



MODERN STYLES WITH TRADITIONAL FABRICS: A sustainable approach



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Rahman stresses how it is natural for people to lack the vision, but a responsibility for designers to bring these ideas to life. Azim Uddula is one of the designers rising to the challenge.

"When leather and faux leather are paired with local fabrics like Katan, Benarasi, silk, and Jamdani, they find unique expressions in bomber jackets, motorbike jackets, and other styles, appearing as linings, back panels, sleeves, or front details," he explains.

The traces of his inspiration can be seen in his latest collection, featuring leather jackets, adorned with a patchwork of Jamdani weaves, Benarasi patterns, and intricate motifs adding a pleasant burst of colours to casual winter wear.

Azim states, "My winter collection is a heartfelt attempt to highlight the richness of our heritage while ensuring the sustainability of our local fabrics, both locally and internationally."

This fusion of traditional and contemporary elements not only preserves the heritage of these weaves, but also makes them relevant to a global audience. Jamdani motifs can now adorn A-line skirts and peplum tops, while Khadi can be used to craft chic trench coats and blazers. Katan silks, once reserved for bridal sarees, may be repurposed into

evening gowns and crop tops.

EXPANDING THE CANVAS

The revival of traditional weaves is not limited to fashion. Designers are also exploring their potential in interior décor and lifestyle products. Khadi, with its earthy texture, makes for beautiful cushion covers and throws, while Katan's intricate patterns can be used for table runners and wall art.

According to Rahman, Jamdani curtains are bound to bring an unmatched aesthetic touch to your home decor. As curtains are not something we wash regularly, one set of curtains will last at least a couple of years before they need replacing.

Purses and clutches crafted from Jamdani, Katan, or Khadi have become prevalent with popular designer brands, blending traditional patterns with modern designs. However, when it comes to jewellery, the trend has been more inconsistent.

To carve a permanent place in people's hearts, designers have taken it upon themselves to combine traditional fabrics with contemporary aesthetics of oxidised metal or brass, offering wearable pieces of cultural heritage that resonate with modern sensibilities.

THE ROAD AHEAD

While the revival of traditional

Bangladeshi weaves is an exciting journey, it's not without its challenges.

Designers Sharmin Rahman and Silmat Chisti, both advocates for sustainable fashion, shed light on the struggles faced by the weaving industry and how the fashion industry, with the right support, can help overcome them.

For Rahman, the biggest hurdle is infrastructure. "We simply don't have the facilities to meet the international factory standards required by global buyers."

She stresses, "Even if they are interested in our weaves, they are bound by legal regulations, and that keeps them from investing. This is where government intervention is crucial. We need policy-level support to modernise our production facilities without compromising the integrity of handwoven fabrics."

Chisti, on the other hand, emphasises the untapped potential of handloom textiles. "The greatest strength of our industry is its diversity," she says. "Bangladesh is home to countless weaver clusters specialising in everything from Jamdani to silk and cotton. But this potential is stifled by some glaring gaps."

One such gap, according to Chisti, is the lack of consistent access to quality yarn. As they are not cultivated regularly, this naturally obstructs the production.

Chisti also highlights the importance of empowering artisans. "The talent is

there, but we haven't created enough opportunities for them. If we can build a bridge to international buyers, handloom weaving could become a significant source of income for the country."

In her view, awareness is the key. "People need to understand the beauty and value of handloom fabrics; where to buy them, how to wear them, and how choosing handloom supports both sustainability and our cultural heritage."

The future of Bangladeshi weaves is not just about preserving tradition, but also about gaining a global audience. Designers, artisans, and policymakers all have a role to play in ensuring that these fabrics not only survive but thrive.

As the world embraces sustainable fashion, the time is ripe for Bangladesh to lead the way. By rethinking traditional weaves and motifs, we are not just celebrating our past — we are weaving a legacy for generations to come.

By Nusrath Jahan
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Joly
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe: Sozpodor Indigenous Textile
by Tenzing Chakma
Jewellery: Shoilee by Tahmina Shaily
Makeup: Piash
Location: Ashraf Kaiser Residence (Arunapalli)



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