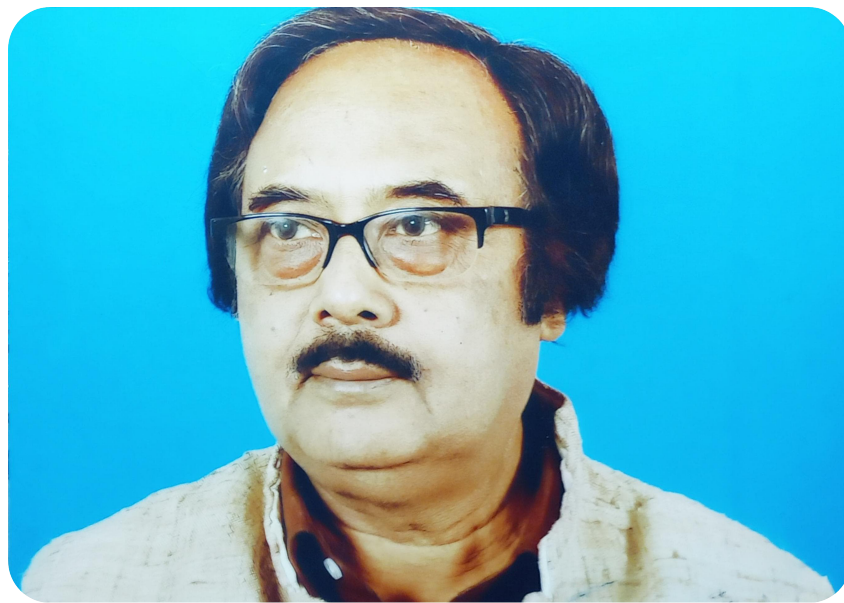




Autobiography of Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar

Chapter 1: Roots Beneath the Floods

Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar was born on the 1st of January, 1941, in a village called **Betim**, located in what was then the Pabna District of undivided Bengal. It was a time of immense political tension and transition—just six years before India would gain independence from British rule. The subcontinent had not yet been divided, and Bengal was still one.

Despite being officially categorized as a village, Betim was far from undeveloped. The area had a vibrant local economy, supported by a bustling market, agricultural trade, and even a small-scale industry. Temples and schools dotted the region, creating a sense of community and culture that shaped young Gopesh's early years.

However, nature played a dominating role in village life. Just a few kilometers to the east owed a mighty distributary of the Brahmaputra River, locally known as the **Jamuna**. This was not to be confused with the Jamuna of Vrindavan or Delhi. This river had a life of its own—broad, wild, and unforgiving. Every monsoon, it would overflow its banks, engulfing Betim in floods and turning everyday life into a struggle for survival.

To adapt, families in Betim constructed their homes on elevated platforms known as **Uju**—small artificial mounds that rose above the flood line. Gopesh's home was one such island in a sea of annual inundation. Nearby lived the Hui family and another locally referred to as the “bus family.” All of them shared the same routine: maintaining boats year-round, ready to be launched as soon as the first waters rose.

Even the journey to school was unconventional. During particularly severe floods, students would ferry one another across water-logged fields. In one such memory, Gopesh recalled being barely a toddler—just a year and a half old—when he was carried to school on the shoulders or heads of older students.

Language, too, was a part of his early challenges. Though surrounded by Bengali speakers, young Gopesh initially spoke little of the local tongue. English education had already found its way into the curriculum under British influence, and he began picking it up early on.

His father, **Yogesh Chandra Sarkar**, was a respected and successful businessman. The family owned large tracts of fertile land and sustained themselves through agriculture. His mother, **Shanti Shudha Sarkar**, managed the household with grace and strength. Their lifestyle was relatively comfortable, even during the early years of British colonialism.

In 1947, the partition of India brought a seismic shift in their lives. Pabna, once part of India, became a region of East Pakistan overnight. Gopesh and his family suddenly found themselves as citizens of a different country. In 1971, after the liberation war, East Pakistan transformed into Bangladesh, and the land of Gopesh's childhood was reborn under a new flag.

