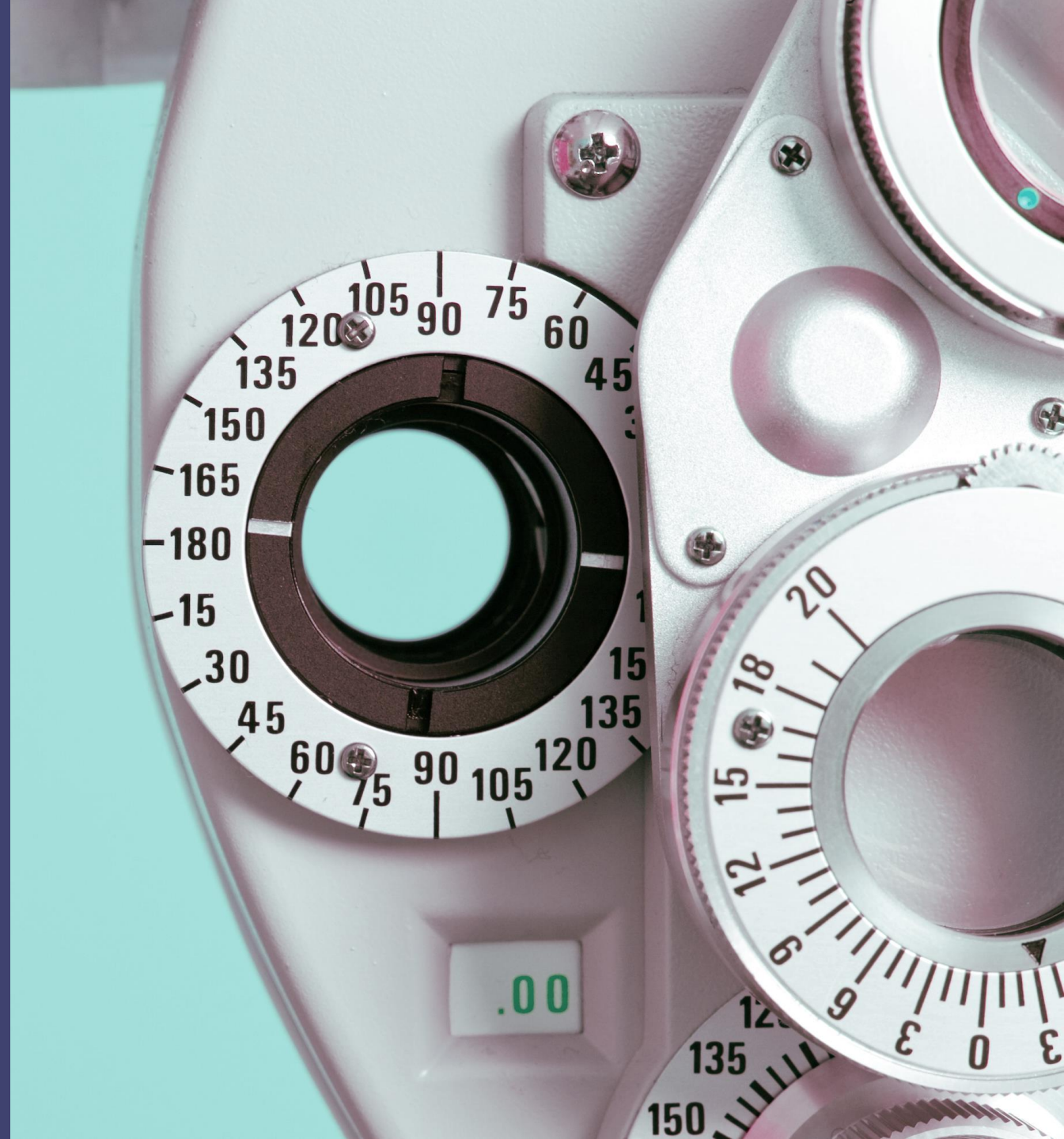


To provide cataract
surgeries through the
project 'Rashtriya Netra
Yagna' for the rural
economically weaker
families

Impact Assessment
February 2024



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Rashtriya Netra Yagna - Executive Summary

Implementing Partner- Vision Foundation of India (VFI)

Period under assessment : April 2021- March 2022

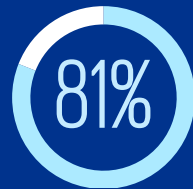
Project objective:

The major objective of the project has been to provide cataract treatments free of cost by reaching out to around 5000+ beneficiaries, wherein the programme has successfully supported **5000 eye surgeries** of the individuals belonging to economically weaker sections of the society and contributed towards upliftment of the emotional and social standards. This programme is carried over with the collaboration of **14 Associate Hospitals (AH)**, that aim to provide high quality eye care services.

Key recommendations

- Capturing and analysing stakeholder-level outcomes
- Address drop-out rates for follow-up
- Liaisoning with government schemes
- Improved support to Associate Hospitals
- Efforts to reduce stigma
- Scale-up plan
- Impact-level focus

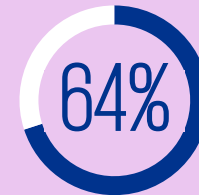
Key Summary Findings



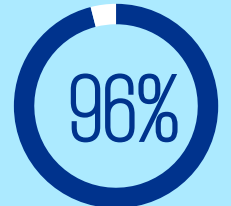
Satisfied with overall experience of the programme



Increased awareness on eye-health post intervention



Experienced reduced reliance on family post surgery



Found the free of cost treatment to be the most beneficial aspect of the programme

Impact Assessment (IA) Study Outreach

80

Total primary stakeholders

16

Total secondary stakeholders

13

Locations covered (14 AH)

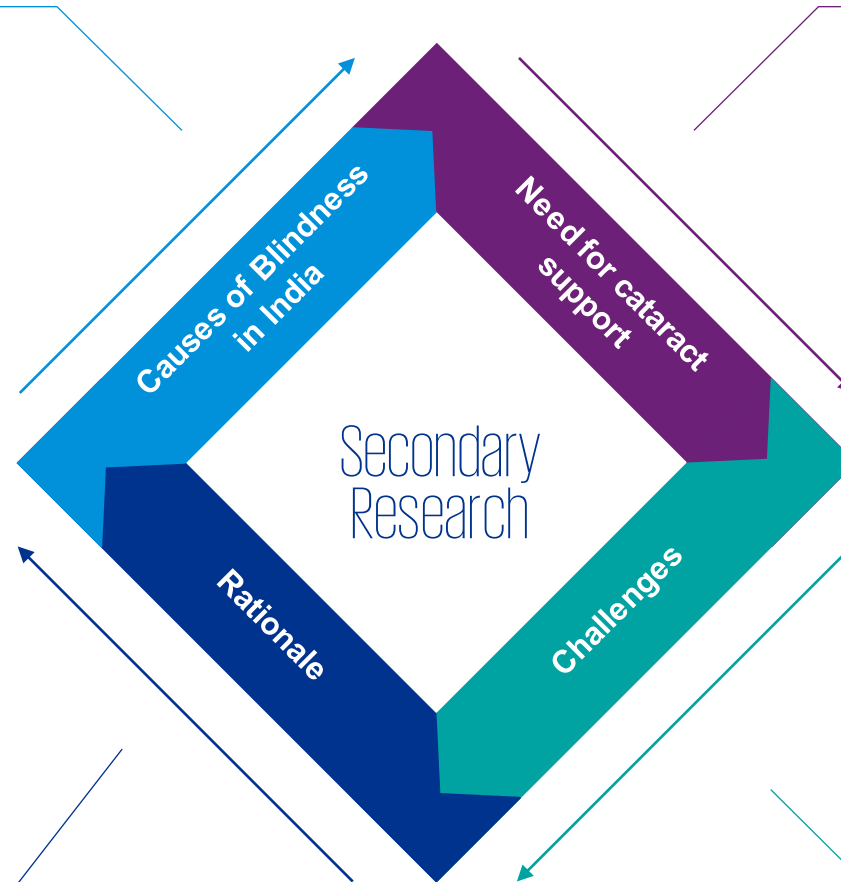
Overview of the problem statement



- Cataract is the principal cause of blindness (66.2%), followed by corneal opacity (7.4%) and glaucoma (5.5%)¹.
- Due to **improved life expectancy rate**, there has been an increase in elderly population, and they are more prone to experience cataract.
- Lack of awareness and lesser presence of healthcare facilities for people residing in remote rural areas is a posing cause of blindness in India.



- According to National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI), latest data from 2019 reveals that India has an estimated **3.91 million blind people** and 16.22 million people with moderate to severe visual impairment.
- India accounts for about a quarter of the global burden of blindness and visual impairment, with 8 million blind people and 62 million visually impaired ones².



- Vision impaired by cataract affects ability of the individual to perform basic daily activities including driving or reading the newspaper among others.
- Neglecting cataract at early stages may lead to complete blindness if not treated at the right time.



- The Indian healthcare system faces several challenges, including a shortage of ophthalmologists and eye care facilities, particularly in rural areas.
- Avoidable blindness is a significant public health problem in India.
- As per a report by the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB), **India requires 25,000 ophthalmologists, but there are only around 10,000 currently available.**
- Poverty and lack of education contribute to delayed treatment for eye-related issues in India.



¹Vashist, P., Senjam, S. S., Gupta, V., Gupta, N., Shamanna, B. R., Wadhwani, M., Shukla, P., Manna, S., Yadav, S., & Bharadwaj, A. (2022). Blindness and visual impairment and their causes in India: Results of a nationally representative survey. *PLoS one*, 17(7), e0271736. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0271736>

²Malhotra, S., Prasad, M., Vashist, P., Kalaivani, M., & Gupta, S. K. (2019). Prevalence of blindness in India: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The National medical journal of India*, 32(6), 325–333. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0970-258X.303612>

About VFI's project

Mission

To reach out to deserving and needy individuals suffering from curable eye ailments and to provide high quality, timely and affordable treatment.

Vision

To be the leading force in the fight against preventable blindness in India.

