

From K-Pop and dramas to fashion, Bengalureans ride the Korean wave

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Bengaluru: Gone are the days when K-dramas meant Indian TV soap operas where every title began with the letter 'K'. Today, K-dramas mean Korean dramas – imported from South Korea – which every other Bengalurean seems to be increasingly obsessed with.

The rising popularity of K-dramas was underlined recently when a Twitter user shared a clip of a drama – Prison Playbook – dubbed in Kannada. Chaitanya Hegde, a netizen, tweeted the clip with a message: "Indicator of the popularity of K-dramas: There is a dedicated channel for Kannada-dubbed Korean shows on local cable." The tweet gained the approval of several netizens.

It is not just K-dramas but almost every major aspect of Korean culture – be it music, food, fashion and skincare – is gaining a large following in the city. In popular culture, any of these genres are prefixed with a K, to distinguish them as Korean.

Rida Tharana, a content creator and emcee with more than 6 lakh followers on Instagram, told TOI that the influence of Korean culture is obvious as 80% of her follo-

HOW INFLUENCE BEGAN

Rathi Jafer, director, InKo Centre (Indo-Korean Cultural and Information Centre), said impact of Korean culture was felt 20 years ago when Hindi content was blocked in the northeast region due to political reasons and Arirang TV – a television network based in Seoul, South Korea – stepped in. "The television network exposed people to Korean music, food, lifestyle, fashion, etc. The more recent influence took place with Psy's Gangnam Style," said Jafer, adding even the popularity of BTS was not by fluke but because of its positive attributes.

She added their songs have changed with more English words now. "There is an upsurge in Korean content on streaming platforms. Their dramas are popular as they hit closer home addressing issues like mental health, loneliness, etc. They are also binge-watch worthy with limited episodes," she said.

wers relate to the content she creates with references to K-Pop and K-dramas.

"My love for Korean culture began in 2017 with K-Pop and has now slowly grown to K-dramas. While BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan – a Korean boy band) keeps me entertained, the short yet engaging K-dramas are my go-to watching favourites whenever I find the time," said the 23-year-old.

Tharana has revamped her entire wardrobe to accommodate K-fashion. "The fashion is sublime, which suits both formal and casual set-

tings. From high-waisted pants, baggy shirts, turtle-necks, to my favourite – Trench coats – it has everything," said Tharana.

Korean food is also a hot favourite these days. Tharana pointed to a growing number of places in the city which serve Ramen and Kimchi.

Karthika SL, a student, said her hunt for the best Korean food is still on. "Watching the characters eat food in K-dramas is inspiring. My favourite spots, for now, are Hae Kum Gang on Brigade Road, Soo Ra Sang and Arirang Ko-



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Tharana revamped her wardrobe to accommodate K-fashion. (Above) Korean pizza by GOPIZZA

What to watch?

- Crash Landing on You
- Something in the Rain
- It's Okay To not Be Okay
- Twenty Five Twenty One
- Squid Game
- Business Proposal

rean Restaurant," said the 19-year-old. Karthika and her friends also save up to purchase Korean skincare products.

Jaewon Lim, CEO and founder, GOPIZZA – a Korean pizza brand, said Bengaluru is more westernised and open to other cultures. "In the two years of our presence here, I can feel the difference in how cosmopolitan people in Bengaluru think about Korea," said Lim, adding that content on online streaming platforms and the presence of major Korean companies have helped in popularising K-culture.

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OF STYLE & FLAVOUR: Rida Tharana revamped her wardrobe to accommodate K-fashion. (Above) Korean pizza by GOPIZZA

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