

THE POPULARITY OF KPOP IN NORTH EAST INDIA: CASE ON THE INCREASING FAME OF  
BTS BETWEEN 14-29 AGE GROUP



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Korean Studies  
Inter-Department of Korean Studies  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
Chulalongkorn University  
Academic Year 2020  
Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

กระแสบ็อบปในภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของประเทศไทย: กรณีศึกษาของกลุ่มวัยรุ่นระหว่าง  
14-29 ปี ที่ชื่นชอบศิลปินวง BTS



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต  
สาขาวิชาเกาหลีศึกษา สหสาขาวิชาเกาหลีศึกษา  
บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
ปีการศึกษา 2563  
ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Thesis Title THE POPULARITY OF KPOP IN NORTH EAST INDIA: CASE  
ON THE INCREASING FAME OF BTS BETWEEN 14-29 AGE  
GROUP  
By Miss Eshani Bora  
Field of Study Korean Studies  
Thesis Advisor Assistant Professor KAMON BUTSABAN, Ph.D.  
Thesis Co Advisor Associate Professor Buddhagarn Rutchatorn, Ph.D.

---

Accepted by the GRADUATE SCHOOL, Chulalongkorn University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts

..... Dean of the GRADUATE SCHOOL  
(Associate Professor THUMNOON NHUJAK, Ph.D.)

THESIS COMMITTEE

..... Chairman  
(Associate Professor Piti Srisangnam, Ph.D.)

..... Thesis Advisor  
(Assistant Professor KAMON BUTSABAN, Ph.D.)

..... Thesis Co-Advisor  
(Associate Professor Buddhagarn Rutchatorn, Ph.D.)

..... External Examiner  
(Assistant Professor Wichian Intasi, Ph.D.)

อิชานี โบรา : กระแสเคป็อปในภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของประเทศไทย:  
กรณีศึกษาของกลุ่มวัยอายุระหว่าง 14-29 ปี ที่ชื่นชอบศิลปินวง BTS. ( THE  
POPULARITY OF KPOP IN NORTH EAST INDIA: CASE ON THE INCREASING  
FAME OF BTS BETWEEN 14-29 AGE GROUP) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ. ดร.กมล  
บุษบรรณ, อ.ที่ปรึกษาร่วม : รศ. ดร.พุทธกาล รัชธร

ฮันรยูหรือกระแสเกาหลีได้เริ่มเข้าสู่ภูมิภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของประเทศไทยผ่านแผ่นซีดีและแผ่นดีวีดีละเมิดลิขสิทธิ์และช่องทีวีเกาหลีในรัฐมณีปุระเนื่องมาจากในขณะนั้นพรรคปฏิวัติได้สั่งห้ามประชาชนรับสื่อโทรทัศน์และภาพยนตร์ภาษาฮินดี กระแสเกาหลีจึงได้เริ่มเป็นที่นิยมตั้งแต่นั้นมา ทั้งนี้กระแสเกาหลีที่สื่อออกมานั้นมีความคล้ายคลึงกับคนในพื้นที่ทั้งด้านกายภาพและวัฒนธรรมอย่างมาก ปัจจุบันวงไอดอลบีทีเอสที่ประกอบด้วยสมาชิกชายเจ็ดคนและมีชื่อเสียงอย่างมากระดับโลกได้นำกระแสเคป็อปมาสู่วัยรุ่นในภูมิภาคนี้

เนื่องด้วยข้อจำกัดในการศึกษาความนิยมของเคป็อปในภูมิภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของอินเดีย จึงมุ่งเน้นศึกษาความชื่นชอบวงไอดอลบีทีเอสของกลุ่มวัยรุ่นช่วงอายุ 14-29 ปี พร้อมทั้งวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อความนิยมเคป็อปในภูมิภาคนี้ ประการแรกในการศึกษานี้ใช้แบบจำลองด้านปัจจัยพฤติกรรมผู้บริโภคและโคมมอนดีโมเดลด้านวัฒนธรรมเป็นขอบเขตวิจัย ประการที่สอง ระเบียบวิธีวิจัย โดยวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลจากการใช้แบบสำรวจออนไลน์สอบถามกลุ่มเป้าหมายจำนวน 320 คนที่เป็นแฟนคลับเคป็อป การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก และสำรวจข้อคิดเห็นบนช่องทางโซเชียลมีเดีย ด้วยวิธีการข้างต้น ทำให้ได้ทราบเหตุผลที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างชื่นชอบเคป็อป ด้วยการเปรียบเทียบปัจจัยทางด้านจิตวิทยาและปัจจัยทางด้านสังคมและวัฒนธรรมเข้าด้วยกันเพื่อให้ได้มาซึ่งสาเหตุที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างชื่นชอบวงไอดอลบีทีเอสผ่านดนตรีและการแสดงได้อย่างไร

ประเทศไทยเป็นหนึ่งในกลุ่มประเทศสุดท้ายที่บริโภคกระแสเกาหลีและยังอยู่ในช่วงเรียนรู้และเฝ้าสังเกตการณ์วัฒนธรรมดังกล่าว ถึงแม้ว่าเคป็อปได้รับความนิยมมากที่สุดในภูมิภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของอินเดีย องค์ประกอบอื่นที่เกี่ยวข้อง เช่น อาหารเกาหลี ความงามแนวเกาหลี และแฟชั่นของเกาหลีกำลังได้รับความนิยมในภูมิภาคนี้เช่นกัน

สาขาวิชา เกาหลีศึกษา

ปีการศึกษา 2563

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต .....

ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก .....

ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาร่วม .....

# # 6288052320 : MAJOR KOREAN STUDIES

KEYWORD: Hallyu, Korean Wave, North East India, K-POP, BTS

Eshani Bora : THE POPULARITY OF KPOP IN NORTH EAST INDIA: CASE ON THE INCREASING FAME OF BTS BETWEEN 14-29 AGE GROUP. Advisor: Asst. Prof. KAMON BUTSABAN, Ph.D. Co-advisor: Assoc. Prof. Buddhagarn Rutchatorn, Ph.D.

Hallyu Wave or Korean Wave in North East India began in the late 1990s pirated CDs, DVDs, and the Korean TV channel in Manipur due the Revolutionary People's Front ordered a ban on Hindi films and TV channels. The popularity of the Hallyu Wave has been present in the North East ever since due to many physical and cultural similarities. Today, due to the popularity of BTS, a seven-member boy group from South Korea who are the biggest boy group in the world have immensely popularized K-POP to the youth.

Due to limited studies on K-POP in North East India, this study focuses on the popularity of BTS from the ages of 14-29 years and analyses the factors of K-POP popularity in the region. Firstly, the Factors of Consumer Behavior and Cultural Diamond model are used as the framework for this study. Secondly, for the methodology, the selected sample size of this study is 320 respondents who are K-POP fans on social media platforms, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, online observation, and comment analysis. Using these methodologies, the study highlights the reason behind K-POP popularity because of psychological factors when compared with social and cultural factors. In case of BTS popularity in the region it is through their music and lyrics which has made them 'relatable' to the young fans.

Since India is one of the last countries to consume Hallyu and is still learning and exploring more about Korean culture. Although K-POP is the most popular component other components such as K-Food, K-Beauty, K-Fashion are also gaining a lot of attention in the North East as well as in India.

Field of Study: Korean Studies

Academic Year: 2020

Student's Signature .....

Advisor's Signature .....

Co-advisor's Signature .....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to extend my gratitude towards my thesis advisor Asst. Prof Butsaban, PhD. for his constant support and patience throughout this study. Because of his guidance, this study was a successful one.

Secondly, I would like to thank my thesis committee: Assoc. Prof. Piti Srisangnam Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. Buddhagarn Rutchatorn Ph.D., and External Asst. Prof. Wichian Intasi Ph.D. for their encouragement and advice for the betterment of my thesis.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Ms. Nongluk Boonthiem, who has encouraged and helped me in every way possible when I faced any setbacks from the beginning till the end of my thesis, and to my batchmates Koravan Teeramatvanit, Cai Wantong, and Chatmongkon Moonninta for their consistent support throughout the period.

To my family back home who has been patient with me and has sacrificed so much for me, I am grateful to my mother Pallavi Bora, my father Rahul Bora, my sister Aditi Bora, Vijay Nair Uncle, my grandmother Prasanti Prova Deka and my late grandmother Dolly Bora for looking out for me and blessing me forevermore. Your prayers and love have given me the strength to pass through the thick and thin.

I would like to give my heartfelt love and gratitude to my best friend Karvileena Deka who has been with me from the beginning till the end providing her insights and support throughout this study. I would also like to thank Amlan Deep Das, Deepa Dutta, Dourani Gogoi (Bangtan Assam Admin), and BTS Army back home who have supported and cheered for me.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratefulness to all the respondents and interviewees who took out time from their daily schedules and answered the questionnaires and interviews. Lastly, I would like to thank the Korean Studies Program for giving us this opportunity to do our thesis on such a big platform.

Eshani Bora

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

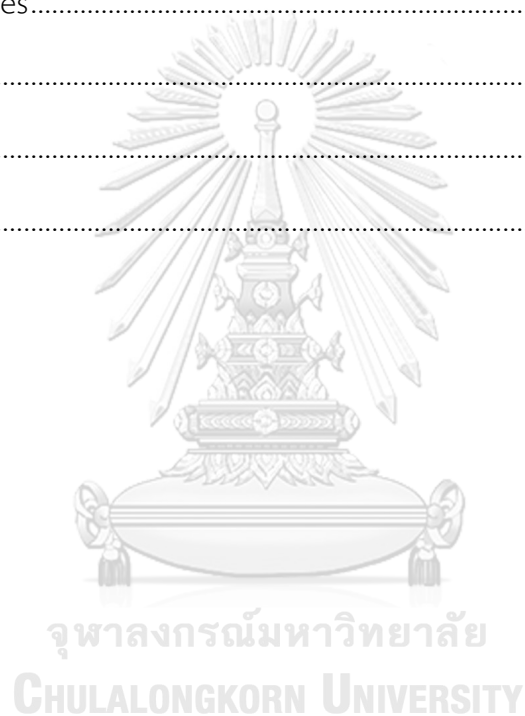
	Page
.....	iii
ABSTRACT (THAI).....	iii
.....	iv
ABSTRACT (ENGLISH).....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Research Background.....	1
1.2 Research Objective.....	10
1.3 Hypothesis .....	10
1.4 Research Questions.....	10
1.5 Scope of the research and Methodology .....	11
CHAPTER II NORTH EAST INDIA, POPULARITY OF K-POP IN NORTH EAST INDIA, MESSAGE OF BTS .....	12
2.1 Introduction to North East India.....	12
2.2 Popularity of K-POP in North East India.....	17
2.3 Message of BTS.....	22
CHAPTER III THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW .....	27
3.1 Related Theory.....	27

3.1.1 Factors of Consumer Behaviour.....	27
3.1.2 Cultural Diamond Model.....	29
3.2 Previous Studies .....	32
CHAPTER IV RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	39
4.1 Conceptual Framework.....	39
4.2 Data Collection.....	39
4.2.1 Primary Data.....	39
4.2.2 Secondary data .....	46
4.3 Analysis.....	46
CHAPTER V ANALYSIS.....	47
5.1 Part 1: Personal information of respondents .....	47
5.1.1 Age .....	47
5.1.2 Gender.....	48
5.1.3 Religion.....	48
5.1.4 Education Level .....	49
5.1.5 State .....	50
5.1.6 Designation .....	51
5.1.7 Income .....	51
5.1.8 Amount of Income .....	52
5.1.9 Allowance from family .....	53
5.2 Part 2: Exposure to K-POP .....	53
5.2.1 Years of exposure into K-POP .....	54
5.2.2 Hours spent on K-POP .....	55
5.2.3 First K-POP group interested in.....	55



5.2.4 Most popular K-POP group in NE India.....	56
5.2.5 Follow any fan groups on SNS.....	57
5.2.6 Own any albums or merchandise of any K-POP group .....	58
5.2.7 Attended a K-POP concert.....	59
5.3 Part 3: Social, Psychological and Cultural factors based on consumer behavior .....	61
5.3.1 Social factors.....	61
5.3.2 Psychological factors.....	63
5.3.3. Cultural factors.....	65
5.4 Part 4(1): BTS fans in North East India.....	70
5.4.1 Fan of BTS .....	71
5.4.2 First song heard by BTS.....	71
5.4.3 Reason why they love BTS .....	72
5.4.4 Bias from BTS.....	74
5.4.5 Attending Fan events by BTS Army (fans) .....	75
5.4.6 Favorite BTS song.....	76
5.4.7 Fan of other K-POP groups besides BTS .....	77
5.5 Part 4(2): Not a fan of BTS .....	78
5.5.1 Fans of which K-POP acts.....	79
5.6 Part 5: BTS popularity in North East India .....	80
5.6.1 BTS is the reason why K-POP is getting popular in North East India.....	80
5.6.2 Popularity of BTS in the future .....	81
5.7 Part 6: Comment Analysis .....	82
5.7.1 Top Hashtags .....	82

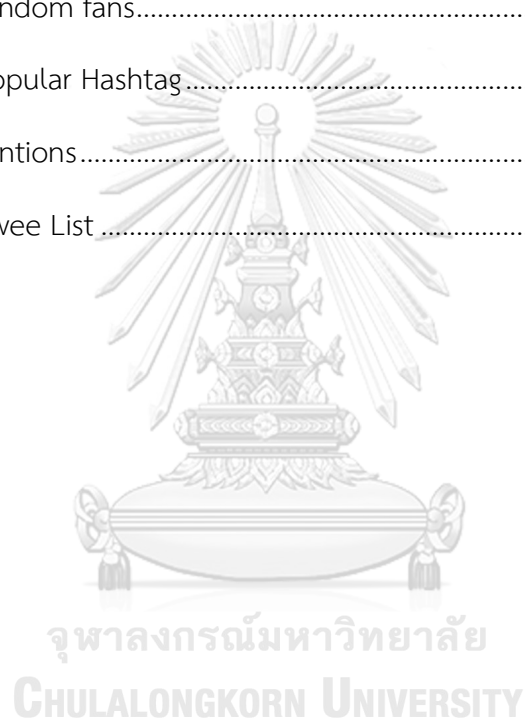
5.7.2 Top Mentions.....	85
5.8 Discussion.....	87
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	92
6.1 Conclusion .....	92
6.2 Limitations .....	94
6.3 Recommendations .....	95
6.4 Future Studies.....	96
APPENDIX.....	97
REFERENCES .....	111
VITA.....	119



## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Hallyu growth in India.....	9
Table 2: Rating Criteria.....	44
Table 3: Age.....	47
Table 4: Gender.....	48
Table 5: Religion.....	49
Table 6: Education Level.....	49
Table 7: Designation.....	51
Table 8: Income.....	52
Table 9: Income per month.....	52
Table 10: Allowance from Family.....	53
Table 11: When did you get into K-POP.....	54
Table 12 : Hours spent on K-POP.....	55
Table 13: First K-POP group interested in.....	56
Table 14: Most popular K-POP group in NE India.....	57
Table 15: Follow fan groups on SNS.....	57
Table 16: Own any albums or merchandise of any K-POP group.....	58
Table 17: Merchandise of the K-POP groups.....	59
Table 18: Been to a K-POP concert.....	60
Table 19: Concert of which group.....	60
Table 20: Social factors of K-POP.....	62
Table 21: Psychological factors of K-POP.....	64

Table 22: Cultural factors of K-POP.....	66
Table 23: Religion state wise (Census 2011).....	67
Table 24: Religion of the respondents' state wise.....	67
Table 25: Reason why they love BTS .....	73
Table 26: Respondents attending Fan events.....	75
Table 27: Fan of other K-POP groups.....	77
Table 28: Multi fandom fans.....	78
Table 29: Most popular Hashtag.....	83
Table 30: Top Mentions.....	86
Table 31 Interviewee List.....	110



## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1: Korean dramas growth in India during Pandemic 2020 .....	3
Figure 2: Top 20 markets by Tweet Volume .....	4
Figure 3: Most mentioned K-POP artists by market.....	5
Figure 4: BTS India fan page (Dated 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2021) .....	5
Figure 5: K-POP’s Breakthrough in India amid the pandemic .....	7
Figure 6: Map of North East India.....	14
Figure 7: Geographical area of North East states (NEC 2015).....	15
Figure 8: GSDP of the North East states (MoSPI 2021).....	16
Figure 9: Literacy rate in North East .....	17
Figure 10: Kori’s Arunachal Pradesh .....	20
Figure 11: North East India BTS fan page (As of 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2021).....	21
Figure 12: Assam Flood donations by BTS ARMY North East India .....	21
Figure 13: Five State to State Streaming Trends Spotify .....	22
Figure 14: Billboard Hot 100 (Dated 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2020) .....	23
Figure 15: Grammy Nomination 2021.....	24
Figure 16: BTSxUNICEF .....	26
Figure 17: BTS speech at the UN 75 <sup>th</sup> General Assembly .....	26
Figure 18: Types of Consumer Behaviour.....	27
Figure 19: K-POP Diamond success Model (SEO MIN SOO 2012).....	30
Figure 20: Four Stages of Star Preparation (SEO MIN SOO 2012).....	30
Figure 21: Conceptual Framework .....	39

Figure 22: Internet users in India .....	40
Figure 23: State .....	50
Figure 24: Factors of K-POP Social, Psychological and Cultural factors of consumer behavior.....	70
Figure 25: Fan of BTS.....	71
Figure 26: First song heard by BTS.....	72
Figure 27: Bias of the respondents .....	74
Figure 28: Flash mob July 2019.....	76
Figure 29: BTS film screening February 2019.....	76
Figure 30: Favorite BTS song.....	77
Figure 31: Fan of K-POP groups.....	79
Figure 32: BTS is the reason why K-POP is getting popular in North East India .....	81
Figure 33: Popularity of BTS in the future.....	82
Figure 34: Most popular Hashtag (pie chart).....	84
Figure 35: VH1Playlist request .....	84
Figure 36: Others Category (Hashtag).....	85
Figure 37: Top mentions (pie chart).....	86
Figure 38: Others Category (mentions).....	87
Figure 39: Top Artists of India .....	89
Figure 40: Top streamed albums of India .....	89
Figure 41: Top K-POP albums and songs of 2020 in India.....	90
Figure 42: Korean noodles in Kohima .....	93
Figure 43: Kori's Guwahati .....	93

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Background

Hallyu Wave is the popular transnational wave (Ryoo 2009) sweeping the world off its feet. The term Hallyu is derived from the word 'Hanryu' and was coined in China in the late 1990s by Beijing journalists to indicate the growing popularity of Korean culture in China. K-POP is a genre of music and is one of the products of the Hallyu Wave which has many fans in the world with well-known idol groups representing it. K-POP is not just about the well-known Gangnam Style but includes the popularity of other famous idols such as BTS, EXO, TWICE, BLACKPINK, BIG BANG, SHINEE, GOT7, MONSTA X, SUPERM, HYUNA, IU, etc.

Hallyu Wave in India began in the North East of India. In the early 2000s, the Revolutionary People's Front ordered a ban on Hindi Films and TV channels in Manipur as they believed that Bollywood films undermined the values of Manipur culture (Bhaumik 2000). This led to a wide gap in people's lives in terms of entertainment. However, this gap was filled by English, Manipuri, Thai, Chinese and Korean dramas, movies, and their popular music. They were mostly pirated CDs, DVDs, containing movies, drama, serial, or music, and the Korean TV channel Arirang TV was broadcasted in the television sets of Manipuri households (Reimeingam 2015). Slowly, Manipur resembled a Mini- Korea (India today 2017). Many young boys and girls also started to pick up Korean words and phrases such as annasaiyo (hello), sarange (I love you), watuke (what to do), wajuwaju (yes) (Kshetrimayum and Chanu 2008) which can also be witnessed today. Even though Manipur has no serious issues regarding Indianization at present, the impact of the Korean Wave is still popular amongst the people. Over the years, the other northeastern States and the rest of India were pulled towards the Hallyu Wave. This is the starting point of the Hallyu Wave in India, beginning from the early 2000s (**Refer to table 1**).

In Nagaland and Manipur since the early 2000s local cable networks have been airing South Korean channels KBS World and Arirang. In 2006, India's state television network, Doordarshan, broadcasted two Korean television dramas namely Dae Jang Geum and Emperor of the Sea (Pankaj 2017). In 2014, DD Bharti aired Korean historical drama Hur Jun was broadcasted on January 13, 2014, to October 29, 2014, and received viewer ratings of 34,164,000. In 2017 Descendants of the Sun aired from February 8 to March 1 on Zee Zindagi, the total viewer ratings were 55,920,000 (Gogoi 2017). Many Indian Bollywood films such as OMG, Bharat have been adopted and reproduced from Korean popular movies (Gogoi 2017).

K-Dramas are popular in India because of the cultural similarities (Tiwari 2020 ). India, being a conservative country, the Indian fans are attracted to Korean dramas because they showcase many family values, a minimal showcase of adult content, love and friendship, and the struggles of youth in daily life. The growth of K-Drama can be most especially seen during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown of 2020. Many online streaming platforms such as Viki, Netflix, MX player have seen a huge rise in Indian online traffic during the pandemic as seen in **Figure 1**. K-Dramas have been popular in North East India since the early 2000s and amongst the Hallyu loving fans in India during 2008-09 but only during a COVID-19 pandemic it has reached to wider audience thanks to many online streaming platforms. Korean Dramas such as Crash Landing on you, Kingdom 2, It's Okay to Not be Okay, and Light Up The Sky (Blackpink Documentary) has appeared on the Netflix India Trending list (Bhatt 2020).



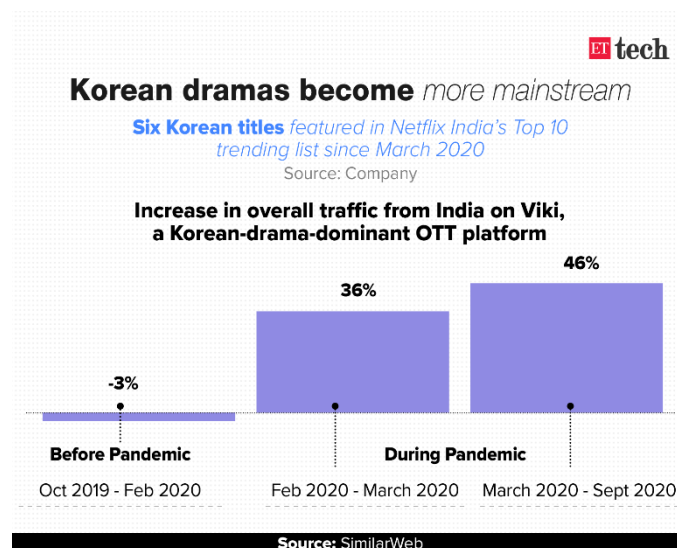


Figure 1: Korean dramas growth in India during Pandemic 2020

Source: The Economic times

K-POP-themed clothing stores and K-beauty are now available both online and offline in India. For example, Innisfree, Faceshop, Laneige, Limese Connect, and 'Hallyu Town' a new K-beauty and clothing store has opened in Gangtok, Sikkim in March 2020. Many Korean restaurants such as Busan Korean Restaurant Delhi, Gangnam Restaurant in Delhi, Kori's, Gung The Palace in Delhi, Hae Kum Gang Bengaluru, Hi Seoul, Bengaluru, Heng Bok Mumbai, etc. The Korean Cultural Centre India (KCCI) is leading the Hallyu Wave in India by partnering with many local organizations and local governments to promote Korean culture. There are about 12 million people in India who can connect to Korean culture (Gogoi 2019). There is a growth of new Korean Cultural websites and pages in India such as Hallyuism\_India, Namaste Hallyu, Nams-K, Korean cultural centre Fanclub, and other regional Korean Cultural fan pages such as Guwahati Korean cultural fan club, Pune Korean cultural centre, Lucknow Korean culture club, etc (Refer to table 1).

