



“My Dream for a Society Rid of Preventable Vision Disorders”

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His Excellency, the Governor of Maharashtra – Shri. S.C. Jamir, Commissioner of Police - Shri.D.Sivanandhan, my father Dr. N.S.Sundaram, Dr.M.M.Sharma, invited delegates, members of the press and Dear friends.

It gives me immense pleasure in welcoming you today.

I would like to share with you, the story of a boy born to a boat builder on 15th Oct' 1931. His father rented boats to local fishermen, in order to pay his school fees. As a young boy, he sold newspapers to enhance his family's income. This young boy was fascinated by things that could fly. So, he studied as hard as he could till he achieved his dream. In the process, a missile called “Agni” was launched and India became a power that no one could threaten anymore. This young man grew up to be India's missile man and then later, **“The President of India – Prof. Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam”**.

It was during his visit to Aditya Jyot Eye Hospital in 2005, that Dr.Abdul Kalam suggested the name **“Aditya Jyot Foundation for Twinkling Little Eyes (AJFTLE)”**. It was during this year that the children and the underprivileged visually impaired people of Maharashtra were granted a better future, in the form of AJFTLE.

He envisaged that this organization would work towards the goals of the **“VISION 2020: The Right to Sight - INDIA”** and the World Health Organisation's aim of

“Prevention of Avoidable Blindness and Visual Improvement” Thus, from this vision, this organization came into being.

Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam, once said, **“Great dreams of great dreamers are always transcended”**.

I too have a dream. A dream of **“A Society Rid of Preventable Vision Disorders”**. A society alleviated of sufferings, especially those of the visually impaired due to preventable vision disorders.

The **AJFTLE** was established with the following aims:

- ✦ Catering mainly to children and the underprivileged members of the society.
- ✦ Tackling the problem at the grass root level by screening the children through outreach programs.
- ✦ Providing the required treatment at **subsidised rates or free of cost**

Dear friends, did you know that as per the National Survey conducted by the NPCB in 2007, the Prevalence of Blindness in India is 1.05%. Out of this, 62.6% was due to Cataract, 19.7% was due to Uncorrected Refractive Errors, 5.8% due to Glaucoma, 4.7% due to Posterior Segment Disorders, 1.2% due to Surgical causes, 0.9% due to Corneal blindness and 5% due to other causes.

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has given its approval for continuation of **National Programme for Control of Blindness** during **11th five year Plan** with an overall outlay of **Rs.1250 crores**.

The new initiatives of the National Programme would be to include within the ambit of the programme, diseases like : Diabetic Retinopathy (DR), Childhood blindness, Low Vision Aids, Squint, VR Surgery, Glaucoma, Laser techniques, Corneal Transplantation Surgeries.

In Maharashtra, out of a total projection population of more than 10.63 millions (ie.,106,386,000) the 2007 survey by the Registrar General of India showed an estimated prevalence of Diabetes was found to be 4% (ie., 4,255,440 people) and the prevalence of Diabetic retinopathy was found to be an alarming 11% (ie., 4,68,098 people).

The NPCB – Maharashtra conducted a survey and came up with these findings:

Infrastructure Available in Maharashtra

One such centre of excellence is Aditya Jyot Eye Hospital Pvt. Ltd., a world class eye hospital, research and training centre located in Mumbai, India. Our mission is to provide excellent & total eye-care under one roof in a caring and a compassionate manner.

In world of complete darkness, just the ability of seeing a loved one can be nothing more than a dream. For those without sight, the gift of vision can be the most precious boon. We, at Aditya Jyot Eye Hospital constantly work towards this.

Our areas of focus are comprehensive patient care, sight-enhancement, community eye health awareness, clinical research, education training programs and charitable activities.

Our charitable activities are rendered through our various charitable wings:

- 1. Aditya Jyot Foundation for Twinkling Little Eyes.**
- 2. Rotary Aditya Jyot Netra Kendra**
- 3. Mahalakshmi Temple Trust**

Through these various projects approximately 22,000 people have been screened and approximately 4000 patients were operated for Cataract. 2500 school children were screened and treated and glasses were prescribed to those needing it.

