



# eyelights



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*45 Years An Identity of Eye Care Service in INDIA*

## SANKARA NETHRALAYA

Wishes you a Bright, Joyous and Safe

# DIWALI!



## Editor's note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of Eyelights from Sankara Nethralaya. With each passing season, we find ourselves inspired by our mission to protect and enhance the precious gift of sight.

In this issue, we bring you a collection of insights, events, and medical advancements that highlight our unwavering commitment to delivering the highest standards of eye care. Since Diwali is around the corner, this issue will also highlight some preventive measures to keep safe during the festivities.

Diwali is a truly unique festival celebrated by Indians around the world, unifying them on a single day or even for an entire week. This celebration serves as a reminder that, regardless of caste or financial status, all Indians form a single, cohesive community.

Preparations for the three-day Diwali festival traditionally begin months in advance. Simultaneously, it is imperative to make important arrangements for maintaining our health during this festive period.

### **Sweets:**

When one thinks of Diwali, sweets invariably come to mind. With a myriad of delectable options available, it's easy to become overwhelmed about what and how much to indulge in. Given the significant prevalence of diabetes in our community, it is wise to consume sweets in moderation.

Opt for sweets without preservatives—chemical additives used to enhance shelf life, color, and taste—since these can negatively impact our vital organs.

Refrain from consuming sweets adorned with silver foil, as this foil is made from aluminum. The aluminum residue can accumulate in our tissues and pose a risk to our brain and nervous system.

### **Alcohol-Free Celebrations:**

A joyful Diwali is one celebrated without alcohol. The true happiness of the entire family remains undisturbed when we choose to forgo alcoholic beverages, whether it's beer or wine.

### **Diwali Gifts:**

Gift-giving is an integral part of Diwali. While sweets are a popular choice, it is advisable to opt for low-calorie sweets or nutritious dry fruits that have a longer shelf life.

### **Safe Firecracker Enjoyment:**

When reveling in the delights of firecrackers, please exercise caution to ensure safety.

### **Supporting Fellow Citizens:**

Embrace the spirit of Deepavali by supporting social organizations such as orphanages and old age homes. Your assistance can bring joy to those in need during this festive season.

### **Contribute to the Gift of Vision:**

As part of the Festival of Lights, consider giving the gift of vision by supporting:

One-time free cataract surgeries for the economically disadvantaged through our community services. For more information, contact [kavitha@snmail.org](mailto:kavitha@snmail.org) or [donation@snmail.org](mailto:donation@snmail.org).

Pledge to donate your eyes. To learn more, contact [eyebank@snmail.org](mailto:eyebank@snmail.org).

We extend our warmest wishes for a joyous Deepavali in 2023.

The Editorial Team – **Aishwarya R, Irungovel AP**

# From the President's Desk

## The Importance of Eye Care during Diwali Festival

### Introduction

Diwali, the festival of lights, is one of the most celebrated and eagerly awaited festivals in India. It's a time of joy, togetherness, and grandeur, marked by the lighting of lamps, bursting of firecrackers, delicious savouries and the exchange of gifts. While Diwali brings immense happiness, it also comes with certain health hazards, particularly for our eyes. This article underscores the importance of eye care during the Diwali festival and offers valuable insights on how to protect your vision.

### Firecracker Hazards

Diwali is synonymous with fireworks, and while they light up the sky, they also pose a significant threat to our eyes. Firecrackers emit sparks, smoke, and debris that can cause severe eye injuries if not handled with caution. Small particles from fireworks, sand and containers (glass and metal) can enter the eyes, causing corneal abrasions, eyelid burns, eye wall tears or even blindness in severe cases. To safeguard your eyes, it's essential to wear protective eyewear while handling or watching fireworks. Use standardized fireworks and use open fields for bursting the crackers. Children should always be supervised by elders so that untoward incidents may be avoided.

### Air Pollution

The air quality during Diwali deteriorates significantly due to the widespread use of firecrackers. This spike in air pollution can have adverse effects on eye health. Smoke, chemicals, and fine particulate matter in the air can lead to irritation, dryness, and redness in the eyes. Individuals with pre-existing eye conditions, such as allergies or dry eyes, may experience exacerbation of their symptoms. To mitigate these effects, it's advisable to stay indoors, keep windows closed, and use air purifiers. Use of masks to protect from dust and smoke is essential.

### Allergens and Irritants

Diwali also witnesses an increase in the use of rangoli colors, incense sticks, and other substances that can trigger allergies and eye irritation. These irritants can cause redness, itching, and watery eyes. Individuals with a history of allergies should be particularly cautious and try to avoid direct exposure to these allergens. Washing your eyes with clean water can also help alleviate discomfort.

### DIY Decorations

The tradition of decorating homes during Diwali often involves using glitter, mirrors, and various decorative items. While these embellishments enhance the festive spirit, they can pose a danger to your eyes. Loose glitter particles can inadvertently enter the eyes, leading to discomfort and possible injury. When creating or handling decorations, it's advisable to wear protective eyewear and handle these materials with care.

### Excessive Screen Time

In the modern era, Diwali greetings and celebrations have extended to virtual platforms, with increased use of smartphones, tablets, and computers for communication. Prolonged screen time can strain your eyes, leading to digital eye strain, dryness, and fatigue. It's crucial to take regular breaks, follow the 20-20-20 rule (take a 20-second break every 20 minutes, looking at something 20 feet away), and adjust your screen settings to reduce glare.

### **Self-control**

Sumptuous meals and savouries are hallmark of Diwali celebrations. Variety of sweets are prepared, exchanged and consumed during this period. We must exercise self-control while consuming these goodies, especially patients suffering from Diabetes, Hypertension and high cholesterol so that joyous occasion does not lead to health issues with long term impact.

