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FOREWORD

Dear Friends,

It's our pleasure to welcome you to the first ever Doclab Dhaka, 2017. It's absolutely a new journey for a country of 160 million people where stories are created every minute. How can we not have a doclab here. We have a long history of cultural movements and cultural activities to take this country forward. This land had and has always looked at life very differently and the scope for interpreting reality through creative lens was always immense. But as you all know, like anywhere else in the world, it is always difficult to create a professional platform for documentary rather than fictions. One always need friends to start something like this. In our case Docedge Kolkata and specially Nilotpol Majumder played that selfless friend's role and worked days and nights with us to make first ever Dhaka Doclab successful. We are ever grateful to Kolkata Docedge.

It's a humble beginning for Dhaka Doclab. But the kind of response we got from tutors, decision-makers and participants, both locally and internationally, are mind-blowing. We are all ever grateful to you. There are some very interesting projects we are going to see from home and abroad. Getting beneath the socio-cultural fabrics of a society is never easy, but our participants have done that successfully. We also look forward to receiving positive responses from foundations and broadcasters about possible co-productions.

We appreciate the kind of support we got from our partners and patrons. Starting from Bengal Foundation, Cosmos Foundation, Bangladesh Shilpokala Academy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Ministry of Information- we are all very grateful to all of you.

Finally, we are committed to continue our effort for years to come and spread our stories to the world. And in effect we want to share our audio-visual narrative with the world. And we take it as our human responsibility.

Warmly,

Dhaka Doclab Team



TUTORS





KAROLINA LIDIN

Filmmaker
Denmark

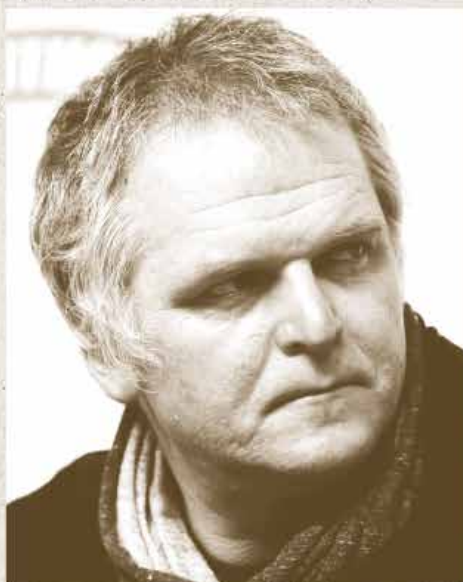
Karolina Lidin is a documentary consultant primarily engaged at Nordisk Film & TV Fond as Documentary Advisor and at Sheffield Doc/Fest as MeetMarket Executive Producer. In addition, Karolina has been continuously involved in mentoring/training schemes, developing projects with international potential, lately with the DocsPort Incheon, Crossing Dreams, DocCampus Masterschool, the MENA Programme for the Middle East & North Africa and the FINAS Workshop for Malaysian filmmakers in collaboration with Documentary Campus and European Documentary Network. Karolina has experience as producer, film commissioner, distributor and as CEO of Nordisk Panorama and Nordisk Forum. Karolina's activities also include moderating the IDFA FORUM and numerous other documentary events in addition to festival jury duty, panel & selection committee participation and tutoring worldwide.



NILOTPAL MAJUMDAR

**Founder & President
Documentary Resource Initiative
India**

Nilotpal Majumdar is Founder/President of Documentary Resource Initiative that organizes DocedgeKolkata, an Asian documentary pitching forum that is engaged with filmmakers for intensive incubation, mentoring and international co-production opportunities. A postgraduate from Film & Television Institute of India, Pune he received a National Award in 1997 for his film Dhatu Jhar '97. He is a frequent jury member and a tutor-mentor at international documentary film festivals and incubation-cum-pitching sessions. Presently, he is Director, Manipur State Film & Television Institute, Imphal. He was also Dean, Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute, Kolkata. Recently, Nilotpal was honoured with the European Documentary Network Award 2017 for outstanding contribution towards developing the international documentary culture.



AUDRIUS STONYS

Filmmaker/Producer

Professor, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre
Lithuania

Recipient of Lithuanian National Culture and Art Award. Member of European Documentary Network. Born 1966.04.28 in Vilnius, Lithuania. 1984-1989 studied in Vilnius State Conservatorium film directing. 1989 studied in Jonas Mekas Film Anthology Archive New York.

His films got numerous international film awards. Among them Audience award in Nyon, Grand Prix in Split, prizes in Bornholm, Florence, Gyor, Neu Brandenburg, Oberhausen, Bilbao and San Francisco. In 1992 Audrius Stonys documentary film "Earth of the Blind" was recognised by European Film Academy as the Best European Documentary Film of the Year and received Felix Award. 2004-2005 Documentary teacher in European Film College, Denmark. Lectures and master classes in Kolkata, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Tokyo, Berkeley, Stanford, Moscow, Belgrade, Barcelona, San Francisco, Carpi Modena, Paris. Film presentations in Switzerland, Russia, France, Israel, Czech Republic, Germany, USA, Belgium, Spain, Turkey, Colombia, Uruguay, Italy.



PAUL PAUWELS

Director

European Documentary Network(EDN)

Jean Paul Pauwels has been the Director of the European Documentary Network since May 2013. He has been working in the world of audiovisual production as unit manager, production manager, producer, commissioning editor (TV), head of a media training institute and finally as the director of an international professional organisation. He studied at the RITCS film school in Brussels where - in 1979 - he got his degree as director and producer. He worked in feature film production until 1987, when he founded his own production unit: Periscope Productions. In 2005, he left Periscope Productions NV to become programme manager at the Flemish Public Broadcaster VRT/CANVAS. Between 2007 and 2011 he was the creator and later the director of the "European Television and Media Management Academy" in Strasbourg, France. He has shared his knowledge as an active documentary producer with several organizations. Amongst them are – Documentary Campus (Germany), the European Documentary Network (Denmark) Greenhouse (Israel), Balkan documentary Center (Bulgaria), International documentary institute (Czech Republic), DocedgeKolkata (India) and Documentary in Europe (Italy). He has been lecturing and tutoring internationally. He has also been moderating pitching sessions all over Europe, including the renowned Forum in Amsterdam. Today, he is a member of the General Assembly of the Flemish Film Fund (VAF) for whom he also acts as an expert reader for documentary projects.



GRACA CASTANHEIRA

Director & Producer

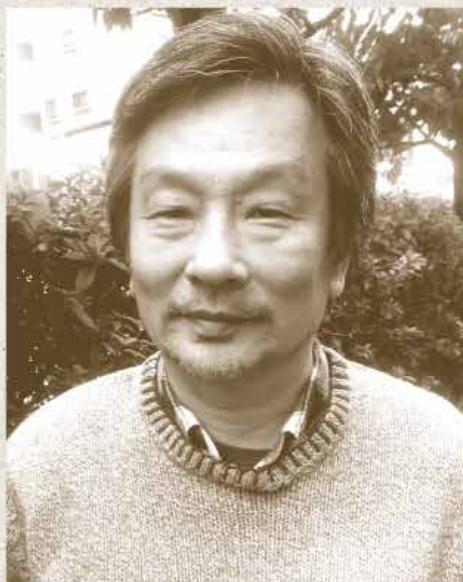
Pop Films

Portugal

Graca Castanheira graduated in Film in 1989 at Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema, where she currently lectures Documentary and Film Directing. She is also in charge of a Documentary Film class at Restart — Instituto de Criatividade e Novas Tecnologias. During her career as a documentary film director, she was distinguished with many awards. Castanheira is also one of the founding members of Apordoc — Portuguese Documentary Association. In 2008 she created her own production and post-production company called Pop Filmes. She works regularly as a colourist



DECISION MAKERS



RYOTA KOTANI

Executive Producer, International Programs
NHK Enterprises
Japan

Since 1986 working for NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) as a director of documentaries and news operations as "News operations of German Unification" (1990) "Urgent Report After Death of Rajiv Gandhi" (1991) and the live show "Symphony for the earth – Satellite Live Message by Seiji Ozawa and world musicians" (1995). His directed documentary "European Picnic Plan breaking against Iron Curtain" (1993) won awards of HBF (Hoso Bunka Foundation). Between 1997 and 1999 working as a NHK correspondent to Hong Kong Office then since 1999 working as documentary producer of NHK unique satellite channel cultivating High Definition Documentaries as like the travelogue "World Strollers" (2005-07) and "Cats!" (2012-14), also as International co-production "Why Democracy" (2007) "Indian Short film series" (2007&08) "Queen and I" (2008), and "The KERIYA" (2016) with NEO and BTV. He commissioned many productions, from which various films got screened at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, like "Chronicle of Amnesiac" (2007) by Anirban Datta, India and "Char... The No-Man's Island" (2012) by Sourav Sarangi, "Spiral Stairs" by Ji Tang (2009), China and "Japan; Love & Hate" by Sean McAlister (2009), U.K won awards at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival.



SYLVIA BEDNARZ

Sheffield Doc Fest
UK

Sylvia Bednarz is the Director of Partnerships and Development at Sheffield Doc/Fest – the UK's largest and most exciting documentary and digital media festival. Ahead of joining the Sheffield Doc/Fest team in 2013, Sylvia worked in documentary film and TV production, beginning her career working on the feature documentary *The Age of Stupid*. She then joined Current TV as an Associate Producer, working alongside the commissioning editor to manage both single and series documentaries from development through to broadcast. At Sheffield Doc/Fest Sylvia develops partnerships across the UK and internationally with brands and industry organisations.



BOJANA MARIĆ

Taskovsky Films, UK

Born in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bojana holds a master's degree in Archaeology from University of Belgrade, Serbia. She worked as museum curator and field archeologist for several years, taking part in many international and local projects and exhibitions. Interpreting human's past has a lot to do with storytelling and Bojana was naturally driven to documentaries as another form of creative research.

Bojana joined Taskovsky Films team being very valuable team member working in acquisitions, festivals and PR department. As a representative of Taskovsky Films Bojana had taken part in several industry panels and programs - to mention few - European Documentary Network - distribution networks Moving Docs - professional training on outreach campaigns and theatrical distribution of documentary films, as well as development, financing and distribution training in Belgrade organized by Film Centre Serbia and many others.



Camilla Nielsson is an independent filmmaker based in Copenhagen, Denmark. She holds a Master's degree in Anthropology & Media Studies from New York University (NYU), and has directed several award winning documentaries including *Mumbai Disconnected* (2009), and *Democrats* (2014), which won more than 25 international awards and nominations, including the Best Documentary Award at the Tribeca Film Festival. She is also a board member of The Why Foundation.

CAMILLA NIELSSON

Filmmaker

Board Member, Why Foundation

Denmark



JANE RAY
WHICKERS WORLD FOUNDATION

Jane is the Consultant Artistic Director for Whickers World Foundation and a multi-award winning documentary maker and executive producer in radio and television. Her awards range from the Sony Award for best news programme (2002) and the TRIC award for best Children's programme (1993) to China's Golden Kapok award for best director (2014). Having spent 29 years at the BBC, Jane worked with Alan Whicker in the 1990s and last year got the call to help set up a new documentary foundation funded by his generous legacy. She wrote and directed Radio 4's archive programme about Alan: Around the World in 80 years, presented by Michael Palin and is immensely proud to have participated in his work for TV and radio.



N. RASHED CHOWDHURY

**Bengal Creations
Bangladesh**

N. Rashed Chowdhury is an Independent Filmmaker in Bangladesh. His documentary and short films were widely screened and acclaimed in various international film festivals & at national level. Rashed joined Film Society Movement of Bangladesh back in 1989 and lead the movement very actively taking part in it. He later became member of Bangladesh Short Film Forum-the only organization, that initiated independent film movement in Bangladesh since 1986 and launched the first independent short film festival-the first of its kind in the Indian sub-continent. Rashed became president of Bangladesh Short Film Forum and directed the Film Festival as Festival Director for two editions. He has recently won the National Film Grant for making his first feature film: Chandrabati Kotha-based on the legendary female writer of the Bengali Language-Poet Chandrabati.



