly large number of women than men live in hostels (41 per cent) and with their friends (44 per cent).

Mass media, including television, CD/DVDs, internet, and other electronic forms promoting and broadcasting movies, dramas and other culturally valuable shows are the main motivating factor for adopting Korean culture among the young people of Manipur. Other consumers preferring Korean media also have a higher tendency to adopt its culture. Surprisingly, about three per cent claimed that although they adopt Korean culture, nothing motivates them to do it.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Korean movies appear to be the source of greatest motivation for it. About 61 per cent of them were motivated exclusively by Korean movies (Table 7). Its influences are ever more significant for the females (73 per cent). Exclusive motivation through the influence of friends is not prominently visible as only three per cent of Koreanised people are motivated by them. However, people influenced by a mixture of sources of motivation such as friends, and friends with Korean TV/movies, is about 19 per cent. This appeared to be more significant for males. The mix of different sources of motivation indicates the blending of style or behaviour that suit them best. It is clear that media, including movies available in CD/DVDs (mostly pirated) or in other electronic form, and TV programmes of movies and serials or drama apart from other culturally valuable shows, are the main motivating factor for adopting Korean culture among young people of Manipur. Koreanisation is overtly and greatly influenced by the media, as expected, and therefore we can accept the hypothesis that consumers opting for Korean media have a higher tendency to adopt Korean culture; the influence of peer groups is clearly less.

**Table 7: Share (%) of KP by Source of Motivation in Manipur**

Motivation source	Male	Female	Person
None	4.08	2.97	3.33
TV	16.33	14.85	15.33
Korean movies	36.73	73.27	61.33
Friends	4.08	2.97	3.33
TV/Korean movies	0.00	0.99	0.67
Korean movies/friends	36.73	4.95	15.33
TV/Korean movies/friends	2.04	0.00	0.67
All (No.)	49	101	150

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

The practice of Korean culture by the people of Manipur is now older than a decade. A majority of them started adopting it in recent times. Most of them who recently started adopting it were in their late teens and early 20s, highlighting the fact that the age of adoption is usually teenage, when hormones change significantly.

**Table 8: Share (%) of KP in Manipur by Their Preference of Korean Items**

Preference of Korean items	Male	Female	Person
Cloth	12.24	9.90	10.67
Hair style	2.04	2.97	2.67
TV shows	0.00	1.98	1.33
Movies	0.00	5.94	4.00
Language and food	2.04	0.00	0.67
Language and movies	0.00	0.99	0.67
Food and cloth	6.12	12.87	10.67
Food and movies	4.08	1.98	2.67
Cloth and hair style	0.00	1.98	1.33
Movies and music	0.00	3.96	2.67
Language, food and hair style	4.08	0.00	1.33
Language, cloth and movies	0.00	0.99	0.67
Language, TV shows and music	2.04	0.00	0.67
Food, cloth and movies	2.04	6.93	5.33
Food, hair style and movies	4.08	0.00	1.33
Food, TV shows and movies	0.00	0.99	0.67
Cloth, hair style and movies	4.08	0.99	2.00
Cloth, TV shows and movies	0.00	0.99	0.67
Food, cloth, hair style and movies	0.00	0.99	0.67
Cloth, hair style, TV shows and music	2.04	0.00	0.67
Cloth, hair style, movies and music	8.16	3.96	5.33
Hair style, TV shows, movies and music	0.00	0.99	0.67
Language, food, cloth, hair style, TV shows, movies and music	46.94	40.59	42.67
All (No.)	49	101	150

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

Koreanised people are really passionate about Korean culture and people. Some, males in particular, want to establish a family with Korean citizens. Koreanised people prefer many items that relate and portray Korean culture in their cloth, food, hairstyle, movies and others. For example, those who like Korean movies also prefer their language, food, music, TV shows, hairstyle and cloth (Table 8).<sup>8</sup> Some of them have a specific preference, such as only cloth (about 11 per cent) or hairstyle (less than three per cent) or TV shows (just above one per cent) or movies (four per cent). The rest, about 81 per cent, prefer a multiple of items. It indicates that those who like Korean movies also prefer their language, food, music, TV shows, hairstyle and cloth; or those who like their hairstyle also want the rest of the items related to Korean culture. Most importantly, about 43 per cent of them want all kind of items related to Korean culture. The share was lower for females (about 47 per cent), who seem to be choosier, than males (about 41 per cent).

People of Manipur who adopted Korean culture do not have a uniform idea about the expenses incurred over the items, such as cosmetics, apparels, etc., that are required to appear like Korean people in comparison to modern or western culture fans. Moreover, it is clear from Table 9 that those who opined that it is relatively expensive to adopt Korean culture is not necessarily from the lower income households. In fact, as income gradually rises to Rs. 20,000/- the share of people who feel it to be very expensive becomes larger. Importantly, monthly household income is not a very strong determinant for relative expenditure consideration.

**Table 9: Share (%) of KPs' Opinion on Expenditure on Adopting Korean Culture in Relation to Modern Culture and Monthly Household Income in Manipur**

Income (Rs)	Expenses opinion					Total
	Very Expensive	Moderate	Cheap	Similar	No Idea	
<5000	3.57	0.00	0.00	3.85	0.00	1.33
5001-10000	17.86	6.67	27.27	11.54	20.00	12.00
10001-15000	25.00	24.00	45.45	34.62	40.00	28.67
15001-20000	42.86	34.67	18.18	34.62	30.00	34.67
>20001	10.71	34.67	9.09	15.38	10.00	23.33
All (No.)	28	75	11	26	10	150

**Note:** Income – Monthly household income.

**Source:** Field Survey in Manipur, April 2013.

Koreanised people also know some Korean language. They use it in communication for verbal conversation or mobile texting or internet mail using Roman script mainly to keep their communication secret from others. Some people do not learn Korean language, but are exposed to it through Korean movies or TV programmes. Females, quicker learners of language, appear to be more knowledgeable about Korean language as compared to males. About 79 per cent of females, against 67 per cent of males, know and speak some Korean language. Undoubtedly, they have learnt to speak Korean by watching TVs and movies which are their main sources of motivation and learning and from friends in rare cases. It again reaffirms that consumption of Korean mass media acts as a catalyst to adopt Korean culture in Manipur.

