



Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

Caring for the community since 1922...



**2025
Sept &
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NEWSLETTER
#51

ROP Special

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Chief Storyteller

Isha Chaudhari

Editorial Board Members

Arpan Gandhi

Kalpana Gupta

Umang Mathur

Designer

Alpana Singh

Photographers

Pankaj Chauhan

Deepak Goswami

Stuart Robertson



“God will always make a way where there is no way” — Gordon B. Hinckley



A miracle child for Mr. and Mrs. Singh, Medhansh was born at just 33 weeks and weighed only 1200 grams. Their happiness soon turned

into worry when his fragile start in life demanded oxygen and NICU care. But little did they know that a greater battle awaited. During our NICU screening, Medhansh was diagnosed with Aggressive Retinopathy of Prematurity (AROP). At barely ten days old, he underwent vision saving intravitreal injection and laser therapy. He even suffered a brief bradycardia during the procedure, but the parents were determined and the child was strong. Weeks later, his retina healed beautifully, and at six months corrected age, his vision remained perfect.

ROP project, timely intravitreal injection and laser therapy free of cost became her lifeline. Weeks later, her eyes began to heal, light replacing uncertainty. At six months corrected age, her vision was clear.

While the vision of both these babies could be saved due to timely diagnoses and intervention, there are many stories where help didn't reach in time...Our aim get to each of these tiny humans timely and not let live in darkness for the rest of their lives.



Patient Story

Contributed by
Dr. Shalini Singh

Born in a distant village with no access to neonatal eye care, baby Rehmat Kaur arrived at just 34 weeks, weighing 1500 grams — tiny, fragile, and fighting for life. After a delayed cry, hydrocephalus, and oxygen support in the NICU, she too was diagnosed with Aggressive Retinopathy of Prematurity. Her parents travelled miles from their remote village, desperate to save her sight. They didn't have the means to support the treatment needed. However, with the help of our



“The key to realizing a dream is to focus not on success but significance, and then even the small steps and little victories along your path will take on greater meaning” – Oprah Winfrey

Editorial

Contributed by
Dr. Shalini Singh

A baby born too young not only has to fight the odds for survival, but other long term sequelae not most people are aware of, not even many doctors. One of the most life-altering of these permanent complications is Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). ROP is a potentially blinding disease of premature babies due to abnormal growth of blood vessels in the retina. Despite its grievous and aggressive nature, it is entirely preventable with timely screening and treatment.... making it an important area for intervention.

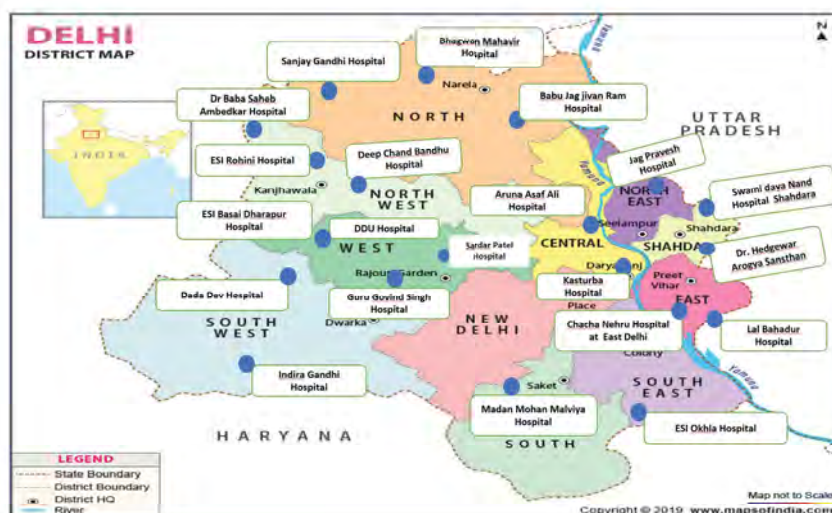
Back in 2021, Delhi didn't have a structured ROP screening program. AIIMS was the only available referral center, if and when ROP was diagnosed in a child. There was also no check on who was actually reaching the center and getting the needful treatment. There was a dire need to deep-dive into this to save these tiny humans from a lifetime of blindness. This was the time when SCEH got associated with a Delhi government run Mission NEEV which was already performing screening for six congenital diseases. SCEH took the responsibility for screening ROP.