AMAN ASHRAF FAIZ

Gazi Television
Bangladesh

Aman Ashraf Faiz is a marketing expert in Brand Building, Media Channel Management, Brand Activation, Rural Marketing and OOH Media, Marketing Research and PR Management with 20 years of work experience. He has lead brand building and communication deployment for all Unilever brands in Bangladesh as the Activation Planning Manager & Head of Media Management.

He has also inspired and transformed the entire Grameenphone media management team to drive efficiency and innovation, monitoring mechanism, process innovation, audience centric buying, and process automation.

Aman is currently leading the fastest growing TV channel – GTV. He was instrumental to launch international sports content from GTV. Some of the milestones that he initiated from GTV are; Innovative TV channel relaunch with clear brand positioning “Ami Ja Dekhi Tumi Ki Ta Dekho”, introducing BREAKFREE EID FEST, Giving sight to blind through TV program “SHOPNO DEKHE CHOCK” etc. With a strong academic background and real-life experience, Aman also served as Guest lecturer in the best business schools of the country and has published multiple articles.



ABU SHAHED EMON

Channel i
Bangladesh

Abu Shahed Emon is a Bangladeshi independent filmmaker. He completed his Diploma and Advance Diploma from Sydney Film School (2009) and RMIT University (2010) and completed his 3 years Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Filmmaking with a Major in Directing from the Korea National University of Arts (2015). For his films, he has received several grants like AFA Scholarship Fund (2010) for the short film 'The Container (2012)', Asian Cinema Fund (ACF) provided by the Busan International Film Festival for Script & Project Development Category (2011) for the project 'The Tale of a Policeman (AKA A foolish man)', Best Pitching Prize by the Goteborg International Film Festival (GIFF) (2011) for the project 'The Tale of a Policeman (AKA A foolish man)' and Asian Cinema Fund (ACF) of Busan International Film Festival for the Post-Production (2014) for the debut feature Project Jalal's Story. Emon's debut feature film project, Jalal's Story has traveled more than 30 international film festivals. His shorts and feature films have participated in the prestigious film festivals like Locarno, Busan, Goa, Montreal World, Kerala, Mannheim-Heidelberg, Fajr, Kazan, Silver Akbuzat, Avanca etc. and received several international awards. His debut feature Jalal's Story was the Bangladeshi entry to the 88th Academy Awards (Oscar) in the foreign language film Category. Emon is currently preparing his second feature film named 'A Foolishman' (AKA The tale of a Policeman).



PARTICIPANTS

I AM FROM AFRICA



TAMAL CHAKRABORTY
INDIA



Logline

Kromah is one of the hundreds of young Africans struggling in the passionate football fields of Kolkata. Longing for family yet pushing on to keep playing, trying hard to earn money to support his poor family back in Liberia... always hoping to become a superhero – from the local tournaments to the Indian football arena.

Synopsis

In Indian city Kolkata, football is everywhere – local tournaments (kheps) to big clubs. And football has connected two distant lands – Kolkata and Africa. African youths fight it out here, leaving behind families yet yearning for them every moment, focusing solely on quick big money to feed those at home.

James – a senior footballer – came to Kolkata many years back. Slowly, he built up a community of Liberian footballers. He is deeply respected as a mentor and father figure. In this group, comes Kromah, – passionate, enthusiastic, with something to say about everything! But one with a mission. With a large needy family behind him, Kromah runs from one playground to another, struggling in an alien culture. As Kromah quickly rises – becoming popular for scoring in every match, James starts thinking of leaving to join his wife in USA. But, James is unsure... What will happen to his community? Will there be anyone else to take over?

Kromah dreams of playing in the big clubs... and chance gets him to one. However, longing for home keeps nagging. – But then, if he goes, can he regain his place? And also, getting into the big league, can he still live with his community? Or does change take over the passionate guy? Where does this path lead?

Director's statement

African footballers in my local games had been my childhood Super Heroes, too. Like those young eager children in my film, I had also run to the games in search of these super heroes and watched open-mouthed their extreme power and acumen. But getting to know them opened up another world altogether. A story that runs much deeper. What pulls me most is their utmost vulnerability. – They are in a foreign land, negotiating an alien culture, accepting their closed in life... all for their families. They are hounded for their prowess, and they keep delivering, but they are carrying such a big load within. And yet, they keep up with that pressure so well. I do not know what lies in store for Kromah

and his mentor James, but then my film will follow the journey faithfully and bring the struggles, pain and conflict alive on the screen before the world.

Director/Producers profile

Tamal Chakraborty specialized in Editing from Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute, Govt. of India. He later went on to Direction.

Born in Kolkata, Tamal had at an early age formed his theatre group where he started writing and directing plays. Film school had been natural afterwards.

Tamal has worked for major international and national documentaries, as also feature films. He has worked with significant national and international broadcasters like National Geography Channel, NHK (Japan) and British Council. One of the first documentaries he produced was "Fairytale Dreams" for NHK (Japan).

He also teaches at the Calcutta University.

Tamal is also the Producer for this film, with his production company – Living Life. This is Tamal's first venture with his own company. Living Life works with a team of film school graduates and provides script-to-screen services, currently starting a number of projects for Indian Tourism and corporate entities.

Treatment

Every early morning, in little fields in nondescript places, intense sessions go on – sturdy African youths and local guys. Thus starts the day of young Africans come to make it big as footballers in alien Kolkata. Soon, practice starts. The field becomes a cloud of dust, bright jerseys and jubilant shouts.

Here, James is a regular. For years he has built up a small community of fellow Liberians. They all dream of recognition, playing for big clubs, major leagues. But what keep them going are small tournaments – "kheps" – to earn their living before they can join big clubs.

Here, comes Ghanefo Ansumana Kromah – another young Liberian. With a family of eight depending on him for survival, he must keep earning. Kromah becomes popular for scoring goals in every match. Go! Go! Goal! People call! And he gets the name – Agogo!

Agogo struggles on... On the one hand, getting calls for games coming, dealing with teammates of an alien culture. And then, the desperate longing for home. He joins a big Indian club, Churchill Brothers, in Goa. Yet he has to come back to Kolkata for khep matches, otherwise he can't run his family in Africa. A steadfast Muslim, his strong belief in faith can't let him ignore his family's needs.

In James' apartment, their life is – music, food and football! And beneath, always the talk of going home. They are always on their cell-phones, talking to home. Despite the Super Hero image, they are just young guys longing for loved ones.

As Kromah starts making a name, he gets picked up by another big club. But even now, the money is not enough. He still has to keep playing kheps. Now, this has strong issues – the club is against playing kheps. Kromah is soon warned. Yet, the money is needed for home...

James is now at crossroads. His need for family is winning. Wife and kids in USA are calling. James has to think about wrapping up in Kolkata and going.

Agogo, too, longs for home... But what would he do back home? Ultimately, what lies in store?

It is a journey of passion, rediscovery, compulsions of one's love for family and fight to an identity at best uncertain...

The camera imbibes itself intimately into the film, filmmaker becoming an extension of his characters' milieu. Active, handheld and steadycam shots would follow the unpredictability of football and the untamable African spirit.

Soundscape

Rich rhythms of Kolkata life and the football fields would add the flavours.

Production Plan

Pre-Production	: July 2016 – September 2016
Production	: October 2016 – March 2018
Completion	: August 2018

Budget

Total budget	: 65000 usd
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Production status

Production

KOHRAAN



FARHA KHATUN
INDIA



Logline

The film documents the life and journey of two Indian Muslim women who are undergoing training in the teaching and interpretation of Quran to become Qazi's (magistrate or judge of the Sharia court or Muslim Personal Law). This will enable them to strive for gender equality and better represent Muslim women in India.

Synopsis

Like many religions across the globe, Islam is preached by men. In a highly patriarchal society like India, the religious leaders rely on the general public's ignorance – since it is written in Arabic – to misinterpret the rules of the Quran and suppress women. In matters concerning marriages, divorce, remarriage (Nikaah, Talaq and Halala), women have no legal recourse except to approach these male Qazis.

The Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), an NGO, has started a movement for gender justice in Islam by training a group of women to become Qazis. The film follows the lives of two such women – Nasreen from Hospet (Karnataka, South India) and Safia from Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh, Central India) – who have been undergoing this training since 2015.

Through the lives and experiences of these two women, the film explores loopholes and problems in the existing system and how it can impact lives of various Muslim women. The film also documents the rising unhappiness registered by the women who are seeking abolishment of some shariah practices. An important question is if mainstream society will accept and seek out these female Qazis for resolving legal issues under the Shariah law, and allow them to bring about social change?

Director's statement

Having been raised in a patriarchal society, I always questioned myself and wondered if Islam really does preach things that oppresses it's women followers.

As a part of my research for this film, I have read translated versions of the Quran. I have also read a number of books published by BMMA (Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan), books on Muslim Personal Law, and articles on gender equality in India. I have spent a lot of time with the founding members of BMMA to learn and understand more about their work. Before beginning to film, I also spent time with Nasreen and Safia, during which we

got to know them personally and then decided that we must document their journeys.

Director's Profile

After having completed my 2-year Postgraduate Diploma in Editing from Roopkala Kendro (2008 to 2010), I have edited several documentary films, short fiction and also worked on feature films.

'I am Bonnie', a documentary film that I edited and co-directed, had the world premiere at BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival, and was awarded the 'Best Documentary' at Kolkata International Film Festival and screened at many other international festivals.

Apart from editing documentaries, I have been a mentor of several filmmaking workshops to teach women about the impact of audiovisual medium, especially documentary in rural areas of India to provide women an additional tool to voice their concerns and thoughts.

Treatment

The story begins with BMMA launching the Qazi training program for women. The arc of the narrative will follow several strands and will terminate with an ending where these women are accepted by the mainstream Muslim community as well as by religious authorities.

During the course of this trajectory, the narrative will incorporate many related strands – the public uprising against the government involvement in the Sharia law; the Supreme Court's ruling on "triple talaq" (the controversial rule that allows Muslim men to divorce their wives by uttering "talaq", the word for divorce, three times); BMMA's broader work of activism and contribution to gender justice and social change – all while closely following the events and the changes that are happening within the personal and socio-political lives of its chief protagonists, Nasreen and Safia.

Nasreen's life is riddled with stories and memories of how her sister has suffered under the rules of Muslim Personal Law. These pushed her into social activism, and eventually motivated her to undertake the Qazi training program.

Safia's personal struggle to get an education, along with events happening all around her, propelled her to become vociferous in her attempts at social change. As a devout Muslim, she is convinced that it is patriarchy that is subverting a fair and just Sharia law.

BMMA's program to train women Qazis acts as a huge blow to the male-dominated structures. Due to this structure, many thousands of women are deprived of basic rights and without legal recourse under the Sharia law. In keeping with the current political and judicial events that are unfolding in India, the film will weave a true tapestry of gender justice in Islam.

In the future, the film will aim to capture these social changes as they further unfold across the country. The final culmination of this Qazi program and the integration or the resistance of these women in society will be documented. We also want to get a good understanding of common folk opinion (word on the street) about having women as Qazis in the context of the existing patriarchal structure.

The challenges and the struggles that these women Qazis will have to face and how they hope and plan to effect social change and bring about gender justice will be the focus of a large part of the upcoming shoot.

