



The Korean Wave in India: Exploring Cultural Influence through OTT Platforms (Fashion, Beauty & Skincare, Food)

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the role in promoting Korean culture and influencing young youth through OTT platforms like Amazon prime video, Netflix, and YouTube which have significantly altered how people consume media and made it simpler for viewers to obtain content from around the globe. Not only in India but among other overseas entertainment channels, Korean content including K-dramas, K-pop movies, and reality show, has grown immensely popular among Indian youth, and has simultaneously influenced their cultural preferences, lifestyle choices, beauty- trends, and language interest. It also emphasizes the market and industry reports highlighting the growth of OTT platforms, revenue generation, and market flow. However, social media helps in cross-cultural communication and influence among younger audiences in India. Research on long – term social cultural effect of Korean influence on Indian society is still limited. The study concludes that the OTT platforms have become significant mediators of cultural globalization and growing Korean market expansion in India. It also encourages cross cultural exchange and blending between Indian and Korean cultures. Future research should focus on the long-term repercussions of these cultural shifts.

KEYWORDS: OTT Platforms, Indian Youth, Cultural Globalization, K-Drama, K-Pop Culture, Hallyu, Digital Media, Korean Culture

INTRODUCTION

The Korean wave, often known as Hallyu, has grown intensively and impacted audiences all around the world through various OTT platforms. The increased interest in K-dramas and K-pop has not only resulted in a rise in Korean culture but also the rise in economic growth towards the spread of Korean fashion, culture, food, and beauty trends. (According to Netflix 2023 reports over 60% of its audience watch Korean content) Globalization and a rapid rise in digital technologies have completely changed how individuals engage with various cultures and consume media. By giving viewers access to a broad variety of content worldwide, the rise of OTT platforms like Amazon Prime Video, Netflix, and YouTube has drastically altered media consumption habits. OTT platforms, in contrast to traditional media, allow users to access material at any time from any location, lowering barriers related to geography and culture. The improved exposure to a variety of cultural items and improved cross-cultural exchange has been facilitated by the increasing accessibility of global content through digital platforms. The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, is one of the most influential trends made by internet media. Hallyu, which has its global popularity of Korean products, Korean dramas, k-pop, films, reality shows, fashion, beauty and food culture. Over the time, Korean entertainment has spread outside of East Asia and grown significantly in popularity throughout the world, particularly in India. Indian youth have a sizable and devoted fan base for Korean dramas like Crash Landing On You, Squid games, business proposal as well as internationally renowned k-pop artists like BTS and BLACKPINK. By making Korean content easily accessible to viewers outside of national borders, OTT platforms have been influential in its spread. The accessibility and appeal of Korean entertainment among Indian viewers have increased due to the availability of subtitles, dubbing options, personalized suggestions, and streaming. As a result, Indian youth's lifestyles choices, fashion tastes, beauty standards, eating habits, and language interest are becoming more influenced by Korean culture. By allowing fans to communicate, exchange content, and take part in online groups focused on Korean popular culture, social media platforms further enhance this communication. Although several studies have examined the popularity of Hallyu and its effects on viewers, it is still necessary to comprehend how OTT platforms contribute to this cultural influence and mold the experiences of young Indians. Thus, the purpose of this review article is to investigate how OTT platforms have aided in dissemination of Korean culture in India and to investigate their impact on cultural preferences and lifestyle choices of young Indian.

With the rapid expansion of OTT platforms such as Amazon Prime Video, Netflix, and YouTube, audiences have easy and wide



access to K-dramas, k-pop, and other cultural content. This has influenced entertainment choices, lifestyles preferences, fashion trends, and cultural perceptions. Therefore, the study is significant as it influences young audience experiences and promotes cross cultural exchange. The study also explores on how OTT platforms support international cultures and promote cultural globalization in India.

