

Internship at
Sankara Eye Foundation India, Coimbatore

Submitted to



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for the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of
Master of Business Administration (MBA)

in

Hospital and Health Management

by

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INTRODUCTION

Sankara Eye Hospital is part of the Sankara Eye Foundation India (SEFI), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing quality, affordable eye care with a strong focus on eliminating avoidable blindness in India. Founded in 1977 under the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Medical Trust, the hospital network has grown into one of the largest providers of community ophthalmology services in the country.

The hospital operates on a “80:20 model”—80% of its surgeries are provided free of cost to underprivileged patients from rural areas, funded by the remaining 20% who can afford to pay.

Sankara Eye Hospital is known for:

- Comprehensive eye care services including cataract, glaucoma, retina, pediatric ophthalmology, and corneal transplants.
- Its flagship outreach initiative, “Gift of Vision”, which organizes free eye screening camps in rural communities and ensures surgery and follow-up for those in need.
- Running a network of Vision Centres to improve primary eye care accessibility.
- Training programs for optometrists, ophthalmic assistants, and community workers.
- Community health education and awareness programs to encourage early diagnosis and treatment.

With a commitment to excellence and equity, Sankara Eye Hospital combines modern medical technology with compassionate care, serving millions of people across India especially those in underserved and remote areas.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERNSHIP

The primary aim of this internship was to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical learning in a real-world healthcare environment. The key objectives included:

1. To explore various departments within the hospital and understand their interdependent roles in providing holistic eye care.
2. To analyse the process flow and administrative systems supporting clinical functions.
3. To improve observation skills and interpersonal interaction with patients, under guidance from senior staff.
4. To become familiar with primary eye screening procedures and optometric practices.
5. To evaluate real-time hospital scenarios and identify opportunities for operational enhancement.
6. To conceptualize and conduct a data-driven research study that adds value to the hospital's service insights.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Sankara Eye Foundation India (SEFI) is one of the country's most respected not-for-profit organizations dedicated to eradicating preventable blindness. Established in May 1977 by Dr. R.V. Ramani and Dr. Radha Ramani as a modest primary healthcare Centre in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, the foundation has grown into one of the largest and fastest-growing social enterprises in India. SEFI operates under the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Medical Trust and is widely recognized for its commitment to high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable eye care delivery.

Over the last 48 years, SEFI has evolved into a national eye care movement, offering top-tier services through a network of 14 hospitals and a rapidly expanding base of 40 Vision Centres spread across 10 Indian states. These centres are located in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and others. Each facility is equipped with world-class infrastructure, advanced medical technology, and a dedicated team of skilled professionals committed to both clinical excellence and social impact.

Vision: To work towards a blindness-free India by providing quality, affordable, and accessible eye care to all, especially the underserved.

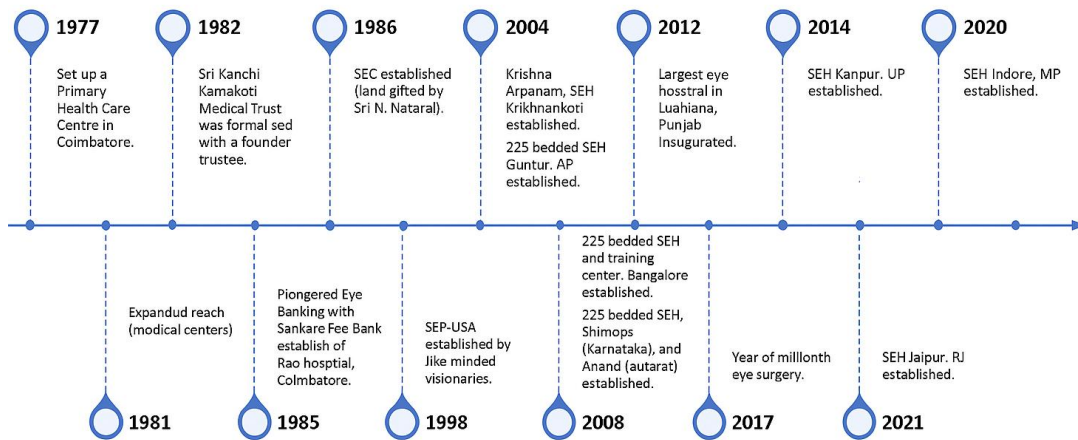
Mission: To provide unmatched eye care services through a dedicated, service-oriented team while ensuring that no one is denied care due to lack of means.