Years later, Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar would look back on this period not just as the setting of his early life, but as a foundation that taught resilience, adaptability, and above all, rootedness—values that stayed with him through his journey as a scholar, teacher, and political thinker. He would go on to earn a PhD in the 1970s, but the oods of Betim remained etched into his memory like an origin myth.

Chapter 2: A Scholar Across Borders

The 1950s and '60s were years of upheaval, not just for the Indian subcontinent but for a young man determined to find his place in a fractured world. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar, raised in the oodplains of Betim, had grown up amid both abundance and adversity. But his intellect was never con ned by geography. As the political climate in East Pakistan shifted toward religious and cultural suppression of Hindus and Bengali intellectuals, Gopesh knew that his ambitions would need to cross borders.

In the early 1960s, he migrated to India—then a young, chaotic, but hopeful democracy. His arrival marked not just a physical relocation but a transition into a new phase of life: one dedicated to education, knowledge, and service.

He enrolled in college with a focus on **Botany**, a subject that had long fascinated him since childhood. The green expanses of his homeland had always whispered secrets, and now he sought to uncover them scienti cally. Gopesh quickly stood out among his peers—not just for his academic excellence but for his curiosity, eloquence, and deep philosophical nature.

It was during this time that the foundations of his future work began to crystallize. He pursued his **M.Sc. in Botany**, delving into plant taxonomy, physiology, and ecology with the same dedication that had carried him across a nation's partition.

But he wasn't done yet.

In the **1970s**, after years of study, eldwork, and teaching, **he earned his PhD in Botany**—a rare accomplishment for someone from his background and generation. His doctoral work contributed meaningfully to the understanding of plant systems, especially those endemic to the eastern regions of the Indian subcontinent. Though modest in speaking of his achievements, Gopesh's academic contributions earned him the title of "Doctor," and with it, a quiet but powerful respect within his circles.

Even as he focused on his research, his mission was never limited to personal advancement. He began to teach—formally and informally—offering lessons not just in science, but in character. His classrooms were places of deep learning, not rote memorization. He challenged students to ask "why" before accepting "what," a rare trait in the post-colonial Indian education system.

For Dr. Sarkar, education was liberation. Not just from poverty or ignorance, but from the constraints of fear, prejudice, and narrow thinking. His classroom became an extension of his worldview—secular, rational, and deeply rooted in empathy.

As the 1970s unfolded, the boy who once oated to school on oodwaters had become a man of letters, guiding others through the turbulent waters of knowledge and self-discovery.

Chapter 3: From Scholar to Statesman

By the time Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar had established himself as an academic and teacher, he had also grown into a man of ideals—fueled by his early experiences with displacement, injustice, and a deep love for his country.

He had lived through Partition, witnessed the formation of Bangladesh, and observed how lines drawn by politics often devastated the lives of common people. These events had not just affected him personally—they had shaped his political consciousness. Education had sharpened his intellect; experience had given him wisdom; and now, public service called to him.

After decades of teaching, mentoring, and research, **Dr. Sarkar retired from formal academic service in 2003**. Retirement, however, did not mark the end of his productivity—it marked the beginning of a new chapter. Free from institutional duties, he turned his attention more fully to society at large.

Throughout the early 2000s, he became increasingly involved in **social work and political discourse**, often holding gatherings in his home or attending local forums to raise awareness about issues like corruption, rural neglect, and the erosion of ethical values in governance.

His reputation as a man of principles began to draw attention. He had no political family background, no deep pockets, no appetite for mudslinging or drama. Yet, in a world disillusioned with politics, his presence felt refreshing.

In **2009**, at the age of 68, he took a bold step. He contested the **Indian General Elections** as a candidate from the **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** in the **Raiganj constituency** of West Bengal. This constituency was historically in uenced by political heavyweights like **Deepa Dasmunsi**, who ultimately won the election that year.

