



# Samhati

Bangladesh Women's Organization

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

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

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October 4, 2021

Dear Friends,

We hope that you and your family and friends are well. Samhati's work is continuing despite the coronavirus challenges. Unfortunately, we have decided that given the Delta variant, it would not be prudent for us to have an in-person event. Our 2021 fundraiser will be a virtual event on Saturday, November 6, 2021, from 5:00 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. Like last year, we are enclosing two exclusive recipes from Samhati chefs and invite you to prepare them and join us online for a demo. Plus we are presenting a newly commissioned dance by Antora Rahman.***

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 Katakhal 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 November 6 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. People in our communities lost income and suffered severe economic loss to their small businesses. Schools and colleges closed on March 2020 and have only started to reopen in September 2021. We have been continuing to give out our scholarships to help the families. Our trainings were closed at various times during lockdowns, but have now resumed with smaller classes and mandatory masks. Coronavirus eventually did reach our village projects, but luckily there have been few casualties so far among our members. One of our cooperative members in Katakhalī died in 2021, possibly from Covid-19, but since no testing was available there is no definitive cause of death. There is a shortage of Covid-19 vaccine, especially in rural areas.

### **Katakhalī Project in Patuakhali 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 2021, scholarships were given to 30 students in the Katakhalī high school and 20 students in the neighboring island called Ganga Char, a very impoverished community. For the second time, we gave bicycles (and helmets) to 10 girls in Katakhalī/Modhukhalī.

Due to coronavirus, the preschool and our trainings were shut down for several months, but all our work has now resumed in smaller groups. We inaugurated a new Computer Training Program to help our students continue to learn online. Our classes were hugely popular and many people saw computers for the first time! We provided information to our community members to raise awareness about coronavirus, including wearing masks and social distancing. We hired women to make hundreds of 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 out-patient clinic if needed. We provided Covid-19 training to the doctor, along with PPE, two oxygen tanks, pulse oxymeter, and thermal scanner. The oxygen tank has saved the lives of many infants and adults with respiratory issues.

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

Our project in Hatianda, Natore District is now in its 14th 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. During the pandemic our classes have been smaller. Over the past year, we managed to train 40 new women in sewing and tailoring, which are traditionally male professions. The Computer Center provides basic computer learning, and this past year we were able to train 25 people, most of whom were female. 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 women of all ages are learning reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. To date, approximately 1,530 women have participated in the program. Due to coronavirus, our programs were closed for many months but now the programs have resumed in smaller groups. We again gave out scholarships for 30 high school children. Our farming cooperative is teaching vegetable gardening 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. This past year, we expanded our work to start a new computer literacy class to facilitate online learning during the pandemic. Samhati is providing 80 high school scholarships, health checkups, and training for women in literacy, sewing, organic vegetable cultivation and poultry rearing. We inaugurated five women's literacy centers in February 2021. Although there were a few months of closure due to Covid, these centers are running and we are requiring Covid-19 safety measures such as masks and distancing.

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

The college/vocational scholarship program in honor of the late Jahanara Ali is now in its fourth year. Ashamoni from Katakhalī is attending Patuakhali Mahila College and is continuing her studies. Beauty Akhtar finished at Nilphamari Government College and is now trying for admission to medical or dental studies. Samhati provided laptop computers to Ashamoni and Beauty so that they could study online while the colleges were closed during the pandemic. Anwara Khatun, who was attending Ranibhavani Mahila College, got married and has a new baby and dropped out. We are searching for a new scholarship candidate to replace her. Colleges and universities in Bangladesh should reopen soon.

# ***Samhati's 2021 Virtual Fundraiser***

**Saturday November 6, 2021**

**5 pm to 6 pm**

**Zoom link emailed to donors only**

**Featuring:**

**A new dance performance  
by Antora Rahman: "Liberation in  
Bloom"**

Tickets per person:

\$75 (**early-bird by October 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/586824> 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 enclosed recipes for Rumana's baklava and Nellie's pakora!**

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.