

## Korean Wave and Korean Media Consumption in Manipur

Marchang Reimeingam

The paper studies the Korean wave covering its origin, transnational characteristics, hybridity nature, style in twisting the original Korean look, threat to their original Korean culture and nature of flourishing business due to the wave. Despite of wide differences in the culture between Manipur and Korea there is a high tendency of diffusion of Korean culture through media in Manipur because of a significant level of Korean media consumption in it. Korean culture refers to the South Korean culture that is a blend of original Korean and modern western cultures. The study examines the process of Korean wave in Manipur as people contact through mass media exposure with the new dynamic culture that appears to be of greater attractive than their inherent culture. It examines the process in relation with their social, cultural, behavioural and psychological factors of the people of Manipur to Korean cultural orientation.

**Keywords:** Korean culture, Koreanisation, business, media, consumption, Manipur.

### Introduction

The paper studies the basis and the trajectory of Koreanisation, i.e. adopting Korean culture, due to the media exposure in the globalised world among the people, especially the youths, of Manipur. Manipur is located in the North Eastern part of India sharing an international boundary with Myanmar in the east. People of Manipur are originated from Tibetan-Burmese groups of Mongoloid. The paper examines the popular Korean culture, which is commonly known as the Korean wave across the world, stressing to its origin, transnational characteristics and nature of hybridity. Further, it attempts to understand the manner the original Korean look is twisted, threat to their original Korean culture and the extent of flourishing business because of the Korean wave. People and the culture of Manipur are briefly examined before the discussion of the diffusion of Korean culture through media and the nature of Korean media consumption in Manipur. The drivers, specifically the media and other electronic forms, of Koreanisation are studied.

---

\* I thank the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore for financing the study. Usual disclaimers apply.

Dr. Marchang Reimeingam is Assistant Professor at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, India.

### **Origin of Korean Wave**

The Korean culture became popular, which is commonly referred as Korean wave, across the globe since 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 is described as the rising popularity of Korean popular culture (Shim 2006 and Lee 2011). Korean wave means spreading South Korean popular culture including films, soap operas, computer games and popular songs throughout Asia and beyond, reinforcing the Korea's growing reputation as an Asian hub for the 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 originated from 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 the Korean feature films and other musical forms are also part of the Korean wave phenomenon. Jang and Paik (2012) also described the popularity of Korean popular culture across the world ranges from television dramas, movies, popular music (K-pop), dance (B-boys), video game, food, fashion, tourism to the language. Incidentally, Korean pop music became very popular across the globe with the latest example of "Gangnam style" by Psy.<sup>1</sup>

Kim (2007) remarked that the success and popularity of a series of Korean films, soap operas and pop idols in Korea have made a successful way particularly for the neighbouring Asian markets. The new term "*Hanryu*" the Korean wave was evolved in this context. The term "Korean wave" was coined in China in mid-1999 by Beijing journalists surprised by the fast growing popularity of Korean entertainment and culture in China. Korean wave that was started in China with the popularity of Korean pop music and television soap operas has spread across the world. Ravina (2009) noted that it begins in East Asia in the 1990s and continuing more recently in the United States, Latin America, Middle East and parts of Europe. Dator and Seo (2004) wrote that the success of Korean wave is contributed by the dynamic young Korean generation with their blossoming creativity and imagination which result to the country's economic prosperity and political democracy. Additionally, Yang (2012) establishes theoretically and empirically that Korean wave evolves due to globalisation, modernity and cultural proximity. Globalisation refers to the openness to foreign countries politically, economically and socially. Cultural proximity shows the cultural distance of a country to Korea. While modernity describes the rise in the popularity of the Korean wave, which is a hybrid in nature whose forms are mainly western popular culture but whose contents are mostly traditional.

Kim (2007) identified various external and internal factors contributing to Korean wave during the boom of Korean cultural products. External factors include Asian economic expansion and media boom, global capitalism and consumer culture. Internal factors covers basically the Korean domestic situation such as economic crisis of 1997 where the search of foreign markets were in need, paradigm shift in cultural policy (lifting of censorship<sup>2</sup>) and rise of people with creativity and talented amidst the boom of multimedia. Economic crisis turn out to be a catalyst in raising export of cultural products in foreign markets extensively. Under the process of globalisation a cultural differ-

ence is disappearing as global culture, markets and industries become more intensely connected. In the 1990s, Asian economies were open up and rapid development was experienced. Cultural products were increasingly exchanged with the rise of the Asian economies. The younger generation raises their aspirations to consume modernity with the rise in income. They become more adventurous in their consumption behaviours and more willing to purchase foreign products. Thus they are easily influence with the modern consumption behaviour. The emergence of young consumer groups in Asian countries is another factor behind 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 the Korean pop culture, which was originated from China, has actively penetrated and spread rapidly in the neighbouring Asian countries including Southeast and Central Asia from 2000 through 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 the Korean wave, there would be a greater tangible Korean economic effect in 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 was originated through the government’s promotion of Korean cultural products for foreigners which is not directly related to Korean diaspora.

