



Report on  
**National Workshop on**  
**“CHILDHOOD BLINDNESS”**

**Venue**  
Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, New Delhi

**Date**  
13<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

## PREFACE

Dear Friends,

Although there are focused efforts to tackle Childhood Blindness by Government and INGOs collectively in the country, such efforts are confined to limited locations. Majority of the areas in the country remain uncovered. Government of India, in its National plan has clearly spelt out its strategy to establish about 50 Paediatric Eye Care (PEC's) units in the NGO and GO sectors in its 10<sup>th</sup> five year plan. There is huge propaganda and promotional services available to disease like Cataract, but the paediatric care-FUTURE GENERATION CARE (FGC)- has not so far received the required level of attention and support. To fill in the gaps in knowledge, human resources, infrastructure etc besides policy support, ORBIS International and Government of India along with other INGOs and NNGOs have been striving hard. To build the facilitating environment for paediatric care in the country the awareness building to all the stakeholders is the stepping stone that VISION 2020India had taken up.

To address this particular demand and supply gap, Vision 2020: INDIA in association with Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, New Delhi had planned a **national workshop on Childhood Blindness** on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2005 in New Delhi. Fortunately the workshop was a grand success because of the contribution made by each one of the partner participated. It had provided a proper forum to dwell upon the subject of Childhood Blindness and provide inputs to the policies at the national level.

We would like to thank every one participated in the workshop personally and especially Government of India and ORBIS International for their wonderful support.

We hope this movement that has just begun will give a face lift to the Paediatric eye care in the country.

With best wishes,

PKM SWAMY

Executive Director

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## **Introduction**

According to World Health Organization, India is home to the highest number of children with blindness, while 40% of all childhood blindness is avoidable. Another 9.2 million children suffer from significant visual impairment. Childhood blindness results into cumulative loss of US\$ 11.1 billion to India's GNP.

There are 12,000 ophthalmologists in India, but less than 150 ophthalmologists (including government and private sector) are trained to deal with pediatric posterior segment disorders. Even today, there are only a few tertiary eye hospitals that are equipped to deal with pediatric eye disorders. Lack of reliable data on infrastructure and human resources available in the country for pediatric eye care services is among some of the critical constraints that plague this subspecialty. Trained pediatric eye care teams comprising of pediatric ophthalmologists, anesthetists, optometrists, nursing staff, counselors is a scarce resource. Then, the sporadic preventive eye care programs for children which are conducted focus only on school going children, ignoring the critical target group of pre-school and non-school going children.

## **Need**

The control of childhood blindness has been globally given high priority by the WHO in its Vision 2020: The Right to Sight program. Various strategies to achieve this goal have been outlined during the course of several National and International workshops over the past few years. In tune with the global call, Government of India in its latest plan of action (2002-2007), has highlighted establishing 50 pediatric eye care centers by the end of the current five year plan. That GoI has taken cognizance of the growing problem of childhood blindness and suggested appropriate steps in its Plan of Action, is considered as a major step towards eliminating childhood blindness from the country. However, there is still a long way to go.

## **Objectives**

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- a. To have a national debate on contentious issues related to pediatric eye care
- b. To recommend standard procedure & practices to control childhood blindness

In view of the above objectives, following issues were discussed during the workshop:

- a. What should be the ideal & acceptable duration of training for ophthalmologist in pediatric ophthalmology?
- b. Best practices for Pediatric Cataract management.
- c. Best practices for Pediatric Strabismus management.
- d. Best practices for management of Pediatric Glaucoma.

- e. Best practices for management of ROP.
- f. How do we strengthen pediatric vision screening program?
- g. How do we overcome demand supply gap in vision screening charts/essential equipment for pre-verbal children?
- h. Sustaining Pediatric Eye Care Programs.
- i. Criteria for setting up Pediatric units.
- j. Important of Outreach for output in CHB programs.

### **Methodology**

- There were presentations on contentious issues by the reputed resource persons followed by discussion
- Presentation by the Groups in the plenary for evolving recommendations. All sessions were highly participatory in nature.

### **Participants**

A total of **49** delegates from different parts of the country had participated in the Workshop. The participants of the workshop were from Central and State governments, INGOs, Non-Governmental organizations in eye care in the Country..

### **Venue and Dates**

The Venue for the National workshop on Childhood Blindness was the Conference Hall, *Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital*, New Delhi .The date was March 13, 2005.

### **Inaugural Session**

**Mr. A.K.Arora**, Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, in his welcome address appreciated the participation from all corners of the Country and extended warm welcome to all.

**Mr. PKM Swamy** , Executive Director Vision 2020-India briefed the objectives of the workshop. He also mentioned that Vision2020-India, would like to conduct other such workshops in collaboration with Government of India and other stakeholders to expedite the Vision 2020 initiatives.

