



Eye-screening programme for Students, Teachers and Staff

22-23 November 2022

Govt. Co-ed Senior Secondary School,
Site-I, Sector-6, Dwaraka, New Delhi



Background

Many students could see only blurred images on the blackboard. They would find it difficult to participate fully in the class, and often their learning would suffer due to limitations. Mostly they would not know why it is happening, and teachers would also not understand their difficulty. Children do not talk about their defective vision as they are often not aware of their problem. They try to manage their difficulties by changing positions in the classroom. In their ignorance, teachers would often reprimand the children and send them to the back of the class as punishment. Here, they would be at a further disadvantage, for they would not be able to see the blackboard at all. Data suggest that millions of students in India suffer from visual impairment due to uncorrected refractive errors. Some studies conducted among students in India have suggested that around 8 percent of children are affected by refractive error, and among these, 61% do not wear spectacles. The population-based estimates of refractive errors in children in India indicate that around 33.4 million children in the country are in need of spectacles for vision correction.



Collaboration with Visionspring

I-catalysts and Visionspring collaborated to organise an eye check-up programme at a school in Delhi. Visionspring has expertise in providing end-to-end services—pre-screening, technical screening, training, and eyeglasses on demand—across India. Visionspring partners and collaborates with government bodies, NGO CSR initiatives, and other agencies to ensure children have the eyeglasses they need for better learning outcomes.

Process of eye screening camp

Our team obtained permission from the Delhi government's education department to hold an eye screening camp in one of their schools. The project team chose Govt. Co-Ed. Senior Secondary School Dwarka to organise the camp. The project manager went to the school to gather all of the information needed to organise the screening camp, met with school administration to choose a

location, and finalised the camp date. The project manager finalised the whole programme in coordination with the principal and other supporting staff.

The goal of the eye screening camp was to raise awareness, perform eye screenings, and disburse eyeglasses to children with impaired vision.

A week before the camp, the project manager held a meeting with the principal. The project manager encouraged him to schedule time slots for parents to participate in the awareness camp. The project team put up banners in the school to create awareness.

Our team in the screening camp comprises an optometrist, counsellor, project coordinator, and volunteers. At the screening day, a counsellor visited class rooms along with school staff and discussed the eye screening program. The monitor had the responsibility to bring students to the screening centre. Volunteers were appointed to ensure that the students stand in line and do not disturb the ongoing classes by making any noise.



We followed the process that we had discussed and finalised with the Visionspring team.

Pre-screening

- In pre-screening, a distance vision acuity test was conducted.
- Individuals who needed to see the optometrist were identified.

Screening for Refractive errors and other problems

- Screened children
 - Detected refractive error
 - Provided prescriptions to all children, as required.
 - Identified infections and other diseases among children and referred them to Ophthalmologists.
- Informed the nodal teacher for both refractive error and referral cases.

Counselling

- Counselling children about eye health issues such as taking care of their eyes and eyeglasses, common vision-related symptoms, and the benefit of long-term use of eyeglasses, etc.
- Tracked down prescription details for each child.
- Demonstrated the care of eyeglasses and "clear vision."

Eyeglasses Dispensing

- Children who were identified as having a need for glasses reserved their glasses.
- Children deposited the filled in customer information sheet for the correct pair (size, color, and power) of eyeglasses.
- The counsellor booked the eyeglasses as prescribed by the optometrist.
- Children selected the eyeglasses (color and size) and were given an acknowledgement copy for their receipt.
- The ordered glasses were delivered within 21 days of the warehouse receiving the prescription.

Findings

A total of 1099 students were screened at the screening camp; 52% of them were girls and 48% were boys. 23% of the total students screened were in the age group of 11–13, 68% were in the age group of 14–16, and 9% were in the age group of 17–18. 14% of the total students were identified as having impaired vision. Among the students identified as having poor vision, 85% were advised to wear glasses, and 15% were referred to an ophthalmologist for a thorough examination. Around 89% of the students suggested for glasses were first-time wearers.

Recommendation

Schools appear to be the best forum for raising eye care awareness. Well-trained teachers, appropriately backed by optometrists, could make a major difference in detecting children with impaired vision. Collaborative efforts from various stakeholders are required to detect and address refractive errors among schoolchildren. It would be highly unfair if students did not achieve their potential in the absence of a pair of glasses.



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