### **Conclusion**

While Diwali is a time of jubilation and merriment, it's essential to prioritize the health of your eyes. Taking steps to protect your vision during the festival is not just a precautionary measure but a necessity. By wearing protective eyewear, staying indoors during fireworks displays, minimizing exposure to allergens and irritants, and managing screen time, you can enjoy the festival without compromising your eye health. Remember, a safe and happy Diwali begins with taking care of your eyes.

**Dr Girish Shiva Rao**

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## **From the Chairman's Desk**

Diwali symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Lights and fireworks signify a time to destroy all our dark desires and thoughts and strength to carry on with our goodwill for serving the society. On the coming Diwali day I wish on behalf of SN all our patients, employees, donors, board members and their families a very happy Diwali. SN is heading for expansion and the project Agasthya is on the cards and request all donors to support our noble cause to start this project and help the needy

God Bless SN,

**Dr T S Surendran**

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## **Sankara Nethralaya Celebrates Women's Day**

Women's Day 2023 celebration at Sankara Nethralaya was held in the Sri V.D. Swami Auditorium, 8th March 2023. The women of SN were gathered for an evening full of fun and games, seamlessly organized by the HR Department headed by Ms. Sudha Mohan, the event included a quiz, a blindfold makeup session, and a hairdressing competition.

A very interesting quiz programme 'On Women, By Women' was hosted by Dr. VV Jaichandran, Deputy Director, Dept. of Anesthesiology, with Mr Suresh Kumar, GM, Operations and Administration, judging the friendly and focussed competitors.

Another fun contest - Passing-the-parcel - was conducted by Dr. Harini R., Assistant Professor, Clinical Lab. To hunt for talent, Dr. Anuja R. Singh, Principal of The Sankara Nethralaya Academy, conducted several contests such as mehendi, kolam, flower tying, gift wrapping, hair styling, and blind-fold make-up. This in turn brought out the creativity of our female employees as well as nurturing enthusiastic audience participation.

The games were designed with the aim to include all the employees gathered for the celebrations; with audience joining in, the evening was a rare chance for the Women of Sankara Nethralaya to let their hair down and take a break from their hectic roles at home as well as at work.





The prizes were distributed by Dr. V. V. Jaichandran, Dr. Shikha Bassi, Dr. Durga Priyadharshini, and Dr. G. Suganeswari.

## **Recognizing the Significance of Cleanliness: Sankara Nethralaya Acknowledges its Housekeeping Team**

On September 15th, 2023, the Sankara Nethralaya Family came together to observe Housekeeping Week. Led by Mr. Kannan Narayanan, Chief Financial Officer, and Mr. Suresh Kumar, General Manager of Administration & Operations, with the valuable participation of Ms. Sudha Mohan, Deputy General Manager of HR, and Ms. Jospheen Nayagi, Nursing Superintendent, this event aimed to both acknowledge and inspire our dedicated employees.

This occasion highlighted the profound impact of cleanliness on our mental well-being and its relevance in our workplace. When our surroundings are pristine, our peace of mind is enhanced, enabling us to perform our tasks more effectively.

This event was not solely intended to recognize those who diligently fulfill their duties; it also served as an occasion to honor employees who have displayed exceptional integrity and professionalism.







Acknowledging the dedication of these skilled and honest frontline workers not only mirrors their joy in their work but also serves as a motivating example for others.

The overall mood of the event was one of joy and contentment, and this was precisely our objective. Recognizing and appreciating the efforts of our employees encourages their minds to function more effectively, providing a source of positive and productive motivation.

Front-line workers create the ideal environment for all events in any given setting, making it imperative to express our gratitude to them. It is incumbent upon all of us to maintain a clean and hygienic environment. Let us all take responsibility for this crucial aspect of our workplace and community.

## A Fun Founder's Day Celebration at MGM Dizzee World

In celebration of Founder's Day on September 6, Sankara Nethralaya's management provided coupons for a day of fun and togetherness at MGM Dizzy World, a theme park in Chennai. On September 3, Sankara Nethralaya employees, along with their families, were treated to an unforgettable day at the theme park, creating cherished memories.

The trip to MGM Dizzee World offered a well-deserved break and an opportunity for employees and their families to relax, enjoy quality time together, and strengthen the Sankara Nethralaya family spirit. It was a day filled with laughter, joy, and a sense of appreciation for the remarkable work that the hospital does in preserving and enhancing the gift of sight.





## Ayudha Pooja Celebration Across All Campuses



The spirit of unity and tradition took centre stage at Sankara Nethralaya as the management celebrated Ayudha Pooja across all its campuses. In a heartwarming display of reverence and togetherness, employees and consultants took part in the auspicious pooja. The sight of members from the top management coming together to pay homage to the tools and equipment that the hospital uses daily highlighted the hospital's strong community spirit.

Following the pooja, a special moment of sharing and giving transpired as employees were offered the prashad of rice puffs – a traditional and auspicious offering signifying blessings and prosperity.

The Ayudha Pooja celebration not only infused a sense of tradition into the hospital but also reinforced the idea that all the employees and consultants of Sankara Nethralaya are a valuable component in the institution's unwavering mission to preserve and enhance the precious gift of sight.





## Sankara Nethralaya Awarded Best Ophthalmology Specialty Hospital at SICCI MedTech Conference and Healthcare Awards 2023



Sankara Nethralaya clinched the prestigious title of "Best Ophthalmology Specialty Hospital" at the SICCI MedTech Conference and Healthcare Awards 2023, held on July 28, 2023. This accolade recognizes Sankara Nethralaya's unwavering commitment to excellence in eye care and its significant contributions to the field.

The Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), India's oldest and most esteemed industry association, conducted the event. As a founding member of The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), SICCI has a long-standing legacy of recognizing excellence and innovation across various industries.

## Our Dr. Jyotirmay Biswas Honored with Honorary Fellowship by American College of Surgeons



In what has come as yet another diamond in his crown, Dr. Jyotirmay Biswas, Director of Uveitis & Ocular Pathology Department, received the prestigious recognition of an honorary fellowship from the American College of Surgeons. The award was bestowed upon him during the grand convocation ceremony held at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center earlier this month.

The convocation ceremony was a platform where Dr. Biswas' outstanding contributions to the medical community were celebrated and acknowledged. During his visit to Boston, Dr. Biswas also actively contributed to the medical community through a series of impactful activities.



One of his notable engagements was at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, where he participated in a Uveitis clinic collaborating with Dr. Lucia Sobrin, Head of the Uveitis Specialist department. Furthermore, Dr. Biswas took the opportunity to share his expertise by delivering a guest lecture on the subject of retinal vasculitis. The lecture was also made available online and was broadcasted throughout the branches of Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Congratulations, Dr. Biswas, on your well-deserved honor and remarkable contributions to ophthalmology!

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## **Dr. Jyotirmay Biswas Honored with Dr Joseph Gnanadickam Gold Medal Oration Award 2023**

Dr. Jyotirmay Biswas, the esteemed Director of the Uveitis & Ocular Pathology Department, added another accolade to his impressive career by receiving the Dr Joseph Gnanadickam Gold Medal Oration Award 2023. The award was presented to him at the 70th Platinum Jubilee Annual Conference of the Tamil Nadu Ophthalmic Association, held in Trichy from August 4 to August 6, 2023.

The Dr Joseph Gnanadickam Gold Medal Oration Award, instituted in 1983, is an esteemed recognition presented annually at the Annual State Conference to exceptional and prominent ophthalmologists for their contributions to ophthalmologic education, training, and research.

Dr. Biswas joins a distinguished list of recipients from Sankara Nethralaya, including luminaries like Dr. S. S. Badrinath and Dr. T. S. Surendran, who have previously been honored with this prestigious award. This accolade underscores Dr. Jyotirmay Biswas's outstanding dedication and expertise in the field of ophthalmology, and his commitment to advancing the science and practice of eye care.

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## **Dr. Rashima Asokan Receives Prestigious Golden Jubilee Medal at IAOH Annual Meeting**

In a momentous occasion at the Annual Meeting of the Indian Association of Occupational Health (IAOH) - Tamil Nadu Branch, held on September 17, 2023, Dr. Rashima Asokan, the Head of Occupational Optometry Services, was awarded the prestigious Golden Jubilee Medal for her exceptional contribution to the field of occupational health.

The event, hosted at Hotel Savera in Chennai, was a gathering of experts, professionals, and specialists in occupational health, dedicated to addressing the health and safety needs of workers in various sectors.

Presentations:

The meeting featured several remarkable presentations by optometrists from the Department of Occupational Optometry Services, which highlighted their significant work aimed at enhancing ocular health and safety among unorganized sector workers. The presentations encompassed various critical aspects, including eye health profiles, visual functions, safety eyewear impact, and visual task analysis.

The IAOH, both at the state and national levels, lauded the presentations as they contributed to enhancing the well-being of workers in unorganized sectors. During the inaugural ceremony, the "Golden Jubilee Medal" was presented to Dr. Rashima Asokan, recognizing her remarkable presentation titled, "Occupational Hazards, Associated Ocular Morbidities, and Impact of Refractive Safety eyewear among Agriculture Workers."



Notably, this award marks the second time Dr. Rashima Asokan has received this esteemed recognition. Furthermore, it represents the third time the Department of Occupational Optometry Services has been acknowledged for their exceptional contributions to occupational health and safety.

## ESO's Principal Dr. Anuradha N Defends Her Diplomate in Public Health and Environmental Vision



Sankara Nethralaya extends our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Anuradha N, Principal of ESO (Elite School of Optometry), on her remarkable achievement!

Dr. Anuradha N has successfully defended her Diplomate in the Public Health and Environmental Vision section by the American Academy of Optometry on the 13th of October, 2023.

Sankara Nethralaya is incredibly proud of her accomplishment and eagerly anticipate the impact she will continue to make in the field of vision and eye care. Join us in congratulating Dr. Anuradha N for her outstanding achievement!



## Renowned Carnatic Vocalist TM Krishna Performed at Charity Concert for SN's expansion



On September 2nd, 2023, the renowned Carnatic vocalist and composer, Shri TM Krishna, delivered a splendid live performance at the Music Academy in Chennai in support of Sankara Nethralaya Eye Hospital. This concert marked a historic occasion as the world-famous Carnatic musician returned to the Music Academy after an extended sabbatical.

The event, titled "Music for Charity," aimed to raise funds for various community service programs and the establishment of a new branch of Sankara Nethralaya at Tondiarpet, formerly known as Agasthya Theatre. Notably, this concert coincided with the 45th Foundation Day of Sankara Nethralaya, which fell on September 6th, 2023.

Among the distinguished attendees were Dr. TS Surendran, Chairman, and Dr. Girish Shiva Rao, President, along with other board members of Sankara Nethralaya. Trustees of the Agasthya Trust, well-wishers of Sankara Nethralaya, and various dignitaries added their presence and support to this meaningful musical event.