The emergence of Hallyu and its impact on viewers have been the subject of numerous studies, but the role of OTT platforms in promoting this cultural diffusion has received less attention. The objective of this study is the increasing popularity of Korean content among India viewers, especially youth. More people are interacting with Korean culture as a result of OTT services increased accessibility to Korean culture. The purpose of this study was to determine how OTT platforms have contributed to the increasing impact of Korean culture in India and how Indian youth's personal preferences and lifestyle choices reflect this influence. Additionally, the evaluation seeks to highlight current research gaps and provides directions for further studies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the understanding of Cultivation Theory and Global Village Theory to examine how OTT platforms promote Korean culture and its influence on young youth.

Cultivation Theory was introduced by Gorge Gebner in 1976 as a part of the cultural Indicators Project which suggests that continuous exposure to media content has led to shaping audience's beliefs, attitude, understanding and perceptions.

In context with the study, exposure to K-dramas, K-pop, has led to an increase in the influence of Korean beauty trends, skincare, lifestyle and food preferences. Therefore, this is how cultivation theory aids in explaining how viewers' exposure to Korean content influences their culture.

Global Village Theory was introduced by Marshall McLuhan in (1964) in his book Understanding Media: Extension of Man which explains how new media technologies connect people from around the globe and spread the global flow of culture through which people from different countries exchange information, culture, lifestyles.

According to the current study, OTT platforms like Amazon Prime Video, YouTube, and Netflix have made it much easier to spread Korean content across the globe. These platforms have made it easier for the Indian audiences to watch K-dramas, K-pop, food culture, fashion, and beauty trends. Thus, the Global village theory contributes to understanding how new media and OTT platforms have contributed to the dissemination of Korean culture across the nation.

Rationale of the Study- According to the Ormax OTT Audience report (2025), India has approximately 601 million OTT users and 148 million active paid OTT subscriptions. This shows the diverse content viewership of OTT platforms, the increase in accessibility, consumption, and the adoption of diverse content & culture across the nation. According to Netflix (2023) reports 60% of its global audience watch Korean content. This reflects the rise in the popularity of Korean content in the entertainment industry with its diverse audience and its international reach across different borders. The PwC India Entertainment and media outlook (2024-2028) OTT platforms are the third- fastest growing segment with a CAGR of 14.9%. This rapid growth suggests that the OTT platforms will grow more in the upcoming years with diverse content offerings and a vast fan base. Korean content is widely available on these platforms, so there is also an increase in the viewership of these platforms.

According to KPMG India the major drivers of OTT growth is the wide use of smart phones and the growing internet penetration, due to which the increase in the data consumption has led to the rapid growth in digital advertisement.

Objective- This review paper explores the role of OTT platforms in promoting Korean culture and influencing Indian youth with the expansion of market and change in consumer behavior (Fashion, Beauty trends, Food).

Research Design & Method- From (2017-2025), this study adopts review-based research which was conducted by utilizing the e-databases of the reputed Journals and Books.

Relevant keywords were used while selecting journals and articles. For systematic analysis, the literature was organized into four major themes. In addition, industry reports from organizations such as KPMG, PwC, and Netflix were included to support the findings with recent statistics and trends. To identify the major findings, patterns and gaps, related to growing influence of Korean culture in India through OTT platforms the information was analyzed thematically.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Based on the reviewed literature, there were several factors which talked about the influence of Korean content through OTT platforms, through which four major themes were derived. The first theme is the Growth of OTT platforms which target the emergence of OTT and cultural exchange. The second theme focuses on the rise of the Korean content and its fan base which played a drastic role in the emergence of Korean wave or the Hyallu in India. The third theme discusses how Indian youth's lifestyles choices, cultural identity, food preferences & consumption patterns are influenced by the Korean trends. The fourth theme examines the hybrid culture and cultural globalization which led the audience to adapt and reinforce the Korean culture in their lifestyles. These themes together provide a deep understanding towards the influence of OTT platforms in cultural exchange and contribute to the increase in consumption of Korean culture among Indian youth.

