

INTRODUCTION:

Manabik Shahajya Sangstha (MSS), armed with its experience in providing eye care services in Bangladesh established its Eye Care Program (ECP-MSS) in June 2014 to identify and treat preventable blindness among the underprivileged; to promote community awareness and education on eye health; and to increase capacity and access to eye care services, among others.

The focus of ECP is on marginalized people targeting women and children with an emphasis on rural areas, improving access to quality eye care at affordable cost through vigorous community outreach activities.

To advance its goals ECP in conjunction with its 27 partner hospitals undertakes a range of activities:

EYE CAMPS AND SURGERIES:

The absence of outreach eye care services during the pandemic led to a huge accumulation of patients requiring urgent eye care services in the post-pandemic period. The main sufferers were the underserved and underprivileged communities in remote, rural areas. ECP geared up its eye care services to address the enormous pandemic-driven backlog; thus, although the number of patients decreased, the number of surgeries increased significantly.

- Since June 2014, ECP implemented 612 public eye camps where 186,238 patients were examined. Reading glasses (40,386) and medicines (8,709) were distributed among the patients. The services provided at the eye camps include eye screening tests, correcting refractive errors, providing medicines, and identification of cataracts and other surgery cases, and performing surgeries. Patients with complex eye problems are referred to our partner hospitals for further treatment.
- Our public eye camps provide free services and are typically held at public places such as local unions, upazila parishads, and educational institutions that target demographics can easily access.



Doctor examining eyes of patients at a Sadullahpur village in Gaibandha



Patients waiting for eye examination at a remote village in Panchagarh

ECP REACHED OUT TO CHAR AREA:

Chars are landmasses formed through the sedimentation of huge amounts of sand, silt and clay over time carried by the mighty rivers and their numerous tributaries. Flooding, land erosion, poor communication, unemployment, food insecurity, and poor health care combine to make the lives of char residents much tougher than mainland people in Bangladesh. Chars are home to 5 million people in



Underserved patient of far-flung, inaccessible Jadur Char consulting our Eye doctor

ECP – MSS decided to extend its services to the people in Char areas to make eye care accessible to them. Thus, ECP – MSS conducted an eye camp in the Jadur Char union of Rowmari upazila, Kurigram on 21 November 2022. In this eye camp, 351 patients were examined. One hundred and forty (104) reading glasses and 710 medicines were distributed among the patients. Of the 55 cataract surgery patients identified 37 surgeries were performed in our partner hospital Ispahani Islamia Eye Institute and Hospital, Jamalpur.

ECP SURGERY HIGHLIGHTS

Total Surgeries: 18918



Female: 9943



Male: 8975



Left Eye: 9605



Right Eye: 9087

Both Eyes: 226



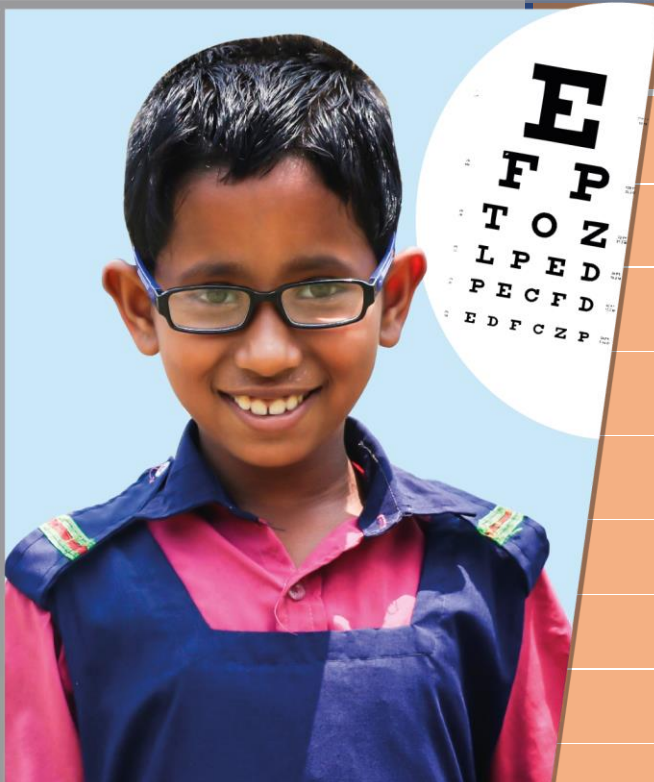
“Long live those who have restored my lost vision.”

