

SPOTLIGHT

Being Goth

According to the definition put forth by Oxford, the word 'Goth' is a noun, meaning, (a) a member of a Germanic people that invaded the Roman Empire from the East between the 3rd and 5th centuries; or (b) a style of rock music derived from punk, typically with apocalyptic or mystical lyrics and a member of a subculture favouring black clothing, white and black make-up, and goth music.

I suppose, in 2019, we should go with definition (b).

One of the reasons the whole Goth culture thrived during the '70s till now, was its distinctive look, and the fact that it was super easy for anyone to adopt the dress code. All you needed were common elements that included black leather and PVC (sort of like the trash bag material), fishnets, crimped spiky hair, black lace, mohair jumpers, winkle picker shoes, and



more. Over the years, Goth fashion has become some sort of a fusion, taking in elements from Edwardian and Victorian clothing, steam punk, cyberpunk, rave, cosplay, and much more.

So, the original 'Goth movement' — the look and the sound kind of erupted in the U.K., like all great things (The Clash, The Cure) and started gradually spreading to the U.S. too. Music was, and is, one of the most popular ways of identifying with the goth culture, and thanks to the Internet, it has spread like wildfire throughout the world, like Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Indonesia, and Scandinavia. And eventually, it made its way to Bangladesh as well.

Today, there's about so many different types of goth, each with its own different sense of style, hairdos, music preferences, outfit choices, that the list goes on. You have goth (goths in sunny places), health goth (cool black athleisure wear), cholo goth (Mexican gangsta goth), pastel goths (pastel colours with skulls on pink bows or heart-shaped bats), cyber goths (bright neon colours), and other kinds of goths who wear jewel tones in addition to black.

The scariest ones are probably the goths who wear all white. Each country has done a wonderful job in adapting it to their culture.

In Dhaka, much like most countries,



people started to identify as goth through the music they listen to. It's a gateway drug into the goth culture. However, here, being goth can be a tad bit difficult in terms of outfits, and maybe music sometimes, if it's too dark. With weather like ours, which ranges between 32-40° C, wearing leather and boots can be quite daunting. In fact, since most people tend to side with the dark goth scene, i.e. black everything, you run the risk of spontaneously melting. Not only that, there are some traditional goth elements mentioned that are either hard to come by, or simply taboo, for example fetish wear.

Luckily, the goths here have adapted and come up with their own idea of goth culture. The dark makeup, dark thoughts, and dark music remained the same, but the outfits were more attuned to the culture. So, instead of fishnet stockings and miniskirts, they just wear black jeans and T-shirts, or shalwar kameez. As for the heat, we all know how to persevere through this heat anyway, goth or no goth.

What exactly does it mean to be Goth? Maybe it's about appreciating the darker things in life, whatever that may mean to anyone, in terms of fashion, music, media, general aesthetic, ideology. It could be about finding beauty in dark places. Basically, anyone and everyone who is remotely darkly inclined can be a Goth.

Being Goth is okay. Like all communities, the Goth community is an accepting one, and it is accepting of other minorities. Be who you are, and being Goth, ultimately is pretty cool.

By Kyoko Bhuiyan

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Model: Itmam

Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

Makeup: Farzana Shakil's Makeover

Salon

Location: The Base Camp, Bangladesh

Deshi goths in my home town

Goth is not for everyone. Simply put, it is mystical and dangerous; not everyone can tread that dark path. It is only for those who can relate to the way of life, and know exactly why they want to be goths. Dark or not, this way of life has certainly attracted a lot of attention over the years, especially with the unique adaptation to clothes. Typically considered a western idea, goth styling has come to influence our very own 'deshi' fashion over the years.

BOOTS, I LOVE

Goths in Dhaka wear vintage, or, on the contrary, super modern saris with a complex cut blouse. Their clothes include jabots, lace, and mesh elements. They flaunt corsets and harness belts, mostly on top of their saris and tops.

The main materials for deshi goth

clothing are silk, velvet, denim, leather, and lace. Afsara, who is studying in the second year of Charukola, is not only an artist, but also into deshi goth. She says, "Other than black, I wear outfits (mostly saris) in deep dark colours like purple, burgundy, dark green and blue, some of which are dyed or hand-painted."

As for footwear, besides traditional heavy unisex boots, deshi goth girls often flaunt army boots.

CELTIC CROSSES, DRAGONS, AND BATS

Just like the goths around the world, deshi goths are very fond of accessories. Instead of handbags, goths in Dhaka flaunt large backpacks and elegant mini cases. Original goth accessories are latex, leather, and metal chokers.

Deshi goths are fond of massive metal

jewellery, with zero admiration towards yellow metals. They also wear rings, bracelets, pendants, earrings, etc. adorned with Celtic crosses, dragons, bats, black cats, roses, skulls etc.

JET BLACK TRESSES

Classic goth hairstyle is the straight black hair. Such a hairstyle is common to both boys and girls. Some romantic deshi goths, on the contrary, gravitate to curls and lush hairstyles. They often prefer to dye their hair in vibrant red or ash colours, contrasting with the saris or panjabis that they are wearing. Some deshi goth girls wear natural makeup, whereas some stick to the bold and vibrant ones.

Naheli, a tenth grader with ardent admiration for the Goth way of styling, said, "I like dressing as a deshi goth, wearing my

vintage themed fatuas, black eyeliner, nail polish, intense eye shadows, and blood-red matte lipstick while roaming around the city."

Hridoy, who claims to be 'just another deshi goth,' admits how he loves wearing vintage themed panjabis, pairing them up with some of his favourite Goth accessories.

The Goth image itself is very unique and authentic. It is chosen by flamboyant personalities who enjoy challenging the prim society. Not every person is courageous enough to pull off Goth fashion. Yet, if you like this style, but are not ready to dive into it totally, you can always start with adding a little traditional goth accent to your regular wardrobe, and indulge into the eternal universe of the mysterious Goth culture.

By Fahmida Jerin Anim