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Vision-2020 meet stresses on preventive eye care



The Hindu COMMENDABLE SERVICE: Dr.R.V.Ramani of Sankara Eye Care Institutions in Coimbatore receiving an award from Sujaya Krishnan, Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, at the Vision 2020 national conference in Madurai on Saturday. Photo: G. Moorthy

The 8th annual conference of 'Vision 2020: The Right to Sight-India,' began at Aravind Eye Care System in Madurai on Saturday with the participation of 400 delegates comprising leading ophthalmologists and eye care professionals from across the country.

This two-day conference is deliberating on various eye care issues related to preventive and curative aspects with thrust on implementing blindness prevention programmes besides providing affordable/accessible eye care to rural masses in particular.

Speaking at the inaugural function, M.Deshpande, president, Vision 2020, said that the conference had brought together all stakeholders in eye care delivery.

“Vision 2020: The Right to Sight-India” was formed in 2004 aligned with global priorities of eliminating avoidable blindness. Our organisation is raring to supplement and complement the Government’s efforts in imparting quality eye care to all sections of society. Our role is advocacy with focus on equity, quality and disease management,” he said.

Collector Anshul Mishra said that Vision 2020 initiative is most required for India as millions of people are affected by eye diseases and eye defects.

“The Right to Sight is the right of everyone. From the point of view of right to live, good eye sight becomes important. It is time we focus on preventive care rather than on curative healthcare,” he said.

Mr.Anshul Mishra appealed to the private eye hospitals to participate in the Chief Minister’s Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme and perform surgeries for patients from deserving sections. He observed that children below six years of age require special attention as they are right now not covered under the health screening programmes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

P. Namperumalsamy, Chairman-Emeritus, Aravind Eye Care System, stressed on eliminating needless blindness through right intervention at the right time. “We have mal-distribution of ophthalmologists in India amidst urban-rural divide and constraints on access to eye surgeries. It is time we have a comprehensive plan to tackle cataract, childhood blindness, refractive errors, diabetic retinopathy and so on. Public Private Partnership will play a key role,” he suggested.

At the national conference, a special award was presented to Coimbatore-headquartered Sankara Eye Care Institutions in recognition of its yeomen service in community eye care programmes for the past 36 years at various locations in the country.

R.V.Ramani, Founder and Managing Trustee, Sankara Eye Care, received the ‘Dharamsey Nensey Award’ from Sujaya Krishnan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The award was instituted by Vision 2020 and it carried a citation and cash prize of Rs. one lakh.

R.D.Ravindran, organising secretary of the conference and G.V.Rao, Chief Executive Officer, Vision 2020: The Right to Sight-India, were among those who addressed the delegates.