

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

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Consumption of Korean media among the young people in Manipur acted as a catalyst of acculturation to Korean culture, a blend of Western and Korean cultures, is a recent development. Adoption of Korean culture is widely prevalent irrespective of their household economic background, educational level, religion, occupation and ethnic group. These people really craze about the Korean culture ranging from food, hair style, make up, movies, clothing to language. However, many of them do not know even the country of origin, i.e. South Korea.

**Keywords:** Korean, Media, Culture, Acculturation, Manipur.

### **Introduction**

The paper studies the nature of acculturation as people contact with the new dynamic culture that appears to be of greater attractive than the inherent 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 to Korean cultural orientation among the young people of Manipur<sup>2</sup> is examined. These people are increasingly adopting the South Korean culture, Korean culture hereafter, a blend of original Korean and modern cultures, which is regarded as the problem of the study. Consumption of Korean media is considered as the catalyst of acculturation to Korean culture.

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 globalisation, does not have limited boundaries. It is becoming less a matter of locations than of hybrid and creolised cultural meanings and practices that span global space. It is hybridised products of interactions across space and is increasingly thought of as carving routes rather than possessing roots. They are constellations of temporary coherence or knots in the field of social space that are the product of relations and interconnections from the local to the global.

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Culture changes as the people interact with others. Pak (2006) viewed that people undergoing a culture change process have been conceived as going through acculturation. Acculturation is a psychological changes 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 (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).

Lahey (2003) noted that various mode 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 better language 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 channels for acculturation. Masgoret and Ward (2006) established that various forms of mass communication including television (TV), radio, newspapers and magazines and internet can help in the process of learning others culture and their cultural values and norms. Family, peer groups, schools, work organisations, 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 that arises largely due to the media exposure in the 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 as Koreanised persons (KP).<sup>3</sup> KP are the youth who are in the stage of energetic, economically productive, challenging, high aspirations, care free, and most importantly in the prime time of a person’s lifetime. 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 more superior or attractive or appealing than their own culture? Developmental gap between people of Manipur and Korean 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 that is followed by 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 field results that validated the prevalence of acculturation to Korean culture, due to the media exposure and consumption, among the young people in Manipur. Finally a concluding remark is briefly made.

**Problem Statement**

Most of the studies on acculturation deal with migrants. Without migrating to Korea, people of Manipur came into contact through media with South Korean culture and soon the young people of the state began to follow the 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 the Korean, they began to imitate and adopt and can, 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 conveniently not only caused by the modern media but also by their peer groups through social network; however, older people are finding much harder to change their habits, language or their values. With an improvement in communication technology the process of acculturation does not have specific and definite culture. The present study tries to understand the process of acculturation towards Korean culture. Geographically, South Korea and Manipur in India have a great distance and do not share a common boundary. Despite this, in recent years, the young people of Manipur have emerged and followed a trend of Koreans imitating their behaviour in consumption, hairstyle, makeup, dressing, fancy mobile handset, Korean movies and alike. They are increasingly fond of Korean movies and TV channel that has altered not only their living style but also in communication like mobile texting in Korean language. Koreanised persons are easily distinguishable from others. The Korean culture and Manipur culture are quite different. The Korean culture which is depicted in the media is to a large extent the mixture of modern western and Korean cultures. 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.

**Objectives and Research Questions**

The study shows the extent of Korean cultural influences through media in the lives of people of Manipur. The objective is to study the nature of Korean media consumption, by the young people of Manipur, which act as a catalyst and stimulant of acculturation to South Korean culture. The main research question is how and why the young people of Manipur are adopting the Korean culture. How do media play a vital role in acculturation to Korean culture? A hypothesis is that consumers opting for Korean media have a higher tendency to adopt Korean culture.

**Methodological Framework**

The present study is about acculturation of Korean culture by the young people of Manipur which is influenced by the media and peer groups. In order to establish the reasons for adopting Korean culture – such as dressing style, which is in fact a modern blended, hair style or even facial appearance – data from secondary to formulate the basis of the study and primary field survey to substantiate and validate the practice of Korean culture are used. Field survey was conducted covering 150 persons who have adopted the 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 schedules

method was adopted in it. The survey adopted a snowball sampling method. Statistically, the data in the form of ratios are analysed and interpreted starting from their basic social profile to their extent of acculturation to Korean culture.