## World Sight Day Program by Pediatric Optometry and Vision Enhancement Clinic

On the occasion of World Sight Day, the Department of Pediatric Optometry and Vision Enhancement Clinic initiated an eye screening camp at the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD). This program was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Rashima and led by Ms. Tharakeswari, Senior Optometrist, between October 16 and 17, 2023.

The screening program began with a small inauguration ceremony attended by Shri Nachiketa Rout, Director & Administration, Dr. Amarnath from the Department of Medical Science, and Dr. Vijayalakshmi, a Pediatrician. During the function, Ms. Tharakeswari explained the importance of vision screening in children with special needs.



As many as 127 children with cross-disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders, ranging between the ages of one and 20 were screened. Among them, 30 children were referred to our hospital for further evaluation and management, while 11 children were directed to the Vision Enhancement Clinic for rehabilitation.

The screening team consisted of Ms. Libiya, a Vision Rehab Specialist, Optometrists Ms. Gowsalya, Ms. Dhanalakshmi, Ms. Indiarra, Ms. Praveena, Ms. Nikitha, Ms. Karthika - Fellow student from the Low Vision Care Clinic, and optometry students Mr. Hariharan, Ms. Jayasanthiya, Ms. Dharshini.

## Graduation ceremony of The Sankara Nethralaya Academy

The Sankara Nethralaya Academy (TSNA) celebrated its ninth graduation ceremony on July 28, 2023. During this event, the college staff took a moment to reflect on the noteworthy events and achievements that marked the academic year 2022-2023. Here are some of the significant occasions from this academic year.

The academic year 2022-2023 witnessed the recognition of 102 Graduands hailing from the faculties of Optometry, Management Studies, and Medical Lab Technology. The students from the faculty of Medical Lab Technology had remarkable achievements to boast about. In the university exams, the UG students achieved an outstanding pass rate of 94%, while the PG students achieved a perfect 100% pass rate. To add to the vibrant atmosphere, 16 UG Optometry students embarked on their internships under the TSNA-SNK internship program, setting the stage for a dynamic and academically enriching year ahead.

As August 2022 rolled in, the students and faculty from the Management Studies department at TSNA engaged in the Students' Knowledge Sharing Conference, known as SAKCON. This event was conducted in collaboration with the Consortium of Accredited Hospitals (CAHO) and AJ Institute of Hospital Administration, Mangalore. Dr. Anuja R Singh, the esteemed Principal of TSNA, served as the organizing secretary of this two-day conference. Ten final year MHA students had the opportunity to present their research papers and posters at the event, further emphasizing the commitment to academic excellence at TSNA.





In the same month, TSNA organized the second edition of DATACON 2022 in collaboration with the International Association for Healthcare Data Analytics (IAHDA). This two-day conference saw active participation from approximately 200 attendees in a hybrid mode, blending virtual and in-person interaction. The event featured pre-conference sessions on the use of SPSS software, which took place at TSNA's campus, while the main conference was held at SN Main campus. Notably, TSNA also actively contributed to the community's well-being on India's 75th Independence Day, with students from the Management Studies department generously donating blood at an event organized by Arogyabharathi Tamil Nadu, in partnership with the Government Stanley Medical College & Hospital. The events in August 2022 highlighted TSNA's commitment to academic exchange, research collaboration, and social responsibility, promising an enriching academic year ahead.

## Raising Awareness during World Retinoblastoma Week

The Retinoblastoma team at Sankara Nethralaya marked World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week from May 8th to May 14th, 2023. Their activities ranged from hosting a press conference to creating a whiteboard at the MAHYCO block's entrance, where young retinoblastoma survivors left their handprints. Their mission was to raise awareness about this treatable childhood cancer, focusing on prevention and cure while reaching out to the public.

Sankara Nethralaya annually treats over 150 children with childhood eye cancers, one of the highest rates globally. It is one of the few institutions in India that treats childhood eye cancer (Retinoblastoma) and provides free treatment to underprivileged children.

Dr. Charanya C, Associate Consultant of Vitreoretinal Services, delivered a presentation titled "Retinoblastoma – an eye-opener," stressing the importance of a collaborative approach in combating this disease. The press conference featured a panel of doctors, including Sankara Nethralaya's retinoblastoma specialists, who addressed media inquiries. They emphasized the need for a multidisciplinary approach involving various specialists to prioritize saving the child's life, then their eye, and, if possible, their vision.



Dr. G. Suganeswari, Senior Consultant of Vitreoretina and Oncology Services, highlighted the curability of Retinoblastoma, noting its prevalence among economically disadvantaged children who struggle with the financial burden of treatment. Several patients and their guardians shared their experiences, underscoring the critical role of cost-free treatment.

Dr. G. Suganeswari encouraged regular follow-up for survivors to monitor potential later-life cancer risks. Sankara Nethralaya's comprehensive care includes an in-house chemotherapy facility, streamlining treatment, and collaborating with other hospitals to manage pediatric patients. The event provided hope, with various NGOs and charities offering support for cost-free treatment, ultimately delivering a message of timely treatment's potential to save lives.

## **Sankara Nethralaya's public outreach programs made a significant impact during the 'Eye Donation Fortnight - 2023'**

The critical importance of cornea collection for vision-restoring transplant surgery is highlighted by the Union Health Ministry's designation of the period between August 25th and September 8th as 'Eye Donation Fortnight,' with the last day being celebrated as 'Eye Donation Day' each year. On this day, various awareness campaigns are conducted by government bodies, private organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).





The CU Shah Eye Bank at Sankara Nethralaya, a pioneering institution in eye care with a four-decade legacy of promoting eye donation, organized a series of activities during this period. These activities included forming a human chain, conducting rallies, and counseling sessions aimed at educating the general public and increasing awareness about eye donation. These efforts had a positive impact on the target audience.

