**Project Proposal for “Gift of Sight for differently abled children”**

Wonderful, beautiful and very hardworking, our eyes are the most amazing gift of God to human beings. It is our eye sight which primarily helps us to traverse this world safely. But sadly, many of us take it for granted and ignore our eye health.

Although it is difficult to assess as to when your child, especially a disabled child, needs to go to an [eye](https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/picture-of-the-eyes) care provider, a little awareness will help you overcome the dilemma.Children’s [eye health](https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/ss/slideshow-healthier-eyes) begins innewborn nursery and it should continue throughout childhood, say experts.

Professor of ophthalmology and pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Michael Repka says, “For many children, an evaluation by a pediatrician may be enough. But if a child has a family history of vision or [eye problem](https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/common-eye-problems) or has symptoms, he or she may need to have a thorough official [eye exam](https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/healthy-vision-as-you-age-14/slideshow-vision-changes)ination.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a programme which aims to control childhood blindness for achieving the goals of Vision 2020.The mission of the Vision 2020 initiative is to eliminate the main causes of all preventable and treatable blindness as a public health issue by 2020.

Incidentally, half the blindness in children is treatable or preventable. The prevalence of childhood blindness varies according to the socio-economic development of the country. Even the need of visually impaired children is different from adults both in terms of diagnosis and treatment. The need relates to both infrastructure and available human resources.

**Eye Disease in Children**

**Bihar is one of the m**ost marginalized states and is **worst hit with 700,000 blind and 4.3 million visually impaired. About 1,00,000 people become blind each year** due to aging and c**ataract is responsible for 83% of the blindness**.

According to a recent survey, about 44% of Bihar’s population are children and the number of kids suffering from refractive errors is 4,56,000. In addition, about **50,000 children suffer from blindness** that can be cured.

**Tackling avoidable blindness**

Blindness is a tragedy in human life. This is all the more so because in spite of there being cures to several types of visual impairment, they are not available to here due to lack of affordability and accessibility. Eye problems like Cataract, Glaucoma, Refractive Error, and Childhood blindness are curable. Hence there is a need for immediate intervention in the area of eye care and services in interior areas of the state also. Refractive error among children is more than five per cent and its magnitude is greater in rural area

**About Mahavir Netralaya**

While peadiatric ophthalmology is a well-established sub-specialty in India, the Mahavir Arogya Sansthan has also developed a pediatric ophthalmology unit---Mahavir Netralaya---which is providing yeomen service to children in need of eye care, especially from the disadvantage group.

The specialty unit caters to need of increasing number of pediatric eye patients and provide quality services to them. The Netralaya also runs sub-specialty clinics like Glaucoma unit, retina clinic, squint clinic, diabetic retinopathy and pediatric ophthalmology clinic, where free treatment and check-up is provided by eye specialists

**Our Objective**

Mahavir Netralaya intends to provide holistic eye health services to children in terms of prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and early education. The entire services will be free of cost which includes food and lodging.

In fact, the status of pediatric eye care services is the state is poorer than adult eye care. Pediatric eye care requires specific expertise, equipment and training to manage the patients. Major barriers to childhood cataract surgery are absence of trained professionals, anesthetists, lack of infrastructure and surgical set up, lack of professional skills to detect pediatric problem and absence of outreach services.

**The project aims to help procure surgical instruments for conducting corrective eye surgeries in children to prevent blindness. Non–availability of proper equipment hampers providing eye care.**

**Implementation Plan**

We have the commitment to take services to areas of need and reach the children of Bihar. Our eye center is a culmination of our commitment. Not only it addresses the unmet need for quality child eye care services in the region but is also helping in building a nation where no child has to suffer from blindness which is curable.

1. Teams from Mahavir Netralaya which will include trained optometrist will organize eye screening camps in every district of the state in which poor children will undergo eye check-up. Those diagnosed with minor eye problems will be provided medicines and advice. Those diagnosed with refractive errors will be given appropriate glasses, which will help to restore their normal vision. However, children who will be in need of corrective surgery for restoration of vision, which includes cataract and partial blindness, will be brought to Mahavir Netralaya, Patna, for treatment.
2. In most of the places, we have established contacts with schools, particularly rural schools so that a large number of children are benefitted through these eye screening camps.
3. To restore healthy sight among poor children through quality eye care, the paediatric ophthalmology of Mahavir Arogya Sansthan will provide treatment at an affordable rate. Some times we offer free treatment which includes providing accommodation and food during stay.
4. The outreach screening camps also aims to create awareness among the teachers, parents and students about eye diseases, their prevention and care.
5. We aim to treat at least 1,000 children every year

**Soliciting Support**

About 99% paediatric cases are done under general anesthesia (GA) and hence the cost of treating children with eye ailments is high. As almost 60% of patients belong to poor socio-economic background, at present, the treatment cost is shared by the cataract unit of Mahavir Netralaya.

However, we now look forward to aid and assistance from various NGOs for this purpose.

**For the sustainability of our project we need the following:**

1. Separate Paedtiatric Screening Unit
2. Referral and Follow-Up Services
3. Adequate Equipment
4. Adequate hospital and field staff
5. Capacity building of teachers and Volunteers
6. Increased awareness about paediatric eye care problems across service providers at all levels
7. Increased community awareness on eye care
8. Development of patient registry
9. Long term financial support for referred children

**Key Challenges**

1. Our key challenge is limited financial support for referred children
2. Limited availability of refractive services outside hospital
3. Uncertainty regarding long-term commitment of NGOs

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| **Paediatric surgery cases taken up in last 3 years** | **No of free surgeries done at Mahavir Netralaya** | **Target for 2020** |
| **566** | **106** | **1000** |

**Budgetary Proposal for “Gift of Sight for differently abled children”**

With the above aim, we wish to develop a dedicated “Paediatric Ophthalmic Unit” at Mahavir Netralaya. The detail expected expenditure for setting up of this dedicated unit is as follows. It may be broadly divided into two categories.

1. **Setting up of Paediatric Ophthalmic OPD**

* Allen Chart , Lea Picture Chart
* HOTA Chart , Sheridian Garden Chart
* Teller Chart
* Auto Refractometer, Retinoscope
* RAF Ruler, Maddox Rod Approx cost Rs 5.50 lakhs
* Prism Bar and Loose Prism0
* Amblyopia Treating Software
* BSV Testing- Lang. Titmus, Frisby, TNO Chart
* Other Miscellaneous items

1. **Setting up of Dedicated Ophthalmic OT**

* Boyles Apparatus ---------------- approx. 10 lakhs
* Operating Microscope ----------- approx. 10 lakhs To be funded by Mahavir
* Phacoemulsification Machine – approx. 25 lakhs Netralaya from Internal
* Operating Instruments –--------- approx. 1.0 lakh Resources

Thus we would require approximately Rs 51.50 lakhs for setting up of a dedicated “Paediatric Ophthalmic Unit” at Mahavir Netralaya, out of which we would mobilise approx. Rs 36.0 lakhs from internal sources and for the remainder Rs 15.50 lakhs, we are seeking external support.

**Our Special Feature**

We are the only Institute in Bihar who is accredited with Bihar Government visionary project BEPC under which we are regularly doing around 50 paediatric cases yearly.