

**VISION 2020: THE RIGHT TO SIGHT – INDIA
REPORT ON LOW VISION WORKSHOP
15th & 16th November, 2013
HV Desai Eye Hospital, Pune**

A two day workshop on Low Vision was organised by VISION 2020: The Right to Sight- India at HV Desai Eye Hospital, Pune from 15th to 16th November, 2013. The workshop was sponsored by CBM, SARO and hosted by H V Desai Eye Hospital, Pune with an aim to enhance the service delivery system for underserved population of Low Vision (LV) people. The workshop was successful as a good number of participants from different parts of the country attended it. Nearly 75 participants representing NGO's, INGO's and Government participated in the workshop to provide their valuable inputs. Twenty Five Paramedic students were also present in the workshop.



Ms. Sujaya Krishnan, Joint Secretary, MoHFW, New Delhi was the Chief Guest and Prof. Rajvardhan Azad, Chief, RP Center, AIIMS, New Delhi and Mr NP Pandya, President, Pona Blinds Men's Association were the Guests of Honour at the workshop.

Objectives of the meeting were:

1. To raise awareness and orient on low vision care services among various stakeholders
2. To share existing models and lesson learnt in LV service delivery
3. To disseminate information's on available resources (Appliances and equipment – provision and supply)
4. To identify Operational Research on low vision care services

The agenda for the workshop focused on the set aims and objectives and the presentations on the various aspects of low vision. The group works aimed to find out the challenges and strategies to strengthen low vision services in India.

DAY-1

On day-1 the session commenced with a welcome address by Col. Dr. M Deshpande, President, VISION 2020: The Right to Sight - India. This was followed by presentations on the various clinical as well as rehabilitation aspects of low vision by the speakers and question answer sessions. Dr. Praveen Vashist, Additional Professor & Head of Community Ophthalmology Department, Dr RP Centre, AIIMS did the situational analysis on LV current situation and services.

The manual on low vision '**Guidelines for Comprehensive Management of Low Vision in India**' supported by Sightsavers and CBM was released in the presence of Ms. Sujaya Krishnan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India; Dr.Rajvardan Azad, Chief, RP Center AIIMS; Dr. Sara Varughese, Regional Director, CBM; Dr. Sandeep Buttan, Sightsavers ,Mr.Pandya ,President ,PBMA;s H V Desai Eye Hospital Col.M.Deshpande ,Chief Medical Director ,H V Desai eye Hospital ,DR.G V Rao, CEO, Vision 2020 India ,Mr.Parvez Bilimoria ,Executive director ,PBMA's H V Desai Eye Hospital ,Dr.Praveen Vashist ,Additional Prof. & Head, RP Center AIIMS and Dr Rahul Deshpande, Medical Director, HV Desai Eye Hospital.



LOW VISION MANUAL RELEASE

The key note address was given by Ms. Sujaya Krishnan and Prof. Rajvardhan Azad and Dr. Sara Varughese delivered a special address.



MS. SUJAYA KRISHNAN
JS, MoHFW

PROF. RAJVARDHAN AZAD
Chief, RP Center, AIIMS

Dr. SARA VARUGHESE
Regional Director ,CBM

Group Work was done on Challenges and Strategies to strengthen low vision services to identify the areas of improvement. The group work was facilitated by Dr. Uday Gajiwala. Group work presentations were made by each group.

The session ended with a discussion on the group work presentations.

DAY-2

On second day of the workshop Mr. Nitin Desai, Chairman, PBMA's HV Desai Eye Hospital, Pune graced the occasion with his kind presence in the workshop.



Felicited Mr. Nitin Desai, Chairman, PBMA's HV Desai Eye Hospital

The session on second day started with Dr. Ilango's presentation. A video on LV centre visit of LVPEI & case study of Joseph Eye Hospitals, Trichy, Tamil Nadu work on Low Vision were presented by the speakers of respective hospitals. Speakers did the presentations on various technical as well as rehabilitation aspects.

As a result of discussion in group works the leading challenges were identified and strategies to overcome by the challenges were suggested on various issues to improve the low vision services:-

Challenges	Suggested Strategy	Way Forward- Action Points
<i>Governance / Policy</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working definition Policy Political commitment Coordination between departments Common goals between NGOs System (national)-GOV Streamlining- GOV Setting protocols (uniform nationally) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set a universal protocol Streamline the different programs (GO, NGO) Mapping and networking of services Policy- one LV clinic In each district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a universal protocol Mapping of present resources – available centres, HR, training centres
<i>Human resources</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum (standardization) Magnitude Teams (including Rehab professionals) Lack of awareness amongst providers Lack of incentive - Non revenue generating stream. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum expansion Upgrading skills for different eye care professionals Sensitization of students Hands on practice Human resource mapping R& D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can we accept present curriculum with due modifications? Level and type of HR to be sensitised / trained
<i>Finances</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of care Allocation and disbursement of funds Non revenue generating stream- sustainability- SD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure fund allocation from government Cross subsidy Health insurance provisions for LVA Involvement of CSR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of funding needed to set up Low vision services Policy level advocacy with the Govt. for raising funding for LVAs & giving priority to LV services Low cost devices
<i>Infra structure / Technology</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Device supply chain Basic infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating in-house R&D for low cost devices (sensitization of developers) IT related R&D for rehab 	
<i>Service delivery</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification Working definition Baseline data Intermittent availability of services Lack of interest & Motivation Lack of counselling Access to Low vision devices Lack of coordination among Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal protocols Effective referral chains (internal & external) Follow-up and tracking (compliance monitoring) Sensitization of all providers TQM Increased awareness- Development & Availability of IEC materials Involvement of the local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of centres needed across the country (one Low vision care centre for 1Million population; One tertiary Low vision centre with sophisticated devices and training & rehab facilities) Awareness generation activities Mass awareness creation campaigns targeted at