## Concluding Remarks

The youth of Manipur, irrespective of their socio-economic background, are adopting the so-called Korean culture that is a hybridised form of Western and Korean cultures. It is inspired by the Korean media, especially movies and dramas. Besides this, peer groups create the network for adopting it; however, they are not very influential. The people in Manipur are fascinated by the Korean culture with its different perspective. They adopt some of its components that suit and fascinate them irrespective of their physical features. Despite the differences in their physical features, particularly with regard to skin, between Koreans as depicted in the media, and people from Manipur, the young generation is switching to Korean style, though it sometimes appears very artificial and is not really the original Korean culture. It is a hybrid of the original Korean culture and modern, specifically western, culture. The native culture of Manipur, which is diverse in nature, is completely different from Korean culture. However, the modern or western culture adopted by the people of Manipur conforms to Korean practices. Media and other related electronic forms are regarded as the main drivers of acculturation into Korean culture. The tendency to adopt Korean culture rises with an increase in consumption of Korean media among the people of Manipur. This increase is partially due to the banning of Hindi TV channels and movies in the state by the insurgents. This has in turn led to the emergence of Asian movies, specifically Korean movies and Korean TV channels, as popular alternatives. Acculturation to Korean culture is a decade-old phenomenon in Manipur. Empirical research, based on field study data, shows that some sections among the young people of Manipur follow the general trajectory of acculturation into Korean culture. The youth are the ones influenced most in the process of acculturation into Korean culture as they have lots of enthusiasm, energy and time to imitate and follow any activities without understanding their real cultural values. Acculturation to Korean culture takes place as people of Manipur come into contact through information and communication technologies such as CDs/DVDs, internet and mobile phones, and through peer groups. The process of acculturation to Korean culture suggests that Korean culture is seen to be more attractive than the indigenous culture of Manipur. The social, economic, cultural, behavioural and psychological features of the people of Manipur are now transformed by Korean culture. The notion and prevalence of adoption of Korean culture among the people, particularly the youths, have been validated. Liberalisation and globalisation have largely contributed in terms of media access and exposure. Indeed, Manipuri people are open to new cultural winds. Hence, they tend to adopt new or modern cultures with regard to dressing, food habits, socialising or language while somewhat retaining their original culture.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Manipur, one of the North Eastern states of India, comprises diverse peoples with a distinct culture, who follow different religions and speak multiple languages. Some ethnic groups like Nagas or Kukis are again subdivided into tribes on the basis of distinct culture and language. Culture describes the traditional attires, food habits, festivals of seed sowing (e.g. *Lui Ngai Ni* among the Nagas), festival of harvesting (e.g. *Kut*, a post-harvest festival of Chin-Kuki-Mizos), *Ningolchakouba* (a festival of invitation of married sisters and daughters to the parental house for a grand feast among the Meiteis), marriage ceremony, feast, languages and so on and so forth. Due to the existence of multi-faceted ethnic groups, the state of Manipur has diverse cultures. Some major ethnic groups such as Meiteis and Meitei-Pangal (Muslim) predominantly inhabit the valley districts and the Nagas, Kukis, Mizos

- and Vaipei mostly dwell in the hill districts. The native people of Manipur are generally classified as Mongoloid speaking one of the Tibetan-Burmese languages (Shimray, 2001).
- <sup>2</sup> Koreanised people are those who have adopted Korean culture. For making this adoption successful, the markets, playing a vital role in Manipur, facilitates the process by selling many products originating from Korea and relating to Korean culture such as dresses, cosmetics, electronic media (movies/serials in CD/DVDs), etc. imported mainly via Kolkata in West Bengal and Moreh in Manipur from East Asian countries, specifically Thailand, China and South Korea.
- <sup>3</sup> Gangnam style, a K-pop music by the South Korean musician Psy, topped the music charts in over 30 countries including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain and the UK towards the end of 2012 (see the details at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangnam\\_Style](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangnam_Style)).
- <sup>4</sup> "The president of the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corporation (MPPC), Lee Jinkeun, defended censorship in an interview conducted in 1982, stressing that films should be a medium that portrayed the brighter side rather than the dark side of Korean society. He mentioned the guidelines the government has set out: That our traditional culture should be mixed with foreign cultures to create a more brilliant culture; that motion pictures are not for individuals or certain groups but for public interest and, therefore, they should make everyone happy...." (Park, 2007:17)
- <sup>5</sup> The sample comprises more females because they refer many more females; also even males refer females as a prospective respondent as snowball sampling technique is adopted.
- <sup>6</sup> It would be incorrect to say practising Korean culture arises spontaneously from their mind. If they claim that they like and practise Korean culture, then it should have either a motivator or a role model as basis. Perhaps what they practise resembled the so-called Korean culture (which in fact is a western modern culture) and the modernised culture adopted by these people. Therefore, they were conveniently reporting that nothing motivates them.
- <sup>7</sup> There are many beauty parlours in Manipur which increasingly deliver a specialised Korean style of makeup and hairstyle. However, their service charges are costly due to the use of high quality and imported cosmetics and related items and trained staff. During the field survey, it was observed that customers of the parlours include both Koreanised persons and others. Youth mostly visit the parlour for stylist Korean makeup and hairdressing.

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