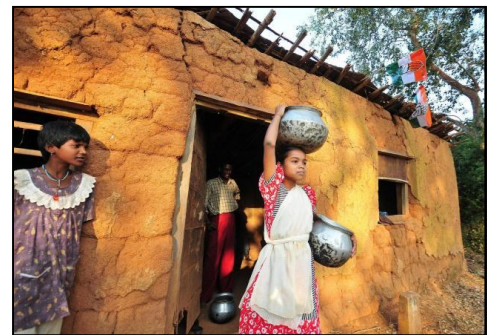


**Sponsored by RC of Heywood, UK.**

Blindness is a colossal problem in India, which unfortunately is home to the largest blind population in the world. It is estimated that one third of the worlds blind people live in India. The state of Rajasthan, wherein Jodhpur is the second largest city, has the highest incidence of blindness in the country. Amelioration of blindness, most of which is due to cataract – a curable condition, is difficult. That's mainly because there is a dearth of eye surgeons, not many community based initiatives exist, patients cannot afford surgery and transport is difficult. To overcome these barriers, the free eye camp [medical mission] approach to treating eye conditions is very popular in India. The Tarabai Desai Eye Hospital is at the forefront in providing eye care services in the Thar Desert region of India and has been providing free cataract and other surgery to the aged and the indigent for over three decades.



An eye camp was organized on 18-11-15 at village Gajsingpura. This is a small village with a population of 5000 situated 115 kilometers east of Jodhpur in Nagaur district. The village was chosen because of its remoteness and for absence of eye care services for miles around it. The camp was organized to commemorate Rtn Dr Kris Kaushal, who passed away on March 23, 2015. Financial support for the camp came in the form of a



generous donation from the Rotary Club of Heywood, UK, of which Dr Kaushal had been a long standing member. Rtn Dr Kris Kaushal was an ophthalmologist who had keen interest in promoting eye care in the developing countries.

Publicity was done in Gajsingpura village as well as in a radius of 10 kilometers around it via handbills, loudspeaker mounted on a jeep and word of mouth publicity by volunteers from the local Kabir Ashram. The Kabir Ashram, a religious monastery was chosen as the site for conducting the eye camp.

On the appointed day, the eye camp team consisting of Dr Sanjiv Desai [ophthalmologist], Mr Bharat Sharma [Refractionist] and Mr MR Karnawat, Mr SS Mehta and Mr Kumbhat [volunteers] set forth from Jodhpur by bus to reach Gajsingpura by 10AM. Thereafter they quickly set up the camp. Dr Sanjiv Desai conducted the outpatient ophthalmic examinations and treatment whilst Mr Bharat Sharma set up the optometry clinic to dispense glasses. The technical team was assisted by volunteers. The eye camp lasted till 4 PM when the last patient was seen.



A total of 357 patients were examined and treated free of charge at the eye camp for various eye diseases. All OPD medicines were given free of charge to the outpatients. Optometric examination was performed for 55 cases and low cost spectacles were dispensed on site. These stats are tabulated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 : Patient Statistics

S.No.	Parameter	Numbers
1.	Patients Examined & Treated .	357
2.	Patients requiring Surgery.	51
3.	Patients opting for surgery.	36*
4.	Patients examined for eye glasses.	55
5.	Patients opting for eye glasses.	20

\* Cataract 34, Cataract + Glaucoma 1 and Pterygium 1.

Those patients who were blinded by cataract were selected for surgery and bussed to the base hospital in the evening. On reaching Jodhpur, the patients were investigated, their intra-ocular lens power calculated, eyes prepared and they were taken to the operation theater for surgery. They were operated by the state of art technique of phacoemulsification and an intra-ocular lens was implanted. The surgery, intra-and post-operative medicines, meals and bed as well as to and fro transport were all provided free of charge to all patients. Almost all patients,



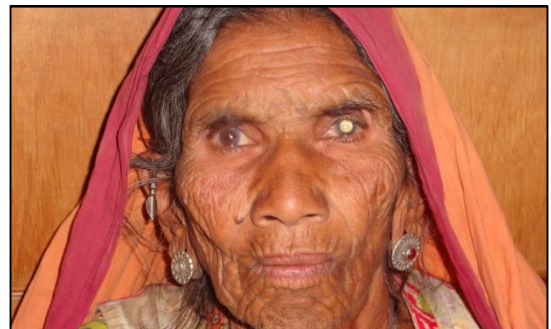
baring a few, were operated the same night. The surgical session lasted till 1:00 AM in the morning. Four patients were operated the next day and one whose intra-ocular lens had to be specially ordered was operated on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November.

