

HAF 09 Waiting for Winter



REGION: Bangladesh

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:

Documentary | Digital Format | Bengali | 70mins

DIRECTOR:

Farid AHMAD

PRODUCER:

Salma SONIA

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers

BUDGET: US\$ 85,250

SECURED BUDGET: US\$ 10,000

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

2019 *Tunes of Nostalgia*

2017 *True False & A Revolution*

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

The film will closely observe the struggle of climate victims, primarily homeless women, who must journey as daily labourers while waiting to regain their homestead from the river.

SYNOPSIS

A group of homeless women, having been displaced by Yamuna river erosion, have taken shelter beside the same river. Many of their husbands have migrated to towns to find work. In many cases, they take on another marriage in the town and settle there. So the women must take the sole responsibilities for their children. For their very existence, they look for opportunities which are mostly uncertain. Ashraf is there to help them but he is also a climate victim, struggling to survive by running a boat. He also cultivates crops in the islands. Every winter, when new islands appear, Ashraf collects these homeless women, takes them to the Dakatmara island and sells their labour. Though both the women and Ashraf are dependent on each other, Ashraf gradually takes control of nature. And the lives of the women turn into modern slavery.

Summer comes again. River erosion becomes more devastating due to climate change. Ashraf and the homeless women try to survive, salvaging their last remaining belongings and waiting for one more winter... If only their homestead appears! And if only they may regain their homes!

In reality, will they survive till the next winter?

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries worldwide in terms of the impacts of climate change. This is affecting many communities. In 2015, I went to Bogra, the most disaster-prone area in Bangladesh. There I met a group of displaced women who lost their homesteads to river erosion and climate change. Daily, they travel to remote islands to find work to survive. They work there from dawn to dusk without food or sanitation. The money they earn after a day's work is so little that many of them steal crops. One day, after a full day's work, when they boarded the boat, it was already overloaded. The boat became stuck on a submerged island. Then the situation changed dramatically. Women started quarrelling, blaming each other for the accident and loudly calling for God's help. And I found the storyline, which is based on the impact of climate change on the women and also found my filmmaking style, which is observational.

In a modern state system, how can people's lives become so inhuman? Does being alive mean everything for a human life? What is the meaning of life, then? These questions also inspired me to make this film.

DIRECTOR

Farid AHMAD

Farid Ahmad is a Bangladeshi independent documentary filmmaker, with an award-winning Educational Documentary *Fellow, India* (2018). He has trained in documentary filmmaking with Docwok, India and Sundance Collab. He also won a National Film Grant to make *True False & A Revolution* (2017), which won the Jury Award at the 6th Siliguri International Short and Documentary Film Festival, India. He has made four independent documentary films and more

than twenty television documentaries. In addition, he is contributing as a guest faculty member at the University of Development Alternative.

PRODUCER

Salma SONIA

Salma Sonia (1987) is an emerging producer from Bangladesh and a co-founder of Noyakar Productions, a specialized production company dedicated to nonfiction cinema. She completed her undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Peace and Conflict Studies at University of Dhaka with first class honors. After working as an assistant director in various documentary films, she started producing documentary films. Recently, she produced *True False & A Revolution* (2017), a documentary film which obtained a young filmmaker grant from the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Noyakar Productions

Noyakar Productions is an independent production company based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, formed by Salma Sonia and Farid Ahmad in 2017. It focuses on documentary films that bring inspiring stories to international audience. It is also exploring the possibilities of collaborating with other companies and filmmakers from all over the globe. It works with a variety of highly skilled freelance professionals, fostering strong alliances and lasting working relationships. It has produced three documentary films which have been appreciated and have won awards nationally. Noyakar also encourages and supports young filmmakers of Bangladesh.