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Female Fashion Trends in Lahore

Abstract

The fashion of female dresses always changes with the priorities and requirements; however, social values and consumer's acceptance are key factors in the social approval and success of a trend. This research paper explores the evolution of female fashion in Lahore and finds a rapid growth and expansion in the local fashion market, with the turn of the century. The formation of the Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design in 1994 has opened the possibilities of formal education and training in the field. Later, Pakistan Fashion Design Council (PFDC) has launched fashion shows in 2010, which gave the chance to amalgamate the local industry to the international fashion designers. International fashion involvements have influenced the traditional dresses, like *kameez*, *shalwar*, *saris* and frocks, and transformed them to create a global appeal.

Introduction

A significant advancement and growth can be observed in the fashion industry of Lahore, after the year 2000, which has been reflected in the rapid transformations in the local fashion trends. This research paper explores the progression of female fashion in Lahore and discovers some of the major factors behind these advancements. Fashion can be defined as the most recent and popular style of a product, which is largely approved and accepted by the public. It also identifies the thoughtfulness and sensibility of design, and reflects the sociopolitical and economic state of a society. The historical evidences of costumes are approximating similar to the human history, and from the ancient eras, outfits are basic necessity of life. However, through the advancement of time, these dresses become the community element to present the majestic, financial and social status. The tradition of garments has a long history and fundamental part of human evolution, but in the 1846 Charles Worth started the couture and coined the term: "fashion".¹

European and Western history describes the gradual developments of fashion trends and also linked these developments with the industrial revolutions. The first industrial Revolution happened in the eighteenth century. Some of the key inventions, like; the fabrication flying shuttle machine in 1733, the Spinning Jenny Machine in 1764, the Water Frame in 1769 and the Power Loom was invented in 1785, which had allowed the mass production of fabric.² The mass production of

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fabrics had paved the way for the cottage industry to manufacture garments and ready-made clothes. These clothes were worn by all segments of society; middleclass, businessmen and working women.³ The invention of hand sewing machines; such as, wooden chain-stitch sewing machine in 1829 and foot treadle sewing machine in 1852 had facilitated the growth of fashion industry.⁴

The western women used to wear fancy-dresses, shifts, cloaks, stockings/ leggings, skirts, long and round gowns before the World War I and II, in 1914 and 1939 respectively. Different cutlines of garments were also included in their fashion like a variety of petticoat styles bell-hoop, hoop petticoat, pyramidal and fan –hoop, deep shoulder cape, mantle,⁵ S band corset, culottes, high-stand collar, Delphos gown, opulent gown, Turkish harem pants, long and narrow sleeves,⁶ loosely cut sleeves, kimono sleeves, Balkan blouse, tango dress, hip hugging skirts, long skirts and lampshade tunics⁷. The employment opportunities for the women had increased after the Wars of 20th century, because the men had concentrated in the war activities. It led to a rapid progression in the women fashion, and dresses were transformed into more comfortable, simple and stylish costumes, so tube dresses, shirts, leggings, coats and skirts were in demand.⁸ Female dresses were also made in boyish style like jumper suit, sportswear costumes, high fashion pants, peasant blouses, jersey and sweaters.⁹ The lower garment flapper and wide-legged pants/ palazzo were in trend.¹⁰ The fancy dresses and ball gowns became less in fashion because it was not easy to carry these dresses in offices and outdoor meetings. The Western trends were spread-out all over the world through the trading system and also the western culture was diffused with the local traditions.¹¹

In 17th Century, the costumes of Mughals or Indians, fairly distinct from the European style of dressing, had a feel of theatrical costumes rather than rather than functional outfits for routine daily life. Rapid growth of western fashion also had an influence on the fashion of the Sub-continent. In the sixteenth century, East India Company came to India for the trade of textiles and spices. Indian Fabrics were highly valued by the British, and the trade had also influenced the local dressing to some extent. However, with the establishment of British Raj had transformed everything. Traditionally, Indians were wearing choli, *gharara*, *kurta*, *dhoti*, *angrakha* and *pyjama*. The British Raj had developed a new cultural identity of Indians changed the culture and emerged new things in their fashion. The British costumes were Indianised, as an average Indian wanted to look like their British masters and thus wanted to copy their styles. Shirt – Trouser took the space of Dhoti-Kurta, the words “Petticoat” and “blouse” becomes a part of the Indian languages, and the structure of sleeves, necklines and blouses of local female dresses were also transformed.¹²

