



Sightsavers  
India

India  
Fellowship  
Program

# Incubating the Future Ophthalmologists



Sightsavers  
India Fellowship Program  
**2025**



# ABOUT US

Sightsavers India, or Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, is a development organisation working with partners to reduce avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Sightsavers India is collaborating with various departments of the respective state governments to scale up operations for Social Inclusion, Eye Health and Inclusive Education— our three core areas of work.

We work in a sustainable way to promote lasting change by strengthening existing health systems, seeking to advocate with and influence governments, and by demonstrating best practices.

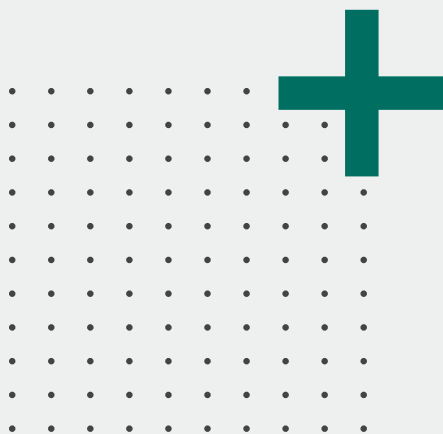
Sightsavers India believes in promoting technologies in eye healthcare, enabling a wider reach of health services. Using innovation in education, we try and make classrooms more inclusive for children with visual impairment.

## MISSION

We are a development organisation working with partners in underserved areas of the country to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

## VISION

Sightsavers India's vision is of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes and where people with disability participate equally in society.



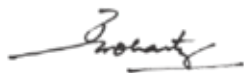
# Message from the CEO

Sightsavers India Fellowship is a program our organisation is very proud of. This initiative allows us to nurture the next generation of talented and dedicated individuals in the field of eye care. These participants are driven by a profound commitment to the well-being of their communities. They are poised to revolutionise the landscape of eye health by shifting the focus from mere quantity to ensuring high-quality care.

Undoubtedly, the scarcity of ophthalmologists in our country remains a pressing concern, given India's vast population. The demand for skilled professionals in this field is ever-growing.

Over the years, we have witnessed a steady rise in the program's popularity among young, aspiring ophthalmologists. This is a testament to its effectiveness in meeting the career aspirations of emerging professionals. The fellowship offers a unique opportunity for recent post-graduates with limited practical experience to evolve into proficient surgeons. Over the course of 24 months, our Fellows undergo rigorous training under the guidance of industry experts. They refine their clinical and surgical skills and gain invaluable exposure to community-based healthcare settings, participate in surveys, and cultivate leadership qualities through interaction with senior mentors. These experiences provide a holistic understanding of the complexities of eye health care. An education in ophthalmology with the mettle of being a team player and attributes of empathy and passion for exploring rural India are adequate for the program.

I sincerely hope you will consider joining the Sightsavers India Fellowship Program, and I look forward to building a lasting relationship with you. Together, let us make a lasting impact on the world of eye care.



RN Mohanty,  
CEO, Sightsavers India



## The Context

Despite significant advancements in accessible technology and innovative healthcare delivery models, blindness caused by cataracts and refractive errors remains a pressing public health issue in India. While high-volume centres of excellence exist in select locations, many rural and semi-urban areas still need access to essential healthcare services. Surgical interventions offer a safe and highly effective means of restoring vision lost to these conditions, but their success depends on well-equipped facilities and dedicated, skilled teams.

Shortages of trained professionals, especially in rural regions, delay treatment and worsen vision impairment risks. Addressing this shortage through comprehensive training programs and incentives for professionals to work in underserved areas is crucial for equitable eye healthcare nationwide.



# Sightsavers India Fellowship Program

Sightsavers India Fellowship is an opportunity for promising and passionate young ophthalmologists to get trained at some of the leading eye health institutes in India. Alongside, the fellows will get a chance to apply these skills and knowledge in a real-world scenario while being placed under Sightsavers India Eye Health Programme.

The program identifies promising young ophthalmologists from India and groom them through an innovative course to enhance their perspectives on rural eye health.