Growth of OTT platforms

OTT platforms are online streaming services that offer entertainment content via internet in place of the conventional cable or television networks Kumari, T. (2020). The idea of OTT content began to take shape in the early 2000's, but it gained significant popularity following the creation and expansion of services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and YouTube Sundaravel, E., & Elangovan, N. (2020). Initially, these platforms started with films and TV shows, but with time they expanded into documentaries, web-series, international content, and original series. The popularity of OTT platforms was further boosted by development of reasonable priced internet access, smart phones and digital technologies Kour, G., & Chhabria, B. (2022). Around 2016, OTT platforms began to expand rapidly throughout the world, particularly in nations like India, where over millions of consumers were drawn in by affordable internet and mobile accessibility Bhattacharyya, M. (2020). People stayed at home and relied on online entertainment during the COVID-19 pandemic, which further expanded the use of OTT services. OTT channels have emerged as a key link for international entertainment consumption and cultural interchange Sharma, K., & Lulandala, E. E. (2023).

The rapid growth of OTT platforms like Netflix, YouTube, and Amazon Prime Video has altered how people watch entertainment. Korean entertainment has been widely spread throughout the world because of these platforms Kaisii, A. (2022). These services make it simple to watch Korean dramas, music videos, and reality shows with multilingual subtitles. Earlier, Korean content was difficult to access in many countries, but OTT services made it accessible everywhere and at any time. Indian youth and viewers throughout the world are now more familiar with Korean culture, language, fashion, cuisine, and lifestyle because of this accessibility Jagan, S. K., & Kalyan, S. (2022).

Popularity of K-drama & K-pop in India

In recent years, Korean entertainment has become widely popular among Indian youth. Most of Indian audiences used to primarily consume Bollywood or Hollywood content, but as social media and OTT channels grew, people began looking into foreign entertainment An, J.Y. (2022). K- Pop and Korean dramas, gradually rose to prominence in India's young entertainment culture. Viewers were drawn to popular Korean dramas like Business Proposal, Squid Game, and Crash on you because of its outstanding production value, suspense, romance, and emotional storytelling Jang, M., Kim, D., & Baek, H. (2024). K- dramas, in contrast to many traditional shows, typically contain brief but captivating plots that keep viewers emotionally invested. The friendships, feelings, hardships, family values, suspense and life lessons depicted in these dramas are relatable to many young Indians Challapalli, S., Panjwani, H., & Khan, I. (2021). K-pop music also became extremely popular in India at the same time; young people developed a strong fan culture groups like BTS and BLACKPINK created strong fan culture among youth. Millions of people were drawn to their good message, dress sense, dance performances, and songs by Sridhar, B., & Jaggi, R. (2022). Fans frequently share dance, reels, jokes, edits and fan content on social media sites like YouTube and Instagram, which contributed significantly to this rise. This popularity is not limited only to entertainment, Korean culture has also influenced India n youth in areas like fashion, skincare, beauty, food habits, and language learning Abigail, S. R., & Jaggi, R. (2022). Many young individuals began utilizing Korean cosmetics, trying Korean food, skin care products, and even picking up some basic Korean vocabulary. This demonstrates how Hallyu, the Korean Wave, is having a significant cultural influence on Indian society, particularly among the young population Singh, S. (2022).

**Market Growth: OTT Expansion and Hallyu Growth OTT Platform Expansion: -**

GROWTH INDICATORS	DATA	SOURCE
OTT & Active paid subscriptions	601.2 million & 148.2 million	ET
CAGR	14.9%	PWC
Number of OTT Platforms	Near around 57	PWC
OTT Market Value	Rs.17,496 crore (2023) - Rs.35,062 crore (2028 projected)	PWC

Hallyu Growth in India: -

GROWTH INDICATORS	DATA	SOURCE
Gangnam Style Initial stage	Over 1 billion views globally (2012)	HISTORY
K-Drama Viewership in India	Netflix reported 370% increase in K-Drama watch hours	INDIAN TELEVISION
Top 10 Netflix trending list	It's okay not to be okay, Crash landing on You, Squid game	FLIM COMPANION
K-Pop Spotify India streaming reported	Grew by 230% from 2020-2022	SPOTIFY
Korean beauty products expansion in India	Top 10 imported beauty categories	NYKAA
K-beauty market size	Rs. 3139.31 crore (2025) CAGR 26.30%	MARKET