The further changes in male dresses were also happened in the result of British Raj, like the men’s *sherwani* was designed ever first time in 1858. The *sherwani*, one of the national dresses of Pakistan, was not a Mughal garment but it was created under the influence of British rulers. After the dominance of British Raj on India, the royalty tried to adopt their fashion but British rulers don’t allow the Indian authorities to worn the same dresses like them. Then the cutline of *angrakha* and *achkan* garment were change with the inspiration of coat and become a keen length *sherwani* with button seams and front opening.¹³

The *shalwar kameez* was declared the national dress for the females of Pakistan, to form a distinctive cultural identity, in 1947.¹⁴ The ceremonial outfits of Pakistanis were generally influenced by the costumes of their leaders, like cap and *sherwani* of Jinnah was prevalent among the males. Similarly, the feminine clothing was inspired by the dressing style of female political leaders, like Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, Fatima Jinnah, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, daughter of Ayub Khan and Nasim Aurangzed. Therefore, in 1950s, the female of Pakistan embraced *gharara* suits and *saris*.¹⁵ Moreover, *sharara*, *gharara*, Dhakan pajamas, Aligarh pajamas and *kurtas* were also in fashion in those days.¹⁶ It shows that the women of Pakistan had their individual sense of fashion, which shaped their personality and form their distinctive identity. In 1950 on the state official visit to USA Begum of Rana Liaquat Ali Khan chose to wear a *gharara* suit.¹⁷ Indeed, it was a conscious effort by a female leader to give confidence to other females and to construct a distinctive identity of Muslim women of Pakistan. This reveals that the leadership was mindful from the very beginning and knew the importance of fashion in the building of distinctive cultural identity.



Figure no 1: Begum Liaquat Ali Khan at Belair house USA in 1950

Source: <https://mohsinism.wordpress.com/2014/10/17/1st-pm-of-pakistan-mr-liaquat-ali-khan-may-1950-usa-we-started-with-respect-and-what-went-wrong/>.

Pakistani male leaders; Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah,¹⁸ Qazi Muhammad Essa, Liaquat Ali Khan,¹⁹ Aga Khan III,²⁰ Abdullah Haroon²¹ and A.K Fazlul Haq²² sometime preferred to dress-up in western style of costumes, like coats and pants; however, the female leaders never preferred Western cutlines, particularly in public appearances, from the very beginning. Here it is pertinent to mention that acceptance of a fashion style in a specific society depends on the community approval, principles of consumer and lifestyle. Fashion, rather than a pre-determined image to achieve some agenda, is a theory to refresh the sense of aesthetic appreciation and understanding of a specific society. Indeed, fashion makes people to follow their natural instinct.



Figure no 2: Author of National Anthem Hafeez Jalandhri with his wife and daughters in 1954

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1307767>



Figure no 3: Karachi students after the Independence on road and supporting the Pakistan creation

Source: <https://www.quora.com/How-did-Pakistani-women-fashion-evolve-from-1950s-1980s>

During the 1950s, the Pakistan was striving to achieve political and economic stability; therefore, female fashion was not the prime concern.²³ Most distinctive elements of fashion during that period were Pashmina Shawls and Poodle skirts.²⁴ Likewise, *sharara*, *gharara*, Dhakan and Aligarh pajamas as a lower garment with short and long *kurtas*, were also in fashion.²⁵ Indeed, a little happening in the fashion world; on the other hand, textile industry had been established in that decade. For example, Nishat Mills Limited was established in 1951,²⁶ Gul Ahmed Textile Mills Limited originated in Karachi in 1953,²⁷ and Sitara Textiles Group of Industries was started in 1956, and started manufacturing fabrics for local and international market.²⁸

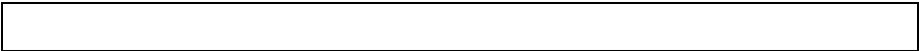
In the 1960s, after the initial industrial development, Pakistani people were more concerned about fashion because of the green revolution and industrial development. The agricultural expansion is considered to be the backbone of industrial stabilization and economic growth. The growth of textiles industry had made it available to the masses on an appropriate price.²⁹ The Pakistani female were afforded to do some experimentation with the cutlines and took some inspiration from western dresses. Thus, dresses like Capri, flappers, hip tight

pants, bell bottoms, pedal pushers and printed leggings with short *kameez* were in fashion. During that decade, the teddy fashion, which is based on tight and fitted outfits, was also in trend.³⁰