In 2017 launched K-Popp'd a K-POP segment on Saturdays that exclusively plays K-POP songs. In India, K-POP is the starting of Hallyu which has spread extensively and is the most popular aspect of Hallyu (Tiwari 2020 ) (Deb 2019). The Hallyu phenomenon began with K-POP, largely because of PSY's Gangnam Style (Bhanuj

2017, George 2019, Bhatt 2020). The popularity of K-Pop can be because of various reasons such as trendy tunes, choreography, and synchronized performances and concepts. There are more than 100 accounts and pages of K-pop fans across Twitter and Facebook, Instagram in India. Notable K-POP fan pages in India is Destination K-POP which is India's first K-POP website dedicated to K-POP and Korean entertainment and K-POP High India is another website dedicated to Korean pop culture formed in 2018 and the Mizoram K-POP fan club, etc. K-pop became the point of ignition for other Korean cultural products in India. When one starts watching K-pop videos, the YouTube algorithm inevitably leads them to Korean items such as K-beauty, fashion, and cosmetics (Bhatt 2018). Fans connect through WhatsApp groups, Instagram fan pages, and Facebook pages.

According to data from Twitter, India ranked 10<sup>th</sup> (previously No. 10, 2019-20) twice when it comes to the top 20 markets with the most K-POP-related conversations such as K-POP tweet volume and unique voices in **Figure 2** (from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020) (Kim 2021). BTS is the most mentioned K-POP group in India followed by EXO, Twice, TXT, and Got7 as seen in **Figure 3** (from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020) (Kim 2020).



Figure 2: Top 20 markets by Tweet Volume

Source- Twitter

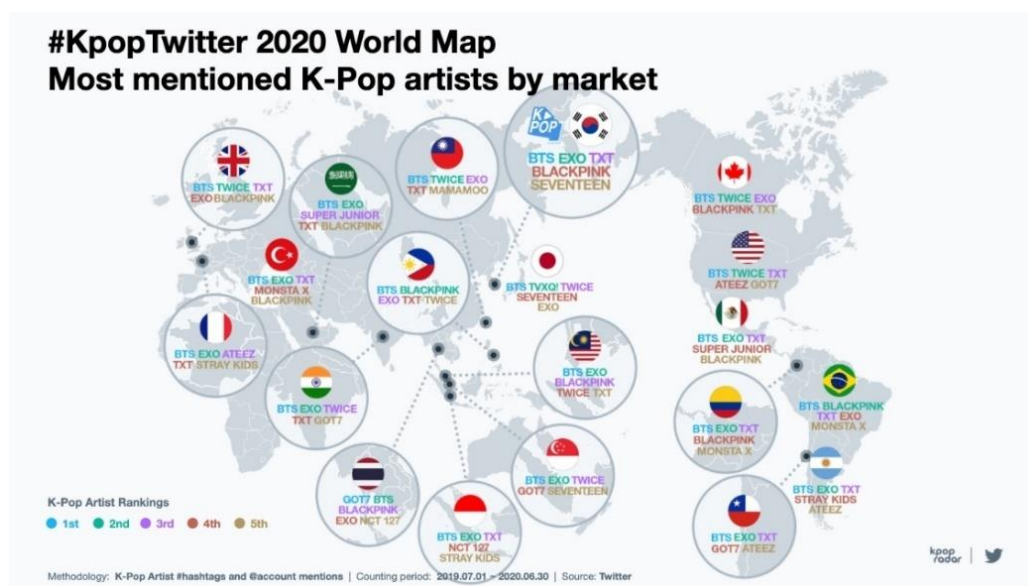


Figure 3: Most mentioned K-POP artists by market

Source – Twitter



Figure 4: BTS India fan page (Dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021)

Source: Instagram

BTS has two impressive fan Bases in India named Bangtan\_India '인도아미' fan page with a growing 127K follower on Twitter and over 179K on Instagram as seen in **Figure 4** along with many regional fan groups and BTSIndiaofficial with 132K followers on Instagram (As of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021). It is one of the biggest K-POP fandoms in India along with Lee Minho Indian fan page with 92.4K followers on Instagram and Team EXO India with 35.1K followers on Twitter and 7900 followers on Instagram (As

of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021). The BTS Army in India has many other fan accounts such as BTS India iTunes and apple charts, BTS India Funds, BTS Project India, Indian Streaming Team for BTS, BTS army helps India, etc.

Other K-POP idol fan pages in India such as Blackpink India, Got7 mission India, Twice fandom India, MONSTA X India, TXT official India, etc., have around 1000-4000 followers on SNS accounts.

According to the Economic Times of India BTS has risen from No. 68 on JioSaavn in January to No.8 in October 2020, with over 2.3 million streams as seen in **figure 5**. Many Bollywood celebrities have promoted BTS and their songs. The Samsung India Galaxy S20 BTS edition ads were shown on TV across Hindi and English entertainment channels. The number of monthly users for Weverse on google play India has gone up by 115% in MAR-SEPT 2020 compared to 64% from OCT 2019- FEB 2020. This significant growth of new fans of BTS and their popularity could be seen during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in India (Bhatt 2020). India has become one of the top five or six countries contributing to YouTube music-video views of K-pop bands like BTS and Blackpink. Other significant growth could be seen in the growth of the number of Korean learners on Duolingo from India, increase in the number of K-Drama watchers on Netflix, Viki, etc.

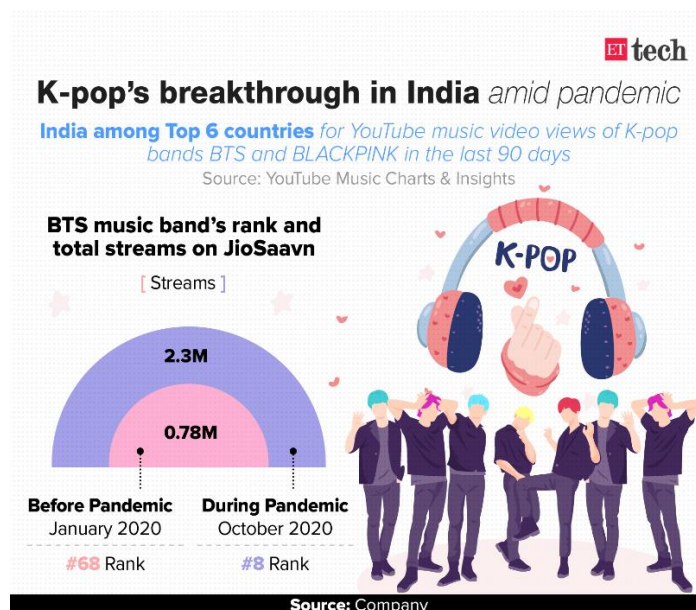


Figure 5: K-POP's Breakthrough in India amid the pandemic

Source: The Economic times

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, BTS had their first exclusive national interview with a major Indian news channel named NDTV India where they were interviewed regarding their recent album, their thoughts on the growth of the Indian Army (name of BTS fans), and their plans of doing a concert in India. They were shown some video messages from their Indian fans and left with a promising message of visiting India soon (NDTV 2020).

K-POP groups and solo artists who have visited India since 2014 are N SONIC, DABIT, JJCC, IMFACT, MONT, IN2IT AleXa, and KARD, etc.; all invited and organized by Pink box Events India. They are an event management company that brings K-pop events to India since 2015.

The LG K-POP contest is held every year in India by Korean Cultural Centre India (KCCI) and its partners. Winners from the K-POP contest would compete in K-POP World Festival. The K-POP World Festival is an annual music and dance competition that was initiated in 2011 by South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is hailed as

one of the biggest K-POP events in the world. The first K-POP contest began in 2012 in India, and it has been growing ever since.

The growth of Indian K-pop fandom can be seen in the growing popularity of the K-pop contest, started by the Korean Cultural Centre in 2012 at a small auditorium in Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, with 37 contestants and 300 attendees (Bhanuj 2017). In 2019, 3475 participants and 1952 teams participated in the LG K-POP India contest (Deb 2019). In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the K-POP World Festival was cancelled by South Korea, but India's KCCI independently organization the K-POP Contest online and bringing about certain changes to the contest such as allowing voting by the fans to select the winners of the contest. They also received a special message from BTS who thanked Indian fans for loving K-POP. Now India is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest consumer of K-POP in the world (K-POP Contest India) (2020).

Spotify, an online music streaming platform, was launched in India around February 2019. According to the Spotify, India is at the top 22% of the K-Pop listening audience in all of Spotify markets globally (Spotify 2020). The most popular K-POP playlist in India is K-Pop Daebak. Spotify has also promoted and is focusing on K-POP in India through advertisements with slogans such as 'Spotify Home of K-POP'. BTS, being the most streamed K-POP artist in India, and Blackpink the most streamed female K-POP artist (Chakraborty 2020). In August 2020, after BTS released their new single "Dynamite", India alone reported 8.6 million views on YouTube, becoming the third country with the highest number of streaming after the US and Indonesia. India also broke the record for the highest number of streaming on Spotify with over 2.4 million local streams (Chakraborty 2020).

With the growing popularity of K-POP and Hallyu Wave the legendary mythology of King Kim Suro of Gaya kingdom marrying Princess Heo Hwang Ok from Ayodhya, India and Korea historical relations has come to light (Dhawan 2017, Pankaj 2017). Many Korean people have also started visiting Ayodhya to worship the memorial of Indian princess Heo Hwang Ok and trace their ancestral lines to her. In 2018, South Korea's

First Lady attended the ceremony in Ayodhya and thus, marked a joint project in upgrading the memorial of princess, and thereby has strengthened the ties between both the countries.

Overall, this research will focus only on the factors of the popularity of K-POP in North East India. Also, to analyse whether BTS is the only reason why fans are interested in K-POP from the age groups 14-29. The study will focus on this age groups as they have been under the direct influence of the Korean Wave through social media platforms. Therefore, this target group will further facilitate and contribute to the finding of the factors which lead to the popularity of K-POP in North East India.

Hallyu	Period	Type	Media
Hallyu 1.0	Late 1990s (Beginning in North East India)	K-Dramas, K-Movies K-POP	Television, Pirated CDs, DVDs
Hallyu 2.0	2006	K-Dramas, K-Movies, K-POP	YouTube, television, Hornbill festival (Nagaland)
Hallyu 3.0	2015	K-POP oriented, K-Culture, K-POP concerts	Magazines, YouTube Newspapers, SNS
Hallyu 4.0	Present	K-influencers and blogging, Korean culture websites, online, Korean food, Kshops (online/offline), Korean language, K-Fashion, and cosmetics	Fan events, Concerts, Fan meeting, Online concerts, SNS

Table 1: Hallyu growth in India

Adapted from (Bok-rae 2016)

## 1.2 Research Objective

The popularity of BTS in North East India can be seen through the active fan base (Army) in their region who are constantly doing activities such as donations, charities, flash mobs, birthday parties of idols, streaming parties, etc., attended by almost 600 to 700 fans. Because of their prominence in the region and people acknowledging their efforts which leads to the popularity of K-POP, therefore, this paper will –

- Find out whether BTS is the reason why K-POP is getting popular in North East India.
- Determine the factors of the popularity of K-POP in North East India.

## 1.3 Hypothesis

BTS is now, one of the biggest boy groups in the world. They are popularizing K-POP to the rest of the world. The same is also happening in India and the North East region. The message of BTS has struck the minds of the young generation. The message of BTS is about loving oneself, social issues, and other mental health issues. So, the hypothesis of this research is –

BTS is the reason why K-POP is now becoming popular in North East India.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The popularity of BTS and K-POP in the last few years has led to this research study. The reason for K-POP popularity is BTS, as most of the K-POP fan growth can be seen after 2016. The research objectives and hypothesis of this study has helped to derive the main research question –

- Is BTS the only reason why K-POP is getting popular in North East India?



- What are the factors which led to the popularity of K-POP in North East India?

### 1.5 Scope of the research and Methodology

- This study examines the factors of K-POP in North East India. The respondents are from North East India, including both male and female respondents from ages 14-29 years who are directly in contact with K-POP and Korean culture by collecting questionnaires and in-depth interviews with the interviewees through online calls.
- The target group is from social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp groups who are in K-POP fan groups and fans of BTS, to understand the BTS impact on increasing the popularity of K-POP and collecting comments to understand the social interaction of Indian fans with K-POP on social media platforms.
- The factors of K-POP popularity include social, cultural, individual, economic, geographical, and psychological factors and BTS to have an extensive understanding of the reason why K-POP is popular in North East India.

**CHAPTER II**  
**NORTH EAST INDIA, POPULARITY OF K-POP IN NORTH EAST INDIA,**  
**MESSAGE OF BTS**

**2.1 Introduction to North East India**

India is a South Asian country with a population of 1.3 billion. It is one of the biggest democracies in the world and the second-most populous country in the world after China.

The region of North East India as shown in **Figure 6** lies on the North Eastern side of India connected to the rest of India by the 'Chicken neck' also known as Siliguri corridor, surrounded by neighbouring countries Tibet and China in the north, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, and Bhutan. It consists of 8 states namely **Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Sikkim, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland**. Initially, the North East region was regarded as the region of 'Seven Sisters' until Sikkim was included in the year 2002 and is considered as a 'Brother' state. These states have their diverse culture along with almost 220 languages being recognized and spoken.

Three-fourth of the North East region is covered by hills and the rest by plain area. The population of the region can be divided into two categories: tribal and non-tribal (Basu, Das Gupta et al. 2004). The tribal is the Mongoloid people who mostly occupy the hilly areas and some in plain areas. The tribal population can be divided into 5 groups: the Mizo [Lushai] -Kuki, the Khasis, the Nagas, the Boro, the Arunachali tribes based on linguistic affinity, cultural similarity, common territory, and biological similarity. Another group called 'others' is for tribes that are not included in the five mentioned categories. For Sikkim, three-fourth of their population is mostly Nepalese in origin. The second category is the non-tribal who mostly live in Assam includes Caste Hindus, Muslims, scheduled castes; they are regarded as the Aryan population.

And tea garden workers, some Mongoloid population fall under the 'Other Backward classes' (Basu, Das Gupta et al. 2004).

There are many languages spoken in North East India. According to the census of 1971, there are 220 languages spoken in NE India. These languages belong to the Sino-Tibetan, Indo-Aryan, and Austro-Asiatic linguistic families. Sino-Tibetan languages include two divisions Tibeto-Burman, and Siamese Chinese. The latter also includes another category of Tai-Kadai language. This category includes Tai-Ahom, Khamti, Khamyang, Tai-Phake, etc. Tibeto-Burman languages include Naga language of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh languages such as NyishiApatani, Tagin, Galo, etc., Boro, Rabha, Mishing, etc., of Assam, the Mizo language of Mizoram, KokBorok of Tripura, Meitei or Manipuri language of Manipur, etc. The Indo-Aryan languages include the Assamese language of Assam, Nepali language spoken Sikkim, Bengali spoken in Tripura. Only the Khasi language of Meghalaya belongs to Mon-Khmer linguistic group which falls under the Austro-Asiatic linguistic family (Basu, Das Gupta et al. 2004).

When it comes to religion the people who live in the plains mostly practice Hinduism, there is a sizeable amount of Muslim population and Jain population. There is also a percentage of Assamese-Sikh community. Buddhism is practiced by a few tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and by a percentage of people in Assam and Meghalaya. The people living in the hills practice their own traditional religion. Christianity is practiced by the hill tribes of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland (Basu, Das Gupta et al. 2004)



Figure 6: Map of North East India

Source: MapsofIndia

## Comparison of Area, GDP, and Literacy Rate of Northeastern states

### Geographical Area of North East India

As seen in **Figure 7**, Arunachal Pradesh has the highest geographical area with 32% followed by Assam 30% and Meghalaya 9%. The whole of North East region accounts to 7.9% of the total area of the country.

### Geographical Area of North Eastern States (in Sq. Km.)

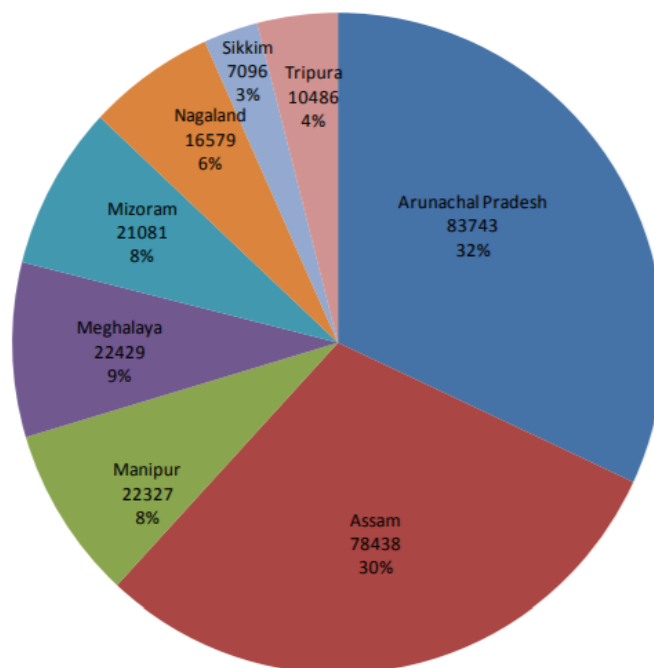


Figure 7: Geographical area of North East states (NEC 2015)

Source: BASIC STATISTICS OF NORTH EASTERN REGION 2015

### GDP of North East India

According to Economics Times India, GDP is the final value of the goods and services produced within the geographic boundaries of a country during a specified period, normally a year. In India, GDP is calculated based on three main broad sectors – agriculture and allied services, industry, and service sector. For the Indian GDP, the base year for computation is 2011-12. The growth in real GDP for India during 2019-20 is estimated at 5.0 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 6.8 per cent in 2018-19 (PIB 2020). According to Directorate of Economics and Statistics Odisha, GSDP is the sum of value added by different economic sectors (Agriculture, Industry &

Services) produced within the boundaries of the state calculated without duplication during a year. It is one of the measures of economic growth for a state's economy.

According to **Figure 8**, the GSDP of Mizoram is highest with 14.7% followed by Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. Although the GSDP of the North East region is small compared to the rest of India, there is potential and growth if proper infrastructure and development takes place.

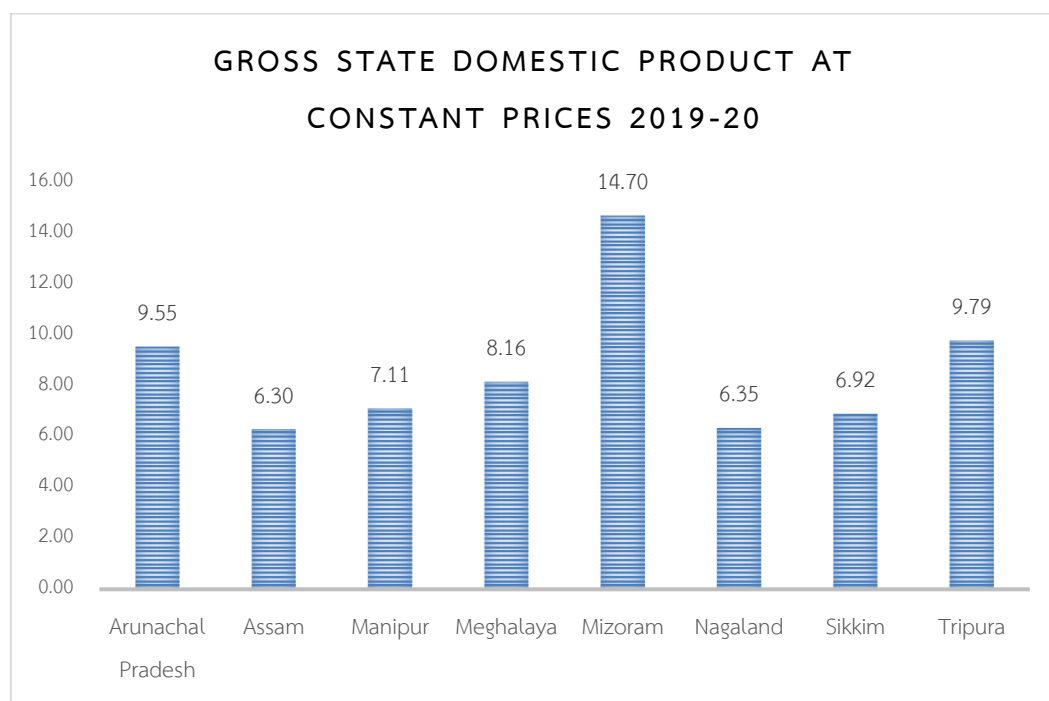


Figure 8: GSDP of the North East states (MoSPI 2021)

Source: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation

### Literacy Rate of North East India

According to **Figure 9**, based on the data given by NE council Mizoram has the highest literacy rate at 91.30% followed by Tripura and Sikkim at 87.2% and 81.4% respectively. Literacy rate is percentage of literates to total population aged 7 years and above (**NEC 2015**). All India the average Literacy rate in India is 74% and Mizoram

ranks No. 4 in the top 5 states according to literacy rate. The average literacy rate in the region is 78.8% which more than the All-India average.