### **Transnational and Hybridity**

The Korean popular culture or Korean wave is a 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 throughout the non-Korean fans and critics in Asia and other countries (Yecies 2008). The spread and success of Korean wave in Asian countries is largely because of their “cultural affinities” (Ryoo 2007) between Korean and the rest Asian countries like China or Japan. The Korean culture is popular, even though it may not be as original or authentic Korean as people might ideate, because it is transnational and hybrid and also involves combinations of local and foreign elements at multiple levels (Jung 2009). The transnational, i.e. a multiple connections and interactions linking communities across the borders of nation-states, cultural flows and cultural mixture, i.e. hybridity, are embedded in the process of Korean wave. Park (2006) and Ryoo (2007) wrote that the success of Korean wave is also attributed by the ability of Korean culture and media industry to translate Western or American culture to fit Asian tastes. The Korean culture is hybridisation of many cultures which are influenced by and intermingled with other cultures. Korean wave becomes more of hybridism as a new dimension is added through transnational cultural flows and cultural mixture. Jang and Paik (2012) opined that the Korean Wave can be more correctly described as the Korean-hybrid wave. It is not a true Korean wave; rather it is a hybrid of the traditional Korean cultures and western cultures in general and American culture in particular. The

Korean pop culture is a fusion of the 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. However, Ravina (2009), cautioned that the story of success of Korean wave is a transnational issues dealing with the reasons and manner of receiving or embracing the Korean pop culture so enthusiastically in a foreign countries. Korean wave is the Koreanised Western popular culture. It can also be described as the reinterprets and mediates the Western popular culture in Korean way. Koreans act as the catalyst to fit the western culture readily acceptable by other Asian countries. Western culture is likely to have a constraint in influencing directly to the Asian countries because of the existence of a certain nonnegotiable cultural heterogeneity. The cultural affinity between South Korea and neighbouring Asian countries like China effectively builds bridge or buffer between the Western and Asia countries (Ryoo 2007; Park 2006; Lee 2011). Ravina (2009) pointed out that the Korean wave was successful first in China and Japan as they shared a broad range of cultural tropes with Korea.

Apart from the popular Korean pop music (such as High Five Of Teenagers, BoA and Rain) or drama (such as Autumn Fairy Tale and Winter Sonata) across the countries including Japan, Taiwan, China etc the Korean movies are gaining a growing popularity on international screens. *Winter Sonata* is about four young, attractive people's love and career struggles and family tensions (Jung 2009). Ryoo (2007) wrote that Korean dramas typically deal with family issues, love and filial piety in an age of changing technology. It often reinforces with the traditional values of Confucianism. The stories that are portrayed in the Korean dramas based on Confucian ideology and values are a construction rather than a reality in Korea (Park 2006). The Korean dramas on family lives and their depiction of social relationships based largely on Confucian values and ideology supposedly contribute to their popularity in Asia. Jung (2009) established that the main reason for the success of Korean wave through TV dramas, that have become popular and emerge as scholarly discourse, is of showing the Asian family-friendly values. Besides this, the cultural proximity determines the success of the Korean wave. Park (2006) refers the Korean dramas which deal with issues, like generational and gender conflicts, social inequality, dissolution of family relationships, westernisation or question of identity, may generate a feeling of cultural proximity based on shared modernisation experiences rather than common cultural traditions.

Shim (2006) found that Korean youth preferred American pop songs rather than their Korean songs. Korean wave has made the Korean pop music market a vibrant. Before the 1990s, Korean pop music was not vibrant and popular. Jung (2009) writes that Korean popular music, a transnational and hybrid aspects, has also been spreading rapidly. The Korean pop-music industry was booming since the early 1990s after liberalising the cultural policy and economy of South Korea. Korean pop music continued to incorporate diverse stylistic input from foreign countries like American hip-hop culture and rap music, which was first adopted by the young-boy band Seo Taiji and Boys. Thus, it became youth oriented. Since then, many young Korean bands targeting the youth audiences have dominated the Korean pop-music. At the start of Korean wave the Korean boys' band namely the High Five Of Teenagers (H.O.T.) became popular in abroad in the

late 1990s. Since the early 2000s the BoA and Rain (Bi in Korean) have been the two most outstanding Korean Wave pop stars.

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 the non-Koreans to take notice of Korean food and language. Kim (2007) established that many Chinese youths are enamoured by all things Korean, from hairstyles to lifestyle. People who are fond of or encounter the cultural products through the Korean soap operas or stars become more curious or interested in Korean fashion, food, hairstyle, language or lifestyles. According to Jung (2009) many fans of Korean TV dramas talk about the physical attractiveness of the Korean actors and actresses and their modern and glamorous fashion, make-up, and hairstyles. These fans choose their show because of the lavish productions including their skilful editing, beautiful cinematography, good acting, captivating the storylines and accessibility, which is contributed by the development of IT and digital-media and globalisation. Lee (2011) pointed out that Asian people are fascinated by not only the Korean music and drama, but also its films, food and fashion. This is what exactly is happening in Manipur among the young people. Shim (2011) opined that there are significant cultural changes which are attributed by the postmodernism, the cultural sensibility of high modernity.