Dr. Sarkar's campaign was modest in its scale but rich in purpose. He **garnered nearly 40,000 votes**, an impressive number for a rst-time candidate with no political machinery or celebrity appeal. His strength lay in his message—rooted in **education reform, rural development, and clean governance**.

He didn't promise the moon. Instead, he spoke with calm conviction about building better infrastructure, ensuring quality education for rural youth, and bringing transparency to public o ces. His interactions with voters were personal—house visits, village meetings, quiet but powerful speeches that made people re ect rather than react.

Though he did not win the seat, his campaign made a statement. It showed that politics was not only for the powerful, and that intellectuals, too, had a voice that mattered in democracy. Many in Raiganj remember his run as an act of courage and idealism in an increasingly cynical landscape.

After the elections, Dr. Sarkar continued to serve in quieter ways—through writing, mentoring, and offering counsel to younger politicians and thinkers. For him, the political path had never been about power, but about participation. Losing the election wasn't a failure—it was a fulfillment of duty.

Chapter 4: The Healer Within

Even after a long and accomplished academic career, Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar was not content to rest on his laurels. Retirement in 2003 brought him time, but not idleness. He redirected his boundless energy toward a domain he had quietly nurtured for years—**homeopathy**.

Long before he formally stepped away from the classroom, Dr. Sarkar had developed a fascination with homeopathic medicine. His scientific training in botany, combined with a deep respect for holistic well-being, made him curious about systems of healing beyond conventional allopathy. But he did not approach it with mysticism or blind faith. He approached it like a scientist.

He began with books—volumes of classical homeopathic texts, materia medica, case studies, and journals. He devoured them with the same scholarly rigor that had earned him his PhD. What started as a curiosity soon evolved into a quiet expertise. He observed patterns, experimented with remedies, and reflected deeply on the mind-body connection.

But this expertise was never broadcasted. **It remained an entirely personal pursuit.** He **never opened a clinic, never took on patients from the public, and never charged a rupee.** Homeopathy, to him, was **a tool of self-care and family care**, not a professional path. Few people outside his immediate circle even knew he possessed this skill.

For years, he treated himself, his wife, and his children using his knowledge of homeopathy. Whether it was a chronic ailment or a seasonal discomfort, Dr. Sarkar would quietly prepare the appropriate remedy, always backed by research and observation.

Despite lacking formal certification in the field, **his background as a PhD scholar** lent him the intellectual discipline and scientific curiosity to navigate the intricacies of homeopathy with precision. He remained respectful of allopathic medicine, often integrating both systems where needed. But when it came to his own family's minor health concerns, **he trusted his homeopathic remedies with unwavering confidence.**

This **silent mastery** over a traditional science added another layer to his character—one that revealed his deep belief in self-reliance, personal responsibility, and lifelong learning. In an age where credentials were auctioned and expertise was monetized, Dr. Sarkar chose discretion. His practice remained unspoken, unseen, and deeply personal.

To this day, **his homeopathy notebooks remain in his study**, filled with notes, annotations, and references—testaments to a healer who never sought applause, only understanding.

Chapter 5: Roots and Responsibility

Beyond the classroom, the laboratory, and even the quiet pages of his homeopathic journals, Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar was, at his core, a deeply devoted family man. His life was not defined solely by academic accolades or intellectual exploration. It was anchored by responsibility, love, and values passed down through generations.

Born in 1940, he grew up in a time when the meaning of "family" extended beyond the nuclear structure. Kinship meant duty, sacrifice, and unwavering support—principles he carried with him through every stage of his life. Even as he pursued higher education and built a scholarly reputation, he never saw personal success as separate from the well-being of his family.

He married in the early years of his career, forming a household that would become a place of both learning and warmth. His relationship with his wife was one of mutual respect, quiet understanding, and shared resilience. Together, they raised children with values rooted in honesty, discipline, and education. While he was not overtly strict, there was an unspoken structure in the home—a rhythm guided by his own lifestyle: measured, thoughtful, and always purposeful.

