

Standard Chartered Bank and Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital Launches Education Academy for Eye Care Professionals

- Facilitate skill upgradation to more than 25000 eye healthcare workers in four years

New Delhi | 12th October 2021: In an effort to provide eye care education and skill enhancement of various cadre of ophthalmic healthcare workers, Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in partnership with Standard Chartered Bank today launched Standard Chartered-Shroff's Eye Care Education Academy in New Delhi. The academy will help in imparting eye care education to healthcare practitioners (who engage with eye, including eye care professionals, nurses, technicians, and students), with a focus on tier II and III cities.

The academy will facilitate skill upgradation to more than 25000 eye healthcare workers in four years including ophthalmologists, optometrists, allied eye health care workers, and eye care managers. They in turn are estimated to reach out and provide eye care services to more than six million beneficiaries every year. The academy aims to revamp eye care education and training and create new training offerings, develop a resource centre for capacity building to train all levels of eye care professionals, and strengthen continuing medical and non-medical education with the help of the existing team of ophthalmic educators.

India has approximately 9000 optometrists who have undergone a four-year training course¹. However, to provide comprehensive vision care across the country, nearly 115,000 four-year trained optometrists are required. The ratio of ophthalmologist to population in urban India is 1:25,000. However, in the rural areas, the ratio is close to 1: 219,000.

Keeping in mind that the shortage of trained personnel is a challenge in addressing avoidable blindness in India, the academy aims to offer the most advanced and comprehensive eye care education from highly experienced and trained practitioners.

Speaking on the importance of eye care education **Karuna Bhatia, Head of Sustainability, India, Standard Chartered Bank** said, "A key barrier to the reduction of avoidable blindness is the shortage of well-trained eye care personnel of all cadres and the COVID pandemic has brought in numerous challenges for medical and surgical mentoring, necessitating creativity in methods of continuing surgical skill transfer to the new trainees. The Standard Chartered-Shroff's Eye Care Education Academy will create an empowered workforce of high-quality eye-care professionals to fulfil India's eye-care needs in the fight against blindness and vision impairment. We always strive to bring our here for good brand promise to life by working towards affecting a real change and this is one such initiative."

Dr. Umang Mathur, Executive Director, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital said, "The academy will demonstrate our commitment to the continued education of the eye health community by providing chances to learn about the most recent advances in ophthalmic technology. We are dedicated to offering best-in-class training to help influence the future of eye care and give possibilities for the best-possible patient outcomes through our industry-leading educational resources. Through this project, we plan to educate more than 25,000 trainees in eye care. We are grateful for this generous grant from Standard Chartered Bank. This collaboration will improve eye care access and quality by developing eye care human resources for the society"

Introducing the academy, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, in collaboration with Standard Chartered Bank, hosted a symposium on **Avoidable blindness - role of human resource**. Mr R.D Thulasiraj, Director of Operations at Aravind; Dr. Gullapalli Nageswara Rao, Founder of LVPEI; Dr. Umang Mathur,

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3491265/>

Executive Director of Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital; and Ms. Karuna Bhatia, Head of Sustainability, India, Standard Chartered Bank were among those on the panel. The discussion focused on the challenges, obstacles, and solutions that must be addressed in the recruitment, retention, and continued professional development of eye care personnel.

Gracing the event, Chief Guest Dr. VK Paul, NITI Aayog Member (Health), said, *"I appreciate the efforts undertaken by Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in providing training to ophthalmologists along with performing eye surgeries. It will be heartening if the academy can introduce more programmes, especially DNB courses as the demand gap in this area is huge. Almost half of the population of India is now covered under the PMJAY, and I request healthcare providers to leverage the Ayushman Bharat PMJAY system to address avoidable blindness in India."*

About Standard Chartered-Shroff's Eye Care Education Academy:

The Standard Chartered-Shroff's Eye Care Education Academy has state-of-the-art equipment, infrastructure, and experienced faculty to conduct education and training in both comprehensive ophthalmology and complex ophthalmic subspecialty diseases. SCEH sees over a million patients and performs more than 40,000 surgeries per year, this hospital combines the finest patient-focused services with the latest adaption to new Technologies in eye-care technology.

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