



Chronicles of Love - Tawang Diaries - October 19th-28th, 2018

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“Medicine Practiced with Love becomes Medicare Says Our Master”. On the 19th of October, we started for yet another wonderful series of Medicare camps in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, India. So far Sai Ashraya has provided the most loving Medicare to about 30,000 patients all over India and of these Patients over 4,500 have been treated in Sai Ashraya’s adopted villages in this District and also the Tawang Monastery and the District Hospital. The People living in Sai Ashraya’s adopted villages have shown phenomenal improvement in their health. Special mentions to the heart patients who have miraculously come out of some of the toughest phases in their life. What is so heart warming is the feedback we have been getting from the Patients about the improvement in their health. This feedback that we get while doing our follow ups is something so amazing. The reason is the Love that we get from these Patients is so special. Many have given up the biggest social evils of drinking, smoking, and chewing tobacco and have conveyed their happiness after doing so. This transformation through Love is the ultimate aim for all of us.

This time around we reached Guwahati a night early and that let us utilise the daylight well the next day. Durga Pooja was on and the atmosphere was simply electric in the evening. The festive vibes set us up perfectly for the Seva ahead. Once we got into Arunachal from Assam, there was a sea change in the environment around. Just absolute silence and the sounds of nature. The Border Roads Organisation (B.R.O.) has been working tirelessly since many many decades and the sheer efforts of so many women and men has resulted in better road conditions in these critical areas. The B.R.O. is the highest builder in India and clearly it is not roads they are building; They are building Our Nation. The last time we travelled through these areas the roads were damaged by massive landslides. Travelling to these areas is possible only by these roads and in no time all these dedicated people have repaired most parts of these roads. We stayed in Tenga Valley close to an Army base for the night getting some blissful sleep listening to the sound of a river flowing just behind our location.



The river flowing behind our rooms in Tenga Valley. This picture was captured from our room's window



The roads are now getting ready. Some of the highest roads ever made in the planet. Let us salute these Heroes building our Nation.

The sun rises real early here at around 3:30/4:00 am and an early morning start is always a must. As we started our journey to Tawang from Tenga Valley, we were greeted by bright sunshine and as the sun rays came through the hills it was a sight to behold. The road conditions were better, but still we could feel the bones inside rattling

after about 100 kilometres of driving through the windiest roads in Our Nation. The weather got really cool as we climbed up to 10,000 ft. and the piping hot food in the Madras Café at the Baisakhi Garrison gave us some instant relief. Walking uphill in these heights can be tiring but energises the body while warming it up. The volunteers decided to walk and had a great time as usual. Air this pure is available only Here we guess!! The environs are as serene as it can get in these areas not yet disturbed by mankind!

We kept driving upwards towards Sela Pass at 14,000 ft. and as we climbed the visibility got really low due to dense clouds and our supermen behind the wheels were at their best navigating through some of the most complex curves of these roads. The speed was an average of 15kms/hour for the next 80 kilometres. The cars turned into aeroplanes as we drove through the clouds!! Finally, we drove through the Sela Pass and reached Jaswant Singh Garh Memorial where we offered our Gratitude to all the Soldiers in Our Country who sacrifice Their today for our tomorrow. As we soaked in this powerful aura we felt supercharged. The Indian Army serves hot tea and snacks to all who come here and as we partook of the same, we sat in silence at a vantage view point quietly to experience the feeling of coming back home which is how we feel when we come to this magical place.



The view from Jaswant Singh Garh

After nearly two and a half hours, we reached Tawang and settled down at our place of stay. The preparations for the beginning of the 8th series Medicare in Tawang got underway in less than 15 minutes after we reached. The covers in which in the Medicines are dispensed have a sticker on them with the dosage and the method of consumption written in Hindi and also contain a beautiful message that reads “Jaldi teek

ho jao” “Get well soon” with a Smile emoticon. The Patients always tell us how much they Love seeing these stickers. One of the Patients said last time “Hamein itnaa accha lagtaa hain yeh. Aap sab itnaa pyaar se ham sab ki Seva karte hain.” We like this so much (Looking at the stickers). “All of you take care of us with so much of Love”. We are often left with tears when we listen to this from the Patients because they say looking at the sticker itself they feel healed. Oh! The happiness they get from the little things in Life. A lesson that all of us can imbibe and put into practice in our daily life. So, we stick these stickers with this feeling echoing in our hearts. The diagnostics are kept ready and everything needed for the next day were double checked before we retired for the day with anticipation about the next 4 days of Love, Service, and Joy coming our way!!