**Mr. Oliver Foot**, President & Executive Director, ORBIS International, USA had inaugurated the workshop

Mr. Oliver Foot, President and Executive Director of ORBIS International spoke on the occasion highlighting need for partnership work between INGOs and NNGOs in eye care in Childhood Blindness collectively under the umbrella of Vision 2020:INDIA. He said they are partners at global level and we want to work actively in India with other INGOs for Vision 2020:INDIA. It is only the partnership that brings about momentum in Vision 2020:INDIA initiatives. He also highlighted the growth of ORBIS International in India and the expansion of its network with credible NGOs in the country and thanked the organizations for making its network strong.

Before the technical sessions started the following persons were felicitated for their commendable work in childhood blindness



**Dr. P. Vijayalakshmi**, AECS, Madurai, **Dr. T.S. Surendran**, Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai, **Dr. Pradeep Sharma**, AIIMS, New Delhi, **Dr. R.V. Azad**, AIIMS, New Delhi **Dr. Bachani** , ADG (O), Government of India.

In the FIRST plenary session Dr. I.P. Bhagwat, Senior Program Manager, ORBIS –India presented a paper on “*Continuing Challenges of Childhood Blindness*”. Dr. P, Vijayalakshmi from Aravind Eye care System presented a paper on “*Magnitude and Causes of Childhood Blindness*”. Dr. GVS Murthy, AIIMS, New Delhi presented a paper on “*Criteria for setting up Pediatric units*”. R. Ravi Shankar from Sankara Nethralaya presented on “*What should be the ideal & acceptable duration of training for ophthalmologist in pediatric ophthalmology*”? .Dr. Praveen Vasisht from AIIMS presented a paper on “*Importance of outreach for output in Childhood Blindness Programme*”. Mrs. Prema K Chande from Lotus College of Optometry presented a paper on “*How do we overcome demand-supply gap in Vision screening*”. Dr. Parikshit Gogate from HV Desai Eye Hospital, Pune presented a paper on “*Sustaining pediatric Eye care programs*”.

In the Second plenary session Dr. Pradeep Sharma from AIIMS presented a paper on “*Best Practices for pediatric strabismus management*”. Dr. R.V Azad from AIIMS had presented a paper on “*Best practices for Management of ROP*”. Dr. Pradeep Vyas from Sri Ganapati Netralaya presented a paper on “*Best practices for management of Pediatric Glaucoma*”. Mrs. K. Manimala from Sankar foundation, Visakhapatnam presented a paper on “*School screening – field experiences and learnt*”. Dr. Suma Ganeshan from Dr. Shroff’s Charity Eye Hospital presented a paper on “*Experiences and interventions in Childhood Blindness*”. Dr. P Sreenivas Reddy Director AP Right To Sight Society made presentation on AP initiatives in Childhood blindness and Dr. Asim Sil from

Chaitnayapur Kolkata shared his experience in childhood blindness in the eastern part of India. Dr. Deuja from Nepal shared his country experience in the childhood blindness. In the concluding session, all above issues were debated upon and the suggestions were noted. **Dr. D. Bachani, ADG(O), Govt of India** had briefed the National Program on Childhood Blindness and some recent initiatives related to the. Also he promised to put forward the recommendations at the Govt. level for consideration.

**(All presentations are in CD, attached separately)**

## **Recommendations**

At end of the day, following recommendations were come from the groups and forwarded the same at the Govt. level for consideration.

- Magnitude of childhood blindness should include unilateral blindness
- Pediatricians and General Physicians should be involved in pediatric eye care. A basic training manual can be developed and introduce through Indian Academy of Pediatrics.
- WHO guidelines for equipment and human resources may be updated and adhered to.
- Eligibility for training in Pediatric Ophthalmology training: completed a residency program in ophthalmology; 2 years (D.O) or 3 years (D.N.B or MS or MD) (preferably)
- Duration of training could be 6 months / 12 months/ 18 months/ 24 months
- Short-term training in pediatric ophthalmology should be considered as 'Observer-ship' and as Fellowship'
- Outreach camps for early identification of children with blindness. Distribution and follow-up of spectacles are the key.
- Primary preventions like Vitamin A supplementation/Nutrition, Measles/Rubella Immunization, Ante-Natal Care and Primary Health/Eye Care should be strengthened
- Secondary service centers need to identify children afflicted with ophthalmia neonatorum, congenital/Juvenile Glaucoma, Amblyopia, Refractive errors, Cataract and ROP.
- Tertiary centers should predominantly perform surgeries and provide low vision care for residual vision including special education

- Child-friendly units should use celebrities (like Sania Mirza & Saurav Ganguly) and specific key messages
- A pediatrician or family physician should examine a new born eye
- All infants by 6 months of age should be screened for ocular health
- By age 3 years all children should have their visual acuity estimated
- Screening at school should become a routine procedure every year in all schools.
- The vision screening charts and equipment to be added under the sight saving equipment list
- Vision screening report should be prerequisite for admission into nursery and playschools
- R&D support to scientist and ophthalmic instrument manufacturer to design tests that are more specific and suitable for Indian children
- Institutions like school of optometry can be given annual targets for Vision screening and outreach programs for preverbal children\
- Issues related to childhood blindness should highlighted in media
- Ophthalmic equipment can be imported at a reduced rate of 5% duty, the consumables are imported at regular duties. This is making the revenue and maintenance costs of the equipment very high, affecting the cost per surgery.

