



The ladies from this region followed the styles of prominent actresses from Bollywood like Nargis, with her high-necked silk blouse and pure chiffon saris. This actress won many accolades for her role in 'Mother India', breaking box office records massively in the recently sovereign countries.

Even though Nargis was an Indian actress, her works and styling were quite popular in both East and West Pakistan. Besides the actresses' particular style, that was trending, the upper crust of society were also inclined towards donning a combination of Victorian and Mughal styling like lehengas, embroidered gowns, long frilled skirts, etc. – a common scene at many elite gatherings.

#### 1960s – Fresh looks, the rise of cinema and tight skirts

This particular era can be most remembered because of the difference in the hairstyles. The simple curls and waves were replaced with the bouffant look and long braids. Ladies used to tease their hair with fine toothed combs to create mountains of knots, later brushed, to give away a beehive effect. While the western world was sporting miniskirts for the first time, the Bengalis were donning sleeveless blouses with chiffon saris and body hugging shalwar-kurtis. The sari draping style was also changing from the traditional right to left anchal to the swirling Bollywood style copied from actress Mumtaz. Large accessories were replaced by thin belted wrist watches, tiny ear studs and necklaces with lockets.

#### 1970s - Independence and bell-bottoms

Despite the war of Independence and creation of a sovereign state like Bangladesh, the 70s were the most colourful decade for fashion in the freshly liberated country. Singers and actresses like Runa Laila and Bobita were major fashion icons for the society. Runa Laila - gifted with the voice of an angel was a treasure of Bangladesh. Young ladies from the entire South Asian zone were mesmer-



ised by her talent and her style sense, diligently following her look, as she morphed into a major style icon.

Bobita, on the other hand, was a national heroine, even favoured by people living in the furthest peripheries of the nation.

Runa Laila's thin eyebrows and Bobita's up-do have become cult fashion, ever since. Global fashion inclination in the 70s was towards psychedelic prints, vibrant colours, nets, shiny materials with bold

designs and Bangladesh was not left uninfluenced. Long unkempt hair, thin eye-brows, bell-bottom pants, loop earrings were fad and the Bangladeshi ladies were donning the trending style.

#### 1980s – Liberty, experiments and fashion

Embracing the new found liberty in its truest sense, Bangladeshi women began to experiment with their looks during this era. While Hollywood and Bollywood, both were there, promi-



nently, to tell people what to wear, ladies did some research on their own. Inclination towards polka dots in different colours, sizes and shapes reigned supreme.

Halter necked blouse became popular and puffed-up wavy hair with frontal bangs became a 'new thing' in hairstyling. Few women even wore kameez with velvet jackets and loose shalwars – more like the, then popular Hindi Cinema heroines.

Big loop earrings were still in, only

this time they were donned in more vibrant colours, rather than the traditional silver and gold. The 80s is probably the decade best attributed to the rise of fashion in the country, which until then, had more serious issues to address.

#### 1990s – Mughal influence and boutique shops

Not much happened in the fashion scenery during this era. The ladies leaped backed to the Mughal era and Anarkalis and really long kameez

media. The 2000s saw a major rise in consumerism and the Bangladeshis were adopting more of a western look.

Jeans, slacks, tops, shirts were the major fashion items for the everyday woman, while saris became celebratory attires. Hairstyling became free-flowing taking no definitive form. However, hair colouring, permanent straightening or curling and highlights became rampant.

#### 2010 onwards – Back to the basics and fusion wear

Pure westernisation had lost most of its charm and Bangladeshis became more interested in fusions, a perfect blend of both the East and West. Casual kurtis, pants, dhotis, etc. were basic dress up materials. Saris were trending again, only this time the blouses were altered in various ways to give a ravishing fusion look. Jacket blouses, net blouses, halter necks and many other designs became the highlight of a sari.

No major changes came in the hair-styles' department but highlights became more environmentally friendly, while hair straightening-curling procedures became temporary and wellness oriented. Regarding accessories and jewellery, big dial wrist-watches, diamonds and small purses started trending.

Almost 70 years ago, the subcontinent was liberated from the colonist regime. It resurrected, only to find itself broken into many pieces and ultimately Bangladesh was born in 1971. Many styles have come and gone within this period but one thing has definitely remained constant throughout; it all was the obsession of the people of Bengal, to look their best through thick and thin.

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