



## June 2019 at LVPEI

This month turned out to be one of many anniversaries!

On the 27th of this month, we have celebrated yet another milestone – the **thirtieth anniversary** of our **Eye Bank**. We started in 1989 on a note of gloomy prognosis, that eye Banking in India is doomed to fail as no one donates eyes! Yet our team was able to overcome these odds and our eye bank has evolved into the biggest eye bank in Asia and the developing world. This in turn, made our Institute the biggest corneal transplantation centre in the world. Hyderabad has become the only city in India with no waiting list for corneal transplantation for about a decade. The overwhelming progress made over these years makes this a very special occasion for us.

We are indebted to many in reaching this stage - Founding technical partners , International Federation of Eye Banks of Baltimore and it's President Frederick Griffith; Verinder Nirankari, the corneal specialist par excellence of Baltimore who made this connection for us; the Gunnam Ramayamma Family for providing the seed grant (the Eye Bank is named after her); Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences and its then Director and his successors for supporting the very first Hospital Cornea retrieval programme (HCRP) in India; and thousands of eye donor families whose unmatched generosity even during their difficult time restored sight to thousands; and scores of other friends who guided us through this journey. All this resulted in harvesting 78,664 corneas that contributed to 41713 corneal transplant procedures across India.

The Institute celebrated its thirty-second anniversary. Much has happened since then with the network spanning mainly the states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, and a single centre in Karnataka. This comprises of 180 primary care vision centres, 19 secondary centres, three major tertiary Centres and one advanced tertiary Centre of Excellence. Through its five tier pyramidal model of eye care delivery, LVPEI has touched about 28.48 million people. Education, research, capacity building and advocacy touched many more indirectly. Technology innovation and product development offer the promise of even greater impact in the future.

Our Rehabilitation unit also celebrated its twenty-seventh anniversary. Upgraded into an Institute for Vision Rehabilitation in the recent past, this unit served around 180,000 clients and many more indirectly through a variety of other programmes over the years.

The introduction of tertiary care components in our rural secondary centres continues to be on the increase with the introduction of General Anaesthesia services in the Seshanna Chennawar Eye Centre in Adilabad, Telangana, making it the second among LVPEI's secondary centres equipped to do so. This will enhance our surgical services for children considerably.



Congratulations to Savitri Sharma on her election as President Ocular Microbiology and Immunology Group, the prestigious US based international organization. This is a fitting recognition to her numerous contributions to this field.

On the Education front, there were many activities and events covering several cadres both for in-house groups as well as open events.

We had four optometrists from different African countries, for a three month fellowship in our Institute for Vision Rehabilitation. Dr. Samuel Ndukoba from Abia State University in Nigeria had the following to say of his experience.

“The expertise, infrastructure and service-delivery model that we all got to see at LVPEI has been a great exposure for us. Given my specialization in the field of low vision, I would like to explore the option of practicing this much needed service in Liberia. I am also hoping that the geographical proximity of Nigeria (where I come from) will make it feasible for me to extend the services that I have learnt in LVPEI for the benefit of people with visual impairment beyond my nation.”

- Gullapalli N. Rao