

GOLDEN JUBILEE BEGINNINGS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2021, FALGUN 4, 1427 BS

Fabrics of Heritage II

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Speaking to the recipient of the 2020 Begum Rokeya award, we also learnt that once upon a time the tradition was to make the pinon-hadi by one's own hands. Even the thread was handmade from locally grown cotton plants. Any young lady who could not make the textile on their own, would have to go without the clothing, until and unless someone else took notice and made it for them – which was a rare case. So essentially every girl of the hill tracts knew the weaving process by heart!

"But that is the story of a long time ago. Every girl used to wear one single set of pinon-hadi for an entire year and they would rarely change it until and unless it was beyond repair. Minor tears and scratches were repaired with extra cloth stitched into place. Things have changed so drastically, that today nobody has the time to bother to make the dress on their own. There are special group of people – artisans for this job and my company. 'Bein Foundation' appoints such lady-artisans to craft the special pinon-hadi for everyone," said Chakma.

During our rendezvous, Chakma also revealed that she began with local fabric production, in 1965. It was with lungi, gamcha and thana kapor first;

"Manipuri sari is an art form just like the Sonargaon Jamdani, the Tangail Tantuz, etc., there can never be a cheaper variant," said Singh, who is himself a member of the Manipuri community.

then we worked on the pinon-hadi – said Chakma. The initiative was taken by her husband and herself after being influenced by Chakma's mother who used to weave the dress by herself like all the other women of the hill tracts.

"To preserve the traditions and bring



it to the forefront of the world, I began to work with it. Today, the traditional is anything but lost in the hill tracts; tourists come to our place and procure for themselves as memento and we also have a huge opportunity to export to neighbouring countries, where there is huge demand," mentioned Chakma.

She also revealed that not only were the wardrobe of the women popular amongst the tourist, but also the age-old, authentic traditional bed-sheet, burgi were popular amidst the collectors.

"Burgi might be slightly expensive, considering that it is completely handmade and unique in design," Chakma said.

The talented designer and

entrepreneur feels proud of being able to hold on to the traditions, claiming that she did not feel at all threatened by cheaper power loom copies of the pinon-hadi.

"We should always remain optimistic. Copies will always be there; it only means that the end-product is becoming more popular and people want to wear it. When in reality 'a copy' can never be as good as the original. One who wears the original, will always know the difference.

"A pinon-hadi copy is never comfortable, does not have the authentic Chakma motifs and designs. Those who value the original, especially the black and red combination of pinon-hadi

have to come to authentic places, where ladies from the hill tracts make the cloth with their own hands in a komor-taant," Chakma said.

We wanted to know how much an average pinon-hadi could cost. "Somewhere around Tk 5000 to 25000," said Chakma. That's only a trickle considering the massive amount of heritage value and craftsmanship it contains.

From the mystic mountains of the Rangamati belt, we went to the green hills of amazing Sylhet, where Laxmikanta Singh, the executive director of Ethnic Community Development Organisation, Sylhet (ECDO), showed us in broad day light the difference between

a fake and an original Manipuri sari. The fake is easily identifiable with harsh quality base fabric, bright contrasting colours that don't easily blend.

"Manipuri sari is an art form just like the Sonargaon Jamdani, the Tangail Tantuz, etc., there can never be a cheaper variant," said Singh, who is himself a member of the Manipuri community.

Singh goes on to add details. "The original Manipuri Sari is crafted by the ladies of the region and consists of a 60-80 thread. It takes almost 20-25 days to make one proper, authentic Manipuri sari with the appropriate, traditional motifs. Whereas the fake 'tetron variant' is made in 2 to 3 days," Singh disclosed.

From a bird's eye view, the competition may seem to be high when in reality to the trades people, like Singh, this competition is insignificant because fakes are losing their charm and people are becoming aware of the difference.

"The fake is nowhere close! The only shortcoming that we have today is the lack of craftspeople. This trade is specifically done by the women, without them it is impossible to craft the exquisite Manipuri, but the ladies today are moving away from the traditional craftsmanship ideologies and getting involved in other jobs," Singh said.

What we learned from our conversation with the expert was that there was huge opportunity in both the local and export field, for the Manipuri handloom. But supply was short due to the shortage in fine-skilled artisans. But Singh was not too sceptical about the future.

He already had structured plans to be set in motion once the pandemic was over, to train more ladies of the region in the craft. So, that the majestic Manipuri, is able to reach its 'truly deserved status' in the world of handloom.

Pinon Hadi Wardrobe: Sazpodor By Tenzing Chakma



THE 5

CHANGE THE WAY YOU LEAD.
LEAD THE WAY YOU CHANGE.



The new BMW 5 Series grabs attention instantly with its dazzling Phytonic Blue paint finish. From here, discover new elements such as the enhanced front apron with larger air inlets and the simplified contours with strong angles. Its evolution is subtle yet impactful, and still every bit an icon. The elegant and functional interior completes the innovative ambition of the vehicle with future-oriented technologies and sporty features. In combination with impressive driving dynamics and innovative technologies, the BMW 5 Series Sedan provides comfort, self-assuredness and, above all, a supreme level of sheer driving pleasure on journeys both short and long.



5 YEARS
FREE PARTS
SERVICE & MAINTENANCE



Executive Motors Ltd, 222, Bir Uttom Mir Showkat Sarak
Tejgaon-Gulshan Link Road, Dhaka-1208
Hotline: 0170 967 44 88 0170 967 44 89 Email: info@bmv.com.bd



RANCON
DEVELOPMENTS

COMING SOON

GULSHAN 2 // ROAD 73

"WELCOME TO THE FUTURE"

© 017 057 33 330