Production Plan

Pre-production & Research : June 2014 - June 2015
Production : April 2015 - December 2018
Post Production : January 2019 - June 2019

Budget

Total Budget : 47500 USD

Production Status

In Production

BILKIS AND BILKIS



HUMAIRA BILKIS
BANGLADESH



Logline

Mother tries desperately to convince her daughter for pilgrimage and thus the journey redefines their relationship.

Synopsis

This is a story of two Bilkis' - a mother and her daughter - and their dialectic difference in thought in the present context of Bangladesh. Mother Bilkis is now a quiet transformed character - from a liberal lady to a pious one. Thus her view point to see the world has also been changed. Now she feels that all her previous photographs should be burnt as taking photos without religious purpose is strictly forbidden in Islam. Mother wants her daughter, Bilkis, to believe it where the daughter has her own ideas and viewpoints. She wants to establish herself as a filmmaker. This makes her family uncomfortable as it opposes to their religious belief. In this continuing conflict, daughter finds out an old diary of her mother where she used to write poetry. This diary is not a mere diary; it is a disclosure of her mother's repression. The daughter understands that her mother has been subjugated to change because of this patriarchy, where women are the first victims. At a certain point, daughter agrees to go for Hajj (pilgrimage) to accompany her mother. Through this journey the daughter realizes that all her mother's devotion is the outcome of her core belief where there exists only fear rather happiness. Finally, the daughter decides to come out from this cocoon of fear and live her own life.

Director's Statement

It's a personal story, an everyday encounter of a woman film maker in the context of Bangladesh. I am often asked about the strength and obstacles of film making in my country. What I can't express is that my family is my strength because they don't like me to be a film maker. Although they are pragmatic and exposed to modernity. Their negativity towards my passion makes me more adamant. As a truth seeker I tried to confront this experiential journey and I found their discomfort lies in their core belief. As a believer they know representation is not allowed in Islam. Strangely they were not so conservative even 20 years back. The recent rise of political Islam and the changing circumstances are also affecting their mind. From my familial experience I find them

very jovial and positive towards media. But when their daughter is going to engage in it, they are not at all comfortable. I realize my mother is more reactive towards my activity than my father whereas she used to be the most liberated woman in my childhood. So I started my dialogue with mother, spending more time with her and in the process I almost rediscovered her old passion. She used to be a poet 25 years back and we found her old diary. It's almost a book of passion and repression at the same time. I realize my mother is reduced to a shadow of her earlier entity. She never sought for recognition and slowly in course of time she lost her expression and gets tamed within the structure of family. The dominating language of religion takes shape in her mind relegating poetry to an obscure memory.

This is how I realize and rediscover the lost relationship with my mother and try to arrive at a middle point where she can begin to appreciate my passion towards image and sound. The only issue I pointed out is that they are not in love with their religion, they only have a fear which is disallowing them to see around and love all the stimulus.

Director Profile

Humaira Bilkis is a Dhaka based independent filmmaker. Her interest in filmmaking revolves around creative treatment of actuality. She likes non-fiction as it liberated her to be a creative storyteller.

After completing her graduation in Mass Communication she's been in to film making for the last six years. She also achieved her diploma graduation from Creative Documentary in Sri Aurobindo Center for Arts and Communication, Delhi.

She worked as an associate producer with the Oscar award winning documentary film maker Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy. She has a vast work experience in handling documentary situations as a field producer as well as a director. Her first short documentary we came walking (2014) was screened in VibGyor International Film

Festival, Trissur, Kerala, India 2015. Her self-reflexive documentary I am yet to see Delhi was acclaimed internationally. It has been mentioned in special jury in New Asian Current category in Yamagata International Documentary Film festival, Japan, 2015.

Now she has just finished her first feature length documentary Garden of Memories on the tea community of Bangladesh who had been forcefully migrated from different parts of India.

Treatment

This film is primarily a character driven story where my mother is in the center and me a catalyst. This personal narrative will be an experiential journey of a period of one year where the pilgrimage will take an important role. The whole story will revolve around the idea of pilgrimage where my mother is trying to convince me to go and perform Haj. In this course of time, lots of dialogues will take place regarding the ritual and custom which is a mandatory for the women only.

The two opposite polarities in which mother and daughter exists will be shown through the depiction of day-to-day events of our life, shot in a observational approach. For instance, the mother is limited by space within which her daily chores unfold. Supervising the food, reading newspaper, watching TV, offering Namaz and reciting the holy Quran with her huzoor (Arabic teacher) is her regular orbit. This orbit brings out a monochromatic dimension of her personality through a series of static close ups and mid shots that make her life look suffocating. On the other hand, the daughter's travails in the cinematic space, her relationships with the outer world are far more dynamic making her life uncertain and unsettled. The mother-daughter conversations are mostly shot in verite style. The daughter questions the mother about various prevailing norms, each of which will open up a new narrative strand. Old photographs will refer to a past time. Memory and nostalgia for the past will be created more with a fictive imagination and will also reflect upon a qualitatively different life form compared to the present. Wall projections of past times depicting

the mother listening to songs and daughter dancing create a dream like time that interacts with the complexity of the 'now'.

The film will avoid obvious objectification and will strive for a discursive plane in which the many 'selves' of both mother/daughter reflect, contradict, agree, disagree, converge and diverge at the same time.

In sound, my narration will be a guide track, on the opposite side, my mother's recitation of her poetry and the holy Quran will be added as off screen voice. I will use location sound as a design. We live just beside a mosque. The daily call for prayers (Azaan) add some extra ambience. Metaphorically it has a resemblance with my mother's life that is centered around prayers. It makes a circularity of life where my mother is bound by this sound. On the other hand, the chaotic city, it's heavy traffic sound will also be used to show the tension of daughter's life. The sound track will be structured around the binary of order/chaos and will echo the tenor of the two characters: mother/daughter.

Production Status:

Pre Production

Duration : 50 minutes

Budget

The estimated budget is 35000\$.

Time line:

Pre production	: July to October -2017
Production	: October 2017 to June 2018
Post production	: July to October 2018

A TREE IS LOOKING AT GOD



FARID AHMAD
BANGLADESH



Logline

The film explores the struggle of urban trees from the point of view of trees and a tree lover who travels around the city on a motor bike and takes care of trees to make the city inhabitable.

Synopsis

Mr. Sadek, a 62 years old man set a plan to make Dhaka, one of the most polluted cities of the world inhabitable. Therefore, he planted over 3000 plants with his own initiatives and own cost. He also organizes street meetings to aware people and protests whenever he sees chopping trees. He travels around the city with his motor cycle. Whenever people gather around him, he starts public meeting. Two street children, Motimala (11) and Asadul (6) inspired by the plant lover, fall in love with tree plants. They regularly take care of the trees that Mr. Sadek planted. The children smile, pass happy time with trees and nature. On the other hand, leaves of the trees change their mood in different seasons. There develops a wonderful relationship between the children and trees. However, the fortunes of urban trees are like the street children. As if they are the metaphor of urban trees. Children are homeless, trees are rootless. Both of them remain untouched of care, love and rights to live. In the name of development they have been cornered in the city.

Director's statement

Rachel Carson, renowned environmentalist once thought of a spring without the songs of birds. Dhaka is the city where spring comes without the sounds of birds; winter comes without fog and coldness. Living in Dhaka for more than 15 years, I find that people of Dhaka lives only in a city, not in nature. Dhaka has been one of the worse cities of the world where there have very few spaces for trees. How much the city is for trees? This is the query from where the idea of the film springs out. I want to look at the city from the point of view of Mr.Sadek, a tree lover. He is planting trees for over 20 years. He wants to make Dhaka healthy for human habitation. Mr. Sadek is the eye through which audience will look at the conditions and struggles of the trees of Dhaka.

Director Profile

Farid Ahmad writes, directs, and shoots non-fiction films. He has a background in documentary and a BA (Hons) & MA in Communication & Media Studies. He got best young filmmaker award for his first film, 'Roadmarchers of 1971'. He won National Film Grant to make his latest film 'True False & a Revolution'. He was invited at the DocWok in India to participate at the mentoring programme for documentaries in production in South Asia in 2014 to complete his film. So far he made 4 documentary films. He has seven years of experience working as a television producer. He is also contributing as a general secretary of Bangladesh Documentary Council.

Treatment

How much the city is for the trees and how much for man? This question will move the film ahead. The main theme of the film is tree plants, their relationship with city life and struggle for surviving. The film will be developed through the point of view of a tree lover. That's why the style of the film will be observational.

Central character: Sadekur Rahman

The central character of the film is Mr. Sadekur Rahman (age 62). He was a freedom fighter. People living here, are too busy to earn their livelihood. They don't have time to look at the city, smell its soil and feel the trees of their surroundings. Mr.Sadek is an exception. I selected him as an important character because he thinks of his surroundings, the city where 1.7 million people live in. He wants to make this polluted city inhabitable. That's why he set a plan to plant trees with his own cost and own initiatives. He thinks about this work as a new war. He noticed that there are so many gardens in dhaka such as mango garden, palm garden, vegetable garden etc. However, in reality, there are no such gardens like these. These are only names. Thats why he want to make some real gardens. I will follow up a palm garden that he is developing day by day. He planted over 300 plam trees at the old airport area of Dhaka. To manage the cost of plantation, he also run a herbal medicine store.

Location: Location of the film is Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Dhaka frequently becomes news headlines for its overpopulation & pollution. Dhaka is considered as the world 2nd most polluted city of the world.

Street Children: Whenever Mr. Sadek comes to Agargaon, two young children, Monimala & Asadul come and join him to take care of the trees. These two children are also important characters of the film. I choose them because they are the symbols of the struggle of urban trees. They are street children who are deprived of basic human needs. Trees of Dhaka also deprive of proper environment to grow up. So the children will be portrayed as metaphor of the struggle of trees in the city life. The eye of the film is tree. Body of the film is Dhaka city. The spirit of the film is the struggle of urban plants and trees.

Production Plan

Production- December, 2017

Post Production- March, 2018

Budget

Total Budget is 45,000 USD.

Production Status

Production Stage

MIRUGAPPANNAI ANIMAL FARM



ARUN KARTHICK
INDIA



Logline

Mirugappannai (AnimalFarm) introspects the human-animal dominion through religious, economic and political rituals.

Synopsis

Under the Western Ghats, every year around two million people gather in our auspicious harvest month of August to celebrate a six hundred year old myth. Native cattle breeds and horses are brought from various parts of South India to be bred, sold and sacrificed. A grand design erupts out of the farming landscape where farmers and traders perform a ritual of epic scale. A historic leaderless youth uprising in Tamil Nadu begins protesting in large groups against the Supreme Court's order to ban Jallikattu, a traditional Tamil bull taming sport. Violent clash between the protesters and the police leads to riots and bloodshed. The ban gets successfully revoked; Jallikattu and other animal sports get staged on a massive scale with the state's authority. The film draws a mimetic map of these perspectives to essay our contradicting relationship with animals and the innate violence in us.

Director's statement

Growing up in an agrarian society and as another participant of these practices, I have some observations regarding our way of life. This essay film contemplates on a remarkable feature of Indian thought, the belief that all creation is an integral totality. Man belongs to the earth in much the same way as animals and is not the only animal with rational thought. But we strangely fail to understand and accept such noble sentiments as we feel superior to all other beings. Our sense of superiority overrides all other feelings for nature. Is it our problem that we are too smart for our own good?

Director/Producers profile

Arun Karthick (1992) is an independent filmmaker based in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Self-taught, he began producing and directing short films at the age of seventeen. He finished his debut feature "Sivapuranam/The Strange Case of Shiva" with a 'Gap Financing award' at Film Bazaar 2014. The film premiered in the

Bright Future section of International Film Festival Rotterdam, 2016. He is currently working on his second feature "'Nasir'" which has received the Hubert Bals Fund for script development.

