



Member, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Chief of Chakma Circle (*the Chakma Raja*), Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)
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EDUCATION

Raja Devasish Roy did a BA from Rangamati Government College, University of Chittagong in 1981 and *BA (Hons) in Law* from the University of Kent at Canterbury, Kent, UK, in 1985. In 1986, he received the degree of *Barrister-at-Law* from the Inns of Court School of Law, London. In 1991, he obtained a *Diploma in Legal Studies* at the La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND & SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

Raja Devasish Roy is a traditional *Circle Chief* – known as the *Chakma Raja* or *Chakma Chief*, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region of Bangladesh since 1977. As Chief he is directly responsible for land and revenue administration, administration of justice and for advising several CHT-related statutory governmental institutions, as an ex-officio adviser or member, including the (i) district civil and revenue administrations of Rangamati and Khagrachari districts of the CHT; (ii) the Rangamati and Khagrachari hill district councils; (iii) the CHT Development Board, (iv) the *advisory committee* of the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and (v) the CHT Land Disputes Resolution Commission.

He has been practising law in the Dhaka District Court since 1988 and in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (High Court Division) since 1991. He has taught *English law* to London University LL.B students at Bhuiyan Academy, Dhaka, and *Constitutional Law* at Rangamati Law College.

In January, 2008 he was appointed as a Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser (Minister of State), Caretaker Government of Bangladesh. He was in charge of the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and the Ministry of Environment & Forests and held these posts until January, 2009, when an elected government resumed office in Dhaka after the caretaker administration of fourteen advisers facilitated one of the fairest elections in the history of Bangladesh.

In May, 2010 he was appointed a Member (Indigenous Peoples Nominate) of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (indigenous-nominated from the Asia Region) for the term 2011-13, effective from 01 January 2011. The appointment by the President of the Economic and Social Council followed an

election process wherein his nomination was endorsed by an overwhelming number of indigenous organizations from fifteen countries in Asia.

In May 2013, at the 12th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, he has been reappointed as a Member (indigenous-nominated from the Asia Region) which is effective from 1st January 2014 until 31st December 2016. The reappointment followed the similar election process to the previous one with the support of numerous indigenous organizations from all over Asia.

MEMBERSHIP OF VOLUNTARY BODIES

Raja Devasish Roy holds membership of many international, national and local voluntary organizations dealing with indigenous peoples' rights, human rights, development and environment. These include the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, London, UK, the Supreme Court Bar Association, Dhaka, Kredha: Peace Council for States; Minorities and Indigenous Peoples; South Asia People's Commission on the Rights of Minorities (SAPCROM); Bangladesh Legal Aid & Services Trust (BLAST); Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD); Arannayk Foundation, Maleya Foundation, Australian Adivasi Association of Bangladesh, Taungya and Dhaka Club Limited.

RESEARCH

Has conducted research on human rights, indigenous peoples' rights, constitutional and administrative law, land rights, forestry, environment, culture and development.

SPECIAL EXPERIENCES

- Led indigenous leaders of Rangamati district in talks with *National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs*, before voluntarily withdrawing from process due to the prevailing un-democratic environment of negotiations, 1988;
- Acted as Resource Person and Facilitator during formal dialogues between the Government of Bangladesh and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (JSS), at Padma Guest House, Dhaka, on invitation of both parties, December, 1997. The dialogues resulted in the signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord on 2 December, 1997;
- Led delegation of CHT indigenous leaders on goodwill and cultural exchange visit to Saami people (Norway) and Greenlandic Innuit People (Denmark), sponsored by ILO, 1998;
- Advised Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the revision of its Policy on Indigenous Peoples as a member of an international indigenous experts' team, 2001;
- Founding chairperson of the Hill Tracts NGO Forum, a representative body of local NGOs of the CHT, 1999-2006;
- Chaired, co-chaired or facilitated several UN-related processes, including at the *UN Commission on Sustainable Development*, between 1995 to 2007; In 2006-2007, he was one of the two co-chairpersons of the Global Indigenous Peoples' Caucus at the Working Group on the Draft

Declaration, which facilitated the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly the following year (2008).

- Adviser to the UNDP Project in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (2004 to 2007);
- Member of the Steering and Coordination Committees of the Asian Development Bank-funded Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project, 2005 to the present;
- Led delegation of the Government of Bangladesh to several international conferences, including the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change in Poznan, the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn, and to the Conference of the Parties to the Ozone Treaties in Doha, in 2008. He also chaired the SAARC Environment Ministers' Meeting in Dhaka in 2008, which led to the Dhaka Declaration on Climate Change.
- Member of delegation of the Government of Bangladesh to the UN Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC)(COP-15, COP-16 and COP-17). At the aforesaid conferences, he was also an active member of the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus.
- Has advised parliamentary and other leaders from several countries over the last few years on constitutional, legal and administrative matters, focusing on indigenous peoples' rights. In 2010 and 2011, at the request of Adivasi-Janajati members of the Nepalese Constituent Assembly, he gave talks, and submitted written reports, on the incorporation of rights of indigenous peoples in the future Constitution of Nepal. In July-August, 2010, he headed a special committee to draft proposed amendments to the Constitution of Bangladesh on indigenous issues, formed at the request of the indigenous members of parliament from Bangladesh and other national-level indigenous leaders. The amendments were endorsed by all five indigenous MPs and other adibashi leaders (including himself) and submitted to the Constitutional Reforms Committee and to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh.
- 2011 to date: Member and Co-Chairperson of United Nations Initiative on Indigenous Peoples (UNIPP); The Board includes representatives of indigenous peoples, ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF and UNPF.
- 2013; He was elected to serve a second term as a member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from 2014-16. He is hopeful that the election will be endorsed by the President of the Economic and Social Council through a formal appointment.

PUBLICATIONS

Formal publications on indigenous peoples' rights include those by Cambridge University Press, ILO, IWGIA (Denmark), Minority Rights Group International (UK), Forest People's Programme (UK), ICIMOD (Nepal), Tebtebba Foundation (Philippines), University of Arizona, Dhaka University, Oxfam-Bangladesh and Association for Land Reform and Development. He has also published articles and reports within Bangladesh and abroad in several journals and newspapers.