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By now, we know the city's diverse population has ensured the saree is always in vogue. Whether it was the #100SareePact that trended on social media or Gen Z embracing it as a wardrobe staple (just look around you), the six-yard drape has never really gone out of fashion.

Bangalore, like much of South India, has long been a saree city. But what sets it apart is the way Gen Z is reinterpreting the ubiquitous garment. Sarees are being layered over jeans and trousers, paired with sneakers and styled in refreshingly unconventional ways.

"I guess saree-wearing mothers have passed on the saree-wearing passion to their daughters. The shift is also because there are plenty of ready-to-wear saree options for those who aren't comfortable with the conventional drape. It's not just Gen Z but also older women who prefer ready-to-wear sarees because they're quick to drape and fuss-free," says Mythili G Nirvan, co-founder of MyAnsi.

Beyond drape order

Bangalore is probably one of the few cities where this evolution feels completely natural. The city's culture values authenticity over formality, allowing people to wear what reflects their identity rather than what tradition dictates.

"The saree has always been timeless, but what has changed is the mindset of the wearer. Bangalore has created a culture where heritage is not preserved behind glass; it is lived every day. We see customers choosing sarees not because they must, but because they genuinely enjoy wearing them. That shift from obligation to choice is what makes the city's saree culture so exciting today," says Laksh Jain, Director, Deepam by Ananta.

The city has quietly evolved into a saree destination in its own right, where the garment is increasingly worn as an expression of personal style rather than tradition alone.

Priyanka Rajwar, who enjoys experimenting with drapes, says younger people in Bangalore are also embracing the saree as a sustainable fashion choice. "I've come across Gen Zs who thrift and love vintage clothing. Sarees are a natural extension because many are handmade and handed down through generations. A single saree can be styled in multiple

CITY IN SIX YARDS

Gen Z, sustainability & bold styling are giving Bangalore's love affair with the saree an entirely new drape



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Founder Director of METAmorphosis
and Aroma Stories

ways or even repurposed into unique garments. Sarees are truly sustainable."

From startups and cafés to concerts and protests, more young Bangaloreans are wearing sarees as everyday attire.

Sharada N Arya, Founder Director of METAmorphosis and Aroma Stories and winner of the Choice of the People title at Mrs Classique Globe 2025, believes social media has played a major role in making the saree aspirational again.

rounding the saree is that it is uncomfortable or impractical. Saleela Kappan, Founder of RED Communications, dismisses that notion, saying comfort largely depends on choosing the right fabric and drape.

Having worn sarees regularly, she believes they are no less comfortable than any other outfit once one finds a style that works.

She also credits the younger generation with breaking another long-held stereotype—that sarees are meant only for weddings, festivals or formal occasions. "You can wear one to work, for coffee with friends, to an art exhibition or even while travelling around the city," she says.

According to Kappan, Bangalore's cosmopolitan character has also played a key role in reinventing the six-yard drape. With people from across the country bringing their own weaving traditions, styling choices and draping techniques, there is no single 'correct' way to wear a saree anymore.

"You can mix and match traditional weaves with contemporary accessories and still look graceful and elegant. Instead of one traditional way of wearing a saree, you see different fashion influences, it is being reinvented."

Art of the saree

That reinvention isn't confined to wardrobes. It is also reshaping how the saree is being viewed, as an object of design, innovation and artistic expression.

The Registry: Centre for Design, founded by Ally Matthan and recently opened in Langford Gardens, has made the saree the centrepiece of its inaugural exhibition, *Perched Upon a Woven Sky*, curated by Aayushi Jain.

Built around the themes of light, colour and perception, the exhibition explores how Indian textiles transform under changing lighting conditions through the course of a day.

The idea unfolds through a series of striking exhibits. A peacock feather-inspired textile explains how colour is created not by pigments but by light interacting with microscopic structures, making feathers appear blue and green despite being fundamentally brown.

Historic weaves further this exploration, including a Banaras Karwa textile that highlights an early cotton-and-gold tradition predating the city's silk dominance, where varying gold thread densities create brilliance without conventional brocading.

Taken together, the exhibition mirrors what is already unfolding across Bangalore's streets: the saree is no longer defined by tradition or occasion alone. With every new drape, styling experiment and generation embracing it, the timeless garment continues to evolve while remaining unmistakably rooted in its heritage.

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No occasion needed

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