Rostom Ali , 65, Gaibandha

“Now I can see again! I can earn money to support my family.”

Rohima Begum , 70, Tangail





SSTP INFORMATION 2017-2023

School Screened	185
Students Screened	46,016
Girls	25,202
Boys	20,814
Spectacles Provided	1,132
Medicines Provided	1,217
Eye Problem Pointers	246
Awareness Flyers	45,925
Awareness Posters	950
Awareness Presentation	813

SCHOOL SIGHT TESTING PROGRAM (SSTP):

SSTP launched in October 2017 with the aim to provide eye care services to underprivileged school students. It is designed to identify short-sighted and visually impaired school-going children and provide them eye screening services, spectacles, medicines, and referral services. The program also raises awareness of the students and teachers on basic eye care services to remote, rural areas of the country.

A student of The Osman Ghani Memorial Primary School, Khagakharibari, Dimla wearing her newly acquired custom-made eyeglasses correcting her refractive error. Thus far 46,016 students have received ECP eye care.

"School Sight Testing Program is very effective for our poor students. Students can realize the importance of eyes and also can learn how to take care of their eyes. We are very happy with ECP doctors and team members behavior." Head Teacher of Khagakharibari Government Primary School.

ECP ACHIEVEMENTS

(July 2014 – October 2023)

SL #	DESCRIPTION	Jul 14 – Dec 18	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
1	Eye Camps Conducted	106	142	63	60	138	103	612
3	Patients Screened	47091	54004	19775	11153	36050	18165	186238
4	Surgery Performed	2838	3652	1507	1648	5120	4153	18918
5	Eyeglasses Given	10965	9516	3230	2540	8070	6065	40386
6	Medicines Distributed	2235	1314	1418	623	2714	405	8709
7	Donors	193	50	16	25	17	25	326
8	Partner Hospitals	21	0	0	2	3	1	27

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Healthy Eye for Road Safety (HERS)

Concerned about the unsafe state of road safety, in 2019, the ECP surveyed drivers of public road transports, revealing that a staggering 70% of them faced vision impairments. In response, the ECP decided to bring affordable, high-quality eye care services directly to these transport workers at their terminals. Teaming up with Al-Noor Eye Hospital in Dhaka, the ECP organized a sight screening program for public transport drivers at both the Tejgaon truck stand and the Syedabad bus terminal on February 24–25 and March 11–12, 2019. A total of 545 public transport workers underwent screening, with 155 receiving prescriptions for spectacles and 291 being provided with medications. Among the 148 drivers screened, 101 were diagnosed with refractive errors and were prescribed spectacles. Additionally, 24 cataract patients were identified, 11 of whom were drivers. The ECP subsidized the costs of eye examinations, spectacles, medications, and surgeries, although the workers bore most of the expenses.

Eye Care Helpline (ECH)

The Eye Care Helpline was introduced on June 7, 2020, to offer accessible eye care services to individuals, thereby minimizing the need for hospital or clinic visits and reducing the risk of COVID-19 exposure. This initiative was launched in collaboration with our network of partner hospitals across the country. To inform people about the Helpline's availability for eye care services via phone or video calls, promotional efforts were carried out through various channels. Notably, the Women's Credit Program – MSS played a crucial role in disseminating information about the program, reaching out to over a million underserved individuals, predominantly from rural areas. The Eye Care Helpline served a total of 800 patients, comprising 403 males and 397 females, with diverse occupations including housewives (341), jobholders (167), farmers (24), students (84), businesspersons (113), children (25), teachers (7), drivers (4), and retirees (35). These patients hailed from 39 districts across the country, with the highest number originating from Dhaka (374).

Industrial Sight Testing Program (ISTP)

The aim of the Industrial Sight Testing Program (ISTP) is to deliver comprehensive eye care services at an affordable rate to workers, addressing refractive errors and other eye ailments to ensure their eye health and enhance productivity. Since its inception in 2018, ECP has been conducting ISTP, serving eight (8) factories. To date, the program has provided eye care services to 6696 workers/staff, dispensed 1687 custom-made eyeglasses, and distributed 2125 medications. Among them, 50 patients requiring cataract surgery were identified, with 24 surgeries successfully performed. Factory owners subsidized a portion of the expenses, while workers contributed partially themselves.

"No one shall remain blind due to poverty"

For further information, please contact: Eye Care Program – MSS

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