The sampling design that is adopted in the study is a snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling technique procedure, according to Goodman (1961), is that the informants nominate or refers different informants in the population through their social network. Following Goodman's snowball sampling procedure, in the study, initially some people who admired and practice 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 other who might also be willing to participate. They refer or nominate other prospective informants through their social networks leading to another informant thereby forming a chain of informants. Some hesitate to participate and were eventually ignored. The referrals were relied upon and discover additional informants who were relatively invisible or hidden and unevenly distributed across the population in Manipur. Some of the referrals were dropped considering the far distance and the travel budget.

Budget limitations and snowball sampling research technique did not allow for tracking of people who are living in peripheral areas; otherwise would form a good sample to represent the population. The design has concealed some of the prospective people who might otherwise be clung to the Korean culture. The non-homogeneity, i.e. different ethnicity, of the population in Manipur would result differently in the taste, value and practise of culture which would ultimately raises the sampling error. Also, some of the referred persons did not want to respond due to some consideration that creates a sampling error. The study is brief in the scope and coverage that is limited to a form of pilot studies covering small sample size, and the nature of research design i.e. snowball sampling cannot represent the large population. As a consequence the finding from the field study cannot be generalised for the population of Manipur.

### **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 since the recent decade. The Korean wave is known as Hallyu or Hanryu in Korean (Shim 2006; Park 2006). It is an intensive and extensive wave (Yecies 2008) and rising popularity (Shim 2006 and Lee 2011) of Korean popular culture across the globe. It 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). Ravina (2009) elaborated that it refers to a surge in the international visibility of Korean culture consisting of two forms of media i.e. TV 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 TV 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>4</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 TV soap operas has spread across the world. 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. 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 cover 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>5</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 difference 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.

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 thought to have originated through the government’s promotion of Korean cultural products for foreigners which is not directly related to Korean diaspora. The Korean popular culture is a new forms and patterns of cultural production and consumption (Jung 2009). It is spreading throughout the non-Korean fans and critics in Asia and other countries (Yecies 2008). 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. 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.

Moreover, 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. 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. 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.

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

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 that appeared in 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 TV, internet, disk, newspapers, magazine, books, etc. Communication became easier and quicker with an increased in use of mobile and computer.

Television channel plays a vital role in the process of acculturation 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. Similar is the situation for KBS World, a South Korean TV channel operated by the Korean Broadcasting System. It was launched by the Korean International Foundation in 1997 as the only international English language broadcasting company in Asia (Kim 2007). 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, and other programmes about South Korea. It aimed to promote tourism, business and improve foreign relationships. Besides TV 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 in Manipur. Every video parlour in the state sells or rent disc containing Korean movies and serial. Korean movies disc 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 acculturation to Korean.

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. Video parlour does not sell or rent it. It has resulted to an emergence of Asian movies especially the South Korean. 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. However, Manipuri film could not come up like the bollywood production in the market. Thus it paved 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 Look East Policy to develop and link North East India with the Asian countries.<sup>6</sup> Besides Moreh-Namphalong 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.

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 *My Sassy Girl* (2001), *The Classic* (2003), *The Brotherhood of War* (2004) and *A Moment to Remember* (2004) in the 2000s and *Chilling Romance* (2011), *The Grand Heist* (2012) and *Miracle in Cell No.7* (2013) in the 2010s. Popular Korean dramas includes *Autumn Fairy Tale* (2000), *Winter Sonata* (2002), *Full House* (2004), *Full House Take 2* (2012) etc. These are widely available in the DVDs and broadcasted through the Arirang and KBS TV channels in Manipur. Starting from early 2000s a South Korean TV 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 acculturation to Korean, in Manipur.

Youngsters are perhaps 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 50 rupees each. The posters and pictures of popular Korean actresses and actors 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.

### **Field Data Results**

The field survey covered a total 150 Koreanised persons in Manipur; out of that 33% were males and the rest 67% were females.<sup>7</sup> Sample population consisted of persons in the age group between 14 years as minimum and 30 years as maximum with a mean age of 20 years. The study shows that young people are really fascinating towards the Korean culture. For them imitating or adopting Korean culture is an exotic life. Life full of lively activities enveloping the Korean cultures from clothing, hairstyle, facial look, food, movies and language. The study shows as the teenagers approach their youthful life they tend to practice or adopt Korean style. However, it seems they gradually relinquished as they grow older. Because as age increases the number of people adopting Korean culture rises which 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 that is influenced by mass media and peer groups. They adopted certain Korean culture component that is suited and fascinated to them. It signifies that Korean culture is more superior, attractive and appealing than their inherent culture. For them adopting Korean culture including clothing, hairstyle, facial look, food, movies and language is thrilling. Facial contouring is uncommon in the state. Adoption of Korean culture among the young people of Manipur does not really matter with whom they live with. It suggests that in Manipur the society is liberal and ready to accept whichever is deemed to be best fit. They mostly adopt Korean culture with their free conscience; some cases, superimposing against their parents will. Religion is not a major determining factor for adopting Korean culture. They formed a group of youthful active life people who either do not fascinate into marriage life or are mostly single person. All males and females are craze about the Korean culture; however, differs in the degree of their interest on it across persons. Young people are really craze about Korean culture irrespective of their marital status as shown in Table 1. However, it varies from person to person in the level of keen interest on it. All the married respondents exclusively like Korean culture. Also among the single persons, 40% of them exclusively like Korean culture and the rest wants a mixture of Korean and others like Western, Japanese, Chinese and even Indian cultures. There appears not a significant difference between the genders in the preferring the Korean cultures. For example, about 45% of the males, against 41% of the females, exclusively want a Korean culture suggesting young males are equally craze about Korean culture as females do.