Cultural Identity & Lifestyle changes among Indian Youth

Indian youth's cultural identity and way of life have been profoundly impacted by the increasing popularity of Korean entertainment. Many young people are growing more familiar with Korean culture and incorporating various facets of it into their everyday life through K- dramas and social media. Fashion choices, eating habits, skincare regimens and even desire to learn the Korean language are all examples of this effect Kharsyntiew, T. T. (2017). Fashion is one important area of influence, K-pop idols and Korean celebrities are well known for their fashionable attire, looks they carry and contemporary street style. Many young Indians want to emulate Korean fashion trends, which include oversized shirts, minimalistic looks, stylish accessories pastel colors and simple styles Varanasi, U. P. Korean fashion has become popular through social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, where influencers and fans regularly share Korean inspired content. Another major influence is Korean skincare and beauty culture. Korean skincare and beauty products have become highly popular among Indian youth, especially because of the Korean celebrities are often associated with clear and health skin Mathew, M. L., & Menon, R. (2026). Products like serums, sheet-masks, and glass skin regimens are now discussed widely and are used by young consumers. This has changed many young people's preferences for beauty and raised demand for Korean beauty goods in India Menache, A., & Bailleux, V. (2021). Food preferences have also been impacted by Korean content. Many young people developed an interest in sampling Korean foods like ramen, kimchi, and Korean fried chicken after seeing Korean dramas. Many cafes and restaurants are becoming more popular in urban areas, and Korean food challenges recipes are widely shared on social media. This shows how entertainment media also influences food, culture, and lifestyle choices Biswas, S., & Roy, P. (2023). Furthermore, a lot of young Indians are developed interest in learning Korean language. To learn about songs and movies, fans frequently pick up simple Korean phrases, words and greetings. Some also use apps or enroll in online language classes to study Korean. This increasing interest demonstrates that Korean entertainment is promoting cultural curiosity and international cultural exchange among youth audiences in addition to influencing viewing habits Touhami, B., & Al-Haq, F. A. (2017)

Cultural Globalization & Hybrid Culture

The term cultural globalization describes the dissemination of concepts, traditions, ideals, customs, and amusement via media and technology from one nation to another, Global connectivity and cultural exchange are enhanced by the ease with which people may now access content from around the globe Kanozia, R., & Ganghariya, G. (2021). The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, has helped disseminate Korean culture throughout the world, particularly among younger people with the emergence of OTT platforms and

social media Sasikala, S., & Nath. In India, this has created a form of hybrid culture. Many Indian youths embrace some Korean lifestyle trends while still adhering to their own customs Joseph, P. (2024). This process of cultural exchange often leads to the development of hybrid culture. Social media has increased awareness of this blending of cultures, with followers producing Korean-style content while retaining their Indian identity Jin, D. Y., Yoon, K., & Han, B. (2023). This demonstrates how globalization frequently results in a blending of local and global cultural activities rather than a total replacement of local culture Mehta, M. (2025). The ability of a nation to influence individuals in other countries through culture, entertainment, ideals, and media rather than by political or military force is known as soft power, K- pop, k-dramas, fashion, cosmetics, and internet media have been effectively employed by South Korea as a soft power tactics Yoon, K., & Han, B.

Revenue Generation and Influencing Indian Market Flow

- K- Drama viewership- Based on the data from Netflix, India's K- Drama viewership has been increased by 370% between 2019-2020. SOURCE [Indian Television](#)
- According to Parrot Analytics, after Squid Game become the success story of the K- Drama industry, Korean dramas brought in about US \$3.4 billion in global membership income for Netflix between 2021- 2024. [PARROT ANALYTICS](#)
- Between 2017-2019, imports of Korean cuisine increased by 162%, while K-Beauty rose 50% annually. SOURCE [STATISTICS](#)
- K-Beauty Market size- As reported by Nykaa, Korean beauty products have been included among the top 10 beauty imported categories since 2021. SOURCE [NYKAA](#)
- The most drastic economic impact is shown in the K-Beauty industry, whose market value increased at a compound annual growth rate of 31% from Rs.150 crores in 2016 to Rs.1020 crores in 2023. Brajesh, S., & Chakravorty, C. S. (2025)
- The ministry of Commerce also reported the rise in consumption of Korean food up to 162%, food items like Korean noodles, tteokbokki, kimchi, and soju (Biswas, S., & Roy, P. (2023).
- According to SOURCE [TOI](#) C Business standards, Zepto shared (May 2023) reports that the demand from major cities like Delhi- NCR, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru was the reason for rising demand for Korean food.
- Brands who sell Korean food products online saw over 400% spike in sales (in six months prior to May 2023). SOURCE [TOI](#)
- According to NielsenIQ (quoted in TOI 2024) the Indian market for Korean noodles grew from Rs.2 crore in 2021 and more than Rs. 65 crores in 2023. SOURCE [TOI](#)
- Orders for Korean food rose by 50% year over year, according to Swiggy's internal data, with Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad having the biggest demand. This shows that Korean food is becoming more popular in India's major cities. SOURCE [SWIGGY](#)

