



# **Chronicles Of Love - Tawang Medicare & Gram Seva, January 2019**

## **Chronicles Of Love**

### **Tawang Diaries - 1st to 4th January, 2019**

This edition of Tawang Medicare and Gram Seva, was special in many ways. Firstly our mobile hospital made its maiden journey and it was the ultimate test for a new vehicle. Sai Aashraya's mobile hospital, is a fully equipped mobile Medicare unit. To transport this amazing vehicle, experts who have a lot of experience driving in many different conditions were roped in and they took the responsibility to drive the vehicle up to Guwahati, the capital of the state Assam. The first journey was a very smooth one as the well-connected roads among the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, West Bengal, and Assam ensured that driving was an absolute pleasure though a bit strenuous. The mobile hospital made its way to Guwahati in about 54 hours of driving time and thanks to the monumental efforts put in by the two experts behind the wheels, Mr. Ramesh and Mr. Nagesh, the vehicle reached with zero glitches during its almost 3000 kilometers journey.

On the morning of the 29th of December 2018, the entire team from Sai Aashraya began the journey to Tawang. An early morning start was planned but the fog delayed our start by about an hour. This ensured that we were fuelled up doubly well with a loaded breakfast. The Assam tea gave us the perfect start. As the journey began all of us had tears in our eyes. Especially those of us sitting inside the mobile hospital. We knew that this was verily a manifestation of pure selfless Love and that this journey was going to be an epoch making one.

The journey through Assam was smooth as ever and as we neared Arunachal, there was a festive atmosphere all around for a yearly festival that was being celebrated with extra grandeur this time. There were thousands of people and the mobile hospital lead our team with the other vehicle right behind. People were so curious looking at a vehicle that size filled with beautiful images all around and it was a proud feeling when we saw people wave at us wishing us well understanding what our mission is. As we entered Arunachal, our ascent to the peaks began. The vehicle performed exceedingly well through its first ever climb returning a mileage that was way beyond our expectations. We halted for the night close to an expansive Army Base near Tenga

Valley in Arunachal Pradesh. The sound of the water gushing right behind the windows of our rooms gave us the best sleep we had in a long time.

The next morning we started real early to make optimum use of the daylight available. The start was excellent and we began to slowly but steadily climb up further. After a long drive through some tough but very scenic roads we made our way up to 10,000 feet stopping for a quick breakfast at the Baisakhi Garrison. The weather was getting colder every minute and we munched the yummy Dosas and Chow Mein at the Madras Café before embarking on a challenging and exciting journey to our destination.

The winter this time was especially harsh with heavy snowfall and extremely windy conditions. This is a combination that most people would dread facing up to. As we climbed up further we found the road conditions really hard. The Army had worked day in and out to clear up the path and the already affected roads were in a bad shape with all the ice and snow wreaking havoc. All of us didn't speak a word for a few hours! The roads had been badly affected and there were huge boulders and rocks. To make the conditions harder was the dangerous crystal ice all over the paths we were travelling. At this juncture we offer our gratitude and a big salute to the Indian Army & the Border Roads Organization (B.R.O.) who toil tirelessly to make sure that we are on the move despite such harsh conditions.



*Journey to Heaven*





**Salute to the Indian Army & The Border Roads Organisation for making our journey possible....This picture is from the windshield of our mobile hospital....**

Then came the biggest challenge, when the temperatures kept dropping with us moving on the snow and ice, the vehicle started slowing down even more and after a span of about 15 minutes, almost stopped. Mr. Bijay had his heart in his mouth as he was driving the mobile hospital and the magnitude of getting stuck in the snow was looming large in front of him. He somehow calmed his nerves and kept the engine just about running. We somehow calmed our nerves too and then in the next couple of hours the unthinkable did happen. We decided to keep moving come what may and the most adventurous journey is what we were blessed with. We skid in the snow and the boulders did come right on our way but we rode through and found ourselves at 14,000 feet. There were few people at the place where we stood and the Army Soldiers slogging it out to ensure that no one was in any danger.



