

## Turning the fates

### Vaccinations are well accepted

Meanwhile all villagers were offered a vaccination against Covid 19, by that the vaccination rate in the village was reported as high for the first dosage, and for the second dosage was considered as a given for older people. According to the health worker team however almost all villagers have been affected by slight influenza-like symptoms -first the mothers then the children. A test for Corona was not possible. Randomly villagers have been tested for Corona, with frequent positive outcome. Thus, we hosted our everyday medical consultation (OPD) in front of the St. Mary health care centre. Thereby, we could take care for all patients.



### Purnima, 17 years, heart insufficiency

Purnima is 17 years old as she suffered from an infection with heart insufficiency (pericardium effusion, cardiac tamponade, lung infection and ascites). The belly continuously was filled with fluid. Her father died some years ago and the mother was left behind with five girls.

Four of the daughters were already married, all except Purnima. The mother works as daily laborer on the fields, however suffers from a muscle weakness in the shoulder area which made work difficult. She owned a small piece of land, which she sold for 40.000INR (ca. 500€, therewith she could pay doctor fees and diagnostic investigations). All money was finished, then the last attending doctor decided she was healthy and discharged her without any further therapy. In her despair she approached a priest, who then brought her to us. Our cardiologist diagnosed a thickened heart wall, which needed operative split, requiring a bigger amount of money. Consequently, we tried to connect her to a government health insurance. However, the insurance was first rejected, as in the village her pre- and surname appeared a second time in another household which already enjoyed the benefits

of health insurance. Only after repeated intervention all administrative hurdles could be overcome. But the relief did not last long. The hospital in charge did not accept the health insurance, as the surgery costs would be covered merely by an insignificant percentage. The mother is desperate and fears that her child now has to die. The mother needs to be picked up from the hospital by us, as she cannot afford any transportation costs anymore. We ask her for the costs requested by the hospital. Shining Eyes will cover the costs, in order that this child can receive her surgery and can stay alive.



It is touching to feel, how we are guided by God's hand to look after the poor and vulnerable and to take care of them. This guidance is clearly perceptible. It is like a miracle, when out of a hopeless situation, in which life seems to find its end, the seed of life can blossom out again. The mother of Purnima was hardly to recognize after completed surgery, full of joy and gratitude.

#### **Tuhin Murmu, 9y, rheumatic fever and destruction of heart valves**



Tuhin came in September 2018 to us with rheumatic fever, swelling of knees and was severely sick from heart inflammation. He came together with his mother from a neighboring district after having been admitted in a hospital, hereby the whole household budget was exhausted, without clarification of diagnose. From another patient they have heard from our St. Mary's health care centre and now searched their way to us. He showed classic symptoms of rheumatic fever after an infection with streptococci. Unfortunately, also three heart valves were affected, which increasingly were deforming -resulting in heart insufficiency. His father is disabled at home and cannot work, the mother is just coasting along with her work on the stone pit, and can hardly feed a family with three children. They live in a harsh environment, where drought and lack of water prevail. Recently, Tuhin has been looked after by our cardiologist and recovered well, however the heart insufficiency got worse by the time and he urgently needs a surgery. We had sent him to a cardiologic center in Kolkata, where he got treated three times, however without any surgery. First for diagnostics, the second time he had caught

a long-lasting cold due to the AC in the intensive care which made surgery too risky, and third his surgery was unachievable due to the high surgery costs. Lately he was emaciated, and needed again admission in our centre. Shining Eyes would like to cover the surgery costs, as he now is repeatedly coming to our health care centre with decreasing state of health.

#### **Monika Hamrum, 5 years, Lymphnode -and Lung TB**



She came totally emaciated and with high fever to us into the ambulance. A lymphnode at her neck was enlarged and necrotic desintegrated. She suffered from both a lung- as well as a lymphnode TB. Rapidly the disease has spread. We started with the TB therapy and quickly she recovered and regained weight, and we could see her happily laugh in our centre.

#### **Schools reopen again after two years of closure**

From 7<sup>th</sup> February onwards most of schools reopened again after having been closed for two years, preliminary from class 5 again. In the meantime private schools had continued their classes online, what however has been impossible for village schools. By that village children have problems to find connection to the studies again, many things have been forgotten and have to be learnt from new. In the Indian school system solely to attend the lessons hold by the teacher are not sufficient. When a child wants to graduate successfully a private tutor is elementary. This however is costly and not possible for everybody.

Also the labour market situation is scarce. In the village we meet a young man, who works in South India as construction worker for good salary, and now found a position in a printing shop. Now only for five days he is on holiday to see his family. Three days of train ride he has to take to see his family with two young children.



### **Much rain lets our gardens flourish**

The exceptional heavy rain has destroyed some rice plants. However for our kitchen gardens this rain was beneficial and they grow magnificent. Some families even now use the rice fields as temporary kitchen gardens due to the high yields.



### **Success of our supplementary food and of our long-term iron therapy**

Our nutrition program is well accepted and our iron therapy successfully increased the Hb value. In the middle of the pandemic in Sep'20, 80% of our children aged below three years were affected by an Hb-value below 10g/dl, suffering from moderate to severe anemia. After half a year of daily iron drops and NutriMix (Lentil-Wheat-Milk porridge with vegetables and fruits from the kitchen gardens) the anemia rate dropped to merely 50%. After a full year of treatment in Sep'21, merely 20% of children were moderately to severely anemic. The children eat the full portion portion of NutriMix, ca. 250-500g.



### **Priest and doctor**

On Sunday the priest calls me, in one village a severely sick woman is living and the relatives now stand crying in front of him and request him to help. So, we jointly visit the village and I recognize a woman I know from former times who suffered from cancer. The relatives are anxious that the last hours of life have started for this woman, however I could see in her eyes and at her movements that there is still vitality and a strong force for life in her. In the next morning we brought her with our ambulance car into the Hope hospital to Kolkata, where a severe kidney insufficiency and anemia was diagnosed and she immediately received a blood transfusion and dialyses. To our surprise quite quickly she recovered and she could be discharged for going home again. For these miracles, that God brings, we can stand and be astonished!





### 11-yearly anniversary of our health care centre St. Mary

Deeply touching and surprising was the gathering with our health worker team on the day of St. Mary's anniversary. We invited them, for the 11-yearly anniversary of our health care centre in order to give Saris to them as a sign of gratitude for their work engagement. They were all sitting together in front of the grotto of Mary and formed a beautiful small community. I asked them for a traditional Santal song,...and they started to sing, which fulfilled me with deep peace and harmony. I asked them for the meaning of the song, and I learnt that it was similar to a Creation Psalm, in which nature, human being and animals are altogether living in integrity, full beauty and peace....

*"Whatsoever you do to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you do unto me"*  
(Matthew, 25: 40)