Over the period of 24 months, the fellows experience a structured skill enhancement and mentoring process covering not only clinical and surgical ophthalmology but also managerial and holistic life skills. The process involves skills upgradation components and personal interactions with eminent leaders in eye care and development sector. Every stage of the fellowship program optimizes learning that helps the fellows transform into all-rounder seasoned professionals.

## Salient Features



24 months journey



Hands-on training at leading institutions\*



Exciting district postings



One-on-one clinical-surgical mentorship



Participation in community-based survey



Self-transformation mentoring



Attractive stipend and residential facility

\*Cataract surgeries and exposure to commonly encountered anterior segment procedures such as DCT, Pterygium, Corneal Ulcer management, Intravitreal antibiotic, Anterior vitrectomy and lid surgeries

## Training Institutions

Leading eye health institutes of India will impart clinical and surgical trainings to the fellows. They will also provide remote and onsite mentoring to the fellows during their placement with host hospitals in districts.



Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

Caring for the community since 1914...

Delhi



Kolkata



Noida

## Strategic Partner

Enrollment in Alcon Phaco Development (PD) Program for getting trained in latest techniques on advanced cataract procedure.

Alcon  
SEE BRILLIANTLY



## Self-Transformation Mentoring Partner



Mantra  
management training  
research associates

Attitude is Everything!

## Fellows Speak



“ This program has honed my surgical skills and equipped me to manage complications effectively, thanks to personalised one-on-one training by seasoned experts. As I begin my journey in host locations, I'm greeted by a supportive atmosphere, with the Sightsavers India team by my side. This fellowship has sharpened my professional skills and ignited a passion to serve my community with compassion and excellence. ”

**Dr Uma, Sightsavers India Fellow**

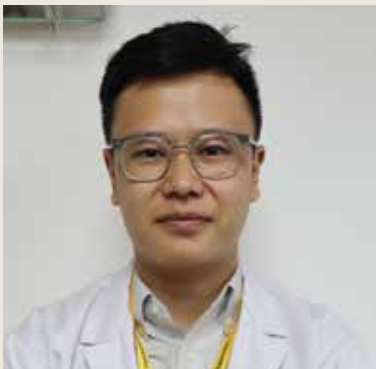
“ Four months of rigorous training transformed my surgical skills, empowering me to perform surgeries independently. Now stationed in a remote area, I provide essential eye care to underserved communities. Thanks to Sightsavers India's support, I am making a meaningful daily impact. It's an honour to be part of this vital work. ”

**Dr Mohd Daiyan, Sightsavers India Fellow**



“ After four intensive months of training, fellows like me are deployed to peripheral locations for 20 months, extending quality eye care to grassroots communities. This program ignites a sense of philanthropy, inspiring us to serve underserved segments. Additionally, it offers insights into hospital management, enriching our current work and preparing us for future endeavours. ”

**Dr Mese Mero, Sightsavers India Fellow**



“ Under the tutelage of esteemed mentors, I have learnt the delicate art of Small Incision Cataract Surgery (SICS), gaining proficiency and the confidence to perform these life-altering procedures. Sightsavers India Fellowship program provided a collaborative learning environment, and support fostered my growth as a skilled surgeon. ”