Students, employed and unemployed adopt the culture as their age are not only young but also stylish driven by their “demonstration effect” behaviour. They adopted it irrespective of their family household income; however, affluent people are more likely to adopt it. The poor, middle class and the affluent have almost equal willingness and

**Table 1: Share (%) of Koreanised Persons (KP) by marital status and cultural preference in Manipur**

| Cultural preference                    | Marital status |           |         |         | Total | Male  | Female |
|--|----------------|-----------|---------|---------|-------|-------|--------|
|  | Never married  | Unmarried | Single* | Married |       |       |        |
| Korean                                 | 27.27          | 45.54     | 40.00   | 100.00  | 42.00 | 44.90 | 40.59  |
| Western/Korean                         | 9.09           | 32.67     | 25.52   | 0.00    | 24.67 | 26.53 | 23.76  |
| Indian/Korean                          | 0.00           | 5.94      | 4.14    | 0.00    | 4.00  | 8.16  | 1.98   |
| Korean/Chinese                         | 0.00           | 2.97      | 2.07    | 0.00    | 2.00  | 0.00  | 2.97   |
| Korean/Japanese                        | 4.55           | 0.00      | 1.38    | 0.00    | 1.33  | 0.00  | 1.98   |
| Western/Korean/Japanese                | 9.09           | 1.98      | 4.14    | 0.00    | 4.00  | 4.08  | 3.96   |
| Korean/Chinese/Japanese                | 13.64          | 0.99      | 4.83    | 0.00    | 4.67  | 10.20 | 1.98   |
| Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese          | 0.00           | 0.99      | 0.69    | 0.00    | 0.67  | 2.04  | 0.00   |
| Western/Indian/Korean/Japanese         | 4.55           | 0.00      | 1.38    | 0.00    | 1.33  | 0.00  | 1.98   |
| Western/Indian/Korean/Chinese/Japanese | 31.82          | 8.91      | 15.86   | 0.00    | 15.33 | 4.08  | 20.79  |
| All (No.)                              | 44             | 101       | 145     | 5       | 150   | 49    | 101    |

Note: \*Single – Never married plus unmarried.

Source: Field Survey, Manipur, April 2013.

desire to adopt the supposedly attractive Korean culture. Most of them do not belong to the modest income household suggesting that affluent people are more likely to adopt Korean culture. Largely persons with greater household income have a higher tendency to adopt Korean culture, perhaps, because they are more capable of affording the “ingredients” such as cloth, cosmetics, facelift surgery, food, ornaments etc relating to Korean culture. It is interesting to observe that about 80% of those who are exclusively craze or prefer Korean culture have household income of above Rs.10,000/- per month (Table 2). It is also striking that about 86% of those who prefer combined Western and Korean culture falls under this monthly income bracket.

They are mostly educated people, matriculation and above educational qualification, and are more prone to adopt it as they can judge and counter influence 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, and Mizo. It

**Table 2: 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         |

suggests that there is a process of Koreanisation across all ethnic people 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. About 66%, 13% and 6% of them have extreme, moderate and little pride respectively to it. And the rest about 15% has no pride but do not feel negative towards their ethnic group. Couple of following reasons mesmerised 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 others ethnic group perhaps through cross ethnic group marriage. Meanwhile, importantly, many of them do not know the country of origin of the Korean wave or culture, that is South Korea, however adopted or follows the behaviour and style of Korean. One-third of them have no idea of origin of Korean culture indicating their ignorance and reluctance to know its origin. It also suggests the influence in adopting the Korean culture by their peer groups. About one percent of them reckoned that the so called Korean culture is originated from North Korea. Interestingly, 65% of them are exactly aware of its origin. Females (72%) have wider knowledge and more certain about its origin as South Korea in comparison with the males (51%). It is partly because females, unlike males, are more curious to learn the minute details of specific things.

