

Surgery separates Bihar's Sita & Gita

PARVEEN NEGI

SONU KISHAN



By Neetu Chandra in New Delhi

SUBHASH Mukhiya and his wife Nirmala Devi began Monday with hope and a prayer. Their daughters, conjoined twins Sita and Gita, were undergoing a crucial operation to separate the two at the Batra Hospital and Medical Research Centre in the Capital.

The 18-month-old twins were born with congenital structural abnormalities. They were joined at the hip and had a common genito-urinary and intestinal system.

The operation started at around 7 am and went on for close to 13 hours at the end of which the doctors and parents were a happy lot.

"The surgery had been successful and the kids had been separated," Dr Sanjeev Bagal, chief executive officer and senior consultant paediatrician of the Batra Hospital, said. "However, the reconstructive surgery was still on," he added.

The children were learnt to be doing well.

The surgery was precise and technically very difficult as the doctors had to create a urinary diversion, an intestinal diversion and also had to reconstruct the lower part, including the hip bones.

While most of the organs had been separated, an MRI

and CAT scan revealed that the whole of the rectum and urinary passage had to be given to one while the same had to be recreated in another.

It took a team of 28 doctors and highly trained nurses to perform the marathon surgery.

The multi-disciplinary team was led by paediatric surgeon Dr Arvind Sabharwal and included plastic surgeon Dr Rohit Nayyar, urologist Dr P.P. Singh, orthopaedic surgeon Dr Tucker and Dr Pawan Gurha, who took care of anaesthetic and critical care.

Sita and Gita were born at Bhawanipur Kushwaha Tola under Sangrampur police station of East Champaran district in Bihar. They come from a very poor family.

Father Subhash is a daily wage worker while Nirmala is a housewife.

"My wife and I were at our wit's end when we saw our daughters in this condition. We approached a lot of doctors in Patna who refused to take up the case because of the risk involved in the surgery," Subhash said.

The doctors advised the parents to go for surgery to separate the twins. But for

28 doctors and nurses involved in surgery

the family, which barely manages to eke out a living, affording this kind of surgery was out of the question.

"We are very poor and couldn't manage the money for the operation. We had to accept our daughters' fate as it was," Nirmala said.

The distraught parents also

took the conjoined twins to different shrines and even consulted village quacks, but to no effect.

They then visited the East Champaran district magistrate's office at Motihari seeking help from the administration.

The twins were referred to the district civil surgeon to look into the case. District civil surgeon Dr Biltu Paswan constituted a medical board and advised the Mukhiyas to take their daughters to the Capital.

In the meantime, Patna-based Dr Ajay Kumar came to hear about the case and offered financial assistance.

The Batra Hospital offered to carry out the surgery and took care half of the Rs 5 lakh expenses while Dr Kumar donated the rest.

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Conjoined twins Sita and Gita have been separated by a surgery in Delhi; Anxious parents Subhash and Nirmala (left) pray at the Batra Hospital.