Some of the noteworthy activities undertaken by Sankara Nethralaya during this period are as follows:

Sankara Nethralaya collaborated with the Madras Medical Mission Hospital & College of Health Sciences to conduct a rally and form a human chain in front of the hospital in Mogappair. This event took place between 10:00 am and 11:00 am on September 1, 2023, with the participation of approximately 150 students.

Another human chain was formed in association with Women's Christian College (WCC) between 10:00 am and 10:30 am on August 31, 2023. Around 150 students participated in this noble cause initiative.

Eye donation awareness sessions were conducted at various institutions, including Billroth Hospital, Sundram Medical Foundation, Stella Maris College, Queen Mary's College, and Saveetha Medical College.

Sankara Nethralaya joined forces with the Madras University NSS Students to organize a rally at Besant Nagar's Elliots Beach, aiming to highlight the importance of eye donation. This rally took place between 7:30 am and 8:30 am on September 8, 2023, and saw the participation of approximately 750 students. The event was inaugurated by Thiru Justice S Jagadeesan (Retired), in the presence of Dr. Vaneeta Aggarwal, NSS Coordinator at Madras University, and Dr. TS Surendran, Chairman of Sankara Nethralaya. These activities served as a testament to the institution's commitment to raising awareness about eye donation and its profound impact on the community.



## Sri Mahaperiyava 29th Araadhana observed January 7, 2023



Chief Guest: Dr. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras.

Highlights: Lecture, Dhingra Trust Awards, SN HealthBytes App launch.

## Sankara Nethralaya Kolkata Branch SN Family Day outing celebration January 8, 2023





## Bharat's Republic Day celebrated in Chennai and Kolkata Branches

### January 26, 2023



Chief Guest: Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, IPS, Former DGP, Govt Tamil Nadu.

Highlights: Flag hoisting, Service Awards, Children's Merit Awards.

## 100th Camp of Mobile Eye Surgical Units valedictory function in Orikkai Village, Kanchipuram District.

### February 5, 2023





## Dr. E. V Memorial Scientific Session March 4-5, 2023



## Hospital Safety Awareness Week March 15-22, 2023



Highlights: Various events, pattimanram, emphasis on Patient Safety.



## World Glaucoma Week observed. March 12-18, 2023



## International Nurses Day celebrated in SN Chennai and SN Kolkatta. May 12, 2023





## International Yoga Day observed June 21, 2023



## 34th Sankara Nethralaya's Alumni Meeting in a grand manner. July 2, 2023





## **Bharat's 77th Independence Day celebrated in Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai. August 15, 2023**



Chief Guest (Chennai): Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan, IAS, Former Chief Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu.

Highlights: Flag hoisting, Merit Awards, Man and Woman of the Year Awards.

## **Bharat's 77th Independence Day celebrated in Sankara Nethralaya Kolkata. August 15, 2023**





**Ganapathi Homam held at Sankara Nethralaya  
R A Puram Annexe.  
August 21, 2023**



**Sudharshana Homam held at Sankara Nethralaya Main  
Campus for the benefit of Patients and Sankara  
Nethralaya Employees and their family members.  
September 2, 2023**





## Colour Blindness Awareness Day observed by the Occupational Optometry Department. September 5, 2023



## 4th Dr. Rajeshwari Mahadevan Scientific Session. September 10, 2023



## Sankara Nethralaya Hosted 5th Annual Retina Summit 2023



Sankara Nethralaya hosted the 5th Annual Retina Summit in 2023, a significant event that took place on June 30th and July 1st at the Taj Coromandel. This year's summit, after a three-year hiatus owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, centered on the critical theme of "Macular Surgery."

The inaugural ceremony took place on June 30th with esteemed guests including Shri N Ram, Head of The Hindu Group, and Shri N Kumar, Vice Chairman of the Sanmar Group. They illuminated the occasion by shedding light on various sociological insights related to the healthcare sector. The ceremony featured a musical performance by "Madhan's Band," led by Sri Madhan Prakash, and a gala dinner.



The Retina Summit 2023 served as a platform for vitreoretinal specialists to share their expertise and enrich participants' knowledge. The sessions featured a dynamic blend of keynote talks, panel discussions, case presentations, and videos. Notable national and international experts, in addition to Sankara Nethralaya's in-house faculty, made the event a collaborative and enlightening experience.

The Retina Summit attracted a diverse audience, with 250 delegates attending from various corners of India and international participants from countries like Kenya and Singapore, making it a truly global event.

It was a well-organized conference by Dr Dhanashree Rathra



## OSKON Makes a Comeback After 5-Year Hiatus 2023



The Ocular Surface and Keratoprosthesis Conference (OSKON) is a unique global gathering focused on ocular surface disorders and Keratoprosthesis. Sankara Nethralaya (Medical Research Foundation) recently organized OSKON 2023, marking the 4th meet in the OSKON series. The conference took place from August 25th to 27th, 2023, at the Sri V. D. Swami Auditorium, Sankara Nethralaya, located at No. 41, College Road, Chennai – 600 006. Previous editions were held in 2012, 2015, and 2018.

This year's event commenced with a 4-day pre-meeting workshop, occurring from August 21st to 24th, 2023, at the Jagadguru Kanchi Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Nethra Nilayam (JKCN), situated at No. 21, Pycrofts Garden Road, Chennai - 600 006. The workshop featured a wet lab session covering topics like DMEK and Kpro, in addition to a hands-on Dry Eye Investigation Session.