### **Twisting the Original Korean Look**

The Korean actors have influence to large extent on the consumer culture, including food, fashion, make-up trends and even plastic surgery, to many people across the world. Incidentally, the youth of Asian countries are decorating their backpacks, notebooks, and rooms with photographs of Korean stars (Shim 2011a). Kim (2009) wrote that women mostly from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam or other Asian countries were flocking to Seoul in South Korea for cosmetic surgery to enhance their facial look. Korean wave has contributed in the rise of popularity of Korean plastic surgery among Asian women. Some Chinese women who dream of working in the entertainment industry even undergo surgery including facial bone contouring to look like Korean celebrities. They go to Seoul for cosmetic surgery even if it is more (two to three times) expensive in Korea compared to the similar service charge in the hospitals in China. Interestingly, Nolan (2013) describes that many patients visit the plastic surgery clinics with photos of celebrities, asking surgeons to imitate American noses or eyes.

Plastic surgery is a booming business in Korea due to the demand of the service from both national and transnational clients. Lah (2011) reported that plastic surgery are demanded to appear westernize look ranging from their small eyes to look bigger, to reshape their low profile nose to nicer nose to the facial contouring. The surgery is done not only following their conscious mind but also by other external forces. For example, in Korea, a young daughter, although she didn't ask for the surgery, was made to perform the surgery by her mother as the mother thinks she will be prettier. According to Dr Kim Byung-gun, head of Seoul, South Korea's biggest plastic surgery clinic, BK DongYang, his patients' want some westernised like Americans nice faces rather than their Asian faces. The idea of beauty is more westernized recently. Dr Kim's patients composed of about 30% from the international and the remaining 70 percent are from South Korea.

Out of the 30 percent international patients, 90% are Chinese. It indicates that the Korean and Chinese people at large want to have the westernised face by disliking their faces. It implies that the Korean wave is a hybrid of potential cultures of western and Korean which people perceive as the Korean culture.

Moreover, Nolan (2013) wrote that at present the South Koreans have more plastic surgery than in any other country particularly among 19 to 49 year old people. In 2011 the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons reported that 15 million people across the globe turned to plastic surgery to enhance their facial looks. In 2012, 20 per cent of women aged 19 to 49 years in Seoul admitted for plastic surgery. Double eyelid surgery is the most common surgery. Kim (2009) further writes that Hollywood is world famous not only for its movie studios but also for cosmetic surgery, dermatology clinics and stores selling luxury goods. Newly created cosmetic surgery techniques and beauty products are exported around the world. The stretch from Sinsa-dong to Cheongdam-dong areas of Seoul is popular with adequate dermatology and plastic surgery clinics, and other beauty-related businesses including fashion stores, cosmetics and accessories.

### **Threat to Original Korean Culture**

Hwang (2009) shows how the Korean Wave affects Korean culture more broadly by contrasting the considerable increase in the popular Korean wave and the increase marginalised in the classical or traditional Korean music. Classical music, rather than Korean popular music, had been regarded as the culturally superior. Ravina (2009) mentioned that historically the classical Korean music has been very popular in Korea as a measure of cultural attainment. The Korean Wave creates problematic situation where the hybrid pop culture overtakes the traditional Korean culture; partly due to the official support to a redefinition of pop culture as legitimate and authentically Korean. Further, Ravina (2009) remarks that the Korean Wave appears as a threat to the status of classical music in contemporary Korea and undermined the traditional Korean culture.

Hwang (2009) described that Korean popular musicians are now enjoying an unprecedented level of recognition and limelight due to the Korean Wave while the Korean classical musicians have marginalised with insignificant recognition and popularity. As a result of Korean Wave a countless young people considers the Korean stars popular around the world, such as Pae Yong-chun, Rain, Yi Young Ae and Boa, as their ultimate role models. It shows that Korean society is experiencing a shift in the value system. Globalisation, interdependence across the countries and socioeconomic development has changes the society, culture and politics by transforming people's basic values and beliefs (Jang and Paik 2012). Hwang (2009) expressed that the inability of classical musicians to become very popular like the Korean wave posits the Koreans no longer be governed by Confucian ideology but engulfed by the capitalism and materialism of the postmodern era.

### **Business Boon**

Kim (2007) asserts that the Korean wave, as a political or diplomatic as well as economic phenomenon, has been a boon to South Korea. The success in promoting the Korean culture in abroad is also associated with the boon in business in the film industry,

television programmes, music, tourism, plastic surgery, etc which boost the Korean economy. Liberalisation, technological development, privatisation and globalisation have impetus to the success in the business and promoting the Korean culture. Liberalisation of Korean media in the 1990s has resulted to surge the Hollywood's market share to 80 percent in 1994, against 53 percent in 1987, in the local market. Shim (2006) wrote that the Korean movies blockbuster includes *Shiri* (1999), *Joint Security Area* (2001), *Silmido* (2004), *Taegukgi* (2004), etc earns millions of USD even in box office in abroad. Kim (2007) shows that the Korean blockbuster *Taegukgi* (*The Brotherhood of War*) clearly demonstrates the success of the Korean cultural products abroad. Apart from the movies or dramas business the Korean companies are making efforts to transform Korean wave fans into consumers of Korean products and services, for example, such as Samsung Electronics in China or LG Electronics in Vietnam (Shim 2006). This is because Koreans have realised that culture can be as profitable as semi-conductors or cars.

