



Chronicles Of Love - Tawang Medicare & Gram Seva - March 2019

Chronicles Of Love – Tawang Diaries March 09-16, 2019.

The Arunachal Pradesh Gram Seva & Medicare is a Project that is the closest to all of Sai Ashraya's volunteers. It really has been two years of sheer bliss for the whole team. This time the preparations began earlier than ever before with the mobile hospital getting some really amazing upgrades. The mobile hospital is now completely solar powered with all instruments aboard running with the help of state-of-the-art solar equipment installed. This basically means being totally independent in terms of power. Further, the mobile hospital saw some utility upgrades with a new shelf on top of the perforated cover made for the solar batteries, and some new electronics too. The mobile hospital was all set and began its journey with two supermen behind the wheels and one volunteer aboard for the first leg of the road journey from Bangalore to Guwahati, traversing through the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, West Bengal, and Assam. It was a special journey of 2900 kilometres covered in 3 ½ days. Travelling through extreme heat and dusty weather conditions was a real test and the volunteers made it through with the mobile hospital clocking good speeds and also returning excellent fuel efficiency despite the heavy load of all the medical equipment, medicines cargo, diagnostics, stationery, and linen. All through the journey where we travelled through the real India, the mobile hospital was an absolute showstopper with at least 10-15 people taking a look and many making requests for their villages to be visited by the team. One such moving request came from Malda District, West Bengal, from where an elder called Sai Ashraya's toll free number and gave the details of the requirement in and around the area while showering his Blessings on the team. The volunteers explained the facilities inside to anyone who requested and it was a great joy listening and speaking in multiple languages with all these people. India is the most vibrant nation in the world and when you soak in those vibes the feeling is simply surreal. After a really long journey which was Blissful, we reached Guwahati, the capital city of Assam, at 10:15am on the 8th Of March. The cargo was unloaded and kept in the hotel room and the mobile hospital was taken to the service station for examination. The results were all good and a few routine jobs were

done following which the mobile hospital was given a proper shampoo bath! All this took a really long time and we loaded all the stuff back in at 6:00pm! The heat had been searing through the past few days and a cold breeze offered some respite. With that we now were at the eve of yet another amazing time ahead. The rest of the volunteers arrived the following morning at around 10:00am and after running a few checks we were all clear and ready to begin our journey to the land of the rising sun, Arunachal Pradesh.

The start of the second leg of our journey was wonderful with pleasant weather conditions. After a journey of 7 ½ hours we reached Tenga Valley in Arunachal Pradesh. One of the biggest bases of the Indian Army is located here and we stay not too far away in a quiet place with a river flowing full flow behind our rooms. The weather had already become way colder than we expected and we quickly finished our dinner before lights out time.

At 6:30am the next morning, our journey began to Tawang District. We got our big fuel cans filled up for rest of the Seva as fuel can be a real problem if we are not prepared. In an hour's time we began the climb. The drive was getting harder than ever and it was too cold even before we reached 10,000 feet to the Baisakhi Garrison where we generally stop for breakfast. Once we reached the Baisakhi Garrison we headed to the Madras Café where we were welcomed by our Jawans whom we were meeting regularly and one of them enquired about a team member of ours who couldn't come for this time's Seva. By this time it was snowing heavily outside. Very soon we received information about the Indian Army taking safety measures to make sure that no one is in danger. The Soldiers had clearing up the snow right from the morning.



@ 10,000 Feet before entering tougher terrain!

We slowly got moving and with near zero visibility there were a few nerves all around. We were moving literally at snail's pace. As we neared an altitude of 14,000 feet we could barely see anything. The mobile hospital and the SUV become aeroplanes moving through the clouds and heavy snowfall. The windspeed was also high. The Indian Army and the Border Roads Organisation were working tirelessly to ensure everyone's safety while shivering in the cold themselves. We Salute All Our Forces for all that they do for us, sacrificing their today for our tomorrow. It was 2 ½ hours of driving in the most extreme weather. The oxygen levels at such an altitude is always on the lower side and more so when the weather turns down south.



The road to Heaven! @ 14,000 Feet



A view from the window of our Mobile Hospital en route to our destination!

We reached the Jaswant Singh Garh Memorial after a really tough drive and heaved a sigh a relief. After offering our salutations to this great soldier who laid down his life fighting for our country alongside 2 more soldiers for more than 72 hours against the Chinese in the 1962 war, we met Our Soldiers who told us how bad the weather was and that it was constantly around -15 to -20 degrees Celsius. We were clearly surprised by the extended winter and made up our minds for the most challenging Arunachal Gram Seva & Medicare yet. The Indian Army makes tea and some refreshments for all those who come here and after a short stop where we soaked in the vibes of this surreal place, we resumed our journey.

