

# From Bollywood Costumes to Couture Empire: Neeta Lulla's 40-Year Reign in Fashion

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## A Career Woven in Celluloid and Couture

Neeta Lulla's journey in fashion began in the late 1980s, working under fashion-choreographer Jeanne Naoroji. Her first breakthrough in films came with the early assignments, but real recognition arrived when she designed for the film *Lamhe* (1991) — earning her first National Film Award for Best Costume Design.

Over the years, she has worked on **300+ films** — often credited as among the busiest, most versatile costume designers in Bollywood.

## Defining Bollywood Looks — From Sridevi to Period Epics

From the elegant chiffon saris that made waves in films such as *Chandni*, to the grandeur of period dramas like *Devdas*, *Jodhaa Akbar* and *Balgandharva* — Neeta Lulla has shaped the aesthetic of multiple eras of Indian cinema.

Her ability to balance authenticity and cinematic grandeur — from delicate sarees to regal Mughal-era costumes embroidered in zardozi and kundan — made many characters iconic.

## Awards, Milestones & A Legacy of Excellence

Neeta Lulla is the only Indian designer to have won the National Film Award for Best Costume Design **four times**, for *Lamhe*, *Devdas*, *Jodhaa Akbar* and *Balgandharva*.

Beyond cinema, she expanded into couture and bridal wear. Her label — the House of Neeta Lulla — became a go-to for brides and fashion-savvy clientele seeking opulence blended with heritage textiles (like Paithani, Banarasi, Kalamkari, Kanjeevaram) reimagined with contemporary cuts.

In 2010s, recognising the need to build future talent, she co-founded the Whistling Woods Neeta Lulla School of Fashion in Mumbai. Through this institute and her teaching stints, she has mentored aspiring designers — giving back to the industry that shaped her.

Her entrepreneurial acumen was also acknowledged when she received the “SME Entrepreneur of the Year” award from a reputed business-fashion forum.

## Evolving With Time

In an interview reflecting her four-decade journey, Neeta Lulla admitted the journey “was not a cakewalk.” As of 2024, she revealed she's still active — currently working on multiple films, designing for couture collections, and planning new fashion ventures.

She was among the pioneers in Indian fashion to incorporate traditional weaves — like Paithani, Banarasi, Kalamkari and Kanjeevaram — into modern silhouettes, bridging heritage crafts and contemporary fashion.

Her brand today resonates not just among film celebrities, but also brides, fashion-conscious shoppers and global clients — testifying to her influence beyond just movies.

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