Save Sight, Give Livelihood

An Innovative Model in India to Reach 2,000 Villages Located in Forest Areas

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Right to Sight

“One of basic human rights is right to see. We have to ensure that no person goes blind needlessly or being blind does not remain so, if by reasonable deployment of skills and resources his sight can be prevented from deterioration or already lost can be restored.”
The concept of “blind-years saved” postulates that restoring the sight of one child with pediatric cataract is equivalent to restoring sights of 10 elderly blind cataract individuals.

- Blind-Years means number of blind multiplied by the length of life.
- When the concept of blind-years is applied, blind children suffer an estimated 75 million blind-years, reinforcing the reality these children will face a lifetime of visual loss.
Costs of Blindness

- **Indirect Costs**
  - Lost earnings of individual and caregiver
  - Pain and suffering of individual
  - Loss of job, social standing, education, livelihood

- **Direct Costs**
  - Treatment of eye disease
  - Medical and health services
  - Pharmaceuticals
  - Research and administration
Need for the Program

- 28% of the state is densely forested and communication facilities in these jungles is unreliable. (Covering 11 districts out of 30)
- Health service delivery mechanisms often inaccessible for these regions.
- Ophthalmologists are located in coastal cities, leaving 77,000 forest villagers un-served.
- Reaching 2,000 forest villages has always been a challenge due to paucity of Doctors & technicians. Also the distance & communication system come in between.
- Blindness in India can be reversed by simple surgery or with the use of refractive glasses
Why the Forest Department, not the Health Department?

- Only dealing with forest villages because it was found that people residing in forest villages are unserved as far as eye care is concerned. It has been decided to join hand with Forest Department to help people access to basic eye care services.
- The Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project (OFSDP) today protects and cares for many of these forests, and strives to improve life for the people residing in the forests.
Empowering the local community in identification of common eye problems in the village, so as to reach out to the last human without the preliminary requirement of doctor/technician.

Animators trained to separate people into two groups: treatable and non-treatable.

Conducting confirmative eye camps in the villages.

Animators trained to give post-treatment follow-ups.
Outline of Model
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Roles & Responsibility of Animators

- Spreading awareness on Eye Care and safety.
- Identifying people with eye problems in the community & enlisting them in the register.
- Screening people twice in one year.
- Submitting the list to the respective Range Officer.
- Creating network with the local stakeholders
- Counselling of patients in need of eye treatment
- Counselling & follow up of the post treatment patients.
- Addressing the myths and misperceptions on eye care.
Comparison

Pre-Training

• Four eye camps were conducted in one district
• 450 people were identified with eye problems
• 336 were identified with cataract
• 216 have undergone cataract surgery

Post-Training

• Five eye camps were conducted in one district
• 1,861 people were identified with eye problems
• 643 were identified with cataract, 370 operated
• In the 370, 12 were children cases
- Continuous Eye Care- Early detection saves the sights; Persons were screened regularly and at a early stage.
- Saturation- All the persons in the villages were screened through trained animators.
- Usage of glasses by the children is ensured
- Cataract Surgical Rate of Keonjhar district has improved from 2,800 to 3,170 (in CY2013)
- Treated people have got freedom from dependency, able to retrieve their livelihood as well as and their social respect.
- Improvement in behavioural and academic performance of the children in the villages.
Program Sustainability

- Collection of information from the ground-
  Analyze them- Reviewing them.
- Refresher training to the trained animators
- Networking with the current Government programmes at the district level.
Thank you

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