Gender and Access to Eye Care Service
National Perspective

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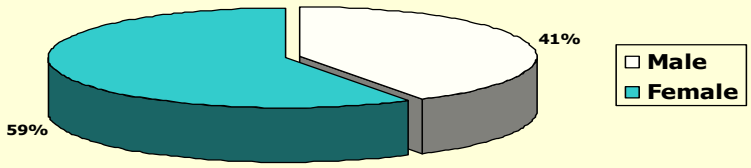
Gender Inequality in India

- **India has witnessed gender inequality mainly in the education, employment and health sector due to its socio-economic and religious practices.**
- **There are vast differences in education level among male-female gender (21 %). The divide is sharper in rural areas.**
- **Men are 2.7 times employed for cash.**
- **In India Sex Ratio of 933 girls born for every 1000 boys, goes up to 793 in state Punjab, the imbalance represented more than 5 million missing Indian baby girls.**

Gender Inequality in BLINDNESS- National Survey 2001



Blindness: VA <6/60 in better eye with available correction
Prevalence:50+ age : Men: 7.0 %, Women: 9.9%

National Survey 2001

Gender	Economic Blindness (<6/60–3/60) (%)	Social Blindness (<3/60) (%)	Adverse Outcome (%)	CSC (%)	IOL Implant (%)
Male	2.8	4.2	30.5	70.1	29.7
Female	3.5	6.4	36.2	62.4	25.1

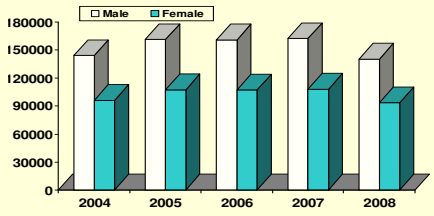
RAAB 2007

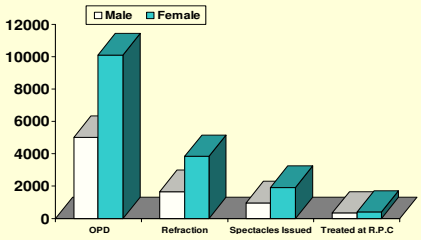
Parameters	Visual Impairment (<6/18–6/60)	Severe Visual Impairment (<6/60–3/60)	Blindness (<3/60)
Male	16.2%	3.7%	2.9%
Female	17.2%	5.1%	4.1%
All	16.8%	4.4%	3.6%

Aravind Comprehensive Eye Survey

	No (%) reporting Previous utilization	Hospital	Eye Camp
Female	32.6	1	1
Male	38.9	1.7 (1.2-2.5)	0.8 (0.6-1.0)

R.P.Centre- Experience





OPD
F 40%
n = 233577

OUTREACH
F 67%
n = 24245

Higher prevalence of blindness among women?

- **Life expectancy of women is higher than men.**
- **Women much less likely access eye care information, services compare with that of men due to social, cultural factors.**
- **Women of all ages are more frequently exposed to causative factors such as infectious disease and malnutrition.**
- **Some blinding conditions, such as trachoma and cataract, are more likely to affect women**

Cataract: INDEYE Study 2004-07

Type of cataract	Men	Women
Nuclear	**1**	**1.82**
Cortical	**1**	**2.07**
PSC	**1**	**1.8**
All unoperated cataract	**1**	**1.81**
All cataract	**1**	**1.8**

CSC-National Survey 2001

State	Males	Females
	Coverage Percentage (%)	Coverage Percentage (%)
A.P	58.8	50
Chatisgarh	**50.8**	**40**
M.P	65.9	63.6
Maharashtra	73	64.5
Orissa	**52.7**	**33.5**
Rajasthan	68.7	64
T.N	86.3	80.2
U.P	**66.4**	**53.9**
Bihar	54.4	44.7
Gujarat	87	82.3
H.P	83.2	81.7
Karnataka	54.9	46.1
Kerala	**83.5**	**70.6**
Punjab	81.3	81.9
West Bangal	56.5	46.2
WB assisted	66.4	57.6
Other States	74.7	68.2
All India	**70.1**	**62.4**

The Gender based barriers for Cataract Surgery

- Economic dependence and Cost of surgery
- Inability to travel to a surgical facility: Generally require assistance,
- Perceived value of surgery: Cataract is often viewed as an inevitable consequence of aging and women are less likely to have social support.
- Lack of access to information and resources: Female literacy
- Fear of a poor outcome

11th five year plan

- Special focus on illiterate women in rural areas. For this purpose, there should be convergence with various ongoing schemes for development of women and children

Strategies:

- Sex specific indicators should be incorporated for all eye care programme activities
- Priority to the community based outreach programmes and community involvement in planning
- Collaboration with non-health care programmes- development Sector for holistic development of the society.
- Design gender-sensitive programmes: To overcome barriers that prevent women from receiving eye care services
- Good quality education for cataract surgery patients.

Research needs

- To determine the reasons for gender inequality in blindness rates and eye diseases.
- To Clarify decision-making roles for accessing eye care
- Identify existing or potential social networks which support women needing eye care
- To Clarify the factors that influence acceptance of cataract surgery by women.
- To determine how health sector reform and cost recovery affects service utilization by men and women.

Conclusion

Improving gender equity in eye care service vital steps in achieving the goals of Vision 2020, to eliminate avoidable blindness.

Thank you