5000

Total number of surgeries conducted

Project objective

To provide free of cost cataract treatment by reaching out to around 5000+ beneficiaries, wherein the programme will support eye surgeries of the individuals belonging to the economically weaker sections of the society and contribute towards upliftment of their emotional and social standards.

This project has been implemented in collaboration with 14 Associate Hospitals, that aim to provide high quality eye care services.

14

Total number of Associate Hospitals

Project components

- To support 5000 eye surgeries to for individuals from economically weaker families.
- To uplift social and emotional standards of 5000 individuals and their family members.
- To build the capacity of 14 Associate Hospitals who will provide high quality eye care services.
- To reach out to deserving and needy individuals suffering from curable eye ailments and to provide high quality, timely and affordable treatment.

Type of beneficiaries:

- Male & Female respondents from lower socio-economic background

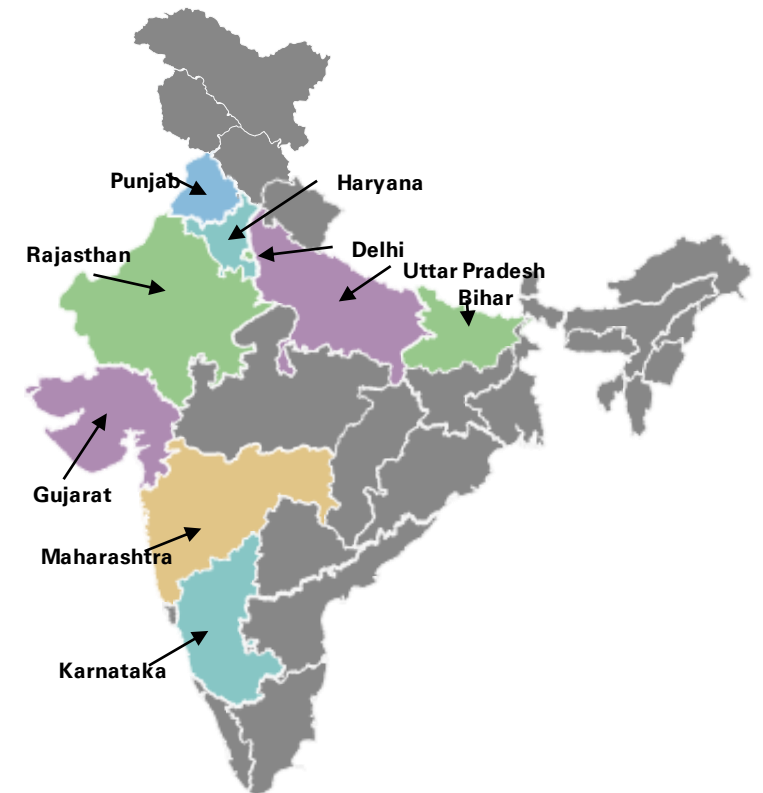
2218

Male respondents reached

2782

Female respondents reached

Project locations- 9 states



Map indicative only

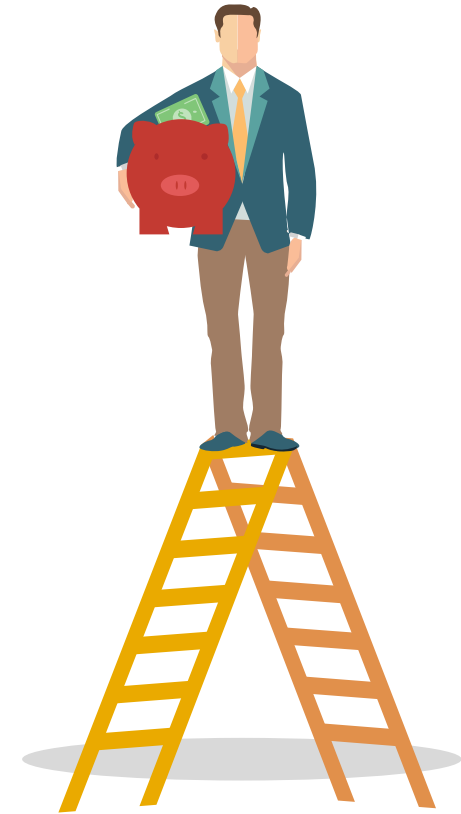
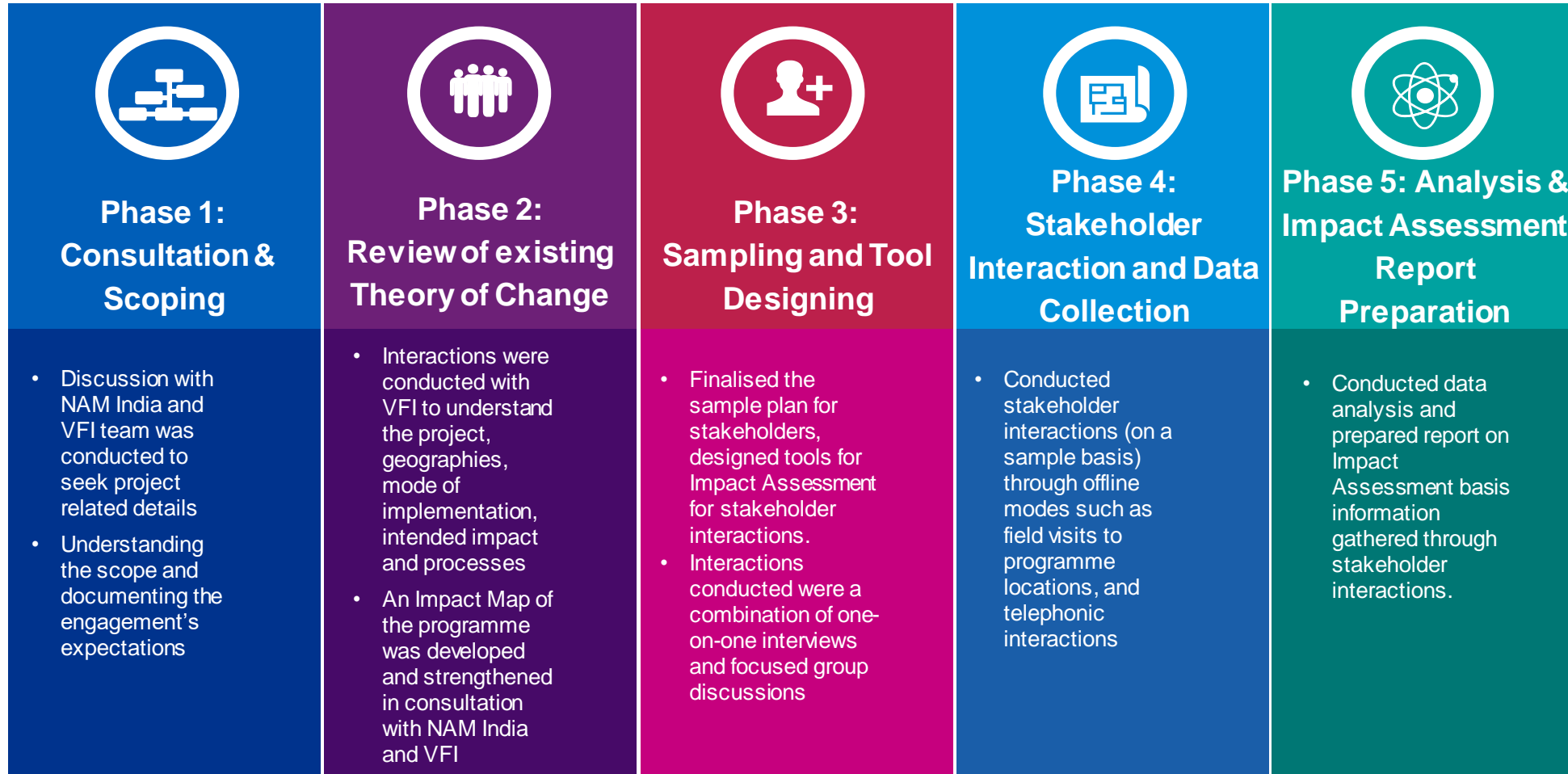
Impact Map

Input	Planned activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Awareness Camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening camp set-up by AH Patient mobilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of respondents reached through screening camps No. of people screened No. of identified cataract patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness on cataract and overall eye health within community Access to eye check up opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced cases of advance cataracts due to early detection Improved knowledge on eye care and overall eye health
	Identification of patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of respondents identified for vision impairment and blindness No. of counseling sessions conducted No. of educational materials distributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved knowledge on preventive measures Early detection of eye problems and treatments available Increased awareness on necessary surgery procedural in its entirety 	
Pre-surgery support and identification	Support and guidance for surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of increased informed and prepared patients No. of patients supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients promoted to make informed decisions Reduced stress and anxiety among patients about treatment process Patients prepared emotionally and physically for the surgery Increased levels of patient satisfaction Patients aware on any post-operative care requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved patient safety and reduced risk of complications or re-admissions Improved relationship and trust with Associate Hospitals
	Health check-ups and test for eligibility of patients for surgeries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of eligible patients post health examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient use of resources Reduced risk of unnecessary surgeries or complications Reduced overall healthcare costs for both patients and healthcare systems 	

Impact Map

Input	Planned activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Cataract Surgery	Operations/Eye surgeries as per standard Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of patients underwent cataract surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regained eyesight after surgery. Increased productivity and reduced complications Reduced dependence on glasses Reduced risk of falls and accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved vision Reduced future eye medication and treatment cost
Follow-up support	Vision sight accuracy test done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of patients received the post-surgery support from the Associate Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces chances of relapse of second cataract Reduced risk of complications Enhanced patient satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved vision Faster recovery Reduced dependency on family members
	Recovery of the patient (AH) - And supporting them with spectacles and eye drop support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of patients fully recovered/gained complete eyesight after surgery 		

Approach and Methodology of the study



Sampling

Stakeholders	Tools Utilised
Surgery beneficiaries	Structured questionnaire Focused group discussion
Associate Hospital staff	Structured questionnaire Focused group discussion
Vision Foundation India staff	Structured questionnaire

State	Total number of respondents(Proportion of total in %)	Target sample
Bihar	700 (14%)	12
Delhi	250 (5%)	4
Gujarat	1600 (32%)	26
Haryana	250 (5%)	4
Karnataka	450 (9%)	7
Maharashtra	300 (6%)	5
Punjab	200 (4%)	4
Rajasthan	250 (5%)	4
Uttar Pradesh	1000 (20%)	14
TOTAL	5000	80

Sampling and data collection approach

Study design: A primary study involving a mixed-methods research approach, involving both quantitative and qualitative tools, was adopted for this study.

