



SAMHATI

Bangladesh Women's Organization

30 Years of Accomplishments

In Support of Women & Children in Bangladesh

October 2014

The Very Beginning...

1984

November
A small group of
Bangladeshi women
in Washington found
Samhati – meaning
unity or solidarity

1985

January
First Board of Directors
Elected

March
Received 501C(3) tax
exempt status; registered
as charity with Maryland

PRESIDENT: Noorjahan Bose
VICE PRESIDENT: Selima Faruquee
SECRETARY: Jahanara Ali
ASST SECRETARY: Sajeda Solaiman
TREASURER: Hosne Are Baten
PUBLICITY SECRETARY: Rana Faruk
EXEC MEMBERS: Zainab Jalil, Najma Noorm Mohsena Islam,
Ismat Bahar Chowdhury, Nina Ahmed



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The First Annual Benefit Dinner

- Fundraising plan formulated in April 1985 – focused on charity bazaars and other small events
- April 1986: First benefit dinner at the Bannockburn Club House in Bethesda, MD
 - Live music and a fashion show

April 12, 1986

Overseas Tribune

Community Affairs

Bangla Funds For The Needy

By Raghbir Goyal

The *Samhati* (solidarity), a non profit Bangladesh Women's Organization, held its first benefit dinner and cultural show on April 5, 1986 at the Bannockburn Club House in Bethesda, MD.

According to Mrs. Noor Jahan Bose, the president of the group, the *Samhati* was formed about fifteen months ago to help their unfortunate sisters in Bangladesh, who are rejected by society and forced to leave their home and have no one to turn to. *Samhati* also helps children, some of whom are with these unfortunate women and others who are homeless and parentless. What the group does here is to raise funds and build shelters back home in Bangladesh.

The group has already raised over \$4000. With that it has built a shelter and a medicare unit for these women and children.

More than 150 people attended the function, including the Ambassador



Photo by Raghbir Goyal

Bangladesh Ladies at fund raising dinner at Bannockburn club.
of Bangladesh, A. Obaidullah Khan, and Mrs. Mahjabeen Khan.

More than \$2500 were raised during the gathering.

A fashion show organized by Mrs.

Mahjabeen Khan was also part of the program which ended with classical dances, songs and group dancing by Kanta Jamil, Rokeya Mir, Mita Sen-gupta and Mini Ray.

India Month



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The Early Days



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Fundraising Events



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Our Work with Mahila Parishad

- Large portion of work efforts from 1985-2000 supported Mahila Parishad, the largest women's organization in Bangladesh
- Samhati was instrumental in creating the first shelter in Dhaka for survivors of violence against women, Rokeya Shadan
- Started in a rented facility in December 1985
- Samhati provided a total of \$160,000 to finance Rokeya Shadan over the years and to fund the construction of a new facility in 1997



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad



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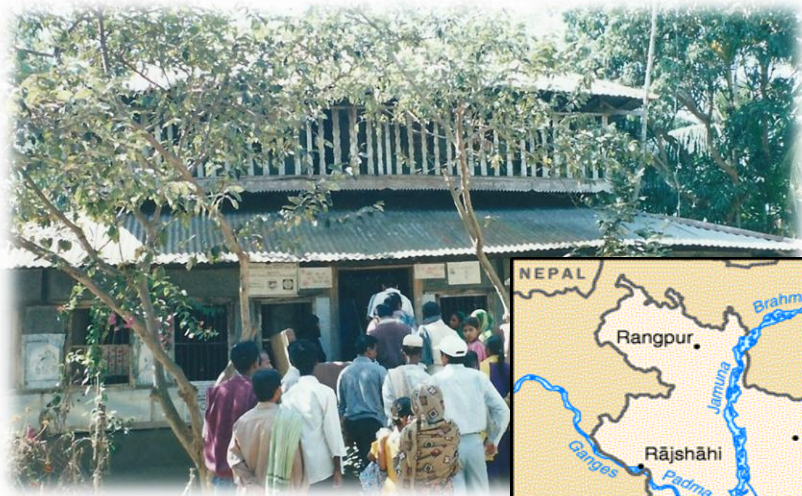
BANGLADESH

