

CURE BLINDNESS FOUNDATION INDIA
Annual Report
April 2025 – March 2026



Executive Summary

The year 2025–26 marked an important phase of growth, institutional strengthening, and strategic advancement for Cure Blindness Foundation India (CBFI). This Annual Activity Report presents the key achievements, milestones, and organisational progress for the financial year April 2025 to March 2026.

Across program areas, the organisation continued to advance its mission of eliminating avoidable blindness by strengthening community-based eye care systems, expanding access to high-quality surgical services, investing in workforce development, deepening government engagement, and reinforcing quality and accountability mechanisms.

Throughout the year, CBFI focused not only on service delivery, but also on building scalable and sustainable models capable of long-term systems integration. This strategic direction was reflected in the expansion of the Prevention Program across Uttar Pradesh, the landmark partnership with the Government of Sikkim, strengthened quality systems, continued investment in clinical training, and growing engagement with government stakeholders on large-scale integration opportunities.

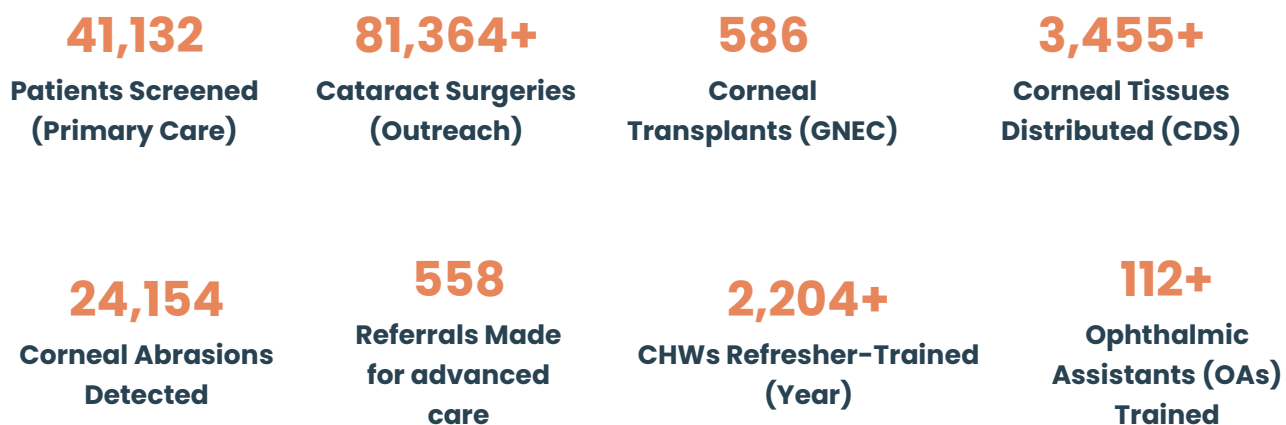
The year also demonstrated the organisation's continued focus on building sustainable and community-centered eye health systems that improve access, strengthen local capacity, and create long-term impact for underserved populations.

Key milestones during the year included:

- Expansion of the Primary Care Program across three intervention blocks in Sitapur and Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh.
- Delivery of more than 81,364 cataract surgeries through institutional partnerships.
- Distribution of more than 3,455 corneal tissues through the Cornea Distribution System (CDS).
- Completion of 586 corneal transplants at Guru Nanak Eye Center (GNEC).
- Release of a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study demonstrating INR 7.3 in social value generated for every INR 1 invested in the Blindness Prevention Program.

- Initiation of government convergence discussions with NPCB-VI, Uttar Pradesh to support scale-up of the Primar care training model under the National Health Mission.
- Launch of a landmark partnership with the Government of Sikkim to institutionalise community-based primary eye care and outreach across the state.
- Strengthening of quality systems through eye bank audits, cataract quality recommendations, and implementation of a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework.
- Continued investment in international fellowships, workforce development, and institutional capacity building.

Annual Impact



These achievements reflect the collective efforts of frontline workers, institutional partners, donors, government stakeholders working with Cure Blindness Foundation India.

As the organisation enters the next phase of growth, CBFI remains committed to strengthening sustainable eye health systems, advancing equitable access to care, and building long-term partnerships that restore sight and transform lives.

BUILDING COMMUNITY-CENTERED PRIMARY EYE CARE SYSTEMS

CBFI's Primary care program continued to strengthen community-based primary eye care by expanding geographic reach, investing in frontline workforce development, and improving access to timely eye care services for underserved communities.

During the year, the program evolved from a service-delivery initiative into a scalable systems-strengthening model focused on early detection, referral, community awareness, and long-term government integration.

Through a growing network of Community Health Workers (CHWs), strengthened partnerships with eye care institutions, and deeper collaboration with government stakeholders, the program advanced early detection and management of corneal abrasions while reinforcing community-centred systems for preventing avoidable blindness.