The weather got slightly better and after 24 long hours we reached our rooms where our host had been waiting for us. Our rooms were warm already and tea was waiting even as we reached. Lot of people nearby came to greet us and enquired about our travel and general well-being. It is this Love that the people shower upon us that drives us. We are always in gratitude to all these amazing people. The sun began going down early and after preparing for the first Medicare Camp in Kitpi Village, we had dinner and fell asleep waiting for Day 1.

Kitpi Village Medicare Camp 11.03.2019.

The day began at 4am for the team and news from outside wasn't the most pleasant. It had rained heavily the whole night and the cold weather wasn't letting our mobile hospital start. Finally after giving it some heat the engine roared and there was relief.

After a heavy breakfast at 7am, we started to Kitpi and in 40 minutes we were at our venue. Lot of people were already waiting and the sight of our vehicles brought smiles all around. One welcome we won't forget ever was from an old patient of ours as she walked up and down greeting each one of us. We had written in our previous blog about this Granny and it was such a moving experience for the whole team seeing her healthier than before.

Shortly after, the Medicare camp began and there was a long queue. The weather kept getting better and as the sun came out, the people around attributed it to our coming there. "Aapke aane se mausam hi badal gayaa" said one of them as everyone echoed the same. The Doctors were very busy on this day as some of the new patients needed special care. Most of our old patients came and our volunteers in the village had made sure that they were regularly taking their medicines and had also brought many of them in different vehicles to avoid them walking from all the way uphill/downhill and then going back. Yet there were so many who had come walking with their children tied to their backs and in some cases the children with those tiny little fete had also come walking.



Patients waiting for registration in Kitpi....The weather began to clear up as they arrived!

While we were happy to see all our old patients' health improve, we were concerned at the number of new patients coming in with serious issues. Cardiac problems were the highest on this day and our cardiologist with his Midas touch along with Sai Aashraya's state of the art equipment treated all of them so Lovingly that many were in tears. One such person was an Aunty 38 years of age and does farming all day for a living. On examination she was found to have serious cardiac issues and needed 2 of her valves to

be replaced. She had kept working hard in the fields while tending to her two little children. The volunteers involved in counselling patients, took special care in explaining things and giving confidence to her husband who had come along with her. We will be doing our best to bring this superwoman back to good health very soon.



Patients waiting for their turn....

There were multiple cases where we had to take action immediately and the Doctors and Volunteers made sure that all was well by the time the patient and the attenders started back home. Medicines were given for 2 months and 20 days this time and our pharmacy made sure that Love was filled in every tablet given as it is in the pharmacy and electronic health record department that has maximum interaction with the patients. This time again the patients said how warm it was inside the mobile hospital and one of them said “Hamein bahut tanda lagtaa tha pehle. Ab tho hamein itnaa accha lagataa hain andar baitke. Andar tho bilkul ghar jaisa hain”



A view inside our mobile hospital...Apna Ghar! (Our Home!)

The patient here was referring to how cold it would normally be while cardiac examination was being done and how cold he would feel. He said “ I used to feel very cold before. But now I just love sitting inside (The mobile hospital). It feels like home inside!” It is such a special feeling to see how the little things make such a big difference to all these people ;the same little things we take for granted in our daily life!



Our Grannies waiting to meet the Doctors

Hypertension, Type 2 diabetes and cardiac ailments were the most common on this day. Let us Pray that all these people get healthier soon. Apart from the medicines, diet changes were also explained in detail by all the volunteers to each patient. The staff of the PHC had taken such good care of us throughout the day. The lunch they served made us feel super charged. We offer our gratitude to all of them.

The solar powered mobile hospital was put to the test with power outside being scarce and the weather becoming colder towards the second half of the day. All our equipment performed better than ever powered by solar energy.



When the treatment comes from a heart made of gold, a golden radiant smile is the result!

As the day drew to a close, we all were a little exhausted physically but it had been a very fulfilling day for the whole team. We then started back and reached our home away from home at around 8:00pm. Dinner was prepared by our two superwomen who had slogged it out the whole day and got back to work after a taking a break only during the travel time! We had a sumptuous dinner and then sleep came calling. We surrendered waiting for a challenging Day 2!



The Granny's Smile says it all!

Day 2 - Zemithang Village Medicare Camp – 12.03.2019

It was 3:30am and preparations had already begun for the day. Breakfast was made and all things were being loaded into the vehicles. By 5am we were ready and this time there was no starting trouble! We were on our way by 5:25am after the final checks were complete. It was going to be a 4 hour journey for covering a distance of 90 kilometres and we knew that the weather would only cause more delay. There was no time to relax whatsoever. It was raining and the visibility was very poor. We were moving slower than ever during the first couple of hours. We then stopped for breakfast. In 15 minutes we were on our way again.