Yang (2012) noted that export of Korean cultural products raises rapidly to a level of about USD 1884 million in 2008, which has doubled from 2004. Digital games industry has led the export drive comprising 58 percent of the total export and the rest share are contributed by publishing (13.8 percent), cartoon (0.2), music (0.9), movies (1.1), animation (4.3), broadcasting (8.5), Advertisement (0.8), Character (12.1) and edutainment (0.3) in 2008. These products were mostly exported to Asian countries with over 60 percent of the total Korean cultural products export. China, Japan and Southeast Asia imported about 20 percent each of the total. Korean cultural product export to North America (22.6) and Europe (10.2) accounts for one-third. And the rest about seven percent are exported to other countries. Korean broadcasting programmes exports rises from USD 6 million in 1996 to USD 187 million in 2010 due to the Korean wave phenomenon; while imports of foreign broadcasting declined from USD 63.9 million in 1996 to USD 10.4 million in 2010 despite the opening of media market. Yang, further, presented that the export of Korean broadcasting programmes were largely contributed by the drama (93.4 percent in 2005; 87.6 in 2010) and little by the documentary, animation, music, entertainment etc. These programmes were mostly exported to the Asian countries (specifically to Japan, China, Taiwan) with close to 90 percent of the total Korean broadcasting programmes. Sungeun (2008) found that the market price of Korean programmes is one of the determining factors for programme export. For example, many Asian countries, having a wide economic gap among them, consider that the price of the Korean programmes is cheaper than to those of Europe, Japan or Hollywood movies.

A sum of USD 0.2 million was earned from the export of films in 1995 which has substantially increased to USD 58 million in 2004. About 73 percent of the total films were exported in Northeast and Southeast Asia. The total export of Korean television programmes rises from USD 10 million in 1998 to over USD 123 million in 2005. The reception countries of the Korean wave has different flavour in choosing the cultural products whether K-pop, drama or films. The difference in the flavour is because each country has a different ethos and based on this, their audiences decode and respond to cultural products in different ways (Kim 2007). The Korean wave has established a good image and income in the international market through globalisation because of the increasingly flourishing Korean films and soap operas.

Moreover, according to Shim (2006), Korean pop stars have contributed to improv-

ing Korea's foreign relations. The wave is not just spreading culture out of Korea, but also drawing people towards Korea in the form of tourist from various countries mostly from the neighbouring Asian countries (Kim 2007). Even Koreans became more exposed to the outside world after Korean government lifted the foreign travel restrictions in 1988 (Shim 2006). Ryoo (2007) writes that the booming South Korean presence on television and in the movies has led Asian consumers to purchase South Korean goods and to travel to South Korea. South Korea was traditionally not a popular tourist destination. Korean wave, after having exposed to contemporary Korean lives through dramas and movies, has deconstructed the negative image such as Korean War, poverty, political instability, demilitarized zone and national division. Interestingly, 130,000 tourists from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand visited the filmed location of the dramas like Autumn in My Heart and Winter Sonata (Shim 2006).

Music has also contributed to a substantial amount in the Korean's economy. Shim (2006) wrote that Korean music was dominated by the Korean ballads and ppongjjak until 1980s. Ppongjjak is the Japanese enka-influenced musical style which is assimilated into Korea. The K-pop band Seo Taiji and Boys released a song "I Know" in 1992 that became a hit in Korea. This band has literally revolutionised the Korean music. It was chosen as one of the 50 people who had changed Korean society since 1945. Later the boys bands such as H.O.T., Sechs Kies, Uptown and Shinhwa; and the girls bands such as S.E.S. and BoA were emerged and exploded in popularity. H.O.T.'s albums were sold with more than 10 million CD and record in the Korean market during 1996-2001. Choi et al (2012) reported that South Korean is increasingly exporting the agricultural and fishery products due to the increasing demand of the Korean products. The Korean wave has raised the popularity and demand of Korean food and agricultural products in Japan, China, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), United States and European Union. The recent Korean pop craze that is spreading throughout the Europe is driving the interest in Korean cuisine. In 2012, Korea was targeting to export agricultural products worth USD 2 billion, against USD 1.4 billion in 2011, to China. It was also reported that Korea's export to ASEAN was likely to reach USD 1.5 billion in 2012. Ravina (2009) found that the Korean Wave is also a marketing and business phenomenon, which involves concerted efforts by promoters, publicists, and corporate agents to sell the Korean culture as a commodity. Concurrently, the Korean government has politicised the phenomenon towards export oriented industry. The Korean government promote the Korean wave directly by supporting the Korean media companies. It also offered a subsidy and low-interest loans to the cultural industries in order to support and promote Korean wave successfully. The government allocated 1.15 percent of the total government budget in 2002, against 0.60 percent in 1998, for promoting the Korean cultural industry (Shim, 2006).

### **People and Culture of Manipur**

The state of Manipur, situated in the North Eastern part of India, comprised of diverse peoples with distinct culture, following different religions and speaking multiple languages forming unique ethnic groups. Some ethnic group like Nagas or Kukis are again sub divided 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 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 facet ethnic groups the state of Manipur is difficult to generalise or establish the concept of “one culture” in Manipur. The people of Manipur originated from Tibetan-Burmese groups of Mongoloids.