Sample size: Basis 85% confidence level and 8% margin of error for the universe of 5000 beneficiaries, the sample size calculated was 80.

Sampling method: Stratified random sampling was used to select study participants where each state represented a strata and respondents were randomly selected from the database shared.

Mode of data collection: In-person and virtual interactions were held with participants from across all the project locations to ensure a representative sample. Care was also taken to ensure equal representation from both men and women.

2 locations – Bihar and Gujarat were visited due to higher percent stakeholders from these locations and as per discussion held with VFI and AH staff.

One-on-one surveys and FGD to capture qualitative insights were administered to participants, designed specifically to the intended outcomes of the program.

Virtual responses were collected from all the other locations.

Interactions were also conducted with VFI staff and AH staff members to understand the benefits and areas of improvement evidenced by them.

Study Outreach

State	Target	Achieved
Bihar	12	13
Delhi	4	19
Gujarat	26	12
Haryana	4	4
Karnataka	7	Nil
Maharashtra	5	5
Punjab	4	4
Rajasthan	4	8
Uttar Pradesh	14	15
TOTAL	80	80


	Direct respondents	Associate Hospital Staff members	Vision Foundation India SPOCs
Target	80	16	5
Achieved	80	25	1


A total of **106** stakeholders were interacted with for the study.

Location Pan - India

54 respondents were covered in the study through telephonic support while field visit interactions were held with **26 respondents in two states (Gujarat and Bihar).**

 **Total 80 respondents**

 **26 Female**

 **54 Male**

Demographic Profile of Respondents (1/2)

Gender

68%
males

32%
females

In total, interviews have been conducted for 80 respondents across all the locations of project implementation, of that 68% were male while 32% were female.

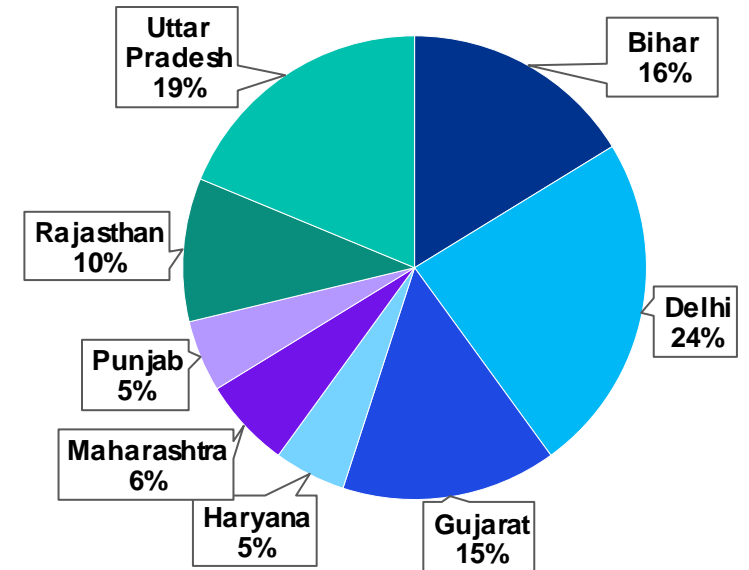
It was observed that more males visited the AH for interaction during field visits. Female respondents had less access to mobile phones and therefore, only a limited number of them could be reached as compared to male beneficiaries, telephonically.

Geographic distribution of respondents

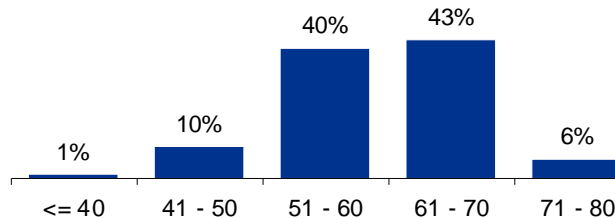
The project was implemented across 9 different locations.

- Of these, responses were captured from 8 states with distribution as shown.
- 24% respondents were from Tara Sansthan Trust, Delhi followed by 19% from Shree Rancchodas BCH, Uttar Pradesh and 16% from Drishti Eye Care Hospital, Bihar.

State-wise distribution of beneficiaries



Age-wise distribution of beneficiaries



52 years
was the average age of
beneficiaries

Age group

43% of the respondents belonged to 61-70 years of age group, followed by 40% respondents belonging to the age group of 51-60 years. Noticeably, only 1% of the respondents belonged to age group below 40. Hence, it is evident that mostly people aged above 50 have been a victim of cataract.

Demographic Profile of Respondents (2/2)

39%

respondents
had studied up
to 10th and
above

Educational background

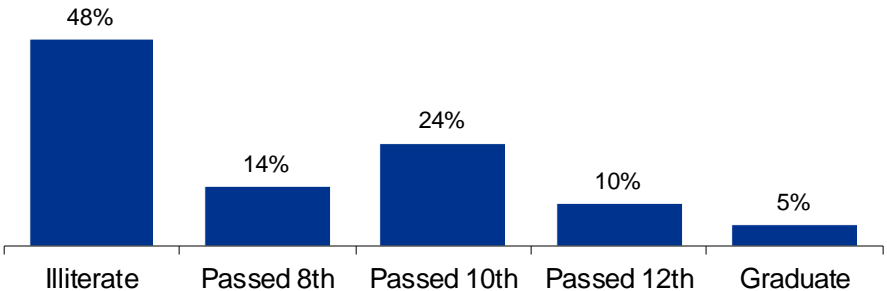
About half of the respondents were illiterate. Respondents shared lack of access to education and financial constraints as reasons for not being able to study.

Only 5% respondents reported being graduates.

Income group

All project respondents belonged to low socio-economic group and were selected for the treatment based on VFI's set criteria to assess their economic conditions.

Education level of beneficiaries



69%

of the
respondents
were
unemployed

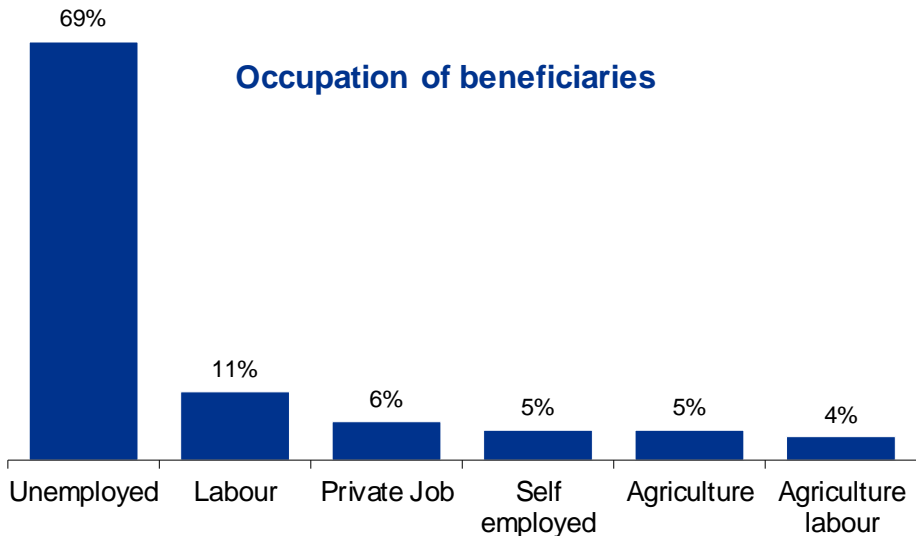
Occupation of beneficiaries

69% of respondents reported to be unemployed currently.

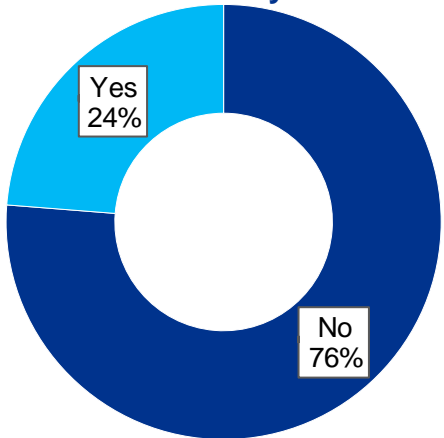
Upon further discussion with the beneficiaries, they reported that due to older age and related ailments, they were not able to perform workplace activities.

Self-employed respondents were usually found to have their own 'kirana' shops.

Occupation of beneficiaries



Only wage earner of the family



24%

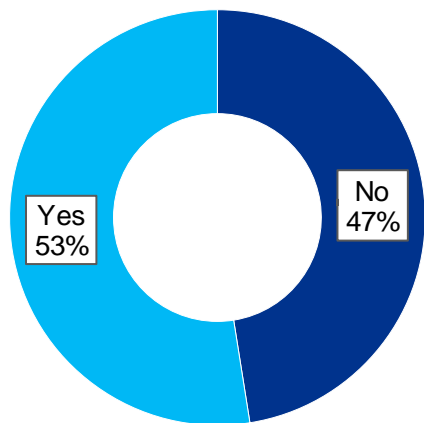
respondents were the only
wage earner of the family

Only Wage Earner of the family

As mentioned earlier, majority of the respondents belonged to older age group, therefore they were not the only wage earner of the family. 76% respondents reported that they were not the sole wage earner in the family. According to them, their children or grand children worked as laborers or were self-employed and contributed towards the family income.