Dr. Sarkar believed that education began at home. Books lined the shelves of his residence, and discussions at the dinner table often drifted toward ideas rather than gossip. He never imposed his views, but led by example. It wasn't unusual for his children to see him immersed in reading at odd hours or quietly working on lesson plans long after retiring from formal service.

Yet, for all his intellect, **he was a man of simplicity**. He disliked extravagance, preferring moderation in both material life and speech. His clothes were modest, his habits disciplined, and his desires minimal. If he held any pride, it was in the accomplishments of those he loved.

His relationship with his grandchildren added a new dimension to his life. No longer bound by the pressures of work, he took joy in their questions, their quirks, and their curiosity. He never imposed expectations on them, but gently nudged them toward self-belief and integrity. His interactions were never theatrical, but they lingered in memory—a quiet story, a relevant quote, a small act of encouragement.

Behind his quiet demeanor was a deep well of emotion. He felt pain deeply, though he seldom expressed it. He had endured loss, political disillusionment, health struggles—but his resilience remained intact, shaped by decades of discipline and an unshakable inner compass.

To him, **life was not about chasing recognition**, but about fulfilling one's dharma—one's duty. Whether it was to his students, his children, or even to himself, he believed in showing up, doing the work, and letting the results follow.

In a world increasingly drawn to speed, noise, and visibility, **Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar lived a life of quiet substance**. His was not the legacy of a public icon, but of a rooted elder whose presence gave

strength to those around him—not through grand gestures, but through steady love, earned wisdom, and unwavering responsibility.

Chapter 6: The Reluctant Politician

In 2009, long after his retirement and well into his years of reflection and quiet living, Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar made a decision that surprised many: he entered the political arena.

At the age of 69, he stood as a **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** candidate in the Indian General Elections from the **Raiganj Lok Sabha constituency** in West Bengal. For someone who had spent most of his life in the contemplative worlds of academia and personal healing, this foray into public service was neither an ambition nor a sudden leap. It was, as with most things in his life, an act of principle.

Dr. Sarkar had long observed the **decay of values in Indian politics**. The corruption, the opportunism, and the lack of ideological substance disheartened him. He believed that politics should serve the people—not exploit them. It wasn't about power, but responsibility. And so, when the opportunity arose to represent a party whose core nationalist ideals he resonated with, he accepted—not out of personal desire, but out of a sense of **duty to his country** and his region.

He campaigned not with flashy promises or large rallies, but with ideas. He spoke to people directly, often walking from home to home, engaging them with sincerity. His tone was never confrontational—he was not a crowd-pleaser—but he offered clarity. He spoke about **educational reforms, rural development**, and **integrity in governance**. Many listened. Some dismissed him. A few were inspired.

In a political landscape dominated by seasoned campaigners and party loyalists, Dr. Sarkar's honest, academic demeanor stood out. He had no interest in political theatrics. He refused to make false promises or participate in mudslinging. He carried with him a scholar's mind, a teacher's clarity, and a citizen's earnest hope.

Ultimately, **he received 40,000 votes**, a commendable number for a first-time candidate in a stronghold dominated by Congress leader **Deepa Dasmunsi**, who won the seat with over 450,000 votes. Dr. Sarkar did not take the defeat personally. He never expected to win. His candidacy had not been about victory—it had been about **making a point**. About showing that good people, even if unelectable, must still try.

After the election, he quietly stepped away from politics, returning to the peace of his home, his books, and his family. He never expressed regret. In fact, he would often say, “At least I tried. At least I did not sit on the sidelines and complain.”

His brief political chapter was not defined by fame, headlines, or influence—but by **courage, conviction, and clarity of conscience**. In a time when many intellectuals stayed distant from politics out of cynicism or fear, **Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar walked into it, knowing full well what it entailed**, and emerged with his integrity untouched.

Chapter 7: The Silent Legacy

In the quiet town of Raiganj, nestled among bookshelves, handwritten notes, and the comforting presence of family, **Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar** continued to live a life that didn't seek attention—but quietly commanded respect. His journey, spanning more than eight decades, was one of purpose rather than popularity. And in that purpose lay his true legacy.