The Aditya Jyot Foundation for Twinkling Little Eyes has been proactive in organizing free eye check-ups for various ocular diseases like refractory errors, squint, etc. The main aim is to bring awareness among people regarding eye disorders and their early

detection. We have been proactive in screening children for various ocular diseases, like refractive errors, squints, etc.

Till date **we have screened approximately 16400 children** from various schools in Thane and Mumbai. The organization takes special interest in promoting eye donation.

Since its inception the trust has been under the guidance of its three trustees - myself, Mr. K.G Menon and Mr. G. Anantaraman who have been actively working towards avoidable blindness.

Our Projects

- ❖ *Children's Refractive Error and Eye Ailment Management (CREAM) Project:*
- ❖ *Mumbai Diabetic Retinopathy Study-Retinopathy, Awareness Level, Incidence Prevalence and Therapy (REALITY) Project*
- ❖ *Rotary Aditya Jyot Nethra Kendra*

Aditya Jyot Eye Hospital conducted a **PILOT STUDY** at Dharavi Slum at **Rotary Aditya Jyot Nethra Kendra (RAJNK)** in association with **Rotary Club of Sion, Mumbai.**

- **Aim:** To screen upto 16,000 people over a period of 5yrs., to detect diabetic retinopathy, and the visual impairment caused by it.
- To create awareness / screening programs and to take the awareness to other slum clusters in Thane & Raigad.
- **Study population** - 1100 over a period of 7 months from July 2007 to Jan 2008 for presence of diabetes and diabetic retinopathy
- We conducted the camps with the help of local NGOs and achieved our target.
- **SHORT TERM RESULTS :** As per our PILOT STUDY(previously done), out of the 1,000 persons screened, Diabetes Prevalence Rate - 9.2% and the Diabetic Retinopathy Prevalence Rate – 45.7 %

- Hence, we are aiming to achieve a feasible and practical goal of screening 15000 – 16000 of population over a period of 5 yrs

Thus, the onus of responsibility falls on the Govt., the Eye Hospitals and the NGOs to eliminate the causes of Preventable Vision Disorders.

The take home message is as follows:

- a) To reduce the backlog of blindness due to preventable vision disorders through proper identification and treatment
- b) To develop Comprehensive Eye Care facilities in every district
- c) To develop human resources for providing Eye Care Services
- d) To train Ophthalmologists for DR screening & management
- e) To conduct Diabetic Retinopathy screening camps
- f) To improve quality of service delivery;
- g) To secure participation of Voluntary Organizations/Private Practitioners in eye care.
- h) To enhance community awareness on awareness about Diabetic Retinopathy.
- i) To increase political and financial commitment to eliminate avoidable blindness
- j) Preparation of evidence based standards
- k) Review national & international experience
- l) Strengthen partnerships and co-ordination between stakeholders involved in preventing avoidable blindness.

In the words of the President of USA – Mr. Barrack Obama,

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. CHANGE WE CAN !”

“...This victory alone is not the change we seek. It is only the chance for us to make that change. And that cannot happen if we go back to the way things were..... It can't happen without you, without a new spirit of service, a new spirit of sacrifice....”

In the same manner, it is within us to bring that CHANGE in our practice, to work towards elimination of blindness due to Preventable Vision Disorders.

Here, I would like to quote the Oath for Ophthalmologists, as told by Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam:

1. I, as an eye care professional realize by removing darkness and giving light to the patient is indeed God's mission.
2. Based on the experience and my core competence as a Doctor, I am capable of diagnosing the exact disease at right time.
3. I will not allow the patient to go through the diagnostics pain by making them to undergo all type of diagnostics tests for which is it is not needed.
4. I will treat at least 100 rural patients in a year by going to rural areas and arrange cataract operations.
5. I will encourage the development of quality indigenous equipments and consumables by making use of them and assisting in enhancing the quality and reliability of the products.
6. I will follow the motto “Let my brain remove the pain of the suffering humanity and bring smiles”.
7. I will always give part of my time for treating patients who cannot afford. I will work for providing quality eye-care to all the needy citizens of Maharashtra within the next 3 years.

With that I conclude my talk.

Thank you for the patient listening.