

# MOULI MADHAB GHATAK

## DOCTOR TRUE TO HIS OATH

### The good doctor's mission is to help the physically challenged stand on their feet

**Moitreyee Ghosh | TNN**

Mouli Madhab Ghatak belongs to a vanishing tribe: that of a doctor with a mission. He has made it his life's mission not only to treat physically challenged people from the poorest sections of society, but also rehabilitate them financially.

His clinic at Park Circus is a ray of hope for the lakhs of people driven to penury by physical disability. They get free treatment here, hot meals — and a warm hug. “My mission is to make these unfortunate people self-sufficient so that they can stand on their own feet,” he says.

Ghatak bears their medical expenses and has convinced some pharma companies to bear only around 10% of the cost. He has appealed, in vain, to the state government to initiate a project for a medical allowance for handicapped, poor people. He has even give the scheme a name — ‘Pongushree’ — but the state social welfare department is not moved.

Ghatak's work extends to many villages, including Shayampur in Howrah, where around 150 disabled people live at the mercy of villagers. Ghatak visits the village regularly, provides free treatment and even hands our small financial doles. For them, he is the closest to god.

“We are the neglected people of society. No one cares for us. But Dr Mouli Madhab Ghatak is like an angel,” says said Ashoke Manna, who lost both his legs in a car accident. “He took charge of my treatment and now I can walk on artificial legs,” Manna said.

Proshanta Shaw, 48, a polio victim is grateful to Ghatak for arranging a wheelchair and regular financial support. “He got my wife a tailoring job. This is the main source of earning for my family,” said Shaw.

Ghatak is the founder of Medical Rehabilitation Trust, which works exclusively for abandoned, financially backward, handicapped people. People like Chaya Manna, a 36-year-old homemaker from Naul village in Howrah, who started losing her hearing after an accident. She couldn't afford a doctor's visit, let alone long-term treatment. Then Ghatak came across her and gifted her a hearing aid. “I am really grateful to our doctor. He is the reason I have a normal life now,” said Chaya.

Ghatak is also fighting for the basic rights of the handicapped to ensure they get equal opportunity in jobs. He is carrying out an awareness campaign among these people to make them conscious of their rights.

His mission started very early in life when Ghatak chucked the chance to specialize in surgery and medicine so that he could pursue physical medicine and work with the physically challenged. His activism extends to campaigning for construction of wheelchair ramps at all public facilities. “He gave us the courage and strength to stand for up for our rights. He is the person who approaches the governmental on our behalf,” said Rathin Roy, who has a bent backbone and can hardly get up from bed. “The doctor gives me free medical check-ups and medicines,” said Roy.

Ghatak is now getting ready to fulfill his dream of setting up a Rehab Village, where the disabled will get proper medical treatment, along with vocational training and job opportunities. “Our dream is to establish a rehab centre in every

village so that these abandoned people can lead a life of dignity," said Ghatak, eyes sparkling with hope.



SOCIAL HEALER: Dr Mouli Madhab Ghatak with his patients. He has transformed the lives of dozens free of cost



