



Media Release
26 November 2019

The Spirit of ‘Giving’ touches young and old: Daan Utsav Samman inspires communities

Daan Utsav Samman 2019, in its fourth year, recognises schools and individuals who make “Giving” an important part of their lives. Twelve Samman winners were felicitated on Tuesday (26/11/19) in Kolkata for their exemplary initiative. Smt Vandana Yadav, Managing Director, WBIDC and Secretary, Commerce and Industries, Government of West Bengal, was the Chief Guest. She appreciated the “Giving” activities and the recognition thereof.

Seven schools and five individuals received the Daan Utsav Samman (trophies and cash awards) at a befitting ceremony, honouring the true spirit of contributing to society arising from the desire to see positive changes in the life of people. The Samman recognizes initiatives in areas of Health & Hygiene, Education, Environment & Social Development. While Sri Sri Academy, Kolkata, got the Daan Utsav Sarvottam Saarvik Samman, the Uttam Saarvik Samman went to National High School (Hazra Road campus). MP Birla Foundation Higher Secondary School was awarded the Harit Samman. Silver Point School was awarded the Aarogya Samman and Bharat Tirtha Vidyapeeth and Anando, the Ujjwal Samman.

Daan Utsav, India’s Festival of Giving, is not an NGO or organization. It belongs to the people, aiming at spreading love, joy and happiness among those who are less fortunate than us, and for each one of us to experience the joy of giving. It is like our own *Diwali* or *Eid*, celebrating “Giving”. Some donate money, some their time, some materials and some just love. Though the Utsav is celebrated from 2-8 October every year, the initiative continues throughout the year, keeping the interest of the less privileged in mind. This year, more than four million people from more than 120 cities and towns and 50 villages across India took part in Daan Utsav celebrations, giving their time, money or material.

The 11th Daan Utsav was celebrated in and around Kolkata, with a bouquet of “Giving” events, from 2-8 October 2019. The events during the “Joy of Giving Week” began in Kolkata on 2 October 2019, with more than 120 people, including children, plogging their way to health. The Kolkata Running Squad, with Garbage Free India and the Daan Utsav Kolkata volunteers, collected about 120 kg of single-use plastic. (The word plogging is an English-Swedish combination of jogging and *plocka upp*, which means “pick up” in Swedish). By picking up litter while out on a jog, both the jogger and Planet Earth benefit.

More than 1,350 children from various NGOs of Kolkata and its suburbs had a Fun Day at Nicco Park, with free rides and lunch. Fifty differently abled children joined in the fun fare.

On 3 October 2019, the Priyamvada Birla Aravind Eye Hospital team held a free eye camp at Bansberia (Sampreeti Bhavan, Rudra Gali, Bansberia, Hooghly), when 60 patients were examined by ophthalmologists. Thirty-five of them had cataract operation at the hospital in Kolkata and 15 were given spectacles, both free of cost. Nearly 600 children from various NGOs around Kolkata attended special shows at the MP Birla Planetarium and were treated with refreshments.

At **Bharat Tirtha Vidyapeeth**, a school for first-time learners, at Usti, near Diamond Harbour, students, from humble economic backgrounds, made paper bags, filled these with

fruit and snacks, and distributed the same among patients at a local hospital. They also donated a cycle rickshaw to a physically challenged person.

A collection drive for the Bengal Network of People Living with AIDS resulted in the distribution of at least 15,000 kg of rice and dal among those living with AIDS. Under the 'Fistful of Joy programme', donors contributed a fistful of rice/dal. New garments were distributed among them, ushering in Durga Puja.

Various schools, corporates and individuals also organised events to distribute clothes for the Pujas, food and blankets. Groups of people organized tree planting and garbage cleaning activities in and around their homes. Schools conducted awareness programmes on the use and responsible disposal of plastic waste.

At the end of the Samman ceremony, Srikanto Acharya, the noted singer, regaled the audience with his mesmerizing voice and evergreen numbers.

Among the Samman winners (complete list given below), **Sri Sri Academy** took on the menace of single-use plastic, donating cloth/jute bags and educating people about plastic hazards, thus winning the **Sarvottam Saarkvik Samman** Award for overall contribution to society.