The conference provided an exceptional interactive platform for specialists in the field of Cornea, Ocular Surface, Researchers, and Students to meet, explore, debate, and exchange information and knowledge. The presence of internationally acclaimed Cornea specialists, including Dr. James Chodosh (USA), Dr. Konrad Hille (Germany), Dr. Christopher Liu (UK), Dr. Jodhbir Mehta (Singapore), Dr. Mohamed Bahgat Goweida (Egypt), Dr. Tsutomu Ben Inatomi (Japan), Dr. Eleftherios Paschalis (USA), Dr. Thomas Dohlman (USA), Dr. Jose Alvaro Pereira Gomes (Brazil), Dr. Alfonso Vasquez Peres (UK), and Dr. Venkat Avadhanam (UK), underscored the significance of the event. Additionally, 33 national faculties from across India participated and shared their experiences.

Dr. Geetha Iyer and Dr. Bhaskar Srinivasan served as the Organizing Secretary and Co-organizing Secretary, respectively. Both are Senior Consultants in the Department of Ocular Surface at Sankara Nethralaya. Dr. Shweta Agarwal, Senior Consultant, and Dr. Varsha Bhambhani, Associate Consultant, were the Editor and Co-editors of the conference, respectively.

Dr. Luis Rodriguez, Dr. Shridhar Sudhakar Kulkarni, Dr. Divya Giridhar, Dr. Madhuvanti Mohan, Dr. Anupriya Kohli, Dr. Gaurav Chauhan, Dr. Sharath Kumar, Dr. Shruti M, and Dr. Nishi Dwivedi, the current Ocular Surface and Cornea fellows, played pivotal roles in organizing this event.

The topics for the first day of the conference included Artificial Corneal Transplants and Ocular Chemical Injuries. On the second day, there were discussions and deliberations on Stevens-Johnson Syndrome and Mucous Membrane Pemphigoid, in collaboration with distinguished dermatologists from the country, particularly Dr. Murlidhar Rajagopalan of Apollo Hospitals, Chennai.

The third day's focus was Dry Eye, with an active question and answer session involving the renowned rheumatologist, Dr. Kaushik Bhojani from Mumbai. The conference concluded with a vote of thanks from Dr. Geetha Iyer, Senior Consultant in the Cornea Department at Sankara Nethralaya.

The meeting was conducted under the mentorship of Dr. Rama Rajagopal, Director of Cornea Services. The meeting hosted 152 participants and proved to be a highly significant scientific event for all attendees.

## Occupational Optometry Services Community Activities

### Introduction:

The Department of Occupational Optometry Services (OOS) has been dedicated to enhancing the efficient and safe visual functioning of individuals in the workplace. In a remarkable series of initiatives, OOS has extended its services to reach unorganized sector workers and small-scale industries across Tamil Nadu. This report provides an overview of the activities and impact of OOS in the year 2022-2023, showcasing their commitment to improving ocular health and safety for workers.

### Expanding Reach:

Unorganized sector workers, who often find it challenging to attend eye camps due to their daily wage work commitments, have greatly benefited from OOS's on-site initiatives. These programs, organized in collaboration with employers, have reached diverse sectors, including tailors, welders, toy makers, housekeeping staff, and salt pan workers.

### Key Statistics:

In the year 2022-2023, a significant total of 4,686 unorganized sector and small-scale workers across Tamil Nadu benefited from OOS's services. This marked a remarkable 55.62% increase from the previous year, which had 3,011 beneficiaries. The breakdown of beneficiaries is as follows:

### Spectacle Beneficiaries: 3,775

Workers from hazardous occupations benefiting from Refractive Correction incorporated Safety eyewear: 314

### Supporting Industrial Sector Workers:

OOS has not limited its services to unorganized sector workers but has also extended its outreach to industrial sectors. In this regard, 10 industries were covered, and 1,314 employees were screened, emphasizing the importance of ocular health and safety in the industrial workforce.

### Assisting Small-Scale Industry Workers:

OOS has demonstrated a commitment to helping small-scale industry workers see better. A noteworthy example of this is the support provided to 214 Wooden Toymakers and Silk Reelers in Channapatna, Ramnagara district, Karnataka. This initiative, in collaboration with Vidyaranya Kannada Kuta, IL, took place on May 5th and 6th, 2022. During this event, the workers underwent comprehensive eye examinations, and 174 of them were prescribed new spectacles. Additionally, 41 workers were referred for further eye examinations at tertiary eye care centers.

### Enhancing Safety and Efficiency:

As part of their occupational safety and health awareness efforts, the Occupational Optometry team has equipped salt pan workers with spectacle-equipped headbands/spectacle ropes. These innovations prevent spectacles from falling during intense physical work, ensuring that workers maintain clear vision and eye protection.

Welders, often exposed to intense bright light and UV rays, received special attention. Many workers in this field only used handheld face shields for protection, offering minimal defense against ocular injuries. The OOS team addressed this issue by incorporating safety eyewear with refractive correction and green filters, effectively reducing UV and intense light exposure. This approach not only enhances safety but also improves work efficiency through appropriate refractive correction.



## Conclusion:

The Department of Occupational Optometry Services has made significant strides in promoting ocular health and safety in various sectors, including the unorganized and industrial sectors. Their commitment to providing essential eye care services, along with innovations in eyewear for different occupations, reflects their dedication to improving the well-being of workers in Tamil Nadu. The substantial increase in beneficiaries in the past year signifies the essential role OOS plays in enhancing the visual functioning and safety of the workforce in the region.

