

Saree: Fashion Transcending Time  
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**Abstract**

The saree is a traditional Indian garment that can be traced back thousands of years and holds significant cultural and social importance in India. In the culture, wearing a saree is a sign of respect for elders and family values. It is worn on various occasions, including weddings, where brides usually dream of bridal Kanjivaram silk sarees, festivals, and other religious ceremonies. A saree is a long piece of clothing in a variety of fabrics with many different prints, patterns, and colors that are worn around the entire body in a particular way. It is traditionally worn in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. It is believed that wearing a saree has brought a sense of modesty and femininity, and has helped women feel confident and empowered. The saree has become an essential part of a woman's wardrobe and is often passed down from one generation to another, as it has become an integral part of the Indian heritage. They are known for their diverse designs and materials when it comes to sarees. Each state is identified by its authentic style of saree, reflecting its heritage.

### **The Evolution of the Saree**

The saree has become a fashion statement throughout recent years in the fashion industry, as various designers experimenting with different fabrics, designs, and drapes, and the saree has been transformed by new technology, making it more versatile and appealing to younger generations. Saree-like drapery has been traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization, approximately 2800-1800 BCE, around the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent. Cotton was first cultivated and woven on the Indian subcontinent around the 5th millennium BCE. During those times, dyes were used namely Indigo, IAC, turmeric, etc. As the tradition of the saree continued to expand during the Vedic period, the attire of women evolved, as various types of garments were being created such as the antariya (lower garment) and the uttariya (upper garment) (Sahai, 2023). The women who wore both garments were female dancers in embroidered outfits. The period was characterized by a distinct economy, which depended on pastoralism and agriculture. It was a society that was divided into various strata according to birth.

The style of saree became a continuation of the culture as in the Medieval period of 600-1200 CE, the regional variations in clothing styles, with different adopting distinct techniques. The unstitched garment evolved into a more recognized form of the saree. It is known that a saree woman is: “A depiction of the cultural essence of their country, something that denotes her passion to be in touch with the roots of their tradition.”

Unstitched saree garments became a new era in fashion. The stitched saree is a way in which designer ensembles allow women to put it on like a dress. The pleats and pallu and the rest of the make are already stitched and adjusted to save time and draping efforts. During the Mughal Era (1526-1857), Indian fashion began to grasp its influence through the changes in the

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use of rich fabrics, intricate embroidery, and decorating orders by becoming more prevalent among the aristocracy. The British colonial period impacted Indian culture by adopting the Western influence of stitched garments, but the saree remained a staple among Indian women. The British opened new doors for Indian culture by influencing new changes in weaving techniques and the introduction of new fabrics. Chiffon, georgette, and crepe are selected as lightweight fabrics that help women look slimmer with a petite and slender look. These fabrics accentuate the curve of the woman, unlike heavy fabrics like silk which may end up making the woman look boxy. (Sundari, 2023)

The American Indian Wars were known as the American Frontier Wars, and the Indian Wars were initially fought by European governments and also by the colonists in the North Wars. This is where they were initially fought by the European governments and the colonists in North America, as later on the United States government and American settlers fought against various American Indian tribes. Before India gained its independence, the styling of sarees came to be inspired by Bollywood movies as a major experimentation with fabrics, patterns, weaves, and drapes as they were being adopted by the newly fashion-conscious Indian women. The Mumtaz style is a draping saree that was worn without pleats as the basic muted monotonous of weaves and dark traditional colors were being replaced by bold, flamboyant, and colorful prints. Therefore, the first saree designers to develop their trademark prints to be seen as fashionable branded wear were Vimal and Garden Vareli.

