Voluntary Action in the North-east

Service to Humanity is Service to God*

Over 60% services of HAMM Hospital are provided on a charitable basis to people who are in no position to pay for their costly treatment

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The Haji Abdul Majid Memorial Hospital & Research Centre (HAMMH) has fulfilled a felt need of the society in the area around Hojai, a small town in Nagaon district of Assam. Inaugurated by Mother Teresa on September 16, 1995, the hospital has since its inception benefited over 1.5 million people. The biggest beneficiaries have been the pregnant women. Indeed, over the years, the HAMM Hospital has contributed significantly to bring down maternal and infant mortality in Nagaon district. Another contribution of the hospital is that the poorest of the poor living in the remotest part of Assam are getting world class treatment, which nobody could have thought about a decade ago. For Haji Ajmal Ali, the HAMM Hospital marks just another milestone in his vision to create a society that is free from infant and maternal mortality, and where no one dies of untreatable ailments. This hospital mainly caters to the health problems of the rural population of Nagaon district in Assam.

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September 16, 1995 will go down as one of the most memorable days in the history of Hojai, a small town in Nagaon district of Assam, when the apostle of peace and service Revered Mother Teresa, came there to inaugurate the Haji Abdul Majid Memorial Hospital & Research Centre (HAMMH).

Such is the felt need of the hospital that since its inception, over 1.5 million people, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion and economic status, have benefited from its charitable services. However, the biggest beneficiaries have been the pregnant women, who earlier used to die as hapless victims of maternal mortality.

For Haji Ajmal Ali, the HAMM Hospital marks just another milestone in his vision to create a society that is free from infant and maternal mortality, and where no one dies of untreatable ailments.
In spite of his old age and poor health, there is nothing that can dampen Haji Ajmal Ali’s zeal to create something that can permanently become a boon for the people of Assam. He now wants to convert this hospital into a Medical College and then set up a Medical University so that there is no paucity of doctors and paramedical staff who are willing to work in the rural areas of the country.

HAMM-Converting a Dream into Reality

It was the death of four pregnant women in just one week in his native town Hojai that hurt Haji Ajmal Ali so much that he decided to do something that can save women and children from dying an untimely death.

What he started then way back in 1986 was just a dilapidated dispensary, but today it has become one of the most modern rural hospitals not just in India, but across the whole of South East Asia.

Over the years, the HAMM Hospital has contributed significantly to bring down the maternal and infant mortality.

However, given the poor health infrastructure and very often non-existent medical services in rural areas of Assam, a lot still needs to be done. And that’s why Haji Ajmal Ali has made the setting up of a Medical College and a Medical University in Hojai as the mission of his life. Fortunately, carrying forward the philanthropic tradition of the family, Haji Ajmal Ali’s five sons have now made the mission of their father as the personal goal of their life.

“The need of the hour is that we all should join hands in contributing the resources and removing all the obstacles in setting up a Medical College, which will ultimately help the poor people in rural areas of Assam,” says Sirajuddin Ajmal, the managing trustee of the HAMM Public Trust.

HAMM-Bridging the Gap

Bridging the gap among the communities, between the rich and the poor, and between those living in towns and remote hamlets has been the biggest contribution of the HAMM Hospital in Assam. “This is perhaps the one and only hospital in India where we do not
look into the pockets of patients, and irrespective of their economic situation we provide them world class treatment,” asserts Haji Ajmal Ali, Chairman, HAMM Public Trust. Because of the poor means of transport and non-existent roads in many villages in Assam, the HAMM Hospital right from its inception has been actively engaged in an outreach programme to reach out to people who do not have access to reliable medical services. Every month the team of doctors and paramedical staff visit the far flung areas to organize medico-educative camps, where patients are treated for their common ailments while more serious cases are referred to the main hospital. Particular emphasis is given on prevention of diseases and spreading awareness about family planning, hygienic living, and nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women and children.

The hospital has recently added two mobile clinics, on boat and wheels, which effectively transport the medical services right to the doorsteps of the people. The Clinic on Wheels is equipped with the state-of-the-art diagnostic services, like ultrasound, the pathology and surgical units, and it has been proving a boon, especially for the poor living in some of the most backward and interior areas of Assam.

**Professionals in HAMM**

Even though the HAMM Hospital is equipped with the state-of-the-art surgical, ICU, diagnostic, neo-natal, and pathological services, yet it is the discipline and commitment of its doctors and paramedical staff that makes it truly special.

The charitable spirit of Haji Ajmal Ali has inspired them so much that there have been a number of instances when doctors donated their own blood to save the life of their patients.

There was a time when the HAMM Hospital used to call surgeons from Guwahati, but now it has its own team of some of the most competent professionals, who have performed thousands of surgeries at a fraction of the cost charged by other private hospitals. Realizing the fact that one hospital cannot meet the medical needs of people in rural areas of Assam, satellite hospitals have now been opened in Goalpara and Moirabari, where specialists from the HAMM Hospital provide the same quality services. With HAMM Hospital emerging as a centre of excellence, the poorest of the poor living in the remotest part of Assam have now started getting world class treatment, which nobody could have thought about a decade ago.

**HAMM-Seeking Green Solutions**

Research on traditional herbal medicines is an important component of HAMM Hospital’s research and development programme. The hospital has set up a “Herbs Centre” to assess the medicinal properties of various plants, their optimum utility, and a mechanism to popularize their use among the rural masses. The flowers, leaves and stems of herbs are separately crushed and their essence is obtained for assessing the potential of each herbal medicine. The idea is to find green solutions to health problems and use them as a substitute to highly expensive allopathic drugs.
HAMM Hospital’s research team has been compiling a detailed database of traditional herbal medicines being used by the villagers for ages so that it can have a good knowledge bank, which can be further researched and analyzed in the lab. Once the efficacy of any particular drug is proved, it is distributed to the people along with the instructions of its use. The practice not only enables the people to be self-reliant in treating the minor ailments, but also saves them from paying exorbitant prices for allopathic drugs and exploitation by quacks.

Another thing that is high on the agenda of the research team is to disseminate to the villagers the nutritional values of vegetables and agricultural products available in their environment. This has led to significant improvement in the situation of pregnant and lactating women, especially in habitations that have been adopted by the HAMM Hospital as model villages.


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