World Vision Report

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Recently to mark the occasion of **World Sight Day**, the **World Health Organization** (WHO) released its first **World Vision Report.**

- The report proposed ways to address challenges such as integrating eye care into healthcare systems that can help in drastically reducing the burden of preventable eye diseases.
    - The report found that globally, over **2.2 billion** people have some form of **vision impairment.** Out of these 2.2 billion, 1 billion people are suffering from conditions that are preventable.
- According to the report, the burden of eye conditions and vision impairment is not borne equally: it is often **far greater** in **people living in rural areas,** those with **low incomes, women, older people, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and indigenous populations.**
    - Low and middle-income regions of western and eastern sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have rates of blindness that are **eight times** higher than in high-income countries.
    - The **age-specific** prevalence of distance vision impairment in an **urban** population of Delhi (20% prevalence amongst 60-69 years old) was **one-third lower** than that of a **rural** population in Northern India (28%).
- The report warned that the **ageing population** would lead to a dramatic increase in the number of people with vision impairment and blindness.
    - **Presbyopia** (a condition in which it is difficult to see nearby objects), affects 1.8 billion people. This condition occurs with **advancing age.**
    - The common refractive error -**myopia** (a condition in which it is difficult to see objects at a particular distance) affects 2.6 billion, with 312 million being under the age of **19 years.**
    - **Trachoma-** an eye disease that is caused due to **bacterial infection** in the eye. Many countries have eliminated it including **India.**

- Vision impairment also caused **productivity loss and economic burden.**
    - The economic burden of uncorrected myopia in the regions of East Asia, South Asia, and South-East Asia were reported to be more than twice that of other regions and equivalent to more than 1% of gross domestic product.
- The report also highlighted that in India the **rate of cataract surgery** has increased **nine-fold** (6,000 per million population) between 1981 and 2012.
    - This has been possible because of the **National Programme for Control of Blindness,** under which cataract surgeries were performed on 6.5 million people alone in the year 2016-2017.
        - In addition to it, a total of 1.5 million management/ treatment procedures were performed for other eye conditions. As a result of these concerted efforts, there was an overall reduction in the prevalence of blindness that was reported as 1.1% in 2001-02 to 0.45% during the years 2015-18.

National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI)

- It was launched in the year **1976** as a 100% **centrally sponsored scheme** (now 60:40 in all states and 90:10 in NE States) by the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.**
- The goal of this programme was to reduce the prevalence of blindness to **0.3% by 2020.**
    - NPCB aimed to provide for **'Eye Health for All'** and prevention of visual impairment, through the provision of comprehensive universal eye-care services and quality service delivery.

Way Forward

According to the World Report on Vision, integrated people-centered eye care has the potential to accelerate action and overcome the challenges. To make it a reality, the report recommends the following actions:
- Make eye care an **integral part** of universal health coverage.
- Promote high-quality **implementation** and health systems **research,** complementing existing evidence for effective eye care interventions.
- **Monitor** trends and **evaluate** progress towards implementing integrated people-centered eye care.
- **Raise awareness** and **engage and empower** people and communities about eye care needs.

Source: IE