

## Meet Vision Technician Shaheen at Bijnepalli

*I always wanted to stand on my own feet. Like most girls in my community, I got married and started a family, but I wanted to do more than that. I continued my studies and, now, I enjoy my work. I meet new people, help them, and am able to contribute to my daughter's education. Today, I am a Vision Technician. Maybe one of them will become a doctor!*



## Village Vision Complex

A Village Vision Complex (VVC) constitutes the very foundation of the L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) Eye Health Pyramid, enabling the institute to fulfill its mandate of providing at least 50% of all services free to the underserved. The VVC has three components — community eye care, primary eye care and secondary eye care. A typical VVC comprises a secondary eye care Service Centre (SC) at the top, linked to a complement of 10 primary care Vision Centres (VC), in turn linked to grassroots level, locally-sourced Vision Health Guardians, each monitoring the eye health of approximately 5000 people. Each VC has a network of 10 Vision Health Guardians. The Vision Centres are managed by Vision Technicians, recruited and trained by LVPEI for a year. VCs conduct comprehensive eye care examinations, prescribe spectacles and refer patients in need of further care to secondary centres, each serving a population of 50,000. Thus, each Service Centre addresses the eye care needs of half a million rural population, providing comprehensive eye examination and cataract surgical services, among others.

Till date, LVPEI's VVC network has served more than 765,000 outpatients and performed 95,086 surgeries. Its key components are: permanent eye care infrastructure in the underserved rural remote areas, capacity building (from community to eye specialists), training and research (public health, basic and clinical research). Currently, we have 89 Vision Centres, 10 LVPEI secondary centres, 9 partner centres, 3 tertiary centres and a Centre of Excellence. LVPEI's core mission for eliminating avoidable blindness is summed up in its motto "Excellence, Equity and Efficiency."

### LVPEI Eye Health Pyramid



## V Rajashekar manages the VVC operations. He is an IAPB Eye Health Hero.

*The past 15 years of my life have been both memorable and enjoyable. My humble beginning as an administrator of an LVPEI secondary level eye centre is in itself a high point as this was our first rural center. We now have 10 secondary centres and more than 80 Vision Centres, all of which I am very fortunate to be a small part of. I am grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the needy and underprivileged. I am in a position that is respected not only by my colleagues but also my family and friends, whose support has been crucial. I am glad to have been of assistance to Dr G N Rao in implementing his vision for LVPEI.*

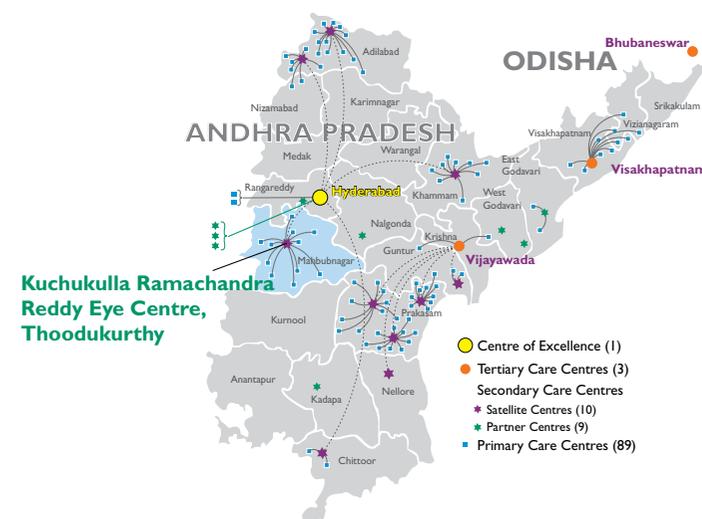


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**LV Prasad Eye Institute**

# Kuchukulla Ramachandra Reddy Eye Centre, Village Vision Complex, Thoodukurthy



Inauguration : 24 October 1998  
 Population of the district : 4,042,191  
 Catchment population : 500,000

The land was donated by local landlord Mr K Damodar Reddy

## Capital funding

CBM (Christoffel Blindenmission), Germany

Sightsavers, UK

Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Inc., USA

Majority of the VVC employees belong to Thoodukurthy village.

Concept, planning and implementation: LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad

## Comprehensive Eye Care Services

- Diagnosis
- Surgeries (Cataract)
- Corneal Infections, Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy
- Low Vision & Community Based Rehabilitation
- Linkage with Health Care Services
- Training Programs
- Monitoring Vision Centres
- Monitoring Community Screening

## Service Delivery (1998-2012)

Outpatients: Paying : 93,139 Non-paying : 58,121 Total : 151,260

Surgeries : Paying : 5706 Non-paying : 14,433 Total : 20,139

## Community Eye Care

Villages covered	468
Community screening programs	566
Awareness programs	167
People screened	697,541
People prescribed glasses	10,805
People referred to base hospital	58,084

## Research

The Andhra Pradesh Eye Disease Study (APEDS) was a pioneering population-based epidemiological study conducted by LVPEI in the representative Indian state of Andhra Pradesh during 1996 - 2000 in three rural and one urban areas. A total of 11,786 subjects of all ages from 24 urban clusters and 70 rural clusters in one urban and three rural areas were recruited and examined to determine the prevalent rates of eye diseases and the burden of blindness and low vision, risk factors associated with major eye diseases, the effect of blindness and low vision on the quality of life and the barriers to eye care services. Hailed today as the first, scientifically designed epidemiological study in the developing world, APEDS provided landmark evidence on the prevalence of visual impairment for the first time. It led to the evolution of the LVPEI Eye Health Pyramid model of eye care service delivery, with the VVC as the base. APEDS Phase-3 is currently being conducted in Thoodukurthy.

The Photo Voice pilot project was launched in Thoodukurthy VVC on July 10, 2012. Photo Voice is a tool used to encourage participative action to address social and environmental issues for community development. Participants use their photographs, taken in real life situations, to highlight problems or focus on desirable changes within the community to build a story and initiative social action at the grassroots level. Photo Voice has been used to better understand public health issues, formulate people empowerment strategies and behavioral modifications.

The project has been initiated in collaboration with Prof Clifton Schor's laboratory at the University of California Berkeley School of Optometry. Dr Nance Wilson and Prof Schor had trained the ICARE team in March 2012.

## Cataract surgery restored Shivakka's livelihood

Kojolla Shivakka, 68, a widow, lives with her sister and grandson. She used to sell vegetables to support her family, but had to give it up because of her poor vision. Despite being aware of the local LVPEI Vision Centre, she did not go for an eye examination, assuming that her vision problem was due to her age and probably not curable.

Krishna Leela, a Vision Health Guardian trained by LVPEI, met Shivakka during a routine screening program and found cataract in both her eyes. She counseled Shivakka and accompanied her to the secondary centre in Mudhole, Adilabad, for treatment. Shivakka had a cataract surgery in one eye, but did not follow up for the second eye, as there was no one to accompany her. Field Supervisor Sayanna followed up and ensured that she had the second operation also. Today, Shivakka is back to her vegetable business! With a big smile, she thanks LVPEI for the help and support she has received.