Image 1: CHW conducting an eye screening in her village.

Geographic Expansion and Program Growth

The Primary care program expanded its footprint in Uttar Pradesh through the addition of Nanpara block in Bahraich district and Rampur Mathura and Mahmoodabad blocks in Sitapur district, Uttar Pradesh. This expansion strengthened the program's presence across six intervention blocks, enabling wider community access to primary eye care services in underserved and high-need geographies.

To support program scale-up and strengthen community outreach, 611 Community Health Workers (CHWs) were trained across intervention areas. These CHWs continue to serve as a critical link between communities and the eye care system by raising

awareness on eye health, supporting early identification of comprehensive eye disease, facilitating referrals and encouraging timely care-seeking behavior.

The initiative was implemented in partnership with Sitapur Eye Hospital, with active participation from local health authorities and government stakeholders.

Strengthening the Frontline Workforce

Continuous learning and quality improvement remained central to the Primary care program. During the year, 961 CHWs across Laharpur and Tambaur received refresher training. Also, an additional 1,243 CHWs were trained across Biswan, Laharpur, Tambaur, Rampur Mathura, Mahmoodabad, and Nanpara. The trainings reinforced competencies related to early detection, referral pathways, patient follow-up, and community engagement. These efforts strengthened consistency and effectiveness in grassroots-level service delivery and further reinforced the role of CHWs as trusted community health actors.

Building Ophthalmic Capacity

In parallel with strengthening community systems, the program also focused on building mid-level ophthalmic capacity.

An Ophthalmic Assistant (OA) training program conducted at Sitapur Eye Hospital engaged 22 OAs and achieved a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 90, reflecting high levels of participant satisfaction and engagement. Building on this momentum, a three-day OA training program was conducted in Chitrakoot, Madhya Pradesh, in collaboration with Sadguru Netra Chikitsalaya and supported by Sunsure Energy Pvt. Ltd. The training reached 60 Ophthalmic Assistants and achieved a 100% Net Promoter Score, demonstrating the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of the training model.



Image 2: OA/ON training organized in collaboration with Sadguru Netra Chikitsalaya and supported by Sunsure Energy.

Community Awareness and School Eye Health

Community engagement remained an important pillar of the Primary care program. As part of World Sight Day initiatives, school eye screening programs reached more than 676 children, with spectacles distributed to students identified with vision needs. In addition, spectacles were provided to 93 school-going girls through support from Seksaria Sugar Factory, Biswan, contributing to improved vision and learning outcomes.



Image 3: School eye screening in Biswan on World Sight Day.

Government Partnership and Scale-Up

A landmark milestone during the year was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Sikkim, Siliguri Greater Lions Eye Hospital, and Cure Blindness Project.

The partnership represents a significant step toward institutionalising community-based primary eye care across the state of Sikkim and reflects growing recognition of the Prevention Program as a scalable and sustainable model for preventing avoidable blindness.

Under the partnership, more than 650 Community Health Workers will be trained, 55 Ophthalmic Assistants will receive specialised training, and more than 5,500 cataract and sub-specialty surgeries are expected to be supported in the coming years.



Image 4: Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Sikkim, Siliguri Greater Lions Eye Hospital, and Cure Blindness Project.

Primary care program impact

Indicator	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual Total
Patients Seen	7,981	10,937	10,780	11,434	41,132
Corneal Abrasions Detected	4,863	6,289	6,338	6,664	24,154
Referrals	75	116	147	220	558



EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH CATARACT OUTREACH SERVICES

CBFI's Outreach Program continued to deliver cataract surgeries to underserved and marginalised communities across India through partnerships with six leading eye care institutions, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, Sadguru Seva Sangh Trust, Akhand Jyoti Eye Hospital, Siliguri Greater Lions Hospital, Trilochan Netralaya and Riti Eye Care.



Image 5: Patient Tamag after successful cataract surgery.

Grounded in the principle of equitable access to high-quality eye care, the program focused on reaching communities with limited access to surgical services.

Across all four quarters, the Outreach Program demonstrated both scale and operational efficiency, contributing significantly to improved quality of life, restored mobility, and greater functional independence for beneficiaries.

Annual Impact of Outreach Program

15,771 Q1 (Apr–Jun)	38,388 Q2 (Jul–Sep)	33,940 Q3 (Oct–Dec)	5,241 Q4 (Jan–Mar)
81,364+ Total Annual Surgeries	51% Male Beneficiaries	49% Female Beneficiaries	

The near-equal gender distribution across all four quarters reflects the program's continued commitment to addressing the disproportionate burden of cataract-related vision impairment among women. Continuing the momentum, an additional 2,175 bilateral patients were screened, indicating strong service uptake and growing community confidence in outreach services.