Respondents' access to nearby healthcare facilities

Awareness about any other nearby healthcare facilities

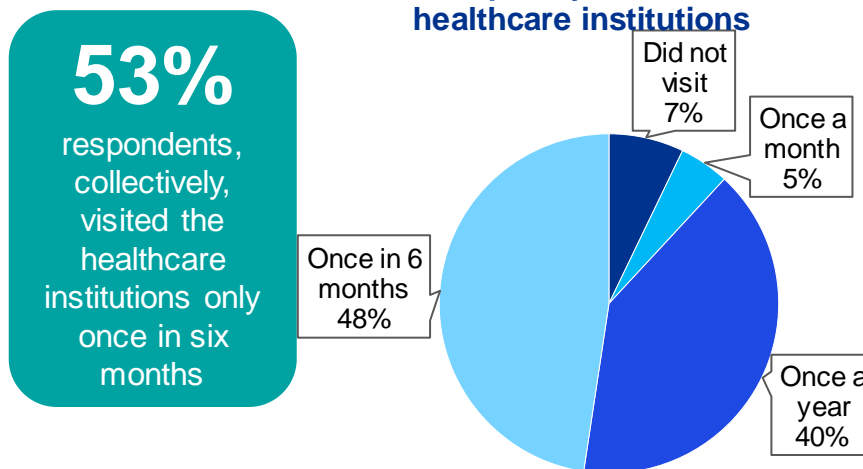


47% of the respondents did not have awareness about any other nearby healthcare facilities

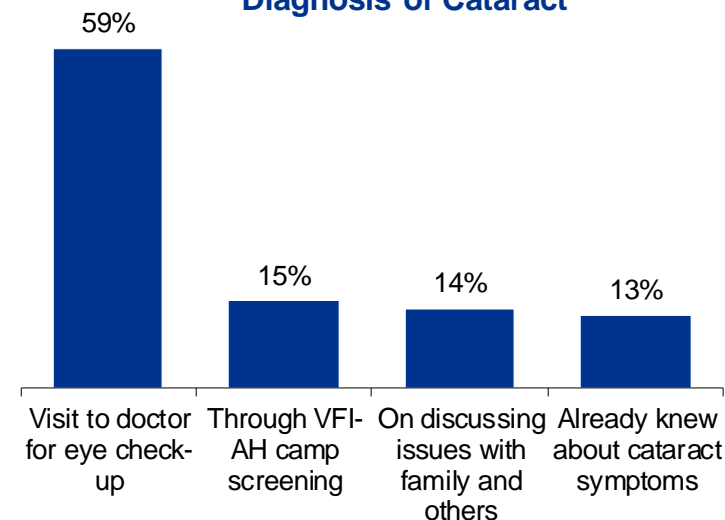
- 47% respondents reported not having access to any other healthcare facilities in or around their locality.
- Respondents at Aurangabad, Bihar reported that Drishti Eye Care Hospital was the only eye health care facility in entire Aurangabad district.
- The 53% respondents who reported presence of other healthcare institutions, further segregated the type of institution into private hospital (60%) and government hospital (40%) respectively.

- From the 53% reporting presence of healthcare facilities nearby, only 5% reported visiting the hospital once a month and 48% reported that they visit the healthcare institutions once in six months.
- The rest 47% respondents were found to have very low frequency of visiting healthcare facilities with about 40% going for a visit only once in a year.
- In Gujarat, few respondents reported that they had access to private healthcare facilities but did not visit there owing to the exorbitant pricing.

Frequency of visit to healthcare institutions



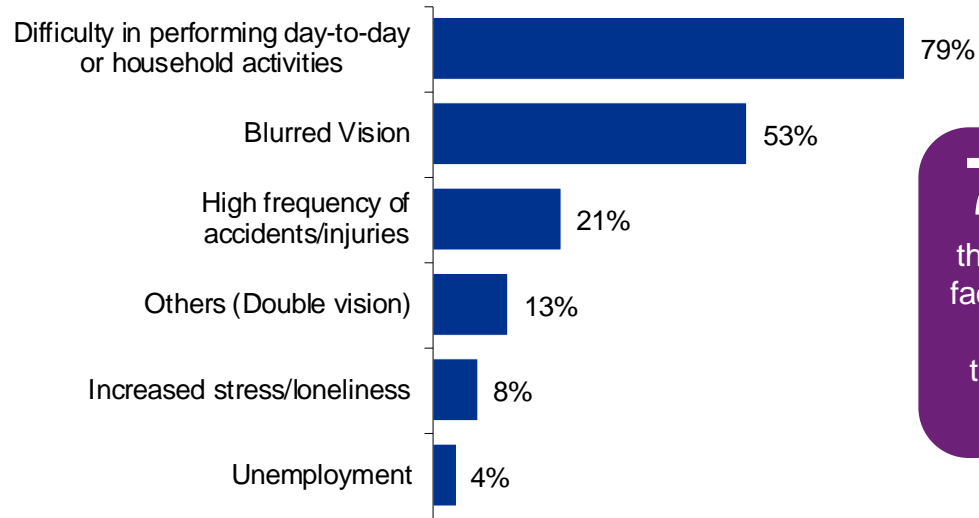
Diagnosis of Cataract



- Around half of the respondents became aware that they had cataract when they visited a doctor for eye check-up.
- 15% of the respondents became aware of their cataract condition after attending the screening camp conducted by VFI-AH.

Challenges faced by respondents due to cataract

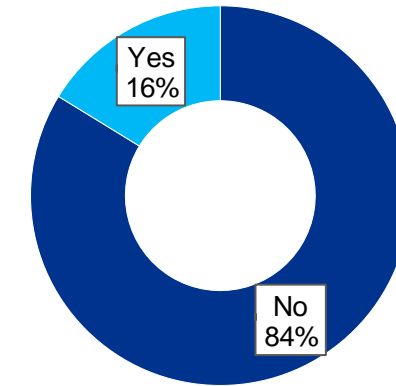
Challenges faced by respondents before surgery



79% of the respondents faced challenges in performing their own daily tasks

- Due to occurrence of cataract, respondents shared facing various types of challenges in their day-to-day life as well as at their workplace.
- Maximum respondents (79%) reported experiencing difficulties in performing their own daily chores and other household activities such as cooking, driving a vehicle, cleaning house, watching television, reading newspaper, among others.
- Blurred vision, one of the most common symptoms of cataract, was reported by about 53% respondents.
- Unemployment, as a challenge, was reported by only 4% respondents. However, it is to be noted that most of the respondents were already unemployed at the time.

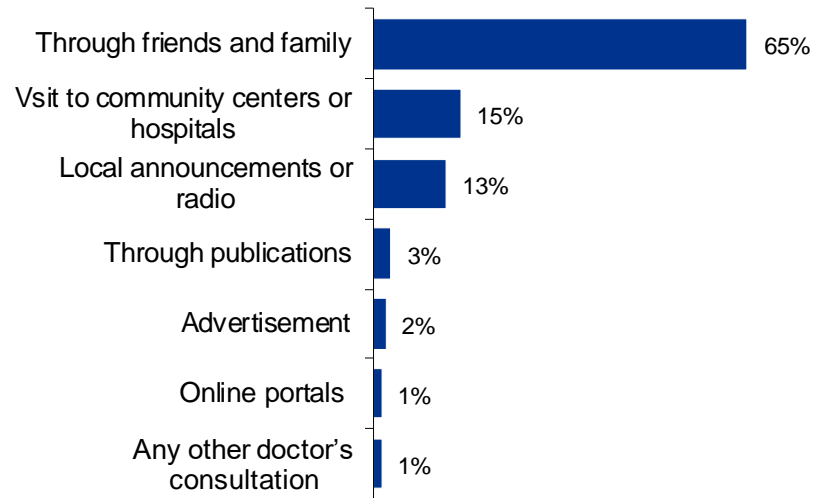
Income generation affected due to cataract



- Consecutively, only 16% of the total respondents expressed that occurrence of cataract had affected their income generation in some or the other way.
- While conducting FGD with respondents at Bihar, one of the respondents who worked as a daily wager, had been sacked out of his job owing to inability to perform work related activities due to cataract.

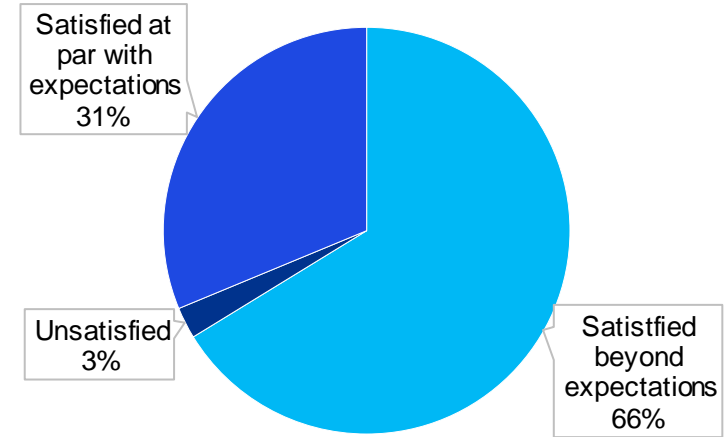
Survey Findings- Experience at screening camp

Information regarding screening camp



- Nearly about two-thirds of sampled respondents became aware about the screening camp through their friends and families and by word of mouth.
- On the other hand, 15% and 13% respondents got to know about the screening camp through the community centers and local announcements, respectively

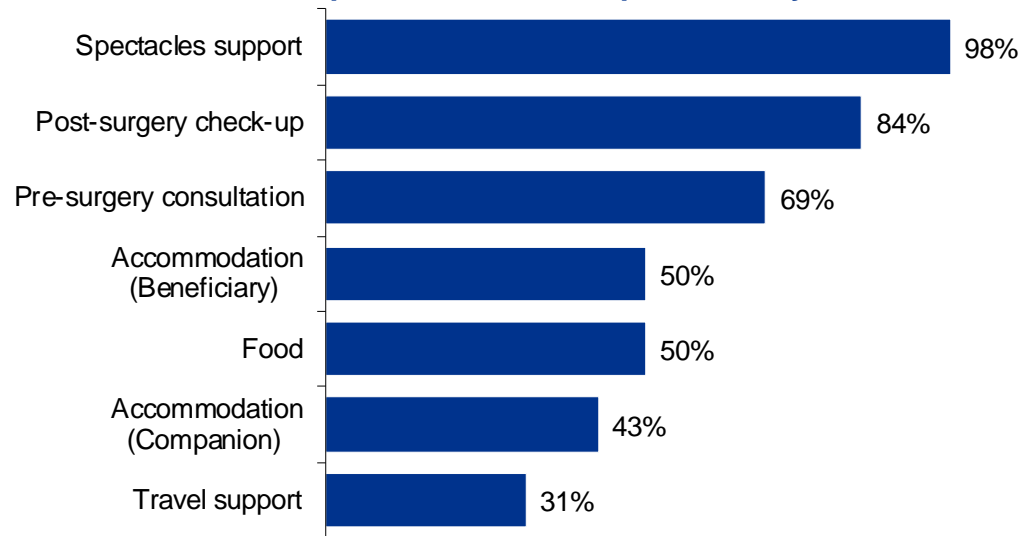
Satisfaction level of respondents with the screening camp



- The figure displays the satisfaction level of respondents with the screening camp. Overall, 97% respondents were satisfied with the screening camp.
- During FGD, the respondents expressed that their level of awareness had enhanced due to this camp.