## Tips for Safe Diwali



## Condolence Tribute to Padma Bhushan Smt Vani Jaiyaram



One of our devoted supporters, Padmabhushan Smt. Vani Jairam, passed away on February 4, 2023, at the age of 78. Smt. Vani Jairam had graced Sankara Nethralaya with her poignant performances at numerous fundraising events, significantly contributing to the promotion of our community services.

In recognition of her unwavering friendship and goodwill toward Sankara Nethralaya, Smt. Vani Jairam was honored with the Dr. MS Subbulakshmi Award in 2018. During her acceptance speech, she fondly recalled her interactions with Padmabhushan MS Amma, after whom the award was named. She also cherished the kind words of praise she received from the legendary Padmabhushan Smt. MS Subbulakshmi.

Additionally, Smt. Vani Jairam lent her melodious voice to the 'Sankara Nethralaya Anthem,' a visionary project initiated by Sankara

Ratna Sri. V.V. Ranganathan, a dear friend and well-wisher of Sankara Nethralaya. With her exceptional talent, she breathed life into the moving lyrics in four different languages.

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## In Memoriam: Sri M S Jayaraman

It is with profound sadness that we pay tribute to a distinguished well-wisher and an exceptional individual, Sri MS Jayaraman, who dedicated over four decades of his life to the progress of Sankara Nethralaya. On September 7, 2023, we bid farewell to a visionary who played an instrumental role in shaping the Information and Technology Department of our institution, leaving an indelible mark that will be cherished for generations to come. Sri Jayaraman's tireless dedication to Sankara Nethralaya was not limited to his pioneering work in the Information and Technology Department.

In recognition of his remarkable contributions, a condolence meeting was organized by the hospital Management on September 13, 2023. Esteemed individuals such as Dr. TS Surendran, Chairman, Dr. Girish Shiva Rao, President of the Medical Research Foundation, Dr. Roni George, President of the Vision Research Foundation, and Dr. Lingam Gopal, Former Chairman and Distinguished Vitreo Retinal Surgeon, shared their cherished memories of Sri M S Jayaraman.





As a token of our immense gratitude, the HRD Department of Sankara Nethralaya has been named "HRD in Memory of Sri M S Jayaraman," serving as a lasting tribute to his exemplary service and vision for our institution.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of Sri Jayaraman and to all those who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside him. May his legacy continue to inspire and guide us, and may his soul find eternal peace.

## In Memoriam: Dr. Ian Sundararaj



Sankara Nethralaya bid a tearful farewell to one of its stalwarts, Dr. Ian Sundararaj, on the 21st of April, 2023. Dr. ISR, as he was affectionately known, left behind a legacy of unparalleled dedication and innovation.

Dr. ISR embarked on his remarkable journey with Sankara Nethralaya in 1983 as the Chief Anaesthetist, a role he executed until 1992. His contributions continued as he took on the role of Advisor, Anaesthesiology in 1993, a position he held until his retirement in September 2017, marking 33 glorious years of service.

To his memory, a condolence meeting was held on the 24th of April, 2023, at the Sri V. D. Swami Auditorium, Sri TS Santhanam floor (7th floor) in the KN BIRVO Block. Dr. Girish Shiva Rao, President of Sankara Nethralaya, and Dr. TS Surendran, Chairman, along with

numerous colleagues from the Department of Anaesthesiology, took the stage to share their heartfelt tributes to the departed soul. Dr. TS Surendran fondly recalled Dr. ISR's numerous innovations, highlighting the indelible impact he had on the institution. Dr. Surendran announced the renaming of the Surgeon's Changing Room in memory of Dr. ISR.

Dr. Nirmala Subramaniam, Emeritus Professor of the Department of Oculoplasty, and Dr. Jyotirmay Biswas, Director of Uvea Services, shared their memories of working alongside Dr. ISR. Dr. VV Jaichandran, Deputy Director of Anaesthesiology, showcased Dr. ISR's innovations through a touching slide show, emphasizing his significance in ophthalmic anesthesiology and patient safety. Dr. Sujatha V, an Anaesthetist who had the privilege of working with Dr. ISR, remembered his reassuring words, "Everything will be alright," even in the face of the most challenging cases. Dr. Ronnie George delivered a touching eulogy and a vote of thanks, sharing his cherished memories of Dr. ISR.

The family of Dr. ISR, including his daughter Dr. Anita Chopra, son-in-law Dr. Sunil Chopra, grandson Mr. Arjun Chopra, and sons Mr. Anand Charles and Mr. Arul Deepak, joined the Sankara Nethralaya family in paying homage to the life of their beloved father.

The loss of Dr. ISR leaves a void that cannot be filled, but his memory will forever remain etched in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him.

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## **World Prematurity Day November 17, 2023 - Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) Gift of sight to those who are born too soon**

In India about 25 million children are born every year. Among the 25 million 1.7 million births are preterm, and these babies are at a higher risk of developing Retinopathy of prematurity. Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) is a blinding disease of the eye that can affect babies born preterm and have received intensive neonatal care for various reasons. ROP is a dynamic, time-bound disease that is not present at birth. Babies develop the disease as they grow. Prevention of visual loss from this disease can be done only if the first ROP screening is done within the 25-30 days of life.. This is possible with a coordinated effort of all health care personnel involved in childcare. All eligible babies should undergo screening before discharge in the neonatal intensive care units if they are born on or before 34 weeks or birth weight less than or equal to 2kg. Babies weighing more than 2kg should undergo dilated eye examination if they have associated infection, breathing difficulties etc based on the discretion of the treating pediatrician or neonatologist.

Retinopathy of Prematurity is a disease that can cause blindness by 3 months of life if baby is left untreated. A white reflex in the babies eye means that ROP has reached an end stage where surgery by a vitreoretinal surgeon could give the child some ambulatory vision in less than 10 percent of cases.