Although all of them do not know exactly the country of origin of Korean culture; however, they largely felt some sort of pride in adopting it. As large as 70% of them opined of pride by adopting it. The rest 30% felt no pride of adopting Korean culture but do not felt negative or bad things toward the Korean culture. It portrays that many of them are just adopting it for the sake of dressing, make up or other lifestyle which appears to be good and attractive; and it has nothing to do with Korean cultural values. They are relatively liberal that creates a space of freedom of adopting and practicing appreciable and 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 in the state. Living with family, in any type of residence, is not a major issue in adopting Korean culture. Only in few cases, staying with parents is impairing their liberty. In such situation, adoption of Korean culture is not a surprising fact. They opt for Korean culture, perhaps as a supplementary culture, by themselves with some influences of different form and the society of Manipur largely respect their decisions because 83% of them were not asked or compelled by anyone to discontinue practicing it. More strikingly, to about 90% of females, against 67% of males, no one asked to stop to discontinue it. It seems females have relatively greater freedom, compared to males, because fairly larger size of females, than males, resides in the hostels (41%) and with their friends (44%).

Mass media, including TV, CD/DVDs, internet, paper and other electronic forms, promoting and broadcasting movies, dramas and other culturally valuable shows has contributed as the main motivating factor for adopting the Korean culture among the young people of Manipur. The consumers opting for Korean media have a higher tendency to adopt Korean culture. The origin of practise of Korean culture has a root which is the source of motivation or inspiration to follow, like and gradually imitate or adopt

it. Surprisingly, about three percent claimed that, although they adopt Korean culture, nothing motivates them.<sup>8</sup> However, a Korean movie appears to be most influencing source of motivation for it. About 61% of them were motivated exclusively by the Korean movies (Table 3). Its influences are ever more significant for the females (73%). Exclusive motivation by their friends is not prominently visible as only three percent of Koreanised people are motivated by them. However, people motivated by a mixture of sources of motivation as exclusively friends, and friends with Korean TV/movies is about 19%; and appeared more significant for males. The mixture of sources of motivation indicates the blending of style or behaviour and adopted that is suited the best. Hence, media, including movies available in CD/DVD (mostly pirated) or in other electronic form and TV which also broadcast movies and serials or drama apart from other culturally valuable shows, has occupied as the main motivating factor for adopting the Korean culture among the young people of Manipur. Koreanisation is overtly and greatly influence by the media, as expected, therefore accepting the hypothesis, that consumers opting for Korean media have a higher tendency to adopt Korean culture; and less by their peer groups.

**Table 3: 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: Same as Table 1.

The practice of Korean culture by the people of Manipur is now older than a decade. It emerges due to the liberal cultural values consideration of Manipur. Majority of them started adopting it in the recent time. Most of them who recently started adopting it were in their late teens and early 20s. It highlights that the age of start of adopting the Korean culture is in their teens, when hormone changes significantly.

Koreanised people are really passionate and craze about the Korean culture and people. Some people, males in particular, have an intention to marry Korean people if good chances strikes or by searching the Koreans. Fascinatingly, people of Manipur who adopted the Korean culture prefer a multiple items that relate and portray the Korean culture such as their cloth, food, hairstyle, movies, etc (Table 4).<sup>9</sup> However, some of them have a specific preference such as only cloth (about 11%) or hairstyle (less than three percent) or TV shows (just above one percent) or movies (four percent). The rest about 81% prefer a multiple 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 items that are related to the Korean culture; and so on. Most importantly, about 43% of them want all kind of items related to the Korean. The share was lower for females (about 41%), who seem to be choosier, than males (about 47%).

**Table 4: 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: Same as Table 1.

Table 5 shows the share of KP cross-classified by their opinion on expenditure on adopting Korean culture in relation to modern culture and their monthly household income in Manipur. The people of Manipur who adopted the Korean culture do not have uniform idea about the expenses made over the items, such as cosmetics, apparels, etc., that are required to appear like Korean people in comparison to the modern or western culture. Moreover, among those who opined that it is relatively very expensive to adopt Korean culture is not necessarily related only in the lower income households. In other words, as income gradually rises up to Rs.20,000/- the share of people who opined it to be very expensive becomes larger. Importantly, monthly household income is not a very strong determinant for relative expenditure consideration.

**Table 5: Share (%) of KP by expenses opinion on Korean culture adoption in relation to modern culture and by 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   |

Source: Same as Table 1.

