

Saree vs. Fast Fashion: How India Is Splitting Its Fashion Wallet

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India's fashion landscape in 2025 presents a dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity. On one hand, the saree, a symbol of India's rich heritage, continues to hold a significant place in the market. On the other, fast fashion, characterized by rapid production cycles and trend-driven designs, is rapidly gaining popularity, especially among the youth.

The Saree: A Timeless Tradition

The saree remains a cornerstone of Indian fashion, particularly in weddings and cultural celebrations. In 2023, sarees accounted for 38% of India's ethnic wear sales. Thus handloom sector, which supports over 3.5 million artisans, predominantly women, continues to thrive.

Therefore regions contribute significantly to India's \$10.9 billion handloom exports, with the United States purchasing nearly 30% of all handloom exports.

Despite the dominance of sarees in rural areas, urban consumers are increasingly investing in premium silk and designer pieces, driving higher revenues. Thus saree industry offers a vast array of options, with over 75 fabrics and 70 print techniques, ensuring that each piece is unique.

Fast Fashion: The Modern Disruptor

In contrast, fast fashion has emerged as a formidable force in India's fashion industry. Valued at \$13.5 billion in 2025, the sector is growing at an impressive 16.7% compound annual growth rate (CAGR). Brands like Zara, H&M, and Uniqlo are expanding rapidly. Meanwhile, with H&M alone generating over ?3,000 crore in revenue in FY24. However return of Shein, now under Reliance Retail, further underscores the sector's potential, targeting \$2 billion in gross merchandise value by 2027.

The rise of social media platforms has played a pivotal role in this growth. Overall 100 million content creators in India, influencer marketing is projected to reach ?3,000 crore by 2025. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube significantly influence Gen Z's purchasing decisions, with 40% of their choices driven by online trends.

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