

Orbis India report calls for increasing investment in eye care

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35% of blindness in children and 82.3% of blindness in adults is preventable and treatable

A report by Orbis in India suggests that the country loses an estimated \$118 billion annually in cumulative gross national income (GNI) due to childhood blindness. The report titled Cost-Benefit Analysis of Investing in Child Eye Health is based on 2020 estimates and reflects the economic losses incurred by India due to lost productive years as a result of childhood blindness spanning over a period of 35 years, and rising to \$158 billion for 40 working years.

The report, which is the first-of-its kind since 1998 to update the data on the economic burden of childhood blindness in India, was commissioned to measure and project the burden of blindness in simple economic terms for guiding and seeking continued support and budgetary allocation. It captures the estimated expenditure on medical care for childhood blindness, income losses incurred due to working years lost by the blind persons and caregivers.

The Cost Benefit Analysis of Investing in Child Eye Health has been categorized into three phases, namely updating the economic burden of childhood blindness post 1998, determining the utility weights for each child's eye health conditions, and measuring the quality of life of those with childhood blindness and visual impairment, using the utility measures developed.

India is home to 9.3 million visually impaired and 270,000 blind children, with more than 75% of that figure preventable or treatable. Orbis hopes that this report will engender a new wave of advocacy geared towards achieving zero childhood blindness in India.