

KOREAN WAVE IN SRI LANKA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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“Korean Wave” is the increase in global popularity of South Korean culture since the 1990s. This phenomenon which began in Southeast Asia reached Sri Lanka a decade ago driven by the spread of Korean TV shows and music. Despite the abundance of global research on Korean Wave, no previous attempt has been made into tracing the Korean Wave in Sri Lanka. As images and information about South Korea are not familiar to Sri Lankan life, and as the country is heavily influenced by Indian and colonial cultures, the spread of Korean culture within a short period of time is an interesting subject of discussion. This paper attempts to discuss the beginning, spread, landmark moments, and the future of the Korean Wave in Sri Lanka. It shows that Sri Lankans were first introduced to Korean culture through the airing of Korean TV shows in local television channels, later accessed through means such as DVDs, movie streaming websites, and user generated content websites. Moving forward from Korean TV shows and movies, today Korean pop music is rapidly gaining a widespread local audience. This has resulted in the creation of active online fan communities on social media, a proliferation of Korean language classes, and an increasing interest in Korean culture within the island. The study is based on primary data collected through interviews of Korean fans, and secondary data collected from journal articles, websites and newspaper articles. The paper concludes that this increase in popularity of Korean culture, especially observed among youth, can challenge the status quo enjoyed by Indian and American cultural products.

Key words: Korean Wave, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Popular Culture

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