THEMES	KEYWORDS	BREIF EXPLAINATION
THEME-1 <i>Growth of OTT platforms</i>	OTT platforms, digital media, amazon prime video, Netflix, content consumption	The Growth of OTT platforms which target the emergence of OTT and cultural exchange.
THEME-2 <i>Popularity of K-dramas and K-pop in India</i>	K-drama, K-pop culture, Hallyu, audience preferences, cultural engagement, entertainment preferences	It focuses on the rise of the Korean content and its fan base which played a drastic role in the emergence of Korean wave or the Hyallu in India
THEME-3 <i>Cultural identity and lifestyle choices of Indian Youth</i>	Fashion, beauty trends, food habits, lifestyle, skincare	It discusses how Indian youth's lifestyles choices, cultural identity, food preferences & consumption patterns are influenced by the Korean trends.
THEME-4 <i>Cultural globalization and hybrid culture</i>	Cultural exchange, hybrid culture, globalization, cultural influence	It discusses how Indian youth's lifestyles choices, cultural identity, food preferences & consumption patterns are influenced by the Korean trends.



Research Gap- Few studies have thoroughly examined how OTT platforms enable Indian adolescents to consume Korean content and how this exposure affects their culture preferences, lifestyle decisions, development, and cultural hybridity, many studies had explored more on identity formation and youth fashion and does not examine the influence of Korean content or the role of OTT platforms on youth cultural lifestyle choices and cultural preferences. Many researchers claim and examine how Korean culture influences consumer behavior, but it does not adequately examine how OTT platforms shape these habits.

Although, cultural exchange through digital media lacks detailed investigation into Korean content consumption through OTT platforms.

DISCUSSION

This paper has examined the role of OTT platforms in promoting Korean culture and influencing Indian youth. The reviewed literature indicates that fast-paced growth of OTT services like Amazon Prime Video, YouTube, and Netflix has drastically changed how people consume media and made it easier for viewers to access material from around the world. Korean content such as K-dramas, K-pop films, and reality programs, has become incredibly popular with Indian youth among other international entertainment available through these platforms. The growing Korean content on OTT platforms and the exposure in consumer demand has significantly influenced market growth and witnessed an increase in demand for Korean food, fashion, and beauty across multiple business sectors. The commercialization of Korean Culture is seen majorly in metropolitan cities where many Korean cafes and restaurants started, and their consumption went on peak. This shows that Korean content was not just limited to content consumption, but it also influenced the consumer's patterns, market strategies, and business turnovers. The rising popularity of Korean entertainment and the interconnected elements between Korean and Indian culture reflects a broader aspect of cultural globalization as Indian audience and their shift to Korean culture is increasing, also social media platforms have further tied this cultural engagement by allowing fans to interact, share and build online community's around Korean popular culture.

CONCLUSION

This literature also suggests that the Hyallu is more significantly affected on certain regions of India, particularly the North- Eastern states. However, many studies remained limited to specific demographic groups. In addition, OTT has also expanded economically the growth in the market along with the market trends. Much of the available literature provides limited knowledge of understanding of long- term impact of Korean culture on Indian society. Further, research must delve into the sustainability of these trends, their impacts, and challenges. This review was only focused on the role of OTT platforms in promoting Korean culture among Indian youth, about the consumption of Korean skincare, food, fashion, beauty trends, language etc.

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