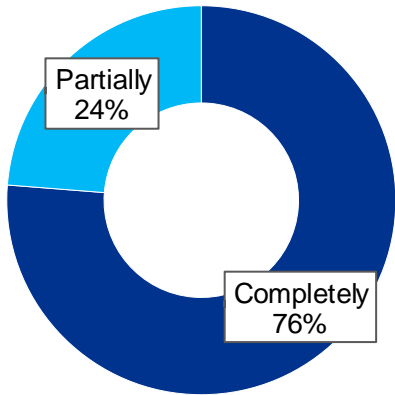
Survey Findings- Experience at AH

Facilities provided to the respondents by the AH



- As a part of the program, patients were provided with various facilities such as free spectacles, food, accommodation, conveyance etc. Almost all respondents reported to have received post-surgery spectacles.
- Travel support was reported being received by only 31% beneficiaries. However, in discussion with beneficiaries, it was observed that travel support was provided to a majority of them on the day of surgery.
- For post surgery follow-up sessions, the patients had to manage the conveyance on their own.

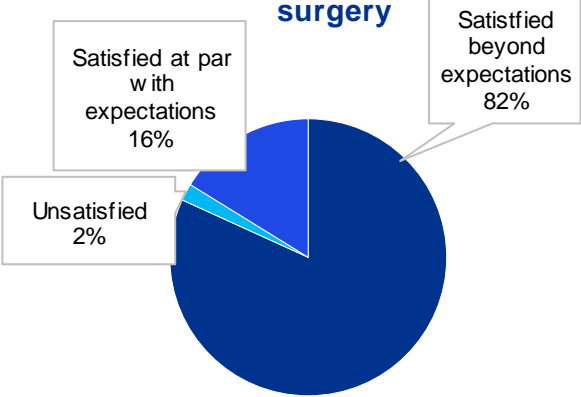
Vision restoration post-surgery



- 76% of the respondents reported to have experienced complete restoration of vision.
- However, 24% respondents expressed that their vision has been partially restored and they are still experiencing issues such as itchiness, among others. Upon further discussion with doctors and AH staff, it was found that surgery at a much-advanced stage of cataract caused difficulties in complete vision restoration for some people.

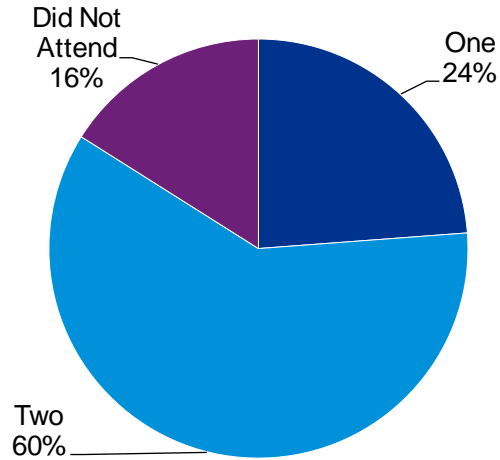
- About 98% of the respondents interviewed were satisfied with their surgery and post surgery conditions, whereas 2% of the respondents were unsatisfied, possibly due to partial restoration of vision or experiencing redness or swelling in eyes, post cataract operation.
- Few of the respondents reported to have experienced temporary issues such as itchiness in eyes because of sunlight or any other reflective light.

Satisfaction level of respondents with vision post-surgery



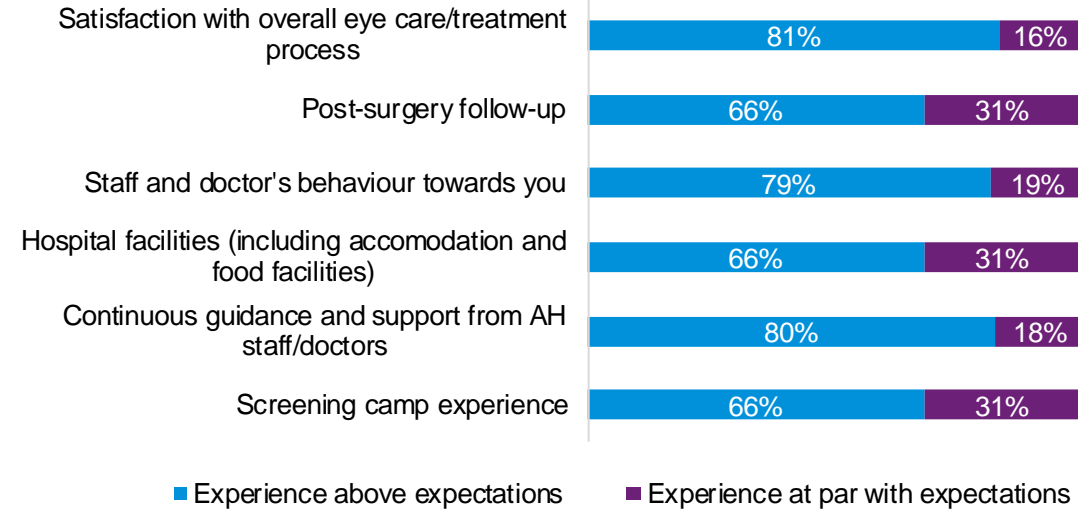
Survey Findings- Experience at AH

Follow-up sessions attended by respondents post-surgery



- Most of the AHs had conducted two follow-up sessions post surgery for the patients.
- 60% respondents had attended both the sessions.
- 16% respondents did not attend any of the follow up sessions because some of them did not face any issues post surgery while few reported not having time along with their work, therefore could not make it to attend the follow up sessions.

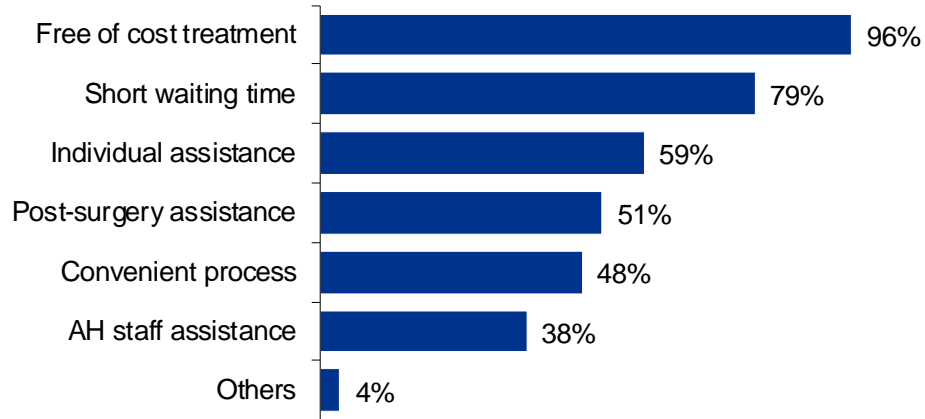
Overall experience with different project components



- As can be seen in the above graph, majority of respondents found their experience either at par or above their expectations.
- Two components- satisfaction with overall treatment process and continuous guidance by AH were found to be features that maximum respondents had very good experience with.
- Only about 3% of the respondents reported their experience below expectations across all the components. This may primarily be due to partial restoration of vision or due to facing any post-surgery eye effects.
- In Rajkot, one of the respondents expressed that the doctors and other staff were very helpful and considerate towards all the requirements of the patients.

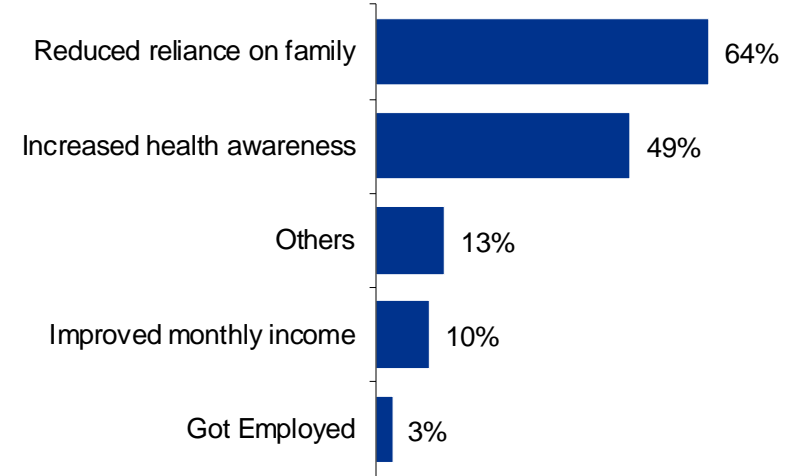
Programme Impact

Aspects of the surgery that respondents found useful



- 96% of the respondents have reported that treatment at free of cost is one of the aspects that has been most useful for them.
- 4% of respondents have stated other aspects such as quality of lens, quality of food as one of the useful aspects of the surgery.
- The graph shows multiple aspects found useful by beneficiaries. This implies that the intervention has been able to successfully achieve its purpose.

