

HOW A SIMPLE SURGERY CHANGED IBRAHIM AND MEHRIN'S LIFE

Mohammed Ibrahim hails from a very poor Muslim family who live in Hasan Nagar, a slum in the south Hyderabad. He has one brother and a sister younger to him. There the little boy lives with his family in the simplest circumstances. He is already five years old and had not undergone surgery because his parents could not afford the surgery.

No one can ignore Ibrahim's smile and expression when he looks at you. The best thing we could learn about him was his interest to go to school. Many a time, his family members have spotted him moving around the school campus and looking at classroom from the window but despite his wish to sit in the classroom, he was reportedly denied to go inside the school and the school authorities were also not wanted that Ibrahim should come to school.

Riswara, Ibrahim's mother was all alone thinking about how her son's lip could be operated as she could not afford the cost of surgery. Because, her husband hardly supports to family and remains outside most of the time. So, she has to take care of her three children alone. That's why she is working as a maid in other's houses and always depends on her father for everything even after long years of her marriage.



The little four year girl Mehrin lives with her parents and four siblings in a poor shelter in a slum in the west of Hyderabad. She is the third child in the family and only one born with a cleft lip and palate. Like Ibrahim's family, Mehrin's father Sheikh Moiz also does not look after his family. But Parveen (Mehrin's mother) did not lose hope. She stood up and started working in neighbouring houses for some months. Then, she got a job in a plastic manufacturing factory nearby their house. It was very bad to know that none of her child goes to school even though Parveen always wanted to make sure that her children had an education. When Mehrin was born, the neighbours and community members started talking bad about the child and her mother. Parveen's husband and in-laws also started saying 'you must have used scissor or have cut lime during solar eclipse at the time of pregnancy that is why her daughter was born with cut lip'. However, Parveen cared nothing to these words. She was only thinking of how her child's treatment can be done as she could not have afforded the cost of surgery.

It was a long four years of wait when one of our social worker visited the family and assured them free cleft surgery. When we told Parveen of the free treatment option, she could hardly believe her luck - finally their daughter would get a "new face"! Though other family members were not in favour of Mehrin's treatment, Parveen's strong determination brought fruit. Like Ibrahim, Mehrin's lip surgery was also done successfully by Dr. A.Vijay Kumar, our surgeon at Hyderabad cleft centre. However, she has an open palate too and for that she will undergo another surgery to close the palate which will also be done free of cost. Now, both Ibrahim and Mehrin don't look different. With new faces, new smiles, they are enjoying the childhood in the fullest.

Like Ibrahim and Mehrin, we operate over 300 cleft children each month in 22 locations in India. We will be happy if you extend your support to our work and give these children a second chance in life.