### **Post Program Action Proposed**

The recommendations made and the consensus arrived in the workshop will be communicated to the Govt. level for action & consideration.



## **I. (Workshop Photographs)**



**(Clockwise: Mr. Oliver Foot, President, ORBIS International, Addressing in the workshop, Felicitation of the eminent personalities in pediatric eye care, Delegates participating in the workshop, Dr. D.Bachani, ADG(O), GOI on the podium)**



## II.

### National Workshop on Control of Childhood Blindness

Venue: Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, Kedarnath Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002  
Date- March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005

*Registration (8:30AM – 9:00AM)*

**Inaugural Session:** (9:00hrs to 10:00hrs)

**Welcome address** - Mr. A K Arora, CEO Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

**An overview of the workshop** - Mr. PKM Swamy, Executive Director, Vision 2020: India

**Special Address** – Dr. G.V. Rao, ORBIS-India

**Special Address** - Mr. Oliver Foot, President and Executive Director, ORBIS, International

*Tea Break (10:00 hrs to 10:15 hrs)*

**Plenary Session** (10:15hrs to 13:15hrs)

- **Continuing Challenge of Childhood Blindness** – Dr. I P Bhagwat, ORBIS
- **Magnitude and Causes of CB** - Dr. P. Vijayalakshmi, Aravind Eye Hospital
- **Criteria for Setting up Pediatric units** – Dr. GVS Murthy
- **What should be the ideal & acceptable duration of training for ophthalmologist in pediatric ophthalmology?** - Dr. K Ravishankar, Sankara Nethralaya
- **Importance of Outreach for output in CHB programs** -Dr. Pravin Vashist.
- **Sustaining Pediatric Eye Care Programs?** - Dr Parikshit Gogate.
- **Childhood Blindness initiatives in AP-** Dr. P.S. Reddy

*Lunch break (13:15hrs to 14:00hrs)*

**Plenary Session (continued)** (14.00hrs to 15:15hrs)

- **Best practices for pediatric strabismus Management** - Dr. Pradeep Sharma, Dr. R P Centre
- **Best practices for management of ROP** - Dr. R.V. Azad, Dr. R P Centre
- **Best practices for management of Pediatric Glaucoma** – Dr. Prateep Vyas, Shri Ganapati Netralaya
- **How do we overcome demand supply gap in Vision screening** - Prema K Chande, Lotus College of Optometry

*Tea Break (15:15 hrs to 15:30 hrs)*

**Plenary Session (continued)** (15:30 hrs to 16:30 hrs)

- **School Screening –field experiment and lessons learnt** –Mrs. Mani Mala, Sankar Foundation Eye Hospital, Visakhapatnam
- **Nepal Experience on Childhood Blindness-** Dr. Amar Deuja, Lumbini Eye Hospital Nepal.
- **Experience and interventions in CB** - Dr. Suma Ganesh, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital
- **Experiences, interventions in eastern India** –Dr. Asim Sil from Chiatanya pur, West Bengal
- **National Program on Childhood blindness-** Dr. D. Bachani, Government of India

**Recommendations** (16:30 hrs to 17:00 hrs)

**A guided tour of Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital** (17:00hrs to 17:30hrs)

**III. Copy of Felicitation Certificate**



Vision 2020: The Right to Sight - India

**FELICITATION CERTIFICATE**

*The Vision 2020: The Right to Sight – India, acknowledges  
and appreciates the significant contributions made in the field of*

*Pediatric Eye Care in the country by*

**DR. P. VIJAYALAKSHMI**











*Aravind Eye Care System, Madurai.*

Date 13-03-05  
New Delhi









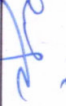

**R. D. THULASI RAJ**  
President, Vision 2020 India



#### IV - Participants List











Workshop on CHB 13th March 2005 (List of Delegates)					
S. No	Name	Organisation	Designation	Email	Sign
1	Dr K. Rani Sankar	Sankar network	CEO	drkrs@sanke.networks.org	
2	Mr. Niyal Adeney	E. v. c. Barroden	M.D	savegroup.saluna	
3	A. Banakar	GRASIS	MS	k	
4	S. S. Belkar	"	PM		
5	Neta Tyagi	"	PM	netas@orbisindia.org	
6	Shanti Chakravarty	"	PM	Shanti@orbisindia.org	
7	Dr. Vijay Laxmi	Aravind Eye Hosp.			
8	Dr. Prem	Lotus Eye Hosp.			
9	Mrs. Harimada	"			
10	M. Srivani	L. V. Prasad Eye Institute		Srivani@icare.sph.net	

