



# Samhati

Bangladesh Women's Organization

13107 Laneview Ct., Oak Hill, VA 20171, USA

[samhati.org](http://samhati.org)

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September 1, 2018

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to invite you to Samhati's Annual Dinner and Auction, which will be held on Saturday, October 6, 2018, 6:00 to 9:00 pm, at the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817. **Dinner will be served at approximately 6:30 pm.**

Founded in 1984, Samhati is the longest-running 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 can direct approximately 90% 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 for the entire Barobaishdia Island of 27,000 people.*
- *Your gift of \$1000 will fund climate adaptation training for 10 villagers in Katakhal.*

Hundreds of women, children, and families - and entire communities- 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. We are providing educational scholarships to discourage child marriage. Your support makes a huge difference. Please send in your donations and join us on October 6. Feel free to contact us: 703-618-4618 (Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton) or [info@samhati.org](mailto:info@samhati.org).

With immense gratitude,

Noorjahan Bose and all Samhati members

## **UPDATE ON SAMHATI'S WORK IN BANGLADESH**

### **Katakhali Project in Patuakhali District (plus Modhukhali 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. Through Samhati, they are gaining climate adaptation skills, such as new farming techniques. In 2017, we started a new cooperative in the adjacent Modhukhali Village, where 30 women are taking literacy classes and learning sewing and other income generation skills.

Samhati's Health Center - staffed by a doctor and assistant - provides medical services to Katakhali and the island's entire population of 27,000, which otherwise would have no medical care. This past year, over 2,500 patients were treated, given preventive care, immunizations, and health and nutrition advice. A new lab allows the doctor to do basic diagnostic testing on site. The Center served as a shelter during recent cyclones and all villagers survived. Since 2002, Samhati provides annual scholarships of approximately \$75 each to 30 needy children so that they can attend middle and high school in Katakhali. We have over 80 high school graduates from our program, with seven working for the government (some as teachers in the village schools) and 45 working in the private sector. In 2013, Samhati started the first pre-school in the community, which employs local women. We are also funding a popular community library.

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

Our project in Natore is now in its 11th year and has brought positive change to the communities in Natore District, in northern Bangladesh. We have adult literacy classes in three different villages, and over 800 adults (mostly women) have learned to read. We provide scholarships to 30 children (20 girls and 10 boys) annually to ensure that they stay in school. At our Computer Learning Center, we now have six desktop and three laptop computers, and the three-month training is very popular and leads to employment for many of the graduates. This year, we have 75 women in the sewing classes using 10 sewing machines, and five graduates have been provided sewing machines (on monthly payment plan) to start their own businesses. One woman has started a tailoring and fabric shop with our help. A farming cooperative includes 10 women, who are learning fish farming and production of organic fertilizer.

This year we started an exciting new program, providing 12 bicycles to girls to help them get to school. Girls rarely bike in Bangladesh, so this bold initiative allows girls to be less confined and more mobile. The bicycle program is a very effective tool to empower girls and discourage early marriage.

### **Project in Laksmichap Union in Rangpur**

Our project in Laksmichap Union, Rangpur, in northern Bangladesh started in 2011. This diverse community includes several religious minority groups and has developed a community-based "Rice Bank" for sharing and stockpiling rice so no one goes hungry during lean periods. Samhati has provided primary school supplies 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 75 women this year. We are providing a total of 80 high school scholarships in two high schools. Our adult literacy programs for women have taught over 775 women to read and write. Hygiene awareness sessions were completed by 60 adolescent high school girls. We also provide free health checkups for school children and members of the community rice bank, mostly women. This year 1,740 children and adults participated in the program and follow up was facilitated for 54 women and children, and, 1 man. With Samhati's support the construction of a fourth Rice Bank at nearby Polashbari has been completed. It is the first run by a women based cooperative. Emergency funding of \$2,000 was given for the flood of 2017. The aid primarily consisted of Vermi Compost (organic soil conditioner) and seeds to 156 families. In 2018, we also distributed bicycles to 10 girls to help them get to school.

### **Jahanara Ali Memorial College Scholarship for Women**

In honor of departed board member Jahanara Ali, we launched a college/vocational scholarship for three low-income and merit-worthy young women, choosing one from each of our high school scholarship programs in Katakhali, Laksmichamp, and Natore, as follows: Ashamoni, attending Patuakhali Mahila College; Beauty Aktar, attending Nilphamari Government College; and Anwara Khatun, attending Ranibhavani Mahila College;

### **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 now in the third year of project to reduce child marriage through scholarships to young women in six villages in Rangpur, Magura, Faridpur Districts. Each woman receives four years of scholarship to cover the two latter years of secondary school (grades 9 and 10) and two years of college or vocational training, such as nursing school or teacher training.

Check out our website for further details and images! [samhati.org](http://samhati.org)

# Samhati's 2018 Benefit Dinner and Auction

Saturday, October 6, 2018

6:00 to 9:00 pm

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817 (@Whittier Blvd.)  
Free parking in lot. (Exit 39 from Beltway to River Road.  
Go towards Bethesda/Washington, take left at Whittier  
Blvd and venue is immediately on left. Public Transport:  
Bus T2).

## Featuring:

**Dance performance by Droopad**

## Samhati's 2018 Host Committee:

Sharmeen and Uzair Dossani, Rose Hayden, Laneyse Hooks,  
Mehmood Kazmi, Sangeeta Mookherji, Mustafa and Naheed  
Chowdhury, Beth Pile, Grace Kibue Sharp, Jyoti Tulsi, &  
Satwant Tulsi.



**Benefit Chairs: Cima Ali and Alema Siddiky**

**Auction Chair: Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton**

Admission per person: \$75 and up (\$35 full-time students). Includes drinks, dinner, dessert.

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 online at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/samhati/191845/>

For information call **703-618-4618** or email [info@samhati.org](mailto:info@samhati.org). LIMITED TICKETS AT DOOR — PLEASE  
SEND YOUR CHECKS NOW OR PAY ONLINE TO ENSURE A SEAT. <http://buytickets.at/samhati/191845>

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

**YOU MAY ALSO PURCHASE A TABLE WITH YOUR NAME ON IT FOR \$1000.**

☐ 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, 13107 Laneview Ct., Oak Hill, VA 20171, USA. Or visit our website at [samhati.org](http://samhati.org) to reserve tickets/donate.