



The lure of natural dyes in sustainable fashion

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and traditions, like the waves of river water, or Panam City, and translate those details into our designs,” informs Brinto. “We continue to explore concepts where sustainable dye and design aesthetics come together.”  
Despite the apparent advantages and visible efforts to increase the reach and acceptance, the harsh reality is that natural dyes are nowhere near as popular as chemical dyes, and with due reason.  
“Colours derived from nature are not

always very vibrant,” shares Nazra. “This is why we have a relatively smaller client base, and one that both comes and stays for the ethics behind it.” These colours, according to her, would not attract everyone.  
Scalability is another factor affecting the popularity of natural colours. More labour-intensive and costlier than industrial dyes, the process is difficult to produce for the masses and time-consuming too. Many of those, like Nazra Sabet, who work with natural dyes or slow fashion, know that they produce

for a niche market. There are a precious few who would pay a relatively higher price for slow, laborious work, although those who do keep coming back for it.  
For natural dyes to become even partially competitive with their more toxic synthetic counterparts, significant innovation is needed, especially in the areas of extraction, processing, and overall production efficiency.  
Strengthening the sourcing and supply chain can involve using waste streams from industrial and agricultural sectors, turning what would

otherwise be disposal challenges into valuable raw materials. Regenerative farming practices can further ensure a steady supply of dye plants while improving soil health and avoiding competition with food crops. With these advancements, natural dyes can move closer to becoming a truly scalable and sustainable alternative for the industry.  
While it is up to each individual buyer to make informed choices between vibrancy and simplicity, and/or slow handiwork and higher prices versus machine-made strength and

cheaper rates, it is worth knowing that the journey of embracing natural dyes is as much about celebrating nature’s palette as it is about promoting sustainability and the livelihoods of those who keep these traditions alive. By supporting sustainable dyeing practices, consumers can contribute to the preservation of these traditions while also making conscientious and nature-friendly fashion choices.  
By Munira Fidai  
Photo: Friendship Colours of the Chars

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