

# Influence of World's Fashion on Bangladeshi Fashion Trends from the 1950s to 2018

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## Abstract

Fashion is the most fundamental thing for a society because by the fashion it is easy to get the idea of modernization of any area. Bangladesh is still developing in terms of fashion. This Subcontinent got liberation from the British colonialism almost 71 years ago. With the partition of British India in 1947 two modern states, India & Pakistan was born. That time Fashion was considered as extravagant so somewhat was intimidated but styling look was not separated from its own way. Bangladesh was born in 1971 after the liberation war with Pakistan. Within this period many styles came and went. Throughout the years the people of Bengal had the interest to look beautiful. By the year fashion has been changed with the development of the country. Some people followed western and some followed traditional & cultural attire. The study was done to find out the changes in fashion trends throughout 1950-2018 in Bangladesh and to understand whether Bangladeshi people were influenced by worlds' fashion or not.

**Keywords:** World's fashion; Ladies wear; Fashion; Trend; Hairstyles.

## 1. Introduction

Fashion is the most popular and latest style among the people and it is not just about clothing, it's also about footwear, makeup, hairstyles, look and even behavior [1]. Fashion is a way of self-expression that allows people to try on many roles in life. Fashion is all about changes which are necessary with the time and consumer demand. Before the birth of Bangladesh, In 1950s the clothing in Indian subcontinent varies on many things.

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India's (Bengal's) fashion was motivated by the British rulers in the 1940s. Women's popular hairstyle was pin rolls in hairdo and Finger waves. Women's from upper-class family (Nawab and Thakur Bari) used to wear fur jacket for modern & fusion look. After the separation in Bengal nothing could change "the trend that is fashion". In that period, fashion was already stepped into the region. Bangladesh was born in 1971, a country with a new form, but quite rich in culture and heritage [2].

## 2. Objectives

- Understanding the reason behind the fashion changes.
- This research will help people to know about the history of our fashion.
- It will help to find out the changes in the costumes and looks.
- It will give a new perspective and ideas for the upcoming fashion designers, Make-up artists.

## 3. Limitations

There are some limitations which the author faced during the research process. Such as the pictures from the old decades of Bengali fashion were not that much available on the internet. Movies, drama, advertisement etc. were the limited source to get the idea about previous Bengali fashion. Quality of the still pictures of previous period were not good for analysis. Whether international styles and fashion were available in internet, Bengali fashion is still not that much reserved in different website as. There are very less article and journal in different website regarding our previous fashion. Online Archive has less information regarding Bengali fashion.

## 4. Methodology

The research was done mainly by using secondary data. Different movies, Advertisement, Magazine, self-observation and still pictures were used for analysis. To make this research strong, different local and international published books and articles were studied. Different websites helped by representing past and present information. Different Bangladeshi apparel brands were also a way to understand today's fashion trend. The target of this research was to understand the condition of today's fashion in Bangladesh. This research also provides some pictures from a different era to find out the differences between the eras. Two methodological compounds were used to this research.

- A literature review on Bangladeshi fashion trends from East Pakistan to Bangladesh.
- Review on world's fashion changes throughout the era.
- Differences between the western fashion and eastern fashion.
- Comments and consultation with the fashion designers of our field.

## 5. Literature Background

*1950s – Uprisings, inherited memories and partition:* Paris reopened their fashion house after the Second World War and that is why there were some diversification in the style of ladies fashion. Some changes came in the neckline and other parts and it influenced Indian fashion. The television, movies and fashion magazine were

being dispersing the new style of female. Narrow shoulder, cinched waist and longer skirt with wider in hem were included in a new silhouette. It was designed by the designers Christian Dior and Cristobal Balenciaga. But in East Pakistan( Now Bangladesh) was a little bit at the back because of movement for mother tongue of the state and other issues [6]. The styles of iconic artist such as Nargis was being followed by the ladies from this region with her high-necked silk blouse and pure chiffon saris, ornaments, and makeup. Though Nargis was an Indian artist, her style was popular in both East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Along with the Indian film star, Mughal & Victorian styling were followed by the upper class people.

#### ***1960s – Modern looks, effect of Movie and close fitted dressings***

The best attributes of this era were different hairstyles. Puffy hair and Long braid were much popular at that time than simple curls. Ladies used fine tooth comb to create huge knots and later they brushed their hair to get the output of beehive effect. While the miniskirt was the trend of western, many Bengalis from the upper class and middle class were pulling on a sleeveless blouse with chiffon Saris and body fitted salwar and Kurtis. The tradition draping way to wear sari had change from right to left anchal [2]. This style was copied from the Bollywood hot actress Mumtaz. Though the accessories were larger it was replaced by thin belted wristwatches, small ear top, and necklace with a locket.

