

## Celebrating Anniversaries

As institutions gather momentum, their anniversaries begin to grow in significance—marking not just the passage of time, but the journeys undertaken and the values created and sustained. It is tempting, and perhaps risky however, to mistake age for value. After all, longevity alone doesn't guarantee impact. The true worth of an institution is measured not in years, but in the imprint it leaves: the lives touched, the culture nurtured, and the behaviours inspired.

Anniversaries, then, are more than milestones. They offer a moment to pause, to reflect on where we've been; to reconnect with our purpose and to look forward with clarity and renewed ambition.

This June brought with it a series of meaningful milestones—each a reflection of who we are, and how far we have come. In this note, I write to honour our journey, the progress made, and the people who make it all possible.

### The PRK Prasad Centre for Rehabilitation

June 5<sup>th</sup> marked the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of **Dr. PRK Prasad Centre for Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired** - a cornerstone of LVPEI's *Institute of Vision Rehabilitation*. From the outset, LVPEI's vision of 'comprehensive care' has sought to ensure that even those with irreversible vision loss receive the care and support necessary to realize their full potential of life. This approach was and still is, somewhat unusual. At a time, 38 years ago, when most eye care institutions primarily focused on clinical care, education, and research (and in that order), LVPEI sought to integrate rehabilitation as a critical pillar of its mission.

The journey began with support from CBM (the Christoffel Blinden Mission in those days) and gained further strength with a generous donation from Dr PRK Prasad, a Detroit-based nephrologist. This early support laid the foundation for a flourishing network of rehabilitation services that are now embedded across our institution. As Dr Beula Christy, who leads the Institute, aptly notes: 'What began in a single room at our Banjara Hills campus has since grown into a holistic, personalized care model serving people of all ages - from infants to the elderly.'

### The Ramayamma International Eye Bank

At the close of June, the Ramayamma International Eye Bank (RIEB) celebrated its 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since inception, RIEB has been central to our mission of addressing corneal blindness in India. What began as a modest initiative in 1989, supporting just 20 transplants annually, has grown into the largest eye bank in India and the Asia-Pacific region, enabling over 5,000 transplants each year. As a Centre of Excellence, RIEB is recognized globally as a leader in eye banking, setting new standards for quality, innovation, and scale.

As of the beginning of this month, the RIEB has harvested over 116,175 donor corneas and facilitated sight-restoring surgeries for more than 66,918 individuals. This volume makes RIEB the largest of its kind in the world. RIEB's anniversary marks a significant

milestone in its journey, as it continues to push boundaries and chart new ambitions. The team is now working to set up eye banks in Indian states where none exist; supporting existing eye banks with low collection numbers; and enhancing quality standards across, through training programs aimed at building a skilled workforce of eye bank personnel across India.

## Secondary Care Centres' anniversaries

This month also marked the anniversaries of two key secondary care centres—each a testament to community trust and philanthropic vision.

The **Seshanna Chennawar Eye Centre** in Adilabad, Telangana, marked its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Founded with the support of Sri Chennawar, a successful businessman from the region, the centre now anchors a network of nine primary eye care 'Vision Centres'. It serves a largely tribal, economically disadvantaged population in a region that has historically lacked access to quality eye care. Over the past 2 decades, the centre has provided over 424,922 outpatient consultations and 45,284 surgeries - nearly half of them at no cost to the beneficiaries. Despite its rural location--over 300 km north of Hyderabad--the centre offers subspecialty surgical services in pediatrics, squint & neuro-ophthalmology, retina, oculoplasty, and glaucoma. In total, the vision centres and community outreach programs have provided over a million eye screenings to people in the need of eye care.

Similarly, the **Venkata Lakshmi Eye Centre** in Karamchedu, Bapatla District, Andhra Pradesh celebrated 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary on the 7<sup>th</sup>. This centre was made possible by the generosity of late Sri D. Rama Naidu, a renowned filmmaker, who donated a fully built facility in his mother's memory. Today, the centre operates 11 vision centres, serving an economically backward and underserved population. To date, the centre has provided over 281,184 outpatient services (nearly 50% of which at no cost) and conducted over 29,848 surgeries (nearly 69% at no cost). In addition, the vision centres and community outreach teams have collectively provided close to half-a-million screenings.

Both centres embody LVPEI's core ethos: ***becoming trusted pillars of care deeply embedded within their local communities***. Their anniversaries not only mark milestones but also celebrate the enduring, trust-based relationship that have developed over the years, helping to ensure sustainable eye care for generations to come.

## 38 years of Purpose and Progress

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, we kicked off our 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The event, held at our Kallam Anji Reddy campus in Hyderabad and joined virtually by many across our network, was filled with energy, camaraderie, and a reaffirmation of our shared purpose.

Our Chief Guest, Dr B N Gangadhar, Chair of the National Medical Commission, spoke on the evolving needs of medical education offering insight into the future of healthcare. Our Guest of Honour, Dr Madhukar Reddy, an alumnus and founder of the Drishti Eye Centre in Hyderabad, reflected on the enduring bond many of our former

staff and trainees share with LVPEI. His nostalgic presentation of memories and photographs from his time with us resonated deeply, reminding us of the journey we have undertaken together.

And of course, there were dances, music, laughter and joy--a vibrant reminder of the strong community of staff we have built over the years.

### Looking Toward the Future: The 40th Anniversary and Beyond

June has been a month of celebration and reflection. Some anniversaries, with time, acquire a deeper significance. As we approach our 40<sup>th</sup> year, we are presented with a unique opportunity: to reimagine our role for the decade ahead.

With the founder's vision as our guiding light and our strategic direction ensuring that **'everyone, everywhere has access to the promise of sight,'** we remain focused in our mission. However, the future calls for as much listening as leading. What long-term challenges must we address? What persistent barriers to sight restoration and rehabilitation need to be overcome? And how can we ensure that LVPEI remains a responsive and responsible organisation as we continue our fight against needless vision impairment and blindness?

As we move toward 2027, I hope we can gather feedback from across the organisation and all stakeholders. Our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary should be more than a celebration-it should serve as a launchpad for the decade ahead, guiding us toward our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and beyond. Let us build that vision, together.

-Prashant Garg