

“Moanoghar (Hill Home) is the ultimate symbol of serenity and peace of the lifestyle of the hill peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). We dream of every children of the region having the peace, serenity and quietude of “Moanoghar” in their life.”
(Founding statements of Moanoghar in 1974)

Moanoghar

An Ideal Refuge for Distressed Humanity



Students of Moanoghar

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Status:

Moanoghar is a non-political, non-profit and voluntary social organization, located in Rangapani, Rangamati sadar.

It is duly registered with the Department of Social Welfare (No. Ranga-18(871)/80 on December 9, 1980) and NGO Affairs Bureau (No. 1637 on 14 April 2001).

Background

Moanoghar was founded in 1974 in Rangapani, Rangmati Hill Tracts by a group of socially engaged Buddhist monks and laypersons with the objectives of providing shelter and education to children in distress and misery, victims from the construction of the Kaptai hydro-electric dam in 1960s and the recent liberation war in 1971. But to appreciate its mission, a brief note on the socio-economic condition of the Chittagong Hill Tracts would be relevant.



The construction of the Kaptai hydroelectric dam was a serious blow to the hill peoples of the region. Its creation presumably submerged under water one-thirds of all cultivable lands, uprooting thousands of people. The region, being hilly and mountainous, cultivable lands were already scarce. Furthermore, compensation arrangements for the victims were not properly implemented; as a result a vast majority of them received very little or did not receive any

compensation at all.

Moanoghar administrative office

The peoples uprooted from their homestead because of the dam, dispersed themselves in different parts of the region as internally displaced peoples. Seeing the distress of these internally displaced peoples, the then head priest of Boalkhali Dashabal Raj Vihar (Temple) opened a shelter home in 1963, called **Parbatya Chattal Bouddha Anath Ashram** where he started to provide shelter, food and education to the children of the victims of the dam.

This shelter home gradually expanded with helps and supports from the local community.

At the aftermath of independence of Bangladesh, the situation in the CHT significantly worsened due to growing influx of refugees and internally displaced peoples of the nine month long liberation war. It is in this backdrop, Moanoghar was founded in 1974 by individuals associated with the Parbatya Chattal Bouddha Anath Ashram

In the following years and decades, the situation of the CHT further deteriorated with continued fighting between the Government forces and the armed cadres of the Parbattya Chattagram Jono Samhati Samiti (PCJSS), the latter waging a low-intensity guerilla war for claiming autonomy for the region's indigenous peoples.

During this period of ethno-political turmoil, which literally left thousands of victims, Moanoghar proved itself as a safe heaven for hundreds of children affected by the nightmare of the conflicts.

Mission and Vision:

Moanoghar was established with a vision of social engagement and activism for

the service of the poor, deprived and the destitute – particularly the children. Children are the most vulnerable of society. But, they also hold the promise of the future.

Moanoghar's activism and service is rooted in the Buddhist concept of universal love and peace. The philosophy of non-violence is the key to realize this; among individuals, but also communities and societies, as well.



A snapshot of Moanoghar campus with students

Moanoghar also aspires to be the image of rich diversity, social harmony and peaceful co-existence of the people of diverse backgrounds in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

While its ambition is to retain and nurture this rich diversity, it also strives to impart this message of tolerance, compassion and mutual understanding to the outside world, which is very much reflective of the collective traditions and heritage of the CHT and its people of indigenous origin.

Objectives:

The main objective of Moanoghar is:

- to provide shelter, foods, clothes, general and vocational education and primary health care to indigenous poor, orphan and destitute children of CHT.
- to contribute in social, religious, educational, cultural and economic development of the indigenous people of CHT.
- to undertake programs of public welfare and to inculcate the idea of universal solidarity and peace with a view to establishing world peace.
- to eradicate illiteracy and initiate income generating and employment projects for the people of CHT.
- to eliminate the root cause of poverty and offer the people their righteous shares in the resources of the society.



A Students hostel

Brief Overview of Moanoghar

At present there are 650 children living in Moanoghar from class I to XII, aged between 7 to 18 years. Out of this total number of children 425 are boys and 225 are girls. Very much reflective of the rich ethnic diversity of the CHT, the children come from 12 different ethnic groups; Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Mro, Chak, Tanchangya, Pangkho, Khyang, Khumi, Lushai, Bawm and Barua (ethnic Bengalis who follow Buddhism)

As part of process of imparting education and providing shelter to the children, Moanoghar run and manages a number of initiatives. A brief presentation of these initiatives is given hereunder:

- **Moanoghar Residential High School:** The school is providing education to more than one thousand children both residential and non-residential as of 2007.
- **Higher Education Stipend Program:** Under this scheme, Moanoghar provides monthly stipends for tertiary level students. At present a total of 200 students are receiving free stipends under this initiative.
- **Moanoghar Pali College:** It provides students with courses on Buddhism and Pali language.
- **Moanoghar Library:** The library has a rich collection of books exceeding 10,000 volumes on Buddhism, Children, Education, CHT &

Indigenous peoples. The library is a point of reference and resources in the region.

- **Moanoghar Indigenous People's Language Preservation Program:** This project is run with the objectives of preservation and development of language and culture of the indigenous peoples of CHT.
- **Moanoghar Mini-Hospital:** The hospital offers charity health care services to the people of the region. Staff members of this Mini Hospital are 5 (five) and beneficiaries are approximately 15,000 (fifteen thousand) in number.
- **Moanoghar Technical School:** It offers courses on vocational and small entrepreneurship such as carpentry, plumbing and tailoring to the working children.
- **Fishery, Nursery, Agriculture & Afforestation:** These are income generating projects of Moanoghar, implemented by the students of Moanoghar on lands/fixed assets that Moanoghar own.

As of now, more than **1500 students passed SSC** (school level education) from Moanoghar. A further **400 students have completed tertiary level of education** and are established in various fields of profession.