

RAYNER CHANGES LIVES

The prevalence of disabilities in the developing world is increasing, this in part is due to the poor or total lack of health facilities available to the poor. Due to resource constraints, disability is not a high priority of the government of Bangladesh. This has resulted in the total numbers of disabled people increasing. Rapid economic decline, increased vulnerability, dependence on others and the potential for increased discrimination are often the consequences of becoming disabled in Bangladesh.

Impact Foundation Bangladesh (IFB) is attempting to halt this increase by providing health care and surgical services through Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Centre in Chuadanga and Jibon Tari Floating Hospital.

To fight disability and restore sight, Rayner International kindly donated 1655 Intraocular Lenses (IOL) to IFB from 1999 to 2002. During this period visiting consultants and volunteer surgeons performed successful cataract surgeries on board IMPACT "Jibon Tari" Floating Hospital and Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Centre and restored the sight of 1275 people.

IFB acknowledges Rayner's kind contribution. The generous assistance from Rayner has helped IFB to fight disability more effectively through the implantation of Intraocular Lenses (IOLs).

The donation from Rayner has been instrumental in restoring the vision and helping to reduce the poverty of the rural poor in Bangladesh. Restoring patients'



sight has helped improve their quality of life immeasurably. It has allowed many to return to work and regain their independence. In particular it has helped the elderly who are among the most vulnerable groups, as the return of their sight has reduced their dependence on family members and restored their dignity.

IFB and its beneficiaries are extremely grateful for Rayner's contribution and hope that it will continue and strengthen its support in future.

END OF MISFORTUNE-

Md. Saifur Rahman (17) of Mollarhat, Khulna used to work in a local bakery with a salary of TK. 600.00 per month. He was able to contribute in his family where before him his father, Md. Ahad was the sole earner. As the eldest son to the family of a poor landless farmer, Saifur hoped to always assist his father in catering for the family's needs. However, he was dismissed from his job after being subject to poor vision for two months.



Md. Saifur Rahman

Saifur decided to go to the district hospital for treatment. There he was told that he had cataract in his right eye and IOL lens would have to be implanted to cure him. The cost of that surgery would be around TK. 8000.00. This huge cost of treatment disheartened Saifur and he returned home with no hope of ever being well again.

For two whole years he led a miserable life due to his dreadful vision. He had always hoped to free his parents from all worries, but his misfortune became the greatest worry for them.

Hungry and almost blind, Saifur decided to go to his previous employer one day, for some financial assistance. On the way he met a friend who recommended him to visit Impact Jibon Tari Floating Hospital. Saifur was delighted to know that the floating hospital was anchored near his village. He soon visited the hospital and was extremely pleased to be offered the required surgery. For days Saifur could not believe his great fortune!

A date was set for his operation and Saifur appeared at Jibon Tari accordingly. Rayner's IOL was implanted in his eye in November 2002 and soon he could see clearly.

Saifur no longer has to depend on others to move around. He feels he can now resume his employment at the bakery and work as efficiently as before. At last he can once again hope to fulfil his dream of becoming an asset to his family. He does not have to face snide remarks any more. He plans to fully utilise this great opportunity of acquiring a new life.

Saifur expressed with joy the fact that I can see again seems still unbelievable. I will now work towards educating my brother and marrying off my two younger sisters properly. Soon my parents will be free from all worries.

BACK TO NORMAL

Md. Tarikul Islam (14) is one of six children in a family where the day labourer father is the sole earner. Despite extreme financial constraints, Tarikul was admitted to a local school. Even while studying, he assisted his father in earning an adequate income to barely survive. As he entered his teens, Tarikul began to suffer from poor vision. His father took him to a local Government hospital where he was examined by an optician.

After screening his eyes, the doctor prescribed some medication including eye drop. He told the patient to see him as soon as the doses finished. However, poor Tarikul could not afford any of the medicine and thus the doses did not start let alone finish.

Lack of treatment led to further deterioration of Tarikul s vision. He could hardly see with his right eye. He had to drop out of school and was soon refrained from assisting his father in his occupation.



Md. Tarikul Islam

Tarikul s mother started saving some money to take him to the Narail District Hospital. Once arriving at the hospital the doctor examined him and said that the state of his right eye could only be improved through surgery. Medicine could no longer cure his eye. The cost of operation at a private clinic would be TK 9500.00, which was way beyond what Tarikul s family could afford. Highly disappointed, the mother and son had to return home. As time went by, he became a burden to his poverty stricken family.