Sughra Kazmi; the first Pakistani fashion designer and bridal outfit revivalist, was appeared during the 1960s.³¹ In 1963, Auhra Karim has launched the first Pakistani fashion magazine: “She”. In 1964, Pakistan Television (PTV) was established by Ayub Khan Government.³² PTV has provided a whole new medium for marketing. In 1969, another textile industry was established by the name of Sapphire Textile Mill Ltd.³³ The decade was also known for the introduction of smaller loans to build the small industries, covering fields like textile, embroidery, garments, knitting, hosiery, leather goods, woodwork and handicraft. The attention was to employ small industries to produce export-oriented goods and also to produce the raw material for the wide-ranging businesses.³⁴ The impact of these small industries would be visible in the decades to come.

During the 1970s, the fashion brand “Teejays” was launched with a local tinge in fashion and with a target to fulfill the wants of local market and also for exporting Pakistani dresses. Tanveer Jamshed marketed *shalwar kameez* as *Awami* (public oriented) fashion, and popularized this trend with providing dresses to the performers at Pakistan Television (PTV).³⁵ Pakistan’s second fashion-based magazine, Herald weekly by the Dawn Media Group, was launched in 1970.³⁶ In 1972, Maheen Khan launched her fashion label “Maheen”, and a few years later threw another brand “Gulabo”.³⁷ Nilofer Shahid started female clothing brand by the name of Meeras in 1978, and continued her struggle and became Pakistan’s first fashion designer to showcase her clothing collection “Le Chambre de Syndicale da le couture”, in 2006-07.³⁸ This decade also brought provincial costumes trends; for example, *Balochi Shalwar*, and it carried the glamorous and disco fashion mode as well.³⁹

1980s was a decade of General Zia’s Islamization, which still has influence on the female fashion, as it had applied strict censor policy on media appearances. Ladies, on television screens, had to cover their heads with *chadar*, scarf, long *dupatta* and *burqa*, because Hudood ordinance (religious laws) was approved with the guidance of some specific religious groups. The government had given orders for women actresses to avoid the close interaction with their fellow actors in dramas.⁴⁰ The faces of female models were wiped out from the promotional billboards. Some of the fashion clothing brands still have an impact of this ordinance, for example: the Almirah lawn, J. Lawn, J. by Junaid Jamshed and Al-Karam, most prominent female clothing brands, are not showing female models in some of their advertisements and commercials.⁴¹ These brands have been avoiding to present their collection through female models even at the platform of PFDC fashion week.



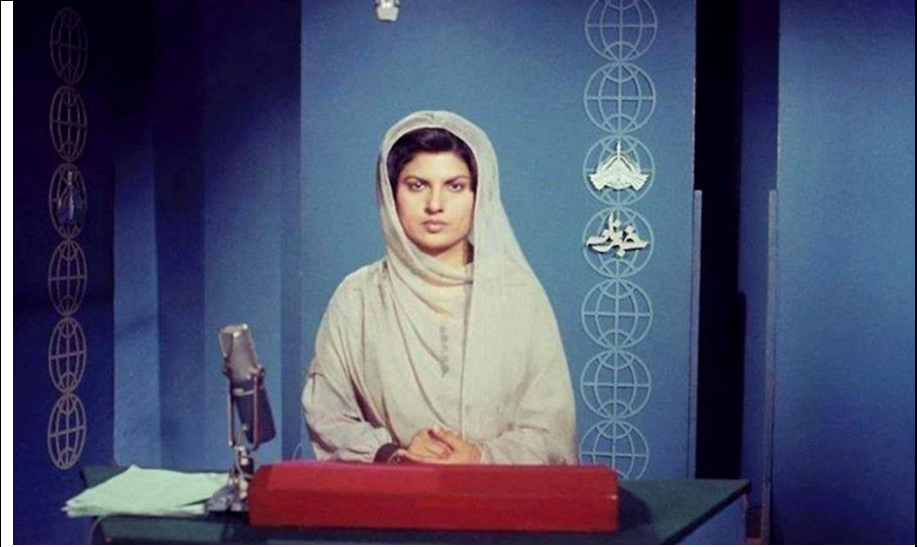


Figure no 4: Female newsreader is reading the 9 O'clock news bulletin on PTV (1984)

