



World Sight Day 2012 - a report

The World Sight Day theme for this year was 'Eye testing for all'.

Members of VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – India across the country observed the World Sight Day in their unique ways. The world's largest Snellen chart, a unique exhibition with retina as a model, large screening and more. The desired effect was that all this created awareness in the public and advocacy with the policy makers who were chief guests in most of the events.

In our main event at Gujarat, we were fortunate to have ample support from the government. Ms Sujaya Krishnan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India; Dr N K Agarwal, DDG (O), National Programme for Control of Blindness, MoHFW, Government of India and Dr V K Tewari, Education Officer, MoHFW, Government of India participated in all our event at Vadodara, Gujarat.

In the following report, we have made an attempt to capture some of the events that we had knowledge of.

VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – India: Walkathon, painting exhibition by school children, a cultural programme by the visually challenged, exhibition and many more events observed by VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – India and its members nationwide were the highlight of the World Sight Day in India. All with an aim to focus on the theme of WSD and to create awareness in the community about the need for a regular eye check up.

Gujarat (western India): VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – India organised a technical session 'Glaucoma: an emerging eye care challenge in India' at one our member organisation - Sankara Eye Hospital, Anand, Gujarat on October 10, 2012.



The technical session emphasised various aspects of glaucoma with a special emphasis on Gujarat, the venue of the session. Eminent ophthalmologist from across the country and from Gujarat through their presentations discussed what needs to be done to manage this emerging eye problem, which is the third leading cause of blindness in India. There was good participation from the government both from the Central and the State government departments of health.



On the day of the World Sight Day, October 11, a colourful walkathon led by school children made its way through the busy road of Vadodara, Gujarat marching to popular tunes played by the band. Banners and colourful placards with messages on glaucoma and the need for a regular eye check up aimed to create awareness among the public. The event was organised with the support of our member organisation Care Group.

The walk that was flagged off by Ms Sujaya Krishnan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and Mr Ashwini Kumar – I.A.S, Municipal Commissioner, Vadodara saw participation from school children, ophthalmologists from the city. Dr N K Agarwal, Dy Director General (Ophthal), National Programme for Control of Blindness, Government of India and Col (retd) Dr Deshpande released multicoloured balloons to mark the walk.



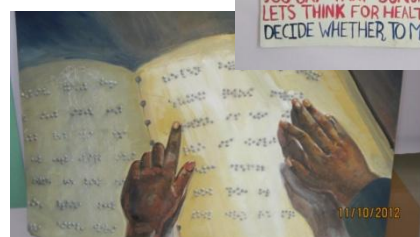
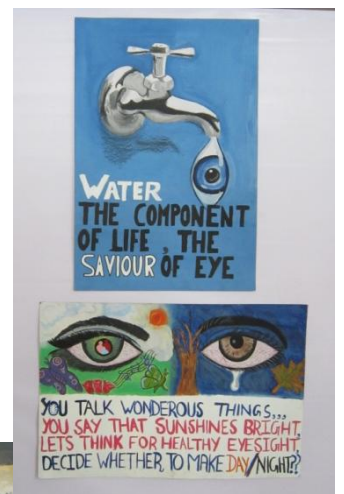
All the participants for the walk were sporting t-shirts with messages on eye care.

The walk culminated at Shayaji Hall, Vadodara where an exhibition of painting by school children from the city school was displayed. The topic was on eye care. These paintings by students of class 9th will form VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – INDA’s calendar for 2013.

Ms Sujaya Krishnan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India addressed the children advising them to participate in the school screening programme. She also gave them tips on nutritive food to eat for healthy eyes.

Dr NK Dr N K Agarwal, Deputy Director General (Ophthal), National Programme for Control of Blindness, Government of India spoke about the need for eye testing for all and how we can do the basic screening at home.

In an effort to create awareness, Ms Elizabeth Kurian, Secretary, VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – India requested a couple of school children and the dignitaries on the dais to blindfold themselves. After a minute when the children removed the blindfold, they were asked to describe how they felt when they were not able to see anything because of the blindfold and prompt came the reply “we



cannot see the beauty of the nature.” Dr. V. Tiwari, Health Education Office, NPCB spoke on the IEC campaigns and programs.

Visually impaired school children gave heart warming performance of popular songs from films and dance.

We would like to thank Mr Lal Dave from Care Group for hosting the main event at Vadodara and his team led by Mr. Bharatsinh Sarvaiya and Mr Rangan Iyer; Dr RV Ramani and Mr Mayur Vyas, for hosting the technical session at Sankara Eye Care, Anand.

Our special thanks to Ms. Sujaya Krishnan, Jt Secretary, MoHFW, Government of India; Dr. N K Agarwal, Dr. V. K. Tewari from National Programme for Control of Blindness, Govt of India, Blindness Control Programme for accepting our invitation to grace the occasion as guest of honour.