Amidst all this misery, a neighbour informed Tarikul about IMPACT Jibon Tari Floating Hospital. His mother used her personal savings for the journey to Narail where the hospital was anchored. As soon as they reached the floating hospital, the medical staff screened his eye and diagnosed the problem - cataract. The doctor advised him to get admitted for surgery.

The next day a Rayner s IOL was implanted in his right eye, after which he could clearly see again. Tarikul and his family stated that they would remain eternally grateful to IMPACT Jibon Tari for the treatment they could never afford in any other health centre. Tarikul has got back his normal life and intends to go back to school and of course, help out his father in catering for the family.

A NEW LIFE FOR PARESH



Paresh with his mother

A person born blind, without the fate of viewing the beautiful world is considered as most unfortunate. Paresh Chandra, son of Sunil Chandra of Khulna is one of those who are deprived in sight. Paresh, 10, was born to the family of a day labourer. Having hardly enough to eat, medical treatment and surgery for Paresh was considered to be more of a luxury to them.

Having no other option, Paresh followed the footsteps of other blind children in Bangladesh. Equipped with chipped aluminium plate, he started sitting on the roadsides and begging for money.

Paresh's mother came to know about Jibon Tari from an acquaintance in November 2002. She took her son to the OPD section of the floating hospital where he was screened and diagnosed. The Medical Officer for eyes suggested that he should get admitted for surgery.

Dr. Kamrul Hasan performed the surgery on Paresh's eye and implanted Rayner's IOL. It turned out to be a very successful operation. It was an emotional moment when Paresh's screamed out 'I can see now' after the nurses took off his bandages. Within a week the same boy who was blind since birth could see the beautiful world and enjoy the sights of nature.

Paresh is no longer dependent on others and looks forward to helping his family in the near future through his earning.

Paresh's parents said they would never again send their child to beg on the streets. They will go through all the hardship and hurdles to educate their son and make him a doctor some day so that he can, in turn, save and restore the sight of blind people.

Jibon Tari has opened our eyes to the fact that kindness and charity is still evident in this cruel world, they said.

A BETTER LIFE!

Amena Begum, a widow and mother of four sons and a daughter is oblivious of her age. Hailed from Alamdanga thana of Chuadanga, she lives with her youngest, unmarried son. For 6 years Amena had been suffering from poor sight and blurred vision due to cataract in her left eye. This ailment made her disabled for work and dependent on others.



Amena Begum

Amena did not give much importance to this issue, as she was sure the blurred vision was the temporary effect of touching a pregnant woman of another religion! No one in the village cleared this misconception.

Previously she lived with each of her three married sons. However, she had to leave their houses as all daughters in law constantly humiliated her for being a mere liability to them. Amena's illness worried her even more because she in turn had to take care of her only daughter, who is physically challenged.

Amena had been to a local clinic for treatment where she was charged TK. 6000.00 for an eye operation. She had staked all she had to accumulate this fund, only to be able to earn and raise her daughter.

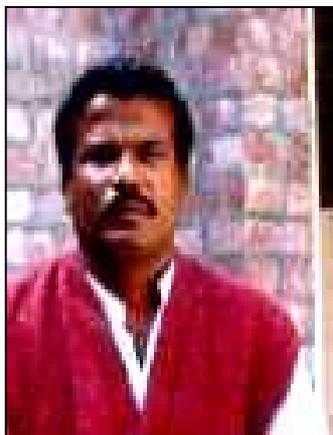
To her delight Amena could see clearly again after the operation. However, her happiness was short lived as the eye problems arose soon after three months. Having no more resources and no means to fend for herself, she had to leave her fate in the hands of God!

Incidentally, Amena learned about the Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Center and visited the centre in August 2002. A doctor diagnosed her illness and advised her to undergo a cataract operation. The minimal cost of surgery surprised Amena and she underwent a successful operation in June 2002. Her eye was cured owing to the implantation of Rayner's IOL (Intraocular Lens).

While Amena's bandages were removed, she longed to see the doctors' faces first to bless them for her new life. She is ever grateful to IMPACT for giving her the ability of being optimistic about her daughter's future. She can now work towards a better life, where she will no longer have to be a liability to anyone.