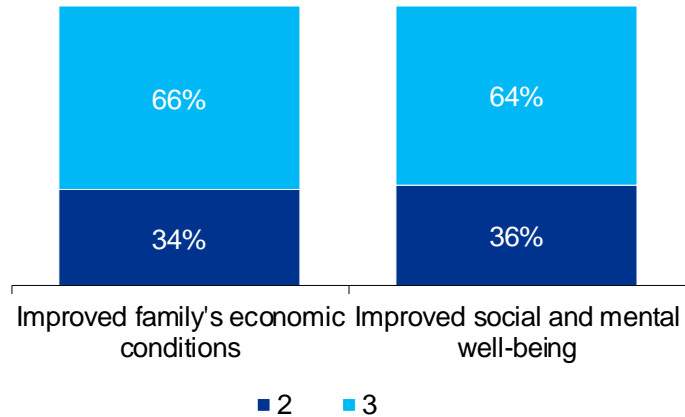
Post-surgery differences experienced by the beneficiaries



- 64% respondents have experienced reduced dependency on their family members with respect to day-to-day activities such as cooking, driving, cleaning, etc.
- Only 3% respondents were able to generate employment post surgery. The percent for employment was low, possibly due to already unemployed prior to occurrence of cataract.
- Also 13% respondents who reported 'others' shared reasons like improved vision, improved mental and social well being, etc.

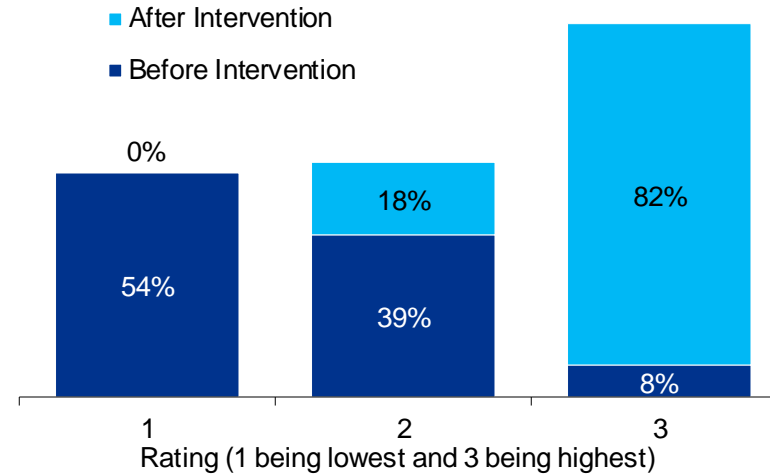
Programme Impact

Overall impact as rated by respondents on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 being lowest and 3 being highest)



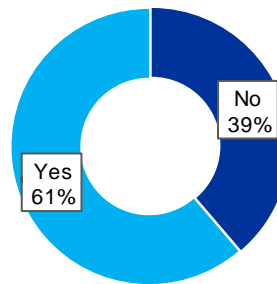
- All respondents reported experiencing a positive impact across family's economic conditions and their own social and mental well-being.
- Respondents observed improvement in family's economic conditions, probably attributable to reduction in caregiver support requirements and enhanced independence.
- Respondents found themselves more able to participate in social events, contributing to an improvement in their social and mental well-being.

Awareness of respondents on their eye-health



- After the intervention, none of the respondents reported their knowledge on eye-health as '1' or low.
- 82% respondents were observed to have significantly increased awareness levels regarding taking care of eye health post intervention.

Ability to afford cost of this treatment at any other facility/scheme



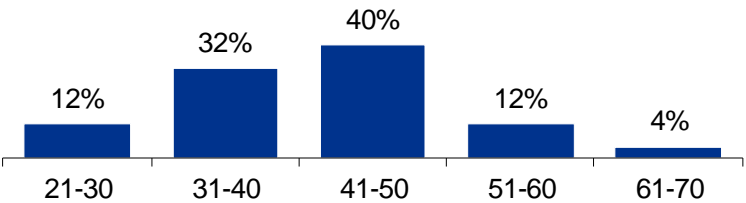
- Findings represent the ability of the respondents to undergo surgery at any other hospital or healthcare facility in absence of VFI. As per data collection, 39% respondents reported their inability to undergo surgery in absence of VFI
- Due to presence of various other government schemes, 61% respondents reported being able to afford the treatment at a government facility.
- However, VFI's partnership is unique due to its presence in very remote locations. Secondly, all the AH identify patients in the radius of 50 km, extending sometimes to 200 km, and arrange for transportation facilities for the patient.

Associate Hospitals - Respondents' Profile

Percent responses from each Associate Hospital



Age distribution of AH staff in years



41 years
was the average
age of respondents
from AH

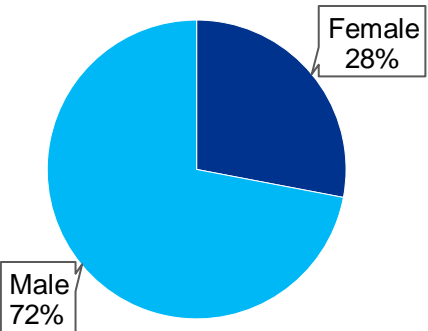
The designation of respondents included trustee, project manager, administrative staff, doctor, para medical staff of the AH.

Geographic distribution of respondents from AH

As a part of this project, VFI had collaborated with 14 Associate Hospitals across 9 different states.

Responses were gathered across all the AH.

Gender

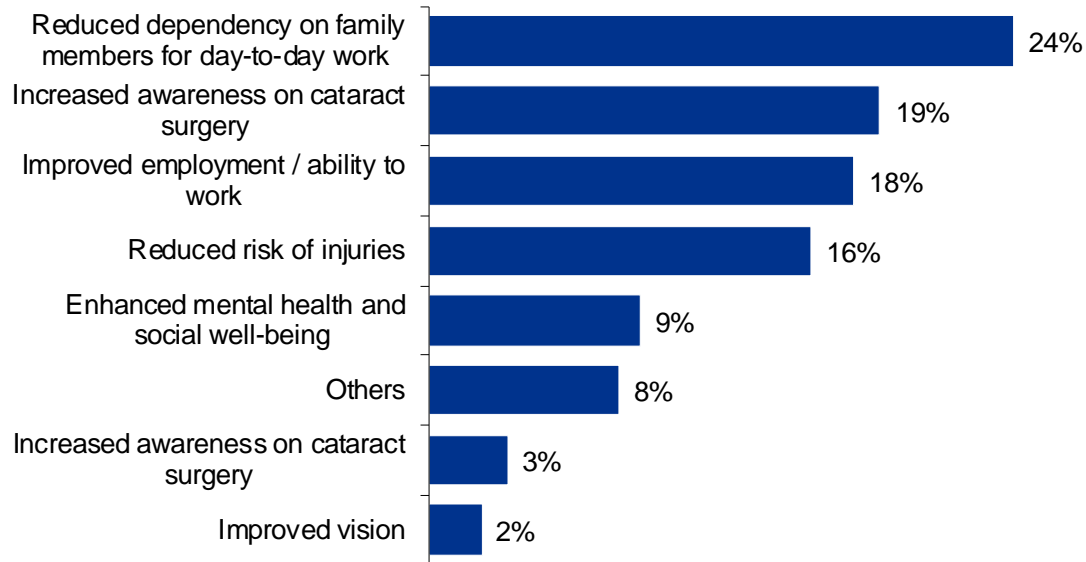


18 male
respondents
from AH

7 female
respondents
from AH

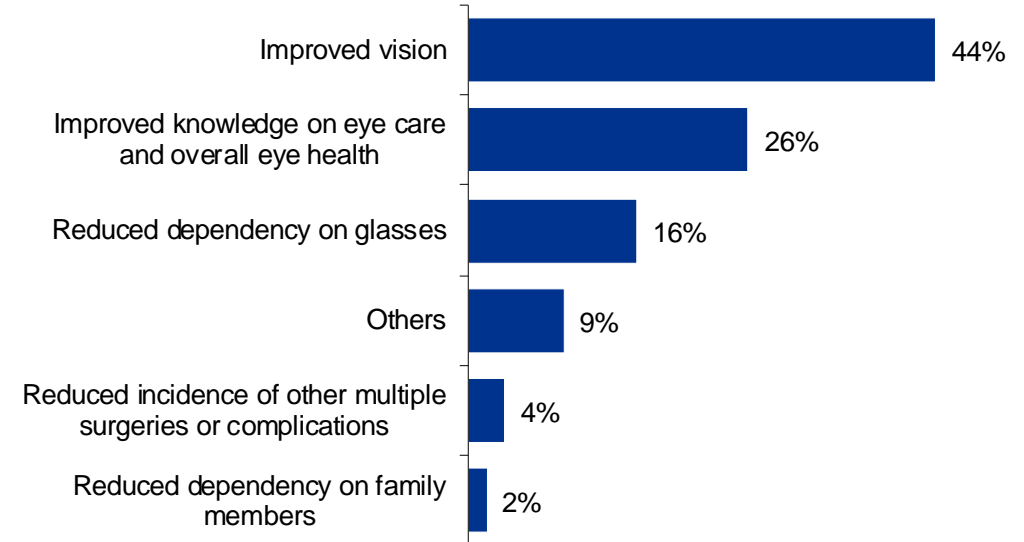
Associate Hospitals – Benefit to patients

Most beneficial impact of the programme for patients



- 24% respondents from AH reported that reduced dependency on family members has been one of the most beneficial impact of the programme, followed by 19% respondents reporting increased awareness on cataract surgery as one of the beneficial impacts.
- 8% of the respondents reported that there could be many other positive impacts such as reduced possibility of future eye medication and multiple surgeries, promotes patient's ability to make better decisions in life

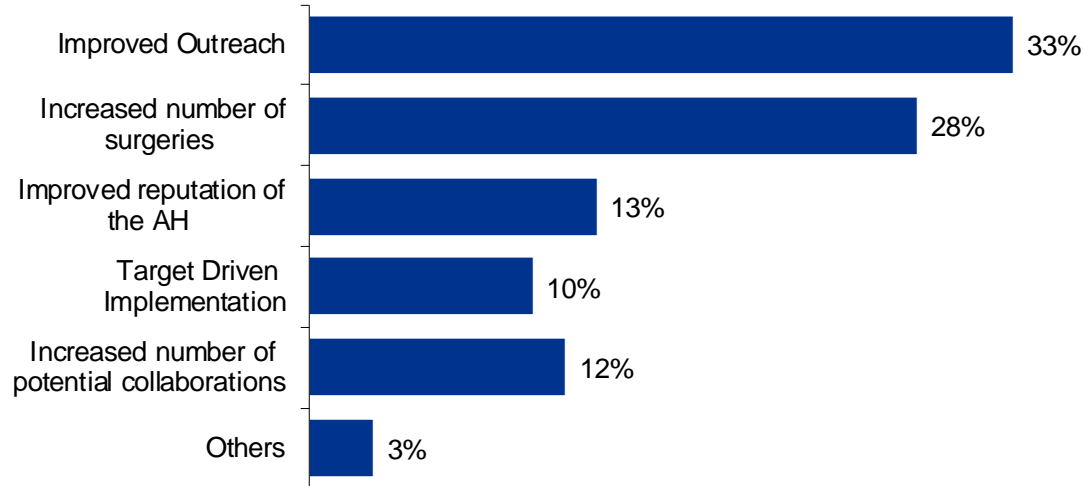
Post surgery improvements



- 44% of the AH respondents reported that vision restoration amongst the patients is one of the most common post surgery improvements that has been noticed.
- 9% of the respondents reported, there could be many other possible improvements such as people have started using spectacles of less power, patients are able perform day to day activities, and ability to perform better at workplace, etc.