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1307767>

Despite all restriction, 1980s had also shown some of the unique female fashion trends; like, *dhoti shalwar*, Patiala *shalwar*, Turkish *shalwar*, shirts, coats with padded shoulders.⁴² Indeed, it was considered to be a unique decade for Pakistani fashion industry, because more designers were attracted towards the field. Fashion designer Faiza Samee, in 1981, had started working as haute-couturier and redesigned the styles of sari and angrakha.⁴³ The first pret wear brand of Pakistan was “Generation” and it was launched by Saad and Nosheen in Lahore during the 1983.⁴⁴ The Libas magazine, published by Sehry Saigol at Lahore during the 1980s, was the third fashion magazine of Pakistan.⁴⁵ In 1985, Saama Aziz launched “Bareeze”; the female apparel brand in Lahore and later, she also established female clothing brands: Chinyere and Kayseria.⁴⁶ Rizwan Beyg introduced the printed voile cotton fabric in 1986.⁴⁷ In 1986, Al Karam clothing brand had launched digitally printed lawn and started worldwide distribution of their products.⁴⁸ “Women’s Own” magazine was launched in 1987 by Riaz Ahmed Mansuri.⁴⁹ Sana Hashmi and Safinaz Muneer collaborate with each other and launched a female clothing brand; “Sana Safinaz” in 1989.⁵⁰ In the same year, Maheen Khan, with the help of Frieha Altaf and Sughra Kazmi, has organized the first catwalk show of Pakistan in Karachi.⁵¹

In 1990s, Indian channels had become available across the border through satellite and dish technology, which had caused a feeling of cultural threat, but also worked as an opportunity to expand cultural, social and political exposure.⁵² Thus, the fashion styles of Indian dramas and Bollywood movies were followed by Pakistani women during that decade. Short *kameez* with *gharara*, *dupatta*, *chunri* and saris were worn by the actresses. During this decade, three-piece suits for ladies were

launched and the fashion of *banarsi dupatta* was famous as well.⁵³ Along with all the Bollywood inspired fashion, the women of Pakistan were also using Capri pants and leather jackets under the influence of Western fashion trends.⁵⁴

The decade also known for some of the significant happenings in technology which also have influenced Pakistan's fashion world. On technology front, the World Wide Web had been released for the common people during the same decade, in Pakistan. Internet connects the countries with each other and opened the possibility to explore global fashion trends. Globalization made it possible for Pakistani female clothing styles to amalgamate with the other countries and this process changed the fashion. On fashion front, in Pakistan, firstly, in 1993, the launch of first fashion broad-paper "Instep".⁵⁵ Second, Deepak Perwani made eastern and western type of female fashion wear in 1994⁵⁶. Third, in 1995, Barkat Ali established a *saris* couture house at Lahore.⁵⁷ Fourth, Khaadi apparel brand introduced hand-woven *kurtas* for women, in 1999⁵⁸, and lastly, Maria. B women's apparel brand was also launched.⁵⁹

The new era, 2000, brought a lot of new trendy dresses which were inspired from international fashion trends. The first two decades of 21st century, Pakistani designers brought back the western dressing styles from olden times, for example; the off-shoulder tops and crop-tops. A number of clothing brands were launched and a widespread range of fashion dresses were presented by Pakistani designers. The range includes; shrugs, capri pants, trousers, pants, pajamas, short and long *kameez*, off-shoulder tops and crop tops according to the comfort level and acceptability of the market. Indeed, the designers, during the two decades of 21st century, rather than taking stimulation from ruling culture, preferred to seek inspirations from contemporary fashion codes, and preferred native styles and valued the local cultures. Now fashion has become an interconnecting process, which encourages people to continue with varied dressing trends.