Amongst the patients was **Dhagli Bai**, a 83 years old widow. She had dense white cataracts in both eyes and was completely blind. Vision in her RE deteriorated 5 years ago but she could manage with the LE which was still good. However the good eye started losing vision 2 years ago and it became increasingly difficult for her to carry out her daily living tasks including eating and toilet.



Her main activity and joy was caring for her grandson. But for the last 5 months she had become totally blind and had to sit in her cot all day long. Her three sons who work as farm hands and live with her together earn about Rs 3500 per month and were able to afford her treatment. After free surgery at the Gajsingpura eye camp she has regained her vision and is a very happy person. She is so glad that she can look at her grandson and will be able to care for him once again. When told about the sponsors she showered her blessings profusely on the family of Rtn Dr Kris Kaushal and the RC of Heywood.

**Jhamku**, 83 year's old woman in the camp had neglected her cataract for so long that it had become calcified and dislocated from its normal position. She underwent complex surgery in her left eye in which the lens was removed and glaucoma filtration procedure was also done simultaneously.



On the third day ie the 20<sup>th</sup> of November, after two days of post-op care, a closing function was organized at the hospital. The function is mandatory for all eye camps. As we bid adieu to the patients, we inform them and their attendants about proper post-operative care, precautions to be taken and about follow-up dates. The follow-up examinations are also performed free of charge for a month and on the month end follow-up eyeglasses are given. The function also provides an opportunity to invite a local dignitary / opinion leader to showcase our work. In this camp the **Rotary District Governor [RID**

**3053], Rtn Anil Beniwal** was kind enough to visit as Chief guest. He was accompanied by **District Secretary Rtn. Depak Gehlot**. The guest of Honour was Dr Prakash Tyagi, Director of the NGO Gravis.

During the function, Dr Sanjiv Desai welcomed the guests and then introduced the sponsors - the RC of Heywood - and spoke about the late Rtn PP Dr Krish Kaushal's devotion for eye camps. Two minutes of silence was then observed to pray for the departed doctor. Hospital Director and Rotary PP Dr NC Desai, then spoke about the huge problem of blindness in India and how to tackle it. District Secretary Rtn Deepak Gehlot congratulated the patients on having regained their eyesight and urged them to become lifelong motivators and help others to get rid of their cataracts because a large number of patients still fear surgery and don't get themselves operated. Guest of Honour Dr Prakash Tyagi recounted the pioneering efforts of the Tarabai Eye Hospital in providing free eye care services in the desert expanse of the Thar for the past 35 years and how surgery in their eye camps has become simpler and hassle free over the years from the patient's point of view.



***Director, Dr NC Desai addressing the meeting.  
Seated from L to R : DG Rtn Beniwal, DS Rtn Deepak  
Gehlot, Dr Prakash Tyagi and Dr Rajiv Desai.***



***Rotary Governor Rtn Anil Beniwal welcomed by Dr NC  
Desai.***

Chief Guest DG Rtn Anil Beniwal gave an eloquent speech on the service activities of Rotary International and the beauty of confluence of Rotary and NGO's like our hospital to promote common goals. He said that Rotary is an international service organization with dedicated members and was at the forefront of service activities all over the world. He recounted how the massive and consistent efforts of Rotary International have helped eradicate Polio from the face of the planet and expressed the hope that one day cataract blindness too will also be a thing of the past. Governor Beniwal also lamented the fact that not many individuals in India donate eyes after death. Stressing upon the importance of eye donation, he said that donated eyes from one person would help give the gift of sight



to two people suffering from corneal blindness. He concluded by urging all present to take a pledge to donate their eyes when they pass away.



***DG Rtn Anil Beniwal talks to the patients and their attendants at the Discharge Function of the Eye Camp sponsored by the RC of Heywood, UK***

Finally, Dr Sanjiv Desai thanked the honored guests and the patients as well as the RC of Heywood for their financial support which made this camp possible. After the function was over the patients were bussed back to Gajsingpura. Their first follow-up is scheduled for the 28<sup>th</sup> of November.

Dr Sanjiv Desai  
Tarabai Desai Eye Hospital  
E-22, Shastri Nagar  
Jodhpur 342003  
India.  
Phone : +91-291-2771714  
Web : [www.eyecamps.org](http://www.eyecamps.org)

## **Acknowledgement**

Our sincere gratitude to “The UK Friends of the Tarabai Desai Eye Hospital” in London which liaises contacts and administers the donations coming in from Europe. Without their liaison this camp wouldn't have been possible.



***Operated patients at the Closing Function.***