

An Eye for Change by Jessica Bachman

Stepping off the bus at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, as part of a group of 17 CBI volunteers, we were greeted by warm sunshine and smiling members of the hospital staff. They presented us with marigold necklaces, a gesture to welcome new guests, and led us excitedly on a tour of the hospital.

It was amazing to see how much work has been done to eliminate and prevent avoidable blindness in India and how much work is still being done. In partnership with CBI, eye centers like Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in New Delhi and LV Prasad Eye Institute in Bhubaneswar have continued to grow in the number of patients they treat and the research they conduct, effectively diminishing the number of blind

people in India who cannot afford or reach the care they need. Regardless of a patient's ability to pay for their care, they were all given the same care, and quality was never compromised.

My favorite part of our trip was when we got to meet and chat with young women who were part of the CBI-supported Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic (COP) Program at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in New Delhi, India. These women were recruited from rural villages

I could see the confidence developing in these young women.

- Jessica Bachman

surrounding New Delhi and offered the opportunity to get a free education with a fruitful career afterwards. Not only did this program expand the number of patients the doctors were able to see, but it also enhanced the quality of care each patient received. Furthermore, the COP program empowered these young women to be independent and vital members of their family and community. I could see the confidence developing in these young women as they expressed how overjoyed they were to be independent and able to help contribute to their family's financial needs.



Jessica visiting with the COP students at SCEH

Throughout our travels in India, we experienced first-hand the difficulties many people have getting to locations to receive the healthcare they need. We travelled to one town, Vrindavan, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, where a schoolhouse was transformed into a screening center. Patients did not have to travel far, and both COP women and doctors evaluated them to see if they could be treated at the site or if they needed further intervention. Free transportation was provided to these patients so that the more complicated cases, such as those requiring surgery, could be treated at larger facilities.



Jessica Bachman with CBI Founder, Suresh Chandra

I could see how CBI's support to organizations like Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital and LV Prasad Eye Institute helped them create a system to reach the maximum amount of people all over India, as remote as they may be, regardless of their ability to pay or not. Moreover, every patient and staff member I talked to expressed how grateful they were for CBI's support, and the opportunities it gave them to fight and eliminate blindness throughout India.



Patient receiving eye exam from COP student

CBI in 2017

371,953 adults screened

71,188 children screened

30,314 adult cataract surgeries

378 pediatric eye surgeries

10,734 glasses distributed

250 young women with economic freedom

CBI Opens Surgical Eye Center in Odisha, India

On March 2nd, CBI family traveled to Keonjhar, Odisha in India to celebrate the opening of the Bijayananda Patnaik Eye Center. The eye center is the collaboration of three partners, CBI with support from the Jack DeLoss Taylor Foundation, L.V. Prasad Eye Institute and the Bijayananda Painaik family. The Patnaik family provided their ancestral land for this center, CBI supported the building of the center and its equipment and L.V. Prasad Eye Institute will incorporate its tiered model to run the center.



Bijayananda Patnaik Eye Center in Keonjhar, India

The system works with a tertiary hospital in Bhubaneshwar, the capital of Odisha, a secondary eye center in Keonjhar, and many primary vision screening centers in rural areas. The patients will be given minor treatment, provided with glasses, and screened for more serious diseases at their vision screening center and, if further treatment is needed, transported to secondary center in Keonjhar or tertiary eye center in Bhubaneshwar where they will be provided with the necessary outpatient and surgical procedures to treat blindness. The center functions on a sliding pay scale. This varied network combined with a sliding pay scale will bring about sustainability in two to three years.



Dr. Catherine Taylor welcomes new hospital staff

The center is projected to provide services to over a million people in and around Keonjhar. On its first day, staff at the center were able to examine and treat 28 patients. In its first month, the Bijayananda Patnaik Eye Center has seen 1,113 patients, performed 11 surgeries, and distributed 160 spectacles. CBI is very proud of this partnership and the impact this center will have on providing access to quality eye care in a region that had so little access to such care.



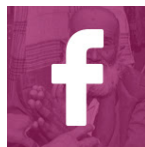


Dr. Suresh Chandra performing an eye exam

SAVE THE DATE!

Please join us in
October to celebrate
WORLD SIGHT DAY
2018!

Connect with
Combat Blindness International!



Help us Go Green!

Please consider providing us
with your email address!



Combat Blindness
INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 5332 Madison, WI 53705