



## **Mother stood up against odds to bring Smile and dignity in her daughter's life**

The birth of a child is usually related to feelings of joy and happiness. Not in Neha's case though. Neha was born with an open lip and palate. Shafir, Neha's father started screaming and was extremely angry at seeing his daughter with this deformity. He was blaming his wife for Neha's deformity and finally abandoned her and the family.

For Salma, with the birth of little Neha began the worst period in her life. She was in a state of shock. What should she do with Neha? And how was she supposed to bring up her three children alone and take care of her sick mother? There followed terrible days of tears and despair. Salma felt so helpless, she saw no way out. Moreover, Neha needed more attention and care because it was difficult to feed her. Salma had no choice: while her mother looked after the children, she worked from early to late as a cook to feed the family. After Shafir left the house, Salma, the kids, and her mother had to move into a single room in a slum near Neelsandra area in Bangalore, where she now lives in a shared house with her brother's family. A year after of these hardships, Salma finally saw a glimpse of hope, when a neighbour told her about the visit of a Project Animator from ABMSS that had been in the area looking for cleft patients. Salma gathered all her courage and called our Animator. She could hardly believe when he told her that Neha's operation would be done free of cost and gave her an appointment with our surgeon Dr. Manu Prasad, at our cleft centre in Mysore, Karnataka.

There she was also told that she is not responsible for the development of the deformity of her daughter. Salma could finally take off that burden of her shoulders. After all the months of helplessness and pain, she gained the hope and confidence that her girl would have a normal, healthy childhood. Dr. Manu Prasad operated Neha's lip so well that only a tiny scar remained.

Now, Neha has to undergo the second important operation to close her palate. Only then will she get

the chance to eat without problems and to learn to speak correctly.

Neha is already a curious little girl who loves to play with her siblings and watch her mother with enthusiasm while she is cooking. Thanks to Salma, who did not give up on her daughter against all odds and discrimination from her family and neighbors, Neha will now be able to lead a normal life with dignity!.