Amidst the mighty mountains on the way to our villages

The sun came out gradually and we were driving through tough terrain. But the roads were actually better than before. The Border Roads Organisation works tirelessly to make travel better all the time. We salute all those women and men who make this happen. It was the visibility that was slowing us down. The views during the drive is something all of us look forward to and Mother Nature didn't disappoint us. It was a Blissful feeling all the way through the 4 ½ hours journey to our destination.

Even as we were reaching our venue people living in and around the area recognised our mobile hospital and gave us a hearty welcome! Once we reached, the people around came rushing and helped us get ready for the Seva. Jawans from a nearby unit were also there waiting for us. It was an honor to meet them and also get an opportunity to treat some of them on this special day.

Soon there was a long queue outside and the sun came out ever so gracefully almost on cue! It really can't be a coincidence we thought. One of our Doctors said the previous day " The weather has to get better! How will the patients come otherwise" The patients came in large numbers and most of them were our old patients. Again, the local volunteers had taken special care of all the patients. The staff of the PHC especially the Nurse in charge were taking care of us as always making sure that we were comfortable. We offer our Gratitude to all of them. Many of the new patients had come walking all the way through some of the toughest terrain with some even coming from the other side of a river nearby.



Patients wait at our venue in Zemithang....

All our old patients had improved and it was absolutely miraculous improvement in some cases. Our mobile hospital was being used for cardiac examination. It was also a source of comfort for parents with infants. They were seated inside while waiting for their turn to get treated. It was turning out to be a busy day but things got tougher when some new patients came in with serious problems. Our Doctors were working tirelessly to ensure timely treatment and the rest of the team was making sure that the patients were always in a positive frame of mind. Many of them had not even consulted a Doctor ever before! They had all come by word of mouth!

It was a really tough day in the office for both of our Doctors. One of them had a particularly hectic day. He had such a long queue throughout. But the healing touch just gets more powerful. Having served Our Nation as a Surgeon Captain in the Indian Navy, his treatment is the most Loving & Holistic. One of the Patients said " Itnaa accha se samjhaaya naa Doctor ne. Hamein kaun dekhta hain aise? Aap sab jeete raho aur sabki Seva karo"

"The Doctor explained everything so clearly to us. Who else treats us this way? All of you live long and keeping serving all". The magnitude of this statement is lost in translation but what a feeling it is to listen to such a statement which comes straight from the heart. No words!

It was yet another fulfilling day and at around 6:30pm the last patient who turned to be a critical heart patient walked with a smile on his face saying that all would be well because he is in the safest hands. Soon packing was complete and we were on our way back. It was pitch dark outside like at 2am elsewhere and it began to rain as well. Things got tougher and tougher and there came a point when we were contemplating on

stopping. But that was not an option and after 5 hours we reached our home weary physically but so happy from the inside. After a quick dinner at 11:00pm, we slept after planning for the next day.

Day 3 - Tawang Monastery Medicare Camp - 13.03.2019

The whole team woke up early to get things ready for a wonderful day ahead. Our two superwomen had woken up at 5:00am and had made Idli and Spring Onion Sambar for breakfast! It was the most amazing breakfast we could have asked for! Having traditional south Indian food over here is a different feeling! Everything tastes better in Arunachal!

We reached our venue at 9:00am and by 9:30am there was a huge line outside. It was going to be a challenging day ahead for the whole team. The Monks lovingly helped us out and so did the staff of the Monastery. Soon treatment began and the first to be treated were the Lamas (The Elder Monks). All of their health condition had improved. Blood sugars were normal, Blood pressure readings stable, cardiac status had improved, and skin ailments were getting cured . It was a wonderful feeling. All of them are a treasure of eternal ancient wisdom which they impart to the Young Monks. The Young Monks had come from their school and it was as usual the most vibrant atmosphere when they came in. It was a relief to see them relieved of skin ailments.



Their smiles are verily like sunshine on a rainy day!