Treatment

The film does not follow a principal human character; rather the montage will be constructed in the tone of a cinematic essay between the animals, farmers, migrant workers, ritual performers, protesters, machines and gods!

Beginning with primordial occupation of the landscape such as cattle rearing, farming and trade the film builds to the evolution of a large fair. The five day fair is held annually as a part of the famous car festival of Anthiyur temple in Tamil Nadu. Being the largest cattle fair in the State, livestock from different regions are brought for trading and slaughtering. Farmers descend from the mountains with their cattle herd, walking them around 80kms to sell in the fair. One can find several breeds of goats, cows and bulls at the fair for trade. Believers bring their goats and roosters raised over a year to slaughter it for the guardian god accompanied with the centuries old chariot ritual. They cook their slaughtered offering and serve it to their family in the temple premises. Immigrant workers toil to set up Giant wheels for the visitors to celebrate the fair. Horses and some rare native breed of domesticated animals are displayed in stalls with pride by its owners. Farmers come in large numbers to purchase farming accessories and livestock. Huge crowd gathers to witness the men riding horses in a cloud of dust around the long line of sheds at the fair.

A historic leaderless youth uprising began protesting in large groups against the Supreme Court's order to ban Jallikattu, a traditional Tamil bull taming sport. In the last day of the protest police began forceful evictions, protesters at the marina threatened to venture into the sea, the clash lead to violent riots and bloodshed. Due to these protests the Governor of Tamil Nadu issued a new ordinance that authorized the continuation of Jallikattu events. The Tamil Nadu legislature passed a bill

exempting Jallikattu from the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1960). The first legal Jallikattu under this exemption was officially staged on 10th February in Madurai district. Popular cinema, an integral part of the modern social and political life of Tamil Nadu, has often portrayed Jallikattu as a symbol of masculinity, and social status. Several villages start to hold Jallikattu and Reckla Race among other animal sports. Among all of this chaos the Indian government's decides to ban selling live stocks at cattle markets and consumption of beef. The film converges these immediate perspectives of our socio-political situation.

Production Plan

Timeline	Production
August	Filming in: Native Cattle Research Center & Filming the cattle fair (Last phase of shoot)
	Post Production
October - December, 2017	Editing
January - February, 2018	Sound design, Foley, music & mixing
March, 2018	Color Correction, DCP and other deliverables

Budget

Pre-production	: \$ 1300
Production	: \$ 13350
Post-production	: \$ 9500
Amount spent so far	: \$ 14,650 (INR 9,37,600)
Total budget	: \$ 24150 (INR 15,45,600)

Production Status

Final phase

METAMORPHOSIS

Logline

A documentary on the journey of Sudeb, a male transforming into female by virtue of Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) and its consequences on her life as she confronts reality with an altered perspective.



SANKHA
INDIA



Synopsis

Sudeb, 37, born and grew up as a 'boy', dreamt of becoming a 'woman' since teenage. Twenty years later, she has accomplished her dream through SRS. Sudeb hails from a low-income family from a district town. After initial resistance, her parents eventually accepted her as she is. Her brother Raju, grocery shop owner, is an open mind and always cooperated with her.

After graduation, Sudeb left home to live an independent life in Kolkata where she met the love of her life, Ismail, a fruit trader, married with twin daughters. Sudeb knew that their affair would never be accepted. So, she created a cordial relationship with his family as a 'man'.

The surgery happens in Mumbai and she gets the most profoundly desired part in her body - female genital. But, she is shocked to find that Ismail's behavior has changed since she left Kolkata. What will happen to their relationship as Ismail cannot hide away showing Sudeb's physical self as man? More importantly, she is facing the change in her personality which she never expected. Transformed body has also transformed her mind that challenges her own desires and lifestyle.

Director's statement

Contrary to the usual notion of director approaching the character, it was Sudeb who requested me to make a film on her. I found she is strong and transparent, yet, has a mysterious personality; extremely pragmatic and unabashedly romantic. She truthfully tells me all the details of her life — on camera, which she knows could be difficult to digest by people around her. Then why does she tell me all these personal accounts? Frankly, I don't know.

While making 'Dui Dhuranir Golpo' (In-between Days, 2012), my first documentary with transgender community, my aim was to explore the idea of 'womanhood' through their eyes. Today, while making 'Metamorphosis' with Sudeb, who has formally become a woman post SRS, I am curious to know how she looks into the

world around her with an altered perspective. And how do people around her deal with her now? Is their behaviors going to change? Or, their expectations?

Director profile

Born 1975, Sankha (Sankhajit Biswas) has done 3-year Postgraduate Diploma in Editing from Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute in 2002-05 and participated in Berlin Talent Campus, 2010.

His editorial credits include both fiction and documentaries which are awarded and/or screened in major film festivals including Berlin, Totonto, IDFA, Busan, Dubai, DokLeipzig, Yamagata, Hong Kong, Museum of Modern Arts (MOMA) and have won many National and International Film Awards.

'Dui Dhuranir Golpo / In-between Days', his debut film as director, is a critically acclaimed documentary on the transgender community of Kolkata. It has been shown in many major festivals around the globe including CPH:DOX, Yamagata and DokPoint Helsinki and won Best Documentary Award in Kolkata International Film Festival 2014.

His second documentary, 'The Wind in the Maruwa Field' is produced by Films Division, Govt. of India. It was selected for prestigious Indian Panorama 2016.

Treatment

Late January evening, sitting by an anchored boat in the fishermen's beach, Sudeb requests me to record her 'confession'. This is supposed to be her last day as 'male'. 'I feel bad for my parents, not because what I am doing today', Sudeb talks while the setting Sun reflects in her moist eyes, 'but, because I could not fulfill their dream. Raju (brother) loves me so much that he has lent me money for the surgery, even though he is under a lot of financial stress.' She turns her face towards the sea to hide her tears.

Soon she recovers and continues, 'I have brought my life insurance papers here. If I die, I would like the amount to be paid to my mother. And I request my mother through you (meaning us, the filmmakers), that fifty thousand rupees to be gifted to Ismail's daughters.' I thought she was such a pragmatic soul, only to be surprised to know her last wish, 'And I have told Ismail's brother, that my last remains to be buried by his grave when he dies.'

We go back in time and reach Sudeb's parental home in Bongaon. Sudeb helps her mother in cooking. We speak to her mother who tells us about her dilemma and apprehension when Sudeb started showing her feminine traits years ago; how she tried to do mumbo-jumbo to 'treat' and 'cure' her. Her father suddenly cries when asked if he knows what Sudeb is going to do SRS and what it means. He says he doesn't like this idea, but he is helpless.

Back to the present with Sudeb heading for the clinic in Mumbai. In the admission form, she writes her sex as 'male'. She is prepared for the surgery and taken to the OT. She has been given Anesthesia. Soon, the surgery starts. The penis is removed and a vagina is created.

When she regains her senses, she eagerly waits for Ismail's call that never comes. She also tries to call Ismail who never responds. She cries.

Again, we go back in time - Sudeb's rented apartment in Baruipur. She speaks about how the relationship between her and Ismail started ten years ago. She proudly tells us about their rapport when they dances together in any event.

Next, the film will follow Sudeb when she comes back from Mumbai and deals with her reality with new eyes.

Production Plan

Preproduction	: Oct 2016 - Dec 2016
Shooting	: Jan 2017 - Mar 2018
Postproduction	: Apr 2018 - Sep 2018

Budget

Total Budget	: US\$ 36,000
Finance in Place	: US\$ 10,000

Production Status

In production

Technical Details

Duration	: 60 Minutes
Format	: HD
Language	: Bengali with English Subtitle

Contact

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FIGURES AND COMMENTS



Logline

The film is about the influence that an editorial cartoonist, Champak Barbara, has on emerging mindsets; how his cartoons spark and often echo an idea that may be formlessly floating in the mental narrative of a people. These ideas find image, voice and an expression in his political cartoons.

BISWAJIT DAS
INDIA



Synopsis

The proposed film explores the work of eminent cartoonist Champak Barbra of Assam, a State in the northeastern part of India. Assam has a turbulent history; after independence, its citizens have often complained about negligence from the Central Government. This has led to violent uprisings - from student agitations to formation of terrorist organization, regional conflict amongst the Assamese people.

During the 80s, when it all started, a young Champak felt motivated to do something about it and directed his energies to his art. Thus began his career as a young political cartoonist in an Assamese daily. His work was published in different newspapers and magazines in the next 35 years, reflecting the socio-political situation of the state in particular and India in general.

For the first time he has opened up about his work and his ideologies. The film also follows three of his serious readers, one a 60-year-old retired English professor, a 30-year-old woman who is a teacher and a 12-year-old girl. All of them follow his cartoons on a daily basis and often discuss them with their peers or family. The film will observe how a cartoonist work has helped evolve their attitudes, broadened their world view and given them insights into political machinations.

Director's Statement

Growing up in Assam in the 90s, Jocoseroius of The Assam Tribune was the first thing in the morning to start the day. The editorial cartoon signed by Champak made me think about the person behind it. When I graduated as a filmmaker, my interest in the subject led me to meeting Champak in person. I started shooting him at work and other places in general. I started questioning editorial cartoons and its role in the society as I kept meeting him and other regular readers of his cartoons. This film is an attempt to explore our stream of consciousness influenced by casually reading the editorial cartoon daily. I have spent the last 5 years shooting on and off and would like to complete my shoot and edit the film.

Director's Profile

Biswajit Das is an independent filmmaker from Assam, India. After graduating as a filmmaker in 2010, he has spent the last 7 years exploring documentary filmmaking in various facets. He has experimented with form and narrative in his quest to understand the medium and to express through it. He has made 3 documentaries which has been screened in various film festivals in India and abroad. He has also done camera and editing for other filmmakers in India. Besides filmmaking, he has also developed content for short graphic stories.

Treatment

One part of the film will try to explore various elements that influences Champak Borbora to come up with a cartoon every day. From daily news to conversations in the tea shop to local experiences during day to day life, the film will try to capture these visuals in an abstract way and juxtapose them with visuals of Champak working in his room in The Assam Tribune's press. The film will also explore his life away from his workspace, with his family and friends and his social commitments to explore a connection with his cartoons.

There will be no formal interviews in the film. Most parts of the film will be without any dialogue but with specific soundscapes, thus making sound design an integral creative element of the filmmaking process.

The other parallel narrative will follow three characters in Guwahati, Assam- a 60 year old retired English professor, a 30 year old women teacher and a 12 year old girl. All of them follow his cartoons on a daily basis and often discuss them with their peers or parents. The film will observe how a cartoonist work has developed their intellects, thus trying to explore how it might have an influence on people around the globe, without them even realizing it.

I am trying to explore different narrative styles to present this film, moving away from the conventional documentary form and experimenting with the form in itself.

Production Plan

Production/Shooting : April 2018.
Post Production/Editing : September 2018
Completion : November 2018

Budget

Total Budget : 20000 USD

Production Status

Production

Applicant

Director : Biswajit Das
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STOLEN WINGS

Logline

This film will depict the story of a Village in Sunamgonj, a largely water bodied district of Bangladesh, where all the villagers live on stealing. Though it is hard to believe, it's not from a Kafka's book; rather it is a magic-reality that can be found in this real world.



TASMIAH AFRIN MOU
BANGLADESH



Synopsis

The water bodied district of Bangladesh-Sunamgonj contains great extent of biological as well as cultural diversity. Small villages are surrounded by huge water covered area, which look like islands. In some of these villages, all the villagers' profession is stealing. These villagers adopt this profession from their ancestors. In 1996, profession of these villagers was recorded as "Stealing" while preparing the voter list. After much criticism, it was changed into "Farming". Each and everyone including the female inhabitant of these villages have case filed upon their names. After stealing things, the village people have to distribute fixed percentages to local law enforcers as well as to the local influential peoples. Many of the villagers changed their profession and started brewing alcohol. Some have migrated to cities. Interestingly, some of them became guards of other villages. Peoples from other villages don't want to form marital relationship with them. Many of the thieves are missing; they are killed by other villagers while stealing. Those who are still alive are also facing life threatening conditions. They are deprived of any government aid/facilities. But, many people from these villages took part in the war of liberation. The real life magic realism of these villagers, fairy tale-like reality of these villages will be brought into frame in this documentary film.