Kitpi Village Medicare Camp

22.10.2018

The day began at 4am for the volunteers as we got ready for the first day of this series of Medicare camps. By 6:30am we were having our breakfast cooked by two of our best chefs and the most amazing volunteers. These super women had actually made yummy Dosas and Sambar for our breakfast. The golden brown dosas which were simply delectable with the perfect sambar gave us the head start that we needed. By 7:20am we were in our cars and started to the Primary Health Centre, Kitpi. As we reached at around 8:15am, there were quite a few patients who welcomed us with the most Loving smiles. They had reached half an hour earlier than scheduled. This is something that happens always. These amazing people are the most punctual and patient people we have met.

As things got underway, patients kept coming in and there was a familiar excitement and joy in the air as the little ones arrived from the nearby schools for their treatment. By this time quite a few patients were already treated and most happened be heart patients. It wasn't turning out to be easy. The first patient was a heart patient and then followed a series of them. Many of them had come walking all the way. Walking 15 kilometres in this altitude isn't easy and walking with a heart ailment makes it harder. All the old patients of ours with heart ailments showed remarkable improvement. This was heart warming and the patients smiled with joy and relief after long.



The Children arrive at the venue in Kitpi

The children from the school were better too. There were a few of them who needed special care and were provided the same by our Doctors. Some of the children while collecting their medicines asked some amazing questions. One we remember is a little girl asking us why we were taking the phone numbers of their parents! And when we explained about the cloud based Electronic Health Records she asked us about cloud computing and the volunteers did their very best for the next 10-15 minutes after which the curious eyes seemed satisfied and said “Haan ab samajh mein aaya” “Yes I understood now”. These children also helped us translate for the elders around and repeated the instructions to them multiple times till they were sure that the elders were clear! The future of Our Nation is bright as these young soldiers are making their way into changing things and rewriting history. There were many instances when we were moved to tears. Especially seeing Mothers carry their children who were unwell and had made it with great difficulty to the venue. Walking through dense forests, walking up the hill and and then coming down all the way again through windy paths, all these people came to shed more light in all our lives. They are just like candles.



The intensity in those little eyes and the caring gaze of the epitome of Love & Compassion!!



With the future of our Nation

Another experience we had is one of the most loving experiences that we have had ever. One of the grandmothers who had come to the venue always comes and makes the most delicious food for us. She is a sweetheart whose Love has always bowled us over and has had us in tears. But today was even more special. She came in and started preparing food and was totally immersed in making multiple items that are her specialty and of course what we love to eat. She had made Red rice, Dal, Baigun (Brinjal Fry), Aloo Gobi, Vegetable salad and Papad. She had cooked for hours in the cold outside. As we went to have our food, she came running to escort us and made us sit and served us this Love filled preparation which we were eating in the most serene environment surrounded by hills all around. She made sure that we ate up to our throats and then gave us some water to drink and made sure that we washed our hands while she poured the water from the bucket to help us wash. As we thought of getting back to our stations, she called one of our volunteers and said "Beta tum naa hamaare sapne mein aaya aur maine baat bhi kiyaa tumse. Bahut khush lagtaa hain jab aap yahan aate ho tho. Itnaa saara pyaar dete ho aap. Isiliye main har baar neeche se aake aap sab ke liye khaana banaati hoon. Mere paas aap sab ko dene ke liye kuchh nahin hain. Sirf der saara pyaar aur Ashirwad hain. Aap sab mere pota poti hain aur mere pota poti ka main dekhbaal karongi. Pyaar sabse uncha hain. Pyaar se zyaada aur kuch nahin hain zindagi mein. Aap sab itnaa pyaar dete ho naa isiliye sab khush hain."

Son, you appeared in my dream and I even spoke with You. We feel so happy when all of you come here. All of you give us so much of Love. That's why I come walking from another place down to make food for all of you. I don't have anything to give all of you. I only have lots of love and blessings to give all of you. All of you are my grandchildren

and I will take care of my grandchildren. Love is the greatest; there is nothing above Love. All the people here are happy because of the Love all of you share”.

