

A relic of the past?

Digging into the annals of history, one notes the historical setting for the popularity of katans. Once worn widely by Mughals; the finery famed across lands. The colours of yesteryears were muted and one frequently sees ivory shades and hues of red. The days have changed and now katans of a much wider colour palette are seen.

In the past Katan saris used to be lighter, thus adding to the comfort of the wearer. However, the yarns now used to make katans are coarser than their historical counterpart, adding to the 'heavy feel' of the saris.

Intricacy of the designs are lost too as

artisans do not get value for the skilled artisanship necessary for making fine katans. At the pinnacle of their popularity, Benarasis were made in Dhaka in the '50s by the migrant population, which had moved to East Pakistan during the partition. As generations of the original artists perished, the younger ones are reluctant to take on the trade, as the glory days of the saris are lost.

Revival of the heritage piece

Due to the inherent nature of the production, katan saris tend to carry higher price tags. One must realise that the intricacy of the production necessitates the

expensive nature of the product. However, one must realise that katans are after all heritage pieces and one does not need a handful to make a statement. One should never compromise on quality over quantity.

Once an average buyer turns into a connoisseur, it will be easy to recreate the former glory of the fabric and make the time consuming, laborious process of creating Benarasis financially feasible.

Diversification of the fabric is a process

already underway, as women are no longer limiting themselves with katan saris.

The fabric has evolved into statement textile for shalwar kameezes. Even men are not shying away from donning katan sherwanis at weddings.

— LS Desk

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Model: Meghla

Make-up: Sumon Rahat

Styling: Sonia

Yeasmin Isha

Set Design: Eskay

Décor

