



CROSSTALK BE THE CHANGE

Before starting the interview, we would like to explain to our readers what 'Cross Talk' is actually about and how it is relevant to Star Showbiz. Over the years, our committed readers have come across stories of different television artists, musicians, dramatists and prominent personas from the film fraternity. However, they have never had the opportunity to hear what the experts have to say about the showbiz industry in Bangladesh. Hence, we present 'Cross Talk', a platform that highlights the views of our cultural influencers.



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COVER STORY

RAFI HOSSAIN: Welcome to Star Showbiz Cross Talk. Today we have with us, President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and Chairman of Nagorik Television, Rubana Huq. She is also a cultural and literary personality. She can sing, recite and also write poems. We also have with us, prominent architect Iqbal Habib, who is known for his distinctive views and sharp remarks at talk shows. And finally, I would like to introduce popular actor and director, Ferdous. Now with this versatile group of people around me, let's indulge in a great conversation focusing on the current situation of our entertainment industry.

I personally feel that our entertainment industry is going through a critical situation right now. I feel that all the programs we see on our local television channels are repetitive, lacking in originality and creativity. If we remove the logos of the TV channels it will be very difficult to differentiate between them

because of the similarity of their content. And the few good movies, music artists and bands we have in our industry are still very underrated and hidden from the limelight. What is your take on this?

RUBANA HUQ: I would not say good movies are not being made as there are still good contextual movies being directed in our country, but maybe the number of such releases are below average. And the reason behind it is the lack of patronage to create something original and unique. We have failed terribly in this department. I also find it difficult to accept that our country is not producing good music. There are still plenty of talented artists and good musicians out there, but the problem is that we are facing difficulties in understanding the taste of our audience. We are less focused on audience preference and more on creating commercial pieces. Now, if we talk about television then it is fair to conclude that if we remove the 'logos' then everything

is the same. It is absolutely true especially in the case of news channels. When we talk about entertainment, there are many quality contents available but we pay less heed to them. We have turned away from watching television and the social media is to blame for this situation. We have access to watch almost everything on YouTube, Netflix and similar other

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platforms.

RAFI: Do you think internet is a positive medium for entertainment?

RUBANA: I view the medium as a positive platform but I cannot always applaud the programs they show because of their contents. Television channels have certain censorship parameters for broadcasting any program; whereas the internet is a free media where there is no form of censorship. This generation has a very laid back approach towards everything and that is why I like calling them the *Dhurro* (dissatisfied) generation. Whatever you ask them, they will answer you with this one word, *Dhurro*. They don't seem to be content with whatever they do, and start taking shortcuts to reach their goals. Just to gain quick fame attractive music videos are being produced. So, music is now mostly viewing rather than listening. Even in case of films, people try to relate themselves immediately to the conventional plotline of aggression, action and thrill and they forget that the world of cinema is not confined within these. And due to all these, I personally feel that the touch of originality has been lost.

IQBAL HABIB: I think a certain sense of negligence is at work here and we have created an ambiance based on it. This could be the beginning of a huge setback ushering in the march of hopelessness in our cultural part. And as Rubana mentioned earlier, the innovative mentality that prevailed back in our times does not exist anymore. Now everything is delivered as prescribed. I use the word negligence here because with this aura of frustration no one can bring a positive change to the society. Growing up in '71, we had nothing, but the amount of hope we had in us was incredible. There was no place for frustration. But this confidence disappeared after a successive period of time, especially after the 90s where the level of depression grew rapidly. For example, if I am having an informal chat right now about the traffic system or dust pollution of Dhaka, an entire research will commence and mostly it will be based on the negative remarks. But nobody for once looks at the bright side; Rajshahi was recognized as the only city in the world where 40 percent reduction of dust pollution was achieved in just three years, and this created a worldwide record. This story never got wide news coverage. We are the enemies of our own heroes. Basically, what I am trying to say is that if we continue to create such environment then who will take the challenge to bring change to this scenario?

RAFI: We have to accept the current reality, but this does not mean that it is the end of everything. Television still has viewers but the shift of viewership from national to foreign channels is quite evident. For example, the recent heartthrob of our nation, singer Nobel has made a mark for himself just because we noticed him on an international platform. The scenario would have been different if he was in a national competition. I am not demeaning our industry, there are good contents being aired on our local TV channels. Somewhere along the line we all will have to bear accountability for this and take measures to fix this issue. What's your take on this, Ferdous?