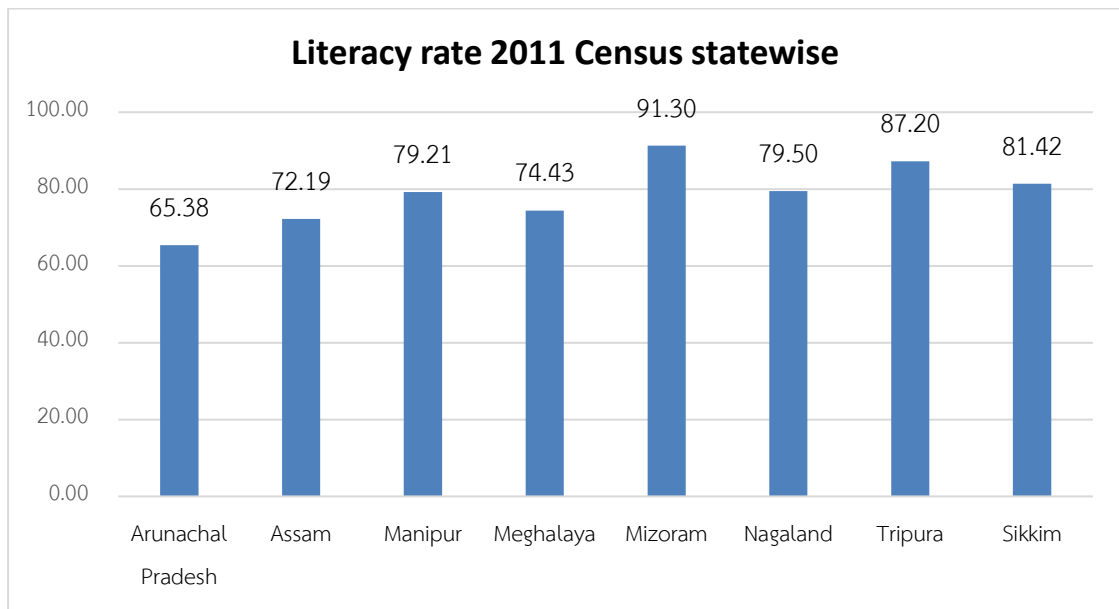


Figure 9: Literacy rate in North East

Source: BASIC STATISTICS OF NORTHEASTERN REGION 2015

## 2.2 Popularity of K-POP in North East India

The previous studies mentioned that the popularity of the Hallyu Wave and its components in North East India is because of similarities in race, similar social values (Kshetrimayum and Chanu 2008). The Northeastern people such as Nagas, Mizos being fond of music and dance (Athikho 2017, Pankaj 2017) contributes to the acceptance of popular Korean culture along with the same looks and physical appearance. Similar community and family relations between South Korea and North East India have led to its popularity among youth and older people (Reimeingam 2014). With the unique tribal traditions, language and religious practices, physical features, North East feels closer to South East Asian culture (Dhawan 2017, IndiaToday 2017).

The rise in the popularity of K-POP can be felt in the last six years with the beginning of K-POP contests, donations, comeback parties, streaming events, birthday parties for K-POP Idols. Many local North East newspapers such as Assam tribune, Sangai Express, Shillong Times, etc., promote and highlight the achievements of Korean artists.

In Nagaland, the Hornbill festival has played an important role in popularizing K-POP. Hornbill Festival is an initiative taken by the Nagaland Government since the year 2000 to promote the unity and culture of the major tribes in Nagaland. It is the 'festival of festivals' where music, art, dance, culture, food, etc., is celebrated. In 2008, the Government of Nagaland in collaboration with Korea's music channel Arirang TV held the first-ever Korea-India music festival in the region (Arirangnews 2008, Asem 2014). They have also invited K-POP idols to the festival in 2018 such as MONT, MustB, and LiveYubin (Gupta 2019). In 2018 MONT performed in the Hornbill Festival garnered around more than 10,000 people to witness their Pre-Debut performance. They also performed Bollywood hits for the Indian fans (Firstpost 2018). MONT came to Manipur in December 2018 and become the first K-POP act to perform in Manipur. And they also had a mini fan meeting in Dimapur. Korean singer and former vocalist of South Korean rock band LEDApple, Jang Hanbyul performed in 4th India International Cherry Blossom Festival in Shillong in 2019. He came to be the first K-POP idol to perform in Shillong, Meghalaya. For the Cherry Blossom festival of 2019, the partner country was South Korea and was sponsored by LG Electronics Inc. He also performed in Diphu in Assam, Dimapur & Kohima in 2019 for his summer tour. K-POP group, KARD came to India in 2019 July for their 'Play Your Kard Tour' and came to Guwahati for their tour attended by more than 1500 (Rongpanglepdang 2019), and added a Bollywood hit number to their setlist to surprise their fans.

K-POP group IMFACT in 2016 came to Sikkim for the K-pop contest India regional round 'NORTHEAST' as guest judges. 700 Hallyu fans attended the contest. The ambassador of the Republic of Korea to India, Director of KCCI (Korean Culture Centre, India) also attended the same. Several K-POP enthusiasts from all over the



North East and the rest of India participated in it. K-POP Idol group LUCENTE was the guest judge for the K-POP regional contest in Guwahati, Assam in 2017 and performed their debut tracks.

In 2016 Priyanka Mazumdar from Assam won the Excellent Vocal Award at the K-POP World Festival. She represented India in a K-POP Contest worldwide and became the first Indian to do so. She has now become a member of Z-Girls, a girl group under the company Zenith Media Contents (ZMC), a global K-POP group with members from several different Asian countries.

During the K-pop World Festival, 2017 in Changwon, South Korea, the boy group called Immortals Army, a seven-member group from Mizoram won the award for the best dance. They performed "Blood, Sweat and Tears" by the popular K-pop band BTS and received \$7,000 prize money. In 2018 Juchy from Mizoram won the First Prize in the vocal category at the grand finale of The Changwon K-POP India 2018 and represented India at the prestigious K-POP World Festival in South Korea (BookofAchievers 2018).

In 2019 Livon launched their search for India's first-ever girls K-POP group. They partnered with the international music channel 9XO. Livon has partnered with popular musicians from the North East region- Aloba Naga, Alune Tetseo, and Kuvelu Tetseo who are the mentors and judges in search of K-POP stars in India. They held auditions in two places: Guwahati, Cotton University, and Shillong, St Anthony's College. In March 2020, five girls who were selected from the auditions become the first K-POP girl group of India named 5HIGH. Out of the five girls, four are from Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya from North East India, and one from Maharashtra.

In Assam, Guwahati, a K-pop-themed restaurant named Kalita Cafe was opened by the Hotel Shoolin Grand. The restaurant includes a K-POP-themed decorated menu that highlights popular Korean dishes such as Jjajangmayeon, Gimbap, and other

items. Other top Korean restaurants are Kori's in Guwahati and Arunachal (**Figure 10**), Asian Bowl in Manipur, and Flavours of Korea in Mizoram.

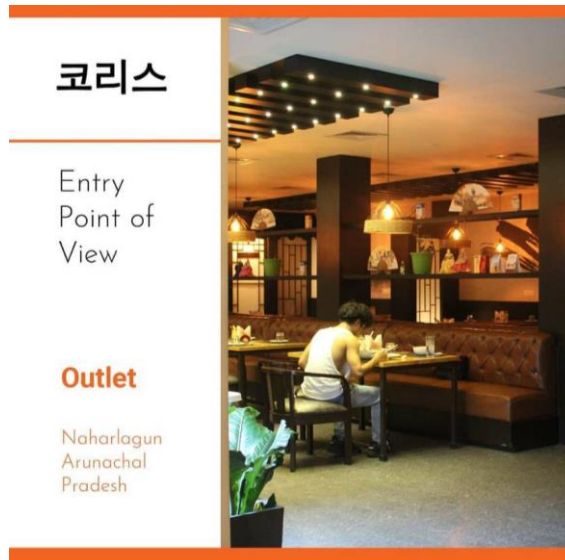


Figure 10: Kori's Arunachal Pradesh

Source: Kori's Instagram

North East India ARMY (BTS Fans) has a fan page named N.E India Army formed in 2018 with 5614 followers on Instagram (**refer to figure 11**) and regional fan bases such as Bangtan Assam (1,610), Mizoram army (5,977), Nagaland Army (1,334), Arunachal Army (1,025), Meghalaya Army (1,655), Manipur Army (2,141), Tripura Army (1,145) (As of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021) etc. The growing BTS fan base in North East can be understood with the increasing number of events such as charity, comeback party, flash mobs, streaming events, treasure hunts, birthday parties for BTS, etc. In 2018 and 2019 BTS's movies namely Burn the stage, Love Yourself in Seoul, Bring the Soul were showcased in India and in Guwahati, Nagaland, Shillong and Jorhat, Assam in North East India by PVR Cinemas and INOX Movies (Gupta 2019) where fans were also given BTS merchandise by the fan base representatives such as photo cards, banners, purple ribbons, etc. In July 2020, BTS ARMY NE INDIA and BTS army helps India raised and donated over ₹5 lakhs for the Assam Floods (**refer to figure 12**) which devastated many lives of the Assam amid the Covid-19 pandemic. In an interview

with Rolling Stone India, BTS had spoken about it and were happy and proud of Indian Armys (fans) helping those in need through their message (Chakraborty 2020).



Figure 11: North East India BTS fan page (As of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021)

Source: Instagram

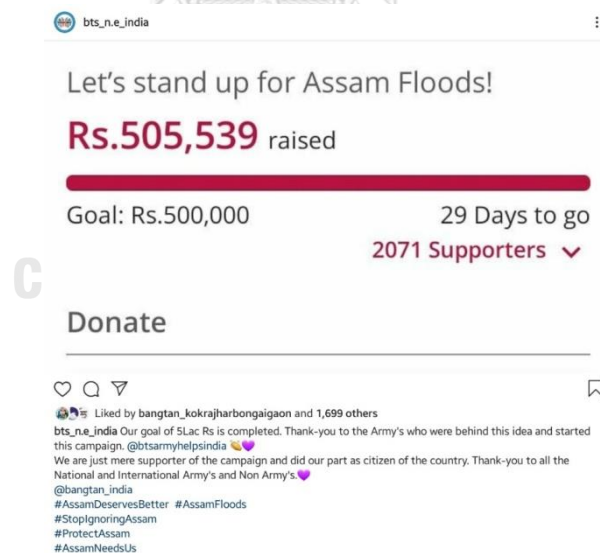


Figure 12: Assam Flood donations by BTS ARMY North East India

Source: BTS\_NE India Instagram

With the launch of Spotify India, they released six Months of Data (February-September 2019), and as seen. In **Figure 13**, K-POP was streamed highest in four North Eastern states (Spotify 2019). There is a strong preference for K-pop music in Arunachal, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura (Hindu 2020).

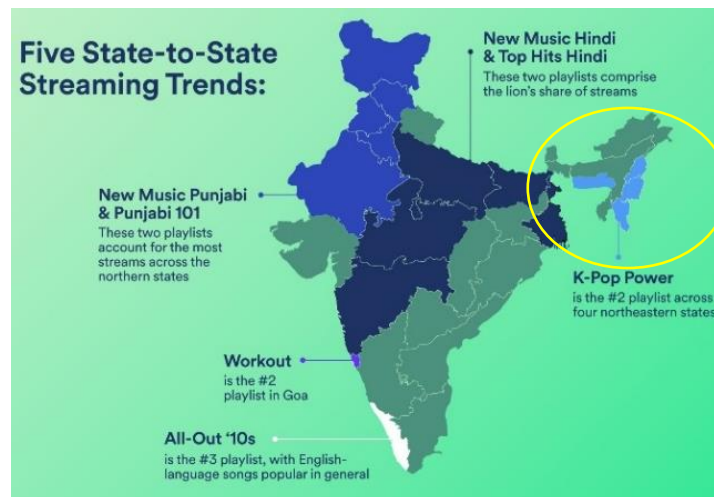


Figure 13: Five State to State Streaming Trends Spotify

Source: Spotify for the Record (September 2019)

### 2.3 Message of BTS

BTS, also known as 'Bangtan Sonyeondan', '방탄소년단' or "Bulletproof boy scouts" debuted in June 2013 launched by BIGHIT MUSIC, under HYBE Labels (formerly known as BIGHIT Entertainment). Their Fans are called ARMY '아미' acronym for Adorable Representative MC for Youth. They have a total of 7 members namely RM (leader), Jin, Suga, Jhope, Jimin, V, and Jungkook (BIGHITMUSIC). They have been followed by 31.2 million followers on Twitter, 35 million on Instagram, and 42 million on YouTube. They have achieved the **Order of Cultural Merit from the President of South Korea** for their contribution to the promotion of Korean Culture in 2018. They have been named as TIME 100: The Most Influential People of 2019, received Top Social Artist Award from Billboard Music Awards five times in a row, performed at the American Music Awards (AMAs) in 2017 as a debut performance in America,

presented an Award and performed with Lil Nas X at the Grammys 2019 and 2020, respectively.

BTS topped No. 1 with their single song “Dynamite” on 'Billboard Hot 100' in September 2020 three times in a row (Billboard Charts dated September 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>; October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, respectively) and topped No.2 and No. 3 on Billboard four times in a row (Billboard Charts dated September 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>; October 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, 5<sup>th</sup> December respectively). They have also been the First Act ever to chart No.1 on Billboard Hot 100, Billboard Global 200, and Billboard Global excluding U.S charts simultaneously. BTS's collaboration with Jason Derulo and Jawah 685 on ‘Savage Love’ landed them on the top of Billboard Hot 100 at No.1 (Chart dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 2020) and is the first group to be at No.1 and No.2 on the Billboard charts simultaneously (2020). In December 2020, they again top NO. 1 and No. 3 with their songs Life goes on and Dynamite (Billboard 2020, Trust 2020) (**Figure 14**). Life goes on is the only song sung predominantly in Korean topping No 1 in the Billboard chart's 62-year history. They have also been nominated for the Grammys 2021 in the category of Best pop Duo and group category (Grammy 2020) (**refer to Figure 15**).

SONG	ARTIST
1 <b>Life Goes On</b>	BTS
2 <b>Mood</b>	24kGoldn ft. iann dior
3 <b>Dynamite</b>	BTS
4 <b>Positions</b>	Ariana Grande
5 <b>I Hope</b>	Gabby Barrett ft. Charlie Puth
6 <b>Holy</b>	Justin Bieber ft. Chance the Rapper
7 <b>Laugh Now Cry Later</b>	Drake ft. Lil Durk
8 <b>Monster</b>	Shawn Mendes & Justin Bieber
9 <b>Blinding Lights</b>	The Weeknd
10 <b>Lemonade</b>	Internet Money & Gunna ft. Don Toliver & NAV

chart dated Dec. 5, 2020

Figure 14: Billboard Hot 100 (Dated 5<sup>th</sup> December 2020)

Source: Instagram Billboard charts

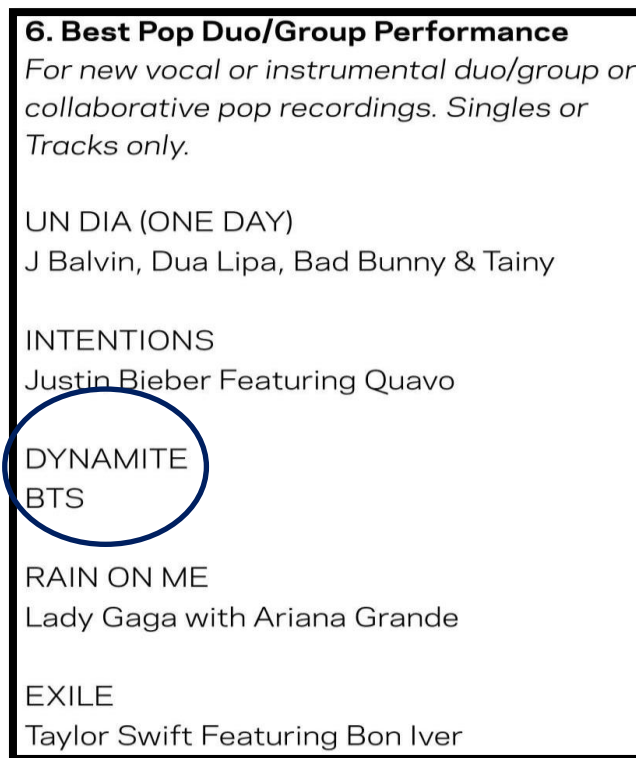


Figure 15: Grammy Nomination 2021

Source: Grammys

They held an online weekend concert called 'BANGBANGCON' on YouTube in April 2020 due to the Covid-19. It gathered over 50 million viewers worldwide (Chakraborty 2020) free of cost without buying concert tickets, cheered, and watched the concert from their homes. They promoted a new form of technological innovation where their fans' light stick called 'Army Bomb' was synced with the group's performance throughout the concert. On October 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 2020, BTS held their online concert Map of the Soul ON: E which was a paid online concert, due to the cancelation of their offline concert with nearly one million fans watching from around the globe (Rowley 2020).

BTS has been advocating the importance of loving oneself. Their songs such as 'Answer: Love Myself', 'Mikrocosmos', 'Magic Shop', '2!3!', 'Butterfly', 'You Never Walk Alone' have a message of being able to accept the good and bad in oneself. BTS is not afraid to show their vulnerabilities to their fans and songs are a sign of

comfort and warmth (Bora 2020). The concept of BTS is breaking stereotypes of society and uplifting the spirits of the confused young generation. It is in the form of a storytelling concept, which also has been adapted into a Webtoon series in 2019 and soon to be released as a K-Drama. They have been breaking language and geographical barriers and have given several references to their struggles as young men living in today's world (Herman 2018).

They have collaborated with UNICEF for the LOVE YOURSELF CAMPAIGN (**refer to Figure 16**) against violence towards young children and teenagers since 1 November 2017. The campaign has been popularized on social media through the #ENDVIOLENCE and #BTSLOVEMYSELF hashtag. According to the Love Yourself UNICEF website, the #BTSLOVEMYSELF has been used 11,811,497 times on social media. A total of 2,600,000,000(KWR) has been raised as of 30.11.2019 (LoveYourself). The goal of this campaign is to help children and young teens live a life without violence of any sort. The group has donated for several noble causes and the same has been done by their fans around the world. One such example is when BTS donated \$1M for the BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT in 2020 and their fans around the world matched the same amount within 24 hours (Rowley 2020). BTS also had the honour of speaking at the Generation Unlimited at the UN General Assembly in September 2018, where RM (leader) said, "Find your name, find your voice by speaking yourself" (UNICEF 2018). The speech was applauded by everyone and trended on Twitter for several hours with the hashtag #BTSxUnitedNations (Kelley 2018). BTS also had the chance to address the 75<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 as seen in **Figure 17**, where they talked about how the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the lives of the young people around the world.



Figure 16: BTSxUNICEF

Source: UNICEF Love Yourself website

LOVE MYSELF



unicef | for every child

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Figure 17: BTS speech at the UN 75<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Source: UNICEF Instagram



## CHAPTER III

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Related Theory

##### 3.1.1 Factors of Consumer Behaviour

There are many factors of consumer behaviour. For example, Manrai Manrai Model emphasized the effect of culture on consumer behaviour (1996), Luna and Gupta Model (2001) focuses on values in culture and their effect on consumer behaviour, Brown (2006) specifies social, personal, and psychological as factors of consumer behaviour, Koudelka 1997 emphasizes on inner and outer factors. According to Marketing (Lamb), 11<sup>th</sup> edition consumer behaviour (**refer to figure 18**) (Charles W. Lamb 2011) these are the following factors of consumer behaviour: Cultural, Social, Individual, and Psychological factors.

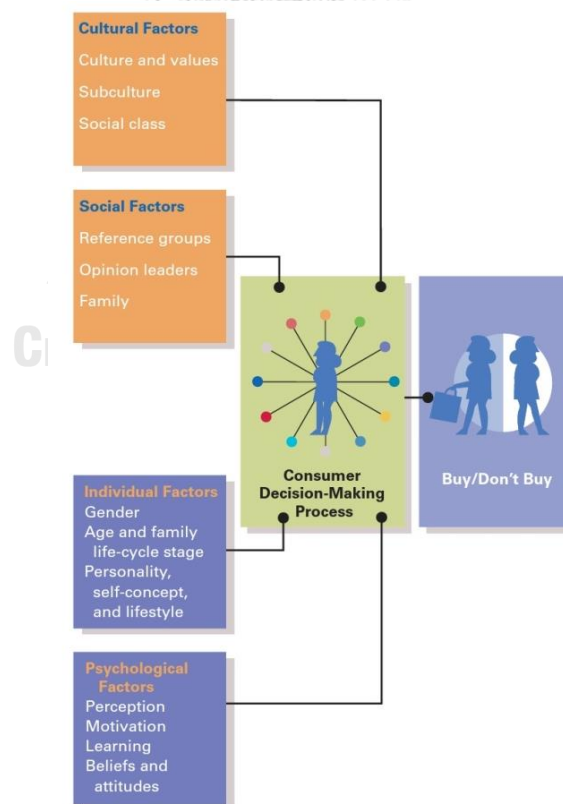


Figure 18: Types of Consumer Behaviour

Source: Marketing (Lamb), 11th ed. (2011)

### a) Cultural factors

The first factor is cultural factors which include culture and values, subculture, and social class. **Culture** is the way of life; it is universal and dynamic. Culture is the way people learn values and beliefs from childhood and is passed on from one generation to the next. **Subculture** refers to the division of culture based on geographic, demographic features. The subculture has its own culture unique to a specific group who also enjoy the overall culture. **Social class** refers to the class distinction in society based on lifestyle. The class system divides the people based on lifestyle patterns and income range.

### b) Social factors

The social factor includes the role of reference groups, opinion leaders, and family members. The **reference groups** refer to those membership groups which influence the consumer behaviour of the members. It highlights the trends within the group. This can also show the life cycle of the products. The second one is **opinion leaders**; they are the people who are the influencers and can influence others. They can be actors, actresses, celebrities, and famous organizations or institutions, who play a major role in moulding the minds and opinions of the public. The third one is **Family** which plays an important role in the everyday lives of people since childhood. Family is the beginning of socialization in one's life. Children learn a lot about consumption behaviour early on from their parents.

### c) Individual factors

Individual factors refer to the personal characteristics of a person which are unique to them and are based on gender, age, personality, and lifestyle. The first one is **gender** which is the physiological differences in individuals. Gender plays an important role in influencing individuals to buy products suitable for their body or their needs. The second is **age and family life cycle** where the consumers' age and their role in the family affect their consumer behaviour. The age of an individual makes them buy products related to their age. The family life cycle is where individuals go through stages of experience, maturity in terms of their behaviour and

attitudes resulting in changes in consumption. The third one is **personality, self-concept, and lifestyle**. Personality refers to an individual's attitudes, behaviour, and the way they react to situations. Self-concept is the way people perceive themselves and their thoughts of themselves. Lifestyle is the life pattern of individuals and the way they live their life. These three components are essential in influencing a person's consumer behaviour.

#### d) Psychological factors

Psychological factors include motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes. The first one is **motivation**, whereby a person's want or need to buy something; the stronger someone's want is, the greater is their motivation to buy or consume something. The second is **perception** whereby a person sees, understands, and decides to buy a product. The concept of perception is different from person to person, what may be important to someone, may be of no use or value to some else. The third one is **learning and beliefs and attitudes**. Learning is the way changes are made in a person through experience and different encounters. Beliefs refer to the values or knowledge a person holds on to. Attitudes are the reactions of individuals to situations and environments. These three components are important in shaping consumer behaviour. The beliefs and attitudes individuals have towards something cannot be changed easily. If a product is aligned with an individual's beliefs, the person will have a positive attitude towards it and if the product is not in the same sphere as their beliefs, the person will not have a positive attitude towards it.