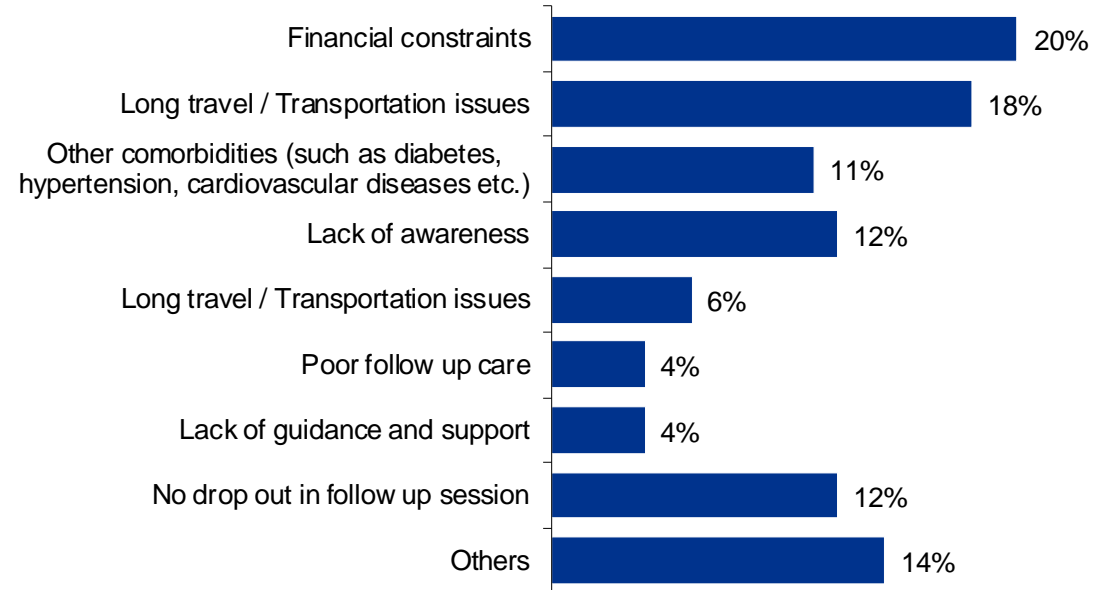
Associate Hospitals- Other findings

Advantages of collaborating with VFI for this project



- 33% respondents from AH have reported that improved outreach has been one of the most important advantages of collaborating with VFI.
- AHs are empaneled under various other government institutions, yet they reported VFI's collaboration has been beneficial for improving the outreach number.
- 3% of the respondents reported that there are other advantages such as assistance of VFI in reaching last mile beneficiaries, constant financial support, among others.

Reasons for dropouts in follow up session



- 20% of the AH respondents believed that financial constraints was one of the major reasons for increase in dropouts in follow up session, followed by 18% respondents who reported that long distance travel and mode of conveyance could be some other reasons.
- On the other hand, 14% respondents who reported 'others' shared various reasons for dropouts such as fear and anxiety, unavailability of the patients etc.

Limitations of the study

The study was conducted through both virtual and offline mediums. The online forms of VFI respondents were filled up through telephonic support which may have partially affected the responses of sample primary beneficiaries.



In reference to the data collection few limitations are mentioned below:

- As most of the respondents were daily wage labourers, VFI shared logistical constraints on the part of the respondents to come for an in-person visit for interaction.
- Due to language barriers in geographies like Haryana and Punjab, the required target of telephonic interactions could not be achieved.
- Due to unavailability and change in contact details of respondents from Karnataka, they could not be contacted for interactions.
- In some instances, the contact information listed was of indirect respondents (family members) and, hence the interaction was limited and restricted.
- Some respondents were not able to respond to telephonic interactions due to being at their place of work.

IRECS Evaluation

Inclusiveness

- The project provided support to individuals suffering from cataract, with inclusion of people from all caste or gender.
- Extending support to patients belonging to low socio-economic background and a higher age group, conditions that are often a barrier to access to healthcare, also made this project inclusive in nature.

Effectiveness

- Comprehensive support was provided to cataract patients. With over 85% of respondents giving the finding the overall treatment process effective, the intervention fulfilled the expectations of not only the respondents but positively impacted Associate Hospitals also.

Sustainability

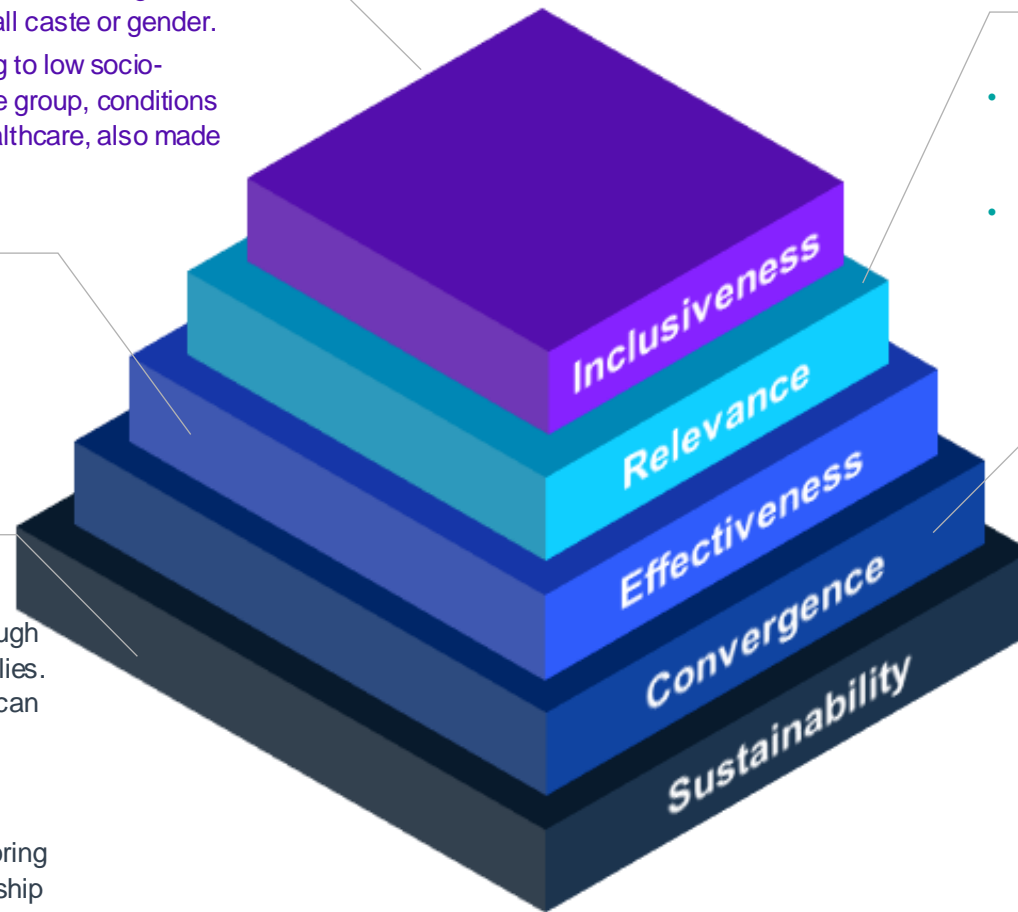
- The project focuses on addressing vision restoration through cataract treatment, benefiting both patients and their families. The support provided at an early stage in cataract cases can prevent double cataract occurrences, and the long-term success rate of cataract surgery is high. This ensures the initiative sustainability.
- The project can further enhance its sustainability by exploring opportunities through more funding mechanisms, partnership with government, village level institutions, etc.

Relevance

- The project objectives help individuals affected by cataracts, particularly those from low-socioeconomic background who cannot afford the treatment.
- The project provides free surgeries, proper awareness and ensures additional support through proper follow-ups, transportation, accommodation, and food provisions. The initiative focuses on offering essential eye care services to vulnerable populations.

Convergence

- The convergence of the programme lies in the model of the programme, where VFI partners with various charitable hospitals, including those present at very remote locations.
- However, the programme should build in collaborations with existing government schemes and village level institutions to improve identification and mobilisation of patients that can afford treatment at any other facility.



Case study



Overcoming Adversity: An Inspiring Journey

The story of Ajay* is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of compassionate care. A 75-year-old agricultural worker from Aurangabad, Bihar, Ajay faced numerous challenges, including cataract in both eyes and the responsibility of being the sole breadwinner for his widowed daughter and her three children.

Ajay first developed cataract in both eyes, which significantly affected his ability to work in the fields and earn a living. The condition worsened over time, making it increasingly difficult for him to support his family.

Unfortunately, the cost of cataract surgery for his left eye in a private hospital was a significant financial burden, amounting to INR 15,000 to 20,000. However, Ajay learned about Vision Foundation India (VFI) and their mission to provide free eye care services to those in need. He eagerly awaited his turn for surgery through the support of Vision Foundation India and Associate Hospital.