Director's Statement

Almost a decade ago, I had to stay in the water bodied Sunamgonj area for fifteen days due to professional requirements. I used to stay in a hut without electricity, which was guarded by an old person. Keeping his javelin in one hand, he used to tell amazing stories all night long. From these stories, I came to know of villages where everyone is thief. It seemed to me that, somehow, Kafka's characters got into lives and jumping out into this real world from the pages of his books. And surprisingly one night, a thief came to my hut too for stealing. I grew an interest to work on this subject. I was questioning myself, why people have to choose stealing as livelihood, though there are affluent amount of agricultural land

and fisheries in these areas? The people who control these vast area and deprive the people from the gift of Mother Nature; force them to live such subsistent, aren't they much bigger thieves than these poor people? I decided to make this film in order to understand the society from the viewpoint of class politics.

Director/Producers profile

I'm Tasmiah Afrin Mou, I started filming in 2007 with the making of the first documentary film *Rupantor Rupkotha* (A Tale of Transformation). Till now I make seven documentary films. One of my Documentary films *Tokai-2012* received the Award for Best Short Documentary at Guangzhou International Documentary Film Festival, China in 2014. From a long time I made Documentary films for television industry.

Kobi Swamir Mrityur Por Amar Jobanbondi (Statement after My Poet Husband's Death), 2016 is my debut short film. It was Premiered in festival *Tous Courts* in France. Already it has received four International awards. I was born 9th November 1983 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. I completed Honors and Masters' degree majoring in Political Science from University of Dhaka. I also love to write short stories. My short story book *Baksha Bondi* was published in 2015. Recently I was invited as a jury in International Film Festival of Nepal 2017.

Treatment

The story tells us about a village, where all the villagers are thieves. Almost a decade ago, I had to stay in the water bodied (HAOR) Sunamgonj district for fifteen days. I came to know of villages where everyone is thief. Amazingly, one night a thief came to steal in my hut. This film will start by recreating this event.

I started in the pursuit of Kamargaon village, The Village of Thieves—which seems to jumped right out of a Kafka book.

We come to know that our young boatman Moshaher is a thief from Kamargaon. He tells us his story how he was raised as a thief.

His eyes Sparkles when he describes his risky endeavors. Local Police takes a percentage. He too, like other villagers, has two cases filed upon his name. He was in jail, but continued stealing after coming out. Though people from other villages does not want to make them relatives, he fell in love with a girl from another village, married her and enjoying conjugal life in Kamargaon. No matter how much they steal, they remain poor, because of the criminal cases they have in their names. There are Alcohol brewing business, as well as gambling- where they spend their money too.

I was watching how the normal regular daily village life was transforming as the night was deepening. A casual villager transforms into a oily, rouge thief who goes to other villages by boats to steal things. The enormous water body seems to make them nonchalant to enormous risks.

Some of the thieves turned their lives around and became guards of other villages. They've imposed 'taxes' and collect them, so that no other thieves can steal anything from the village they protect.

Sadek was a thief, who lives a pious life now. He said, many people from these villages took part in the war of liberation. For this, their village was burnt by Pakistani Military. But they don't get any state facilities. Their problems are nurtured by the political parties.

Many of the thieves are missing; they are killed by other villagers while stealing. We get to know of a young widower named Sumi, whose husband got killed stealing. Sumi struggles to live with her four children, but chose to never marry again- saying that she'll never get another as good as her expired husband. She might have to migrate to city, pursuing garment job-in order to maintain her family.

They don't want to remain in this risky profession anymore. They want to enjoy a peaceful night's sleep. What will they do? Whether the small numbers of peoples who control the affluent resources of Water bodies are the real thieves or the poor villagers are? The 'Village of Thieves' may go extinct through oppression, but the Stealing won't; the powerful people will continue stealing.

The conditions of HAOR are very different in rainy and dry season. In the monsoon, all the villages looks like small islands floating in

a sea-like water body. But in the dry season, all the water are gone and there are miles of cultivable land. The nature and its inhabitants will be represented by a sound designing which will be constituted by sound of air, natural ambience and soundlessness. This documentary will be produced in Poetic and Participatory style.

Production Plan

Pre production : March 2017-October 2017
Production : November 2017-October 2018
Post production : November 2018-February 2018

Budget

Total budget : (USD) 55,000 \$
Secured Budget (self) : (USD) 5,000 \$

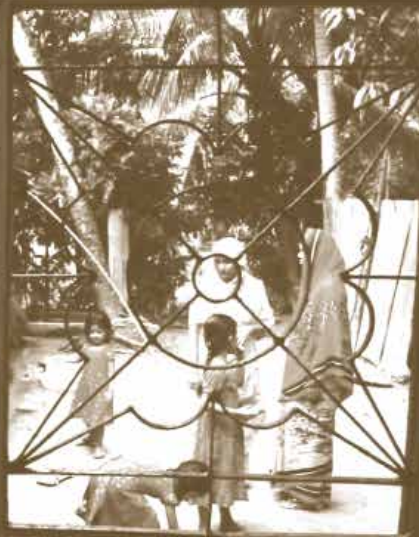
Production Status

Pre production

Contact

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MY SISTER, MY FRIEND



Logline

Though her in-laws' house strongly threatens, a rural Bangladeshi young (35) widowed HIV (AIDS) victim with her three daughters struggles to retain the share of her deceased migrant worker husband's property and dreams of becoming a paramedic against their will.

SUMON DELWAR
BANGLADESH



Synopsis

Bangladesh is a major source country for migrant workers. The villages of this country are the major suppliers of migrant workers to the world market. Babupur, Chatkhil, Noakhali is such remote a village where most of the people are migrant workers in the Arab Gulf region; and the rest are mostly illiterate and orthodox Muslims who lag behind any modern treatment or technology. In such a remote village of Bangladesh, Kohinur Akter Shipon (35), my childhood friend, my cousin with whom I had many sweet memories of childhood, is left widowed with three daughters (Maria 9, Mim6 and Maimuna 5) in the terminal HIV (AIDS) by her migrant worker husband a couple of years back. Since then she has been trying to survive and be independent in that rural backdated area and living in an unforgivingly conservative and hostile society. Because, in Bangladesh, HIV (AIDS) victims specially from lower Socio-economic background usually end up leading a pitied life. But Shipon challenges this custom and aims to lead the dignified life of an independent woman.

Shipon now works for a local NGO and visits house to house to make awareness on various issues. Besides, every month she embarks on a perilous journey ALONE more than 300 KM to the capital city Dhaka where the medications are available and returns the same day in the late night. But the severe problem continues as her brother-in-law threatens her to burn with kerosene instead of ensuring her deceased husband's share of the property. Her in laws' house now seeks opportunity to throw her away with her three daughters. It is a struggle for her to endure in a hostile environment as a woman and on top of that as a HIV (AIDS) victim as she constantly faces hostilities from her in-laws' and the society itself. So she files a case in the nearby Thana/ Police station and lets the Union Porishod chairman know the fact, but does not get any justice. On the other hand, the hectic job of the NGO keeps her in constant moving which she can't cope with and plans to be independent. For that she plans to enroll in a paramedic training to open a medicine shop and provide primary treatment to the poor in the village after completing the course.

Can Shipon succeed to enroll in and complete the six month training? Can she retain the property and ensure her daughters' life before anything happens? Can she really open a medicine shop if she can complete the paramedic training? "My Sister, My Friend" explores the story of a destitute but courageous woman and her three daughters' struggle and dream.

Director's statement

What will happen to you when you see one of your childhood sports comrade affected with HIV (AIDS) is dying slowly? Refuses to accept that rather struggles courageously against all odds? And if she lives next door to you? Specially when you are a filmmaker? What do you say? Aren't you thinking about making a film? I am pretty sure, you must do this if specially you are chased away by some pieces of memories you both shared in the realm of nature. So does happen to me. And yes, I am making a feature length documentary film named "My Sister, My Friend" on Kohinur Akter Shipon (35), my childhood comrade, my cousin, still in friend-brother-sister relation, and her father-searching three daughters.

When I got admitted into college, I had to leave my village home. At the time, we had less communication, but after my graduation one day in 2007 I got an invitation of her marriage. I was so happy too. After some years I got shocked when I came to know that her husband was a HIV positive and it was actually his last moment. After her husband died, I came to know that she was also carrying HIV by her husband and she had at that time already three daughters. Frankly speaking, it has been haunting me for years. It appeals to my imagination, to my emotions, to my moral and philosophical mind. Besides, I need to feel a personal resonance with the stories I try to tell. Also, I like to tell stories about people who inspire me and who I believe inspire others. In fact, what inspired me to make this film is the desire to cover a range of human experiences and to examine and unravel the truth behind one's struggle that I feel I have to talk about, I can best deal with on film. I feel, very strongly that this is the way the best films arise.

As director, I have typically had a reasonably good understanding of the subject well before filming has commenced. The relationship with her makes me understand that her realities symbolize the realities of those who are creating a new world, not who are merely victims. That is why, I have been spending my times struggling to make this documentary. I have thought about its ethical side too. Shipon is a very good friend of mine and in fact, we are cousin. That's why we have family relations too. As she has agreed to allow me an entry into her private life denied to most others, I'm also careful not to abuse that trust. It is also noteworthy that she, more than me, wants to tell her story and make people aware of the fact what happened to her life. What my subject and her story showed me is the power that this documentary has not only to entertain but to educate, inspire and potentially create meaningful social change. They are generated from the burning passion to say something interesting, vital and moving about the human condition. I find that it has a strong narrative thrust and a tale that can be recounted in the most compelling, dramatic way possible. I think the film will pass from the interesting to the unforgettable. And I am in the belief that something this personal becomes universal too.

"My Sister, My Friend" will tell a story of struggle, dream and of love. But it has far wider implications in illustrating and questioning government policies and health department of the country regarding HIV (AIDS) victims and their miserable condition. I hope the film will create an emotional experience, engage an audience and try to make a difference. My audience will be an active participant in the film process too. It will challenge their beliefs, question them and encourage them to come to their own conclusions about life. Specially the film, we see, will seek to explore the three little children's world who have been living fatherless for couple of years and searching for their father role. Its goal is also to enter the world of the kids – their emotional and psychological fall out than observe and report on it. Through the eyes of three kids how the world looks like. My belief is that the film is intended not only for a specific audience in one country but also for showing around the world.

Director/Producers profile

Sumon Delwar, born in 1981, is a Bangladeshi filmmaker, poet, and editor of a film magazine who graduated from Jagannath University in English literature and participated in many filmmaking courses. He studied Documentary Filmmaking in Bangladesh Film Institute (BFI) and worked as an assistant to the famed Bangladeshi director Tanvir Mokammel. Besides authoring three books on poetry, he has been working as Editor of Bangladesh Film Institute's film magazine "Udalchitro" (Flying Image) since 2013. He has been involved in film society movement as well as Bangladesh Short Film Forum. He founded his own film production company Filmosophia Bangladesh and started to produce films. He has been directing and producing a documentary film "Jologuerilla'71" (Naval Commandos '71) for the last three years on the Bangladesh-Pakistan Naval War in 1971 which was awarded a grant by Janata Bank Ltd. and now on the way to be released in 2017. These days he has been working for making a documentary on his friend and cousin who is a HIV/ AIDS victim and her three daughters, tentatively titled "My Sister, My Friend".
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Treatment

Data from different sources indicate that the bulk of the identified HIV cases in Bangladesh involved overseas migrant workers and spouses. According to Ashar Alo Society (AAS), and organization working with people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Bangladesh, about 60 percent or more of the total reported HIV cases involved migrants. The film "My Sister, My Friend" which tells the personal story of my dear childhood friend Kohinur Akter Shipon (35) and her three father-searching daughters, while making a wider comment on the all HIV (AIDS) victims and migrant workers and the existing marriage system. Here in her story, I have two focus point: the struggle of my cousin, my friend Shipon, to retain the property share to ensure her daughters' future and her dream to become a paramedic and open a medicine store leaving her hectic job.