TERTIARY CARE

Guru Nanak Eye Centre (GNEC)- Corneal Transplants

Guru Nanak Eye Centre demonstrated consistently strong surgical performance throughout the year, exceeding quarterly targets in three of the four quarters.

Annual Impact



Cornea Distribution System (CDS)

The Cornea Distribution System (CDS) continued to demonstrate strong year-on-year growth and operational performance.

Throughout the year, CDS consistently surpassed quarterly targets; more than 3,455 corneal tissues were distributed against a combined annual target of 2,850.

Annual Impact



This performance reflects continued strengthening of eye banking systems, improved coordination mechanisms, and effective institutional partnerships that support timely access to corneal tissue across the network.

CBFI continued to invest in long-term ophthalmological capacity building through fellowships, institutional partnerships, equipment grants, and training collaborations.

These initiatives contributed to strengthening clinical excellence, workforce development, and sustainable eye care systems across India and partner geographies.

Equipment Grants

CBFI continued to strengthen institutional infrastructure through targeted equipment support.

- An equipment grant worth US\$155,000 was extended to Sadguru Netra Chikitsalaya, Riti Eye Care Hospital, and Siliguri Greater Lions Eye Hospital.
- Also, equipment valued at US\$150,000 was provided to four partner institutions to strengthen primary and tertiary eye care services.

These investments supported improvements in clinical readiness, service delivery capacity, and institutional infrastructure across partner hospitals.

Centres of Excellence

As part of its long-term institutional strengthening strategy, CBFI initiated partnership discussions with Orbis India to develop two Centres of Excellence in North India. A feasibility visit to Akhand Jyoti was also conducted to support its advancement as a future training institute.

These efforts reflect CBFI's growing focus on building sustainable regional training ecosystems capable of supporting long-term clinical excellence, research, and workforce development.



Image 6: Patient Kasturi after successful cataract surgery.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

STRENGTHENING QUALITY SYSTEMS AND MEAL

CBFI continued to strengthen quality systems across partner programs, with a focused emphasis on eye banking standards, cataract service quality, data systems, and continuous improvement.

Eye Bank Audits and Certification

Key audit and certification milestones during the year included:

- Drushti Daan Eye Bank: All Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA) items identified during the audit were formally closed, and a certification panel meeting was scheduled to assess eligibility.
- Mohsin Eye Bank, Visakhapatnam: Audit completed on 11–12 July 2025.
- Aravind Eye Bank, Coimbatore: Audit conducted on 14–16 October 2025, with a certification panel meeting in February 2026.
- EBSR approached CBFI for an audit, with discussions initiated with L.V. Prasad Eye Institute for a joint audit.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Framework

A Continuous Quality Improvement framework for cataract services was developed and piloted with selected partners in August 2025.

The framework established a structured approach for identifying, testing, and implementing improvements in surgical quality, patient safety and service efficiency.



Image 7: CBFI team during eye bank audit.

Also, five additional partners were oriented on the framework, followed by technical support and implementation follow-up.

These efforts represent an important step toward institutionalising continuous quality improvement across partner networks and strengthening accountability within service delivery systems.

Minimum Data Reporting

Minimum data reporting requirements for cataract surgeries were finalised for new partners, enabling more consistent performance tracking, outcome measurement, and reporting across the network.

This standardisation helped strengthen data quality and improve the comparability of information across partner institutions.



Image 8: CHW during comprehensive primary eye care training.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & GESI

During the year, CBFI strengthened engagement with government stakeholders and advanced discussions around long-term integration of community-based eye care models into public health systems.

SROI Study Release – Lucknow, September 2025

A landmark Social Return on Investment study conducted by Deloitte on the Blindness Prevention Program in Sitapur was officially released on 11 September 2025 in Lucknow. The study demonstrated that for every INR 1 invested in the program, an estimated INR 7.3 of social value was generated through direct healthcare savings, improved livelihoods, and reduced workdays lost. The event was attended by more than 80 participants and received extensive media coverage.

Distinguished guests included Dr. Promila Gupta, Former Director General of Health Services, Government of India; Dr. Pankaj Saxena, State Program Officer, NPCB-VI Uttar Pradesh; and Sujeet Verma, District Program Manager. District and block officials, ASHA Sanginis, and key partner organisations also participated in the event.

The findings further strengthened the evidence base for scaling the Prevention Program model through government systems and reinforced the value of community-based primary eye care interventions.



Image 9: Group photo from the SROI study release event.

Building on the SROI findings and government interest, CBFi commenced work on a proposal to integrate the Blindness Prevention Program into the National Health Mission's Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs) for 2027. These developments represent an important step toward government-supported scale-up of the ASHA training model and greater institutional integration of preventive eye care services.



Image 10: Dr. Promila Gupta delivering the keynote address at the SROI release event.



Image 11: CBP team member explaining eye care supplies to Dr. Promila Gupta.



Image 12: Patrick Emery delivering the keynote address at the SROI event.