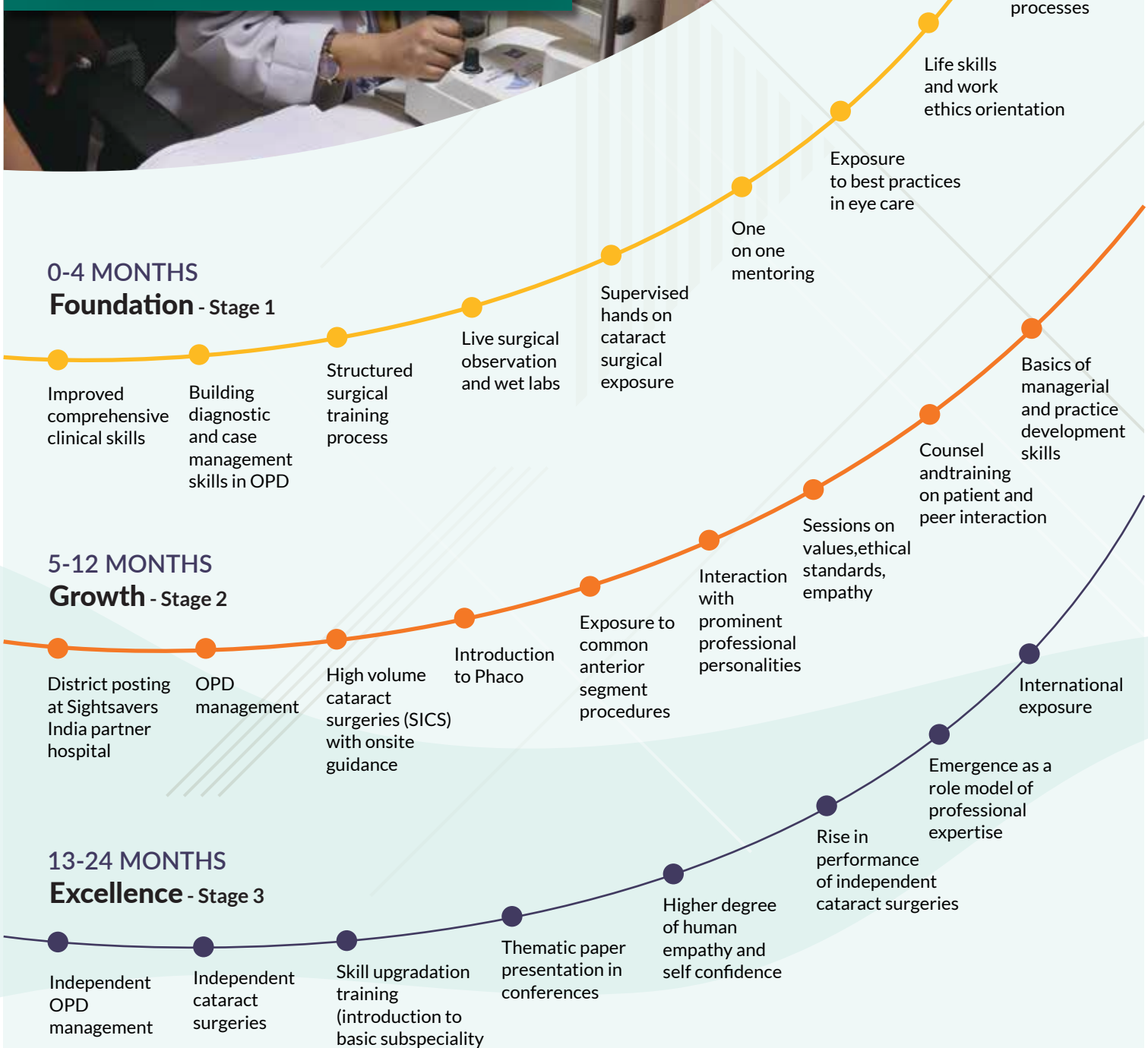
**Dr Rumana Aafreen, Sightsavers India Fellow**





# 24 Months Journey

Mentoring on clinical/surgical and life-skills enhancement



# Eligibility

Postgraduate or a diploma holder in ophthalmology (MS/DNB/DO) from any recognized institute/ university in India, having sound knowledge on clinical ophthalmology (current year pass outs are eligible to apply).

## Desired attributes:

High learning orientation, adaptability, professional ethics, emotional resilience.

## Selection process

### Preliminary Selection

- Application submission
- 1st round of shortlisting
- Call for panel interview

### Final Selection

- Final list endorsed by the committee
- Reference/Background check
- Formal induction and orientation

The decision of Sightsavers India management will be final.



## Fellowship Stipend

- ₹ **35,000** per month - Initial four months training period;
- ₹ **65,000** per month - 1st year of field posting;
- ₹ **75,000** per month - 2nd year of field posting;

### Additional benefits

- ▶ Lump-sum payment upon successful completion of year 1 and 2.
- ▶ Medclaim, accident, term and professional indemnity insurance.