Overall, the look and the feel of the film "My Sister, My Friend" is personal, intimate and engaging. I, the filmmaker, is a part of the film as a subject at various part of the narrative too. It is emotional and sometimes autobiographical. Its goal is to enter the world of the mothers and the kids: the central protagonist Shipon (35), her mother Khotiza (65), and her three daughters (Maria 9, Mim 6, Maimuna 5). I become an interactive participant in the proceedings. My story is located in Babupur, a remote village of Noakhali, Bangladesh where my cousin lives with her three daughters and where most of the people are conservative Muslims, illiterate, and lag behind the knowledge of HIV (AIDS). Here being a HIV positive is a curse not a disease, though it is transmitted by her husband. In "My Sister, My Friend", this is Shipon who after her Six years of conjugal life lost her husband, now faces stigma by her in-laws for which her husband is responsible. Shipon after being diagnosed HIV positive, transmitted by her expatriate husband in 2013, has been facing immense discrimination and stigma from her in-laws. Being capable of understanding the practical aspects of life and behavior of the people, she joins in a local NGO after her husband dies. This is just not only for her existence and identity but also for her three daughters' life and security. She tackles everything strongly when she goes alone to the capital city for taking her medicine, though feeling tired and hopeless. She even faces the threat of her in-laws and handles very tactfully. She goes to nearby police station and complains, though does not get any solution yet. However, in the journey, being optimistic, she plans to enroll a paramedic training for opening a medicine store and providing primary treatment to the village folks. Because, the hectic job torments her heavily and the field work is too far away from her home. So she plans and dreams to sit in a fixed place and make her life stable. But her in-laws runs after her life and makes it hell.

Shipon's mother Khotiza, a 65 year old woman shows greatest and unchangeable love and devotion to her and her three daughters. When she was frustrated by the lack of support from her in-laws' house, her mother, Khotiza consoles her and makes her courageous. As a grandmother, she takes care and looks after her

daughter's children when Shipon goes to Dhaka for taking HIV treatment. Maria (9), Mim (6) and Maimuna (5) are all school going who just stare at their father's passport and the photograph of that passport. Because except this photograph of the passport they do not have anything visual and this way the passport size photograph becomes the only way to communicate and have memories with their father. To them father is just a photograph in the passport.

The first portion of the film "My Sister, My friend" is the conversation of my sister Shipon and me, celebration of Eid-ul-Adha (one of the two biggest religious festivals of Muslims), going to her house and her mother's house to meet. Here shows their everyday activities also. She goes to work and goes to Dhaka for medicine too. The film then attempts to trace the inner and outer problem and struggle to retain the property of her deceased husband. Dealing with her two migrant worker brothers and discussing with them in many issues over phone. For the fear of the threat of her in-laws, she goes to the police station and to the Union Porishod chairman too. Then, as she plans to enroll in a paramedic training, I will observe her very intimately from the admission to the completion of the course and opening a medicine store in her village. I guess, whatever happens in her life, she, at last, will complete her training and will be a self-reliant woman by opening a medicine store in her village avoiding all threats and odds. She will get back her property if the local police station and the chairman helps her from their heart. She can win the race and set a model who could achieve human rights and peace and her children's rights too against all social injustice and prejudices.

As it is a very personal and intimate film, I will try to deploy a combined cinematographic style, candid images and interactions. The camera will work in a way that is intimately observational and sometimes interactional and captures the realities and conflicts of her life and the whole family's psychological dilemma and fallout without any interference. Some important shooting of the film is at night. I am using a camera that allows me to shoot in extremely low light conditions with good results in available light. The small

size of the camera and the fact that I do not have to use additional lights, means that I can manage to be unobtrusive and can actually attempt to accurately represent the visual quality of what we see with our eyes. I will pass through a thoughtful process of edit with the support of a creative sound design. My editing style will be wholesome as the audience experience as well as my thought process mingles with the story and the protagonists.

Production Plan

Production Schedule

Research and Pre-production: January – July, 2017

Production: August, 2017 – August, 2018

Post-Production: September – October, 2018

Release: January, 2019

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Filmosophia Bangladesh is a newly set up film production company aims to produce independent documentary films, short films and feature films. Since its inception it has produced some short films and now in the run of producing two documentaries.

Budget

Total Budget : USD 40,500

Secured Budget : USD 5,000

Source of Funds : Self

Production Status

The project is at the Production (5-10 %) level.

Technical Details

Format : HD

Original Language : Bangla (with English subtitle)

Estimated Running Time : 90 min

Contact Details

Producer : Sumon Delwar

Production Country : Bangladesh

Production Company : Fimosophia Bangladesh

THAT SINKING FEELING



KAVITA BAHL
INDIA



Logline

The underbelly of a democracy where millions are submerged to electrify a city.

Synopsis

As India turns 70 this year, its longest anti-dam struggle turns 32.

We are in middle of the Theatre of the Absurd- where a democratically-elected government is bent on submerging the most fertile land- drowning and displacing millions of citizens- to electrify some cities and power some industry.

That Sinking Feeling reveals layer by layer a dystopian world where reason and logic are turned upside down.

The film is an intimate poetic window into the lives of Sakku Bai and Anar Singh Saad - the Dam-displaced citizens of the Narmada valley. It also allows the viewers to understand how those in the vanguard of the struggle work and survive - strong women like Medha Patkar and Chittaroopa Palit from NBA.

The personal stories of the Dam-affected villagers and the reigning paradigm of 'Progress' and 'Development' form the warp and weft of the narrative structure.

The film unfolds through the voices of the protesters, activists and the stories of our main characters. The unfolding drama in the present is juxtaposed with what the citizens have witnessed over the last 30-years - the cyclical nature of their engagement with a 'democratically-elected' government.

Things come a full circle. This allows us to deploy a circular structure, to convey the feeling of déjà vu.

Director's statement

In the last 70 years, millions of Indian citizens have become refugees in their own land because of large dams.

In a flagrant violation of human rights- they are dispossessed of their land, homes and livelihoods.

Ironically, their slow genocide is choreographed on the shrill drum beats of the tune of the modern mantra of progress.

'That Sinking Feeling' exposes the Orwellian universe where omnipotent corporations and a subservient state wreak havoc upon a people.

In this background are stories of grit and determination- strong characters with interesting entry points into the story.

With the landslide victory of the pro-corporations right-wing in the general elections- Narmada Control Authority- finally raised the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam to 138 metres- threatening to submerge homes of half a million people.

We started filming the protests in September 2012 when the National Hydel Development Corporation raised the water level of the Onkareshwar dam reservoir in Madhya Pradesh (one of the many dams on river Narmada), in defiance of the orders of the High court. The dreaded submergence was at hand. In the face of this apathy, the villagers of Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh started a 'Gandhian satyagraha'- (non-violent protest).

The struggle continues.

We have been following the struggle and filming at critical junctures, as the story unfolds.

We have filmed the Police action and atrocities, the poetic visuals of the submerged citizens in the Narmada valley, and the different phases of the election.

We have poetic images, poignant stories and some strong sequences with police action and the electioneering.

2017- We now need to build upon the stories of our main characters as well as the movement as it moves towards endgame.

Director's profile

Kavita Bahl is an independent film-maker. In over two decades of her practice as a film- maker, she has produced and directed many poignant narratives of these times.

She has thrice received the National Film Award for her films on

development-related issues in contemporary India: 'I cannot give you my Forest' (2015), 'Candles in the wind' (2013) & 'Cotton for my shroud' (2012)- all bring to the fore the voices of the marginalised, the farmers and the aboriginal communities.

After her post-graduation in world literature from Delhi University, she trained in Journalism. She worked as a journalist with the national newspaper 'Indian Express' for six years. Her journalistic experience forms the bedrock of her films which are both incisive and experiential in nature. She turned a new leaf in 1996 as an independent film-maker. Her oeuvre spans the domains of culture, gender, livelihoods, development and human rights. Kavita has been on the Awards Jury of Trento Film Festival (Italy), and, twice on the preview jury of International Film Festival of India. As a trainer, she trains inquisitive minds in 'documenting reality' and, telling a story using a camera.

She loves to travel and draws her sustenance from listening to people's stories.

Producer's profile

Nandan Saxena is an independent film-maker, photographer and a media trainer. His oeuvre spans the domains of culture, ecology, livelihoods, development and human rights. His films often blur the line between documentary and cinema. He has twice received the National Film Award for the films produced by him: 'I cannot give you my Forest' (2015, Best Environment Film), & 'Cotton for my shroud' (2012, Best Investigative Film). After his Masters degree in World Literature from Delhi University, he trained in journalism. He worked as a journalist for seven years in television before launching his independent banner- Top Quark Films in 1996. As a media-trainer, he trains inquisitive minds in film-making & how to make cinematic films on a low budget.

His workshop on film-making has been invited to all major film-festivals in India.

Treatment

The theatre of the absurd is situated in central India, in the valley of the River Narmada- the most dammed river in India.

Ironically, Narmada is also considered the holiest of rivers in India. 32 mega dams and 135 medium and 3000 small dams have been built on the river causing the displacement of 40 million people.

Around 32-years ago, an engineering student went to the Narmada valley and what she saw made her stay on. Medha Patkar, put aside a promising career and launched a movement that has become the longest continuing struggle against big dams and for people's rights in India.

Today, 32 years from that nascent beginning of Save Narmada Campaign (Narmada Bachao Andolan), the movement is seen as the rallying point of 11 million citizens in Narmada valley- protesting against the large dams and their forcible eviction without proper rehabilitation.

The government is using police and paramilitary forces to force the citizens out of their villages into shanty towns where corrugated tin sheds greet them.

The film follows the characters over a six-year period from 2012.

The raising of the dam's height is pushing the matter towards its closure- precipitating the crisis.

There is a lot of drama in the Narmada Valley- juxtaposed with the serenity of nature and the upheaval in the lives of the people.

Gritty- cinema verite sequences nestle in a bed of poetic surreal visuals.

The disjointed world of the protagonists calls for a similar treatment.

We do not envisage any traditional talking heads- we explore situations in which our central characters are caught- to advance the story.

The central character in the film is the river and water is the element that is a leit motif- it evokes both fear (of drowning/submergence) and also subtle feelings of pathos and beauty.

It becomes an important element- both visual and aural.

Sometimes we project water or show reflections of water on a dilapidated wall as a backdrop to the impending catastrophe of a watery grave.

We envisage some surreal sequences of a lot of people- adrift.

Single shots and sequences that become metaphors for their situation- like a woman adrift in a large water-body- on a cot, clutching her belongings and a bottle of water.

Or a drone, top-angle shots of Patwari ji, an important character in the film- floating in water. The audience wonders whether he is dead or alive.

Or of paper lanterns with charcoal/pencil sketches of our central characters and some villagers- pasted on paper lanterns that are launched into a twilight sky or a starry night.

Production Plan

Production	: December, 2017 – May, 2018
Post-Production (Edit)	: June – November, 2018
Grading & Mastering	: December 2018
Final Delivery	: January, 2019

Budget

Top Quark Films Private Limited supported by Living Farms, an NGO working on civil rights in India have funded 30% of the budget.