HUMAN RESOURCES & COMPLIANCE

Key Appointments and Organisational Growth

During the year, CBFi continued to strengthen organisational capacity through strategic recruitment and internal leadership advancement.

Key Appointments

- Divya Baliyan joined as Communications Manager, Asia.
- Sohini Sanyal joined as Learning and Development Specialist, Tertiary Care.
- Lopamudra Sanyal joined as Manager, Government Relations and GESI.
- Anshu Singh was promoted to Senior Manager, Primary Care.
- Pinki Kataria was promoted to Manager, Primary Care.

Global Staff Retreat

A global staff retreat was organised in Nepal from 2–5 May 2025, bringing together team members from multiple geographies to strengthen collaboration, alignment, and cross-functional engagement.

Strategic Leadership Engagements

- CBFi had the privilege of hosting Dr. Geoff Tabin, Co-Founder and Chairman Emeritus of Cure Blindness Project, during his visit to India. Together with senior leaders from Cure Blindness Foundation India, Dr. Tabin engaged with leading academic and clinical partners, including Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, and



Image 13: Dr. Geoff Tabin screening a patient's eyes in AIIMS, New Delhi.

L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, to strengthen strategic partnerships, deepen clinical collaboration, and reinforce a shared commitment to advancing high-quality eye care, training, and sustainable capacity building.

- CBFi also welcomed several international visitors and collaborators from Africa, including Dr. Jafer Kedir, Head of the Department of Ophthalmology at Jimma University, Ethiopia; Sr. Eden Bahiru and Sr. Melat Andargachew, nurses from the Eye Bank of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa; and Dr. Diana Brebu-Dadzie from Ghana. The visit created opportunities for clinical exchange, institutional learning, and cultural engagement, including celebrations during the Diwali period.



Image 14: CBFi team during Diwali celebrations.

- Mr. Graeme Warner, Manager, Program Operations at Cure Blindness Project, USA, visited India for field observations and program review, engaging closely with the India program team to strengthen operational coordination and support alignment of program implementation with organisational priorities and strategic goals across geographies.
- CBFi also hosted Josie Noah, Chief Programme Officer, and Jeff Wallace, Chief Marketing Officer, from Cure Blindness Project, USA, during the year. The engagement included discussions with the India team on leadership, organisational culture, communication, and long-term institutional alignment. As part of the visit, Jeff Wallace visited Sitapur to observe the impact of the primary care intervention firsthand, where he interacted with ASHA workers and engaged with local stakeholders, including Seksaria Sugar Factory.

Conferences and External Engagements

- Shaifali Sharma, Country Director-India and Director, Primary Care, and Sheetal Babbar, Senior Manager- Human Resources and Compliance, represented Cure Blindness Project at the India CSR and ESG Summit hosted by CSRBOX. Held under the theme “Enabling the Next Era of Sustainable Growth,” the summit brought together CSR leaders, ESG experts, entrepreneurs, government stakeholders, and development organisations.

- CBFi also participated in the SHRM India Conference 2025 in New Delhi, attended by more than 4,000 HR professionals and global leaders. The team engaged in discussions on leadership, organisational culture, and evolving people practices.
- Jayaprada Pattnaik and Sheetal Babbar attended an FCRA Seminar organised by CPA Services to strengthen understanding of FCRA compliance requirements and evolving regulatory guidelines.

Statutory Compliance

CBFi continued to maintain strong governance and compliance systems throughout the year.

Key milestones included:

- Annual statutory audit completed in June 2025.
- All Income Tax Return and Registrar of Companies annual filings completed by September 2025.
- 80G and 12A registrations successfully renewed for the next five financial years (2027–28 to 2031–32).
- Anti-Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Policy formally adopted and circulated across the organisation.
- Internal Committee constituted and annual PoSH training completed for all staff.
- PoSH annual filing for calendar year 2025 completed, including SHE BOX registration.
- Annual performance evaluations completed, followed by merit increases and finalisation of two internal promotions.

These measures reflect CBFi's continued commitment to accountability, governance, employee well-being, and organisational integrity.



Image 15: Shaifali Sharma and Sheetal Babbar at SHRM India Conference 2025.

CONCLUSION

The achievements of 2025–26 reflect a year of meaningful growth, strengthened partnerships, and continued progress toward building sustainable eye health systems.

Across program areas, CBFi continued to move beyond service delivery toward long-term systems strengthening through government engagement, workforce development, institutional partnerships, quality improvement, and evidence-based engagement.

From community-based primary eye care and cataract outreach to tertiary care and strategic initiatives, the organisation remained focused on expanding equitable access to high-quality eye care for underserved communities.

As CBFi looks ahead, it remains committed to advancing scalable and sustainable models that restore sight, strengthen systems, and improve lives.



Image 16: Three schoolgirls during a community eye screening.