#### 3.1.2 Cultural Diamond Model

This model was given by Wendy Griswold in the 1980s. To understand the success of K-POP in the world the Cultural Diamond model can be used to understand this phenomenon. Seo Min Soo (2012), used the Cultural Diamond Model to explain the success of K-POP globally; the model contains four factors as seen in **figure 19** preparation, content, delivery, and consumers (Min-Soo 2012).



Figure 19: K-POP Diamond success Model (SEO MIN SOO 2012)



Figure 20: Four Stages of Star Preparation (SEO MIN SOO 2012)

In the first stage Preparation, the trainees are chosen and selected through auditions in South Korea and worldwide auditions, based on their talent to sing, dance, rap, or entertain; they then go through vigorous training for 5-10 years (refer to figure 20). After the training, only the best is selected to debut in a group or have their solo debut. The audience gets to see the best and the refined individuals in K-POP groups (Min-Soo 2012). The idols are trained to execute content with sophisticated choreography and concepts which is unique to every K-POP act. For example, BTS has their concept of the 'LOVE YOURSELF' and HYYH theory which is in the form of storytelling. They also released merchandise relating to their concept such as graphic lyrics of several songs and books and webtoon based on the theory (2020).

In the producing stage, the companies work with experts from different fields such as choreography, music, producers to give a finishing and appealing touch to idols and cater to the target audience. The entertainment companies form collaborations with

global companies and produce music or ask the companies to collaborate with global artists.

In the consumer stage, the target audience is mostly the young audience who are very much into technology and are in constant touch with social media. In the present era, SNS (social networking services) are of great importance as within minutes, a debut song or an idol comeback can trend on any platform or stay at the top of any global or local music charts.

Lee Soo Man founder the SM Entertainment, introduced in 2016 CT or Cultural Technology and NCT or New Cultural Technology, where he showed a framework of four stages namely Casting, Training, Production, and Management (2016). He focused on the importance of '**Localization of Hallyu**' and delivering K-POP not just to Asia but worldwide. He introduced the K-POP Group called NCT which is a group not only with Korean idols but idols from Japan, China, and South-East Asian bases and American Korean idols, thereby producing a multicultural and multilingual group under New Cultural Technology.

Bang Shi Hyuk founder and Chairman of HYBE Corp. in his interview with TIME magazine (Bruner 2019) gave the company's method of training artists. They create a 'more school-like environment' and educate artists on the importance of living their life as an artist and the importance of how one must use social media. The focus is on educating artists on life lessons and keeping an 'open window' for artists to have their own space so that in times of any need or questions they can always seek the opinion and help from the company. This method according to Mr. Bang Shi Hyuk is an honest and sincere approach towards the artists and which got through to the fans.

### 3.2 Previous Studies

#### Papers by international researchers-

**Globalization, or the logic of cultural hybridization: the case of the Korean wave** by **Woongjae Ryoo (2009)**, explains the complexity of the transnational Cultural Wave is getting assimilated into the everyday lives of the people. The culture flow from one region to another is a complex process along with the factors of globalization and hybridization. The subject matter of the study focuses on the social, historical, political, economic, and other discourses in the relationship between cultural and regional identity. The hybrid culture interacts and negotiates with the local elements and people create their 'own spaces'. The Hallyu Wave may also act as a competitor to American popular culture. The theory of hybridization is important as the culture flow interacts with local factors and forms its own space in the local and global arena. Although the Korean Wave is becoming popular, it is also losing its support in some areas such as China, Vietnam. Many views the Hallyu Wave as Cultural Imperialism, trying to dominate the culture of another society. For the sustainability of Hallyu, it would require the support of local institutions for it to remain valid and have the trust of the people. Ryoo argues that the theory of Cultural imperialism of the Hallyu Wave is not completely valid as it does not explain why there is so much craze for it all over the world. The Hallyu wave should not be viewed from one dimension but through its complexity. This transnational hybrid cultural flow seems to bring Asia under one umbrella, but with regions still having their own identity.

In the paper **Past, Present and Future of Hallyu (Korean Wave)** by **Kim Bok Rae (2016)**, highlights the chronological phases of Hallyu. From Hallyu 1.0 to Hallyu 4.0, a chart is drawn to showcase the characteristic of every phase from the beginning of the 1990s to the present era. Hallyu 1.0 focused on K-Drama, 2.0 on K-POP, 3.0 on K-Culture, and 4.0 on K-Corporate Culture. The transformation of Hallyu from 1.0 to the present context is important to understand its future and get a new perspective.

The Hallyu phenomenon is an important topic of discussion for Korean society. The Hallyu Wave is trying to weave Asia into a single whole devoid of cultural homogeneity and binds with oneness.

**The Success Factor of K-pop Music from the Fan's Perspective** by **Yew Chee Chew (2018)** focuses on finding the factors which led to the success of K-POP and the degree of fan satisfaction. The paper used quantitative online survey and used four important components of success factors namely performance which include K-POP performance, lyrics, dance, and costumes, the second component is Korean culture, the third component is talent which is about the idol's talents and abilities and the last component is Idol aesthetic which includes the physical appearance of idols. The research was conducted among all K-POP fans around the world and collected 207 samples. The study finds that the degree of satisfaction among fans is high and the Korean culture component is the popular component.

The current research is inspired by these four components in finding the factors of K-POP popularity in North East India (Chew 2018).

#### **Papers by Indian researchers-**

In **Mapping Cultural Diffusion: The Case of 'Korean Wave' in North East India** by **Otojit Kshetrimayum and Ningombam Victoria Chanu (2008)** states the cultural proximity between Manipur and Korea. The similarities in race, similar cultural values have an important contribution to the popularity of the Hallyu Wave. The role of media such as the broadcast of Arirang in the TV sets of Manipur, pirated DVDs/CDs, and has played a significant role. The sharing of international borders with Myanmar has encouraged trade but also increased the availability of pirated Korean CDs/DVDs. Manipur in North East India experienced Hallyu Wave at the same time as Taiwan and China, for that several factors are being cultural, racial, religiously, social, and moral proximity. The social and moral principles of Manipur and Korea are somewhat like each other to quite an extent.

**Neikolie Kuotsu (2013) Architectures of pirate film cultures: encounters with Korean Wave in “Northeast” India**, focused on mainly three states Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland. This study used film theories, writings, and analysis of secondary resources. The study examined the piracy culture and the partial factor piracy which facilitated the growth of the popularity of South Korean films in the regions. The geographical location has facilitated the circulation of media in the region in and around the border. The region is located on the borders of Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Bhutan. Myanmar is also an important trading partner with China. The consumption and circulation of Korean films are not because of a single factor but because of trade, political disputes, a ban on national media, insurgency, etc. The Korean films and media are rather accepted by the people with any backlashes while Bollywood movies are marked as films of nudity and inappropriate content. The familiarity of the North East people with Koreans in terms of looks also serves as an example for the young jobseekers to look for jobs at Korean companies. Korean movies are favoured by the people because of their values such as devotion, loyalty, humaneness, filial piety, morality, etc.

**Dr. Bidyarani Asem (2014), Contextualizing Social Learning Theory through Korean Media: A Case Study of Cultural Heterogenization in North East India** focuses on the Koreanization of North East people through social learning theory. The diffusion and assimilated of Korean culture in the North East region are through popular Korean films, movies, dramas, and music, etc. The usage of Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory further proves that the Korean culture has assimilation along with local cultural traits. The way the Korean actors or celebrities dress or style, their behaviour, lifestyle showcased in the dramas, usage of chopsticks, etc., is keenly observed are learned by the people. The Korean culture is furthermore accepted by all ages. It is also popularized by the local government such as Nagaland Government’s initiative in the Hornbill festival to include Korean popular music. The other reasons that have been attributed to this popular culture are the racial discrimination faced by the North East people from mainstream India, alienation from



the rest go the country, globalization, technological changes, and familiarity of physical appearance with Koreans.

In **Korean Wave and Korean Media Consumption in Manipur**, by **Marchang Reimeingam (2014)**, mentioned Hallyu Wave as being a **hybrid culture** mixed accurately with Western modernity and Asian sentiments. The investigator uses theoretical approach in explaining how Korean culture has been adopted by the youth of Manipur which is not the 'original' Korean culture. This popular culture also poses a threat to the authentic Korean culture endangering classical Korean artists. The Korean dramas have not only captured the hearts of the youth but also of the older generation who are drawn to the similar family and community values showcased in the dramas. The Manipur youth being fascinated by Korean Idols and the availability of dramas, music, and films through pirated CD, DVDs at cheap prices. The international border shared with Manipur and Myanmar has led to the imports of electronic goods mainly from China, Korea, and Thailand but also increased supply of pirated CDs, DVDs. Lastly, and the importance of media has helped in the high consumption of Korean popular culture in Manipur.

In **Ranjit Kumar Dhawan (2017) Korea's Cultural Diplomacy: An Analysis of the Hallyu in India, Strategic Analysis**, a vivid account of India and Korea's relation was explained in terms of history, culture, and economy. This researcher analyses Korea's cultural diplomacy efforts to spread K-wave in India. The reception of Hallyu in India is somewhat not as popular as it is in other Asian countries. Although North East India has accepted Hallyu Wave earlier than the rest of India, because of several similarities in terms of physical and cultural traits, it is not so popular in the rest of India. For Korea to become an important ally and trading partner, it must invest in other sectors of the Indian economy such as sports, infrastructure, technology, connectivity, etc. And for India, it must decrease the trade deficit with Korea and become a reliable manufacturing partner.

**Hallyu in India: A Study of the Reception of Korean Culture in India Today** by **Pankaj N. Mohan (2017)**, analyses the historical, popular Korean cultural forms, language, and literature. This paper highlights the ties between India and Korea which later faded during the Joseon dynasty, married Queen Heo Hwang Ok from Ayodhya who married Korean king Kim Suro of Gaya kingdom and the acceptance of Hallyu in the North Eastern states of India. Besides the past historical ties between both countries, India is yet to change her views on Korea. India considers Korea as an exotic country, but after globalization and the expansion of Korean companies in India such as Hyundai, LG, Samsung which are now household names; the image of Korea is yet to change. The opening of graduate programs on Korean studies and language in the major universities of India is the first step of moving forward.

The North East states such as Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland are an exception to this, as they have already accepted and are aware of Hallyu Wave and Korean popular culture since the early 2000s. The proximity in culture, religion, physical appearance plays an important role in this. The evident trade route between Myanmar and China played a vital role in the region's Korean cultural assimilation through pirated CDs, DVDs of movies, dramas, and popular music. The image of Korea and the popularity of Hallyu is yet to change in the whole of India, with North East India the only exception where Hallyu is already prominent.

Another study **Globalization, Hybridization and Cultural Invasion - Korean Wave in India's North East**, by **Athikho Kaisii (2017)** highlights the acceptance of Korean culture by North East people. This study used semi-structured interviews and participant observation. With globalization came the hybrid culture as a cultural invasion in the form of Korean dramas, music, style, fashion attracting the youth of North East India. The North Eastern people such as Nagas, Mizos being fond of music and dance contributes to the acceptance of popular Korean culture along with the same looks and physical appearance. Another factor is the similar social and religious attributes allowing Korean values in the dramas to be accepted by the people without any opposition. The attractive looks of the Korean actors and Idols also

serve as an important aspect of this cultural invasion. ‘Youth Inquisitiveness’ is described, where the youth has readily accepted this phenomenon and has enthralled them to the modern ways of living. Last, the importance of Globalization and how one can learn to stick to their cultural roots, although one is being attracted to another culture.

**In conclusion,** the previous studies have mostly mentioned about Hallyu Wave being a hybrid culture and the factors of globalization and hybridization. Most articles on Korean Wave highlight the beginning of the Hallyu in North East India. The region was already aware of it unlike the rest of India which was still unaware of Hallyu which has begun to spread recently. Nonetheless, there a few other articles that have acknowledged the rapid growth of Hallyu, as now there is a growing insurgence of young girls and boys who are in love with Korean culture and the increasing popularity of learning the Korean language. India and Korea have important relations with each other in terms of historical ties and economic partners, although Hallyu Wave hasn’t gained its momentum in mainstream India yet (with the North East region being an exception) like in other Asian countries and the USA, it is important to note that Hallyu is still new to the subcontinent and it will take some time for it to fully be accepted by the people.

In studies related to North East India and Hallyu, it is highlighted that Hallyu Wave has been accepted by North Eastern youth and even by older people in some states. The people of the North East have seen the beginning of Hallyu since the late 1990s. The cultural proximity in terms of cultural, race, social values between Korea and North Eastern states has been examined closely but besides that, the factors of K-POP are not studied in the past studies. Most of the focus is on the history of the beginning of the Hallyu Wave and its popularity in Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland but there is limited mention about the popularity of K-POP in the rest of North East. There is no study on the popularity of K-POP in North East India as a whole. Hence, this study will focus on the factors responsible for the popularity of K-POP in North

East India and the popularity of BTS in terms of the increasing fame of K-POP in the region.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research techniques, data collection methods and Conceptual Framework which is used in this research.

#### 4.1 Conceptual Framework

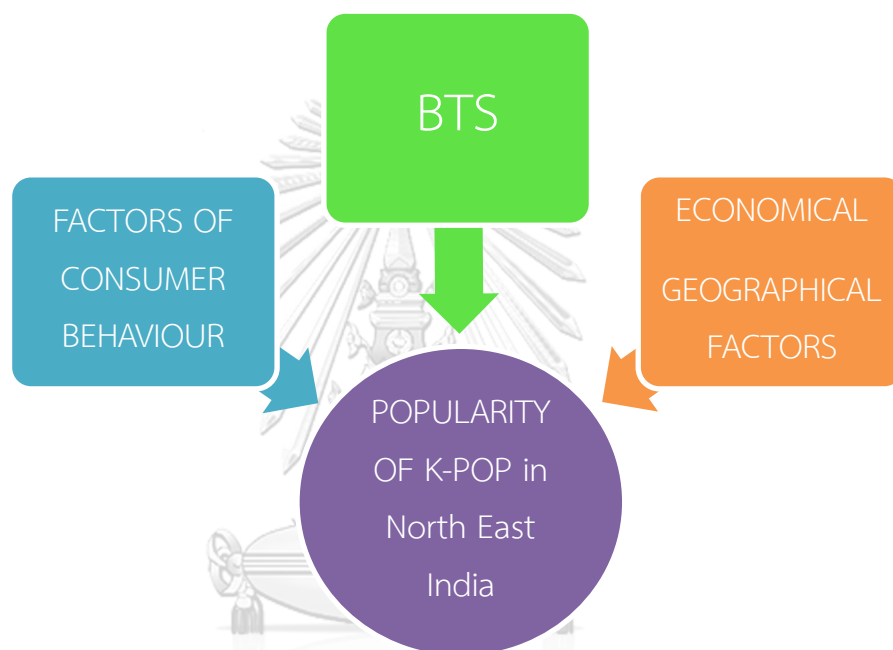


Figure 21: Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework is based on the research hypothesis, showing the factors of K-POP popularity in North East India is BTS, factors of consumer behaviour such as Individual, psychological, cultural, and social factors, also two more factors which are economic and geographical.

#### 4.2 Data Collection

##### 4.2.1 Primary Data

This study aims to find out the factors behind the popularity of K-POP today in North East India and if BTS is the reason behind the K-POP popularity. The study is carried out through interview method, questionnaire method, and online observation among the age group 14-29 in the eight states of North East India.

### a) Population

The eight states namely **Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Sikkim, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland** of North East of India have an approximate population of 45 million (India Census 2011). The region was the first in getting exposed to Hallyu Wave and has been already assimilated in the other states.

The study focuses on the age group 14-29 years as the sample group because this is the age group that is usually the audience of K-POP and Korean culture in India. They have independent access to the internet, with the maximum number of internet users who are easily exposed to K-POP. Young consumers are important as they experience and go through technological advances, experience different cultures, are in the prime time of their life (Reimeingam 2015), enjoy popular culture on different social platforms, and spend more money on buying and enjoying the products of popular culture.

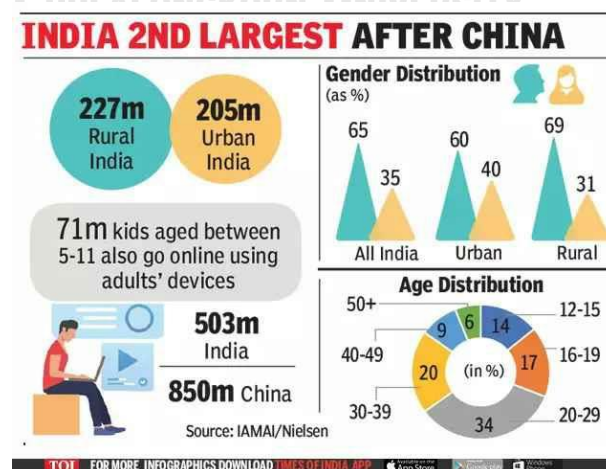


Figure 22: Internet users in India

Source: Times of India 2018

As seen in **Figure 22**, the internet users of India show that the age groups 12-15 have 14%, 16-19 have 17% and 20-29 have 34% access to the internet in India, when combined constitutes 65% which is highest compared to the other age groups. Children from the age group 5-11 use the internet of the elders and their parents at home (Chanchani 2020).

Internet connectivity has reached only 35% of all the eight North East states and around 8,600 villages are yet to receive Internet connectivity (Chanchani 2020). Assam has a total of 10.25 million internet users and the rest seven states have a total of 6.09 million internet users combined (Kaita 2018) .

According to Spotify India (Chakraborty 2019), Spotify listeners range from Gen-Z i.e. 18-24 years old to over 55 years. BTS leads the K-POP playlist in all places both domestically and internationally. That is why this study will primarily focus on the ages 14-29 years. The “2021 Global Hallyu survey” annual report carried out among 8,500 Korean cultural content consumers from 18 countries, such as the United States, China, Japan, India, and more showed that Asian women in their 20s and 30s were the "biggest spenders" on Korean cultural products in 2020 (Kwak 2021).

#### b) Sample Size

The National Youth Policy in 2014 defined youth from the age group 15-29. The youth population of India was 35.11% in 2010 (Dr. Davendra Verma 2017) and is expected to be 34.33% in 2020 (Dr. Davendra Verma 2017). In 2011, India had a population of 1.21 Billion populations (India Census 2011). The Indian youth was 27.5% based on the National Youth Policy 2014 and North East India had a share of 4% of the total youth population in the last census (Deka 2019).

The target population of this research is young people from the age group 14-29 years. Since the youth population in North East India, exceeds more than 50,000, it is

an infinite population. The respondents are those who are into K-POP and fans of BTS.

In 2004, Godden provided a method to calculate infinite population (Tran 2013):

$$SS = \frac{(Z)^2 \times (p) \times (1-p)}{C^2}$$

SS = Sample Size

Z = Z-value (e.g., 1.96 for a 95 percent confidence level)

P = Percentage of population picking a choice, expressed as decimal 0.5

C = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., 0.5 is used)

$$SS = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.5) \times (0.5)}{0.5^2} = 384.16$$

Using this value calculated at 384.16, the value is the amount needed to take as sample size. But, due to time limitations and large target audience, the sample size for this study is 320.

#### c) Sampling Method

The data was collected through two ways in this research– Questionnaires and interview methods. The Questionnaire was sent online to respondents. Questions were distributed through 'Google Forms' which were used as a medium for collecting respondents' answers. Online Questionnaire helps in wide circulation to those who are interested in the topic. The questionnaire was collected from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

#### d) Questionnaire

The questionnaires were used to gather data from the respondents regarding their interest and understanding of K-POP in North East India. The questionnaire was based on the factors of consumer behaviour to understand the popularity of K-POP in North East and questions on BTS popularity.



The questionnaire was divided into 5 parts. The first three parts and Part 5 are the same for all respondents, except in Part 4 was based on the answers given by the respondents there were two sets of questions for BTS fans and another for fans of other K-POP groups.

**Part 1** consists of personal information such as age, sex, religion, income or allowance, state, occupation, education level of the respondents.

**Part 2** consists of the questions on the time they got exposed to K-POP, how many hours they listen to K-POP songs, who was the first K-POP group they were interested in, the most popular group in North East India according to them, do they own any albums or merchandise, do they follow or are a part of any fan groups on Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and have they attended any K-POP concert.

**Part 3**, based on social, cultural, and psychological factors. The method of rating each statement on a scale of 1 to 5. The questions are how they got interested in K-POP, why they love K-POP and why K-POP is accepted in North East India.

**Part 4** consists of questions regarding if the respondent is a fan of BTS, **based on their answer**, Yes or No, they were *directed to two different sets of questions* for each Yes or No answer.

*One set of questions* if they answer **Yes** consists of questions regarding the first song, they heard by BTS, why they love BTS (based on rating each statement), who is their bias; if they attend fan events organized by ARMY in their area, what is their favourite BTS song and are they fans of other groups besides BTS.

*Another set of questions* for those who have answered **NO** they are asked which K-POP group they are a fan of to understand the other K-POP groups popular in the region after BTS.

**Part 5** of the questionnaire has two questions which were asked to **all respondents**- if BTS is the reason why K-POP is becoming popular in North East India and do they

think BTS will be able to maintain their popularity in North East India *in yes or no or maybe* answer format.

**e) The rating criteria**

Part 3 and Q. 20 of Part 4 were evaluated on the Likert scale of 5 points from 1 to 5 ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree. The value and meaning of each point are given below:

Score	Meaning
5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Neither agree nor disagree
2	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree

Table 2: Rating Criteria

**f) The criteria of score**

The study provides three average score ranges from very low to a very high-level agreement.

From 1.00-2.50 non-influence level or low-level agreement

From 2.51-3.50 medium level agreement

From 3.51-5.00 high level or very high-level agreement

**g) Interview**

The interviews were carried out amongst nine individuals. The interviews were conducted online through video calls or phone calls due to restrictions in traveling and the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of using Interviewees' responses in the research, their names were substituted with 'Interviewee (number)', for example, the name of the interviewee is Eshani Bora, the name was be substituted as 'Interviewee 1'.

To understand the popularity of K-POP and the reason behind its popularity, the interviewees were asked around 8-10 questions, the questions vary according to the fact that if they are BTS fans or other group fans.

If the interviewees are BTS fans they were asked the following-

- How did they get into K-POP? When and how they became BTS fans?
- How do their family and friends react to them (fans) listening to K-POP music?
- Why is K-POP accepted and so popular in North East India?
- What they think about BTS's popularity in North East India? Will BTS be able to maintain its popularity in North East India?
- What do they think about BTS's message?
- What makes BTS different from other K-POP groups which have helped them to gain such popularity?
- Does K-POP make them interested in Korean culture?

If the interviewees are not BTS fans they were asked the following questions such as-

- How did they get into K-POP? Which group they are fans of?
- Why and how did they become their fan?
- Why is K-POP accepted and popular in North East India?
- Does K-POP make them interested in Korean culture?
- According to you is BTS the most popular K-POP group in North East India and why?
- Do you think BTS will keep becoming popular in North East India?
- Can other K-POP groups benchmark BTS?