WAKING UP FROM A NIGHTMARE

MD. Abdul Latif, 40, comes from Darshana Village, Chuadanga. A talented man, he



MD. Abdul Latif

was once renowned through the village as a great artist. The villagers always admired his billboards, hoardings, signboards and paintings in rickshaw. His monthly income would be around TK 3000, which was the highest scale of earning in his community.

He had been leading a blissful life with his wife and four sons. But as the villagers say, the evil eye caught up with him. For the last three years, he has been suffering from eye problems. Subsequent watering and itching of the eyes was followed by constant blurred vision.

Within six months, this ailment deteriorated and soon he could view only large objects and letters. This problem came as a hard blow to his financial circumstance. Soon he had to live by his savings, while his steady income came to a halt. Consequently, his wife started working in other people's houses to cater for basic necessities. All four of Latif's sons, despite being good students, had to drop out from school.

To break free from the bad spell, Latif perpetually visited various doctors from both the village and outside but to his great disappointment no one could offer him proper medical assistance, even when he was able to pay for treatment.

Soon, Latif heard of Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Center from his friend and decided to visit the centre as his final resort. The doctors in the health centre screened his eyes and were able to successfully diagnose his ailment. The cause of the downside in his life was — cataract in both eyes.

Within the interval of three months, IOLs from Rayner were implanted in both his eyes. On November 2002, Latif's bandages came off. He could see normally once more!

Soon after he took some personal loan and started his business all over again. He is now leading the very same blissful life (touchwood!) with his family. He said, IMPACT has given me back whatever I lost. Everything is the same, if not better than what it was. The time period when I was ill is now like a nightmare, from which I have woken up, thanks to IMPACT.

REMOVAL OF CATARACT-FREEDOM FROM ISOLATION

For the past 3 years Gopasha, (60) from Damurhuda sub-district of Chuadanga district, has been suffering from severe eye ailment. A fisherman by profession, Gopasha had an accident when a fishing net struck his left eye. The piercing pain made him go to a local clinic only to find that he also had cataract in his eyes. His deteriorating vision caused his daily income of TK. 40.00 to go down to zero.



His disability kept him from catching fish or going afar to carry out his job. He became completely unemployed as he was unable to leave his home without assistance. He started living with his son and daughter-in-law. His partial blindness did not prevent him from noticing the annoyance of his family towards his idleness. His son would provide food, but who would assist him in walking around, bathing, and going to bed? He was very lonely.....

From an acquaintance who is an IMPACT field worker, Gopasha learned about Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Center, where cataract surgeries were performed for the poorest people of the community. After consultation with the doctor of the Health Center, he was selected for cataract surgery. Gopasha had his surgery in November 2002 and an IOL was implanted in his left eye. This made his vision completely normal and he feels that he can go back to his profession of fishing.

He said, I will be eternally grateful to IMPACT for giving me what I had lost hope on. I now receive more care and respect from my family members and hope to be by their side till death .

ALISUN BEGUM IS NOW A MORE CONFIDENT PERSON



Alisun Begum (60) had her cataract surgery 2 months ago and says that her life has improved immeasurably.

Her eyesight began to deteriorate over a year ago from cataracts, and she became totally blind in her right eye just before her surgery. Her loss of sight made it extremely difficult for her to get around as she was always bumping into things further injuring herself. This resulted in her being afraid to go out on her own without assistance.

As her eyesight got worse she became more and more dependent on her son's family to help look after her. Eventually she had to move in with one of her sons, as she was unable to safely use her cooking utensils and became dependent on her daughters-in-law to cook and feed her. This situation however was not ideal as her son's family began to look on her as an added burden to their lives. As time went by her sons gradually began to neglect her and her daughters-in-law frequently got irritated with her because she was unable to help them around the house.

It was a time in Alisun's life when she felt most depressed thinking that she was a burden to everyone around her. She stopped meeting anyone. Her weak eyes seemed only good enough to shed tears of desperation. Alisun had heard that her condition could be cured but it would require a lot of money. She had no way of raising the required Taka 5000 to pay for the treatment at the local private clinic.

It was then that one of the field workers of Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Center (IMCHC) of Chuadanga informed the people of her village that Impact Foundation Bangladesh (IFB) could offer corrective surgeries at a fraction of the cost of other medical centres. Alisun visited IFB's health centre and had a cataract surgery with Intraocular Lens (IOL) implantation in her right eye.