Then started the ordeal. Much work

was needed in coordinating with Neonatal ICU's and standardizing workflows. The biggest challenge was ensuring consistent follow-ups. Additionally, training teams had to be created, resources had to be managed, and most importantly awareness had to be created among parents and health care providers continuously. Government doctors and nurses also had to be counselled and motivated to refer patients and support the process. Currently, our ROP teams visits 27 NICU's in government hospital across Delhi and Mathura district periodically providing screening, laser, and treatments. We got referrals from adjoining states as well.

In the last 4 years, we have screened over **7000** premature babies and treated over **1000** babies, salvaging their vision. But this wasn't a single-handed effort. This structure is built on strong partnerships and shared purpose. From our dedicated ROP team, associated neonatology team, courageous and relentless parents and caregivers, to the generous support of USAID and the **Cognizant Foundation**, we all strive to screen and treat every eligible ROP baby.

Delhi Govt. Hospital ROP Screening program



We continue to expand services, train healthcare teams, and strengthen awareness about this avoidable cause of childhood blindness as every child deserves not just to survive—but to see, dream, and thrive.

*"There is a time to let things happen, and a time to make things happen.
Life is what happens when you are making other plans" – John Lennon*

Humans of SCEH

Dolly
ROP Coordinator

I was a young naïve girl just out of school when an ASHA worker in the colony informed my friend and me regarding a AOP course at SCEH. Although I was as clueless as most teenagers are about what I want to do with my life, I knew I wanted to work to help people. While my friend didn't get through, I did, and that's how my eight-year long association with SCEH started. Everything I am and became in life, happened while I was here. What this place gave me was a deep-rooted sense of stability that I couldn't have expected anywhere else.

When I joined SCEH, I was fascinated by the OR. I always wanted to work there, but didn't get a chance. Instead, I was trained into becoming a patient educator. Initially, it didn't interest me a lot, but one morning, when I opened the eye patch of a post operative patient, he blessed me immensely as I was the first face he saw after years of blindness. In that moment, I knew I was in the right place.

Soon after the course got over, I got married. While my husband was away working in Bangalore, I felt the need to work as well. And as if God had responded to my wish, I got a call from Dr Monica Gandhi, who offered me a research position. I was on a maternity leave when COVID-19 lockdown hit and the project was shelved. Once the hospital started functioning again, I re-joined in another department of the hospital. When I returned from my second maternity leave, my earlier position was already filled and there was no vacancy. However, I was still on leave without pay, while waiting for a job position. The responsibility of running the family and caring for two kids, made me want to quit and be a



stay-at-home mother. I was on my way to the hospital to give in my resignation when a call with my mother changed the course of my life. She inspired me to work and be financially independent and offered to help with my children. She devoted her entire life to care for her family and now she is doing the same for mine.

Today, I work in the ROP program. Earlier, we used to screen the labor rooms in various hospitals for pre-term babies, who were later examined by the doctors. Currently I screen them with a hand-held device independently. I think I have come a long way from a young oblivious girl to a responsible woman managing both my personal and professional life. But it wouldn't have been possible without the immense and selfless support from my mother and the endless confidence the people of the hospital have had in me. I am forever grateful to the contribution of each and every person who has molded me into someone I am proud of.



World Sight Day celebrations

Department of Paediatric Ophthalmology and Public Health Celebrated World Sight Day at SCEH Delhi, satellite centres and their catchment areas, including Alwar, Modi Nagar, Meerut, Saharanpur, Mohammadi, and Vrindavan. A painting competition, steered by our in-house artist, Stuart Robertson was organised, where children — including those with CVI and low vision — filled the canvas with imagination, hope, and creativity. At SCEH Vrindavan, the focus was on CVI and MDVI children, where, at the country's only CVI-focused vision centre, a Warli art drawing competition was held. Awareness talks were organized in a local school, and vision screening was conducted in an orphanage. Other satellite centres also participated through street plays and painting competitions.