#### **h) Online Observation**

The online observation was conducted from June 2020 to December 2020, for a period of seven months. Fan groups on WhatsApp, Online comments, discussions, and conversations among K-POP, and BTS fans, activities, and events were observed

to have a better understanding of the popularity and active participation of fans in North East India.

#### **i) Comment Analysis**

Comment analysis was done by using the Python program to extract Twitter comments by using the Keywords K-POP and BTS. The comments were collected on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and from India only. A total of 755 comments were collected for this study.

#### **4.2.2 Secondary data**

Secondary data were collected from official websites such as Researchgate.com, Academia.edu, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History, Korea.net, as well as articles, journals, interviews, and HYBE briefings, and SMTOWN: NCT (2016) briefing on YouTube, research papers, and magazine on consumer behaviour.

#### **4.3 Analysis**

To analyse the questionnaire, all the data were collected and reviewed by using the EXCEL program to create Graphs and Pie-charts and to find the mean, Standard deviation score for analysing Part 3 and Q.20 from Part 4 that are presented in Chapter 5 by using the SPSS program.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS

The result of the study is analyzed and presented in this chapter. There are 7 parts which contain personal information, social, cultural, and psychological factors, BTS and popularity of BTS, comment analysis, and discussion.

#### 5.1 Part 1: Personal information of respondents

This part consists of age, gender, religion, educational level, state, designation, income, and allowance from family. The information is gathered from North East India youth from the age group 14-29 years old from 1<sup>st</sup> October -5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

##### 5.1.1 Age

As seen in **Table 3** the age group from 18-21 has the largest share of the respondents with 36.2% out of 320 respondents followed by the age group 14-17 and 18-21 with 30% and 27.2% respectively. The least number of respondents is from the age group 26-29 age group.

Age	Number of Responses	Percentage
14-17	96	30
18-21	116	36.2
22-25	88	27.2
26-29	20	6.2
Total	320	100

Table 3: Age

### 5.1.2 Gender

As seen in **Table 4** the percentage of female respondents is 90.9% whereas for males it is 9.06%, as the number of female respondents out of 320 respondents is 291 and male is 29.

Interviewee 8 has said that some of his friends criticize him for fanboying BTS. Interviewee 4 has also said that he has been criticized for being a fan of K-POP by both his male and female friends.

Gender	Number of Responses	Percentage
Female	291	90.9
Male	29	9.06
Total	320	100

Table 4: Gender

### 5.1.3 Religion

As seen in **Table 5** the percentage of Christian respondents is 52.8% followed by Hindu and Buddhist respondents with 32.8% and 7.8% respectively. The least number of respondents is from the Sikh religion with 0.6% only.

Religion	Number of Responses	Percentage
Christian	169	52.8
Hindu	105	32.8
Buddhist	25	7.8
Other	15	4.6
Muslim	4	1.2
Sikh	2	0.6
Total	320	100

Table 5: Religion

#### 5.1.4 Education Level

As seen in **Table 6** when it comes to the education level, the percentage of Undergraduate level is highest i.e., 39.6% followed by postgraduate and higher secondary with 23.1% and 18.7%. High school has the least number of responses with 18.4%.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Education Level	Number of responses	Percentage
Undergraduate	127	39.6
Postgraduate	74	23.1
Higher Secondary	60	18.7
High School (till class 10)	59	18.4
Total	320	100

Table 6: Education Level

### 5.1.5 State

According to **Figure 23**, the respondents were collected almost equally from all 8 states accounting for a total of 320 respondents. The reason why an equal number of respondents were taken was to show the equal representation of all 8 states in collecting the responses of the people. From 6 states 40 responses were taken, except for Assam with 42 responses and Arunachal with 38 responses.

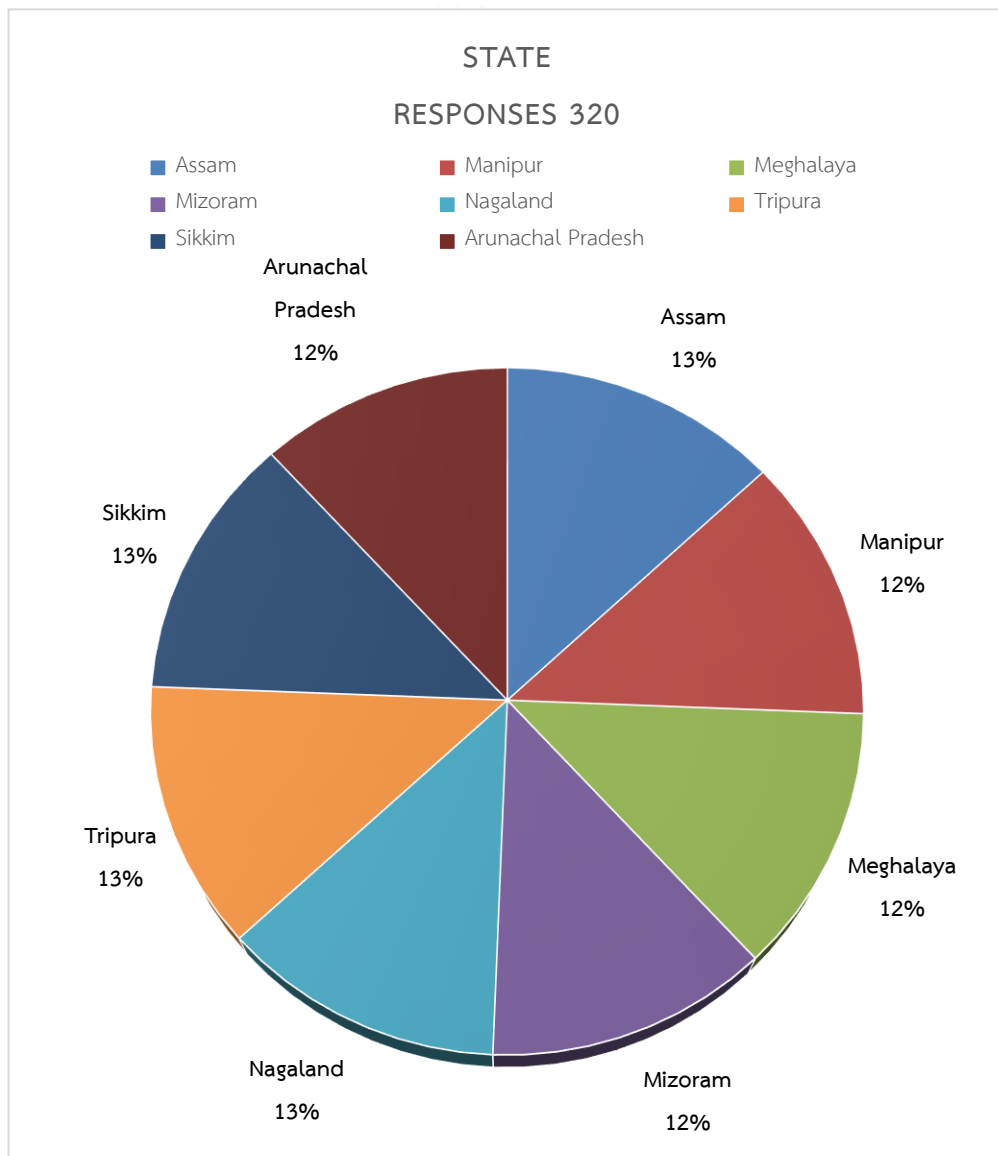


Figure 23: State



### 5.1.6 Designation

As seen in **Table 7** the percentage of students is the highest with 88.1% followed by employed and unemployed with 5.9% and 2.8% respectively.

Designation	Number of responses	Percentage
Student	282	88.1
Employed	19	5.9
Unemployed	9	2.8
Self-employed	6	1.8
Other	4	1.2
Total	320	100

Table 7: Designation

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

### 5.1.7 Income

The respondents were asked whether they have an income or not. As seen in **Table 8**, the result is that 89.6% have no income with 287 responses whereas 10.3% have an income with 33 responses.

Do you have an income?	Number of responses	Percentage
No	287	89.6
Yes	33	10.3
Total	320	100

Table 8: Income

### 5.1.8 Amount of Income

The number of responses with an income is 33 out of 320 responses. As seen in **Table 9** the highest number of responses are from ₹10,000-₹20,000 income and ₹20,000-₹30,000 income per month accounting for 27.2% respectively, followed by less than ₹10,000 in a month with 24.2% responses. The least is from more than ₹50,000 per month with 3.03%.

How much do you earn in a month? (in ₹)	Number of responses	Percentage
10,000-20,000	9	27.2
20,001-30,000	9	27.2
Less than 10,000	8	24.2
10,000	4	12.1
30,001-40,000	2	6.06
More than 50,000	1	3.03
Total	33	100

Table 9: Income per month

\*Note: 1 USD = 74.2 INR; 1 INR = 0.43 BAHT as of 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

### 5.1.9 Allowance from family

The number of responses who have **no income** has allowance from their family with 287 out of 320 responses. As seen in **Table 10**, the highest percentage is 27.8% for ₹500-₹1000 category, followed by ₹1000-₹5000 and no income category with 21.9% and 19.5% respectively. And the least percentage is above ₹10,000 accounting for 3.4%.

Allowance from family (in ₹)	Number of responses	Percentage
500-1000	80	27.8
1001-5000	63	21.9
None	56	19.5
Less than 500	49	17.07
5001-10,000	29	10.1
Above 10,000	10	3.4
Total	287	100

Table 10: Allowance from Family

\*Note: 1 USD = 74.2 INR; 1 INR = 0.43 BAHT as of 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

### 5.2 Part 2: Exposure to K-POP

This part will show the time of exposure to K-POP, how many hours they listen to K-POP, the first K-POP group interested in, most popular K-POP group in North East India, do they follow, or are a part of any fan groups on WhatsApp, Instagram or any SNS platform, do they own any albums or merchandise (light sticks, posters, etc.) of

any K-POP group, which group's merchandise, have they ever been to a K-POP concert and which group's concert.

### 5.2.1 Years of exposure into K-POP

As seen in **Table 11**, the highest percentage of responses is in 3-6 years with 30.9% of the respondents getting into K-POP during this time frame. The next category is from 1-3 years with 25.6%. The least number of responses is 6-10 years with 19.06% only.

When did you get into K-POP?	Number of responses	Percentage
3 ½ -6 years	99	30.9
1-3 years	82	25.6
More than 10 years	78	24.3
6½ -10 years	61	19
Total	320	100

Table 11: When did you get into K-POP

### 5.2.2 Hours spent on K-POP

As seen in **Table 12**, the highest percentage of responses is 2-5 hours and more than 5 hours with 35.6% each. The least hours spent on K-POP is 2 hours with 14% only.

How many hours do you listen to K-POP?	Number of responses	Percentage
2½ -5 hours	114	35.6
More than 5 hours	114	35.6
Less than 2 hours	47	14.6
2 hours	45	14
Total	320	100

Table 12 : Hours spent on K-POP

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

### 5.2.3 First K-POP group interested in

**Table 13** shows that the highest percentage of responses is BTS with 50% followed by EXO and other groups such as BigBang, Got7, etc., with 15.6% and 10% respectively.

According to Interviewee 1 and 3. the first K-POP group they encountered was BTS. Interviewees 3 and 7 have said that the first K-POP idols they got interested in were Super Junior and SNSD.

First K-POP group interested in	Number of responses	Percentage
BTS	160	50
EXO	50	15.6
Others (34 groups)	34	10
Blackpink	21	6.5
Super Junior	19	5.9
Girls Generation [SNSD]	18	5.6
Twice	18	5.6
Total	320	100

Table 13: First K-POP group interested in

#### 5.2.4 Most popular K-POP group in NE India

According to **Table 14**, the most popular group is BTS with 88.1% responses followed by EXO with 6.2%. Interviewee 1 said that BTS is popular in North East India is because they give strength and hope to young teenagers. According to Interviewee 2, BTS has changed the way the world looks at K-POP. They have huge popularity because of the many shows, videos, and fan interactions they had in their early years as a K-POP idol.

Most popular K-POP group in North East India	Number of responses	Percentage
BTS	282	88.1
EXO	20	6.2
Blackpink	16	5
BigBang	1	0.3
Got7	1	0.3
Total	320	100

Table 14: Most popular K-POP group in NE India

#### 5.2.5 Follow any fan groups on SNS

According to **Table 15**, 84.3% of respondents do-follow and are part of fan groups on SNS platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., while 15.6% responded with No.

Do you follow or are a part of any fan groups on SNS?	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	270	84.3
No	50	15.6
Total	320	100

Table 15: Follow fan groups on SNS

### 5.2.6 Own any albums or merchandise of any K-POP group

According to **Table 16**, the percentage of respondents with no merchandise or albums (light sticks, posters) is 52.1% while respondents with albums or merchandise are 47.8%.

Since most of the respondents are students and most of them receive an allowance from family, that is why more than 50%, do not own any albums or merchandise.

Do you own any albums or merchandise (lightsticks, posters etc) of any K-POP group?	Number of responses	Percentage
No	167	52.1
Yes	153	47.8
Total	320	100

Table 16: Own any albums or merchandise of any K-POP group

Based on their answer yes or no, the respondents are asked which K-POP group's merchandise they have. The question has been answered by 153 respondents who have K-POP merchandise out of 320 respondents. As seen in **Table 17**, the highest percentage of respondents is for BTS merchandise 55.8% followed by EXO with 14.5%.



Which group's merchandise? (Multiple choice)	Percentage (153 respondents)
BTS	55.8
EXO	14.5
Blackpink	8.4
NCT	3.2
Got7	2.8
Others (21 groups)	15
Total	100

Table 17: Merchandise of the K-POP groups

### 5.2.7 Attended a K-POP concert

As seen in **Table 18**, 91.8% have not been to a K-POP concert while 8.1% have been to a K-POP concert. The reason why the number of responses has never been to a K-POP concert is that there has not been a K-POP concert in India with mainstream K-POP artists such as BTS or EXO. Although other artists have come such as MONT, Kard, Jang Hanbyul, etc. Most K-POP concerts are outside of India which makes it difficult for most of the fans to visit because of pricey concert tickets and plane tickets.

Have ever been to a K-POP concert?	Number of responses	Percentage
No	294	91.8
Yes	26	8.1
Total	320	100

Table 18: Been to a K-POP concert

Based on their answer yes or no, the respondents are asked which K-POP group's concert they have gone to. As seen in **Table 19**, the highest number of respondents who have been to K-POP concerts is to MONT's concert accounting for 23.3% followed by 16.6% who have been to a BTS concert outside India. The other category with 11 K-POP groups accounts for 46.6% consists of K-POP groups such as Kard, Imfact, MUSTB, etc.

Which group's concert?	Percentage (26 responses)
MONT	23.3
BTS	16.6
Hanbyul	13.3
Others (11 groups)	46.6
Total	100

Table 19: Concert of which group

### 5.3 Part 3: Social, Psychological and Cultural factors based on consumer behavior

This part will focus on the social, psychological, and cultural factors of K-POP which has led to its popularity. This part consists of statements that were rated by respondents from 1 to 5 ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The three factors are then scored from 1.00-2.00 as non-influence or low level, 2.51-3.50 as medium level agreement, and 3.51-5.00 has a high level or very high-level agreement.

#### 5.3.1 Social factors

From **Table 20**, it is observed that the respondents have rated the social factors with an average of 3.72 which means this factor has a high-level agreement. In social factors, the statement '*I got interested in K-POP because of BTS*' has the highest mean score 4.08 (S. D= 1.36), followed by the statements '*I got interested in K-POP because of K-Dramas*' and '*I got interested in K-POP because of friends*' got the mean score of 4.07 (S. D= 1.09) and 4.01 (S.D= 1.10), respectively. The statement '*I got interested in K-POP because of family*' has the lowest mean score of 2.7 (S. D= 1.27).

Statement	RATING					Total	Mean	S. D
	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree			
I got interested in K-POP because of								
Family	34	53	86	77	70	320	2.7	1.27
Friends	139	90	59	20	12	320	4.01	1.10
BTS	198	33	37	21	31	320	4.08	1.36
Korean celebrities	121	93	68	27	11	320	3.89	1.10
K-Dramas	154	80	52	25	9	320	4.07	1.09
Internet, newspapers, magazines, webtoons	94	86	82	39	19	320	3.61	1.19
Total						320	3.72	1.17

Table 20: Social factors of K-POP

9 out of 9 interviewees have mentioned that BTS and K-Dramas have played an important role in popularizing K-POP in the North East region. In recent times BTS has popularized K-POP to young fans who have just started to listen to K-POP music. While for older fans, K-Dramas was the reason why they got into K-POP as K-Drama OSTs are usually sung by K-POP artists so they how they discovered K-POP.

### 5.3.2 Psychological factors

From **Table 21**, it is observed that the respondents have rated the psychological factors with an average of 4.47 which means this factor has a high-level agreement. In social factors, the statement '*I love K-POP because of Music and lyrics*' has the highest mean score 4.78 (S. D= 0.56), followed by the statements "*I love K-POP because of Choreography and performance*" and '*I love K-POP because of it is a source of happiness*' got the mean score of 4.72 (S. D= 0.57) and 4.68 (S. D= 0.72), respectively. The statement '*I love K-POP because of Fan service*' has the lowest mean score of 4.03 (S. D= 1.07).

According to Interviewee 1, "K-POP is something people can connect emotionally to." According to Interviewee 8, "K-POP fashion and music is what has attracted the youth of North East India." As also said by Interviewee 4, "K-POP fashion has played an important role in changing the way how young boys and girls dress up nowadays." According to Interviewee 7, "K-POP is popular because of the handsome and attractive looks of K-POP idols."

Statement	RATING					Total	Mean	S. D
	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree			
I love K-POP because of								
Attractive idols	144	91	67	12	6	320	4.10	0.98
Choreography and performance	246	65	6	1	2	320	4.72	0.57
Concept and art	234	71	13	1	1	320	4.67	0.59
Music and lyrics	268	40	9	1	2	320	4.78	0.56
Message of the group	228	50	31	3	8	320	4.52	0.89
Fashion and beauty	162	94	59	2	3	320	4.28	0.85
Fan service	144	76	76	14	10	320	4.03	1.07
Source of happiness	250	50	12	4	4	320	4.68	0.72
Total						320	4.47	0.77

Table 21: Psychological factors of K-POP

### 5.3.3. Cultural factors

From **Table 22**, it is observed that the respondents have rated the cultural factors with an average of 3.88 which means this factor has a high-level agreement. In social factors, the statement '*K-POP is accepted in North East India because of love for music*' has the highest mean score 4.56 (S. D= 0.67), followed by the statements '*K-POP is accepted in North East India because it helps to know more about Korean culture and language*' and '*K-POP is accepted in North East India because of the popularity of Korean culture*' got the mean score of 4.25 (S. D= 0.93) and 4.15 (S. D= 0.93), respectively. The statement '*K-POP is accepted in North East India because of similar family and social values*' has the lowest mean score of 3.35 (S. D= 1.02).

According to Interviewee 2, "K-POP is popular in North East India because of Hallyu Wave started a long time ago in the region and the similarity of looks with Korean people." According to Interviewee 3, "North East people feel more connected to Korean culture due to a range of factors like physical resemblance, food habits, and similarity in culture"; also, K-POP makes her interested in the Korean culture which has made her learn Korean language. Interviewee 8 said "Due to the lack of representation in the cultural sphere, the North East youth have found Korean culture to have given them a way to represent themselves through fashion and following the Korean lifestyle." According to Interviewee 7, "K-POP is popular and accepted in North East because of similarity in cultures." According to Interviewee 9, "K-POP is accepted in North East India because of the popularity of Korean culture because it leads to people learning more about Korean lifestyle and language." The similarity of North East India's culture with the Korean culture also has led to the acceptance of K-POP in the region because of the love for music and festivals.

Statement	RATING					Total	Mean	S. D
	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree			
K-POP is accepted in North East India because of								
Similarity in appearance between Koreans and North East people	67	94	109	40	10	320	3.52	1.05
Similar family and social values	46	95	121	44	14	320	3.35	1.02
Love for music	208	88	21	2	1	320	4.56	0.67
K-POP helps to know more about Korean culture and language	150	112	50	6	2	320	4.25	0.83
Popularity of Korean culture	142	103	62	7	6	320	4.15	0.93
Similarity with Korean culture	60	87	121	41	11	320	3.45	1.04
Total						320	3.88	0.92

Table 22: Cultural factors of K-POP



### Comparison of religion in the North East and K-POP

From the above **Table 23**, according to the 2011 Indian Census, in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland the major religion is Christianity while in Assam, Manipur, and Tripura the majority religion is Hindu which validates the data in this current study (**refer to Table 24**) which shows the same majority religion in seven North East states except in Sikkim where Buddhism is observed to be the major religion in this study.

2011 Indian Census statewise religion								
Religion	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Tripura	Sikkim
Hindu	29.04%	61.47%	41.39%	11.53%	2.75%	8.75%	83.40%	57.76%
Muslim	1.95%	34.22%	8.40%	4.40%	1.35%	2.47%	8.60%	1.62%
Buddhist	11.77%	0.18%	0.25%	0.33%	8.51%	0.34%	3.41%	27.39%
Christian	30.26%	3.74%	41.29%	74.59%	87.16%	87.93%	4.35%	9.91%
Sikh	0.24%	0.07%	0.05%	0.10%	0.03%	0.10%	0.03%	0.31%
Jain	0.06%	0.08%	0.06%	0.02%	0.03%	0.13%	0.02%	0.05%
Other Religions	26.20%	0.09%	8.19%	8.71%	0.07%	0.16%	0.04%	2.67%
Majority Religion	Christian	Hindu	Hindu	Christian	Christian	Christian	Hindu	Hindu

Table 23: Religion state wise (Census 2011)

Religion	Arunachal (38 respondents)	Assam (42 respondents)	Manipur (40 respondents)	Meghalaya (38 respondents)	Mizoram (42 respondents)	Nagaland (40 respondents)	Tripura (40 respondents)	Sikkim (40 respondents)
Christian	52%	4.67%	37.5%	89.4%	100%	97.5%	22.5%	20%
Hindu	7.89%	85.7%	55%	5.26%	-	-	75%	30%
Buddhist	15.7%	-	-	-	-	-	2.5%	45%
Muslim	-	4.67%	2.5%	-	-	2.5%	-	-
Sikh	-	4.67%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	23.6%	-	5%	5.26%	-	-	-	5%
Majority religion	Christian	Hindu	Hindu	Christian	Christian	Christian	Hindu	Buddhist

Table 24: Religion of the respondents' state wise

Tribal groups in North East do not have any dividing line between mundane religious functions of leaders. Rituals based on the sacrifice of pigs and other animals and offerings were present in both in early Korea as Goguryeo and Silla as well in North East India were sought to appease malevolent spirits (Pankaj 2017). Later, Christianity played an important role in North East India along with the forces of nationalism and modernization during Indian independence which also has a close resemblance to Korean history (Pankaj 2017).

