



# Samhati

Bangladesh Women's Organization

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

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

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September 8, 2020

Dear Friends,

We hope that you and your family and friends are safe as we continue to grapple with the pandemic around the world. Our deepest condolences to everyone who has lost family or friends. Samhati's work is continuing despite the coronavirus challenges. We need your help more than ever this year. Our 2020 fundraiser will be a virtual event on Sunday, October 4, 2019, from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm on Zoom. ***It will be a teatime/cocktail event from each of our homes. We hope that you will join us with your own beverage of choice. We are also enclosing two exclusive recipes from Samhati chefs and invite you to prepare them and join us online.***

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 95% of your contributions to needy families. This year we are also trying to help our programs cope with COVID-19.

- *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, or when school is closed, provides help to the whole family.*
- *A donation of \$100 will provide adult literacy or vocational classes for a village woman.*
- *A donation of \$250 will help 20 families with a cash stipend for food during the pandemic.*
- *A donation of \$500 will fund our health clinic in Katakhalia village for one month, providing care for the entire Barobaishdia Island of 27,000 people.*
- *Your gift of \$1000 will support 80 families with small cash grants during the pandemic.*

During the pandemic, Samhati is continuing to pay all our local workers in Bangladesh and to provide scholarships to our students. We are now providing socially-distant trainings in literacy, sewing, farming, and computer literacy. We have funded the sewing of masks and COVID-safety awareness. We have distributed masks and cash stipends to over 500 families. Please support our work and join us on October 4 to learn more.

With our best wishes and many thanks,  
*The Samhati Board and Advisors*

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

All our projects have been impacted by the pandemic. Schools and colleges have been closed since March 2020, but may resume later this year. We are continuing to provide our scholarships to help the families. Our trainings were closed for almost three months, but have now resumed with smaller classes, social distancing, and mandatory masks. We raised over \$5,000 for emergency COVID-19 relief, and provided small cash relief of 1000 takas per family to over 500 families in our three programs. We are also continuing to fund mask-making, mask distribution, PPE, and special supplies for our clinic in Katakhalī.

### **Katakhalī Project in Patuakhalī District (plus Modhukhalī Project)**

Since 2000, Samhati has been working to empower women and families in the remote Katakhalī 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 in Katakhalī Village and neighboring Modhukhalī Village (since 2017). Because of the increasing severity of storms in the area and other adverse impacts of climate change, the villagers are particularly vulnerable. In February 2020, scholarships were given to 30 students in the Katakhalī high school. We also awarded 20 new scholarships to students in the neighboring island called Ganga Char, a very impoverished community. This year, we gave bicycles to 10 girls in Katakhalī/Modhukhalī, all of whom quickly learned to ride the bikes. We also distributed tin sheets to repair the homes of 31 poor families who sustained damage to their homes from Cyclone Bul Bul and other storms. The community library and preschool for 25 children were also repaired after suffering storm damage.

Due to coronavirus, the preschool and our trainings were shut down for several months, but we have resumed our trainings in small groups and hope to start outdoor preschool after the rainy season ends. We have provided information to our community members to raise awareness about coronavirus, including wearing masks and social distancing. We hired women to make 600 masks for the community. Samhati's Health Center has continued to provide medical services to the island's entire population of 27,000, which otherwise would have no medical care. Many consultations are by phone, but patients are also able to visit our clinic if needed. We have provided Covid-19 training to the doctor, along with PPE, an oxygen tank, pulse oxymeter, and thermal scanner.

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

Our project in Hatianda, Natore District is now in its 13th year. Hatiandah is a Union of eight villages in northern Bangladesh, and our work has brought considerable positive change. Girls and women from all these villages come and learn tailoring, and many have set up shops or sewing businesses from home. Every three months, we train 70 new students in sewing and tailoring, which are traditionally male professions. The Computer Center provides basic computer learning using our two laptops and six desktop computers. Our Computer Center graduates are easily able to find employment, either in the government or private organizations. Some have set up small shops providing word processing and online services to villages, most of whom do not own computers. At present we are running three adult literacy centers in three adjacent villages, where 75 mothers and grandmothers are learning reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. To date, approximately 1,500 women have participated in the program. Due to coronavirus, our programs were closed for three months but now the programs are resuming slowly with social distancing. Women are making more masks than dresses. We recently gave out scholarships for 30 high school children. Our farming cooperative is teaching vegetable gardening, fish farming, and production of organic fertilizer.

### **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. Our programs in Laksmichap were suspended due to COVID-19 but are starting to resume now. Samhati is providing 80 high school scholarships, health checkups, and training for women in literacy, sewing, organic vegetable cultivation and poultry rearing. We recently provided emergency cash assistance of 1000 takas each to 300 families whose livelihoods were impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown.