After undergoing successful cataract surgery for his left eye, Ajay experienced a remarkable improvement in his quality of life. His ability to work in the fields increased, and he was able to earn up to INR 700 per day. Although sunlight sometimes caused temporary difficulties while working in the fields, he found that taking a short break would help him regain normal vision.

With the support of VFI and Drishti Eye Care Hospital in Aurangabad, Ajay was able to receive life-changing treatment at no cost. This allowed him **to restore his vision and significantly enhance his income generation capabilities.**

The story of Ajay serves as a powerful reminder of the impact that access to quality healthcare can have on an individual's life. With determination and resilient spirit Ajay was able to overcome the challenges posed by cataract and continue providing for his family. His story is a shining example of hope and perseverance in the face of adversity.

**The name Ajay is used to protect the identify of the beneficiary*

Case study



Restored Vision and Enhanced Earnings: A Success Story of Cataract Surgery Supported by VFI and AH

Cataract, a common eye condition, can significantly impact a person's quality of life. This case study highlights the journey of an individual who, with the help of Vision Foundation India (VFI) and Aravind Eye Care located in Bihar, Aurangabad (Associate Hospital), overcame the challenges posed by cataract and regained his ability to work efficiently.

A few months ago, Sanjay* began experiencing symptoms of cataract in both eyes. After a medical check-up, he was diagnosed with cataract in both eyes. However, due to financial constraints, he could only afford to undergo cataract surgery for his left eye in a private hospital, which cost around INR 18,000.

Sanjay later learned about a collaboration between VFI and AH through a local radio announcement, which offered cataract surgery support for those in need. He took advantage of this opportunity and underwent surgery for his right eye, with all expenses covered by AH.

Following the successful surgeries, Sanjay's vision was completely restored, significantly improving his ability to work. As an agriculture labourer, he had previously faced difficulties in performing various tasks and had even suffered injuries. However, the support from VFI and AH allowed him to **regain his confidence and return to work with enhanced efficiency.**

In addition to the improved quality of life, Sanjay's earnings also increased. He started earning INR 700 per day, a significant improvement from his previous situation. Sanjay expressed his sincere gratitude to both VFI and AH for this successful intervention and continued support in providing such life-changing opportunities.

**The name Sanjay is used to protect the identity of the beneficiary*

Testimonial

Primary Beneficiary

“

"I am grateful for the exceptional care received at the Associate Hospital, which helped me overcome my vision problem. The Centre offered free treatment and the staff were supportive throughout the process. After successful surgery, my quality of life has improved significantly."

**Male (61), Nandadeep Medical
Care Foundation, Kolhapur,
Maharashtra**

Associate Hospital, Chairman

“

"Overcoming adversity, our dedicated team provided life-changing surgeries for daily wage workers suffering from cataracts. With restored vision, these hardworking individuals not only regained their ability to support their families but also continued their labour in farms. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to VFI for enabling this remarkable transformation."

**Prashant S B (Nayonika Eye Care
Charitable Trust, Bangalore,
Karnataka)**

Associate Hospital, Managing Director

“

"Through our cataract surgery project in Banka District, we have not only restored vision for over 300 individuals but also uplifted their lives and communities. This experience truly embodies our hospital's motto of 'Vision for All, At Any Cost,' and we eagerly look forward to similar opportunities in the future."

**Dharmendra Kumar Singh (Shri Sai
Amar Heera Memorial Charitable
Trust, Banka, Bihar)**

Primary Beneficiary

“

"Overcoming challenges, I've gained independence, can do all my activities and contribute to my family's happiness by working. It's a fulfilling journey."

**Male (54), Shree Ranchhoddas
BCH, Rajkot, Gujarat**

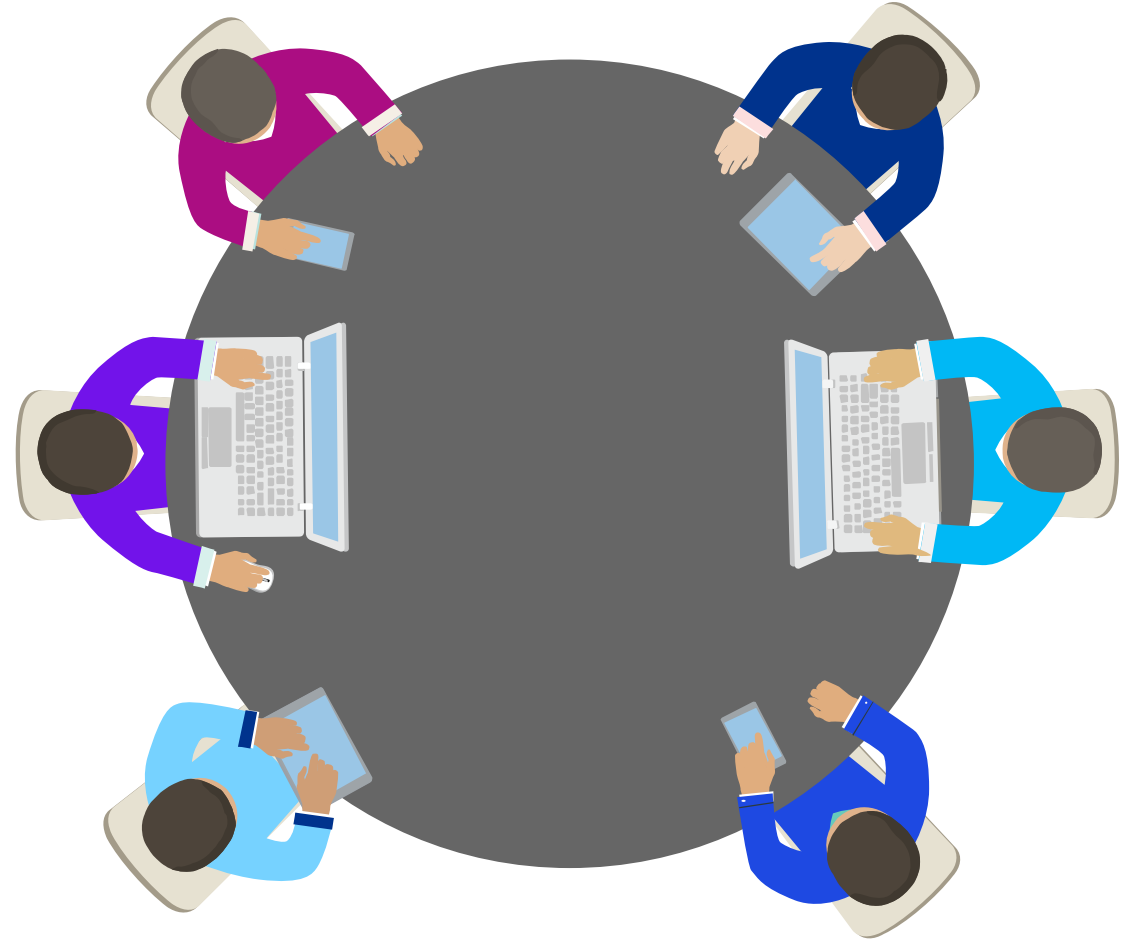
Way Forward

Over the years, the programme has made significant improvements to make it more accessible and sustainable for respondents and Associate Hospitals. However, the programme can make further improvements on the following parameters:

- **Capturing and analysing stakeholder-level outcomes:** Over the follow-up sessions, VFI may include a short survey to capture some of the major outputs and outcomes experienced by past community members as a result of the cataract surgery, including documentation of case studies and testimonials. Analysis of the same may also help strengthen systems and processes for future operations. This may also help VFI create a stronger database of all beneficiaries.
- **Address drop-out rates for follow-up:** Although cataract surgeries are generally safe in nature, follow-up sessions help ensure that any side-effects after the surgery need to be addressed at the earliest. VFI may plan better and allocate more budget and community resource persons better for follow-up activities as per requirements of patients, to reduce incidents of drop-outs.
- **Liasioning with government schemes:** VFI may consider liasioning with government hospitals for supporting mobilisation, for patients who can afford/ access the same. Further, VFI may also take support of village institutions and leaders for follow-up of patients. Such advocacy would also support enhancing the impact of the project,
- **Improved support to Associate Hospitals:** VFI may consider to assess the requirements of Associate Hospitals including per beneficiary cost as well as availability of latest technology, etc. for better implementation of services. Further, VFI may document the capacity building of AHs in the process of implementing the programme, through a feedback collection mechanism.

Way Forward

- **Efforts to reduce stigma:** VFI may use case studies to plan an awareness campaign at district or state level to reduce stigma related to cataract surgeries.
- **Scale-up plan:** Saturation approach for the blocks selected may be ensured through exploring more funding mechanisms by VFI. Hybrid fees mechanisms for community members as per their socio-economic backgrounds may also add an element of sustainability to the project.
- **Focus on impact:** The overall programme design was observed to be output-oriented, with less focus on the larger objective. VFI can give more emphasis to identifying a particular geography and initiating more efforts like advocacy, liaisoning with other partners with an aim to make that geography 'cataract-free'.
- **Post surgery follow up:** It is recommended to VFI that they, in collaboration with Associate Hospital, organise post surgery consultation and capture impact and outcomes from community members to understand their satisfaction level, identify as well as strengthen the project objectives.



Photographs from Field



General ward for patients at Drishti Eye Care Hospital, Aurangabad, Bihar



Laboratory at Drishti Eye Care Hospital, Aurangabad, Bihar



Interaction with beneficiary at Drishti eye Care Hospital, Aurangabad, Bihar

Photographs from Field



Interaction with beneficiary and hospital staff at Babubhai Shah Sarvodaya General Hospital, Ahmedabad, Gujarat



Operation Theatre (OT) at Drishti Eye Care Hospital, Aurangabad, Bihar



With staff of Shree Ranchhoddas Bapu Hospital, Rajkot, Gujarat

To provide cataract
surgeries through the
project 'Rashtriya Netra
Yagna' for the rural
economically weaker
families

Impact Assessment
February 2024

