



Exploring the rich history of Bangladeshi textile motifs

When you think of a motif, what visuals first come to mind? Perhaps, delicate paisley unfurling like budding flowers, reminiscent of the intricate designs in Jamdani sarees. Or, a geometric lattice mimicking the symmetry of a temple carving. Our traditional patterns are unique in their terms, carrying the whispers of a thousand hands that have weaved them.

Motifs are not mere decorative elements; they are powerful symbols and visual language etched into the folds of our textiles, the patterns on pottery, and even the moulds for traditional sweets like *sandesh*. Still, their story is not confined to tradition alone. Many contemporary designers are reimagining and adapting them to modern tastes and finding inspiration in everything from Islamic geometric patterns to Celtic art, blending local craftsmanship with global influences.

But what is the origin? How did they evolve to symbolise the cultural identity of Bangladesh? To understand their significance, we must journey back in time.



ART ROOTED IN NATURE

"Initially, the primary inspiration came from the natural world," says Chandra Shekhar Shaha, a prominent designer, a leading expert on Bangladeshi crafts and the author of the book, *Sandesh*.

Since time immemorial, the fertile landscape of Bangladesh, teeming with rivers, flora, and fauna, has served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artisans. First, nature's patterns were observed, reimagined and then, transformed into symbolic art.

In his book, *Sandesh*, Shaha offers thought-provoking insights into their origin.

"Once discovered through meditative contemplation, nature became a canvas for the artistic spirit of ancient people. These totem-believing communities, particularly the focused minds of women engaged in ritual art, intertwined their devotion with artistic expression. Thus, motifs were born."

Take, for example, the lotus – which we find in Jamdani sarees – goes beyond

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2X BRIGHTENING POWER

FIGHTS POLLUTION. ENDS DULLNESS.

**GARNIER
MEN**

NEW

**TURBO BRIGHT
FACE WASH**



[VITAMIN C]

+

[BLACK CHARCOAL]

INSTANTLY BRIGHT