No words can ever describe this Love. This Granny comes walking all the way uphill each time to meet us and make food for us. She makes us feel so Loved that we just feel like sitting with her all day long! When we told her while giving her medicines that she has to eat less salt she quipped, “Haan zaroor! Aapke bacche ko jab leke aoge tab bhi mereko unka dekhbal karna hain naa taaki aap sab jaake Seva kar sakte hain!”. “Yes surely! Because when you bring your children here I will take care of them so You can continue doing Seva!”

She would just not leave till the sun went down and then she said that she just doesn't feel like leaving us and going home. This is the Love that we get from all these people who come to the Medicare camp not for medical treatment but for just meeting us and sharing their Love. They keep telling us that two months is a long wait and that they find it really hard without us being with them. One of the patients said that she gets worried as we start our travel due to the frequent landslides and is finally relieved only when she sees us! We feel Blessed to be showered with all this Love and will work till our last breath to share all this Love in the form of Seva.



East or west grannies are the best! Selfie with the awesome granny!

As the sun went down the last few patients were being treated. It was a very fulfilling day where a lot of lives had been touched by Love through Medicare. Once again Heart ailments and hypertension topped the list of diagnoses made. Diabetes came next. All the old patients showed wonderful improvement and many had given up drinking the home-made wine that has been causing them plenty of problems and told us how happy their families were seeing them do this. As we were driving back to our rooms we only

felt more energetic and geared up for the next day before having our dinner and sleeping with the Loving words of our family here in this part of our Country echoing in our Hearts!

Zemithang Village Medicare Camp

23.10.2018

At 3:00am in the morning, two of our volunteers began cooking for the rest of the day. The engine had started. By 4:00am every volunteer was up and it was really getting bright outside. The fragrance of the rotis, aloo, and rajmaa was making us really hungry. But we had to leave by at least 5:30am and so everyone got to work and started the loading process by 4:50am and at exactly 5:30am we started our journey to our adopted village in Zemithang. The Primary Health Centre here was the venue.

The journey to this place is always the most breath taking and this time too we were witness to the magic to mother nature. Driving amidst the most magnificent hills which plays host to the most exquisite flora and fauna is a treat to our entire being. Waterfalls are in plenty and the sound of the water hitting the rocks is a treat to the ears. The rivers that flow in this route are always in full flow and none of us spoke in the car or played music even because this was the sound we wanted to listen. As we soaked in the atmosphere the sun gave us the warmth we needed as it was biting cold outside. The road conditions were not so great due to the monsoon season that had just ended and we were jumping up and down and dancing as the cars managed to get through somehow. But who cares about the road conditions when you are at the lap of Mother Nature. We had breakfast quickly at halfway point amidst the hills. The rotis and aloo got us going and in 15 minutes we were on our way again. At 9:15am we reached our venue and started getting things ready.

The staff of the PHC were helping us out and soon an important piece of information reached us. There was a festival happening to offer gratitude to the cows and the turnout of patients was expected to be very less. The cows are an integral part of everyone's life here as they provide the people their livelihood. It's said "Gaai tho jaan se bhi pyaara hain". "The cows are dearer to the people than their lives". We were always moved seeing how the people young and old alike were taking care of their little farms and their cows but today was special. Special food was being given to the cows. Their favourite grass, fodder. We went up the hills to see this sight and bring our heart patients in the car as they can't walk down. But they were already on their way! They looked healthier and were smiling and waving at us. There was something special waiting for us when we got back. There was a long line of patients queued up and there was a joyous buzz going around. The people decided to come down to the Medicare Camp even though a festival was on. School students from nearby also had come. "Kaise ho aapse milne ke liye aaye hum upar se" "How are You we came just to meet you from all the way up". That was how we were greeted on coming back to the venue. This got tears to our eyes. The patients came running to us to hold us and ask us about our well being before even we could open our mouth and ask them about their well being. This Love is what we live for! What a profound lesson these people teach us every time.



A Joy to behold for the young and the old! Seva begins in Zemithang....