*Our path this time around....*



*We wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy new year....*

We then made our way to our place of stay and it was again an equally difficult journey which we endured not by our effort but because the bounty of Nature enthralled us and we were falling asleep actually despite the most bumpy ride.





***Bright Sunshine on our way out of the blue....A shot from our mobile hospital***

It was 22 hours of driving time and finally we entered our place of stay. The rooms were ice cold and the water in the taps were freezing. Two amazing volunteers from the lady gang made some amazing south Indian dishes and the hot food made us feel warm. As the cooking began in the kitchen, the other volunteers sat in the mobile hospital prepping up for the next day. The mobile hospital's industrial power socket came to use as we got some power to vacuum the space and keep the hospital as sterile as we could. All the equipment was tested and the batteries were charged with some special efforts for the exciting first day of this series of Medicare camps & Gram Seva at Sai Ashraya's adopted villages.

As we slept that night, we all offered our gratitude to the amazing men behind the wheels. While the first two came back to Bangalore after parking our Mobile Hospital in Assam, two more iron men joined us from there for this leg of our journey. As we dined with them they were recollecting how miraculous the whole journey was and how they hadn't seen anything quite like this in a long time. Goosebumps! It was new year's eve and we were truly celebrating!







***People begin to queue up at our venue in Kitpi....***



***Waiting to meet our Doctors....***

Our Mobile Hospital though was warm with a heater on inside. As the patients came in slowly, we felt relieved to see some familiar faces make it. All of them came in with their old files. There was a phenomenal improvement in their health condition though the extreme weather caused a few problems. The cardiac status of some of the patients had improved so much that we were left speechless. We realized that it was not the medicines that were healing them. It was Love that was truly healing them. One of the patients whose ECG was being done inside the mobile hospital said, “Aap yahan iss baar aaye yahi hamein bahut Khushi deta hain”

“The fact that all of you have come this time itself fills us with a lot of happiness”

He went on to say this while referring to the extreme weather conditions outside and how they thought that we wouldn't be able to make it. Some patients had even offered special prayers when they knew that we were coming.

One of the patients said, " Aap naya saal aise Seva ke saath shuru kar rahe hain. Isse acchha aur kyaa ho sakta hain."

"All of you are starting the new year with serving all and what can be better than this"

While another patient said " Dekho aap sab aaye aur dhoop bhi niklaa!"

"See, all of you came and sun is also out giving us warmth"

What can be a better feeling than this. Our Master Says, " Love seeks no reward ; Love is its own reward"

Here we were experiencing that every moment. As more patients came in the mobile hospital doubled up as a waiting room too. The elderly went in and said that they didn't feel like coming out. They were so happy and the happiness did flow with tears of joy from all the eyes. Every eye was moist with the Love being spread all around. One man came up and said with so much of happiness, " Maine daaru, cigarette sab chod diyaa. Mera Mrs. Bahut khush hain aur sab kucchh acchha ho gayaa ghar mein. Sab khush hain"

"I quit alcohol and smoking. My wife is so happy and everything is great at home now. Everyone is so happy."

The magnitude of the statement is lost in this translation. This is the impact that Sai Aashraya is bringing to the lives of so many people through the Sociocare initiative. So many lives have changed in myriad different ways. From less quarrels at home to finding work to going to school to not getting involved in child labor. All this thanks to the wonderful local volunteers who do a great job in taking care of the people around while keeping us updated. They made the extra effort this time to communicate and also bring in the patients in this harsh weather.



*The intensity in the glance of the child.... They all came all the way walking....*





*She comes walking from far away every single time to meet us...*

We had adequately stocked up appropriate medicines and the diagnoses matched up. The number of asthma related cases were up and also were other viral infections. Cardiac patients were yet again the stars as they made rapid progress quite miraculously. We will have to use this word Miracles quite frequently as it's a matter of fact that most of the people showed improvements that are medically speaking next to impossible. Even the patients with diabetes who had to consume potatoes out of sheer need didn't have sugar levels that we would normally find in such cases!

