

EYE SIGHT SAVED IN THE NICK OF TIME

Mr Lar Shadap is a 60-year-old man who lives in Narwan, a village under East Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya. He is married to Mrs M. Langstang and is a farmer by profession.

Mr Lar Shadap led a simple life and he would often be seen working in a field cultivating rice and vegetables. This formed a major portion of his daily routine and as his sister, D. Shadap, rightfully puts it, *“My brother is a very hard working man and a majority of his time is spent in the field”*.

In his defence, Mr L. Shadap has a very good reason for being busy, for he holds a very important responsibility on his shoulder. And that responsibility is being the breadwinner of the family. *“I try my best to always make ends meet and provide for the family. Though some people may consider it to be easy but trust me working every single day in the field involves a lot of hard work and sweat”*, shared Mr L. Shadap.

However, since he was working in the field for a prolonged period of time, Mr L. Shadap's eyes were exposed to the elements as he constantly gets into contact with dust, UV rays from the sun, insects and bugs. Mr L. Shadap, though, considered it as a trivial occupational hazard and did not recognize it as a threat to his eyes.

As years went by, Mr L. Shadap began complaining about itching on his eyes and thereafter realized that his vision started waning especially at night. He could no longer see things clearly particularly in dim light and was worried that it may hamper his ability to work.

Knowing how much his family depends on him, Mr L. Shadap did not want his condition to further aggravate and cause a financial problem in the family.

Fortunately, the village headman made an announcement that came as good news for Mr L. Shadap. The message communicated was that an eye camp will be organized in the village in the premises of Narwan Secondary School in which a dedicated team from Bansara Eye Care Centre with support from the Society for Promotion of Eye Care & Sight (SPECs) will visit on 5th May 2018.

On hearing this, Mr L. Shadap considered it as a window of opportunity for him to seek medical intervention to address his eyesight problem and was keen to attend the eye camp.

Located approximately 102 Kms away from Shillong, the team from Bansara Eye Care Centre eventually reached the venue. With many patients lining up to get their eyes examined, Mr L. Shadap patiently waited for his turn.

When his turn finally came, he underwent a vision test and got his eyes thoroughly examined. The result of his Pre-op vision was found to be “Finger Counting @ 3 metre” on his right eye and he was diagnosed with cataract. One of the team members from Bansara Eye Care Centre counselled him and advised him to undergo a phaco surgery at the base hospital in Shillong.

After weighing in the pros and cons, Mr L. Shadap agreed and soon after one of the Community Health Worker working with Bansara Eye Care Centre took it upon himself the responsibility to make arrangement for his travel to Shillong.

On the eventful morning of 10th May 2018, Mr L. Shadap’s journey to recovery began when he left the village along with his fellow villagers who were referred to Bansara Eye Care Centre, Shillong, via a vehicle arranged by the health worker.

On reaching Shillong in the afternoon of 10th May 2018, Mr L. Shadap was admitted in Bansara Eye Care Centre with an MRD number 181152 and his surgery was scheduled to be conducted on the same day.

With a dedicated staff waiting for him in the operation theatre, his surgery was thoroughly and carefully supervised by an experienced team. As soon as the Phaco surgery process was completed, Mr L. Shadap was received by one of the nurses and was escorted to the In-Patient Department (IPD) Ward where he received counselling and medical instruction to help him during the recovery stage.

A team from Bansara Eye Care Centre then arranged his commute back home and when he finally returned home, Mr L. Shadap’s life took a turn for the better.

When the Community Health Worker from Bansara Eye Care Centre met him again, Mr L. Shadap greeted him cheerfully. They had a conversation where Mr L. Shadap went on to express his appreciation for the work and service provided by Bansara Eye Care Centre and the Society for Promotion of Eye Care & Sight (SPECS).

When asked about the duration (in terms of months or years) in which Mr L. Shadap suffered due to the vision problem, he said that he could not remember it since it has been a very long time. But with a smile on his face, he

told the health worker that, *“It does not matter now, what matters is that I can help my family financially by farming in the paddy field again and also by taking up labour work as well”*.

His visual acuity was measured to be 6/12 and before the community health worker parted ways, Mr L. Shadap humbly stated, *“Nga ai khublei ia ka hospital Bansara Eye Care Centre bad ka SPECS kaba la pynioh ia ka jingiarap ia nga khlem da donkam ban siew. Wat lada ngam tip shaphang ka jaka ai jingsumar khmat hynrei lyngba ka jingiarap jong ki nongtrei BECC kiba lah pynbiang ia ki kali ban leit buh bad wan shaw ia ngi kum ki nongpang ka lah iarap ia nga shibun bad ngam nym lah ban siew kylliang ia ka jingleh bha jong ki”*.

(Translated from Khasi to English - *“I thank the Hospital, Bansara Eye Care Centre and SPECS, for helping me without charging any payment. Although I am not aware of any facility that offers eye care service, however, through the help offered by the staff of Bansara Eye Care Centre - who made the arrangement for my travel as a patient - it has helped me immensely and I cannot repay them back for their good work”*).
