



## SAMHATI

Bangladesh Women's Organization

8602 Aqueduct Road, Potomac, MD 20854, USA

<http://samhati.org/>

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September 1, 2016

Dear Friends,

You are invited to Samhati's Annual Dinner and Auction, on **Saturday, October 22, 2016**, at **6:30 pm**, at the **River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation**, located at **6301 River Road**, in **Bethesda, MD 20817**. Please note the change of venue from last year.

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 Katakhalī village for one month, providing care and health education for over 500 families.*
- *Your gift of \$1,000 will fund climate adaptation training for 10 villagers in Katakhalī.*

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 crucial!

Please send in your donations and join us on October 22. Should you have any questions, contact us at 703-618-4618 (Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton) or [samhati1984@yahoo.com](mailto:samhati1984@yahoo.com).

With our gratitude,

Noorjahan Bose

## **UPDATE ON SAMHATI'S CURRENT PROJECTS IN BANGLADESH**

### **Katakhali Project**

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 27,000 people who would otherwise get no medical care. The Center also serves as a shelter during cyclones saving villagers lives. The villagers are learning climate adaptation skills, including sustainable farming techniques. From December 2015 to January 2016, the cooperative members along with 200 people from the island took part in a workshop on climate change in collaboration with the International Centre for Climate Change and Development.

Every year Samhati provides annual scholarships of around \$70 each to 28 needy children so that they can attend middle and high school in Katakhali. So far, 195 children have received scholarships and 75 children have finished high school due to this program. These children in turn have taught their parents, found jobs, and are helping to 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 nutritious snack that is prepared daily by villagers.

### **Eco-Village Project in Natore**

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

Our adult literacy classes have taught reading skills to over 600 adults (mostly women). We are also providing scholarships to 30 children (20 girls and 10 boys) to ensure that they stay in school. More than 100 students completed our three-month training courses this year at our Computer Learning Center. 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. Dozens of women are trained in our sewing and embroidery classes and are starting to generate income. In addition, we are providing interest-free loans to women to start their own businesses which include tailoring businesses, tea and snack shops, and vegetable stands.

### **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 provide sewing, organic vegetable cultivation and poultry rearing training to approximately over 100 women. We are providing a total of 80 individual high school scholarships in two different high schools. Our adult literacy programs for women have taught over 625 women to read and write. We also provide free health checkups for school children and women, benefiting 600 persons last year, with follow up treatment for 56 patients. Our biannual eye-check-up camp serves approximately 450 persons.

### **New Women's Scholarship Project to Reduce Child Marriage in Six Villages**

With the initiative and support of a longtime friend of Samhati, Sidney Schuler, we are launching a new project this fall to reduce child marriage through scholarships to young women and teens in six villages in Rangpur, Magura, and Faridpur Districts. Each woman will have four years of scholarship to cover two years of secondary school (grades 9 and 10) and two years of college or vocational training, such as nursing school or teacher training. Thirty young women will receive four-year scholarships.

# Samhati's 2016 Benefit Dinner and Auction

Saturday, October 22, 2016 (6:30 to 10:00 pm)

**River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817 (Entrance is off Whittier Blvd.)

Free parking available in large Church parking lot

Directions: Take Exit 41 from Beltway. (Public Transport: Bus T2)



image credit: Tania Chatterjee

## Featuring:

**Dance performances by Shreya Mukherji & Antora Rahman of Mayur Dance Academy**  
**Henna design by Nurunnahar Mili and Tahera Anu**

## Samhati's 2016 Benefit Host Committee:

**Mustafa and Naheed Chowdhury, Sharmeen and Uzair Dossani, Mehmood Kazmi, Grace Kibue Sharp, Saroj Singh, Jyoti Tulsi, Satwant Tulsi, Wameek Noor, and Laurie Whiteman.**  
Benefit Chair: Monica Jahan Bose      Auction Chair: Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton

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 buy tickets/donate online <http://buytickets.at/samhati/65556>

For information call **703-618-4618** or email [samhati1984@yahoo.com](mailto:samhati1984@yahoo.com).

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

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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:     \$100     \$500 (silver)     \$1,000 (gold)     \$5,000 (platinum)

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 go online at <http://buytickets.at/samhati/65556> to donate and reserve tickets.