Patients waiting for their consultation

Many patients had come from all the nearby villages to the Monastery. All the old patients showed tremendous improvement and some again were miraculous cases of improvement defying all odds. Yet again cardiac issues topped the list of common ailments. Many factors contribute to this. The tough terrain, Lack of oxygen in high altitudes, Lifestyle too. The excess consumption of butter tea was something that most of the hypertensive patients had in common! They were given diet plans by the volunteers. There were many moving experiences on this day. This one experience though is still sinking in. One of the patients, A Grandpa was having severe asthma. He can neither speak nor hear and we always have been communicating to him freely despite his condition. But today he seemed really Ziddi (Stubborn)! Our cardiologist wasn't happy looking at his cardiac status and said that our Grandpa needed to be given an IV injection to control his asthma and also had to be put on oxygen. But our old man wouldn't move an inch. While our mobile hospital got ready to ferry him to the nearest hospital, he was just not agreeing to come! He in fact said You go and get admitted! Finally we managed to convince him and one of the Lamas accompanied him to the hospital. Lying down inside the mobile hospital our grandpa kept smiling and occasionally laughing even while struggling to breathe! As soon as we reached the In Patient Department, we informed the Doctor and nurses on duty about Grandpa's condition. After refusing to co-operate for so long Dadaji finally agreed. We had a hearty time during such a tough situation! It was a relief to see him breathe comfortably after an hour and he continues to recover well! He wouldn't let go of us and always wanted us to sit alongside him. One could see tears slowly forming in those intense eyes. So Loving a Grandpa! His smile is really the most loving we have ever seen!



The most Loving Smile! The Complete Smile!

Even as the last patient was treated with the same Loving care, we could feel the impact Love & Selfless Service was having on us. It is an opportunity that all our people are giving us to do what we do today. The Lamas waited till the end and helped us load everything into our vehicles. They stood outside in the cold helping us out and only started back after our vehicles moved. We offer our Gratitude to all the Lamas who are verily the embodiments of Love & Peace.

After we reached home, we had a quick dinner and then got ready for the next day which would mark the end of this Edition Of Arunachal Gram Seva & Medicare. Even as we fell asleep the sound of the Grandpa's laughter kept ringing in our ears.

Day 4 – District Hospital Medicare Camp – 14.03.2019

As we reached the District Hospital, which is close by home, we could see a lot of people waiting eagerly for us. Most of them were our old patients. We were given a hearty welcome by all of them. In no time really, the Treatment began. We were literally seeing the line go all the way to our mobile hospital which was parked outside.

The staff of the hospital are always around helping us out. From the last couple of years it has been an absolute joy to meet them and learn from them. We offer our Gratitude to all of them for all that they do to make sure that everything goes smoothly. It was a blissfully hectic day again. The registration team was the hardest working with getting the patient details and vitals done in double quick time. The Doctors were as energetic as on day one and began treating the patients with utmost Love and Care as always.

“Medicine when practiced with Love becomes Medicare” says Our Master. All our old patients showed remarkable improvement. It clearly was not the medicines doing the magic. It is Love that heals in a way no other medicine can. In Sai Aashraya we are witness to this magic that Love creates every day. Even as the day progressed we saw more and more people coming in.



Patients at Sai Aashraya's registration counter in the District Hospital

It was another testing day for the whole team. Right from the beginning there were patients who came in a serious state. Cardiac patients were the most common and most of them had no idea that they were having a problem. The weather helped as more patients came walking all the way. Some patients who had not made it to the other venues travelled from as far away as 4-5 hours to reach the venue!

It was sight to see our old patients help our new patients understand how the Sai Aashraya system works! Really slow and steady! It was a long wait for most patients as those needing immediate attention were treated first and that number was large mostly among new patients. Our medicine stock kept going down as the number of patients kept increasing. Medicines to treat cardiac ailments and hypertension were the fastest moving. The weather had made sure that many needed anti biotics too. The number of skin ailments had come down drastically.



Medicine practiced with Love becomes Medicare and there's the example!



Our gratitude to all the people of this heavenly district for giving us this opportunity

This time around 540 patients had been treated with the most Loving Medicare and over 36,000 Patients have been treated all over India by Team Sai Aashraya. Sai Aashraya has adopted 6 villages and all of them continue to show tremendous progress. Our Gratitude to all the local volunteers who selflessly serve the people around them on a day to day basis. Sai Aashraya will be adopting more villages in the future with the same model of Loving and Holistic Care being implemented.

As the day drew to a close, our hearts welled up in Gratitude to all the people of this heavenly district for giving us an opportunity to serve them. As night set in, the last batch of patients were treated and were leaving for their homes. We started packing up with hearts filled with the Love that the people had showered upon us. "We will wait till we see You in May" said many of our patients and it indeed will be a long wait till May Comes Calling. This time's Seva was the most challenging one so far. Yes there were those tough moments where we could have done better. But we stuck together as an unit and did the best we could. It's said, "Some goals are so worthy, it is Glorious even to fail". We will be better prepared the next time and do better.

It's going to be two days of travel back to Assam in extreme weather. Our Mobile Hospital will be travelling by road for 3 ½ days spreading more Love all around. Yet another edition Blissful Time Of Love & Service in Arunachal draws to a close and so does this blog. We'll keep you all posted. Till then take care. Tagra Raho! Jai Hind!



With Abundant Love,
Team Sai Aashraya