ROP is usually treated by eye specialists who are either Vitreoretinal surgeons or medical retina specialists. ROP screening is done 15 minutes after instilling a drop in the eye called dilated eye examination. These dilated retinal examination are performed starting from day 25 to 30 of life and continuously monitored until the baby attains normal growth of retinal blood vessels. If the blood vessels stop growing then they will perform either laser treatment in the neonatal intensive care unit or in the operation theatre under the supervision of neonatologist or anaesthetist. If the growth of blood vessels are too less then an injection is delivered into the babies eye in the operation theatre. Once the injection is given the babies are to be continuously monitored for regrowth of retinal blood vessels. When the growth of blood vessels stops laser treatment will be performed.



Retinopathy of Prematurity is a preventable childhood blindness. This calls for coordinated efforts by pediatrician or neonatologist and Vitreoretinal surgeons or medical retina specialists. All neonatal intensive care units should have a system in place to screen and treat ROP to save sight. If detected late or untreated, severe sequelae can result in the form of irreversible blindness. Babies born in government hospitals are currently receiving various range of services for prevention of blindness from ROP in India. They are Child Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Rashtriya Bal Swasth Karyakram (RBSK) and National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment.

It is very important that every parent of preterm child be aware about this avoidable blinding eye disease called retinopathy of prematurity and should seek for an ROP examination within 25 to 30 days of child birth immaterial of their place of stay urban or semiurban or rural.

Every child born in this world has the right to see.

**- Dr Suganeswari G, Senior consultant, Vitreo-Retinal Services.**

## Thank you, readers

As we come to the end of another edition of Eyelights, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. With every issue, we aim to not only inform but inspire. We believe in the power of knowledge to transform lives, and it is our privilege to share the latest breakthroughs, heartfelt stories, and significant events with you.

To our patrons and sponsors, your support enables us to reach even greater heights in our pursuit of excellence in eye care. Your contributions, both large and small, make a huge impact on our ability to provide world-class services and engage in ground-breaking research.

Thank you once again for being an integral part of the Sankara Nethralaya family. Together, we can continue to bring light into the lives of those in need.

With warm regards and best wishes,

The editorial team.

**Aishwarya R, Irungovel AP**

Designs by **Mr. V. Deenadayalan.**



## An Appeal

Dear Valued Supporter,

At Sankara Nethralaya, our mission is to bring clarity and vision to those in need. Our Jagadguru Kanchi Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Nethra Nilayam (JKCN) complex, situated at 21 Pycrofts Garden Road, Chennai, has been changing the lives of countless individuals seeking quality eye care.

JKCN complex is an integral annex of Sankara Nethralaya, known for its dedication to eye care. The facility offers a range of services, from consultations to advanced surgeries, including Lasik procedures. With eight operation theaters and various rooms for patients, JKCN plays a crucial role in providing high-quality eye care to the community.

In our ongoing commitment to better serve the community, we are planning to construct several new Operating Theatres (OTs) in this complex. These OTs will greatly enhance our capacity to provide top-notch eye care to those who rely on our services.

The expansion project will include state-of-the-art facilities to support various eye surgeries. With these new OTs, we aim to perform even more surgeries daily, offering immediate relief and clarity to countless patients who depend on us.

With your generous donations, we can light up more lives and restore vision to those who have lost it. Join hands with us in this noble cause. We deeply appreciate your support, and together, we can achieve the vision of a world where preventable blindness is a thing of the past.

Thank you for being a part of the Sankara Nethralaya family and for your unwavering support.

With Warm Regards and Best Wishes

**Dr. Girish S. Rao**

President



# Join our Mission for Vision



## DONATION SCHEME



Sankara Nethralaya USA

### Support Towards

### Minimum Amount in Rs.

One cataract surgery	Rs.5,000
One major surgery like Glaucoma, Vitreoretinal, etc	Rs.17,500
Mobile rural teleophthalmology camp (Per Day)	Rs.20,000
Cost free eye screening of needy children in a rural school	Rs.45,000
One cataract surgery, which will be performed annually on an indigent patient on a date specified by the donor. The surgery will be performed for 12 years	Rs.50,000
One major surgery, like Glaucoma, Vitreoretinal, which will be performed annually on an indigent patient on a date specified by the donor. The surgery will be performed for 12 years	Rs.1,50,000
Free services for one day (approximately 40 surgeries per day)	Rs.2,00,000
Urban/Rural Comprehensive Eye Screening Camp	Rs.3,00,000
<b>MESU - Mobile Eye Surgical Unit. Hospital on wheels</b>	
MESU Adopt a village (Distance upto 200 km radius from Chennai)	Rs. 10,00,000
MESU Adopt a village (Distance upto 300 km radius from Chennai)	Rs. 12,50,000
MESU Adopt a village (Distance upto 500 km radius from Chennai)	Rs. 15,00,000
<b>Other donation schemes @ Sankara Nethralaya</b>	
Naming a work-up (optometry) Room	Rs.10,00,000
Naming Consultant Room	Rs. 15,00,000
Paediatric Treatment	Any Amount
Corpus fund for community outreach programme	Rs. 2,00,000

\*Note: We have suggested the lowest amount for each procedure/programme though the operational costs are much higher.

**Kindly draw your cheques in favour of "Medical Research Foundation"**

Donations are exempt under Section 80G

**For more details, contact**

**Ms. Kavitha B,**

Manager, Resource Mobilization

**Sankara Nethralaya**

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[www.omlog.org](http://www.omlog.org), [www.sankaranethralayausa.org](http://www.sankaranethralayausa.org)