Total Fund Secured	: USD 25500
Fund Required	: USD 114500
Total Budget	: USD 140,000

Production Status

In Production

JOL GHOR BOSHOTI



SHAEEM JAHANGIR
BANGLADESH



Logline

Climate change has a face – poor people of river Island Bhola are experiencing its furious face through cyclones, river erosions and submerge.

Jol Ghor Boshoti (Waves and Weavers) is a documentary that exposes the injustice of climate change and adaptation initiatives, through a family prone to be climate refugee – who keep standing-up again and again in their torn nests, with a hope to live a beautiful life.

Synopsis

Nature is not just enough, to hold those responsible for climate change. Instead hurting blindly – the children, women, men, elderly, land, trees, birds, animals...

River Island Bhola is one of the hardest hit. Half of the island has succumbed to erosion caused by heavier waters, and rising of sea levels. The film revolves around two families – one in river island Bhola and another that has displaced to city slums.

In Bhola, Ali and Hazera's family have taken shelter on an embankment. The seven-member family is struggling with day-to-day little income earned from fishing, brick-crushing, net making etc.

There are adaptations, safety-net programs etc, etc – but hardly reaching the hardest hit. Ali's grandmother, around 100 years old, never got any support from safety-net programs e.g. old allowance. They wonder how old, how economically-poor they have to be, to be eligible for these allowances.

Often they think of moving to a safer place, in Dhaka or other country, leaving behind hostile water and injustice.

The film compares their livelihoods with another family that already moved to city slum in Dhaka – continued to struggle, moving from one slum to another, with insecurity and hope – what a life to lead!

Director's statement

Jol Ghor Boshoti (Waves and Weavers) is a story of climate change affected people, struggling at the seaside of Bangladesh in Satkhira, Bhola; and also those who have taken shelter in city slums.

As a human rights activist and story teller, I think we need more of us to tell stories of life in a changing climatic, geographic and economic situation. The losses, cry, past, hopes and dreams should

reach the people who can make the policymaker understand the severity of the problem and take adaptive and mitigating actions.

Director and Producer Profile

Shaeem Jahangir is a struggling filmmaker with a dream to produce films that will communicate stories of reality, dreams and hopes. Wants to make films that will help people to have a better life in the world in a more sustainable way.

Shaeem, was born in a village in Tangail, Bangladesh in year 1969. He is Masters in Political Science. He is experienced of film and theatre productions through Ain o Salish Kendra and Kotha Kolpodroom media. Attended different trainings related to film from London Film Academy in London and NIMCO in Dhaka.

The travelling and people he worked with have amused him with their cultural richness, differences and similarities, sorrows and happiness, traditions and challenges. These had a deep impact on him to become a story teller through camera and lens. Jahangir has hundreds of stories to tell, unfortunately lacking in process and resources are major constraints.

Treatment

Betua Ghat, Char Fasson: Abdul Ali and Hazera Khatun's family: The seven member family lives in Betola in Char Fasson, Sub-district of Bhola. The family consists of Ali's grandmother, parents, his spouse Hazera and two girl-child called Jhorna and Shathi – and their neighbours.

The family mostly depends on Ali's day-to-day incomes from fishing, brickfield, and ice-factory. Hazera mostly works from home; she makes fishing nets and mats, and takes care of daily chores. Their income is not enough to feed the family and take care of elderly and children.

Rayer Bazar Slum, Dhaka: Badsha Mia and Jamila Khatun and their family members – migrated from Bhola facing frequent river erosions.

Badsha Mia and Jamila left the river island long ago. Now they are old, senior citizens of the country – still struggling for their food and shelter. Badsha used to be a rickshaw puller and Jamila still works, as domestic worker. They moved from Bhola with a hope for a better life – but still struggling moving from slums to slums, with insecurity and poverty.

The film illustrates detail picture of:

- A family considering migration
- A family migrated to city slum
- Natural environment
- Hazards like, flood, river erosion
- Local culture, music, theatre or entertainment
- Local market
- Family members (women, men, children, elderly) and their daily lives
- Domestic and pet animals Livelihoods
- Daily lives, chores (cooking, water collection)
- Family conflicts over livelihoods, migration
- Care, cry Exploitation, conflict, injustice

Production Plan

Expected date of completion : July 31, 2019

Budget

Total budget : USD 60,000
Secured budget : USD 2,000
Source of funds : Self

Production Status

Pre-production stage

Contact Details

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THE GURU OF THE FIRE-EATERS



NANDAN SAXENA
INDIA



Logline

The Guru of the ancient Indian cult of Siddha Fire-eaters faces his Hamlet moment: To be or not to be!

Synopsis

A real story – that borders on the fantastic, buried in the sands of the desert of Rajasthan in western India, the film is an intimate window into the life of Siddha Surajnath – a mortal struggling to trace the larger-than-life footsteps of his Gurus. He is the torch-bearer of a 600-year old tradition, the spiritual guide to his people, the carrier of the 'fire'.

On auspicious dates, the ascetics of the Nath order, perform a 'Night-vigil' and dance on fire in his ancient fortress - watched by devotees and international tourists. Their music invokes the hidden powers of Nature.

- Surajnath was anointed 'Guru' at the age of six.

One year later, the then Guru passed away.

The twist in the tale came when he ran away from home, trying to escape the onerous responsibility.

- As he conducts himself as the 'Guru', it is interesting to observe the 'man'. Surajnath plays football, and loves to travel - especially to Europe.

His inner dilemmas as a custodian of the sacred fire when the abiding values that have sustained over centuries are in a stage of decline – provide the conflict and the dramatic arc.

Director's statement

The 'Guru of the Fire-eaters' is a fantastic story- never documented before.

Though it is easy to be bowled over by the mesmerising 'Fire-Dance' and the sonorous repertoire of the 'Jasnathi Raaga', the film lies in the personal journey of the reluctant Guru- Surajnath.

He shares his concerns with us - over the decline in the devotion, and the coffers at the Ashram. Yet he does not approve of running the affairs of the ashram on a profit-loss paradigm, that his associates advocate.

The dialectic of a rigidly patriarchal society that hides its women behind a veil, observing the many international volunteers and women associates of their spiritual teacher is an interesting layer. Especially, when they find a woman behind one of the cameras we are filming with.

Standing at the crossroads between tradition and modernity, Guru Surajnath is trying to decipher the oracle.

To be or not to be!

Director/Producers profile

Nandan Saxena is an independent filmmaker with over 40 films to his credit, many of them feature-length.

He has a Master's degree in World Literature from the Delhi University and a diploma in journalism.

He started with a newspaper, before branching out as a television journalist - in what he calls his previous life.

In 1996, he quit his job to follow his dreams. He teamed with Kavita, to form Top Quark Films.

Over two decades into filmmaking, their films often find literary metaphors for people's struggles – blurring the thin line between documentary and cinema.

Their oeuvre spans the domains of ecology, livelihoods, development and human rights. Three of their recent films have received the National Film Award:

- 'Cotton for my shroud': [World Investigative Film Week @ London-2013]
- 'Candles in the wind': [World Premiere @ Thessaloniki-Greece]
- 'I cannot give you my Forest' [IUCN World Congress, Hawaii]

As media-trainers, they offer workshops to initiate inquisitive minds into filmmaking and photography under the banner - Quark Workshops.

Treatment

If ever there was a documentary that demanded the use of cinematic and literary tropes of magical realism, this is it.

While we focus on the mortals playing out their parts in this dull, sub-lunary world, the magical world of the tantric sect of the siddhas is just beneath the surface, waiting for the camera to scratch the surface.

The camera weaves the warp of the 'intangible' and the weft of the 'real' to create the fabric of this film.

The film gives an intimate window into the life and the mind of our central protagonist- Siddha Surajnath. He is an enigmatic character who ran away from home, to escape 'Gurudom' in his youth.

Yet, he was prevailed upon.

We have seen glimpses of this strong urge to escape in Surajnath when he shares his innermost thoughts with us. The film does not eulogise the Guru, but the gaze of the filmmaker is one with empathy.

The foil to his story involves the canvas of life at Rajasthan- some of which we paint with bold strokes, and some that we paint with a fine brush- fleshing out details that make the story intelligible to a global audience.

The characters that populate the world of the Guru - do not appear as talking heads. We try to explore the mindscapes of Sherry - the Director of Yoga Programmes, Danielle - the Israeli artist, Nicola - the Australian nutritionist, and Yogesh- the swirling dervish of Nath panth.

The dialectic of the patriarchal society that still hides its women behind a veil - observing the many international volunteers and women associates of their spiritual leader is an interesting candid layer in the film.

As the volunteers conduct Yoga and Drug De-addiction camps, offer workshops on nutrition and healthy cooking, and paint the

parables from the Jasnathi sect's history on canvas - the tension amongst the devotees is palpable.

The idiom of Cinematography uses cinematic devices to mirror the inner turmoil of the Guru, amidst the cacophony of Ashram activities, prayers, milling devotees and swirling dervishes.

The sonorous singers, the beatty drums, the clinking cymbals create the base for the entranced feet of the fire-dancing Siddhas.

The music of the crickets, the song of the birds, the whispers of the desert wind provide the chorus. No extraneous sound or music is required.

Sherry Minnard (America):

The Guru is assisted by Sherry -an American lady managing the activities of the Ashram as Director-Yoga Programmes. She has been given the name- Sreejan Sita.

Sreejan brings in her expertise in management and as a Yoga-Trainer, trying to woo rich western tourists to the Ashram as an Eco-Retreat.

The volunteers from Britain, France, Germany, Canada and Australia sweep floors, cook in the community kitchen, assist during the drug-de addiction and yoga camps.

Danielle - an artist from Israel came to the Ashram as a tourist but stayed for six months, painting murals depicting the miracles attributed to Guru Jasnath- the founder of the sect, and the anointing of the present Guru. She gives an insight into the Man behind the Guru.

Nicola - a yoga-trainer from Australia brings her background as a nutritionist to help the drug-addicts kick the habit at the De-addiction camps organised by the Ashram.

We found two young noviciates, aged 13 and 18, learning the fire dance. They are preparing for taking initiation into the 'Nath-Panth'.

We plan to film with these two young boys, at their home, and in their school.

The dancers form another set of characters - who have devoted their lives to the ashram, and to the Guru. What are their dreams, hopes, and frustrations?

Yogesh- the swirling dervish is one character we plan to follow.

Production Plan

Pre Production : November 2016
Production/Shooting : January 2016 - July 2018
Post Production/Editing : July 2018 - December 2018
Final mastering : November 2018

Budget

Estimated : 420640 USD
Secured Budget : 31180 USD (SONY-India)

Technical Information

Proposed duration : 75 minutes

Contact Details

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WHAT IS MY FAULT



FATIMA AMIN
BANGLADESH



Logline

The film explores the struggle of a harijan (Dalit) faceless boy who wants to set up a dance school and wants to explore his life as a successful dancer.

Synopsis

This is a story of Talip, who describes himself as Hindu Dalit, based in Chaksubapur, Bogra. His realistic sketches of dance never comes into light. 20 years old Talip wants to begin his career as a dance performer. He didn't want to follow their tradition of sweeping the city what his forefathers do. He wants to earn his livelihood by performing dance. But he is not welcome to the society because he is from out cast, people recognize him as Dalit. Talip wants to set up himself successful in the society as a dancer, he wants to adopt all kinds of modern dance forms like: jazz, hiphop, contact improvisation, post modern dance etc. He wants to set up a dance school within the Dalit centric paradigm. In their society they have their own language, own tradition, own perception seeing life I want to explore it.

Director's Profile

Fatima Amin, works as a senior newsroom editor in a news channel in Bangladesh. She has completed her BA and MA in Theater Studies. After that she went Jadavpur University for an MA in film studies. 'What is my fault' is her debut documentary film.