This common foundation of tradition and religion may help in understanding how Hallyu Wave became popular in North East India. In the early 2000s when Hindi dramas were dubbed in Mizoram there was a decline in Church attendance which led to several backlashes from organizations to ban it because it promotes “alien culture” and offends religious belief. But in the case of the consumption of Korean products, it was not the same. The people were not offended by any of the contents and were deemed as “appropriate” and does not offend their religion or tradition and if there are films with nudity or violence there was “self-censorship” (Kuotsu 2013). This sense of similarity with culture and religion does play an important role to a certain extent but may not be a necessity for understanding why Korean products are highly consumed in the region.

One of the things we need to understand is that North East India is not alien to Christianity and Buddhism or other religions. There is diversity in religious beliefs and other forms of religion such as worshipping nature, ancestors, or even Shamanism in certain states. The religious and cultural consciousness of Korea and most of the North East states of India have been nourished by Shamanism of Central Asian origin (Pankaj 2017). When Korean dramas and videos were seen in different states in the early 2000s such as Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, etc., there was a sense of affinity with the traditions and religious practices (Athikho 2017). If there is a depiction of

Christian marriage or a visit to a Buddhist temple etc., in Korean films, Music videos, or films, it is not new for the Northeastern people. If religion played an important role in the consumption of the Hallyu Wave or Korean Wave in the beginning, how do we explain its popularity in Assam, Tripura, or the rest of India where Christianity is not the majority religion? The answer is simple it is the diversity of India which does not make people feel alien towards different religions. From Hinduism to Zoroastrianism (Whelan 2020) all religions are protected and guarded by the Constitution of India, including the Fundamental Right to freedom of religion (Articles 25-28 of the Indian Constitution). Therefore, the popularity of the Hallyu Wave and in the case of this present study on the popularity of 'K-POP', religion may not be a major deciding factor in consuming K-POP or other components of the Hallyu Wave in North East.

From the above analysis we can summarize as follows:

Out of the three categories namely – Social factors with a mean score of 3.72, Psychological factors with a mean score of 4.47, and Cultural factors with a mean score of 3.88 (**Figure 24**) the following can be understood-

1. Psychological factors have the highest mean score compared to the other factors which mean the respondents are inclined towards the psychological factors such as attractive idols, choreography and performance, music and lyrics, the message of the group, fashion and beauty, fan service, and source of happiness.

Most of the interviewees said that the music and lyrics, attractive looks, the performance of K-POP idols has led to their popularity in the world. The people are motivated when they listen to K-POP music and the visuals of the music videos as well the attractive looks of the idols are the icing on the cake.

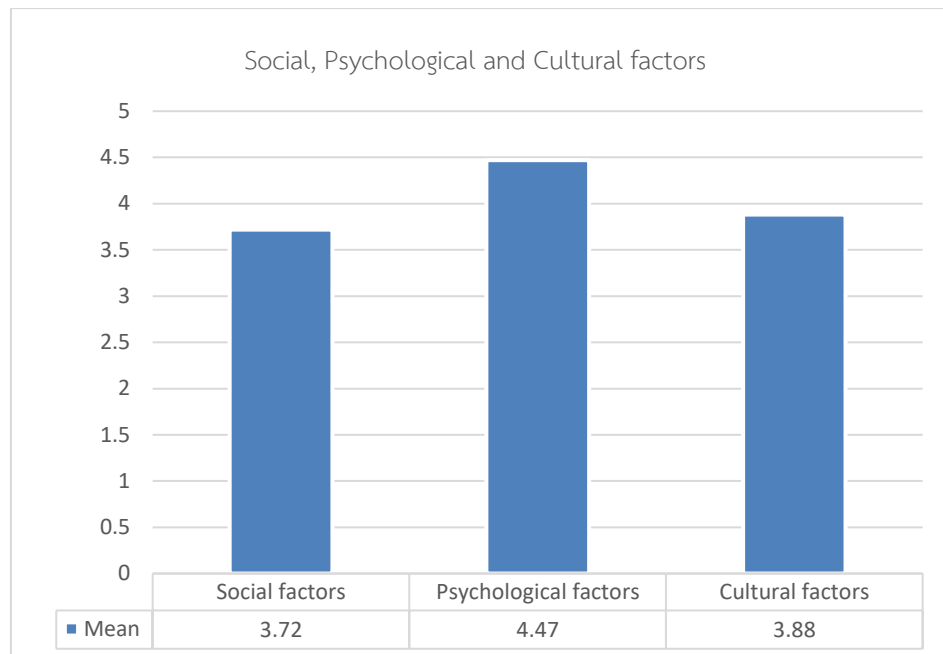


Figure 24: Factors of K-POP Social, Psychological and Cultural factors of consumer behavior

2. In social factors, the statement 'I got interested in K-POP because of BTS' has the highest mean score among the other statements, meaning that most respondents have got into K-POP because of BTS.
3. In cultural factors, the statement 'K-POP is accepted in North East India because of love for music' has the highest mean score compared to the other statements implies that the love for music among the respondents has resulted in the acceptance of K-POP in North East India.

#### 5.4 Part 4(1): BTS fans in North East India

This part will highlight the responses of all 320 respondents regarding BTS. The key question in this part is whether they are a fan of BTS, according to their answer based on yes or no they are directed to two sets of questions.

#### 5.4.1 Fan of BTS

As seen in **Figure 25**, out of 320 respondents, the total number of respondents who are fans of BTS is 266 which is 83.1% while 54 respondents i.e., 16.8% are not fans of BTS. Based on the answer yes or no, the respondents are directed to two sets of questions.

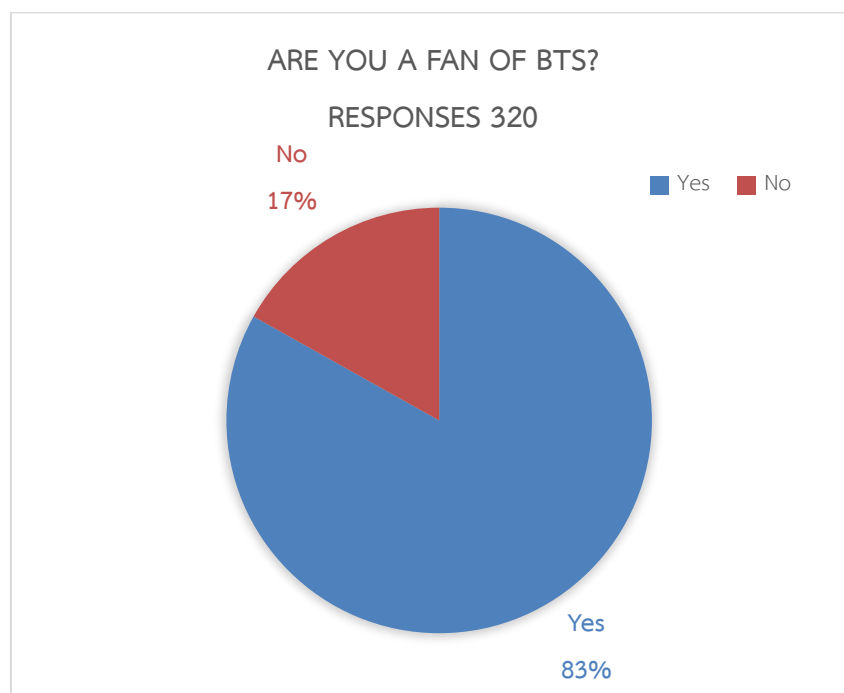


Figure 25: Fan of BTS

#### 5.4.2 First song heard by BTS

As seen in **Figure 26**, 266 respondents have answered this question. The song blood, sweat, and tears have 37 responses i.e., 14% of responses followed by no more dream 9%. The category 'others' which account for 165 responses i.e., 62% has 36 songs in it such as Boy with luv, DNA, War of Hormone, fake love, etc., with one response to each song.

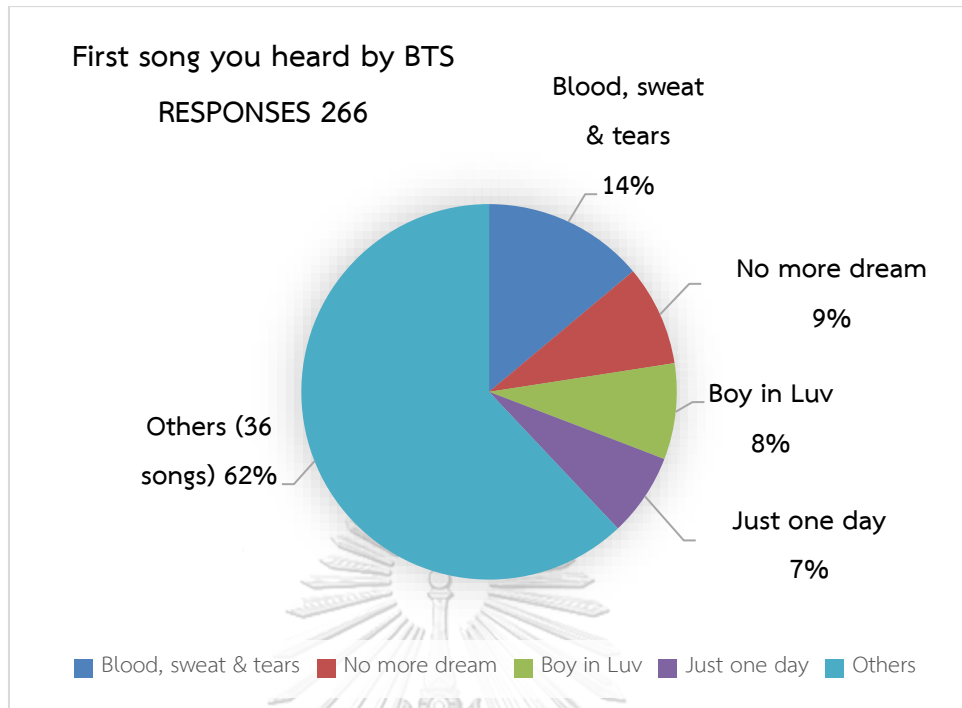


Figure 26: First song heard by BTS

#### 5.4.3 Reason why they love BTS

As seen in **Table 25**, it is observed that lyrics and music of BTS have the highest mean score with 4.88 followed by choreography, and performance with 4.86 and message of the group with 4.84 mean scores. The least mean score is 4.28 for attractive looks.

Statement	RATING					TOTAL	Mean	S. D
	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree			
I love BTS because of-								
Attractive looks	139	76	42	6	3	266	4.28	0.89
Choreography and performance	232	33	0	0	1	266	4.86	0.40
Concept and art	226	36	3	1	0	266	4.83	0.43
Message of BTS	238	16	11	0	1	266	4.84	0.51
Lyrics and music	244	16	5	0	1	266	4.89	0.42
Fan service	160	58	35	7	6	266	4.35	0.96
Total						266	4.67	0.60

Table 25: Reason why they love BTS

When asked the question why you love BTS and why did you become their fan this is how the interviewees answered-

Interviewee 3 has said, “One can connect with the lyrics of BTS because they are beautiful and meaningful.” Interviewee 4 said, “BTS when he was not in a very good place and BTS became my source of comfort and healing through their lyrics and music.” Interviewee 5 has also said that she became a fan of BTS mainly because of their song lyrics and their attractive visuals. According to Interviewee 6 when she

listens to BTS's songs she forgets about her anxiety and depression as their songs and lyrics are a source of healing for her. Interviewee 8 answered that he became a fan of BTS because of their choreography, music, and attractive looks. Interviewee 9 mentions that "English pop songs do not have a fixed concept but when I saw BTS' music videos, I was enchanted by the storytelling concept of BTS which was in sync with their lyrics and music."

#### 5.4.4 Bias from BTS

According to **Figure 27**, it is observed that out of 266 responses, 33% of the respondents responded with the answer OT7 meaning One True 7 which means that the respondents love all seven members of BTS, followed by solo bias responses V with 21% and Jungkook with 20%.

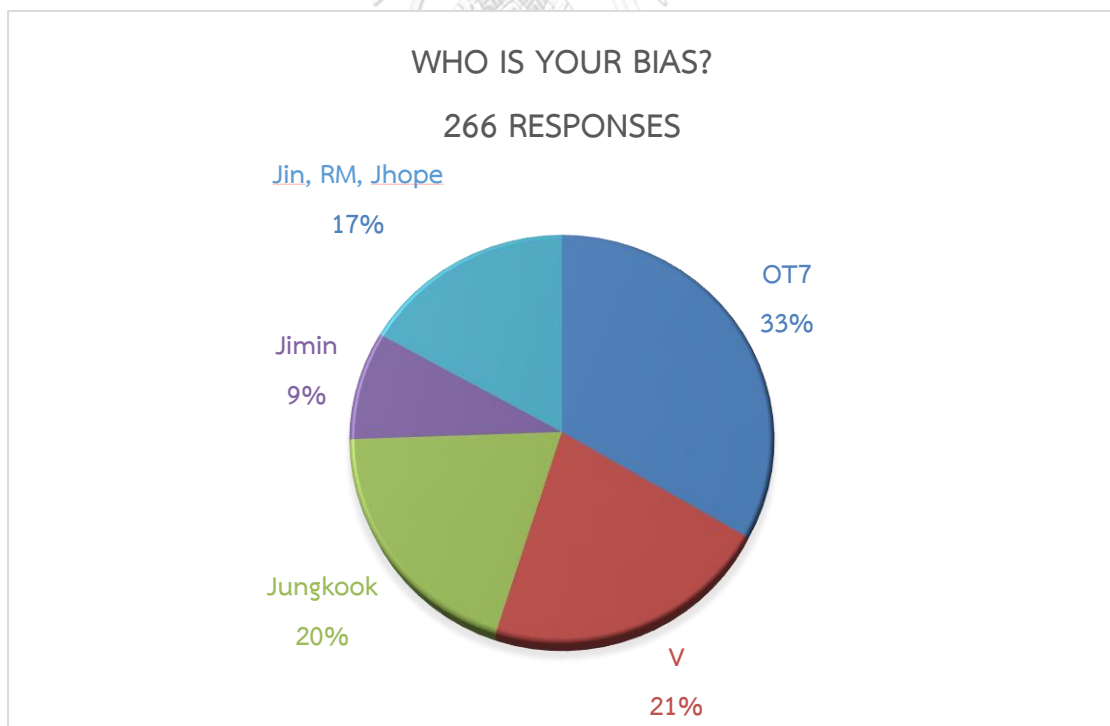


Figure 27: Bias of the respondents



#### 5.4.5 Attending Fan events by BTS Army (fans)

**Table 26** shows that 63.1% of the respondents out of 266 respondents does not attend fan events organized by Army (BTS fans) while 36.8% attend fan events.

Do you attend fan events organized by BTS ARMY in your area?	Number of responses	Percentage
No	168	63.1
Yes	98	36.8
Total	266	100

Table 26: Respondents attending Fan events.

The reason why many fans do not attend these fan events is that they are a school or college students. They do not have time to attend the events as many are busy with schoolwork or assignments. While those who go to fan events the events organized by BTS ARMY fans which are Birthday party events of the members, charity events, BTS film screening events, and flash mobs (**Figure 28, 29**), etc.



Figure 28: Flash mob July 2019

Source: BTS N.E INDIA twitter

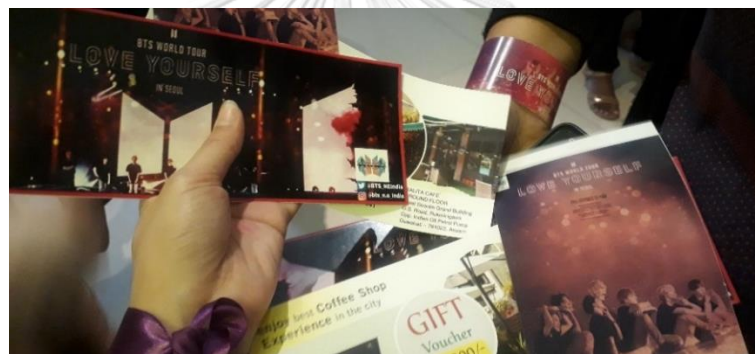


Figure 29: BTS film screening February 2019

Source: BTS Love Yourself in Seoul Film 2019

#### 5.4.6 Favorite BTS song

**Figure 30** highlights that Spring Day has 20% responses from 266 respondents followed by Magic shop and Dynamite with 9.3% and 6.7% respectively. The others category has 40 songs from the respondents with one to five responses for each song. The songs which are shown in **figure 30** are about hope, happiness and features the life of the youth when they are faced with obstacles or face any sort of sadness in life.

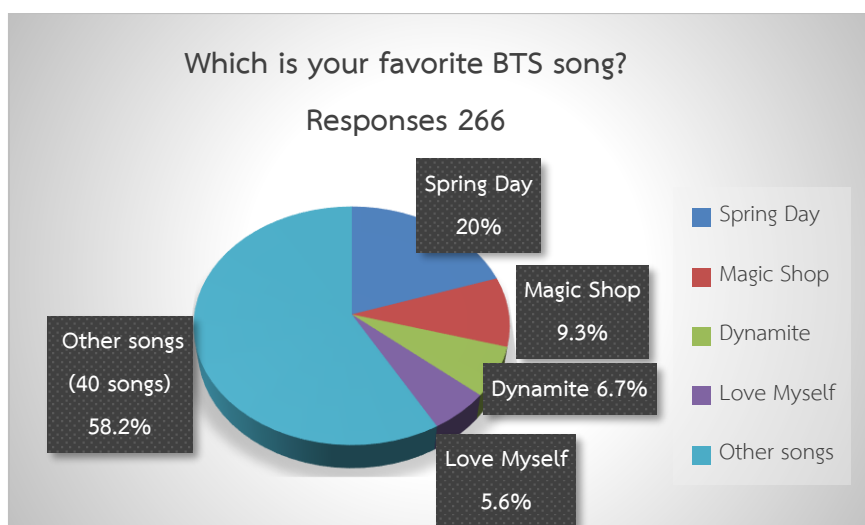


Figure 30: Favorite BTS song

#### 5.4.7 Fan of other K-POP groups besides BTS

As seen in **Table 27**, the respondents were asked if they are fans of other K-POP groups besides BTS, where 197 respondents i.e., 74% are fans of other K-POP groups while 69 respondents 26% are not. Based on their answer yes or no, the respondents who answered yes were directed to the next question and the rest were directed to the last part of the questionnaire.

Besides BTS are you a fan of other K-POP groups?	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	197	74
No	69	25.9
Total	266	100

Table 27: Fan of other K-POP groups

The respondents who answered Yes were asked which K-POP groups they are a fan of. **Table 28** shows that 16.6% are fans of Blackpink and 14.1% of 197 respondents are fans of EXO. The other category consists of 50 groups such as G-idle, Pentagon, IU, Seventeen, etc., which accounts for 25.7% with one to thirteen responses for each group.

Which groups? (multiple choice)	Number of responses (197 respondents)	Percentage
BP	100	16.6
EXO	85	14.1
TWICE	65	10.8
NCT	48	8
SNSD	39	6.5
SUPER JUNIOR	36	6
TXT	31	5.1
STRAY KIDS	24	4
ENHYPEN	18	3
Others (50 groups)	155	25.7
Total	601	100

Table 28: Multi fandom fans

#### 5.5 Part 4(2): Not a fan of BTS

Part 4(2) has only one question for the respondents who answered that they are not fans of BTS to understand besides BTS who the other popular K-POP groups in North East India are.

### 5.5.1 Fans of which K-POP acts

As seen in **Figure 31**, this question is answered by 54 respondents who fans of other K-POP groups. It shows that EXO has the highest number of responses with 48.1% followed by Blackpink with 13%. The ‘others’ category account for 13% which has 11 groups in it such as Seventeen, NCT, SuperM, etc.

Interviewee 1 states that she is a fan of EXO because of their strong choreography, and she can relate to the members. Interviewee 2 explains that EXO presents the real feel of K-POP. Their unique concept is an important factor for their popularity. The unity of EXO through the ups and downs has made her love the group even more.

According to the data provided by Spotify for its annual Wrapped review, Blackpink has the most streamed album in Spotify India in rank 3, following BTS on rank 1 and 2. The top 20 K-pop artists on Spotify India are BTS being the No. 1 group, along with EXO, Twice, BLACKPINK, GOT7, Monsta X, TXT, Ateez, Red Velvet, etc. (Rolling Stone India 2020).

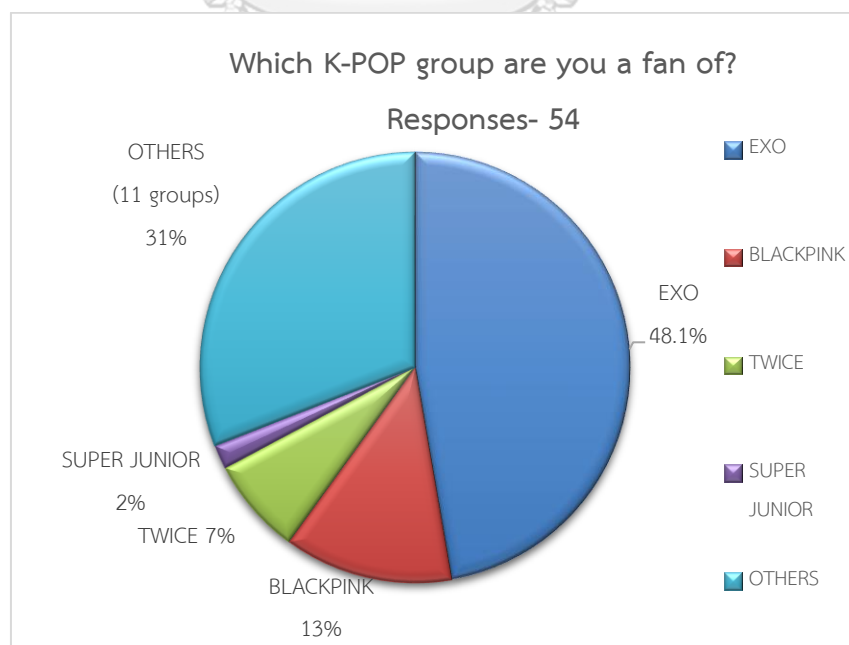


Figure 31: Fan of K-POP groups

## 5.6 Part 5: BTS popularity in North East India

Part 5 focuses on the popularity of BTS in the North East and whether they will be able to maintain their fame in the future. This part has been answered by all 320 respondents.

### 5.6.1 BTS is the reason why K-POP is getting popular in North East India

As seen in **Figure 32**, it is observed that 52% of the respondents have answered yes i.e., 167 responses agree that BTS is the reason K-POP is getting popular in North East India. 34% have answered maybe i.e., 107 respondents are unsure whether BTS is the reason why K-POP is getting popular in the region and 14% has said No to the same. Based on the interviews from 9 individuals, 7 out of 9 interviewees think that BTS is the most popular group in the North East region, and here is the reason why-

BTS has created a huge fan base in the North East region. They have inspired people through their music and meaningful songs based on their own experiences and struggles. Before BTS, although K-POP was known by many people it was not considered mainstream music and after BTS' debut performance in the Billboard music awards in 2017, it led to a massive fan growth all over the world as well as in India. 2 out of the 9 interviewees believe that BTS is not the only reason why K-POP is becoming popular in North East India. Before BTS other K-POP groups such as EXO, BigBang, etc., had already paved the path for K-POP popularity in the region. According to them, BTS is just one of the reasons why K-POP is becoming popular, since the Hallyu Wave began in the late 1990s, K-POP has always been popular.

