

Project Haate Khori

FAUZIA SULTANA

Don't be surprised if you happen to find a group of child domestic workers studying in a makeshift class held in the community hall of your apartment building, your neighbour's garage or even in your own apartment. It is a Haate Khori classroom.

Haate Khori, one of the endeavors of 1 Initiative, is a makeshift school that aims to provide basic education to child domestic workers. The outcome of a 15-month-long research, the Haate Khori model was developed with the objectives to instil basic literacy skills in child domestic workers aged five to eighteen, as well as to increase awareness of mass citizens on the conditions and rights of these children.

Haate Khori classes are designed to accommodate students of all kinds- fast or slow learners with or without basic literal knowledge. Classes are usually held thrice a week, where students are taught basic Bangla, English, simple Arithmetic, Art and General knowledge. "We do not want to burden the students by making official assessments. In a Haate Khori classroom students are taught to learn, not to be assessed," said Israt Zerin, instructor for Bangla.

Willingness of the child domestic workers as well as their employers is vital for successful completion of a

cycle. "Convincing both the employers and the children and motivating them to continue or even start their classes is a hurdle commonly faced by the Haate Khori instructors and volunteers," explained Namista, intern at Haate Khori. Employers usually do not take them seriously and are sometimes uncooperative, she added. However, there are supportive employers like those of Jhorna and Ramzan's, two of the gradu-



ates of the Haate Khori-March, 2014.

On asking about their future plans, Fatima Akhtar, Project Leader and English teacher shares, "I want more people to start their own Haate Khori and encourage the graduates as well as the employers to continue this practice."



PHOTO: COURTESY

Iftar on the Streets



APURBA JAHANGIR

When it comes to iftar, us Bangalis go head over heels for all the fried food we can get our hands on. Despite the fact that we aim for the healthy side every year, deep within, we know that's not happening! What if one could buy genuine home cooked meals right off the streets? "Hot Stuff", the new sensational foodcart in Banani 11 is just the place to go to.

Hot Stuff is a venture started by Maher Syeed Chowdhury and his mother, Nargis Chowdhury. "My mother is an excellent cook and she wanted to start a business that she could relate to," says Maher. "That's when we thought about 'Hot Stuff'. With the booming of cart businesses in the city, we planned to start immediately." He also adds, "The main plan was to sell lunch items but since the month of Ramadan was already knocking on the door, we started off with Iftar items."

Hot Stuff began its journey on the first day of this Ramadan, and became popular with food lovers in and around the area. "Everything's cooked at home and is healthy," asserts Maher. Showcasing a total of 10 dishes, food lovers seem to have their hearts set on the Kebab Roll and the Beef Tehari.

Hot Stuff aims to attract more office goers, which is why Banani 11, an area filled with offices and businesses of all kinds, is the primary location. They will soon try to expand their venture to different places of the city like Uttara and Dhanmondi.



For A Healthy Ramadan

ELITA KARIM

Almost half the month has flown by and Ramadan seems to be getting all the more colourful with food and shopping. Despite the shopping and cooking frenzy, however, people do seem to be slightly confused over what to eat, how to take care of one's health and of course, how to stay fit. Masuma Akhter, a popular nutritionist in Dhaka, says that every Ramadan, she gets to meet the three kinds of patients. "Firstly, there are those who gain a lot of weight in the month of Ramadan," says Akhter. Ironically, people consume an extra quantity of calories during and after iftar, which they normally would avoid. "We tend to eat everything in sight when we break our fast, which is extremely unhealthy. Instead, we should start off with fruits, maybe a refreshing fruit drink, or just water to break the fast. That should follow with bread, chicken, soup, sandwiches, a little rice etc. Instead we gobble up the fried food at one go, which should be avoided at all costs!"

Akhter talks of the second category of patients. "Urine infection seems to be yet another ailment that sees an increase in Ramadan," says Akhter. For the last few years, Ramadan falls in the months of summer, with longer hours of scorching heat. "After one breaks fast, one must drink two glasses of water before moving on to anything else," says Akhter. "Between iftar and suhoor, one must drink 12-14 glasses of water. It is not as difficult as it sounds. Make a habit of drinking a glass of water or two every couple of hours. You'll feel refreshed and stay hydrated." Masuma Akhter gained popularity in the last few months with her 'Magic Diet' that promises to shed at least 10 kilos in 6 weeks. With the help of monthly counselling programmes held at Smart Diet, her clinic in Banani, many have experienced positive results. "My diet is more of a scientific diet, rather than a 'magic' diet," smiles Akhter. "The programme constitutes of a proper diet and exercise programme."

The third complaint that Akhter faces from patients in Ramadan is of gastric pain. "This is very common in our country and the number of patients increase a lot more in Ramadan," says Akhter. "This is mainly because of the culture of devouring fried food every day, and that too of all kinds. After breaking fast, one can have chira (cereal) and bananas to cool the system. The fried food can be divided over the week. For instance, one day can be devoted to beguni (pieces of eggplants fried in batter), while the next can be a day for aloor chop (potato chops) or aloooni (pieces of potatoes fried in batter)."

Clearly, the right diet will not only take us a long way, but will keep us healthy.

To know more about Masuma Akhter's diet wonders, visit [facebook.com/smartdietbd](https://www.facebook.com/smartdietbd).



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