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing links between Policies & Implementation at Grassroot level • Lack of willingness at Management level • Lack of monitoring/ follow up • Opportunity costs of running the low vision services 	<p>community in planning , identification ,referral & Provision of services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added focus on Low Vision • Developing network linkages with CBOs, NGOs, Hospitals and local governments as appropriate • Low vision should be included in the existing Health Professionals curriculum • Integrating Low vision component in the existing Programmes • Ensuring access and local availability of affordable Low vision devices • Advocacy efforts for prioritizing Low vision at Policy levels • Increased Monitoring & Follow up • Multi disciplinary approach 	<p>general Public depending on the local needs. Different strategies needs to be adopted focusing on service providers. To sensitise ophthalmologists, Doctors, other health professionals by including in their curriculum. Creation & Dissemination strategies of Quality IEC materials need to be developed. Awareness materials for grass root ophthalmic technicians needs to be developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Indicators for Service delivery and training need to be measured on the regular basis. These indicators can be made part of reports submitted to NPCB. Regular CMEs on Low Vision need to be conducted by Medical colleges, medical associations locally.) • Magnitude of low vision Financial loss due to low vision • Develop IEC material in all different languages
Health information		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline data • Streamlining of systems 		
Community perspective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness • Access to Services • Lack of motivation • Lack of time for caregivers • Low Vision not being a priority • Ignorance on Rights and entitlements of persons with Low vision • Social stigma & myths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEC activities 	

Group work and presentations on the Group work was done on the basis of presentation made by Dr. Sandeep Butan on suggested operational research by each group.



GROUP WORK

A "National Working Committee on Low Vision" and "National Steering Committee on Low Vision" is formed to take the responsibilities to improve low vision services in India. The Committee has experts in low vision from different part of the country.

National Working Committee on Low Vision

Dr. Tanuja Britto	Ms. Prema Chande
Dr. Sunita Lulla	Dr Namita Jacob
Dr. Shubhra Sil	Mr. Ajeet Bharadwaj
Dr. K. Ilango	Ms Jaya Srivastava
Dr. Rahul Deshpande	Ms Sachu Ramalingam
Ms. Beula Christy	Mr. Daniel Franklin
Dr. Uday Gajiwala	Ms. Deiva Jayaram
Mr. Rishiraj Borah	Mr. Madhavan S A

National Steering Committee on Low Vision

Dr. Rajvardhan Azad	Mr. Nitin Desai
Dr. Sara Varughese	Mr. N P Pandya
Dr. Praveen Vashist	Mr. R. N. Mohanty
Dr. Sandeep Buttan	Dr. Col. M. Deshpande
	Dr. G. V. Rao

Subsequent to the entire group work presentations workshop ended with a summing up & valedictory.

The workshop was exceedingly appreciated by Ms. Sujaya Krishnan, INGO's, NGO representatives as well as the participants. Some of the participants expressed their willingness to hold more low vision workshops at regional levels.



- We would like to thank PBMA's H V Desai Eye Hospital for hosting the main event.
- Our thanks to CBM, SARO for their support.
- Our thanks to Sightsavers for their support.
- Our thanks to Ms. Sujaya Krishanan, Joint Secretary, MoHFW, New Delhi for accepting our invitation to grace the occasion as Chief Guest.
- We would like to thank Prof. Rajvardhan Azad, Chief, RP Center, AIIMS, New Delhi and Mr NP Pandya, President, Poona Blinds Men's Association to grace the occasion as Guests of Honour at the workshop.
- Our special thanks to Mr. Nitin Desai for his kind presence in the workshop and to host dinner at Desai Brothers.
- We would also like to thank speakers & facilitators of the workshop Dr. Sara Varughese, Mr. Antony Prabhakar, Mr. Jesuraj & Mr. Madhavan from CBM, SARO, Dr. Sandeep Butan, Sightsavers, Dr. Praveen Vashist, RP Center AIIMS, Mr. Sandeep Tambe, RCI, New Delhi, Dr. Sunita Lula, ICARE, Noida, Dr. Subhra Sil, Vivekanand Mission Asharam, W. Bengal, Dr. Tanuja Britto, Joseph Eye Hospital, Ms. Beula Christy, LVPEI, Hyderabad, Dr. S. Gadkari, HV Desai Eye Hospital, Ms. Prema Chande, Roshni Eye Care, Mumbai, Dr. Namita Jacob, Perkins International, Ms. Sumana Samuel, Sharp Memorial, D.Dun, Dr. Uday Gajiwala, Dr. K Ilango, Aravind Eye Hospital, Dr. Rahul Deshpande & Dr. Sudhir Taras, HV Desai Eye Hospital, Mr. Ajeet Bhardwaj, IOF, Dr. Deshpande AA, Ms. Sachu Ramalingam, Ms. Deiva Jayaram, Ms. Jaya Srivastava, Ms. Soniya Srivastava, SCEH, Delhi & Mr. Amrut Asal, BPA, for their able support for making the event a success.
- Our thanks to all the participants of the Low Vision workshop.