From the responses from 320 respondents and 9 interviews, the hypothesis of this study is proved to be correct. BTS is the reason why K-POP is becoming popular the North East region. They have made people explore K-POP groups and songs. Thus, making them the biggest factor in popularizing K-POP in the region.

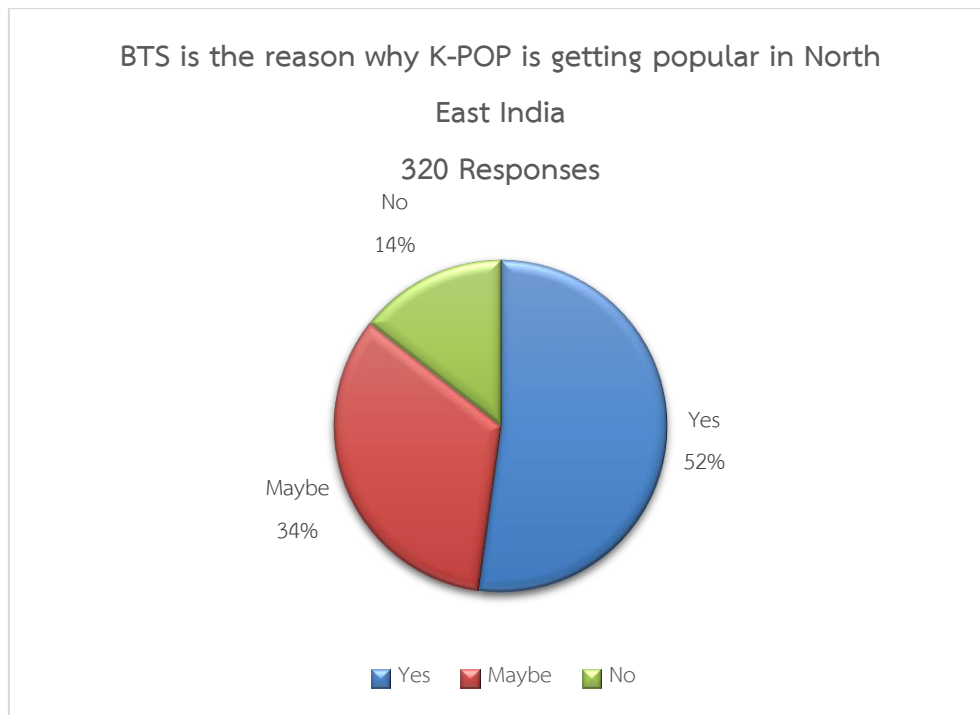


Figure 32: BTS is the reason why K-POP is getting popular in North East India

### 5.6.2 Popularity of BTS in the future

From **Figure 33**, it is observed that 78% i.e., 251 respondents out of 320 respondents answered that BTS will be able to maintain their popularity in North East while 18% are unsure and 3% have answered no for the same.

The answers of all the interviewees also support that BTS will be able to maintain their popularity in the North East region. According to the interviewees, the group has gained respect from the fans and will stay for a long time. They have also entered the western music industry which is already a huge success and is at the top of the Billboard charts. They are nominated for Grammys which is another milestone in their career. Their collaborations with UNICEF and their contributions to other charities and events will always be remembered by their fans. Very soon many fans are expecting BTS to have a concert in India as they are aware of the huge fandom who is constantly making efforts for them to visit India.

Although in the dynamic arena of K-POP, new K-POP groups might come and be more popular, the benchmark left by BTS will not be forgotten and will be looked up to by new artists.

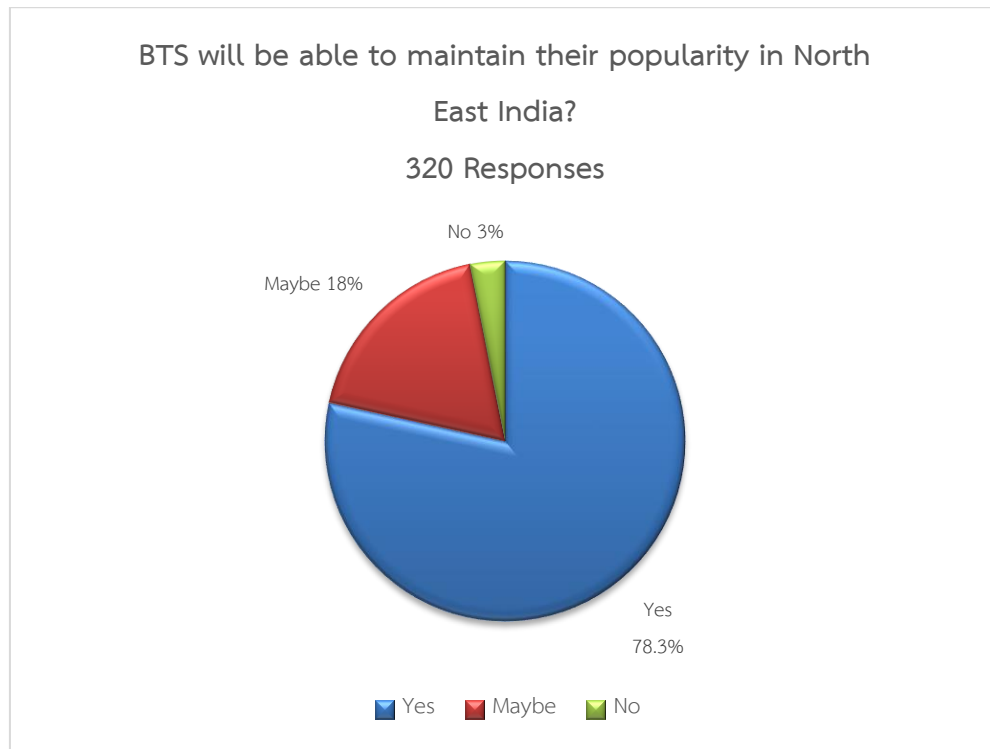


Figure 33: Popularity of BTS in the future

### 5.7 Part 6: Comment Analysis

In this part, comments were collected from Twitter using the keyword K-POP and BTS. A total of 755 comments were collected from India only and the data has been analyzed as follows-

#### 5.7.1 Top Hashtags

Out of the 82 hashtags collected from the Twitter comments **Table 29**, shows the 16 most popular hashtags which were used by the users. As we can observe the most used hashtag is VH1Playlist is 27%, BTS is 18% and others are 17% (**Figure 34**).



VH1Playlist has been used the most because on Twitter the K-POP fans can request VH1 channel, cable television network to play their favorite K-POP and other songs (**Figure 35**). The hashtag BTS is the second-highest hashtag which also indicates K-POP users requesting VH1 to play BTS songs or congratulating BTS for topping Billboard Hot 100 chart for their song “Life goes on”. ‘Others’ include all the hashtag which has been used only once and according to that data the others are divided into hashtags related to BTS or not related to BTS as seen in **Figure 36**.

Most popular hashtags	Number of hashtags	Percentage
Vh1Playlist	247	27
BTS	170	18
OTHERS	159	17
Lifegoeson1onhot100	103	11
MAMAVOTE	37	4
Lifegoesonno1bb100	30	3
Bebillboardallkill	25	3
BTS_BE	25	3
Taehyung	19	2
2020MAMA	19	2
BTSARMY	18	2
BTSV	18	2
Blueandgrey13onhot100	18	2
BTSARMY	12	1
Bebillboardallkill	10	1
Btsworlddomination	10	1

Table 29: Most popular Hashtag

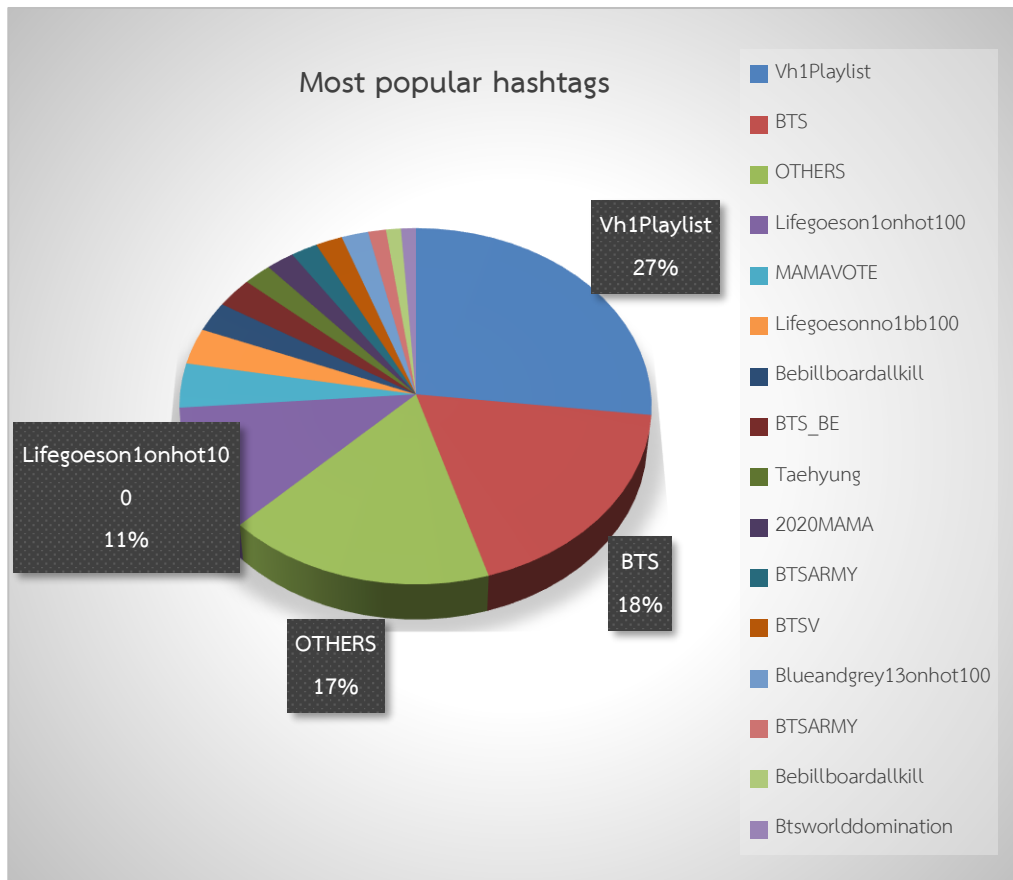


Figure 34: Most popular Hashtag (pie chart)

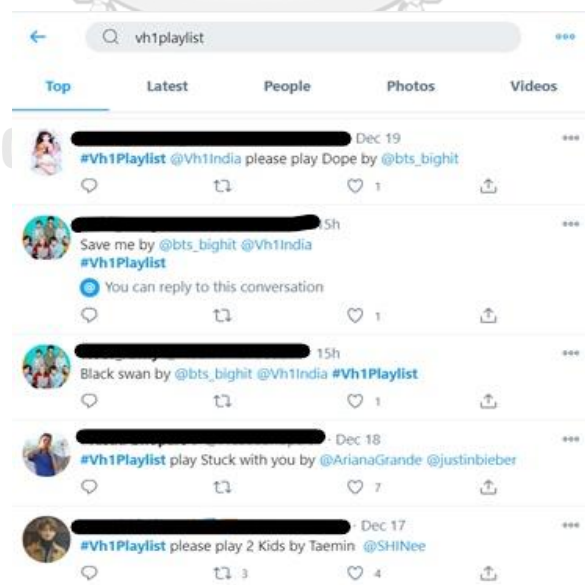


Figure 35: VH1Playlist request

Source: Twitter search

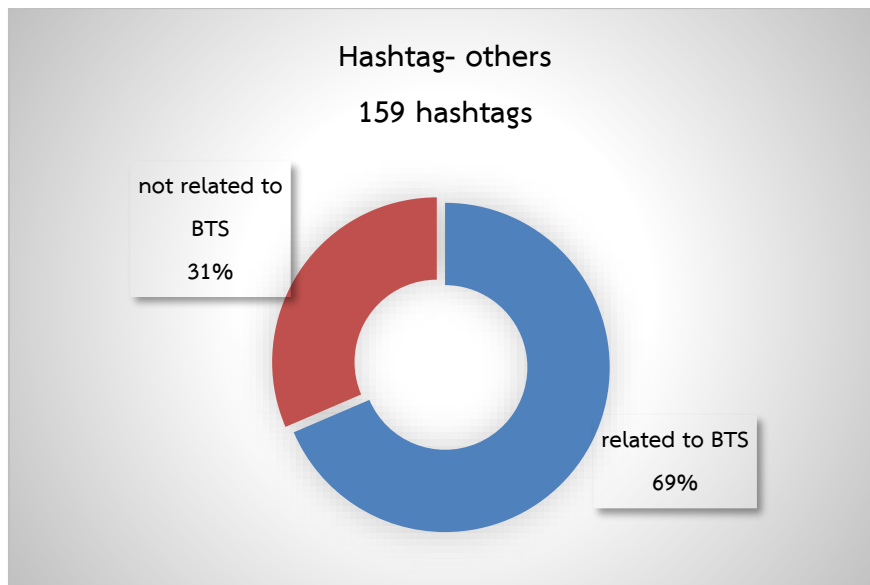


Figure 36: Others Category (Hashtag)

In the ‘others’ category (**Figure 36**) there are 159 hashtags out of which it is observed that 69% of the hashtags are related to BTS while 31% are not related to BTS.

### 5.7.2 Top Mentions

This part contains the most popular mentions in the tweets out of 39 mentions. Mentions are tagging Twitter accounts along with the users’ comments. As seen in **Figure 37**, it is observed that BTS\_twt is the most mentioned account with 60% mentions followed by VH1 18% and others 11%. In the top 10 top mentions as seen in **Table 30**, out of 10 mentions 6 mentions belong to BTS or BTS fan accounts. In the ‘others’ category, it includes all the mentions which have been used only once and according to that data it is divided into related to BTS or not related to BTS as seen in **Figure 38**.

Mentions	Number of mentions	Percentage
BTS_twt	442	60%
Vh1India	136	18%
OTHERS	82	11%
Bts_bighit	28	4%
Mnetmama	19	3%
BTS	10	1%
Sceneryfortae	9	1%
JYPETWICE	7	1%
Jiminoosaurus	6	1%

Table 30: Top Mentions

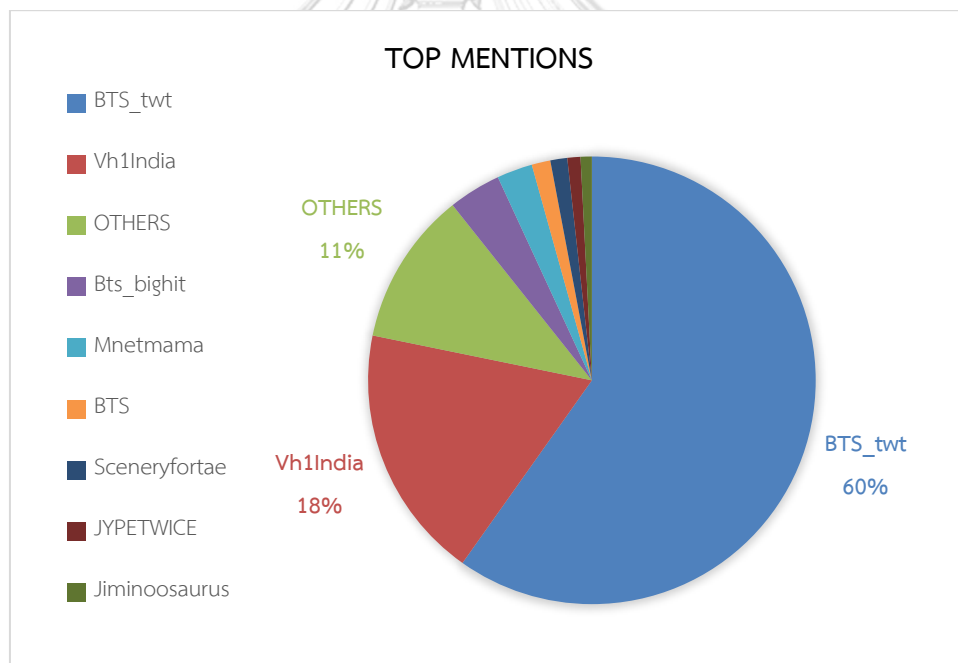


Figure 37: Top mentions (pie chart)

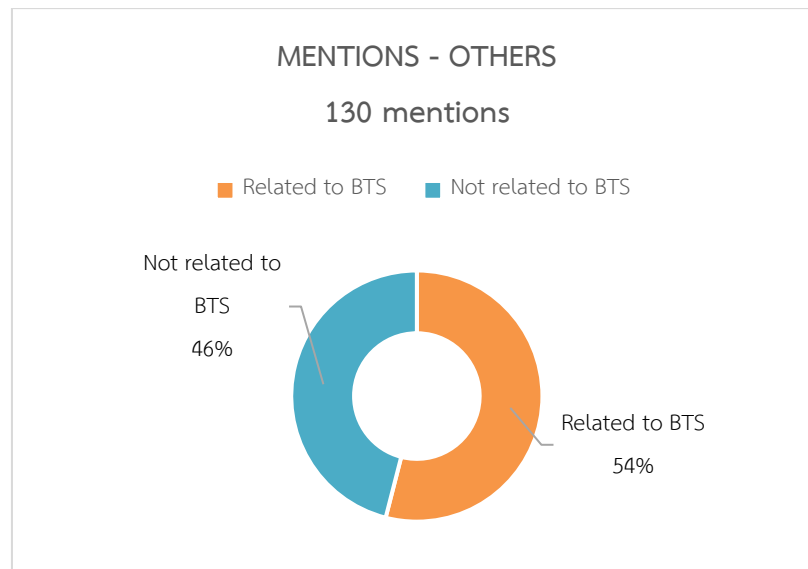


Figure 38: Others Category (mentions)

As observed in **Figure 38**, out of 130 mentions, 54% of the mentions are related to BTS while 46% are not related to BTS.

## 5.8 Discussion

At the end of the analysis, it is observed that there are many similarities and differences between this study with the previous studies and research related to K-POP and Korean Wave in North East India.

Firstly, it is seen that to some extent similarity in looks and popularity of Korean culture (Tiwari 2020 ) (Kshetrimayum and Chanu 2008) (Dhawan 2017, IndiaToday 2017) (Reimeingam 2014) among the North East people has led to the popularity of K-POP in the region. But when asked in interviews and questionnaires, it is the love for music which is culturally strong in both North East and Korea (Athikho 2017, Pankaj 2017) (Reimeingam 2014) which is making K-POP popular in North East.

### **Objective 1: To find out whether BTS is reason why K-POP is getting popular in North-East India**

BTS has been a major point of ignition for the spread of K-wave in North East India. When it comes to the social factors BTS has influenced many fans to get into K-POP. They have made K-POP popular amongst the ages 17, 18, 19 who are the largest age group respondents for this study. Most of the respondents also spend more than 5 hours listening to K-POP which shows the amount of time they invest in K-POP in their daily life. The activities of the fans especially, charities and donations to society have also made a positive impact on the minds of the local people and have broken several stereotypes among people about fandoms being obsessive or delusional.

The data also shows that number of BTS fans is almost a third of the 320 respondents. Another important point in this study is when asked why the respondents love BTS, it is because of their music and lyrics. The lyrics and songs of BTS have been a constant source of healing for the fans in North East India as well as all over the world. Songs such as Spring Day, Magic Shop, we are Bulletproof, etc., are songs for the youth who need happiness or have lost their way in searching and loving themselves. As seen in **Figures 39 and 40**, according to Spotify Wrapped data in 2020, BTS is ranked No. 4 on the 'Top Artists India' category. India has her own entertainment and music industry and to have a foreign artist as one of the Top artists in the country is a big milestone. Thus, showing the popularity of BTS in India. They also have the top streamed album in 2020, including in the top 10 streamed K-POP songs of 2020 BTS owns 7 places and 9 places in top streamed K-POP albums in Spotify India (Chakraborty 2020) (**Figure 41**).

From the comment analysis, it is observed that the most mentioned account amongst K-POP fans is BTS and the most requested songs by K-POP fans on Twitter are BTS songs to VH1 India. The most mentioned account is BTS\_twt (BTS official twitter account) among the K-POP fans shows a high amount of social interaction with accounts related to BTS in India.



Figure 39: Top Artists of India

Source: Spotify



Figure 40: Top streamed albums of India

Source: Spotify

Artist	Album	Rank
BTS	<i>Map of the Soul: 7</i>	1
BTS	<i>Love Yourself 結 'Answer'</i>	2
BLACKPINK	<i>The Album</i>	3
BTS	<i>Map of the Soul: Persona</i>	4
BTS	<i>Love Yourself 轉 'Tear'</i>	5
BTS	<i>You Never Walk Alone</i>	6
BTS	<i>Young Forever</i>	7
BTS	<i>Love Yourself 承 'Her'</i>	8
BTS	<i>Wings</i>	9
BTS	<i>Map of the Soul: 7 ~ The Journey~</i>	10

Artist	Track	Rank
BTS	"Dynamite"	1
BTS, Halsey	"Boy With Luv" (feat. Halsey)	2
BLACKPINK	"How You Like That"	3
BTS	"ON"	4
BLACKPINK, Selena Gomez	"Ice Cream" (with Selena Gomez)	5
BTS	"Black Swan"	6
BTS	"Filter"	7
BLACKPINK	"Kill This Love"	8
BTS	"Fake Love"	9
BTS	"Euphoria"	10

Figure 41: Top K-POP albums and songs of 2020 in India

Source: RollingStone India

### Objective 2: To determine the factors of popularity of Kpop in North-East India.

The number of female respondents is more than male respondents in this study is because of the already present structure of masculinity in the society which equates men with certain terms such as being manly, strong, masculine or listen to music which is not for 'man'. The "Global Hallyu survey of 2021" states that the main consumers were Asian women between the ages of 29 and 31, and the results showed that women spent more on dramas, variety shows, films, books, beauty products, and food. Men only outnumbered women in games (Kwak 2021).

## CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Since this study is about the youth, so most of the respondents are students. As students, 90% of them do not have their income and they receive some allowance from family every month. This shows that due to limited allowance and a few having their income, most of the respondents have not been to a concert or do not own any albums or merchandise. But this does not stop them from enjoying K-POP. There are other ways of loving K-POP as said by the Interviewees (Interviewee 5, 8, 9) K-POP can reach them even without money, with a single click they can go to many streaming websites and apps such as YouTube, Spotify, Naver, etc., and listen or watch videos of their favorite K-POP artists. Thus, it is observed that economic factors do not play an important role in popularizing K-POP.