Our sincere thanks also to Mr Ashwini Kumar – I.A.S, Municipal Commissioner, Vadodara. We would also like to thank Govt officials: of the State for supporting the event: Dr Deepak Mehta, Director, RIO, Gujarat, Dr Jasalpura, SPO, Gujarat; Dr. Utpal Jani Consultant to SPO and Ophthalmic Surgeon, Ruxmaniben Govt. Hospital, Ahmedabad Dr. Mariam. N. Mansuri, Professor & Head of Glaucoma Unit, M. & J. Western Regional Institute of Ophthalmology and Dr Pran Nagpal, President, Vision 2020 The Right to Sight Gujarat Chapter; Dr Uday, Gajiwala, Divyajyothi Trust, Ms. Trupti Khaladkar, Senior Lecturer, Lotus Eye Hospital, Mumbai; Dr. A. K. Agrawal and Dr. Suneela Garg from Society for Sound Hearing; members of VISION 2020: The Right to Sight – India Dr. Jateen Shah, Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, Ms. Manimala, Dr. T P Das, Ms. E. Kurian, Dr. R. D. Ravindran, Dr. Sara Varughese, Mr. Jesuraj, Mr. Kashinath for their able support for making the event a success.

Haryana (North India): Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences (RP Centre), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi organised a mega eye care festival at AIIMS-II, Village Badsa, Jhajjar district, Haryana on October 10 & 11, 2012.



The mega eye festival was inaugurated by Chief Guest, Mr Keshav Desiraju, Special Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India along with Prof. R.C. Deka, Director, AIIMS. Mr Vineet Chaudhary, Deputy Director (Administration), AIIMS and Prof. Rajvardhan Azad, Chief, RP Centre, AIIMS also graced the occasion.

The two- day event had a number of events: conducted a massive screening programme where 4490 persons were seen

including school children was done. 1645 spectacles have been dispensed/ booked for free spectacles; released IEC material developed in vernacular language; a poster exhibition on common eye diseases by students from ten schools studying in and around Badsa village was on display.





Several NGOs working in eye care: VISION 2020- Right to Sight – India, Divya Jyoti Jagriti Sansthaan, Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute, Mamraj Agarwal Foundation participated in the exhibition.

VISION 2020 – INDIA put up a stall with posters on eye care and introduced a game to attract the visitors to the fair who were mostly from rural India. This was creating awareness at the grass root level.

Aravind Eye Care Systems, Madurai, Tamil Nadu (south zone): Aravind Eye Care, Madurai organised unique exhibition to mark the World Sight Day. It was truly unique as it had a model of retina at the entrance, a model operation theatre along with video screening of cataract surgery and visitors were made to walk through the make-shift dark pathway and were asked to play simple games blindfolded to get a glimpse into the life of the blind.

A focus on all the eye diseases along with preventive measures and treatment procedures was projected through the twenty stalls put up at the venue.

The exhibition was officially inaugurated by District Collector, Mr Anshul Mishra. The exhibition received wide response from the public and as many as 6500 people including students visited the exhibition.

Sankara Eye Hospital, Bangalore (south India): World's Largest Vision Chart measuring 7000sq feet was created in Bangalore by doctors of Sankara and the School of Optometry to mark the World Sight Day. They were supported by Sightsavers and Essilor India.

The dimensions of the chart were such that the first letter "I" was 51.951ft wide and 268.621ft high and visible from a distance of 4.64kms. According to Sankara Eye Hospital, this is the 'world's largest vision chart ever created.'

Keeping in with the theme of the World Sight Day of 'Eye Screening for all' and to create awareness among the general public about the need for preventive eye care and regular check-up the snellen chart was made.

The Snellen chart was displayed at important places through the city like the airport, bus stop etc to create awareness among the public.

The other activities included:

Insight Clay Modelling: Many Ways of Seeing... Workshop, Screening @ IIM Bangalore
Panel Discussion on Kasturi Channel on preventive eye care
Gift of Vision outreach camp



Indian Optometry Federation (across the country): in their unique way, in a well coordinated activity observed the World Sight Day throughout the country involving all their units.



IOF observed "Eye Testing for All" with special focus on "Refractive Error & Emerging Eye Diseases" as the main theme and distributed banners and posters to their associations through the country. Following are the screenings that were held by IOF throughout the country:

- Screening of School Children & Adults with Refractive Error
- Screening for Diabetic Retinopathy
- Screening for Glaucoma
- Detection & Treatment of Childhood Blindness, Trachoma etc

Walks and candle light walk were held by Optometrists throughout the country.

Arunodhya, Gurgaon (North India): Arunodhya observed the World Sight Day at the Medanta Hospital, Gurgaon. They organised a technical session on glaucoma.