Across our 113 Vision Centres, the day was marked with a wide range of activities—awareness sessions, patient education programs, and large-scale free eye screening events—all promoting this year's global theme, “Love Your Eyes.” In addition, free one-day OPD services were provided at all centres, ensuring comprehensive eye check-ups and consultations for every community member.



SCEH conducted a focused two-day DSAEK Surgical Skill Transfer Course, attended by seven external candidates. The course featured didactic lectures by faculty, presentations by fellows, and interactive case-based discussions, providing a comprehensive learning experience. There was a wet lab session providing hands-on experience and live surgical case demonstration.



“Patients’ Voices Guiding Excellence”

As part of its monthly framework to strengthen patient-centered care, SCEH hosted a Focused Group Discussion with patients.

Participants from varied backgrounds shared their experiences, appreciating the compassionate care of doctors and staff, with special mention of the support patients receive from young AOP professionals on escorting them from one station to another. They also highlighted areas for improvement.



Bollywood icon Kabir Bedi, Brand Ambassador of Sightsavers India, visited SCEH Alwar to review the ongoing School & Rural Eye Health Programme supported by Sightsavers India. During the visit, he toured the surgical camp, interacted with pre-operative and post-operative patients, and participated in an eye-screening activity at a Government school. He expressed his appreciation for the remarkable impact of the programme and highly valued the quality of our services.

Dr Namita, Dr Chhavi and Dr Usha bagged multiple awards at annual conference of Oculoplasty association of India for best free papers and best case.





Workshop on 3D printing & Organoid

SCEH in collaboration with CELLINK and ATCG India, successfully organized a one-day workshop titled “Redefining Cell Culture: Automated 3D Systems for Tomorrow’s Therapies”. The event was convened by Dr. Virender Singh Sangwan, Director – Innovations and Translational Research, Eicher Shroff Centre for Stem Cell Research.

The workshop brought together scientists, researchers, and students to explore the transformative shift from 2D to 3D cell culture systems and their impact on translational research. Participants gained hands-on experience with next-generation bioprinters and learned about the applications of 3D bioprinting in disease modelling, regenerative medicine, and therapeutic development. The workshop included insightful talks by experts, engaging live demonstrations, and interactive discussions that encouraged collaboration among researchers, clinicians, and industry professionals.



Dr Virender Singh Sangwan won Dr Daljit Singh oration award at AIOS mid-term conference held in Amritsar.

Dr Abhijay won first prize in ESCRS film festival for his video titled “Retro-Fixated Iris Claw: From Goats Eyes to Human Eyes”





POSN 7 - A Grand Success

POSN 7 (Annual Pediatric Ophthalmology, Strabismus and Neuro-ophthalmology grand rounds -7th edition), was hosted by the Department of Paediatric Ophthalmology at SCEH bringing together nearly 300 delegates in a vibrant celebration of science, learning, and collaboration. It was organised under the able chairmanship of Dr. Suma Ganesh, Senior Director of the Pediatric Center of Excellence at SCEH, with Dr. Shailja Tibrewal as Organising Secretary and Dr Suma Ganesh and Dr. Soveeta Rath as Scientific Chair, and the meeting featured enriching contributions from keynote speakers Dr. Virender Singh Sangwan (New Delhi), Dr. Hala El-Hilali (Egypt), and Dr. Saurabh Jain (London), along with experts Dr. Rahul Bhola (USA), Dr. Arif O. Khan (Abu Dhabi), and Hannah Scanga (USA).



Dr Suma Ganesh and Dr Suneeta Dubey were conferred the Elizabeth Blackwell Award for outstanding excellence in teaching and mentoring in Ophthalmology at the WOW WOS Annual Ophthalmology conference.



SCEH celebrated an eventful 5-day Patient Safety Week. This year's celebration focused on strengthening a culture of safety across all departments—doctors, nurses, optometrists, technicians, housekeeping, security, and quality teams. The events included hand hygiene awareness, fire and emergency preparedness, incident reporting and emergency code drills.

