

# Nepal Fact Sheet

SEVA'S WORK AT A GLANCE: In country since 1978 | Partners: 21



## Country Overview

- » Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia. Predominantly located in the Himalayas it also includes parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain
- » Nepal spans 56,956 square miles
- » Population: 29.1 Million
- » 2021-22 Human Development Index Ranking: 143 of 191 countries<sup>1</sup>

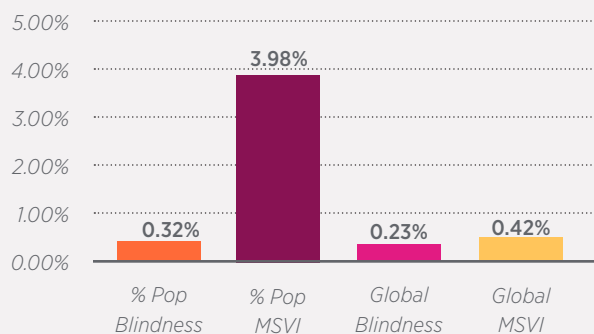
## Scope of Eye Care Needs<sup>2</sup>

- » 0.32% of Nepal's population is blind (100,000), as compared to 0.19% in the United States.
- » 3.98% of the population has moderate to severe vision impairment or MSVI (1,230,162), as compared to 2.02% in the United States.
- » 0.23% of global blindness
- » 0.42% of global MSVI

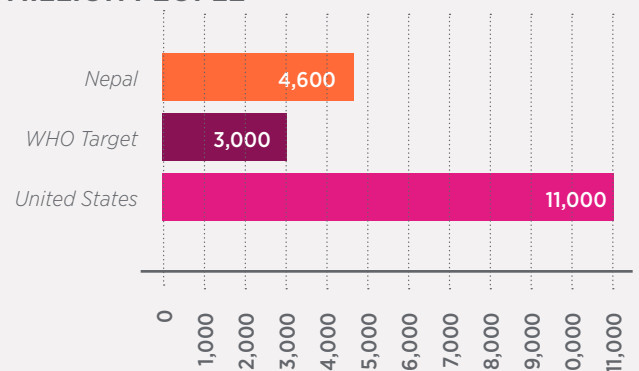
## Nationwide Eye Care Response

- » Nepal's Cataract Surgical Rate (CSR) was 4,600 surgeries per million in 2019, as compared to the US CSR of 11,000
- » 8.4 Ophthalmologists per million people in 2015 (240 total)
- » 86.1 Optometrists per million people in 2020 (2,510 total)
- » 26 allied ophthalmic personnel per million in 2019 (750 total)

### EYE CARE NEEDS



### CATARACT SURGICAL RATE PER MILLION PEOPLE



<sup>1</sup> 2021-22 UNDP Human Development Report: [https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf\\_1.pdf](https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all country sight statistics from IAPB Vision Atlas: <http://atlas.iapb.org/global-action-plan/gap-indicators/>

### Context

Nepal has undergone tremendous transformation since moving out of agrarian isolation and opening its borders in the 1950s to neighboring India, and with it, the outside world. The country has since abolished its monarchy, lived through a decade of civil war, which ended in 2006 and created a multi-party parliamentary system. Following nearly half a century of political turmoil and enormous transition the region was hit with the destructive earthquake of 2015, killing thousands and destroying an already nominal infrastructure as well as rich heritage sites. Nepal's economy relies heavily on outside aid, foreign remittance and tourism, as it remains one of the poorest countries in the world. More than 80% of the blindness in Nepal is either preventable or curable, however the vast majority of people in Nepal don't have access to quality, affordable eye care. This is greatly due to the inaccessibility of rugged terrain that separates 81%<sup>1</sup> of the Nepalese population living rurally.

Today, there are 240 ophthalmologists in a country of over 29 million, which equates to 8.4 for every million person. Seva has created a network of eye care providers through partnering with Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh, REMEH, Butwal Lions and TIO and its branches in 33 districts out of a total of 77 districts in the country. The services provided through this wide network target the most vulnerable populations including women, children and hard to access rural communities. Seva is providing its services through 56 Vision Centers across all 7 provinces.

Seva supports continuing medical education, professional training, and provides surgical equipment and supplies, all of which serve to increase the quality of patient care. By equipping our partners with the tools they need to provide quality, efficient services, Seva builds locally run eye care programs that are self-sustaining within 5-10 years of establishment. Additionally about 540,000 eye examinations and nearly 51,000 eye surgeries are performed annually in Nepal through

Seva and local partners, thanks to the support from TOMS, Focusing Philanthropy and other donors.