When it comes to geographical factors, in the past the Hallyu first spread in North East due to proximity with East Asia but today K-wave is everywhere and with globalization it has spread all over India, so the geographical factor is no longer as effective as before. The psychological factors such as attractive idols, choreography and performance, music and lyrics, the message of the group, fashion and beauty, fan service, and source of happiness have the biggest influence among the respondents when compared to social and cultural factors.

The most relevant theory of this study is the theory of Consumer Behavior which has helped to analyze the factors of K-POP popularity in North East India on the basis of cultural, social, psychological and personal factors. The theory has also helped in analyzing why BTS has gained popularity in the region. The conceptual framework of this study which considered BTS to be the main influential factor followed by the factors of consumer behavior is observed to be true based on the fulfilment of the research objectives and questions.

The main hypothesis of this study is that BTS is the reason why K-POP is getting popular in North East India has been proved to be true. From being the most popular K-POP artist to being able to maintain their popularity, BTS has proved to be the most important factor which has led to K-POP popularity in the region.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will present the conclusion, limitations, recommendations, and future studies related to K-POP and Hallyu Wave in North East India.

#### 6.1 Conclusion

K-POP is the most famous component of the Hallyu Wave which has been popular in North East India for a long time. From this study, it cannot be denied that BTS is the reason why K-POP is becoming popular in the region. Young fans between 14-19 years started listening to K-POP through BTS. The reason why they have such an immense impact is because of their lyrics and music. Even though BTS has a huge fan base in North East India, the popularity of other K-POP groups such as Blackpink, EXO, GOT7, Twice, etc., including several 4th generation idols such as TXT, ITZY have or are starting to have a massive growth in their fan bases.

The factors of consumer behavior used in this study namely- Social, Cultural, Individual, and Psychological factors show that there is a high level of influence of all the factors especially Psychological factors such as attractive looks, music and lyrics, the message of the group, etc. The geographical and economic factors do not play a very important role in the popularity of K-POP.

The study also observes the number of respondents in the case of females is higher than males because young girls are more attracted to K-POP. The other components of Hallyu such as K-Fashion, K-beauty, K-food (**Figure 42, 43**) are slowly becoming popular through K-Dramas, Korean restaurants, and cosmetic brands. Samsung, LG, Kia motors, and Hyundai are well-known names in every Indian household and now brands such as Innisfree, Lemona, Faceshop, etc., are also becoming popular.



Figure 42: Korean noodles in Kohima

Source: Jimmy and Grace YouTube Channel (지미와 그레이스)

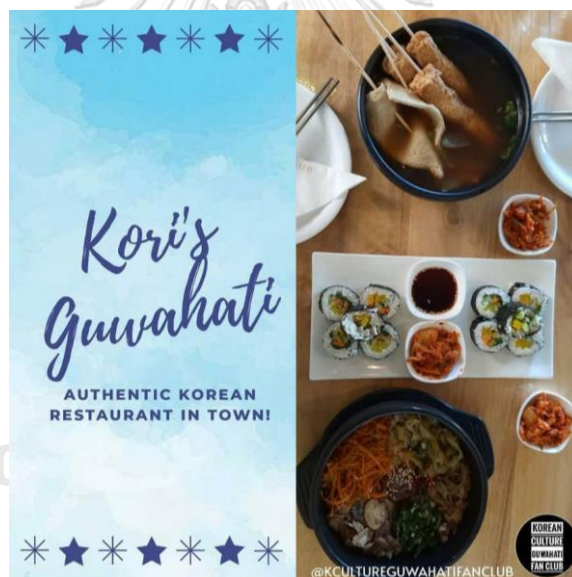


Figure 43: Kori's Guwahati

Source: K-Culture Guwahati Fanclub Instagram

Through the comment analysis, it has been observed that hashtags and mentions by K-POP fans in India are mostly on and about BTS. For the rest of India, K-POP might be a new trend but for the North East region, it has been there since the early 2000s. What makes the North East region different from the rest of India, is the similarities it

has in terms of religion, appearance, language roots, culture, and values with Korea along with their 'love for music'.

Lastly, the sudden boom in consuming K-Dramas on Netflix, Viki during the COVID-19 pandemic has been another important point in India's potential of consuming Hallyu products.

## 6.2 Limitations

This study primarily focuses on the young people from the 14-29 age group so most of the respondents are students who are still studying and have no income. This sample size does not include individuals above 29 years and so the economic factors do not play a major influence in the popularity of K-POP.

The second limitation is the constraints faced due to COVID-19. Due to the pandemic, the study was conducted online through google forms and online interviews. Since face-to-face interviews were not possible to conduct, the answers of the respondents may have some biases. Unlike face-to-face interviews which capture the actual emotions and behaviour of the respondents, online interviews may incline towards biasness and pre-prepared answers.

The third limitation is that since the population of the whole North East region is large so the sample size of this study might not show the actual representation of the youth. Respondents of some regions were difficult to contact due to lack of internet connectivity and some inactive fanbases, the data collected might not be sufficient to represent all the eight states.

### 6.3 Recommendations

The recommendations from this study can be explained as follows: the Korean government should try to invest more in the North East region as this region has a lot of potentials to conduct Hallyu-related activities or concerts. The Indian government should also try to invest in this region in collaboration with the South Korean government to promote K-culture and diverse North East cultures to boost tourism. Annual events such as the Hornbill festival, Cherry Blossom festival are masterstrokes by the Nagaland and Meghalaya governments respectively where many K-POP idols were invited to perform and promote themselves which has boosted the popularity of K-POP in the region and in promoting their tourism.

Korean language should be included in the school curriculums which will become supposedly easier after the Education Policy reform of 2020. The inclusion of the Korean language will help people in finding jobs in Korean companies present in India such as Hyundai, Samsung, LG, KIA motors, etc. The KCCI in New Delhi has been playing an important role in promoting K-culture. The new King Sejong Institute in Pune (2020) is yet another noteworthy investment in India. The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Centre of Korean studies and Korean language course at Manipur University are all examples of how such investments in India can help to promote Korean culture and Korean studies in India.

India and Korea are not strangers and have a strong historical link and can also become strong trading partners in the future. The relationship of India with Korea today is going strong, and India is also recognizing the growth of the Hallyu Wave on many social platforms such as Netflix, Viu, Viki, Spotify, etc.

#### 6.4 Future Studies

This study emphasizes the popularity of K-POP in the North East region with a special focus on BTS popularity. For future studies, a comparative study between different regions might be a good way of having a better understanding of K-POP popularity in each region. Since many studies focus on North East India and Hallyu Wave, research on other parts of India can also increase the scope of the study.

This study has only focused on only one K-POP group BTS, but others have extensive popularity in India and worldwide such as Blackpink, Got7, etc. Other studies can also be extended to other components of Hallyu such as K-beauty, K-food, K-sports, K-Fashion because along with K-POP all these components are also becoming popular in Northeast India as well as in the rest of India.

Lastly, new studies can focus on other age groups above 29 to get a better understanding of how the older age groups feel towards K-POP and K-wave. Hallyu Wave is growing in India and future studies on it can be limitless.

## APPENDIX

### Popularity of Kpop in North East India: Case on the Increasing Fame of BTS

Hello, I am Eshani Bora, currently pursuing my master's degree and for my thesis, I am working on the popularity of Kpop in North East India.

NOTE- It will take approximately 5-7 minutes.

All responses will be confidential and used only for educational purpose.

Thank you for your cooperation.

#### Part 1. Personal Information

Please complete all sections and tick the appropriate boxes.

1. Age:

2. Gender:

Male

Female

3. Religion:

Hindu

Christian

Muslim

Buddhist

Jain



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

- Sikh
- Other

4. Education Level:

- High School
- Higher Secondary
- Undergraduate
- Post-Graduate
- Other

5. State:

- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Mizoram
- Nagaland
- Tripura
- Sikkim

6. Designation:

- Student
- Employed
- Self- employed





Unemployed

Other

7. Do you have an income?

Yes

No

8. If yes, how much do you earn in a month? (In ₹)

10,000

Less than 10,000

10,001-20,000

20,001-30,000

30,001-40,000

40,001-50,000

More than 50,000

9. If No, how much allowance do you receive in a month from family or any other source? (In ₹)

Less than 500

501-1000

1001-5000

5001-10,000

Above 10,000

- None

## Part 2. Exposure To K-POP

Please complete all sections and tick the appropriate boxes.

10. When did you get into Kpop?

- 1-3 years
- 3½ -6 years
- 6½ -10 years
- More than 10 years

11. How many hours do you listen to Kpop?

- 2 hours
- Less than 2 hours
- 2½ -5 hours
- More than 5 hours

12. Which is the first Kpop group you were interested in?

- BTS
- EXO
- Super Junior
- Girls Generation [SNSD]
- Twice
- Blackpink

- Other

13. According to you which is the most popular Kpop group in North East India?

- BTS
- EXO
- Super Junior
- Girls Generation [SNSD]
- Twice
- Blackpink
- Other

14. Do you follow or are part of any fan groups on WhatsApp, Instagram, or any other SNS platform?

- Yes
- No

15. Do you own any albums or merchandise (Light sticks, posters etc.) of any Kpop group?

- Yes
- No

16. If yes, which group's merchandise? (Multiple choice)

- BTS
- EXO
- Super Junior



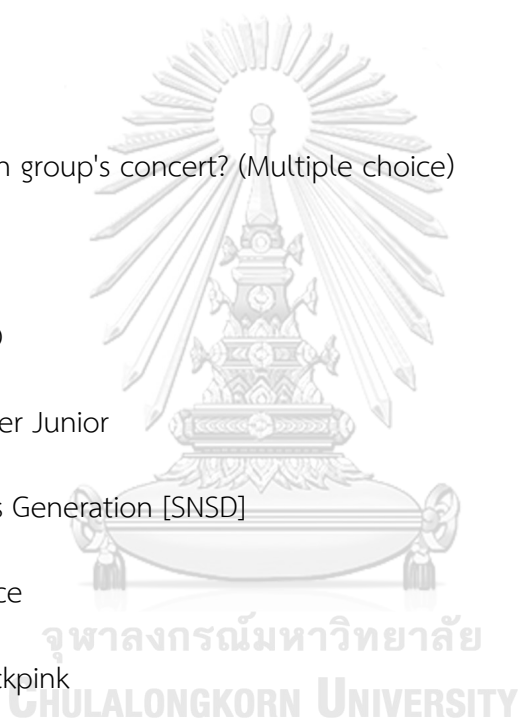
- Girls Generation [SNSD]
- Twice
- Blackpink
- Other

17. Have you ever been to a Kpop Concert?

- Yes
- No

18. If yes, which group's concert? (Multiple choice)

- BTS
- EXO
- Super Junior
- Girls Generation [SNSD]
- Twice
- Blackpink
- Other



Part 3. Social, Psychological, Cultural factors based on consumer behavior.

Please choose the appropriate number 1 to 5 that can best indicate your degree of agreement toward the following statement.

19. How did you get interested in Kpop?

I got interested in Kpop because of...

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Family					
Friends					
BTS					
Korean celebrities					
K-Dramas					
Internet, newspaper, magazines, webtoons					

## 20. Why do you love Kpop?

I love Kpop because of...

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Attractive idols					
Choreography and performance					
Concept and art					
Music and lyrics					
Message of the group					
Fashion and beauty					
Fan service					
Source of Happiness and Healing					

## 21. Why do you think Kpop is accepted in North East India?

Kpop is accepted in North East India because of...

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Similarity in appearance between Koreans and North East people					
Similar family and social values					
Love for music					
Kpop helps to know more about Korean culture and language					
Popularity of Korean culture					
Similarity with Korean Culture					

Part 4(1). Fan of BTS

Please complete all sections and tick the appropriate boxes.

22. Are you a fan of BTS?

Yes

No

**If YES, you are a fan of BTS:**

23. Which was the first song you heard by BTS? (Just the song name)

24. Why do you love BTS?

I love BTS because of...

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Attractive idols					
Choreography and performance					
Concept and art					
Music and lyrics					
Message of the group					
Fan service					



25. Who is your Bias?

- RM
- Jin
- Suga
- Jhope
- Jimin
- V
- Jungkook
- OT7

26. Do you attend fan events organized by BTS ARMY in your area?

- Yes
- No

27. Which is your favorite BTS song? (Only 1 song name)

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

28. Besides BTS are you a fan of other groups?

- Yes
- No

If yes, you are a fan of other groups:

29. Which groups? (Multiple choice)

- EXO
- NCT

- Super Junior
- Girls Generation [SNSD]
- Twice
- Blackpink
- Other

Part 4(2). Not a Fan of BTS

**If NO, you are not a fan of BTS:**

30. Which Kpop group are you a fan of?

- EXO
- Super Junior
- NCT
- Girls Generation [SNSD]
- Twice
- Blackpink
- Other

31. Do you attend fan events organized by your fandom in your area?

- Yes
- No

Part 5. BTS Popularity in North East India

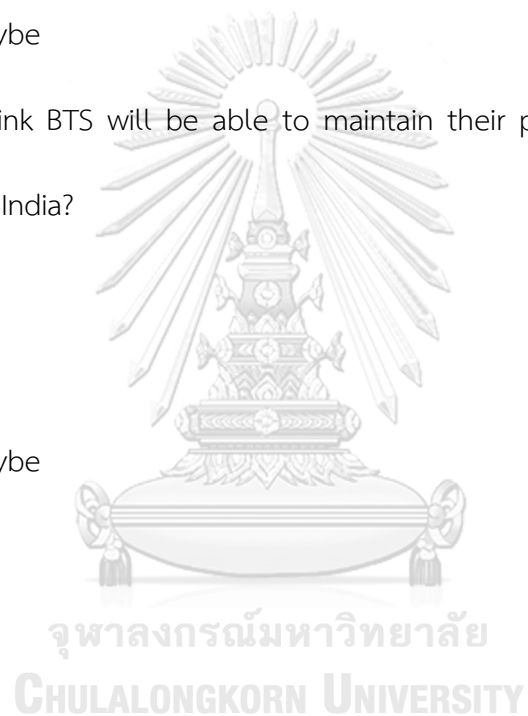
Please complete all sections and tick the appropriate boxes.

32. Do you think BTS is the reason why Kpop is getting popular in North East India?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

33. Do you think BTS will be able to maintain their popularity in the future in North East India?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



Interviewee Number	Gender	Age	State
Interviewee 1	Female	22	Assam
Interviewee 2	Female	21	Assam
Interviewee 3	Female	22	Assam
Interviewee 4	Male	22	Assam
Interviewee 5	Female	21	Assam
Interviewee 6	Female	23	Assam
Interviewee 7	Female	22	Nagaland
Interviewee 8	Male	17	Manipur
Interviewee 9	Female	23	Assam

Table 31 Interviewee List

## REFERENCES

Constitution of India. Legislative, Ministry of Law and Justice India.

(2016). SMTOWN: New Culture Technology, 2016: 36:46.

(2020). Big Hit Corporate Briefing with the Community (2H 2020). South Korea: 57:43

(2020). "Billboard Charts ". from <https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100>.

(2020). K-Pop India Contest 2020 Final Round. India: 2:27:54.

Airangnews (2008) Nagaland Korea-India Music Festival.

Asem, D. B. (2014). "Contextualizing Social Learning Theory Through Korean Media: A Case Study of Cultural Heterogenization in North East India." The International Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences Vol 2(11).

Athikho, K. (2017). "Globalization, Hybridization and Cultural Invasion - Korean Wave in India's North East." Asian Communication Research Vol.14: pp. 10-35 (26 pages).

Basu, A., et al. (2004). Anthropology for North-East India, a Reader: Indian Anthropological Congress Commemorative Volume, Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists, Indian Anthropological Society, National Museum of Mankind.

Bhanuj, K. (2017) How K-pop conquered India.

Bhatt, S. (2018) From K-pop to K-drama, Kimchi to K-beauty, Indian youngsters just can't get enough of Korea.

Bhatt, S. (2020) How K-pop and Korean drama had their biggest breakthrough in India amid the pandemic.

Bhaumik, S. (2000) Rebels ban Hindi films.

BIGHITMUSIC. "BTS Profile." from <https://ibighit.com/bts/eng/profile/>.

Billboard (2020). "Billboard Hot 100." from <https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/2020-12-05>.

Bok-rae, K. (2016). Past , Present and Future of Hallyu ( Korean Wave ).

BookofAchievers (2018) Mizoram girl Juchy, the winner of K-POP India will compete amongst 72 global contestants at South Korea K-POP World Championships in October 2018.

Bora, E. (2020) The Butterfly Effect: How BTS changed my life.

Bruner, R. (2019) The Mastermind Behind BTS Opens Up About Making a K-Pop Juggernaut.

Chakraborty, R. (2019). "K-Pop Makes for 25 Percent of Spotify's 'India Discovers' Playlist."

Chakraborty, R. (2020) BTS Reflect on the Massive Success of 'Dynamite' in India.

Chakraborty, R. (2020) BTS' Online Concert 'Bang Bang Con' Pulls in Over 50 Million Views.

Chakraborty, R. (2020) Here Are Spotify India's Most Streamed K-pop Artists of 2020.

Chakraborty, R. (2020) Why Spotify India's New Campaign Will Focus On K-pop.

Chanchani, D. M. M. (2020) For the first time, India has more rural net users than urban.

Charles W. Lamb, J. F. H. J., Carl McDaniel (2011). Marketing.

Chew, Y. C. (2018). "The Success Factor of K-pop Music from The Fan's Perspective."

Deb, R. (2019) Indian millennials are riding the Korean wave.

Deka, K. (2019) Youth and infrastructure development in Northeast India.

Dhawan, R. K. (2017). "Korea's Cultural Diplomacy: An Analysis of the Hallyu in India." Strategic Analysis 41(6): 559-570.

Dr. Davendra Verma, P. D., Mitter Sain, Chandra Prakash, Ravi Kumar, H.P. Kesan (2017). YOUTH IN INDIA. C. S. O. Social Statistics Division. New Delhi.

Firstpost (2018) Nagaland's Hornbill Festival to feature performance by K-Pop band Mont, chilli eating competitions.

George, L. (2019) Decoding Hallyu, the Korean Wave in India.

Gogoi, M. (2017) K-drama to K-pop: Is India finally warming up to the Korean wave?

Gogoi, M. (2019) Korean pop in India — a love affair that could well define this generation.

Grammy (2020) 2021 GRAMMYS: Complete Nominees List.

Gupta, N. (2019) BTS Love Yourself In Seoul Film gets a release date in India.

Gupta, N. (2019) K-POP Idols to Perform in Hornbill Music Festival 2019 [NAGALAND].

Herman, T. (2018) BTS Reflect on Life & Love on Uplifting 'Love Yourself: Answer'.

Hindu, T. (2020) Spotify has been streamed in nearly 2,300 cities in the country.

IndiaToday (2017) Here's why K-Pop is so popular in North East India.



Kaita, P. (2018) Northeast states lag behind in internet, mobile connectivity.

Kelley, C. (2018) BTS Deliver Speech At United Nations Urging Young People To 'Find Your Voice'.

Kim, Y. (2020). "Celebrating 10 years of #KpopTwitter."

[https://blog.twitter.com/en\\_us/topics/insights/2020/Celebrating10yearsofKpopTwitter.html](https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/insights/2020/Celebrating10yearsofKpopTwitter.html).

Kim, Y. (2021). "#KpopTwitter achieves new record of 6.7 billion Tweets globally in 2020." [https://blog.twitter.com/en\\_us/topics/insights/2021/kpoptwitter-achieves-new-record-of-6-billion-tweets-globally-in-2020.html](https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/insights/2021/kpoptwitter-achieves-new-record-of-6-billion-tweets-globally-in-2020.html).

Kshetrimayum, O. and N. V. Chanu (2008). "Mapping Cultural Diffusion: The Case of "Korean Wave" in North East India." In S. Narsimhan & D. Y. Kim (Eds.): (pp. 181-195).

Kuotsu, N. (2013). "Architectures of pirate film cultures: encounters with Korean Wave in "Northeast" India." Inter-Asia Cultural Studies 14(4): 579-599.

Kwak, Y.-s. (2021) Young Asian women most loyal 'hallyu' consumers: survey.

LoveYourself. from <https://www.love-myself.org/eng/home/>.

Min-Soo, S. (2012) Lessons from Kpop's Global Success.

MoSPI (2021). State Domestic Product and other aggregates, 2011-2012 series.

<http://mospi.nic.in/data>, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.

NDTV (2020) Namaste, India: "Eager To See You, Hope That Day Will Come Soon," Say BTS.

NEC (2015). BASIC STATISTICS OF NORTH EASTERN REGION 2015. N. E. C. SECRETARIAT. NONGRIM HILLS, SHILLONG, NEC Secretariat.

Pankaj, N. M. (2017). "Hallyu in India: A Study of the Reception of Korean Culture in India Today." Journal of Contemporary Korean Studies **4(1)**: 123-137.

PIB (2020). First Advance Estimates of National Income, 2019-20, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.

Reimeingam, M. (2014). "Korean Wave and Korean Media Consumption in Manipur." Journal of North East India Studies **Vol. 4(2)**: pp. 15-30.

Reimeingam, M. (2015). "Korean Media: A Catalyst of Acculturation to Korean Culture in Manipur." Journal of North East India Studies **Vol. 5(2)**: pp. 1-17.

Rongpanglepdang (2019) Assam: K-pop band KARD dazzles fans at maiden show in Northeast.

Rowley, G. (2020) BTS' Virtual Map of the Soul ON:E Concert Garnered Nearly 1 Million Viewers Across the Globe.

Rowley, G. (2020) BTS Issues Statement Supporting Black Lives Matter: 'We Will Stand Together'.

Ryoo, W. (2009). "Globalization, or the logic of cultural hybridization: the case of the Korean wave." Asian Journal of Communication **19**(2): 137-151.

Spotify (2019) Six Months of Data Shows India's Increasing Appetite for Streaming.

Spotify (2020) 3 Major Streaming Trends from Spotify's First Year in India.

Tiwari, S. (2020 ) The rise of Hallyu in India: An Obsession with all things Korean.

Tran, M. D. T. (2013). Effect of Korean Wave on Young Vietnamese Consumers: Case of Korean Restaurant Popularity. Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University. **Masters Degree.**

Trust, G. (2020) BTS' 'Life Goes On' Launches as Historic No. 1 on Billboard Hot 100.

UNICEF (2018) We have learned to love ourselves, so now I urge you to 'speak yourself.

Whelan, N. (2020) The Major Religions In India.



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
**CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY**

## VITA

NAME Eshani Bora

DATE OF BIRTH 18 January 1998

PLACE OF BIRTH Guwahati, Assam, INDIA

INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED Chulalongkorn University, Thailand  
Cotton University, India

HOME ADDRESS House NO- 314, Ashray, Hatigarh Chariali Zoo Narengi  
Guwahati- 781024