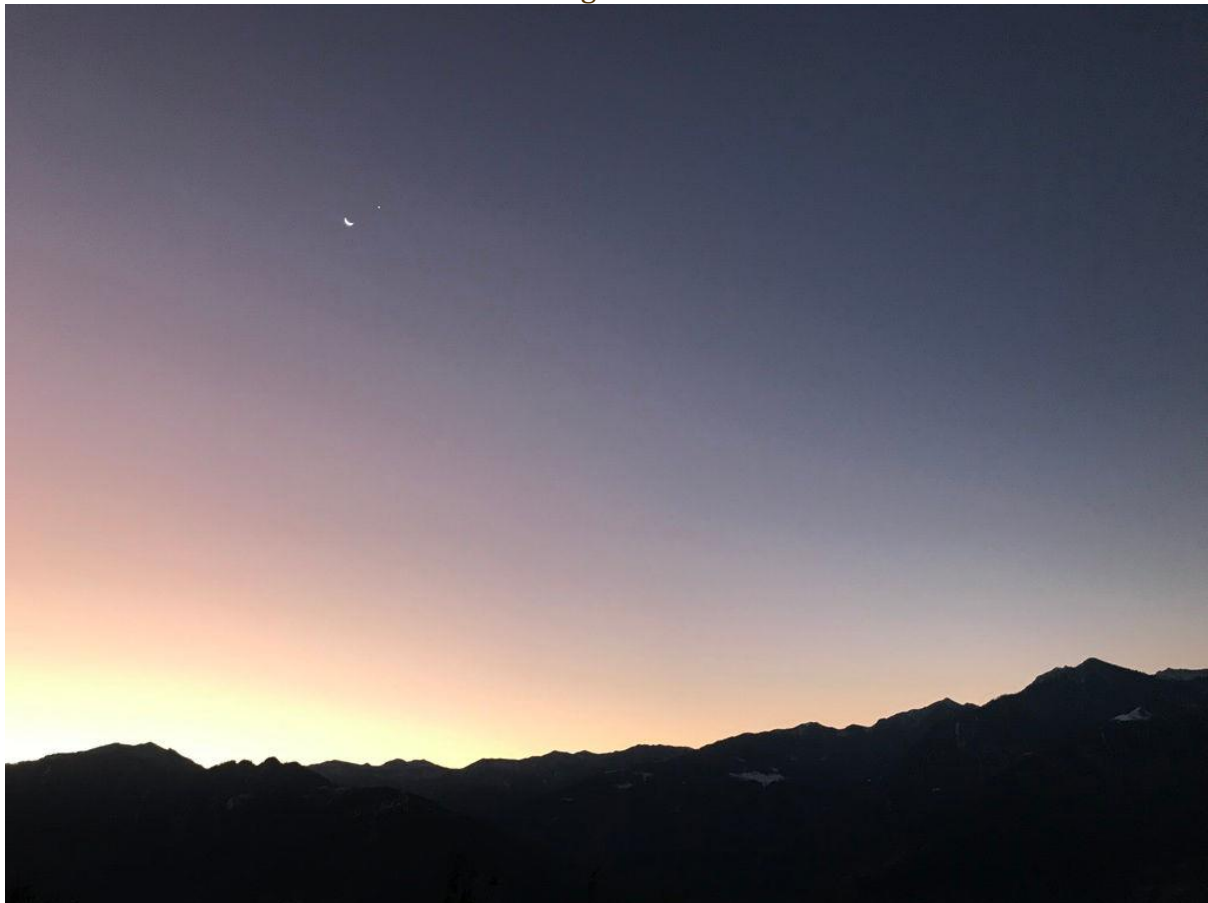


*Cardiac examination inside the Mobile Hospital...*

We were served a really homely lunch by the staff of the Primary health center whom we take this opportunity to express our gratitude to for being there in such a crucial time. As the sun began going down extra early at around 4:00pm, we were treating the last few patients. The people around helped us wind up smoothly by about 5:30pm and it was pitch dark outside. As we said see you soon to everyone around and got inside our vehicles, we sat down quietly for a few moments sending out more Love to all the people. It was a very fulfilling day yet again. The new year had got off to a great start for us in Team Sai Aashraya and we celebrated the new year with those have motivated us and kept us going with all their Love; The People of this heavenly district.