Core Philosophy: The 80:20 Model- SEFI's operations are based on a unique 80:20 model where 80% of the patients receive free eye care services, funded by the 20% paying patients. This self-sustaining financial model ensures inclusivity without compromising quality, making eye care accessible to the poor and marginalized sections of society.

Milestone :



SANKARA EYE HOSPITAL
YOUR VISION OUR MISSION



Organization Structure:



SERVICES PROVIDED BY ORGANIZATION

Core Specialties:

Cataract & Intraocular Lens (IOL) Clinics

Glaucoma Diagnosis and Management Services

Cornea & Refractive Surgery (including LASIK and keratoplasty)

Vitreo-Retinal Surgery (for retinal detachment, diabetic retinopathy, etc.)

Oculoplasty and Aesthetic Eye Surgery

Ocular Oncology (eye cancer diagnosis and treatment)

Additional Services:

Pediatric Ophthalmology

General Ophthalmology (routine eye check-ups and treatments)

Ocularistry (custom-made artificial eyes)

Vision Therapy (treatment for binocular and visual learning disorders)

Assistive Vision & Low Vision Rehabilitation

Eye Banking and Corneal Transplantation

Programs

1. Sankara Eye Bank

In 1985, at a time when eye banking was still in its infancy in India and the country heavily depended on Sri Lanka for donor eyes, Sankara Eye Foundation took a bold and visionary step by establishing the Sankara Eye Bank a move met with scepticism and resistance from many quarters.

Undeterred, the Foundation launched thousands of awareness campaigns across communities, emphasizing the importance of eye donation and the urgent need to transform it into a People's Movement. Through persistent efforts, the message resonated deeply, particularly among the Gujarati and Jain communities in Coimbatore. These communities led by example, voluntarily pledging and donating the eyes of their loved ones—becoming torchbearers for what is now one of the nation's most respected humanitarian causes.

Their courageous initiative inspired others across social and cultural lines, gradually transforming public attitudes toward eye donation. What began as a single act of courage and conviction is now a consistent, life-changing service with at least one pair of eyes donated each day, restoring sight and dignity to countless individuals.

Today, the Sankara Eye Bank stands as a symbol of compassion, community solidarity, and selfless service, playing a critical role in the success of corneal transplant programs throughout India.

2. Gift of Vision

The Gift of Vision initiative by Sankara Eye Foundation represents a transformative approach to eradicating avoidable blindness across rural India. With a strong emphasis on accessibility, affordability, and quality care, the program follows a meticulously planned and community-centric model that ensures no individual is deprived of their right to sight.

Community Identification and Pre-Camp Activities

- Field workers, known as Vision Health Visitors (VHVs), play a pivotal role in identifying patients in need of eye care. Covering a radius of 40–50 kilometres around the selected camp site, VHVs conduct detailed household surveys to collect demographic, socio-economic, general health, and eye health information.
- Individuals identified with potential eye issues are referred to attend a central eye screening camp on a designated date.
- Publicity and community mobilization efforts are carried out in advance to maximize awareness and participation.

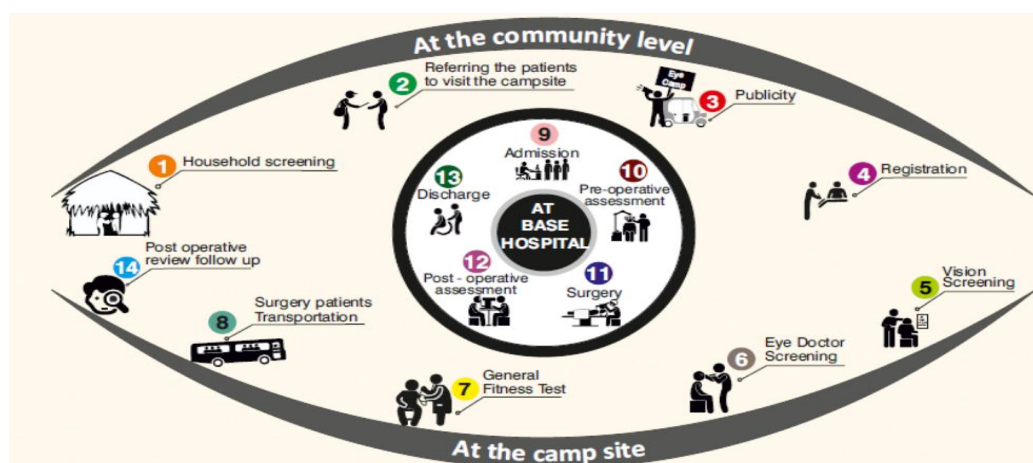


Fig: Process flow of Community Outreach

Activities at the Camp Site

On the appointed day, a specialized team of ophthalmologists, optometrists, nursing staff, and volunteers from the nearby Sankara Eye Hospital travel to the rural camp site, where the following services are rendered:

- Registration of patients
- Vision screening by trained staff
- Detailed eye examination by the attending ophthalmologist
- Laboratory investigations
- General fitness evaluation for surgical eligibility
- Pre-surgical counselling to ensure patient understanding and consent
- Patients selected for surgery are then transported to the base hospital, with free services including transport, accommodation, medication, and meals.

At the Base Hospital

Once at the hospital, patients undergo:

- Admission and pre-operative assessment
- High-quality cataract/IOL surgery or other necessary ophthalmic procedures
- Post-operative evaluation and observation
- Discharge with medication and instructions
- All surgeries are conducted using modern microsurgical techniques, ensuring safe and effective outcomes.

Follow-Up and Review Camps

To ensure the continuity and quality of care:

- Patients are re-evaluated one-month post-surgery during a follow-up camp at the original community site.
- This step enables medical audits and qualitative assessment, ensuring surgical success and sustained patient satisfaction.

Integrated Care Flow of Gift of Vision

At the Community Level:

- Household-level screening
- Referrals to central camp
- Awareness campaigns and community engagement

At the Camp Site:

- Registration and vision screening
- Eye surgeon examination
- General fitness tests
- Transport arrangements for surgical candidates

At the Base Hospital:

- Admission and full surgical preparation
- Eye surgery with intraocular lens (IOL) implantation
- Medication, rest, food, and discharge planning

At the Review Camp:

- Post-operative check-up
- Documentation and outcome evaluation

3. Rainbow**Overview:**

Poor eyesight during childhood can hinder a child's academic performance, social interaction, and future opportunities. Recognizing this, Sankara Eye Foundation launched the RAINBOW program—a large-scale preventive eye care initiative targeting children aged 4 to 16 years across Elementary, Middle, and High Schools in India.

Key Highlights:

- The RAINBOW Program regularly screens school children to identify undiagnosed vision impairments and refer them for appropriate treatment.
- The program has successfully screened over 6 million children across India.
- It is coordinated through Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore, the mission headquarters and a pioneer in community eye care for over 45 years.

Mission & Impact:

- Early detection and correction of visual problems among school-aged children
- Prevents long-term visual impairment and its impact on learning and development

- Reinforces Sankara's legacy of community outreach and innovation through Vision Centres and technologies like the Electronic Remote Visual Information System (ERVIS)

4. MAITRI – Mobile Vision Rehabilitation Program by Sankara Eye Hospital

Overview:

Every year, thousands suffer from irreversible visual impairments that cannot be treated medically or surgically. Vision rehabilitation focuses on enabling such individuals to lead more independent, fulfilling lives by maximizing their residual vision.

Purpose of Vision Rehabilitation:

- Help individuals adapt to vision loss
- Promote independence in daily life, education, and career
- Enhance quality of life through assistive training and tools

About MAITRI

Background:

- Established as a Vision Rehabilitation Centre in 2013 at Sankara Eye Hospital, Bangalore
- Transformed into the ARM Vision Rehabilitation Centre in 2014 with support from ARM Embedded Technologies Pvt. Ltd.
- On January 18, 2017, MAITRI (a mobile vision rehabilitation vehicle) was launched with support from Microsoft India
- Features of MAITRI Vehicle:
 - Fully equipped mobile rehabilitation unit
 - Delivers doorstep services to the visually impaired
 - Trained professionals provide customized functional and psychological support

Objectives of the MAITRI Program:

- Deliver comprehensive rehabilitation services to the blind and visually impaired in rural and urban areas
- Provide home-based care for individuals diagnosed with low vision or irreversible blindness

- Increase public awareness about the importance and availability of vision rehabilitation
- Distribute and train patients on assistive vision devices (e.g., magnifiers, mobility aids)

5. Nanna Kannu Program – School Eye Screening Initiative

Overview:

The “Nanna Kannu” (meaning “*My Eyes*” in Kannada) program is a school-based eye health initiative launched by Sankara Eye Foundation to address vision problems among school-going children, especially in rural and underprivileged communities.

