

Chapter – 4

TAMIL NADU STATE BLINDNESS CONTROL SOCIETY

4.1. Blindness is a major problem throughout India. As early as July, 1972, Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr.Kalaingar had launched the Free Eye Camp Scheme for undertaking surgery for those suffering from cataract induced blindness under which thousands of poor people were operated upon for the removal of cataract and were given free spectacles by organizing camps throughout the State. The National Programme for Control of Blindness launched in 1976 was extended and included in the World Bank Assisted Cataract Blindness Control Project till 30.06.2002. Thereafter the Government of India is funding this programme as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme.

4.2. The Tamil Nadu State Blindness Control Society was formed on 01.04.1996, as a separate entity, to give thrust to the goal by planning, executing and monitoring at the District level. The Tamil Nadu State Blindness Control Society is functioning under the control of Mission Director, State Rural Health Mission, Chennai with effect from 01.04.2007. The Project Director is the Secretary of the Society for the implementation of the scheme. Every district in the State has one District Blindness Control Society to govern the activities of the National Programme for Control of Blindness. The District Collector is the Chairman of the District Blindness Control Society. The cataract, being the major cause for the avoidable blindness, was given importance and various infrastructure facilities like base eye wards, dark rooms etc., have been built till 30.6.2002 and are now in use. Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in tackling blindness, particularly arising from cataract.

4.3. The following activities were undertaken for the year 2007-2008 by utilising the assistance provided by the Government of India:-

Particulars	Target	Achievement Upto 31.12.2007	% in Achievement
Cataract operations	5,00,000	3,86,410	77%
Implantation of IOL	3,50,000	3,76,652	108%
Women Beneficiary	2,75,000	1,85,776	68%
Surgery on bilaterally blind	2,50,000	50,546	20%
SC/ST/Below poverty line beneficiaries	2,50,000	1,86,073	74%
<u>School Eye Screening</u>	8,00,000	14,94,671	186%
School children screened			
Children with refractive error	56,000	49,739	89%
Free spectacles to poor children	16,800	15,421	92%
<u>Eye Donation</u>			
Eyes collected	7,500	5,714	76%

4.4. It is proposed to carry out the following activities during the year 2008-2009:-

1. Performing cataract operations with more than 70% being IOL Implantation.
2. Screening of school children for detection of refractive errors and provide free spectacles to poor children.

3. Collection of eyes for transplantation in persons with corneal blindness.
4. Provide training to eye surgeons in modern cataract surgery and other specialised procedures.
5. Enhancing capacities for eye care services to Non Governmental Organisations by providing assistance to hospitals at various levels.
6. Development of eye banks and eye donation centres to facilitate collection and processing of donated eyes. Eye bank has been functioning at Regional Institute of Ophthalmology and Government Ophthalmic Hospital, Chennai in co-ordination with Lions International.

4.5. The Government have taken following measures to enhance the cataract surgeries in Government Institutions:-

1. District Blindness Control Societies are permitted to provide incentive to Government Ophthalmic Surgeons who perform more than 100 cataract surgeries per month at Rs.100/- (Rupees one hundred only) for each extra cataract surgery done beyond the 100 surgeries.
2. District Blindness Control Societies are permitted to hire private Ophthalmic Surgeons to do cataract surgeries in Government Institutions and pay Rs.150/- (Rupees one hundred and fifty only) per cataract case done.
3. District Blindness Control Societies are permitted to hire private staff nurses trained in the field of Ophthalmic surgery to assist cataract surgeries in Government Institutions and to pay Rs.50/- (Rupees fifty only) cataract case assisted.
4. District Blindness Control Societies are permitted to incur expenditure on the above items from the Grant-in-aid funds provided by Government of India for cataract surgeries.
5. The Senior most District Ophthalmic Surgeon is appointed as District Programme Manager under the National Programme for Control of Blindness in the place of Joint Director of Health Services as Joint Director of Health Services who has multivarious works, cannot concentrate on this National Programme.

4.6. The Government of Tamil Nadu have already reduced the prevalence of blindness to the level of 0.8% with the assistance provided by the Government of India.