Workshop on CHB 13th March 2005 (List of Delegates)











S. No	Name	Organisation	Designation	Email	Sign
11	Ugon Hteep	Shan Garmulu Nethology	Medical Officer	pygon@nethology.com	
12	Dr P. Somnaran Nethy	A.P. Rignat & Signat Security	Director	signtap@city.com	
13	Dr Kuldeep	SNC - Chhriker Security	Head, Custodial & Control Center	drkuldeep@prison@yahoocoms	
14	Dr. Dole.	H-V-Desai Eye Hospital, Pune.	Ophthalmologist Project co-ord.	kuldeepdole@yahoo.com	
15	Kamalekh Guha	ORBIS	Program Manager	kamalekh@orbisindia.org	
16	Dr Ch. B. Shukla	Kotary Netha Sunderli VIT An	Consultant ophthalmologist	B. Shukla@orbisindia.com	
17	Dr. Anurag Mishra.	JPM Kotary Eye Hospital, Aizawl, Mizoram.	Resident, pediatric ophthalmology.	anuragmishra@net.us	
18	Dr. Wenhua Li	ORBIS		Wenhua-Li2003@yahoo.com	
19	Dr Arun Deusa	Senior Paramedical Staff Hospital Nepal	Director	arundeyi@hptai.ac	
20	Dr. Eligeben Joseph.	L.P. Hospital Angamaly, Kerala	Senior Consultant & pediatric ophthalmologist	eligeben@yahoocoms	



Workshop on CHB 13th March 2005 (List of Delegates)

S. No	Name	Organisation	Designation	Email	Sign
21	Dr Pradeep Sharma	RPC AIMS	Professor	drpradeep57@yahoo.com	
22	Dr S. Chandrasekhar	Srikanth Inst. of Pathology	Director	Chandra @ srikanth.org	
23	Dr Vinay Gupta	RPC (AIMS)	Asst Prof	gupta_v20032000@yahoo.com	
24	Dr S. Kothari	Stolt Bombay ORIS INTERNATIONAL DATA	Consultant		
25	Dr UVER FOOT		PRESENTER		
26	Dr Krishna prasad	MMJ Shriyog Jus Hindu Hindu	NGO Consultant	mujisri_krishna@yahoo.com	
27	Dr M M Joshi	"	NGO Director	"	
28	Mr P. K. Byrareddy	"	NGO CEO	"	
29	Deepak K. Bhatnagar	SC EM	Clinic Manager	deepak_optima@yahoo.com	
30	Dr Sumita Gupta	Neuro.	Consultant		

Workshop on CHB 13th March 2005 (List of Delegates)

S. No	Name	Organisation	Designation	Email	Sign
31	Dr. Karanale	Venu	SRMD		
32	Dr. Arul Tosa	Venu	CEO		
33	Dr. GVS Murthy	RPC	Assoc Prof		
34	Dr. Arunima	Training Eye Dept	Prod person	arunima@arvind.org drakrishna.dagar	
35	Dr. Parthasarathi Lakshmi	H.V. Desai Eye Hosp.	Sr. consultant	parthasarathi@yahoo.com	
36	Dr. Pooja Varma	RPC	Asst Prof	parthasarathi@yahoo.com	
37	Dr. Arul	RPL	Prof	arunima@arvind.org	
38	Dr. G. S. Nagarajan	Rion clinic	Asst. Prof	g.s.nagarajan@rediffmail.com	
39	Dr. Karan Aggarwal	SEH	Exec consultant	karanaggarwal@rediffmail.com	
40	Dr. K. Sundarashan	Aravind Eye Hosp.	M.S.	Aravind nager madhuri Tamil	

(41) Dr. Teena Mathur

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M.S.

Nandi



42 - Dr. Chauhan Karkar		M.S.	VENU Hospital.
43	ROHITA JASON CRISIS INTERVENTION		<del>YES</del>
44	Dr. Arjun Kumar SGL DMB Vivekananda Mission, Bram Chaurangpur MB		Arjun
45	Dr. G.V Rao Country Director OERIS NARDDELH		✓
46	Mr. PKM Sarany Natural Executive Director, VisinDro India		Munasa ✓
47	Mr. Arora CEO, SEETH NARDDELH		✓
48	Dr. Badani ASCO GOE NARDDELH		✓
49			
50			