Objectives:

- **Early Detection:** Identify refractive errors and other eye conditions in children at an early stage
- **Accessibility:** Provide comprehensive eye care services directly at schools, removing access barriers
- **Awareness:** Educate children, parents, and teachers about the importance of eye health
- **Prevention of Visual Impairment:** Prevent avoidable blindness and promote better learning outcomes

Key Activities:

- **Vision Screening Camps** conducted in schools by trained optometrists
- **On-the-spot diagnosis** and referral for children requiring further evaluation
- **Free spectacles** provided to children diagnosed with refractive errors
- **Follow-up visits** to ensure proper usage of glasses and continued care
- **Awareness sessions** on eye care and hygiene

Impact:

- Thousands of school children across India have benefited from early intervention.
- Improved academic performance and reduced dropout rates due to better vision.
- Enhanced community engagement in preventive eye care.

6. Vision Centres- Sankara Eye Hospital, has 40 Vision centres across India.

S. No	UNIT	VC
1	Anand	Balasinor
2	Coimbatore	Ambur
3	Coimbatore	Anaikatti
4	Coimbatore	Annur
5	Coimbatore	Kallakuruchi
6	Coimbatore	Karamadai
7	Coimbatore	Krishnagiri
8	Coimbatore	Kulithalai
9	Coimbatore	Pappampati
10	Coimbatore	Perur
11	Coimbatore	Polur
12	Coimbatore	Sathyamangalam
13	Coimbatore	Virudhachalam
14	Coimbatore	Mannargudi
15	Coimbatore	Gudalur
16	Coimbatore	Sirkali
17	Guntur	Darsi
18	Guntur	Gurazala
19	Guntur	Krosuru
20	Guntur	Kanchikacherla
21	Guntur	Jandrapeta
22	Guntur	Ponnuru
23	Kanpur	Chhibramau
24	Kanpur	Jhinhak
25	Kanpur	Kannauj
26	Kanpur	Safipur
27	Krishnankoil	Aruppukottai
28	Krishnankoil	Rajapalaiyam
29	Krishnankoil	Sivakasi
30	Ludhiana	Millerganj
31	Ludhiana	Samrala
32	Shimoga	Challakere
33	Shimoga	Channagiri
34	Shimoga	Hangal
35	Shimoga	Honali
36	Shimoga	Hosudurga
37	Shimoga	Kadur
38	Shimoga	Ranebennur
39	Shimoga	Shikaripura
40	Panvel	Uran

KEY ACTIVITIES/ PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN OTHER THAN DISSERTATION.

As part of the internship, I participated in the SEVA Training Program, which was organized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the organization's structure and philosophy. The training covered key aspects including:

- Organizational History and Legacy
- Mission and Vision of Sankara Eye Foundation
- Core Values and Guiding Principles
- Introduction to key community eye care models and outreach frameworks

I was inducted into and observed the functioning of all hospital departments, gaining valuable insight into their roles, interdepartmental coordination, and patient flow mechanisms.

Further enriching the experience, I was part of a 3-day field stay camp in Kallakurichi, which provided hands-on exposure to rural eye care delivery.

For my project work, I visited 8 Vision Centres across Tamil Nadu, where I interacted with patients, staff, and community health workers to understand the practical implementation of teleconsultation services and gather data for analysis.

As an additional responsibility, I contributed to the proofreading and review of the Canteen Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document.

KEY LEARNINGS FROM INTERNSHIP

- Gained practical understanding of the functioning and coordination of various departments within Sankara Eye Foundation.
- Participated in outreach and review camps at multiple locations, observing community-level engagement and service delivery.
- Closely observed the outreach department's operations, including field mobilization, patient screening, and post-operative follow-up.
- Designed a research questionnaire aligned with the objectives of the dissertation study.
- Collected primary data from patients at Vision Centres and outreach camps through both face-to-face and telephonic interviews.
- Conducted data cleaning, and analysis, contributing directly to the preparation of the final dissertation report.
- Learned to work collaboratively with optometrists, vision technicians, and camp coordinators, strengthening interpersonal and communication skills.
- Gained exposure to teleophthalmology systems, including video consultation protocols and referral mechanisms.
- Understood how community health models can be scaled sustainably using vision centre-based approaches.
- Developed time management, field coordination, and critical thinking skills essential for healthcare operations.
- Strengthened the ability to apply theoretical MBA concepts in real-world public health settings.