Manipur is a multi cultured society formed by various ethnic groups. Some major ethnic groups of Manipur are Meiteis and the Meitei-Pangal (Muslim) who predominantly inhabited in the valley districts of Manipur, and the tribal groups like Nagas and Kukis who mostly dwelled in the hill districts of the state. Hodson (1901) remarked that Kukis are migratory from the force of circumstances and possess a strong fissiparous instinct; while the Nagas live in permanent villages. However Hangsing pointed out that the British understanding of the then Kuki Society was limited to colonial interest and the purpose of such colonial writings were to rule and gain. He argues that as the expansion of the Kuki territory took place through creation of new village beyond the bound of the old one was misread as mindless migration (Hangsing 2013: 11, 23). The historical settings during the British colonial rule and their peopling, and the demand for exclusive ethnic homeland by both the Kukis and Nagas with overlapping territory was one of the main causes of the continuing conflict in the post-independence period (Haokip 2013: 258). The Government of India recognises these tribal groups as Scheduled Tribes in the Indian Constitution, while anthropologists classify them as of Mongoloid stock speaking one of the Tibetan-Burman languages (Shimray 2001).

In Manipur, people are non-homogenous. Different communities have distinct and unique characteristics relating to their social, cultural, political and economic set up. Similarly, Scheduled Tribes people are also a non-homogeneous group. They are one of the most distinctive features scattered over the state particularly across the hill areas. They represent a unique feature of the state covering 33 communities that originated from Tibetan-Burmese groups of Mongoloids. They are categorised on the basis of their distinct language, culture, traditional attire, food habits, belief and superstition. Presently there are 33 recognised Scheduled Tribes in Manipur. The major tribal ethnic groups in Manipur are the Nagas and Kukis. Scheduled Castes of Manipur are classified, by the census of India 2001, into 8 sub castes. There are Meities, forming the majority of the population of Manipur, Meitei Pangal and others. They formed among the first who received modern education as a result they are relatively more advance in terms of economic status. However, situation is approaching towards equality with the increase of educational development across the various social groups of people in Manipur.

The people of Manipur both living in the hills and plains have distinct socio-cultural practices and speak their own respective languages. However, Manipuri is used as the common language of the state. It is noticeable that in several cases dissimilarity of language and dialect was not found to involve equal dissimilarity in customs and manners. For example, Mao Naga and Maram Naga, though very similar in dress and customs, spoke dialects which differed considerably; and Angami Naga did not differ materially from other members of the Naga family in manners and customs, but the linguistic divergence

was so great, Damant (1880:243) noted, that “whether they should not be classed as a distinct family of themselves”. The wonderful multiplicity of their languages is a salient characteristic of the Nagas. All the Naga tribes speak different languages which are so different that a member of one tribe speaking his own language is quite unintelligible to a member of the other tribe. He described that all Naga tribes, more than thirty different tribes, speaks different languages and mutually intelligible one to another. Dissimilar and distinct languages are also spoken among the sub tribes like among the Tangkhul Naga. In addition many dialects are spoken by the sub tribes again e.g. Tangkhuls. However, different tribes speak essentially distinct languages, and often no connection or similarity is found between them. Damant (1880:229-230) noted that the “greatest confusion exists; there is such a multiplicity of tribes, each speaking a different dialect, and they are so small in numbers, sometimes consisting of only one village, that without visiting each village personally, it is almost impossible to define the limits of each tribe with any approach to accuracy, or even to say precisely how many tribes there are.” Similar is the case for the Kuki tribes but not so diverse to the extent of the Nagas. Meiteis, like the hill tribal people, belong to the Tibeto-Burman family (Shimray 2000). However, Meitei and the Meitei Pangal speak one common Manipuri language.

There is a marked distinction in dress and manners between the Kuki and Naga (Damant 1880) and also Meitei the dominant people of Manipur. Each of them has their unique cultural and traditional dresses and practices. Their ethnic identity can be distinguished by their traditional dresses, make up (decoration), food habit, language, physical appearance, behaviour, and any other conduct of life. The colour, texture, design, size and the material used in their respective ethnic traditional dresses varies in nature and can easily be distinguished from others. Sometime people use other ethnic group's traditional dresses. Traditional dress, shawl and other wear in particular, are hand woven handicraft products especially among the Scheduled Tribes. Traditional dresses are mostly uncommon and different for both man and woman. For example, among the Tangkhul Nagas, *phangyai*, *kahang*, *seichang*, *thangkang*, *kongrah* or *zingtai kashan* are worn exclusively by women; *malao*, *laokha* or *kahang malao* are exclusively worn by men; *haora* are mostly used by men; *chonkhom* mostly by women; however, *raivat* and *phingui kachon* are common for both men and women (Lisam 2011).

Although the state is a multi religious and non-homogenous society, cross marriage between the groups is common. People of the state follow animism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. Scheduled Tribes people, mainly living in the hills, largely follow Christianity while Meitei follow Hinduism and Meitei Pangal practice Islam. Concerning the cuisine, rice forms the staple food in Manipur. The cuisines are rich in non-vegetarian delicacies across the communities whether the Meitei, Nagas or Muslim. Specialties of Manipur cuisine include *iromba*, i.e. chutney, which is a pasty mixture of fermented fish, chilli (mainly king/raja chilli locally known as *umarok* in Manipuri), vegetables, bamboo shoots, etc; *kangsoi* a soupy dish of combination of vegetables, fish (dry or fermented), mushroom, etc. The method of preparation and the use of ingredients of *iromba* and *kangsoi* are different across the communities. It means that the flavours of these dishes are uniquely and differently prepared across different ethnic groups.