The camp got underway and just like day 1 the heart patients were the first to come in. But here is the miraculous part. Every single heart patient had improved. The story of one granny with heart failure whom we thought we won't be able to meet this time, was all smiles as miraculously her condition had got better. The Echo looked much better and our cardiologist was left with tears in his eyes and the patient's son was naturally moved and conveyed his happiness in the pharmacy. There was more to come. Today was a day when we treated the most number of heart patients and the patients who came in for the first time and were diagnosed with heart problems especially heart failure and severe pulmonary hypertension were moved to tears and said that they came from far away as they felt for the first time that they should see a doctor for their recurring chest pain and headaches. They said that they just made it by chance and then said that God decided that their problems should go away on this day. We then dropped these patients to their homes which were situated almost on top of the hill across the river! Meeting their families to brief them about their health was important and this moved everyone who was there witnessing these life changing moments. The patients had come walking from that far away and a little more walking could have made things worse. Once again heart ailments connected to hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and asthma topped the list of ailments.



The smile is always the same. Joy or sorrow. Meet this grandmother miraculously recovering from a heart failure....What an inspiration....

We started back at 5:20pm with the conditions outside extremely cold and it was pitch dark like how it would be at 2:00am! There were only 2 cars on the road for most of the time as always and they were ours! The river was in full flow and the sounds of the hills

and the dense forest was so calming that we fell asleep instantly and woke up only after we reached the place of our stay. A light dinner and we fell asleep.

Tawang Monastery Medicare Camp

24.10.2018

This is one venue where the energy levels of everyone around whether it's the volunteers or the patients is very high. This is because of the young monks who come to our Medicare Camp. On reaching the Tawang Monastery we were greeted by the sight of these young Monks running all around playfully and then the Elder Monks helped us set the venue up. This day was a little cold and the Monks who are always the perfect hosts gave us a hot cup of traditional Laal Chai to get us up and running. In half an hour the patients from the nearby villages started coming in and the Doctors got to work lightning quick. These people had come walking up all the way. The Monastery is at a higher altitude and the patients somehow made it up all the way. Among these patients were old people who walked up and one among them is an inspiration. This grandpa is 80 years old and takes a walk everyday without fail around Tawang all alone! Though a little weak nothing deters him from this walking routine! Nothing! Not even the biting cold weather. The grandpa was seen by our cardiologist and was diagnosed with a heart condition that required him to take a lot of medications. As he came to the pharmacy he looked as fresh as ever and was smiling away like he was having the time of his life. No one had accompanied him and we took time to carefully explain his medications to him. The other members of his family who can read Hindi will have to make sure that the medicines would be given in time to him. He was so happy that he met all of us and was making everyone around him happy the entire time. Selflessness and Love personified is how we can describe this grandpa.

As noon approached the young Monks began to come in to meet the Doctors. Their health had improved too. The skin infections had come down a fair bit and we identified a few more Monks needing special attention in this regard. They had taken our word seriously and had begun to take warm water every morning and very promptly told us the same! They are an absolute bundle of energy and we feel so refreshed every time we see them. Some of the Monks who had serious ailments had their illness followed up as per our Doctors' advice and all of them are stable now. The elder Monks showed tremendous improvement. As the people from nearby villages came in, more serious ailments were diagnosed especially those pertaining to the heart. Some of them had never met a Doctor before. To be honest, they might have lost their life in a few months had they not come on this day. They just came out of curiosity but ended up finding out the reality of their health condition. The medicines prescribed by us are for 2 months and 10 days extra. This makes sure that no one runs out of medications by the time we arrive. The medicines are not available locally and that is another reason for us dispensing higher quantities of medications.

Another experience that moved us was that of the 18-year-old patient diagnosed with a serious heart ailment about whom we had written in our previous blog. The Mother of this patient had made tea for us specially in the morning and got the tea along carefully all the way in a flask. She was in a critical condition when we started back last time and now her health condition had improved. But look at the Love that flows from all these patients. The daughter then gave us the tea with biscuits and there was a lump in our throats as we had the tea with so much of gratitude to all these people who have changed our lives for ever. The daughter stayed back till the end of the day and helped

our cardiologist with the translation and explained to the patients what the Doctor was saying with total dedication. No words can describe how we feel when we witness moments like these.