Koreanised people also know some Korean language. They used it in communication for verbal conversation or mobile texting or internet mailing using roman script to mainly maintain their secret from others. Some people do not learn Korean language, despite they are exposed to Korean movies or TV programmes. Females, a quicker learner of language, appear to be more knowledgeable about Korean language as compared to males. About 79% of females, against 67% of males, know and speak some Korean language. Undoubtedly, they have learnt to speak some Korean words from Korean TVs and movies that are their main sources of motivation and learning and from friends in rare case. Most of those who have knowledge of Korean language are being motivated by Korean TVs and movies which suggest that they also learnt from it. It reaffirms that consumption of Korean mass media act as a catalyst to adopt Korean culture in Manipur.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Youth of Manipur, irrespective of their socio-economic background, are adopting the so called Korean culture that is a hybridised form of culture of Western and Korean cultures. It is motivated by the Korean media specially movies and dramas. Besides this the peer group creates the network in adopting it; however, they are not very influential to each another. They are fascinated it with different perspective and intention. They adopt certain component of Korean culture which suits and fascinated them irrespective of their physical features particularly their facial appearance. Despite of differences in the physical features particularly the skin between the Korean, largely which appeared in media, and people from Manipur, appeared in the field observation, the young people of Manipur are adopting the Korean style. Young people are the main group of population who are adopting the Korean culture which is sometimes appeared as very artificial. The Korean culture like hairstyle or clothing that 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 culture. 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 acculturation to Korean culture. The tendency to adopt Korean culture emerges with an increase in consumption of Korean media, in a globalised world, among the people of Manipur. Its increase is partially due to the banning of hindi TV channels and movies in the state by the insurgents. This has led to an emergence of Asian movies specifically the Korean movies and Korean TV channels. Acculturation to Korean culture is a decade old phenomenon in Manipur. The field study data result shows that some sections among the young people of Manipur are following the general trajectory of acculturation to the Korean culture. Youth are mostly affected in the process of acculturative to Korean culture as they have lots of enthusiasm, energy and time to imitate and follow any activities without understanding its real cultural values. Acculturation to Korean culture takes place as people of Manipur came into contact through an information and communication technology such as media, CD/DVDs, internet and mobile, and through the peer groups with the new dynamic Korean culture. The process of acculturation to Korean

culture suggests that Korean cultures are greater attractive than their inherent culture of Manipur. A social, economic, cultural, behavioural and psychological factor of the people of Manipur is associated with the adoption of Korean culture. The notion and prevalence of adoption of Korean culture among the people particularly the youths is being validated. Liberalisation and globalisation has largely contributed in terms of media access and exposure. Indeed, Manipur people are open society to cultural consideration. Hence, they tend to adopt new or modern culture and also retain their original culture in dressing, food habits, socialising or language.

## Notes

1. The author thanks the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore for financing the study. Usual disclaimers apply.
2. Manipur, one of the North Eastern states of India, comprised of diverse peoples with distinct culture, following different religions and speaking multiple languages forming ethnic group. 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 has diverse cultures. Some major ethnic groups such as Meiteis and Meitei-Pangal (Muslim) predominantly inhabited in the valley districts and the Nagas, Kukis, Mizos and Vaiphei mostly dwelled in the hill districts. The native people of Manipur are generally classified as the Mongoloid stock speaking one of the Tibetan-Burman languages (Shimray 2001).
3. Koreanised people are those who make Korean in character. For making it successful the markets, playing a vital role, in Manipur facilitates by selling many products originated from Korea and related to Korean culture such as dresses, cosmetics, movies/serials in CD/DVDs, etc imported mainly via Kolkata in West Bengal and Moreh in Manipur from East Asian countries.
4. 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)).
5. "The president of the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corporation, 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)
6. For details about India's Look East Policy and the Northeast see Haokip 2011, Haokip 2015a, Haokip 2015b.
7. The sample comprises of more females because they further refer to females; also even males refer females for a prospective respondent as snowball sampling technique is

adopted.

8. It would be incorrect to be spontaneously arising from their mind and practice Korean culture. If they claimed that they like and practice Korean culture then it should have the basis either as a motivator or role model. Perhaps what they practice resembled with the so called Korean culture making indifference between the Korean culture and the modernised culture adopted by these few people. Therefore, they were conveniently reporting that nothing motivates them.

9. There are many beauty parlours in Manipur who 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 staffs. During the field survey it was observed that customers of the parlours include both Koreanised and others. Youth mostly visit the parlour for stylist Korean makeup and hairdressing.

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