Treatment

We know in the past the script in the most cases has been the foundation of a film. But I believe that this way of filmmaking when you rely on script cause some problems which impose limits on filming. When we create a script, the storyline itself is meaningless because its all about our experiences which we shot before. I believe the viability of a film doesn't consist in serving the story we already know.

The story shouldn't be controlled by experience or by the narrative logic of film which existed before. I went Bogra for shooting my film teaser. I am finding my own comprehension of the film and to enter into the dialogue with myself about the structure of the film. I actually want to do it in a simple story telling way but I want to experiment with the time, space with happiness,

suffering and wanted to combine these elements into a narration. I want to use two camera at the same time to film talip's dance group. Before filming I thought in a different way but after editing the film content of the story turned out to be very rich. Even I organized my title in a way totally different. I don't want to talk of caste, I want break it, we are from out cast community, everybody inject sickness in it. But I represent the cured generation - says Talip. Talip wants to reform his new dance group with a new wave and to him Dance is a symbol of struggle. Art has always been the bedrock of the social change. Talip and his group members know it. They know the art can move hearts. Using dance is a medium Talip wants to educate his people about history and give them a positive mind set. My film will observe their journey.

Budget

USD 50000

Technical Information

Proposed duration : 75 minutes

WHEN KABUL SINGS



Logline

It's telling the story of the first women in their families, community and country to learn music in over 30 years. Their goal is fighting extremism by music.

SAHRA MOSAWI
AFGHANISTAN



Synopsis

Music was forbidden during the Taliban extremist regime. Playing music, listening to it or selling cassettes were considered un-Islamic and were outlawed.

During this period, Afghanistan's musicians were forced to flee from their homeland to find ways to follow their passion elsewhere and this resulted in the scene of arts and culture in Afghanistan to remain hindered for many years

A group of courageous young women aspire to become symphonic musicians in Afghanistan — despite the many perils such ambitions bring them. In the process, they discover music that reflects the pain of their fellow countrymen, who have endured more than three decades of war. They also discover music that inspires Afghans to imagine a better future. Partaking in this musical endeavour gives the girls and teens insight into their own lives, while showing them how to support one another in this musical odyssey they have embarked upon together.

Our protagonists are our heroes in their own unique ways as they decided to stay and continue to fight while the school is under constant threat of Taliban and ISIS attacks.

They are hoping, the next time you think about Afghanistan, you do not think about bombs, soldiers, ISIS or Taliban... Think about a universal language. The language of the hearts.

Director's Statement

While a teenager, I used to save my pocket money to buy a guitar; a dream that finally came true. However, when I brought the guitar home, my brother broke it and punished me for doing such a thing; he even stopped me to go out for few weeks. He believed that only ill-reputed girls or women would play a guitar. According to him, a girl with a good family kept herself away from any kind of music. Believing so, he didn't stop insulting me for many years because of the shame he had felt while he saw me with a guitar in front of others.

I know that this is not only me who has such a story. There are thousands of women in my region and other conservative societies

suffering from the same discrimination. Punished or insulted, most of them give up on their ambitions. However, there are others who keep going.

Twenty years after what happened to my guitar, I met girls in my country, Afghanistan, who were learning to play music; girls who are trying to change the mentality of Muslim countries, as, they perceive, that music is not forbidden in religion.

Director's Profile

Sahra Mosawi is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, lecturer at university and the founder of Afghanistan Documentary Film House.

Sahra got her masters in documentary film from London University of the Arts, and her BA in Digital film production.

She makes documentaries about her own country Afghanistan with the focus on women, Education and children issues.

Sahra is the director/producer of nearly 12 films; her last film "Obstinate" was supported by Sundance, Idfa Bertha Fund, Fork Films and chicken and Egg. Sahra's nominated in different film festival around the world. There are some of her Awards and accomplishments.

AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- First prize at Women International Film Festival in Herat, Beyond the Burqa, 2014
- Special mention prize in London International Afghan Film Festival, Beyond the Burqa, 2015.
- Nomination for American Documentary Film Festival, Beyond the Burqa, April 2013.
- Nomination for BIFF 2013 (Beloit International Film Festival), Beyond the Burqa, 2013.
- Nomination for Fallbrook International Film Festival, Beyond the Burqa, 2013.

- Nomination for Middle East Film Festival in Florence, Kaloo School, April 2013
- Nomination for International Human Rights Film Festival in Prague, Kaloo School, 2013.
- Nomination for IDFA (International film festival Amsterdam), Kaloo School, 2012

Treatment

The documentary follows the lives of two young girls and Dr. Sarmast. Through their stories, the courage of their families and the challenging path towards modernity that Afghanistan has embarked upon will be revealed.

The documentary also follows the institute's all-girl Ensemble Zohra, which has toured Europe and performed at the closing ceremony at Economy Forum in Davos in January 2017, as well as many other European Cities like Berlin, Geneva and Zurich, where they become the winner of Freemuse Award 2017.

Zarifa is 18 and a student leader and lives with her family. No one except her parents knows that she attends the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, in order to protect her from gossips that would denigrate her for going against conservative Islam. (In Afghanistan, female singers, actresses and musicians are often considered no better than prostitutes.)

Zarifa studies violin and became one of the two female conductors of the Ensemble Zohra orchestra.

Negin, 18, is the Afghanistan National Institute of Music's second orchestra conductor. She comes from a Pashtun province where girls do not have the right to go to school. Negin's father wanted her to become a doctor, which is why he let her study at the national institute, which has high academic standards in addition to teaching music. Negin began learning piano but, due to a TV report about the institute, her conservative village found out she was studying music and excommunicated the family, who moved to Kabul. Negin wants to show Afghan society that a young woman can uphold traditional values yet still be a musician.

Dr. Ahmad Sarmast is a visionary founder of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music.

Tuition is free, hours are flexible and academic as well as music subjects are offered. Students are accepted after an entrance exam assessing their capacities for rhythm, voice and listening.

Doctor Sarmast was born to a family of musicians; his father was a famous Afghan musician. Dr. Sarmast or his father worked all his life to help create an open-minded society through music.

He wishes that music could become the language of cultural exchange. He likes to mix classical western like Mozart with traditional Afghan music. The teachers he employs are coming from western countries teaching violin as well those from remote provinces of Afghanistan like Badakshan, teaching traditional instruments like rubab.

His dream is to increase the number of students each year (especially girls), and expand the infrastructure through building a 300-seat concert hall, a rehearsal building with 20 practice rooms, a residence hall, and a cafeteria. He has the dream of expanding this program to other provinces.

Production Plan

Pre-production : From 2015 to 2016
 Production : January 2017 to December 2018
 Post-production : From January 2019 to June 2019
 Delivery the film : June 2019

Feature length Documentary : 90 min and 53 min

Production status : On early production stage

Contact

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES





NASIR UDDIN YOUSUFF

Chairman

A valiant Freedom Fighter during Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, after the Liberation War he was a pragmatic driving force in establishing organizations like Dhaka Theater (that produced more than 36 nationally and internationally acclaimed stage plays written by famed national and international playwrights). Nasir also takes tremendous interest in researching in theatre heritage and creating political awareness among mass people.

He made his first film in 1993-94. Ekattorer Jishu (Jesus 71), a full length feature film received invitation and nomination to the Edinburgh Film Festival, London Film Festival and Brisbane Film Festival. Guerilla, his second feature film, was made in 2010-11 that received the NETPAC best Asian Cinema Award in the 17th Kolkata Film Festival in 2011. Presently he is working on Alpha, which he loves to define as "the most modern film."

Yousuff presently teaches in the Film, Theatre & News Media Department at Daffodil International University, a leading private university in Bangladesh. He also happens to be an examiner of Dhaka & Jahangirnagar universities, two national universities of high standing in Bangladesh.



LUVA NAHID CHOWDHURY

Luva Nahid Choudhury is the Director General of Bengal Foundation, a private trust which supports and promotes the arts in Bangladesh. She is an architect by training and is the principal of an architecture practice in Dhaka. Luva sits in the editorial board of arts and literary magazines Kali O Kalam, Six Seasons Review, and Jamini. She heads ICE Media and Bengal Publications, both leading publishing concerns. She is a member of the governing board of BRAC, one of the largest NGOs in the world.

Luva received a bachelor degree in Architecture from BUET, Dhaka, in 1986. She served in the Department of Architecture in the Ministry of Public Works for 10 years before joining private service in 1998. She is a trained musician and has published two albums of the songs of Atulprasad Sen, Rajanikanta Sen and D L Roy. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, in 1962, Luva received her schooling in Dhaka. Her father, Anis Choudhury, was a journalist and a noted playwright. Her mother, Razia Choudhury, was a school teacher. Her son Apurba is an archivist and a visual communications designer.



SAMIA ZAMAN

Samia Zaman owns the production house Versa Media which produces films and television content - both fiction and non-fiction. She has produced 2 feature films and is currently producing a new feature film with a grant of Bangladesh Government.

She is the founding President of International Film Initiative of Bangladesh (IFIB). This is a platform to help upcoming filmmakers to connect with the global film circuit.

Besides Samia is a major figure in the television industry of Bangladesh. She is the CEO of the premier 24 hours news channel in Bangladesh - Ekattor Television, which produces good number of award winning documentaries.



TAREQ AHMED

Tareq Ahmed was the Director of International Short & Independent Film Festival, Dhaka, Bangladesh. He has worked extensively producing AV programs for local & international development agencies. Besides this he Lead a Media & Communication organization which particularly worked for grassroots media & media professionals. He has attended workshops and trainings on cinema and the medium at home and abroad. Tareq Ahmed has also written a book titled Patriotic Thoughts in Cinema (Bangla). A collection of articles on cinema in Bangladesh.



SYED GOUSUL ALAM SHAON

Shaon is a portrayer of the many shades of the society we live in and the people that make or break those shades. His strength lies in decoding the collective unconscious of people in order to understand the hidden truths of people's desires, happiness, pain points, ambitions and the grey zones in their minds. His debut film 'Aynabazi', where he contributed as screenwriter, actor and producer, was an instant blockbuster hit. The movie did a record 91 shows in 10 days, the highest number for any Bangladeshi film with an occupancy record of nearly 99% in eight weeks. Currently, he is writing and preparing for his next productions, which aim to offer more contemporary contents that Bangladeshi audience had been longing for. He is also a well-recognized advertising creative in Bangladesh industry and has produced many memorable campaigns in this market. His achievement in his advertising career includes a Gold in Cannes Lion 2016, one of the most prestigious recognitions globally for advertising creative.



N. RASHED CHOWDHURY

N. Rashed Chowdhury is an Independent Filmmaker in Bangladesh. His documentary and short films were widely screened and acclaimed in various international film festivals & at national level. Rashed joined Film Society Movement of Bangladesh back in 1989 and lead the movement very actively taking part in it. He later became member of Bangladesh Short Film Forum-the only organization, that initiated independent film movement in Bangladesh since 1986 and launched the first independent short film festival-the first of its kind in the Indian sub-continent. Rashed became president of Bangladesh Short Film Forum and directed the Film Festival as Festival Director for two editions. He has recently won the National Film Grant for making his first feature film: Chandrabati Kotha-based on the legendary female writer of the Bengali Language-Poet Chandrabati.



SYED IMRAN H. KIRMANY

Born in Dhaka Mr. Kirmany is currently working as CEO of Pixx Cineplex Ltd. A private sector cinema projection company. He has extensive knowledge of working in the television industry in Bangladesh particularly in the broadcast sector. Including MCR, Broadcast Operation, Live Program Management and Transmission. He started his career with ETV (Ekushey Television) the first private sector TV station in Bangladesh in 1999.

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