### ***Day 2 - Zemithang Village Medicare Camp - 02.01.2019***

We were up early and the two superwomen in the kitchen were up as early as at 3:00am! They had made breakfast and also prepared the lunch that we would be carrying with us. An early start ensured that we were on track with time. The whole night we were on vigil and one of volunteers started the mobile hospital every once in 2 hours for about 25 minutes to thaw the engine!



***A beautiful start....Please zoom in to see the crescent and the star greet us along with the rising sun***

The journey was an amazing one despite the testing road conditions. The mobile hospital was getting tested to the fullest extent possible and the response was fabulous. The early start meant negotiating some visibility issues to add to the road conditions. But by the time we stopped for breakfast right in the lap of nature, the sun was out



giving us all the light and warmth we needed. The breakfast session was a blissful one as most of us woke up from our sleep to the yummy Chapatis and Chole.



***The best breakfast amidst nature's bounty with the sun coming out in all grandeur***

After a 4 ½ hour journey we finally reached our venue, PHC Zemithang. We got to work and as soon the pharmacy was ready, the patients began to come in. It was a long line and people waited so very patiently wishing us a happy new year and sharing with us their updates since last time. One particular experience moved all of us. A granny who was diagnosed to have heart failure in our previous camps, was walking all the way up with her son even as we went around in our vehicle to pick up patients so they don't have to walk all the way. She seemed more than happy to walk and by the time we got back she was being treated by our cardiologist. As soon as she had come in, she very joyously shared with our volunteers about how good she was feeling. It was truly a heart rending moment. Her reports looked even better and her son was so happy and just kept smiling with moist eyes.



***Patients waiting near the registration desk at our venue in Zemithang***

The mobile hospital saw a lot of cardiac patients being examined inside. It was a real change from the previous setting where the heating wasn't good and in the process of treating the patient, it would be a tough experience for both the patient and the volunteers.

Everyone from a little 17 days old baby to a real grand old man was given the best care possible. The number of old patients who came in made us feel relieved. Yet again the results were miraculous. There was improvement all around. While all this was going on, Sai Aashraya took a giant leap. Yes a giant leap! After interacting with the head of a nearby village with two small villages under it, Sai Aashraya felt the need to adopt them immediately to expand and provide holistic care. But how could that happen in a few hours because that's all the time we had. The needs of the village was mapped and the key information was got out in a matter of just an hour. The next half hour saw Sai Aashraya officially adopt this village and the two small villages under it, and the document was sealed and signed by the Head of the village and by Sai Aashraya. Sai Aashraya has now adopted this village to provide holistic care starting 2nd January 2019.

With a total of around 90 households, the village needs support in the key areas of holistic Medicare, Educare, Sociocare, and Food and Nutrition. Sai Aashraya in coordination with the local volunteers will strive to provide the same very soon. The children need the right kind of support and the school needs to function in a way to make ideal citizens. The lack of awareness in some basic aspects of life is something that



Sai Aashraya has been working on and based on the success in the other adopted villages, the same will be emulated here as well.

As the day progressed, more new patients came in and were treated with Love and care. But one of them was so moved and said, ***“Aap kitnee pyaar se baat karte hain hamse. Hamein yeh davaai se badaa hain aap ka pyaar”***

All of you speak with so much of Love to us. More than all the medicines, it's your love that is bigger for us”

While the improvement in the overall health of the patients made us feel so happy what gave us more happiness was the fact that the Love that was being spread all around. It isn't easy for someone to stop smoking and drinking in an instant and live up to it fighting themselves. One of the patients said, ***“Do teen din ke liye bahut mushkil lagaa par hamne koshish ki aur chod hi diyaa last mein”. Aap log ka chehra yaad aata hain hamein har din. Aap ghar aaiye naa”***

***“It was hard initially, but then with effort I gave those habits in the end . I remember all your faces every day. Please come home.”***

This is just one example of people giving up some habits that they had formed decades ago. This impact that we see gives us the highest happiness. This is in fact the Bliss that everyone seeks to attain.

