

# Korean Culture Knocking on India's Door



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Korean manufacturers are in the spotlight in India. **Hyundai Motor Group** has its largest overseas production base there, with an annual capacity of 824,000 units, soon to reach 1 million. **LG Electronics** is currently building its third factory in India. Once complete, its combined annual output capacity will rise to 4.7 million air conditioners, 3.75 million washing machines, 3.6 million refrigerators, and 2 million televisions. Two Korean companies' local subsidiaries have gone public in India, one last year and another this year, raising capital to fund their ambitious investment plans.

While much quieter, a new wave of Korean companies is spreading across India's cultural content industry.

**HYBE**, the entertainment powerhouse behind BTS, established its fifth global headquarters in India in September 2025. With the mission "Where voices of India become global stories," the company views India not merely as an export market but as a source of creative talent for global audiences. Its multinational group *Katseye*, known for appearances in Netflix's *Pop Star Academy* documentary and Gap's *Better in Denim*

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campaign, already features a U.S.-born, Indian-origin member.

Korean over-the-top (OTT) content has also started climbing Indian charts. Earlier this year, Nielsen reported a sharp rise in younger Indian viewers' interest in Korean dramas. *When Life Gives You Tangerines* (폭삭 속았수다) was the highest ranked non-Indian original in Nielsen's March 2025 sample. Recognizing such momentum, **CJ ENM**, in partnership with Amazon MX Player, recently announced a major push into India, starting with the release of 18 Korean dramas, including *Lovely Runner* (선재 업고 튀어), dubbed in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu-language.

**Krafton**, the creator of *Battlegrounds Mobile India*, has become one of the biggest gaming success stories. With over 100 million registered users and 180 million downloads, its triumph lies in localization, incorporating Indian style music, costumes, and items. Krafton is also investing in India's creative ecosystem through a startup incubator aimed at nurturing local talent.

Korean content companies' pivot to India is no coincidence.

According to the 2025 Overseas Hallyu Survey conducted by the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, which covered 26,400 individuals who have experienced Korean cultural content across 28 countries, India ranked third in favorability and fourth in popularity toward Korean content. Other top five countries include those in Southeast Asia, where Korean culture has already become part of mainstream youth culture. India also ranked fourth in time spent consuming Korean content and fifth in its share within total content consumption.

Even more striking is India's dynamism: the share of respondents reporting increased interest and willingness to consume Korean content over the past year was highest in India. The same pattern held for expectations over the coming year.

Although India is a relatively new market for Korean creators, Indian audiences are already familiar with Korean-style stories thanks to numerous remakes. Several Indian adaptations of Korean hits have already appeared: *Duranga* (from *Flower of Evil* (악의 꽃)), *Gyaarah Gyaarah* (from *Signal* (시그널)), *Bharat* (from *Ode to My Father* (국제시장)), and *Rocky Handsome* (from *The Man from Nowhere* (아저씨)).

Indian creators are also taking inspiration in new directions. Later this year, Netflix will release *Made in Korea*, a film about an Indian woman who discovers friendship and hope while exploring Korean culture. The movie, directed and acted by Indian artists, was largely filmed in Korea.

The Korean government, for its part, plans to play a supporting role. In September, it announced 123 National Policy Tasks, of which Tasks 103-108 focus on turning Korea into a “creative cultural nation.” The initiative targets eight major Korean sectors, game, music, film, animation, publishing, webtoon, broadcasting content, and OTT content, with an ambitious goal to nearly double cultural content exports from 26.6 trillion won in 2024 to 50.0 trillion won in 2030. The policy also promotes internationalization of “Korean wave-linked” industries such as food and beauty products.

The convergence of corporate enthusiasm and government backing is expected to further accelerate the spread of Korean culture in India. Success will depend on how well Korean creators understand and adapt to local tastes and sensitivities. If they get it right, the cultural industry could serve not only as a growth engine but also as a bridge linking Indian audiences to Korean products and brands across other sectors.

A relationship must be two-way. The Korean and Indian governments could explore ways to increase the visibility of Indian culture in Korea, complementing the growing popularity of Korean content in India. Signs of such exchange are already visible.

Last June, Gwanghwamun Square at the heart of Seoul was filled with nearly one thousand people performing yoga for the UN International Day of Yoga, gathering around the statue of King Sejong the Great, the creator of Korean alphabet, Hangeul, and an enduring symbol of Korean creativity. [KIEP](#)