

Moanoghar Sharadindu Shekhar Chakma & Priti Chakma Memorial Scholarship



MOANO GHAR

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Founder: Shaddharmaditya Ven. Jnanasree Mahathera
Rangapani, Rangamati, P.O.Box 4500. Bangladesh

About the Scholarship

The Scholarship is created by Mr. Sharadindu Shekhar Chakma and his wife Ms. Priti Chakma, to be known as “**Moanoghar Sharadindu Shekhar Chakma and Priti Chakma Memorial Scholarship**”. The scholarship will be awarded annually to a meritorious student for tertiary level studies from the CHT indigenous communities. The initial endowment donated by them will be kept in a fixed deposit account under the custodianship of Moanoghar. Only the interest from this endowment will be spent for the scholarship.

Administration of the Scholarship

The scholarship will be administered as part of Moanoghar ‘Higher Education Loan Programme’ (HELP) and the overall terms and conditions of the HELP will be applicable to the recipient of the scholarship. Consequently, the recipient of the scholarship will have obligation to refund to Moanoghar the amount s/he has received once s/he enters into income generating employment after the studies. The recovered amount will be used for disbursing further loans to future candidates. The selection of the candidate will be carried out through a competitive process as laid down in Moanoghar’s HELP Policy (*available at www.moanoghar.org*).

About Sharadindu Shekar Chakma & Priti Chakma and family

Sharadindu Shekhar Chakma was born in 1937 in Khulyabil village of Burighat *mouza* in Naniarchar upazila of the Rangamati district. The original village was submerged under water after the construction of Kaptai hydro-electric dam. Following this catastrophic event, his parents, Mr. Phuloraj Chakma Mrs. Tanyabi Chakma, moved to Perachara located 4 kilometers north at the outskirts of Khagrachari sadar town in the 1960s.

Mr. Chakma’s education started first at Burighat Primary School. After Class IV, he then took admission at Choto Mohapurum Junior School at Class V. Later, he took admission in class VII in Khagrachari in the Khagrachari Junior High School. From there, he went to the Rangamati Government High School in 1951 from where he passed matriculation (now, Secondary School Certificate) in 1953. Subsequently, he took admission in Sir Ashutosh College, from where he completed HSC in 1955. After HSC, he enrolled in the Department of History in Dhaka University from he passed BA (with Honours) in 1958 and Masters in the following year.

It should be mentioned here that Mr. Chakma is first student from the indigenous minority communities of Bangladesh to study B.A. (Honours) in Dhaka University and second student to pass M.A. He was a meritorious student all through student life and because of that he always obtained merit scholarship from the Government which allowed him to continue his studies despite coming from a poor family.



Mr. Sharadindu Shekhar Chakma with Priti Chakma at Moanoghar

After his university education, he at first took a job as Junior Officer in 1961 in the then East Pakistan Cottage Industry Corporation. In the same year, he participated in the Central Superior Service of Pakistan (CSSP) and East Pakistan Civil Service (EPCS) examinations and passed in both. Although he was not finally accepted in the CSSP cadre, he joined the EPCS as a Deputy Magistrate in the same year in Sylhet District. He is the first EPCS officer from the indigenous minority communities in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

During his long years of service in the government, he served in various locations including in Gaibandha, Rangamati, Bandarban, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. He served as Sub-Divisional Officer (currently, Upazilla Nirbahi Officer) in Thakurgaon; Additional Deputy Commissioner in Pabna and as Personal Secretary to the Adviser of the President, Rajmata Binita Roy. Subsequently, he served as Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health and Family Planning. Afterward, he served for six years as Project Director of the National Livestock Development Project under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. In 1993, he was promoted as Additional Secretary and appointed as Principal of National Planning Academy under the Ministry of Planning from where he retired in 1994, ending his long illustrious career of government service. It is notable that he is the first Additional Secretary in the Government of Bangladesh from the minority communities, both religious and ethnic minorities.

In post-retirement period, he also continued in public service in various roles. When the Government of Bangladesh initiate the peace dialogue with Parbatya Chittogram Jana Samhati Samity (PCJSS) to bring to an end to the decades' long conflict in the CHT region, he was invited to be a member in the National Committee on CHT and the successful dialogue of the Committee with PCJSS resulted with the signing of the historic CHT Peace Accord in 2 December 1997 between the Government of Bangladesh and PCJSS.

In the following years, we served as ambassador of Bangladesh to Bhutan from 1998 till 2001. He is the first ambassador from the ethnic minority communities of Bangladesh to serve Bangladesh abroad.

Throughout his life, Mr. Chakma remained engaged with numerous social, religious, cultural and humanitarian associations. He is the founding member of Parbatya Bouddha Sangha and played the key role in establishing Sakyamuni Bouddha Vihara in Dhaka, besides other organizations across the Chittagong Hill Tracts. He has supported countless students, young people, often from his own expenses, to pursue studies or finding employment.

Mr. Chakma is a prolific writer. He has, so far, written 36 books on subjects comprising of the CHT's indigenous minorities, their history, culture and recent political development. This also includes 6 travelogues, a testimony of his travels in various regions of the world; and a book of Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy.

In recognition of his erudition, he has been invited to be a life member of Bangla Academy – the most prestigious literary institution in Bangladesh – along with Uttara Sahitya Parishad.

While, Mr. Chakma's life is a testimony of committed public service, humanitarianism and erudition, it has been only possible for the constant support of his wife Ms. Priti Chakma. Mr. Chakma himself pays his indebtedness to his wife in the following words, "my life without her would have been a journey in the desert. It is only because of rock-solid support and care of the family that I could take upon the challenges of my life. She deserves as much, if not more, for what I have been able to achieve".

Together, Mr. and Mrs. Chakma have 4 children and at present, 7 grand-children. All the children are illustrious in their careers.

Mr. Chakma is at present 88 years old and his wife, Mrs. Chakma 76 years old. May they live long and brings their contribution to the community, in the words of the Buddha "Bohujono hitayo, bohujono sukhayo" (for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many) as message of wisdom which, in many ways, also reflects his entire life.