#### ***1970s- Independence, bellbottom and iconic fashion from Bangla cinema***

In spite of independence and creation of a free country-Bangladesh 70s was the most important and colorful decade for newly liberated country. Polyester was the most preferable and bright colors were everywhere. Very tight fittings pant and platform shoes were the first choice for men and women for fashionable look. [3] With the lift of world fashion, the bellbottom dress dispersed whole over the country. Though this era started with bright and glittery colors, by 1979 from almost all outfit colors were missing and were replaced by gray, black and earthy tones. Accessories were bigger in size which were dominated by the color black and gray specially the bracelet and goggles [5]. Actress and singers like Bobita, Kobori and Runa Laila were the important iconic figure for Bangladesh. Runa Laila was a pride for Bangladesh for her voice [4]. Whole south Asian zone were fascinated by her talent. Her style and looks were being followed by her followers as a fashion icon. On the other hand Bobita & Kobori were national heroin so they had the essential power of fashion during that period. Thin eyebrows of Runa Laila and Bobita's up-do have become fad fashion. Global fashion preference in the 70s was colored prints, vibrant colors, net, glossy materials with bold design and Bangladesh was also influenced [2]. Bangladeshi ladies were getting into the trending style with long unkempt hair, bell-bottom pants, thin eyebrows, loop earrings and these were called fad fashion [3].

#### ***The 1980s – Freedom, experimentation, and fashion***

The 80s fashion was submissive in color with lots of brown, tans and orange shades to some extent. Blocky shapes were overworked and dressing like tennis players became less and velvet and velour were the most up to date. Disco and Dancewear came at that time. As MTV was introduced to television in 1981, people could easily see which to wear and fashionable so that was a great impact on the consumer market. After getting the freedom

in the truest sense, Bangladeshi women started to try out with their looks in this period. Though in that period Hollywood and Bollywood both were there excellently to demonstrate people what to wear, ladies tried out some research on their own ground by liking polka dot in various colors, shapes, and sizes and it ruled highest [5]. On the other hand, the world fashion was practicing bright colored accessories, bangles, and hoops. Pop music star like Cyndi Lauper was leading a new style by the mid of 80s era [3], where Bangladeshi younger boys followed Azam Khan, a pop star for his style.

Blouses with halter neck came to be popular and puffed-up wavy hair with frontal bangs became a 'new thing' in hairstyling. Few women wore kameez with velvet jackets and loose salwar [2]. Big circle earrings were in the fashion. Rather than traditional silver and golden color, this time ladies were donned in more vibrant colors. To raise the fashion in Bangladesh, this decade had a great attribute. Until then there were many serious issues to address.

### ***1990s- Influence of Mughal & raise of boutique shop***

1990s era was for the fashion of loose fitting and colorful garments. T-shirts were big in size and shorts were extra-long. Narrow pants were in use widely within the young generations. Mullet – hairstyle was fashionable for some years and baseball cap was widely used among the boys and girls in different ways. Turtleneck was so much popular for sweater even in every sweater had a turtleneck. Most importantly the hip-hop artists became main streams to follow fashion in the starting of 90s. But in Bangladesh interestingly not that much changed that much in fashion scenario during this era [4]. Anarkali and really long dresses became extensive everywhere as the ladies jumped to the Mughal era. Bengali ladies started tying their hair in a tight-up-do. Short hair came back. Around the country many boutique shop rose in this era and tried to take entry in local market [2].

### ***2000s –Millennials, globalization & chemical experiments***

This period was famous for new experiments and fusion. But, it was music based subgroup to the youngsters and hip-hop fashion was very much popular to both sexes [7]. Because of globalization and as it was a new millennium the world was uniting to become one which also influenced fashion. Internet, social media were the main key to raise consumerism and Bangladeshis were accepting more of western look. In world's fashion, Lace, satin, parkas, trench coats and little black dresses with heels and stockings were a big hit of the time with its simplistic style. On the other hand in Bangladesh denim, jeans, tops, shirts were the most important fashion items for the everyday woman, whereas saris became celebratory costumes to the women of Bangladesh [5]. There were so many changes in hairstyle including coloring, permanent straightening, curling and highlights. These became widespread from lower to the higher society [2].