### **The Saree in Fashion**

For a woman to wear a saree isn't just laying fabric on your body, it is a symbol of India's rich cultural heritage. As it has been worn for centuries, it is considered one of the oldest forms of clothing in the Indian subcontinent. Each region in India has its unique styles and ways of draping a saree with its inspired designs. Saree is known to inspire women to express their style, taste, and identity. It may be reflected in their cultural background, fashion sense, and even social or economic status. The saree is most commonly thought to be nine yards in length but given various drape styles, sarees often require different lengths for different drapes. Many people think a saree is at risk of 'falling off' and use dozens of safety pins to secure it. Although safety pins can be used to feel more secure, they are not needed. It is known that, when overused, safety pins often make the garment more rigid, which is not how it's supposed to be worn. (Gupta, 2019)

Indian cultural appreciation has arisen throughout the last couple of years with the expansion of cultural movies where children and families can learn about their beliefs and customs. The style has changed in many different ways such as you can wear a saree without a blouse and a dress. The saree was worn without a blouse and petticoat before the British Raj. During the Victorian era, baring one's chest or being blouseless was seen as improper, so the Raj promoted the wearing of blouses and petticoats with ruffled hems. Although none of the regional saree drapes require a petticoat, many can be worn without a blouse. The most common and widely used saree draping style is pleated and tucked at the waist and then draped over the left shoulder, leaving the pallu hanging behind. This style of draping is the most comfortable and suits women who wear sarees every day.

### **Traditional Indian Designs**

Indian designers have created designs that have changed the language of fashion through their raw materials and authentic patterns. Ritu Beri is an Indian fashion designer known for her work that gained prominence in the 1990s and has since become one of the leading figures in the Indian fashion scene. Beri is recognized for her exquisite designs and has showcased her collections both nationally and internationally. In 1997, Beri launched her brand as 'Ritu Beri Fashion Fraternity' (RBF), a platform for young Indian designers during India's First Fashion Week. This brought a prestigious forecast magazine for global fashion trends, making it the first Indian designer to go international. (Gupta, 2019)

Through her global appearance during the years 1998 through 2000; Beri was able to sign a collaboration with D.SWAROVSKI as the First Indian designer. She was also able to collaborate with L'OREAL Paris but more importantly, she was the first Indian designer who was invited to the Cannes Film Festival in 2001. Beri's love for changing humanity became her passion as she launched The Blessed Hearts Foundation in 2009, a charity for children, and became the First Indian designer to launch a Kid's line, "Baby Beri." She also launched a Not-for-Profit Foundation to promote the treasures of India, and brand India globally. The foundations that Beri has created have become homes for families in need. The Blessed Hearts Foundation became a premier charity with the mission to provide quality education and a safe, healthy future for those less fortunate children in India, providing education, nourishment, and healthcare support, as they thus for a better future for the children in India. The foundation also works to support Autism awareness and effective treatment initiation as its primary objective. They also work to help find homes for orphan children by providing real doctors, effective treatments, hospitals, or practical help available in India.

Although Ritu Beri has served the country of India, she also designs most bridal color designs such as golds, reds, and blues. She utilizes a unique and extremely well-crafted way of adding frills to the garments, especially the skirts or the ghagras. Beri's collection usually has a rich display of silks, brocades, and other luxurious fabrics and exquisite use of embroideries to match. Her designs are handcrafted to perfection, reflecting years of research, experience, craftsmanship, and trends. The brand signifies a true creative innovation being the protege of the French embroidery maestro Francois Lesage. This created a dynamic group relying on dialogue, exchange, solidarity, and mutual assistance, developing a winning attitude to conquer new spheres of influence, exposure, and markets. (Sundari, 2023)

In conclusion, the saree is a symbol of tradition, diversity, and femininity as it continues to hold a special place in the hearts of Indian culture for years to come. As each saree is inspired differently per region in India, each garment is a testament to the country's rich and diverse history. It is a sign of respect for elders and family values as it is believed that wearing a saree brings a sense of dignity and grace to a woman's personality. It's considered a symbol of modesty and femininity, and it helps women to feel confident and empowered. A focal point for the fashion industry, the saree has reflected a rapid growth in the middle class and an increasingly powerful manufacturing sector.

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