

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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