



June 2022 at LVPEI

On June 1, we turned 35! As I sat down to write this letter, I began to reminisce on our eventful journey over these 35 years. Beginning as a state-of-the-art speciality eye care centre in Hyderabad, in these three decades we have built a robust pyramidal network of over 260 eye care centres. Together, we now provide affordable and appropriate eye care even in remote and rural parts of the country. Today eye care, more than ever before, is closer to the doorsteps of those who need us. The LVPEI pyramid model enables us to provide the entire spectrum of eye care: from population screening to the management of complex diseases, as well as rehabilitation services for those with irreversible vision loss. We are present in 264 locations in four states of India (Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Karnataka) and have an overseas centre in the capital city of Liberia, a small country in Western Africa.

We can deliver on this comprehensive vision for eye care through our 10 functional arms, all aligned to eliminate needless vision loss and blindness. We have the largest eye bank network in Asia that has reached the milestone of collecting 10,000 corneas each year. Our eye bank is a major resource for corneal tissues in the country. The Institute is a major education hub for all cadres of eyecare personnel. In 35 years, we have touched the lives of 34 million people through our direct interventions, trained more than 56,000 eyecare personnel, collected 120,000 corneas, rehabilitated 200,000 people with incurable vision loss, published 4100 scientific papers, and have taken eye care to 12,000 villages. This remarkable journey was made possible by Nag Rao's visionary leadership, a committed team and support from around the world. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to lead this organization with such an illustrious legacy and rock-solid foundation into the next phase of our journey.

Anniversaries

With all this in mind, June began with our celebrations to mark the 35th anniversary. After a gap of two years, we had an in-person event and the teams' enthusiasm, and gusto was palpable. Mr Kishore Kothapalli, a renowned technologist, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and a long-time supporter of LVPEI was the Guest of Honour. To commemorate the anniversary, our team at Kallam Anji Reddy campus organised a blood donation drive. I was touched by their gesture – a unique and noble way to demonstrate their commitment for promoting and protecting the health of our fellow citizens. I am proud to lead such a wonderful team.

In the month of June, we also celebrated the anniversaries of two secondary centres. The Venkata Lakshmi Eye Centre in Karamchedu, Andhra Pradesh celebrated its 20th anniversary. Established with generous support from the late Daggubati Ramanaidu, a noted film producer and Dada Saheb Phalke award winner, the centre has provided outpatient services to more than 225,000 patients and performed 26,000 surgeries. The Seshanna Chennawar Eye Centre Adilabad, Telangana celebrated its 17th anniversary. Located in a remote tribal area and established with the generous support from Mr. Seshanna Chennawar, a local cloth merchant with a strong desire to serve local communities, the centre has provided outpatient services to more than 310,000 patients and performed 34,500 surgeries. I was humbled by the commitment of the Daggubati and Chennawar families and the motivation of teams at both the centres. I would like to thank each one of them for joining in our mission of eradicating needless blindness.

Collaborations and support

At the Standard Chartered LVPEI Academy of Eye care Education, our team led by Avinash Pathangey constantly explores opportunities and newer ways of bridging the gap between demand and supply of human resources in eye care. In June, the Academy entered into partnership with the Indian Institute of Technology – Hyderabad and developed a brand new two-year Masters course in Ophthalmic Engineering. This unique program will be open for students with an



undergraduate degree in medicine, health sciences and engineering. The curriculum will comprise of engineering and vision science courses. I am confident that the graduates from this interdisciplinary course will have an excellent understanding of vision science and applied engineering, and will play a major role in innovating and improving technology used in eye health. Join me in wishing the teams from IIT Hyderabad and LVPEI a grand start and all success with this new course.

Another partnership to mark and celebrate this month is with the Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS), Banaras Hindu University. On June 23rd we inaugurated an Eye Bank in the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology, IMS in Varanasi (earlier known as Banaras). For this initiative LVPEI provided technical support, while operational support was provided by the HANS Foundation and TATA Trust. This is the first state-of-the-art eye bank in a public institute in the city. This effort will ensure availability of quality corneal tissues and will help eliminate the wait list for corneal transplant surgeries in the region.

About three years ago, we embarked on a new initiative to create an incubator as part of our Technology Innovation initiative. The LVPEI incubator, funded under the BioNEST scheme of the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), launched its first “Start up Social”. Start Up Socials are a series of events aimed at energizing and nurturing a vibrant and collaborative ecosystem for healthcare start-ups. The LVPEI BioNEST incubator will hold such events every month and will focus on providing a value-creating platform for the start-ups by bringing together incubators, clinicians, and other catalysts. On this occasion Ajit Rangnekar, the former Dean of the Indian School of Business (ISB) and a Board Member of the Hyderabad Eye Institute launched the website for the incubator. I would like to congratulate Ramesh Kekunnaya and his team on the launch and wish them all success.

This year too, LVPEI faculty had a rich haul of awards and recognitions at the annual meeting of the All-India Ophthalmological Society for their work. I will run out of space if I mention each one of them! I congratulate them all for bringing laurels to the organisation.

The Gift of Sight

I would like to end this newsletter with gratitude for Raimohan Parida and his family. Mr Parida was a noted film actor and jatra artist from Odisha, known for portraying negative roles. The 58-year-old actor featured in 100 movies and 40-odd Jatra shows before his untimely death. News of his death shocked his fans and left a vacuum in the Odiya film industry. Even in such a time of despair, Mr Parida’s family came forward to donate his eyes. While his fond memories will always stay alive in the hearts of his fans, this gesture will bestow vision to patients who will have their sight restored by this donation. Mr Parida, and the many donors like him who have given us the gift of their sight, will always be in our thoughts.

-Prashant Garg