

What's brewing in the

The Dilemma of Global Cultruae

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CULTURE is the learned, shared and transmitted information or facts from one generation to the next. It is the behaviour, learned and practiced, that defines and distinguishes one society from another. Culture gives individuals an anchoring point, a sense of belonging and thus, an identity. This identity demands adherence to certain rules of conduct. But what happens when the barriers are broken; when there are no boundaries between two cultures and when people are faced with the question: where do we belong? Debates may shuttle among economists, administrators and the academia but it is the ordinary people, the men and women in the streets who are experiencing and metamorphosing the effects of globalisation.

For the consumer the local markets are bursting with cars, cosmetics and confectionery among numerous other goods. Almost everything that is produced in one country can be made available to another country, even in another continent. The transfer of human capital is also on the rise. The driving power behind all this seems to be 'cable television'. It is not restricted to urban dwellers but penetrates the community centres of the deepest rural areas. Not only are we seeing



Interchanging of culture is an inevitable process of globalisation.

what other cultures are like, we are also seeing how they behave, how they dress, what they eat and what they do.

Celebrities have always been role models, if not with their life styles, at least their hairstyles and wardrobe. In the past many fashion conscious people looked westwards for fashion but their sights were set nearer home. Now they've been teleported much further west and hair styles of Julia Roberts, Jennifer Aniston and David Beckham are turning up in the elite circles of Dhaka society. Not to be outdone, *tokais* in the little alleys of Dhaka and other little street urchins can be seen singing tunes from Michael Jackson's songs and emulating 'moon-walks'.

It is not just monkeys who fit the adage "Monkey see monkey do." Put people in their place and we act likewise. But, unlike monkeys, we have the ability to mutate the concepts or ideas and adapt them into our own. A clear example of this is in the world of fashion, where the mundane and lowly *fatua* has leaped to the heights of