People of Manipur are passionate about music. Folksongs, classical songs and a

modern blend of music are prevalent and common across the communities. Song and dance are related to the folklores, seasons or events. For example, among the Tangkhul Nagas, *kathi mahon* is a dance for the dead, *laa khanganui* is a virgin dance during *luira phanit* (seed sowing or new year festival), *rai pheichak* is a war dance (Lisam 2011). Popular dances among the Meitei include *khamba thoibi*, *nupa pala*, *pung cholom* and *thabal chongba* or moonlight dance. Moonlight dance is a folk dance where the boys and girls dance and sing together in a circle in the moonlight. Interestingly, Manipur people do not restrict only with their cultural practices. Cross invitation and participation during the festival time is common to every community. The practice helps in understanding the multi cultured society for blissful co-existence. Nevertheless, they tend to adopt or practice new or modern culture and also retain their original culture in dressing, food habits, socialising or language. In recent times, the Korean wave has penetrated in Manipur with the influence of media and globalisation.

### **Korean Media Consumption and their Culture in Manipur**

Bollywood hindi movies have been replaced by the Hallyuwood the South Korean movies in Manipur. Hallyuwood is a combined word of Hallyu in Korean and the wood in English (Yecies 2008). Many hit Korean movies in Korea are also popular in Manipur. Top Korean movies which are also equally popular in Manipur includes Shiri (1999), My Sassy Girl (2001), My Tutor Friend (2003), The Classic (2003), A Tale Of Two Sisters (2003), Oldboy (2003), The Brotherhood of War (2004), Love So Devine (2004), Windstruck (2004), A Moment to Remember (2004), The King and the Clown (2005), You Are My Sunshine (2005), 200 Pounds Beauty (2006), My Boss My Teacher (2006), Voice of a Murderer (2007), The Chaser (2008), The Divine Weapon (2008), The Good, the Bad, the Weird (2008), A Frozen Flower (2008), Running Turtle (2009), My Girlfriend Is an Agent (2009), Tidal Wave (2009), Secret Reunion (2010), Chilling Romance (2011), War of the Arrows (2011), Architecture 101 (2012), The Grand Heist (2012), Miracle in Cell No.7 (2013). 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 in the DVDs and broadcasted through the Arirang and KBS TV channel in Manipur. Starting from early 2000's a 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 people in particular who eventually began to adopt the style of dressing and make up of actors of these movies and dramas, which could be considered as the starting point of Koreanisation, in Manipur.

Youngsters are the main Korean media consumers mostly movies and dramas in Manipur as they are very fond of it. This phenomenon makes the youngsters tendency in adopting Korean culture. DVD containing such movies or drama, mostly pirated, is available plenty in every video shop and in roadside kiosks at inexpensive price at less than one USD each. The posters and pictures of popular Korean actresses and actors such as Wang Ji-hyun, Lee Yo Won, Cha Tae-hyun, Park Min Young, Yoon Eun Hye, Jung Da Bin, Shin Min Ah, Moon Geun Young, Jeon Ji Hyun, Lee Hyori, Jung So Min, Song Seung Hun, Park Shin Hye, Lee Min Ho, Jang Geun Suk, Jeon Ji Hyun, Gweon Sang-

woo, etc are used as a wall posters, mobile or computer screensaver and even as facebook profile picture.

This pattern is gradually crisscross and influences to the younger generation irrespective of the race, class, ethnicity or religion. This led to the process of acculturation in which people of Manipur finds and adapts new culture relating to Korean. It may even result to a new blended culture comprising of their original Manipur culture and Korean culture. Korean media consumption does not limit to the young people and specific urban areas in Manipur. Their media is even popular among the younger and older people too. Older people are interested in their media not because of their fascinating style, unlike among the young people, but because of the content of the family and cultural values. However, the tendency to adopt Korean culture is immense among the youth.

Korean culture penetrated into Manipur through the media with the development of IT, liberalisation and globalisation. Young people of Manipur are fascinated to the popular Korean stars observing from the media 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 stories. The advancement of technology has changed the consumption pattern of media. Information is quickly transmitted and available in the television, internet, disk, newspapers, magazine, books etc. Communication became easier and quicker with an increased in use of mobile and computer.

Television (TV) channel plays a vital role in the process of Koreanisation in case of the young people of Manipur. The Korean TV channel called Arirang, which is an international channel founded in 1996 in Seoul in South Korea, is a very popular channel in Manipur in particular. Similar is the situation for 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 a diverse and interesting programme on cultural, language, living style, educational, documentaries, movies, entertainments, sports, news etc programmes about South Korea. It aimed to promote tourism, business and improve foreign relationships. Besides television programme there are various Korean movies, drama, serial, music and songs, fashion, cuisine, tradition, hospitality and so on in soft copy and CD/DVD form which are available in the internet as well as flooded in the video parlour. Every video parlour in Manipur sells or rent Korean movies and serial. Korean movies are sold, at cheap price, like a hot cake in Manipur. The extensive demand of such products has influences in their lifestyle ranging from the use of Korean cosmetics, dressing, food, etc to Korean language resulting to Koreanisation.