SCEH inaugurated the Urmila Khemka Centre for Diabetic Retinopathy as an initiative to enhance diabetic eye care. The honoured guest at the event was Cabinet Minister, Shri Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma.



SCEH Saharanpur centre proudly achieved "1000 Surgeries" in a month, the highest ever for the centre. It also achieved the highest number of glaucoma surgeries in a month.

During an incident of a suspected infection in the water source in the operation theatre, our civil team worked day and night to rectify the issue and didn't rest till the cultures were clean again. Kudos to the dedicated team and their effort!





Its Ultimately all about teamwork!!

In April 2022, the eight-year Strategic Plan, called “SAMBHAV” was launched. In early October 2025, more than 80 leaders across the SCEH network gathered for a two day “Reflection” workshop. The objective was to revisit the progress from 2022 till 2025 and also set the context for the next three-year sprint.

A 238% growth in patient served at one million plus patients served in clinics. A 115% growth in surgeries at 81000 odd. Another 2.7 million countrymen screened in the community. Upping the count of satellite centres to eight and vision centres to 115. Medical Education Department having a tally of more than 300 ophthalmologists graduating through long term and short term programmes and more than 350 women completing their 2 years training programme and joining the system. Strides in both Clinical and Translational Research.

These milestones represent the unflagging resolve and commitment to service & excellence of more than 1800 staff members across the network. Commitment to the Mission and Values of the Institute.

But the setting also presented an opportunity to pause and reflect on the emerging landscape. We invited Mr. R. Sunder, Trustee, Shankara Eye Foundation-USA to share his thought on scaling up community impact. Mr. Shrinath V, an independent AI expert and a mentor with Google for start-ups, shared insights on AI and its application in eye care domain. While one talk set the need to adopt technology in a rapidly changing world to bring in efficiency, productivity and patient satisfaction, the other set the context on work left to be done in eradicating needless blindness. It drove home the mission and the purpose for which Dr. Shroff’s Charity Eye Hospital exists.

Groupwork on thematic areas identified the emerging priorities and the way forward on the 10 strategic pillars on which the SAMBHAV initiative is crafted. Smaller teams across locations are now working on developing specific plans for the upcoming sprint. Its indeed Ultimately all about teamwork.

Creative corner

"A Listening Ear in Darkness" Power of hearing!

"Importance of empathy and human connection in healthcare"

She was expected to be on the road to recovery, as assured by her ophthalmologist, but the anxiety and uncertainty of her eye treatment had taken a toll on her fragile state of mind. The pain, the fear, the endless questions—what if it doesn't work? What if I don't recover?—swirled in her mind like a storm she couldn't escape.

That's when she reached out, her voice barely above a whisper over the phone. Every day, she would call me, pouring out her fears, her sleepless nights in her living room, her doubts. And I listened. I listened



with every fibre of my being, offering words of comfort and reassurance. "This is just a temporary phase," I would say softly. "You are strong, and soon you will get through this."

At first, it was just a string of calls. But with each conversation, I realized I wasn't just a voice on the other end—I was her lifeline. She would share her deepest fears, and I would offer empathy, understanding, and a gentle nudge of hope. I wasn't a doctor, but I was her safe space, her confidant in the darkness.

Days turned into weeks, and slowly, her voice began to change. The tremble gave way to determination, the fear to resilience. She started to see a glimmer of hope, a light at the end of the tunnel. And then, one morning, her call was different. "Thank you," she said, her voice filled with gratitude. "Just talking to you made all the difference."

In that moment, something shifted inside me. I realized that I had not given her any magical cure or solution, but I had offered her something far more precious—my presence. My listening ear had been her anchor in the storm, her reminder that she wasn't alone.

As we wrapped up our final call, I smiled, knowing that I had made a difference in her life. But more than that, she had taught me the power of compassion, the impact of a listening ear. Sometimes, it's not about having all the answers; it's about being there, fully and completely, for someone in need.

Kalpana Gupta
Executive – CEO Office

Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

5027, Kedarnath Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002

Ph no:011- 43524444, 43528888 | Email:communications@sceh.net

Delhi | Alwar | Mohammadi | Meerut | Modinagar | Ranikhet | Saharanpur | Vrindavan