



Underprivileged children from Charulata Bidyapith at Tulatali in Chittagong flash the victory sign. The school was founded by six students for providing free education. It currently has 120 students.

PHOTO: STAR

# Small school, Small school, big hope big hope

## Six Ctg youths running school for underprivileged children

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Charulata Bidyapith, a school initiated by six youths studying at different educational institutions in Chittagong, gives a ray of hope for underprivileged children to get an education.

Domestic help Minara Begum and her day labourer husband Nagor Shikder are now happy as their two daughters, Nupur Akhter and Jumur Akhter, and their son Mohammad Shahadat are getting quality education.

"We cannot afford to send our children to such a school that offers standard education. We all are really thankful to them [the founders]," said Minara.

In the mornings, Nupur, 13, and her younger sister Jumur, 11, work at a Fish Processing Factory in Gate-2 area in Chittagong city, on a temporary basis and in afternoons, they go to Charulata Bidyapith, where classes begin at 2:00pm and continue till 5:00pm.

The school, situated in Gate-2 area of Tulatali, started its journey around six years ago with the aim of providing quality education to underprivileged children.

Currently, 120 children are getting free education from the school, enrolled from nursery till class five.

Students from renowned universities and colleges in Chittagong conduct the classes.

Besides, the school provides students study materials free of cost, and the students are served quality food on special occasions.

Students also get new clothes and shoes during Eid and Durga Puja.

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Even, the school also bears treatment costs of students and their parents.

Six youths -- Emdad Hussain Ruman, Avik Raihan, Sabuj Mandal, Soumen Nandy, Saleh Uddin Rashed and Rajen Dey -- founded the school with only 20 children after renting a room in Tulatali area on April 14, 2012.

They were then students of different educational institutions, including Chittagong Medical College, Chittagong University and Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology.

The six also have a charity organisation named Charulata which has 82 members. The school is being run under the charity.

The school manages its expenses from the monthly contribution of the 82 members.

"We founded the school thinking of doing something for these underprivileged and helpless children," said one of the founders Emdad Hossain Ruman, who completed his MBBS from CMC.

"I always led a privileged life, where my parents met all my needs. I saw that young souls were being abused and addicted to drugs which prompted me to do something for them," he added.

Another founder, Rajen Dey, who

completed his engineering graduation from CUET, said their work would continue for the betterment of those children's future.

Nupur, a class-III student, said she loves to go to school and wants to study more after class five.

Her younger sister Jumur is a class four student and brother Shahadat is a class two student.

"I want to serve the underprivileged people of the country after becoming a doctor," said Shima Akhter, a class two student.

But she is in uncertainty that pursuing the goal could come to a halt because of her family's financial problem.

Mainur Akhter, a fourth-grader, said she is learning many new things every day.

"We do a lot of fun here and enjoy our classes," she said.

"My daughter wanted to go to school. I was always feeling bad as I could not send my daughter to a good school," said rickshaw puller Mohammad Rafiq, whose daughter is a fifth-grader at the school.

Now other poor dwellers of Tulatali, whose children have not been enrolled in the school yet, are waiting for the next admission session, which the founders say will begin next year.