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

The college/vocational scholarship program in honor of the late Jahanara Ali is now in its third year. Three low-income and merit-worthy young women, one from each of our high school scholarship programs in Katakhalī, Laksmichamp, and Natore, are the recipients: Ashamoni, attending Patuakhalī Mahila College; Beauty Aktar, attending Nilphamari Government College; and Anwara Khatun, attending Ranibhavani Mahila College. Unfortunately, classes have been suspended for the last few months due to the pandemic, but we hope they will soon resume.

# Samhati's 2020 Virtual Fundraiser

**Sunday, October 4, 2020**

**5:00 to 6:00 pm**

**Zoom link will be  
emailed to those who  
purchase tickets**



**Featuring:**

**Dance performance  
by Antora Rahman**  
*Plus a cooking lesson!*

Tickets per person:

\$75 (**early-bird by September 20**), \$100 or more (\$35 full-time students only). This year, 100% of your ticket price will be tax deductible since we cannot provide food and drink. If you send in your check or purchase tickets online, we will send you the Zoom link. You may buy tickets online at <https://buytickets.at/samhati/417764> For information call **703-618-4618** or email [info@samhati.org](mailto:info@samhati.org).

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

**Please try our recipes (enclosed) so we can eat together from our own homes!**

Photo credit: Tania Chatterjee

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Please indicate or write in your donation amount:

*Donation levels:*  \$35 full-time student  \$75 (early bird)  \$100  \$250  \$500 Silver

\$1,000 Gold  \$5,000 Platinum  \_\_\_\_\_ Other amount (fill in)

Please send me a zoom link to the fundraiser.

I am donating but will not attend the fundraiser.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**We must have your email to send the event link!**

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.

## The Recipes for our Virtual Fundraiser

### **Chotpoti (Savory)**

**by Jahanara Hasan**     *active preparation time: 30 mins - 1 hour*

Chotpoti is a popular and healthy street food made with chickpeas, onions, and potatoes. It is a favorite snack in Bangladesh and India with tea. A spicy/sour treat, Chotpoti is best served hot or at room temperature. *Assemble ingredients and we will show you how to prepare Chotpoti.*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 Cups dry chick peas or black Chana dal (or substitute for three 15 oz cans of chickpeas/garbanzos)
- 1 Cup vatara dal\* (optional)
- 3 medium sized potatoes
- 1 medium onion (red or yellow)
- 3 green chillies (or substitute jalapeno or serrano peppers)
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger
- 2 Tablespoons Chat masala\* (or grind up roasted cumin seeds, chilly powder, cardamom, black peppercorns, cinnamon, cloves, and kosher salt)
- 1 Cup tamarind sauce\* (or substitute 2 tomatoes, juice of 1 lemon, and 1 Tablespoon sugar and 1 teaspoon salt)
- 1 bunch cilantro (approximately 1/2 cup chopped)
- 3 boiled eggs (optional)

Soak the chick peas and vatara dal (optional) overnight (or at least 5 hours). Rinse the soaked chickpeas and vatara dal and boil in 2 cups of water (add more if needed) on medium heat until they are soft (30-40 minutes). Boil and mash the potatoes so that they remain lumpy. In a large bowl, put the drained chick peas and vatara dal (or the canned chickpeas). Add the potatoes to the bowl. Chop onions, green cayenne peppers, ginger, and cilantro, and add to the bowl. Add the Chat masala and tamarind (or tomato/lemon juice) and chopped egg and mix with a fork. Serves 8 to 10 people.

*\* These ingredients available at South Asian markets (e.g., Bangla Bazar) or Amazon.*

### **Bengali Sujir Halwa (Sweet)**

**By Alema Siddiky (modified from Siddika Kabir's book)**     *preparation time 15 minutes*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1/3 Cup ghee or clarified butter (substitute with regular butter or canola oil)
- 1 Cup semolina (shuji) or cream of wheat
- 2 inches cinnamon sticks (broken in a few pieces)
- 1 Tablespoons raisins
- 1 Cup sugar
- 2 Cups plus 2 Tablespoons water

In a pan on medium heat, sauté the semolina until it is lightly browned. Add cinnamon sticks and ghee (or butter or canola oil) and continue to cook until the paste turns medium brown - from 6 to 8 minutes. Pour in water and stir the paste until it boils (1 min). When the shuji bubbles add the sugar and raisins. Once the water dries up sauté the semolina a bit more for about a minute or so. By this time there should not be any water; the water should be absorbed. The consistency should be soft and dry but not liquid. Pour it on a dessert dish and garnish with more raisins. Can be eaten warm, at room temperature, or chilled. For more creamy taste, you may substitute the water with milk.