



July 2021 at LVPEI

Dear Friends,

Greetings from L V Prasad Eye Institute! As I write my first note to you, I experience a sense of excitement with the commencement of leadership transition. The new leadership team that assumed responsibilities on July 1, was selected through a rigorous process spread over 2 years and involved multiple eminent people from both within and outside of country. It is now the turn of this team to take the Institute to newer heights.

I would like to begin this new phase in the journey of LVPEI, by assuring all friends and well-wishers of the Institute that we will not leave any stone unturned in continuing to play a significant role to eliminate needless blindness. I would very much like to have your continued support and guidance for the next phase of our organization.

July month marked the completion of 15 glorious years of service for two of our tertiary eye care centres – Mithu Tulsi Chanrai (MTC) campus, Bhubaneswar and GMR Varalakshmi (GMRV) campus Visakhapatnam, with the former serving 1.5 million outpatients and performing 160,000 surgeries, and the latter serving 1.2 million outpatients and performing close to 150,000 surgeries. This anniversary was unique as it also marked the change of leadership on both campuses. Please join me in welcoming Bhavik U Panchal and Srikant Sahu as Heads of the Visakhapatnam and Bhubaneswar campuses respectively. Bhavik is a young and dynamic vitro-retina specialist who did both his residency and fellowship training with us. Srikant is a well-known cornea specialist who has been with us for a longer period, having done cornea fellowship with us and brief stint at one of our secondary centres. I would like to convey my deepest appreciation to Merle Fernandes and Suryasnata Rath, the outgoing Heads of these campuses for their services. They have both now moved into the senior leadership team.

The MTC campus celebrated its anniversary by initiating three new and unique programs:

- A. Tribal Odisha Eye Disease Study – where 2600 households of one of the most backward tribal community (the Dongria Kondh tribal community) of Rayagada district in Odisha will be screened for various eye disorders and provided necessary care. The study is funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.
- B. Inauguration of Hemanta Kumari Advanced Ocular Trauma Centre for providing comprehensive ocular trauma care. The centre is funded by the generosity of a local philanthropist, Mr Tarini Prasad Mohanty in memory of his mother.
- C. Inauguration of the Advanced Molecular Mucormycosis Laboratory dedicated to the research and management of Mucormycosis. The laboratory is funded by the generosity of the MGM foundation, Bhubaneswar.

I convey my gratitude to all the donors for their support to these programmes.

The Academy for Eye Care Education is always at the forefront of new initiatives. This month, a brand new year long curriculum based virtual program for the learners of Uveitis was started. The program comprises of 12 modules covering all aspects of Uveitis. This was initiated in

partnership with DocMode – a global platform that provides interactive learning programs for health professionals and is supported by Santen, a Japanese pharmaceutical giant. 170 participants have already registered for the program. Thanks to Soumyava Basu, Head of our Uveitis service, for spearheading this novel program.

The July month marks the start of a new academic session, and the Academy was buzzing with activities to induct new trainees. I extend a warm welcome to these youngsters into the LVPEI family and wish them a very fruitful tenure with us.

Other prominent activities of the Academy comprised of 22 webinars, where 1650 eye care professionals participated; and the second edition of Eye Health Education Program (EyeHEP) comprising of a series of education programs engaging all cadres of eye care personnel and professionals and spread over 3 weeks.

The highlights of the Prof Brien Holden Eye Research Centre include 46 publications in various peer reviewed journals; selection of Asik Mohamad as a mentor for the ARVO Global Mentorship Program; and appointment of Mohammad Javed Ali and Sirisha Senthil to the editorial boards of the Journal “Orbit” and “Frontiers in Ophthalmology” respectively. Congratulations to Ashik, Javed and Sirisha.

July was a month of joy for the team at the Institute for Vision Rehabilitation. This month, 9 of their clients successfully secured placements in different jobs. So far, the group has successfully facilitated job placements and self-employment for 300 clients. I am sure this month’s success will motivate the team and strengthen their efforts in this direction. LVPEI and the Institute for Vision Rehabilitation constantly work towards empowering visually impaired persons and enabling them to achieve their full potential.

The COVID pandemic has brought a change in health seeking behavior of our population with most of the people availing health care closer to their door step. This is evident in the more rapid recovery of operations after the second wave in our rural secondary and vision centres, similar to last year.

In addition to providing centre based care, our teams in rural areas provided eye care to 38 families in 16 villages through “home care” program. The commitment of our team at these centres towards the society in these difficult times is gratefully acknowledged.

Let me end this note with the story of a 54-year-old lady and a teacher, who was suffering with Uveitis for past 30 years. Frequent use of corticosteroids resulted in elevated eye pressure. By 2020 she was suffering with glaucoma and uveitis. The COVID 19 pandemic brought her more misfortune. With total lock down in the country, travel and physical evaluation were no longer an option. With only tele consultation, her eye pressure shot up with consequent irreversible damage to her peripheral vision.

On a visit to Hyderabad in January, she decided to visit our centre and sought an appointment with Dr Soumyava Basu, Head of our Uveitis service. After a thorough evaluation and investigations, Dr Basu diagnosed her condition as HLA-B 27 uveitis. She continued to follow-up with him, and today, she is free of flare ups without corticosteroids for the past 6 months and her eye pressure is under control. Being relieved of such a long standing painful eye condition, she is a happy patient and expressed her gratitude in these words, “I was late but lucky to have found a young soft spoken and perfect uveitis specialist who actually knows how to treat chronic patients of uveitis. I am forever grateful to the amazing team of L V Prasad Eye Institute”. Kudos to Soumyava Basu for being a 3 H (hands, head and heart) doctor!

- Prashant Garg