As the day drew to close at around 5pm, it was really getting pitch dark outside and in as the last patient left the premises, the staff of this PHC helped us wind up in half an hour's time and we started back with hearts filled with more Love that the people showered us with. It was a 4 ½ hour journey in the dark in extreme weather but all was smooth as we completed the journey with zero stops! As we entered the room we found all the water frozen. The whole pipeline was frozen totally. With the little water available we managed quite efficiently and made it through the cold night. The weather yet again was so kind to us the whole day and we all witnessed yet another fulfilling day of Seva.

### ***Day 3 - Tawang Monastery Medicare Camp 03.01.2019***

It was the time of a traditional yearly Festival Mela and the atmosphere was electric near the monastery. There were hundreds of people all around despite the weather. Even as we got into the venue, all the arrangements were already made by the Doctor in charge along with the Elder Monks. The staff in the monastery helped us immensely with our medicines cargo which was really heavy. They stopped at nothing to make us comfortable. This moved us to tears and we thanked them profusely before the Seva began. Many of the patients had come walking all the way to the top for both the Medicare camp and the festival. Some of them had come all the way from Bhutan walking! Even as treatment began there was a long queue outside waiting for registration. The two superwomen who had again woken up way earlier than all of us, made sure that the patients were comfortable. One of our old patients had made hot tea for all of us and made sure that we had the tea before doing anything else. There was just pure Love in the air. The elder monks had come straight from the Pooja (Prayers). It is a Blessing for us that we are able to be of some help to all the Monks who are verily the embodiments of Love and Peace. Their health had improved and many showed signs of improvement sooner than expected.



***Our Inspiration....Their lives are ideals for all of us to emulate....***

The younger Monks too showed wonderful improvement with regards to skin related issues. They along with our creams had been applying turmeric and honey paste every night. Though the honey would be crystallised, they had managed to put it to use diligently and the improvement was visible. Among the adults who were old patients, it took us more time to treat them as we had to make them wait and let their breathing become normal after all the walking and then send them in for consultation. The cardiac patients showed phenomenal improvement with some needing lesser medicines this time around. There were a few new patients who were found to be having multiple problems. Some were not at all in a stable state and were promptly attended to. One experience that moved us was when a patient looked at the sun shining outside the window of our pharmacy and said, ***“Aapke aane se poora mausam hi badal jaata hain” - “The whole weather changes with all of your arrival”.***

When we replied saying it is the people who had made everything possible and had given us so much happiness by giving us an opportunity to do some Seva, the reply was, ***“Aapse milne se ham acche se haste haste rehte hain. Aap khush ho to hum khush***



***hain. Aur kyaa caahaiye. Jab tak aap aaoge do mahine ke baad ham har din ginte rehenge”***

***“We keep smiling and are so happy when we meet all of You every time. Our happiness lies in your happiness. What else do we need (than all being happy). Till all of you come next time in two months, we will be counting the days (waiting for all of your arrival).”***

No words can ever express the happiness we get when we are part of such moments. As evening approached, there was a sudden snowfall which intensified into a storm accompanied by heavy winds. There were people living out in the open in such conditions. were a lot of patients waiting was more owing primarily to the number of critical patients being treated.



***That one smile....Can't really caption this one....Words can't fathom some moments....One such moment is right here***

In a span of the next two hours or so all of the patients were given the best care possible and their families were updated about the current health status, the medicines to be given, the diet to be followed for taking care of their loved ones. It was a special day for all of us under immense pressure. It was like we always say in Sai Ashraya, blissfully hectic.

As we began winding up for the day, we offered our gratitude to the Monks who translated the language of the Bhutanese people. There was a lot of laughter as the patients found our Monpa the local language extremely funny! With all the laughter we felt even more energetic and as we stepped out in the pitch dark night it was still snowing. We rushed and packed everything into our vehicles. The Elder Monks and the staff made sure that we were comfortable till the doors of our vehicles closed. We offer

our gratitude to all of them who made sure that we felt at home every moment. From our food to everything. No words!