In Manipur, the distribution of all Hindi satellite channels and screening of Hindi movies are banned by the valley based insurgents known as the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) in September 2000 (Akoijam 2009) particularly in the valley districts. RPF ban it because Bollywood was undermining the culture of Manipur. RPF considered Hindi films as a cultural imperialist. At present, in Manipur, there is no screening of Hindi films in the theatres, no satellite Hindi TV channels and no Hindi songs in the radio; except for the government controlled Doordarshan (DD) channels.

This has resulted to an emergence of Asian movies especially the South Korean. Hindi movies are not screen in the movie theatres in the state of Manipur. Video parlour does not sell or rent it. English movies along with the Korean, Chinese, Thai and Manipuri movies are mostly available in the state. The ban of hindi movies has benefited in the growth of Manipuri films. The hindi films are replaced by Manipuri films with the banning of hindi movies. However, Manipuri film could not come up like the bollywood production in the market. Thus it pave a way to enter the Chinese, Korean and other movies to substitute the wide gap created after banning hindi films. This also has to reason with the opening of India's economy with the liberalisation and globalisation through the India's prestigious Look East Policy to develop and link North East India with the Asian countries. Besides Moreh-Namphalang border trade between India and Myanmar has facilitated the imports of electronic goods mainly from China, Korea and Thailand (Myint 2003). The CD/DVD, mostly pirated, containing movies, drama, serial or music, which is originated from South Korean, is part of the electronic goods imported from Korea.

### **Conclusions**

The Korean culture which is adopted by the young people of Manipur is not entirely the original Korean culture. It is a hybrid of the original Korean culture and the modern, specifically western, cultures. The commonly known as Korean culture refers to the culture of South Korea. The inherent culture of Manipur, which is diverse in nature, is completely different with the Korean culture. However, the modern or western culture adopted by the people of Manipur is common with the Korean practice. Media and other related electronic forms are regarded as the main drivers of Koreanisation. Recently, Korean culture became gradually popular in the foreign countries with an increasing demand for Korean dramas, movies and songs by the foreigners. Concurrently, Korean government give a greater effort on Korean media production and broadcasting through censorship, regulation and promotion. Korean culture has a transnational characteristic. It is the hybridisation of many cultures. Koreans undergo cosmetic or plastic surgery to enhance their look like the Americans with sharper noses and bigger eyes. Korean actors appear prettier or more handsome because they have twisted their original Korean look through plastic surgery. The popular Korean culture, e.g. K-pop music, is a threat to their original Korean culture, e.g. Korean classical music. The success in promoting the Korean culture has led to a flourishing business by raising the export of Korean cultural products such as film industry, TV programmes, music, plastic surgery, etc that boost the Korean economy; besides improving foreign relations. The tendency to adopt Korean culture emerges with an increase in consumption of Korean media, in a globalised world, among the people of Manipur. Koreanisation is not a new phenomenon in the global as well as Manipur context.

### **Notes**

1 Gangnam style, a K-pop music by the South Korean musician Psy, topped the music charts of over 30 countries including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain and the UK in the end of 2012 (see the details at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangnam\\_Style](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangnam_Style)).

2 “The president of the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corporation (MPPC), Lee Jinkeun, defended censorship in an interview conducted in 1982, stressing that film should be a medium that portrayed the bright visions rather than the dark side of Korean society. He contended, [a]mong the guidelines the government sets are these: 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 the public interest and, therefore, they should make everyone happy....” (Park 2007:17).

## References

- Akoijam, Sunita (2009): “Chopsticks in Manipur”, *Himal Southasian*, Viewed on 17.05.2013 (<http://himalmag.com/component/content/article/634-chopsticks-in-manipur.html>).
- Choi, J W, Y K Ban and G Smith (2012): “Gov’t Looks to Boost Export of Korean Agricultural Products”, Seoul, GAIN Report No.KS1228.
- Damant, G H (1880): “Notes on the Locality and Population of the Tribes Dwelling between the Brahmaputra and Ningthi Rivers”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 12(2): 228-258.
- Dator, J, and Y Seo (2004): “Korea as the Wave of a Future: The Emerging Dream Society of Icons and Aesthetic Experience”, *Journal of Futures Studies*, 9(1): 31- 44.
- Hangsing, P. (2013): “Understanding the Politics of the Stateless Kukis: Was it by Choice?”, In Thongkhola Haokip, *The Kukis of Northeast India: Politics and Culture*. New Delhi: Bookwell: 11-25.
- Haokip, Thongkhola (2013): “Essays on the Kuki–Naga Conflict: A Review”, *Strategic Analysis*, 37(2): 251-259
- Hodson, T C (1901): “The Native Tribes of Manipur”, *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 31: 300-309.
- Hwang, Okon (2009): “No ‘Korean Wave’ Here: Western Classical Music and the Changing Value System in South Korea”, *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, 31: 56–68.
- Jang, Gunjoo, and Paik, Won K (2012): “Korean Wave as Tool for Korea’s New Cultural Diplomacy”, *Advances in Applied Sociology (Scientific Research)*, 2(3): 196-202.
- Ju, Hyejung (2007): “The Nature of Nationalism in the “Korean Wave”: A Framing Analysis of News Coverage about Korean Pop Culture”, *Conference Papers, National Communication Association*, Chicago, Viewed on 10.05.2013 ([http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/8/7/9/2/pages187925/p187925-6.php](http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/8/7/9/2/pages187925/p187925-6.php)).
- Jung, Eun-Young (2009): “Transnational Korea: A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States”, *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, 31: 69–80.
- Kim, Chul-joong (2009): “Beauty Industry Could Create the Next Korean Wave”, *Chosun Ilbo*, Viewed on 4.06.2013 ([http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2009/10/15/2009101500909.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/10/15/2009101500909.html)).
- Kim, Ju Young (2007): “Rethinking media flow under globalisation: rising Korean wave and Korean TV and film policy since 1980s”, PhD Thesis, University of

