Assam Gujarat Voluntary Blood Bank & Research Center

By Shobhan Vyas

Gujaratis are a tiny ethnic group of Guwahati, with nearly 150 families only. Almost all members of the community are engaged in trade and commerce, which is a traditional occupation of Gujaratis everywhere. Though small in size, the Gujarati community of Guwahati has succeeded in making a healthy impact on the socio-economic environment of Guwahati. One of their highly valuable contributions to Assam is the well managed Voluntary Blood Bank and Research Centre. The Secretary of the Board of Trustee and a leading social activist, Shri Shobhan Vyas has given below the account of the functioning of the Blood Bank and the different Blood Donation Camps organised and Eye Donation Initiative taken by the Blood Bank.

-Editor

India is a unique country and a place where you find people speaking different languages, following different religions and living together. People from different regions intermingle in the country. Persons from outside the state have chosen Assam as their place of work and are trying to do something substantial for society in whatever possible way they can.

Persons from Gujarat have come out from their state since centuries and have settled in various parts of the world to earn their livelihood. Likewise, Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi was sent to South Africa to earn his livelihood. He became Mahatma-the Father of the Land - who played a vital role in India’s Freedom Movement.

People of the Gujarati Community also reside in the North-eastern part of our great country. Here they are working in various fields – industries, tea, business, both small and big, and have been in service since the last many years. Gujaratis of all castes and creed have formed Shree Gujarat Welfare Society which was earlier known as Gujarati Samaj. Its founder President was Late Ratilal Vyas and Secretary, Shree Praveen Bhai Shah, way back in 1980. Thereafter it started to grow but due to great changes in Gujarat, people stopped coming out in search of work.

The data below can give a brief of work done till November 2004.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Issue</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>1717</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>2307</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>1672</td>
<td>2187</td>
<td>1557</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>14620</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Collection</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2324</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1698</td>
<td>2232</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>1154</td>
<td>15005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of Camps</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Don. at Camp</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Don. At B.Bank</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free blood Grouping</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>2087</td>
<td>7162</td>
<td>6067</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>2220</td>
<td>2746</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>1056</td>
<td>27655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This being our Karma Bhumi, the Gujarati Community, consisting of 150 families wanted to do something for the society in which they live. A Trust was formed in December, 1993 by the name of “Assam-Gujarat Charitable Trust” with its founder chairman, Shree Kakula C. Mehta, vice-chairman Shree Praveen Bhai Shah and secretary, Shree Shobhan Bhai Vyas. Late Raman Bhai Mehta, late Faruk Bhai Bheemat, Shree Ramesh Bhai Mantora, Shree Asgar Bhai Jabrot, Shree Deepak Sheth were the founder members of the Trust. They soon started working on its first project - A Voluntary Blood Bank – the first of its kind in the North East, and for this necessary guidance was taken from the Rajkot Voluntary Blood Bank (Gujarat).

There were many teething problems such as getting a proper place to start the project, then procuring a licence for the Blood Bank and, finally, the Assam-Gujarat Voluntary Blood and Research Centre started functioning fully in 1996 and has not looked back thereafter.

The Blood Bank not only provides safe and screen blood but is also trying hard to eliminate professional blood donors as till today this constitutes nearly 60% of blood donation. Guwahati with a population of 13lac(approx) daily requires nearly 250-300 units of blood and it has 5 blood banks in government sector- Guwahati Medical College, Mahendra Mohan Choudhry Hospital, Railway Hospital, Army Hospital, CRPF Hospital, 4 in private sector- Guwahati Neurological & Research Centre, Down Town
Hospital, Dispur Poly Clinic, International Hospital and 2 stand alone blood banks i.e. Ganga Blood Bank and Saharia Blood Bank and only Voluntary blood bank is Assam-Gujarat Voluntary Blood Bank & Research Centre.

