



SAMHATI

Bangladesh Women's Organization

8602 Aqueduct Road, Potomac, MD 20854, USA

<http://samhati.org/>

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September 1, 2015

Dear Friends,

You are invited to Samhati's Annual Dinner and Auction, "Literacy to Leadership," on **Saturday, October 3, 2015, 6:30 to 10:00 pm, at the Embassy of Bangladesh, 3510 International Drive, NW, Washington, DC, 20008.** We will be joined by His Excellency Mohammad Ziauddin and Madam Yasmeen Ziauddin. Our keynote speaker is Commissioner Nina Ahmad of President Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Founded in 1984, Samhati is the only organization of Bangladeshi women in the United States. We design and support small projects – focused on education, health, and environmental sustainability – to improve the lives of impoverished women and families in Bangladesh. Samhati is tax exempt (IRS ID Number 52-1390261). As an all-volunteer organization with negligible overhead, Samhati directs 97% of your contributions to needy families.

- *If you donate \$75, it will provide a one-year scholarship to ensure that a middle or high school child stays in school and does not have to work.*
- *A donation of \$100 will provide adult literacy or vocational classes for a village woman, who in turn will be able to better care for her family.*
- *A donation of \$500 will fund our health clinic in Katakhal village for one month, providing care and health education for over 500 families.*
- *Your gift of \$1000 will fund the Ganga Char literacy project for four months.*

Hundreds of women, children, and families have been transformed by Samhati's work. Our focus on literacy has created leadership from within to maintain and grow our projects. Samhati has provided cyclone relief and climate adaptation training, established the first women's shelter in Bangladesh, and developed eco-empowerment projects in villages. Your support is essential! Please send in your donations and join us on October 3. Feel free to contact us: 703-618-4618 (Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton) or samhati1984@yahoo.com.

With our gratitude,

Noorjahan Bose, Secretary
Shaan Noman, Treasurer

UPDATE ON SAMHATI'S CURRENT PROJECTS IN BANGLADESH

Katakhali and Ganga Char Projects

Since 2000, Samhati has been working to empower women and families in the remote Katakhali community, a village on an island off the southern coast of Bangladesh. Samhati provides adult literacy classes and leadership and skills training to motivated villagers, mostly women. Because of the increasing severity of storms in the area and other adverse impacts of climate change, the villagers are particularly vulnerable and need adaptation assistance. Samhati's Health Center - staffed by a doctor and assistant - provides medical services in Katakhali and nearby villages, serving 500 families which would otherwise get no medical care. The Center served as a shelter during recent cyclones and all villagers survived. In 2014, Katakhali's coordinator took part in a UN-sponsored training on climate-adaptive agriculture. These skills have been shared this year with cooperative members through hands-on classes. In 2016, the cooperative members will take part in a climate knowledge-sharing workshop to share monitoring and adaptation skills.

The women of Katakhali on their own initiative have started a literacy class for 32 women in a nearby village called Ganga Char, a short boat ride away. It is very exciting that Katakhali's women are sharing their skills with others.

Every year Samhati provides scholarships of approximately \$70 each per year to 28 needy children so that they can attend middle and high school in Katakhali. So far, 189 children have received scholarships and 70 children have finished high school due to this program. These children in turn teach their parents, find jobs, and bring about a tangible change in the community. In 2013, we inaugurated the first pre-school in Katakhali, and local women have been employed to run the program. The preschoolers receive a daily nutritious snack prepared by villagers.

We need to raise at least \$17,000 for expenses in Katakhali and Ganga Char for next year.

Eco-Village Project in Natore

Our project in Natore is now in its eighth year and has brought positive change to the communities in Natore District, in northern Bangladesh. Currently, Samhati is coordinating several initiatives in Hatiandah village and a midday meal program in Narayanpur Primary school, Narayanpur for 110 children.

Currently, our adult literacy classes have taught reading skills to over 585 adults (mostly women). As well, we have provided scholarships to 30 children (20 girls and 10 boys) to ensure that they stay in school. At our Computer Learning Center, a total of 125 students completed our three-month training courses this year. After completing the training course, some of the students went on to open their own computer shops and several young women found employment in Natore and other districts.

Thanks to your help, we were able to purchase new sewing machines for the tailoring classes and now we have eight fully functioning sewing machines and one embroidery machine. So far this year, seventy village women have completed the sewing classes. In addition, we provided interest-free loans to twelve women to start their own businesses. Seven women started their own tailoring businesses, three women opened tea and snack shops, and two women started vegetable stands.

We need to raise \$14,000 to fund the Natore Project activities next year.

Project in Laksmichap Union in Rangpur

In 2011, we started supporting a project in Laksmichap Union, Rangpur, in northern Bangladesh. This community is diverse (includes several religious minority groups) and has developed an innovative community-based "Rice Bank" for sharing and stockpiling rice so that no one goes hungry. Samhati has provided primary school supplies in this community, and approximately \$4,000 toward a revolving fund for training women in skills for income generation. We provided sewing, organic vegetable cultivation and poultry rearing training to approximately 100 women this year. We are providing a total of 80 high school scholarships in two different high schools. Our adult literacy programs for women have taught over 525 women to read and write. We also provide free health checkups for school children and women, and a biannual eye-check-up camp which has so far served 650 persons. We also supported the construction of a new Rice Bank at nearby Polashbari.

We need to raise \$12,000 to fund the Laksmichap Project for next year.

LITERACY TO LEADERSHIP

Samhati's 2015 Benefit Dinner and Auction

Saturday, October 3, 2015

6:30 to 10:00 pm

The Embassy of Bangladesh

3510 International Drive NW

Washington, DC 20008

Metro: Van Ness/UDC (Red Line)

Street parking is available.

Featuring:

Dance performance by Dhroopad

Keynote address by Nina Ahmad, Ph.D

Henna art by Sabrina Chowdhury



Samhati's 2015 Benefit Committee:

Sharmeen and Uzair Dossani, Susan Lanham Nevins, Wameek Noor, Nona Pucciariello, Jan Rumi, Grace Kibue Sharp, Saroj Singh, Jyoti Tulsi, Satwant Tulsi, and Laurie Whiteman.

Benefit Chair: Monica Jahan Bose Auction Chair: Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton

Gourmet catering by Aladdin Restaurant, Bangladeshi Cuisine

Admission per person: \$75 (\$35 students) and up. Includes drinks, appetizers, dinner.

If you send in your check, we will reserve a ticket for you and your name will be on the guest list at the door.

Tickets will also be available at the door. Or pay with Paypal by sending funds to samhati1984@yahoo.com.

For information call **703-618-4618** or email samhati1984@yahoo.com.

DONORS OF \$500 OR MORE WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN OUR PROGRAM AND WEBSITE.

I would like ___ tickets to the Benefit Dinner. I enclose a check for \$_____. The price per ticket is \$75, of which \$60 is tax deductible. Additional donations are very much appreciated.

I am unable to attend the Benefit Dinner but would like to support Samhati's projects in Bangladesh.

I enclose a check for: \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$5,000

___ Other amount (please fill in)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

Your email helps us save postage and paper.

Please make your check payable to "Samhati" and mail with this form to:

Samhati, 8602 Aqueduct Rd, Potomac, MD 20854, USA

You may also visit our website <http://www.samhati.org/donate/> to donate and reserve tickets.