"We don't see these as pills. We will take them in time as they are a form of the Love you share with us. It's the Love that cures us said an old patient"

As the last few patients were treated with the same energy and care as the first patient, the Elder Monks invited us for a small get together. We wound up and cleaned up the place and then the Monks helped us carry all our medicine trunks, diagnostics and made sure that we did not do any more work! This happens every time and the Monks teach us a lesson in humility and they embody the teaching of simple living and high thinking. We were then given hot tea in a hall upstairs and then one of the Monks started saying how happy the people are because of this Seva and then felicitated us one by one. We had no words to say. The air was filled with Love and Joy and then slowly we got into our cars. It would be 2 months before we would come again and we said a quiet Prayer and then as if to say that our Prayers had reached its destination there was the full moon shining right over the monastery and we kept looking up till we reached our rooms. We then quickly had our dinner and fell asleep awaiting the last day of this series of Medicare camps in Tawang.

District Hospital Medicare Camp

25.10.2018

The Tawang Festival was just around the corner and the people were gearing up for this festival of joy with great enthusiasm. We were anticipating very few patients on this day and as we entered the Hospital, our feeling we felt was spot on. But we got to work and with the help of the staff and the people around we began setting things up. In a span of half an hour we were all set in the first floor of the hospital which the administration had graciously permitted us to use. All of a sudden there were our old patients coming in to the hospital and in no time, there was a long queue at our registration counter in the ground floor.

The people here are extremely patient and waited through the registration process and then climbed up to meet our Doctors. School students came in as well later. The first few patients were being examined for a long time and with time came some tough news. They turned out to be heart patients and had absolutely no clue about the problems they had inside them. Our cardiologist after a point said "I think we must stay here and treat these patients" It was a tough time and meanwhile our other magical doctor with his Midas touch had identified some more cardiac patients with just his stethoscope and his BP machine. The other patients were put on the waiting list as the cardiac patients were being given maximum care.

One of these patients was a grandma who had a smiling face when she came in to the pharmacy. We found out that she was a heart patient and started to enter her record in the cloud. We explained her condition to her family members. And the end of it all we requested her to smile for a picture to be uploaded for her health record. She did so and when we showed her the picture, she began to laugh saying oh! I have no teeth at all! When this was translated to us in Hindi from Monpa, we started laughing with the granny and she began laughing even more. It was almost 20 minutes and she got up slowly after we finished giving her medicines to her family. Even as she almost left the room, she put her hand into her bag and took out some snacks and gave it to us so lovingly. Just the perfect granny! When we said You will need it for the travel, she laughed and said "I have no teeth where am I going to eat all this!" The Love that pours from each one of these people is just an experience that leaves us overwhelmed each time.



The smile that brought smiles all around! It's All About Love!

As the day went by we witnessed more and more of these moments that shook us and showed us the reality of the condition of all these people. Some had traveled from far away hearing about us in their village which was close by the previous venues and even though they would have to travel for hours together they came in search of help they badly needed. The lack of quality Medicare in these regions is absolutely shocking. Lack of awareness also contributes to the rapid spread of some of the deadliest diseases. We at Sai Aashraya have been spreading awareness about some of these most basic life changes that people would have to make. Most of our Patients have given up drinking and smoking which are the worst social evils. The chewing of tobacco has reduced a lot. Reduced consumption of non-vegetarian food has helped the patients a lot and they say they are feeling lighter now!

One of the Patients said “Ab tho sahib humaara ghar mein sab khush hain. Sab ladaai band ho gayaa. Sab khush hain aur hamein lagtaa hain ki agar sab yeh adat chod denge tho koi dawaai ki zarrorat nahin padegi aur sab khush honge”

“Now everyone is happy in my home. There are no fights at all and everyone is happy. I feel that if all the people give up these bad habits, then there will be no need of medications and all will be happy”

What can be a better feeling than witness this transformation through Love right in front of our eyes. Yet another extraordinary day of Love and Service had touched so many lives. About 450 patients were treated this time around despite the festivities going on. All the patients have returned back home happy and reassured. Though we missed the Tawang festival we could experience the joy of it all when an uncle said “Ek din aur hamaare ghar mein rukh jaate hum khaana khilaa denge festival bhi hain naa” “You all could have stayed a day more in our home. The festival is also beginning.” One of them told us that the way we speak with them makes them feel so happy and they feel like they are already cured. Sai Aashraya has today touched the lives of 30,000 patients and has treated 5,000 patients in this heavenly district. In this process we have actually been the main beneficiaries in every sense of the word because this ethereal experience has bestowed on us the clarity needed in our life and has led us to understand that It’s all about Love! That’s all that matters. Thank you all so so much for all the Love and Support. Namaskaar. Jai Hind!

With Abundant Love,
Team Sai Aashraya