The students of **National High School**, winner of the **Uttam Saarkvik Samman** Award for their overall contribution to society, touched the hearts of the children and the elderly who are in 'Home away from Home' in Mother Teresa's "Nirmal Hriday". The students spent hours with them, listening to their stories, offering them food and medicines and cheering them up.

Mr Sabarna Saraswati (26), with Masters in Zoology, changed his career plan and started working with the people living along the Ichhamati river bank. He led a team of 450 people who have cleaned a 12-km stretch of the river. Not willing to rest on his laurels, he is taking another tough job to create 10 plastic-free villages in Nadia. He is the **Kalyan Samman** recipient for his signal contribution to Environment.

The 77 year old **Subhrendu Raychaudhuri**, recipient of the **Kalyan Samman** Award, has set up computer labs with several desktop computers, a few laptops and 40" TV sets for 11 primary schools in the Sunderbans. In addition to this, to stem waste of water from leaking taps by about 25% to 30%, he has also devised and popularized the use of a water saving nozzle.

The students of **Silver Point School**, winner of the **Arogya Samman** Award, for contribution to Health/Hygiene, cleaned up the Rani Rashmoni Ghat of Ganga. They not only cleaned the place but also brought about a change in the mindset of their family members, who now do not throw away flowers etc. in the river, in particular, but also discard waste responsibly.

M.P Birla Foundation Higher Secondary School, which won the **Harit Samman** Award for its contribution to Environment, has done extensive work in and around the school, in association with local clubs, for blood donation and dengue awareness, apart from donating clothes and pantry items to the needy.

Sushila Birla High School, which won the **Kalyan Samman** Award towards contribution to the community, organized cleanliness awareness drives round the year, such as Swachhata Awareness Day, Hand Wash Day and Personal Hygiene Day.

Who would not like to have fresh, hot and hygienic *rotis* with pickle, ghee and sweets free of cost? You must be within the reach of the *Apni Roti* van of **Mr Bikash Agarwal**, who won **Naveen Samman Award** for his contribution to health/hygiene. The *Apni Roti* van houses an automatic *roti* vending machine which produces approximately 900 fresh and hygienic *rotis* per hour. There are two vans serving different slum areas in Kolkata and Siliguri.

Anando, winner of the **Ujjwal Samman**, works with children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Jadavpur area. It celebrated the spirit of service (*seva*) by making and distributing lime juice. They collected and planted saplings in recycled plastic bottles and eco-friendly planters made from newspaper, which were distributed on the streets. Old clothes were distributed at Sealdah and an awareness programme on the use of plastic bags was also organized.

Birla Corporation Limited is the Goodwill Partner of Daan Utsav Samman

List of awardees:

Award	Awarded for	School
Daan Utsav Arogya Samman	Contribution to Health / Hygiene	Silver Point School
Daan Utsav Harit Samman	Contribution to Environment	MP Birla Foundation Higher Secondary School
Daan Utsav Kalyan Samman	Contribution to Community	Sushila Birla Girls' School
Daan Utsav Ujjwal Samman	' Inspiring Giving ' Initiative	Bharat Tirtha Vidyapeeth and <i>Anando</i>
Daan Utsav Uttam Saarvik Samman	Overall Contribution to Society (Runner-Up)	National High School (Hazra Road campus)
Daan Utsav Sarvottam Saarkvik Samman	Overall Contribution to Society	Sri Sri Academy

Daan Utsav Naveen Samman	Contribution to Health / Hygiene	Mr Bikash Agarwal
Daan Utsav Kalyan Samman	Contribution to Community	Mr Subhrendu Raychaudhuri
Daan Utsav Harit Samman	Contribution to Environment	Mr Sabarna Saraswati
Daan Utsav Shiksha Samman	Contribution to Education	Dr Maya Shankar Jha
Daan Utsav Ujjwal Samman	' Inspiring Giving ' Initiative	Mr Arup Kumar Mukherjee

One may visit www.sammanawards.com and share "Giving" initiatives. It is also present on Twitter and Instagram.

Goodwill Partner

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