The transformation of female dresses in the twenty first century shows that how the struggling fashion industry of Lahore became improved and globalized. The fashion weeks of Pakistan Design Council and Libas magazine becomes the sources of genuine records after 2000. Firstly, the analysis of the Libas magazine unveil the content regarding fashion; for example, interviews of artists, fashion styles of Pakistan and the plans of Pakistani and Indian designers. Secondly, this magazine allows to examine the shift from national fashion to the international fashion, and includes international catwalk, global fashion articles.⁶⁰ It also include the photographic data of Pakistani designer's apparel collections from 2000 to 2010. Thirdly, it also provides evidence about "Lux Style Awards", a fashion platform running by Unilever Pakistan. The fashion designers of Pakistan were presenting their collections on this platform as a small segment, before the beginning of Pakistan Fashion Design Council (PFDC).⁶¹

Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design (PIFD) established the fashion committee of PFDC in 2006, in Lahore, and has been organizing regular fashion events and catwalks with the collaboration of various brands. In the 2010, the first fashion show by Pakistan Fashion Design Council was held with the collaboration of Sunsilk.⁶² Then in 2011, the Trade and Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) became a sponsor of PFDC fashion week.⁶³ In 2012, Style 360, Zong,

Ponds, Lux, Hum TV and Bank Alfalah became the promoters.⁶⁴ In 2013, a wide variety of benefactors extended with Daraz.pk, Magnum, Diet Pepsi and Nokia,⁶⁵ PIA and Fed Ex in 2014.⁶⁶ Then in 2016, Careem, Huawei, Borjan, Pepsi Co⁶⁷; in 2017, TCS, Slice, Ink Factory, British American Tobacco and Pak Suzuki Motors⁶⁸; and in 2018, the Pel and Geo.⁶⁹ These sponsorships illustrate the success of the show, as it becomes a regular feature of the fashion world in Lahore. PFDC fashion weeks expand the fashion trends of Lahore all over the world and it also provide computerized profile to these shows, in a form of photography series of outfits, which are accessible on the web-page of Pakistan Fashion Design Council (PFDC). The data in Libas magazine and the PFDC fashion week catalogues reveal a clear transformation in the local fashion industry.

The analysis of the data Libas magazine discloses that frocks, *saris* and long *kameez* were trendy from 2000 to 2003, but the trend of long *kameez* was replaced by short *kameez* in 2006. The year 2009 brought frocks and long *kameez* again in fashion and these trends were continued during the year 2010. The influence of the international trends turns into more observable scenario in Pakistani fashion after the year 2011 and it is signified through the silhouettes of jumpsuits, gown dresses, peplum, tops and sheath dresses. Although, the short *kameez* and frocks were also worn by women, the dresses with international influence were dominated. During the 2012, the form of long *kameez* was revised but the short *kameez*, tunics and tops replaced the long *kameez* in 2013. The fashion was changed again during the 2014, as frocks was replaced by tops and short *kameez* was second preferred trend.

In 2015, the tops and crop tops cutline were dominated on the frocks. The high range of short *kameez* and tops were associated the fashionable trends of 2016 as well; however, during the 2017, the frocks were again shifted on the second rank of the fashion graph and the tops were in the top position. On the other hand, the female dresses were transformed again in 2018. The Western inspired dresses along with the various frock patterns became trendy again. The alternate styles of lower garments; including tights, Capri, trousers and tulips, replaced the trend of *shalwar*. Typical look of women's dresses was transformed to the modern look with different inspirations. Most these transformations were due to the global influences and the cutline of *dupattas* disappeared gradually, in the female fashion of Lahore.

Conclusion:

The first two decades of 21st century witnessed the modernity in female fashion. It transforms the classical appearance of female dresses into modern through the combination of inspirations. The use of *dupattas* in women fashion is gradually reduced, which shows the drastic transformation. Other western inspired costumes, for example; tops, peplum, maxi dresses, shirts, jumpsuits, sheath dresses and pants are approved by females as fashionable dresses to adopt the modern culture. The socio-economical, technological and political development in Pakistan has changed the scenario of fashion entirely and fashion has also become part of common lives. At present, the fashion of women in Lahore is based on the renewal of previous fashion trends and it is a combination and amalgamation of traditional and western styles. Contemporary world has been providing an understanding of

fashion and a chance to experience stylish dresses to everyone. Fashion has become a platform, where everyone could appreciate the latest trends without any social and economic discrimination. Market demand plays a crucial role in the moderation of fashion and in the manufacturing of garments, in Lahore. Another factor is the fast and easy access to information, through internet and applications, like Facebook, Instagram, as these social media platforms enable the consumers to explore new trends. The creative process, inspiration and motivation to create fashion has been totally changed in the last two decades, and the emphasis is on global trends.

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