

# Looking Back at 2025

The L V Prasad Eye Institute was founded on a simple yet powerful idea: that excellence and equity are not competing ideals but complementary obligations. World class eye care must not be a privilege for the few, but a service to all those who need it. In a world, and particularly in India, where inequity in healthcare access remains profound, this belief gives us both our purpose and is our compass for the future.

Over the years, we have been guided by idea of building a *responsible and responsive* organisation: one that is attentive to complex and emerging eye care challenges, anticipates change, and acts with purpose to maximise impact. Responsibility, for us, means stewardship—of trust, of talent, of resources, and of a legacy built over four decades. Responsiveness is about listening closely, adapting courageously, and acting decisively to meet both visible and emerging needs. Together, these principles shape how we think, how we serve, and how we help the organisation grow.

In pursuing this vision, we are at the cusp of a wonderful milestone. Next year, we will begin marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our founding—four decades of service, learning, and transformation. It will also be close to 5 years since the current generation of the senior leadership assumed stewardship of this storied institution. Milestones such as these offer an opportunity to pause and ask: Are we remaining true to our founding promise? Are we reaching those who need us the most? Are we using the strength of our integrated network to create real, lasting impact? There will be a time for numbers and statistics, but I do think that some of the highlights this year present us with a gestalt of impact.

In January, our Institute for Vision Rehabilitation was honored with the [Telangana] *Governor's Award for Excellence in Divyangjan Welfare*, recognising our work with persons with disabilities. In 2025 alone, we delivered over 34,000 rehabilitation services to nearly 11,000 individuals. These services ranged from holistic early intervention therapies to special needs education and low vision device support. Over the past decade and half, this commitment has translated to nearly 290,000 services, close to 40% provided at no cost to the client. Alongside this deep social impact, we continue to feature prominently in global rankings such as the SCImago rankings, the Nature Index, and other national and international benchmarks for both eye research and eye care service delivery—affirming that compassion and excellence can, and must coexist.

This year also marked a phase of thoughtful consolidation and innovation. In collaboration with a key partner, our colleague Pravin Vaddavalli and the Shantilal Shanghvi Cornea Institute soft-launched a pilot program to address the complex and interconnected causes of corneal blindness – bringing together our clinical, research, education, and community strengths in a truly integrated way. We deepened our investments in priority areas such as myopia, neonatal eye diseases, inherited eye diseases, and the eyes' links to the brain. Our eye care delivery models also evolved meaningfully. The *LVPEI@Home* initiative—offering home-based eye care services for the elderly and persons with disabilities—has expanded across several centres in our network, enabling care for those unable to come to our facilities. In time, I hope this initiative will, much like community-based rehabilitation, make deeper inroads across the LVPEI pyramid.

This year marked the beginning of a new phase of expansion in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In Munipalle, Guntur district, we inaugurated a new secondary centre, the NATCO eye centre. Another secondary centre, Y S Raja Reddy Eye Centre, started in southern Andhra Pradesh, in Kadapa district. We also established a state-of-the-art vision centre in Mandadam village near Guntur, and another in Vanguru village, near Eluru. Plans are now underway to develop the campus at Vanguru into a secondary centre, the Kasaraneni Paripurna Lakshmi Eye Centre, which will also serve as a hub for community-based rehabilitation services and training of local youth in eye care. These developments will help us reach deeper into the state and extend services to hundreds of new, unreached communities.

As clinicians, we strive to pull people back from the precipice of sight loss. While we practice what is known, progress in clinical medicine depends equally on those who push beyond current frontiers. This spirit was evident in 2025, when four of our colleagues were recognized at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO). In addition, many others received national and international accolades across the year. Just as important, this year we seeded several new PhD programs in vision science – investments that will shape the future of eye research for years to come.

As the December nip set in, we celebrated a joyous graduation ceremony for this year's cohorts of eye care professionals trained at LVPEI. In a vibrant gathering, with Prof Aung Tin, the executive Director and CEO of the Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC) as the Chief Guest, 314 graduates were felicitated. This was complemented by two days of intensive, structured workshops where our faculty and education teams explored new frontiers in training, skill, and professional development. A team from SNEC participated in the workshops and the graduation ceremony.

As I conclude this note, let me hark back to our Foundation Day ceremony on 17 October. Dr R 'Balu' Balasubramaniam, delivered the inaugural L V Prasad Oration. His words continue to resonate deeply: *"Somewhere, in a remote tribal village or an urban slum, there is still a person waiting to be seen — and when you reach them, the spirit of LVPEI will be alive again."*

Ultimately, institutions endure not because of buildings or milestones, but because of the lives they touch. As we step into our 39th year, anniversaries will naturally accumulate. But our true measure will always lie elsewhere—in reaching the unreached, in innovative solutions for clinical challenges, in building an empathetic and knowledgeable eye care workforce, in restoring independence and providing dignity to specially abled people. There remains much to be done, and that is both our responsibility and our privilege. Each year brings new challenges, but also new opportunities. With your continued trust and partnership, we will keep pushing the boundaries of what is possible in eye care, while remaining anchored to our founding promise: that no one should be denied the gift of sight because of where they live or what they can afford.

With gratitude to all our donors, sponsors, collaborators, alumni, patients, and my wonderful team, I thank you for walking this journey with us and wish you a hopeful, healthy, and fulfilling New Year.

-Prashant Garg