- Warwick, Viewed on 14.06.2013 ([http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/1153/1/WRAP\\_THESIS\\_Kim\\_2007.pdf](http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/1153/1/WRAP_THESIS_Kim_2007.pdf)).
- Lah, Kyung (2011) “Plastic surgery boom as Asians seek ‘western’ look”, *CNN*, May 24, viewed on 15.05.13 (<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/05/19/korea.beauty/index.html>).
- Lee, Sue Jin (2011): “The Korean Wave: The Seoul of Asia”, *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 2(1): 85-93.
- Lisam, K Singh (2011): *Encyclopaedia of Manipur Vol. 2* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publication).
- Myint, Soe (2003): *Burma File: A Question of Democracy* (Delhi: India Research Press).
- Nolan, Steve (2013): “Has plastic surgery made these beauty queens all look the same? Koreans complain about pageant ‘clones’” *Daily Mail*, April 25, Viewed on 22.05.2013 (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2314647/Has-plastic-surgery-20-Korean-beauty-pageant-contestants-look-Pictures-contest-hopefuls-goes-viral.html>).
- Park, Jung-Sun (2006): “The Korean wave: Transnational cultural flows in East Asia” in Armstrong, C K, Rozman, G, Kim, S. Samuel, & Kotkin, S (ed.), *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (New York: M.E., Sharpe), 244-256.
- Park, Seung Hyun (2007): “Korean Cinema after Liberation: Production, Industry, and Regulatory Trends” in Frances Gateward (ed.), *Seoul Searching Culture and Identity in Contemporary Korean Cinema* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 15-36.
- Ravina, Mark (2009): “Introduction: Conceptualizing the Korean Wave”, *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, 31: 3-9.
- Ryoo, Woongjae (2007): “Globalization, or the Logic of Cultural Hybridization: The Case of the Korean Wave”, *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, TBA, San Francisco, CA*, May 23, Viewed on 10.06.2013 ([http://citation.allacademic.com//meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/6/8/7/9/pages168799/p168799-15.php](http://citation.allacademic.com//meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/6/8/7/9/pages168799/p168799-15.php)).
- Shim, Doobo (2006): “Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia”, *Media, Culture & Society*, 28(1): 25-44.
- Shim, Doobo (2011): “Waxing the Korean Wave, Asia Research Institute”, Working Paper Series No.158, Singapore, Viewed on 13.02.2013 ([http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps11\\_158.pdf](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps11_158.pdf)).
- Shim, Doobo (2011a): “Korean Wave in Southeast Asia”, *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, 11: 1-7.
- Shimray, U A (2000): “Linguistic Matrix in Manipur”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35(34): 3007-3008.
- Shimray, U A (2001): “Ethnicity and Socio-Political Assertion: The Manipur Experience”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(39): 3674-3677.
- Sungeun, Shim (2008): “Behind the Korean Broadcasting Boom”, *NHK Broadcasting Studies* 6: 205-232, Viewed on 29.05.2013 ([http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/english/reports/pdf/08\\_no6\\_10.pdf](http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/english/reports/pdf/08_no6_10.pdf)).

- Yang, Jonghoe. 2012. "The Korean Wave (Hallyu) in East Asia: A Comparison of Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese Audiences Who Watch Korean TV Dramas." *Development and Society* 41.1: 103-147.
- Yecies, Brian M. 2008. "Planet hallyuwood's political vulnerabilities: censuring the expression of satire in the President's last bang (2005)." *International Review of Korean Studies* 5.1: 37-64.

**Dr. Marchang Reimeingam** holds Ph.D. in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi in 2009. He has worked as Research Associate in IHD, Delhi (2003-04) and as Assistant Professor in Sikkim University (Central), Sikkim (2009-12) prior to his joining as Assistant Professor in ISEC, Bangalore in 2012. He has worked as a team member on various projects sponsored by Planning Commission, GoI, such as Manipur State Development Report, Mid Term Appraisal 11<sup>th</sup> Five Years Plan (Mizoram) etc. More than 30 articles in books, journals and newspapers have been published by him.

**Address:** Room No.71, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Dr. VKRV Rao Road, Nagarabhavi PO, Bangalore – 560 072, Karnataka, India. [Email: reimeingam@isec.ac.in]