### ***2010 onwards – Revival of fashion & fusion wear***

World's fashion of the 2010s has seen the revival of fashion of 1950s, 1970s, 1980s &1990s [8]. This era has seen different recycled fashion, tribal fashion, monochromatic & printed clothing, neon color, work wear, luxurious sportswear etc. Popular global fashion brands of the decade include Forever 21, Topshop, Uniqlo, Christian Dior, Hollister, Abercrombie and Fitch, Ben

Sherman, Lacoste, Philippines clothing retailer Bench, H&M, Nine West, , Human, Burberry, Monsoon, River Island, Dorothy Perkins, Coach, Marks and Spencer, Hugo Boss, and Alberto [8]. On the other hand, Bangladeshis became more interested in fusion, a perfect blend of both East and the West as pure westernization had lost most of its appeal. People from almost all the strata chose casual kurtas, pants, dhotis, etc. for basic dress up. Saris were trending back again but it became the appealing formal attire for outing & social gatherings. To give a ravishing fusion look remarkably this time, the blouses were altered in various ways. Different types of blouses like jacket blouses, high neck blouse, net blouses, backless, halter necks and many other designs became the highlighting co-garment of a sari. Not that much change came in hairstyle but highlights became more naturally friendly. Hair straightening and curling procedures became temporary and wellness oriented. Big dial wrist-watches, diamonds and small purses started trending in accessories and jewelry.

## **6. Findings and result**

Bangladesh is a country with its rich culture and custom values to whole over the world. The subcontinent was liberated from colonist government 71 years ago. Many years have been passed after two freedoms of Bangladesh first from India (in 1947) and from Pakistan in 1971. This research shows that within that time many fashions came and went. Due to the unstable political condition of the country and war, many people or media could not always follow the world fashion trend. As we were a little bit back in terms of technology, television and other social media was introduced later. So that time, only movies were the sources to follow fashion. Movie stars and singers were the main icons of fashion. So, world's fashion could not influence much on us from 1950s-1970s. Fashion is also related with economic status or condition. In 1971, this country lost many people and wealth. Socially and economically the country went through a tough time. But at the ending of the 1970s and beginning of 1980s Bangladesh started to see the development. Those people who could travel another country could relate fashion with the world. As maximum population was from a rural community, fashion grew so slowly. In 1980s women started to experiment with fashion. 1970s bellbottom dress we found in Bangladesh at the starting of 1980s. We remarked the 1980s for its fashionable outfit for both men and women. The 1990s was about long dresses and Anarkali dress so probably people of Bangladesh were not that much interested regarding worlds fashion as still there was lack of internet.

In the 2000s with the help of media and internet, people started to follow the western fashion. By this side, our RMG sector was already on the way to burst its success and it did. So many international dress categories were followed by the people. Jeans was everywhere. Though that time some of our local brands were setting up, people were wearing western outfit as well. The unisex dresses were much available in the country. From 2010 to 2018 it is all about fusion and revival of older fashion. With the world's fashion Bangladesh is also trying to make a fusion with eastern and western. Variation of the silhouette is the key point of changes in fashion. It was not only in bodies but also in sleeves and neckline.

We also got different motif and used as print, embroidery from different culture. Such as tropical, bohemian, African tribal, Art Deco, Greek key etc. As we are a Muslim religious based country, so we have some boundary in making design. By keeping our norms and values in mind, designers are doing great designs with the suggestions of the world's fashion.

## **7. Conclusion**

The overall result shows that, there were a lot of ups and downs in Bangladesh as it was under colonist regime. The total subcontinent was divided into many pieces, then we found this country. Technology, economic growth, freedom, and lifestyle are the main issues that can make an impact on fashion. After the revolution of the internet, the whole world is trying to be together. With the development of technology regarding clothing, now we can focus on different print and embellishment. As our country is one of the most leading country in RMG sector, so now we understand more about global fashion. Due to cultural exchange, it is natural to exchange fashion also among the countries and Bangladesh is not left behind. With the development of RMG sector many university and institution have been introduced in our country. Many students got the opportunity to participate in international show with our cultural heritage like Jamdani, Maslin etc. and they are gathering knowledge about the international demand regarding fashion. They are achieving many awards which is adding value to our country. So now government should give more emphasis on fashion designing institutes. Our archive should be richer regarding our previous fashion. So now it can be said with the modernization, global fashion is now blended with our lifestyle.

## **8. Recommendation**

As Bangladesh was not that much developed regarding technically, different data of previous fashion was not uploaded. But it is developing gradually. To save our history and to observe the changes in fashion, it is recommended that:

- Different website should be built from where people will get more information about Bengali fashion trends as well as international fashion trends regarding fabrics, print, silhouette, embellishment etc.
- Designers should know about sustainable fashion.
- Students can select Fashion designing, Apparel manufacturing or textile engineering as higher study to communicate with world fashion.
- Not only theoretical knowledge but also practically students have to be sound.
- Different international organization should arrange foreign trip, seminar and workshop to understand the world fashion.
- Designers should travel their own country to get inspired by own heritage to make fusion with global fashion.
- Designers should study more about the history of fashion and reasons of different changes in fashion.
- Cultural exchange program among the designers should be increased.

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