As per our study, \(275 \times 30 \times 12 = 99,000\) units of blood are required annually in Guwahati with a population of 13 lacs. If there are 3 lacs healthy donors within age group (18 yrs to 55 yrs) who can donate blood and if I and you donate blood today voluntarily, then next of our donation will come only after 3 yrs. So what we need today is general awareness among the people about voluntary blood donation & its benefits as this prevents lots of disease and spread of diseases like HIV, Jaundice (HbsAg, Hcv), VDRL, M.P, etc as the blood you donate is tested of all these parameters & then only given.

We follow a procedure before issue of blood which is mentioned below:-

When attendant of any patient needing blood comes to our Blood Bank then he/she must bring requisition from the treating Doctor, where he mentions the quantity of blood required in units. For each unit one donor must donate blood. Attendant has to bring blood samples of patient with label.

Then we check the patient’s blood group in our laboratory and if the blood group is available then our doctor checks the donor who comes for exchange of blood. The donor is guided to the air-conditioned Phlebotomy Room. Thorough Clinically required examination, history taking, blood pressure, weight, etc, are done here with Hemoglobin assessment. Then the donor is asked to fill up a donor form where every detail including his physical status, earlier any blood donation, is taken. When all the paraphernalia are completed then only the donor is taken to the bed for donating blood. Once again, he is looked for any skin lesion, prick marking etc. before drawing his blood. After the blood is drawn each unit is tested for Grouping, HIV, HbsAg, Hcv, M.P, VDRL, Irregular Antibody& Surface Antibody. Each unit collected is then forwarded for cross matching, which is done both by Major and Minor Method. All these tests are done under doctor’s supervision. If the cross matching is found O.K. with the patient’s blood sample then only the blood is issued to the patient’s attendant. For all this testing procedure a nominal Test charge is taken from the patient’s attendant.

Assam Gujarat Voluntary Blood Bank & Research Centre helps Thalassemia patient by providing concession in test charges & without blood exchange, also provides free/concession to economically backward patient.

The other activity undertaken by Assam Gujarat Voluntary Blood Bank & Research Centre is to increase awareness on eye donation after death. In association with Shree Sankar Dev Netralaya till today 20 people donated their eyes, 40 people got benefited. This is a small step towards eradicating corneal blindness, which is growing day by day in India. For both the projects—Voluntary Blood donation and Eye donation— we organize awareness camp and show all over Assam.

By doing this little service we have got tremendous support from many individuals and N.G.Os, including Purvotar Pradesha Marwari Yuwa Munch and its branches, various Lion’s Clubs, Mahavir Yuva Parishad, Leo Club and its branches, Maheswari Yuvak Mandal, Zoo Narangi Sports Socio-Cultural Organization, NEEPCO, Ulubari Kachari Basti Cultural Night Celebration Samity, Atma Nirbhar, Assam Association of Deaf, Manav Kalyan Sanstha, Khandel Vipra Parishad, Birubari Young Men's Association, Custom Officer, State Bank Of India, Terapanth Mahila Mandal, Dadich Parishad, Punjabi Sabha, Art Of Living, Sarathi Welfare Society, Don Bosco Youth Mission & Educational Services. To create awareness of Voluntary Blood Donation among students it has organized camps at colleges like R.G.Baruah College, Chakma Students Union, Pragjyotish College, K.C.Das, Commerce College and West Guwahati Students' Union. Besides this, many other organizations like Red Cross Society & local NGOs have co-operated with our Blood Bank.

There is still a lot to do, we need more support from every one. Our future projects are: -

1) Complete Blood Bank with component facility.
2) Thalassemia Day Care Centre.

For this project we are looking for a big place where we can have all this under one roof. At present we are running from a rented premises and so any philanthropist who wants to help us in this mega project is most welcome. Our aim is that not a single individual should die for not getting safe and screen blood.

At present Assam Gujarat Voluntary Blood Bank & Research Centre is managed by following body & other technical staff including doctors, receptionist, laboratory technician and office boy.
Ramesh Mamotra - Chairman
Shobhan Vyas - Secretary
Asgar Jabrot - Trustee
Deepak Sheth - Trustee
Kaku Lal C. Mehta - Trustee
Sanjay Kedia - Adviser
Sudhir Jain - Adviser
Mahendra Kotccha - Adviser
Purushottam Gaggar - Adviser