He never sought to be remembered as a celebrity, nor did he care for the rewards of fame. What mattered to him was whether he lived truthfully—according to his principles, his sense of duty, and his inner moral compass. He walked the long road of academia, the silent path of self-taught medicine, and the uncertain ground of politics, always with the same posture: head held high, expectations low, and heart rooted in honesty.

He was a man of contradictions, and yet, perfectly whole. A scientist who believed in homeopathy. A teacher who chose silence over status. A politician who never played games. A father and grandfather who guided more by actions than words. These juxtapositions did not confuse his identity—they enriched it.

Even in his later years, Dr. Sarkar remained intellectually sharp and spiritually anchored. He continued to reflect on the rapidly changing world around him with a blend of concern and insight. But perhaps one of the most profound expressions of his care and foresight came in a decision he made regarding his ancestral home in Raiganj.

As his sons, **Goutam and Uttam**, began to build their own lives and families in **Bangalore**, Dr. Sarkar recognized the burden of financial pressures that came with buying homes in a booming metropolitan market. Understanding the steep real estate costs in Bangalore, he made the difficult yet purposeful decision to **sell the family home in Raiganj** for ₹80 lakhs.

He kept ₹10 lakhs for himself, and distributed ₹33 lakhs each to **Goutam and Uttam**, enabling them to purchase their apartments and secure their families' futures. But this decision wasn't just about money—it was about **protection, accessibility, and dignity**.

Dr. Sarkar observed that Raiganj had **no direct airport or easy connectivity**, and it was increasingly unlikely that his sons, living busy lives in Bangalore, would be able to visit frequently. **Relocating to Barasat, Kolkata**, in the year **2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic**, brought him geographically closer to both the city and modern infrastructure. The **new home was strategically located near Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport**, which made future visits easier and more practical for his children and grandchildren.

In **December 2021**, his elder son **Goutam**, daughter-in-law **Priyanka**, and grandson **Tuhin Sarkar** visited the Barasat home for the very first time. The visit was filled with quiet pride and admiration—it felt like a **huge milestone** for a man in his **80s** to buy a new home with such clarity of vision and calm resolve. It

wasn't just a new house—it was a symbol of independence, resilience, and a testament to how deeply he valued the well-being of his children.

More importantly, there was a political layer to his reasoning. Given his past **association with the BJP**, he foresaw a possibility that after his passing, **political parties—especially those in opposition to the BJP—could attempt to claim the land in Raiganj**, using it as a tool to stake ideological or physical control. He did not want his sons to be dragged into legal disputes, or forced to reclaim family property through courts and bureaucracy. He wanted **no battles left behind**.

As always, his decision was made not for himself, but for those he loved. He didn't announce it with fanfare. He never sought recognition for it. But his actions demonstrated once again the same quiet strength and unwavering clarity that defined his life.

To those who knew him well, he was more than a man with degrees and elections behind him. He was a lighthouse—quietly illuminating the path through example. He inspired not by volume but by presence. His greatest teachings weren't in classrooms or speeches, but in the way he lived: **simply, ethically, mindfully**.

His grandchildren, like the author of this very memoir, grew up witnessing a kind of strength that isn't easily found in books. The strength to stay silent when the world is loud. The strength to heal others without needing applause. The strength to stand for something—even when no one stands with you.

Now, in his 80s, his voice may be slower, his steps more measured—but his legacy grows louder with each passing year. Not because it is broadcast, but because it is lived through those he touched. Through former students who remember his clarity. Through children who inherited his values. Through curious minds who one day might read about a quiet man from Raiganj who lived with unmatched integrity.

In the end, **Dr. Gopesh Chandra Sarkar's life was not a performance—it was a meditation**. A sustained act of discipline, duty, and dignity.

And as his grandson, I, **Tuhin Sarkar**, feel privileged—not just to have recorded this story—but to have been shaped by it.