



For Immediate Release

Operation Eyesight Universal Encourages Parents, Guardians, Caregivers and Children to Prioritize Child Eye Health Care this World Sight Day (10-10-2024) – in India and across the world

450 million children worldwide have an eye condition that requires treatment – early detection and treatment can prevent lifelong consequences of vision loss

Hyderabad, India, 08-10-2024: Operation Eyesight Universal is championing child eye health care this World Sight Day, 10-10-2024, alongside our many partners including state governments in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh, and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and its over 250 global members.

Currently, [450 million children worldwide have an eye condition that requires treatment](#), and 90 million children live with sight loss, according to the IAPB Focus on Child Eye Health 2022 Report. Early detection of eye conditions is essential as approximately 40 per cent of childhood blindness is preventable or treatable – wearing spectacles for those students in need can reduce class failure rates by 44 per cent. Children who go without treatment can face lifelong consequences – those with vision loss in low- to middle-income countries are two to five times less likely to attend school, according to the [IAPB Vision Atlas](#).

Operation Eyesight Universal has been working in India since 1963 and currently has eye health programmes in 90 districts across 17 states. Many programmes target or include children. In 2023, Operation Eyesight and its state government and organisational partners screened 17,115 students through school eye health programmes, 150,745 children through community door-to-door eye screenings and, in partnership with CL Gupta Eye Institute, 288 preterm infants for Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP). Preterm infants are at high risk for ROP, and early screening and treatment can prevent a lifetime of blindness. This is important in India as [3.5 million preterm births are reported every year, with 5,000 babies requiring ROP treatment, according to the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology article, Retinopathy of Prematurity.](#)

Yashwant Sinha, Operation Eyesight Universal Regional Director, South Asia, says, “Children are the foundation of any nation's future, and this year's IAPB theme, *Love Your Eyes* with a special focus on child eye health, is both timely and essential. Safeguarding the vision of our children is not just a medical responsibility but a societal one. Ensuring their eye health is crucial for enabling them to lead productive, fulfilling lives, and to ultimately contribute to the growth and prosperity of their communities and the nation as a whole. By prioritizing child eye health, we are investing in the well-being and success of the next generation.”

Kashinath Bhoosnurmath, President and CEO of Operation Eyesight Universal and elected trustee of IAPB, says, “Every day, preventable and treatable eye health issues cause children to miss out on learning and social opportunities. They do not just deserve but have the right to a

happy childhood. Healthy eyes enable kids to learn, play and thrive, setting them on a path for life.”

A Spotlight on Child Eye Health Care Programmes around World Sight Day

Operation Eyesight Universal and its partners have more than 100 activities planned in honour of World Sight Day, spanning from September to November. Some of the initiatives include:

- Conducting eye screenings across 800 schools covering 70,000 students and dispensing an expected 5,000 prescription spectacles – in partnership with Chandraprabha Eye Hospital, Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya, Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital, Trilochan Netralaya, Rotary Eye & ENT Hospital (REEH) and India Vision Institute. This includes a new partnership with Kurnool Ministry of Education that will result in 20,000 government school students being screened between September 2024 and March 2025 in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh. *(Media advisory for Kurnool District event to be circulated at a later date).*
- Declaring 40 villages/communities Avoidable Blindness-Free at public events (an Avoidable Blindness-Free village or community is one where all preventable and treatable cases of vision loss have been addressed and there are eye health care services in place to address ongoing needs). Twenty villages received this declaration in partnership with CL Gupta Eye Institute on September 10 in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, and 20 villages received the declaration in partnership with Chandraprabha Eye Hospital on September 25 in Majuli, Assam.
- Organizing 100 outreach camps across the districts of Bargarh, Deoria, Dhemaji, Golaghat, Kamrup, Latur, Howrah, Mairabari, Marigaon, Nainital, Raisen, Rajgarh, Sehore and West Siang in partnership with Chandraprabha Eye Hospital, Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya, Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital, Trilochan Netralaya and Rotary Eye & ENT Hospital (REEH) from October 3 to October 10, resulting in the screening of 19,000 community members and dispensing of 2,100 spectacles.
- Screening 500 people across five workplaces in Madhya Pradesh: Pilukhedi Factory in Kurawar; Bhaskar Company in Mandipeep; Sagar Company in Obedullaganj; a rice mill in Bareli; and welding labourers in Begumganj.
- Conducting Continued Medical Education on Retinopathy of Prematurity on October 6 in Amroha and on October 27 in Rampur District, Uttar Pradesh. This is in collaboration with CL Gupta Eye Institute and will benefit over 60 neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) staff.

Child Eye Health Facts

(Source: [The Issues - The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness \(iapb.org\)](https://www.iapb.org/))

- 450 million children worldwide have an eye condition that requires treatment
- 90 million children live with some form of sight loss
- Children with vision loss in low- to middle-income countries are two to five times less likely to attend school



- 40 per cent of childhood blindness is preventable or treatable
- Wearing prescription spectacles can reduce class failure rates by 44 per cent

Help Children Love Their Eyes

- Parents, guardians and caregivers are encouraged to help children to love their eyes with eye health tips and resources at operationeyesight.com/worldsightday
- Help all children love their eyes by donating at operationeyesightindia.org

About Operation Eyesight Universal *Learn more at operationeyesightindia.org*

Operation Eyesight Universal is an international development organisation working to prevent blindness and restore sight. Its vision is to eliminate avoidable vision loss. It is registered as a charitable Trust in India, where it has been working for more than 60 years. Inspired by a physician working in India, Operation Eyesight was founded in Canada in 1963 and has grown into a global community spanning four continents – South Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. The vision is global and the focus local, with teams on the ground in communities of work. Through activities like community outreach, water and sanitation projects and health education, Operation Eyesight is addressing the root causes of avoidable vision loss which contributes to six [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: no poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and partnerships for the goals](#).

About World Sight Day

World Sight Day is an annual day of awareness, held on the second Thursday of October every year, to draw attention to and action around vision loss in the world. The focus of World Sight Day for 2024 is Child Eye Health. [Currently, more than 1.1 billion people live with vision loss](#), and 90 per cent of this is avoidable or treatable, according to the IAPB Vision Atlas. Vision loss and eye health care are highly correlated with complex and interconnected development issues such as the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness champions World Sight Day, as do its 250 members around the world.

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