## Post Fellowship

- ▶ Sightsavers India recommendation for other sub/super - speciality fellowship at one of the training partners based on feedback of clinical mentors.
- ▶ Continue with Sightsavers India hospital partners as their staff, if agreed mutually;
- ▶ Completely depart from the program as per their personal aspirations;
- ▶ Alumni fellows are encouraged to stay connected with the program as visiting faculty, interact with future candidates and share their achievements.

## Placement

At host hospitals in district(s) of one of these states for hands-on learning experience.



To apply visit: <https://indiafellowshipprogram.sightsaversindia.in/> or scan QR code:

For more information call: +91 9818157997

Email ID: [indiafellowship@sightsaversindia.org](mailto:indiafellowship@sightsaversindia.org)



# Guiding Voices

**Dr Manoj V. Parulekar,**  
Consultant Ophthalmologist,  
NHS UK

“Sightsavers India Fellowship Program is a unique initiative to develop a cadre of young ophthalmologists who would work within wide network of ophthalmologists across the world.”

## Unique Initiative

**Dr Umang Mathur,**  
Executive Director & HOD  
Ophthalmology, Dr Shroff's Charity  
Eye Hospital, Delhi

“The Program is well designed to nurture and give supervised surgical skills to handle any kind of cataract surgery and manage the practice properly.”

## Nurtures Best Ophthalmology Talent

**Dr Asim Sil,**  
Medical Director Chandi Campus,  
Vivekananda Mission Asram (VMA)  
Netra Niramay Niket

“This fellowship has included one-to-one mentorship. It is going to be very much helpful for the candidates.”

## One-to-one Mentorship

**Thulasiraj RD,**  
Executive Director,  
LAICO – Aravind Eye Hospital

“Sightsavers India Fellowship Program in some ways could be beginning of building eye care leadership in India.”

## Builds Eye Care Leadership



# Chronicles from the Field

Dr Saif, a dedicated professional with roots in a small town in Uttar Pradesh, realised his childhood dream of becoming a doctor to impact society positively. After obtaining an M.S. in Ophthalmology from Aligarh Muslim University in 2023, he aspired to become an eye surgeon and joined the Sightsavers India Fellowship program.

Selected based on a recommendation from a senior fellow, Dr. Saif underwent four months of intensive training at I Care Noida, honing his skills as a confident cataract surgeon and compassionate ophthalmologist. Post-training, he was assigned to The Christian Fellowship Hospital in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, an institution serving the rural and tribal population for over 50 years.

Under the supportive administration, Dr. Saif's journey as an ophthalmologist began in January 2024, marked by continuous improvement in eye surgeries. Engaging with the local population through camps and field activities, he found deep satisfaction in alleviating patients' anxieties, counselling them for surgery, and witnessing their improved vision outcomes.



During his tenure, Dr. Saif encountered patients who had suffered from near-blindness due to poverty and limited healthcare access. In collaboration with Sightsavers India, the hospital organised camps in villages and tribal areas, identifying patients and ensuring they received cataract surgery. Dr Saif personally performed surgeries on about a thousand eyes.

Dr Saif acknowledges their role in his professional evolution by expressing gratitude to Sightsavers India and the host organisation. One such success story is Shukham Bai, a 60-year-old widow from Chhuria village in Rajnandgaon.

Struggling with deteriorating eyesight for two years, Shukham Bai's daily life became challenging. After several failed attempts by her daughters to persuade her to have surgery, she was introduced to Sightsavers India's Chhuria Vision Centre, supported by Standard Chartered Bank. Dr Saif, during a counselling session, diagnosed her with bilateral cataracts, emphasising the risk of complete eyesight loss without surgery.

Realising the urgency, Shukham Bai was referred to the base hospital in Rajnandgaon. Pre-surgery, her vision was severely impaired, but after the successful procedure in her right eye, it improved significantly to 6/18. Overjoyed with the results, Shukham Bai expressed her excitement about celebrating Diwali and experiencing the festival lights properly for the first time in years.

This success story exemplifies Dr Saif's commitment to change lives through surgical interventions and the collaborative efforts of Sightsavers India.



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[www.sightsaversindia.org](http://www.sightsaversindia.org)

Sightsavers India is registered as “Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind”  
under Bombay Public Trust Act 1950 vide registration number E4330.

