

## RESTORATION OF EYE SIGHT

Mrs. Simoi Pala, a resident of a village called Sutnga located in East Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya, is a 72-year-old woman who has been suffering from an eye problem (which involves itching, redness and pain) for 2 years.

A casual laborer by profession, Mrs. S. Pala was married to (Late) Mr. L. Bareh and they were blessed with a daughter. Living below the poverty line, the family is engaged in labor work primarily in the extraction of coal from coal mines.

Unfortunately, ever since the condition of Mrs. S. Pala's eyesight aggravated, she was confined in her house and could not make any significant contribution to the family in terms of providing assistance. On the contrary, she became dependent and could no longer work in any capacity.

*"I cannot work and have developed difficulty to see especially at night. It got to a point where I could not even see the character of words printed on the hymn book when I attend church services on Sundays",* recalled Mrs. S. Pala when she remembered the condition she was in when her eyesight deteriorated.

However, the commencement of her recovery began when she heard about an announcement made by the village headman about an eye camp that would be organized in the Community Health Centre (CHC) of Sutnga village by Bansara Eye Care Centre in collaboration with the Society for Promotion of Eye Care & Sight (SPECS).

Curious at first, Mrs. S. Pala was circumspect and apprehensive, but when her fellow villagers made a decision to visit and attend the eye camp, she felt confident and decided to do the same.

When the eye camp was held at the Community Health Centre, Mrs. S. Pala anxiously waited for her turn queuing with other patients who were also suffering from different eye problems. On meeting one of Bansara Eye Care Centre's optometrist, she shared all of her problems concerning her vision. After a thorough examination, the result of her pre-op vision was found to be "Finger Counting @ 3 meter" on her right eye and as for her left eye, it was "6/24".

Thereafter, she was advised to undergo surgery at Bansara Eye Care Centre located in Shillong. Though Mrs. S. Pala was willing to undergo surgery, however, she dreaded thinking about the cost of surgery and transport expenditure that she may have to bear.

That concern though was addressed by the Community Health Worker of Bansara Eye Care Centre who reassured her that the surgery will be done free of cost and that the transport arrangement will be taken care of by them.

Mrs. S. Pala was pleasantly surprised on hearing this and decided to go forward with the process of undergoing surgery. When she eventually reached Shillong on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and visited Bansara Eye Care Centre, she was registered under the MRD number 180604 and her date of surgery was scheduled on the very next day, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

The team at the Operation Theatre made all the necessary preparation before the surgery was conducted and when Mrs. S. Pale was escorted inside, she became anxious at first, but she kept her faith in God with a belief that everything would be fine.

A Phaco surgery procedure was conducted on her right eye and the surgery was a success. After all medical procedures were completed, the staff at Bansara Eye Care Centre then made arrangements for her return to her home place, Sutnga, where she arrived safely.

During a follow-up process when the Community Health Worker from Bansara Eye Care Centre met her again she rejoiced and happily told him that, *"I can now see you clearly compared to the first time when we met. Now that my sight has been restored, I can also read and do household work"*.

After spending time with her and examining her eyesight, the vision of her right eye was found to be 6/9. And before departing, she thankfully shared that, *"Ngam nym lah shuh ban siew kylliang ia ka jinglehbha bad jingiarap kaba nga lah ioh. Nga ai khublei ia phi bad kumjuh ruh ia baroh kiba trei ha Bansara Eye Care Centre bad SPECS bad nga kmen ruh namar ka lah iarap ia nga"*

*(Translated from Khasi to English: "I cannot repay back the kindness and assistance that I have received. I thank you and the rest of the staff working at Bansara Eye Care Centre and SPECS and I feel happy because it has helped me").*