*The snowfall begins....*

There was snow all over vehicle and the white coloured mobile hospital seemed to have got a fresh coat of thick white snow. We kept our engine running for a long while before sleeping and Mr. Bijay and Mr. Raju were on constant vigil to see that the vehicle would start the following morning. We all had dinner together and Raju Bhaiyaa had a hearty laugh along with his friend Bijay Bhaiyaa looking at how we were shivering in the cold even as we ate. We could barely speak!





***Just before the night set in....Our mobile hospital gets ready to battle it out....The wipers look like swords don't they!***

As slept that night there was an air of uncertainty over what would happen the next day as the weather showed no signs of getting better. How would the patients come if this was the situation? Some of us even were interacting with patients while we were fast asleep! That's really some involvement!

#### ***Day 4 - District Hospital Medicare Camp - 04.01.2019***

We were all up early and were reaching out to all the volunteers from different areas requesting them to take special care while coming to the venue. After we were all set, something wonderful happened. The sun came out shining bright shedding warmth and light despite all the forecasts suggesting otherwise.

The first batch rushed to our venue and with the immense help of the staff of the District Hospital, we had the venue ready well in time. The patients started coming in large numbers soon after our Doctors arrived. The temperatures warmed up a bit and there was cheer all around.

Once again seeing all our patients come was a big relief. Their overall condition had improved a lot but there were a few grannies and grandpas whose health wasn't holding up well. The volunteers took special care to reassure them of their well-being. This moved them to tears with all of them sitting with us and talking about their life and how miraculously they met all of us. Things have changed for them they said with them feeling that they have a big family now.



***Patients at Sai Aashraya's registration desk in the District Hospital Tawang***

There were a lot of patients who had to wait for really long times, but the what was special was that they never complained. Ever! After a really blissfully hectic 4-5 hours we finally knew that this series was coming to a close. It had been the most challenging series ever. And we had definitely won. How do we know? Because the smiles on the faces of all the people tell us that result. About 330 patients were treated in the limited time that we had in hand this time due to the weather. Sai Aashraya has now treated about 35,000 patients all over India and about 5,300 people in this heavenly district where Sai Aashraya has now adopted 5 villages!

It was about 6pm and it was getting cold outside. The staff of the hospital helped us pack up and as we got into our cars we could listen to people saying just the one thing. "March mein milenge". A very very special series of Loving Medicare had come to a close. We offer our gratitude to the administration, the staff in the various venues who made us feel at home. We take this opportunity to Thank our two amazing doctors. They are really special people who have hands that heal and have hearts that are pure gold. Truly legendary as we say here in Sai Aashraya. Their energy and enthusiasm is something that . So much so that we are left wondering how do they do it. One of our doctors always quips " Don't be fooled by my wig" while referring to his age! Our cardiologist made this statement after seeing improvement in the health of a patient who was in a really critical condition. He said, "It's not the medicines that are healing. It is Love that is healing all of them" .



## ***The journey back Home from Home***



### ***On the way back Home....***

There is always this silence when we start our return back Home. Because we feel we are coming home and are away from home all at the same time! While one team reached early after travelling with the mobile hospital from Tawang upto Guwahati, the other team with the Mobile hospital returned by road travelling from there. The journey back was a little quiet to start with but as it progressed we knew it was a special journey. As we passed through different states having the local food on the way we would see always 20-25 people come and read what's in the mobile hospital when we would be having food. It was an opportunity for us to interact with hundreds of people who were touched by the work being carried out.



***Good Morning from West Bengal! A shot from the mobile hospital on the way back Home from Home....***



*Roti and Daal Todka getting ready....*

The mobile hospital performed well in varying weather conditions. Yes there were a few tense moments too but all is well now and that's what matters. After 3 days of continuous driving, we got back home. As soon as we got back the preparations for the Bangalore Medicare camp began.

Yet another chronicle of love in Sai Aashraya's history. Love and Service are the two wings on which all of us soar in our life. We just have to let that love innate in us flow through us and express itself in the form of Seva ( Selfless Service). Jai Hind!



*With Abundant Love,  
Team Sai Aashraya*