UNITED

RELIEF



2000: Launched Katakali Village Program



- Created first holistic eco-empowerment project in this remote coastal area
 - Initially with local NGO SAP-Bangladesh
- Included adult literacy, leadership building, provision of healthcare and family planning
- Focus on skills training on sustainability, sanitation, nutrition, farming and small business development
- Tremendous positive impact within this community



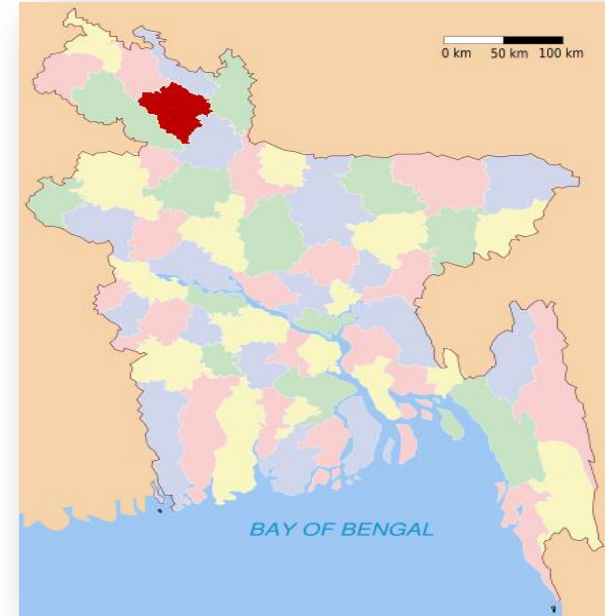
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2005: Launch of Rangpur Program

- Expanded eco-empowerment projects to the villages of Bathgari and Charani of Rangpur District
 - Partnered with Environment and Social Development Organization
- Women and girls receiving small loans and income generation training
 - Adult literacy, sustainability agriculture seed and sapling production, cattle and poultry raising, handicrafts, computer skills and generation of biogas and solar energy
- Three-year project resulted in over 400 women graduating from literacy classes and 300 more from other training programs



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2007: Katakali Major Updates



- Built brick & mortar health clinic and staff residence for Katakali Project
 - Building serves as defacto cyclone shelter
- Provided immediate direct relief after Cyclone SIDR
 - Rebuilt 50 homes and deeded to female head of household

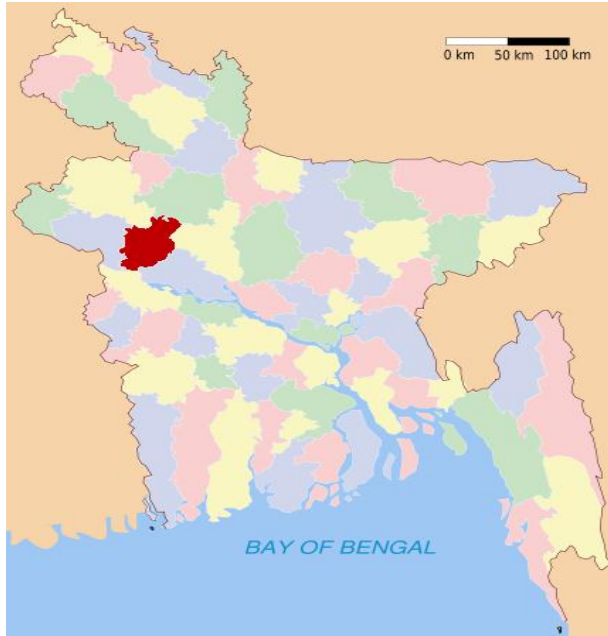


IMF Civic Program Grants



- From 2007-2011 - Samhati received annual grants of \$10,000-\$15,000 from IMF's Civic Program
- Graduated out in 2011