Alisun had the surgery 2 months ago and says, "I feel like I have had a new lease of life, I can now stand on my own two feet again and am not dependent on my relatives any more." She also states that her relationship with her sons and daughter-in-laws has improved as she is now able to help them with the housework and reduce some of their workload.

MOHAMMED ISLAM CAN NOW RETURN TO HIS JOB IN THE MOSQUE



Mohammed Islam is 75 years old and was an Imam at the local Mosque in Chuadanga before the eye sight of both his eyes began to fail due to cataracts over a year and a half ago.

As he began to find it more and more difficult to read he had to leave his job at the Mosque. His eyesight became so bad that he was unable to look after himself and had to move in with his son. At first this worked out all right but his son soon began to get irritated with him because he was unable to even help around the house. Sheikh Islam was more and more neglected by his son and was frequently just left at home with nothing to do and no one to help him around the house.

He went to Dhaka to try and have his eyesight corrected but found that the cost of cataract surgery was far too expensive and he had to return home without the surgery.

Mohammed Islam then heard about the work of IMPACT FOUNDATION BANGLADESH in Chuadanga through one of its community health workers and decided to go to Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Centre to see if they could help him. After 2 consultation meetings Mohammed Islam's eyes were operated on and Intraocular Lenses (IOL s) were implanted.

Since then his eyesight has returned to almost perfect. I am extremely pleased with the work of IMPACT as they have given me my life back, I have been able to return to my job in the Mosque and have been able to move back into my own home again

MAFIZ UDDIN CAN NOW READ AND WRITE AGAIN



Mohammed Mafiz Uddin is 65 years old and worked in a local office in Alamdanga union, Chuadanga before the sight in his right eye began to fail. As his eyesight got worse he had to leave his job, as he was unable to read any documents or write his reports. On the loss of his job, Mafizuddin's life began deteriorate fast. The loss of his income meant that he was no longer able to buy as much food and could no longer afford any new clothes or household items. Mafizuddin went to the local doctor who advised him to buy some spectacles, which cost him Taka 200. They did not improve his eyesight.

He had heard about the work of IMPACT FOUNDATION BANGLADESH through a neighbour who had had surgery there, and decided to visit Impact Masudul Haque Memorial Community Health Centre in Chuadanga. Mafizuddin attended a consultation session and was told he could have the surgery in a week's time. On the day of his surgery Mohammed arrived at the health centre and waited for his operation, but as the time approached he began to get scared and ran away. Eventually he plucked up enough courage to come back and he rearranged the operation time. He says that he felt like running away and almost did so again, before he underwent the cataract surgery when an Intraocular Lens (IOL) was implanted in his right eye.

Since then Mohammed laughs at his attempts to run away and says I wish I had not been so afraid as my life has completely changed. If I had known how this was going to restore my sight I would never have run away. I am now looking forward to return to work as I can read and write again

ARONI NO LONGER HAS TO RELY ON HER NEIGHBOURS FOR HELP

Aroni Begum of Darshana, Chuadanga cannot remember her age but says that her right eye first started to deteriorate roughly 9 years ago. She originally thought that this condition was just to do with her old age, but as she began to find it more and more difficult to manage, she decided to visit the doctor to see if he could help. The Doctor charged her Taka 100 just for the consultation meeting and then told her that he could not help her.

As Aroni's eyesight began to totally fail she had to leave her job as a domestic helper in other people's homes and began to find it increasingly difficult to cook for herself. Her loss of income saw her situation becoming increasingly desperate. This situation was then compounded by her only son leaving her to live with his in-laws as he found his mother too much of a burden to bear.

The loss of Aroni's only income and the help of her son saw a rapid fall in her socio-economic situation and resulted in her becoming almost totally dependent on her friends and neighbours for income and help with preparing food. Aroni was particularly uncomfortable about this situation as she was totally dependent on the good will of her neighbours, which she felt could run out any time.

Aroni was then referred to IMPACT FOUNDATION BANGLADESH health centre in Chuadanga by one of IMPACT's health workers who had visited her village. At the health centre she was screened first and had a Rayner IOL implanted in her right eye.

Aroni now says, I have now regained my independence as I have been able to start work again, I can cook for myself and I am no longer dependent on my neighbours for help

***Aroni Begum preferred not to have her picture taken**