

Md. Masood Alam, State Programme Manager, NUHM, SHS Bihar

Manoj Kumar, IAS, Executive Director, State Health Society, Bihar

### BACKGROUND:

Bihar is the third most populous state in the country with the population density of 880 persons per sq. km., which is more than double of the national average. Huge population load brings the bigger responsibility for the healthcare of the beneficiary group. NUHM is primarily focussed on urban poor, people living in the slum, socially and economically marginalised population group. Currently 98 Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHCs) are functional in 25 cities of the state.

Blindness is one of the biggest issues of the society. Curable and avoidable blindness is also very high in the community. Urban PHC and HWC are supposed to provide the different healthcare services to the socially and economically marginalized people of the community. To tackle this issue State Health Society, Bihar taken the initiative under NUHM to provide the basic ophthalmic services at UPHC-HWC level.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MODEL:

In first phase this service was started in 16 UPHC-HWC of Patna district. Currently 23 UPHCs of Patna district is providing eye OPD services including eye screening at outreach camps. Under this initiative UPHC-HWC is providing the services like refraction, primary disease diagnosis, visual impairment correctness, counselling and cataract identification. Cataract cases are getting referred to higher centers for free operation. This service has gained popularity in very less span of time and now state is in process of expanding this initiative in another 30 UPHCs of different cities of the state, which will be now 53 vision centres across 53 UPHCs of the state.

### HUMAN RESOURCES (Existing and/or New):

Existing manpower is being utilised where 4 Optometrists from Sightsavers are serving these 23 VCs on a weekly basis along with 6 urban cluster coordinators where coordinators takes care of catchment areas.

### CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES:

Community workers like urban ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists) and MAS (Mahila Arogya Samiti) members have also been trained on eye health care, for creating referral linkages from community to the health centres. They were provided with screening kits and were trained using training modules for conducting primary screening at community level and refer patients to their respective health facility. The training also prepared them as Master Trainers for further percolating eye health awareness messages to the MAS members of their respective UPHC.

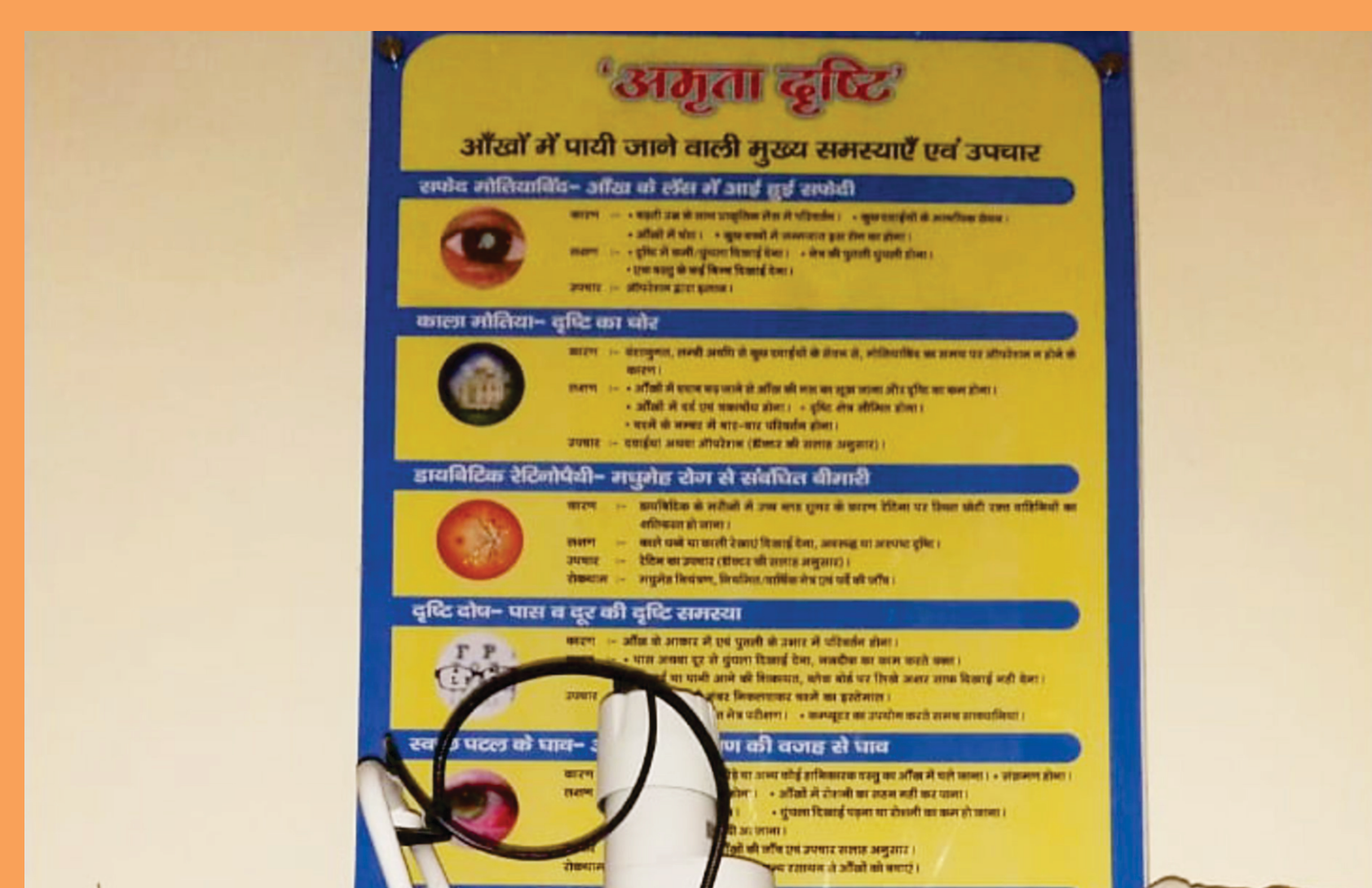


Fig: Patients are being examined at various vision centers of UPHCs

### EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS / RESULTS:

Urban Eye Health Project (Amrita Drishti) of Sightsavers in collaboration with NUHM Bihar is catering to eye care needs of an estimated population of around 32 lakhs. Furthermore, it is leading integration of eye health within the three-tier structure of NUHM- community level, primary health care level and secondary health care level.

The average OPD footfalls have risen to 150 patients per month per VC; also average OPD in some VCs goes up-to 100+ per day (Source Sightsavers dashboard). The intervention focuses on female inclusion, which has resulted more than 60% female footfalls in the vision centres. Furthermore, the provision of eye health services has led to increase in overall footfalls in the UPHC.

The vision centres were started functioning from September- 2019 in UPHCs of Patna. The achievements are as follows in the table below:-

Indicators	Achievements (Oct'19 to Oct'20)
Number of eye OPD at UPHC	17153
Number of eye screening (camp)	57907
Number of persons refracted	13413
Number of persons with Refractive Error (RE), prescribed spectacles	6424
Number of persons identified with Cataract	3327

### CONCLUSIONS:

As data indicates, Vision centres are providing the services to the larger urban population along with economically weaker section of the community and daily wages workers. Vision centre is helping in reducing the out of pocket expenditure. This is also helping in the early identification of refractive error and preventing the avoidable blindness at the doorstep. Instituting a primary eye care unit in an established set-up itself is a challenging and time-consuming process. Finding a workable consortium, struggles for wedging a space in the premises, acceptance of service provision, and finding ways for community penetration, intricate the process. However, feasible and phased rolling out of the model can help overcome various implementation barriers. Now Vision Centres are being replicated in 30 more UPHCs (Total Vision Centre is 53) in FY 2020-21 under NUHM.