2008: Launched Natore District Program



- Work done in several villages within the Natore district
- Project includes adult literacy classes, training on sustainable agriculture, computer skills, creation of a media center and mobile library
- Scholarships also begun for middle and high school children
- Project now is run by local leadership

2011: Launched Laksmichap Program

- Within the Rangpur District, project includes support in a range of areas:
 - Education and scholarships
 - Health and nutrition
 - Skills training
 - A revolving small business fund



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Updates on Current Projects



1

Katakhali

2

Natore District



3

Laksmichap Union, Rangpur



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Training

- Adult Literacy and leadership classes, at more advanced levels
- Training on income generating skills: sewing, fabric printing, candle-making, confection making, vegetable gardening, etc.
- Approximately 300 villagers have learned to read, obtained vocational skills, and been trained on health and hygiene
- Katakhali women are sharing their skills by starting a literacy class for 32 women in a nearby village, Ganga Char

**Health Center**

- Since 2007, a fully-staffed medical center serves 500 families with routine healthcare
- Building serves as shelter during natural disasters

Scholarships

- 182 children have received scholarships and 65 children have finished high school



Climate Adaptation Activities

- Our Katakhali women are true climate warriors
- Samhati has introduced new homes that are sturdier and adapted to more severe storms and cyclones
- Our project leader has recently attended a 10-day UN training on eco-agriculture and how to farm in response to climate change
- The Katakhali women continue to participate in Storytelling with Saris, an art and advocacy project to bring attention to the issue of gender and climate change



2014 Update

Now in its 7th year, our work has brought strong positive change to the communities in Natore District in Northern Bangladesh

Training

- Adult Literacy classes have taught reading skills to over 500 adults
- In 2014, we provided scholarships to 20 children (14 girls, 6 boys)
- Computer Learning Center has 7 computers and provides a popular 3-month training course
 - Last year, 120 students received training
- Purchased new sewing machines (now have 8) and embroidery machine for tailoring classes

Loans

- Provided interest-free loans to ten women to start their own businesses
 - Six started tailoring work and purchased own machines
 - Four are raising cows for a dairy business

Additional Natore Initiatives

- Coordinating several initiatives in Hatiandah village
- Added a midday meal program in Narayanpur Primary School



This diverse community (includes several religious minorities) has developed an innovative “Rice Bank” program for sharing/stockpiling rice so that no one goes hungry

Education & Health

- Fund primary and pre-primary school supplies
- Provide 80 high school scholarships at 2 different schools
- Free health checks for schoolchildren and women
- Biannual eye check-up camp: has helped 650 people



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Additional Initiatives

Literacy

- Adult literacy program has helped 400 women to read and write

Revolving Fund

- Provided \$4000 toward fund for training women in income generation skills
 - About 100 women have been trained in sewing, organic vegetable cultivation, poultry rearing



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2015 Priorities

1

Katakhali

We need at least **\$17,000** for expenses in Katakhali and Ganga Char

2

Natore District

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

3

Laksmichap Union, Rangpur

We need **\$12,000** to continue to fund the Laksmichap Project for the coming year



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Thanks for Your Support!

Long-Term Donors

Rose Weiner

Jean Leiserson

Platinum Level Donors

Jaseem Ahmed

Ronald Creamer

Gold Level Donors

Dale and Julie Bennett * Blake Biles
Anita Jahan Bose * Sherry Epstein * Steven Escobar
Dr. Rumana Kazmi * Hafizur Rahman
Laurie Whiteman

Samhati Treasurers

Hosne Ara Baten

Zainab Jalil

Shaan Noman

Contributing Artists

Antora Rahman

Sheikh Mawla Milon

Shristee Nrittyangon

Sabrina Choudhury

Embassy of Bangladesh

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin
& Madam Yasmeen Ziauddin
and all the Embassy officers and staff



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