By assessing Nepal's **Burden of Blindness**, we are able to reveal how blindness or moderate to severe visual impairment (MSVI) imposes a challenge to this population. **Nepal has 0.23% of global blindness**, for a country with nearly 30 million, this is a fairly manageable rate. Compared to the US, with a population of over 300 million and 0.35% of global blindness, we can, however, still see the relative disproportion.

### Seva's Approach in Nepal

Seva supports eye care services in the four main geographical areas of Nepal:

**The Lumbini Zone** (the central western development region) has a total of eleven eye care facilities including one center of excellence, two secondary eye care hospitals, two surgical centers, two District Eye Care Centers and five Vision Centers (VCs).

**The Narayani Zone**, located in the central south of Nepal with five districts, has a network of three eye hospitals with VCs in each district. Bharatpur Eye Hospital has one Secondary Eye Hospital in Thori and Parsa and eight VCs. Gaur Eye Hospital has three VCs. Kedia Eye Hospital has five VCs.

**The Eastern Region** consists of five eye care facilities supported by Seva Nepal.

Seva works closely with Geta Eye Hospital located in the Kailali district to provide eye care services in six remote districts throughout the **Far Western Region**. This area does not have active and organized local NNJS chapters (Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh — National Society for Comprehensive Eye Care) to help gather local resources and facilitate delivery of eye care services. Therefore, Seva's support through outreach activities in collaboration with Geta Eye Hospital has been critical in providing the necessary eye care services to this particularly disenfranchised population.

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<sup>1</sup> Reported in 2016, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators.

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Seva's approach to addressing eye health needs in Nepal prioritize three key strategies; **Access** to universal eye care, building **Capacity** of personnel and infrastructure as well as **Evidence**-based interventions and advocacy.

**Primary eye care services** are provided through VCs as well as through eye camp outreach, which offer exams, medical treatment, glasses, surgeries and transport. In 2016-17 63% of the patients seen at eye camps in Nepal were female, similarly 63% of all patients seen at hospitals or VCs were female or children.

Modern **Technology** for patient care is vital in supporting up to date practices implemented locally. By purchasing clinical equipment for partner hospitals, Seva and our partners ensure an increase in availability of quality services for the Nepali population. This year Seva will also support two hospitals to introduce tele-consultation linking its hospital with its remote VCs.

By focusing on **Hospital Management Systems** such as training, tracking and evaluations, hospitals and local communities alike are more equipped to build out their capacity and more effectively serve their populations. This year Eyexcel training was implemented and organized by the Seva Nepal staff with sessions delivered by local partners and invited faculty.

Seva with our partners, provide trainings for local doctors in ophthalmology residencies, Allied Ophthalmic personnel as well as teachers for school screenings. The quality of cataract surgeries, evaluation of personnel and the effectiveness of service delivery are all tracked. Attendance at professional conferences and meetings allows our partners to share program findings with a broader community of specialists.

Seva Nepal is also involved in developing National Eye Health Strategies led by the Ministry of Health in Nepal.

Finally, by tracking financial sustainability and cost recovery Seva can support maintaining and building up the capability of services to those in need.

### EYE CARE PERSONNEL

8.4



Ophthalmologists per million people

86.1



Optometrists per million people

26



Ophthalmic personnel per million people

= 10 million people

### SPOTLIGHT ON REACHING CHILDREN

Seva Nepal's Youth Led Outreach Program (YLOP) held 25 school screenings, 10 school and community awareness campaigns, and created a robust media campaign including reports, manuals, podcasts, webinars, jingles, children books, mural paintings, promotion on social media, etc. to highlight the importance of eye health for children in remote communities. In total, they examined 6400 children, provided 288 glasses, and found 605 operable cataracts, 318 of which underwent surgery. Despite COVID-19 limitations, they successfully completed the program and impacted the lives of children throughout the Nepali region.

## Impact of COVID-19 in Nepal

Nepal experienced its first wave of COVID-19 cases in October 2020 and the second wave in May 2021. Although the government enacted periodic lockdowns throughout the year to limit transmission, Nepal’s border with India largely remained porous. When India’s COVID cases rose, Nepal’s caseload increased within weeks.

In response to the pandemic, Seva and its partners developed a three-pronged approach, focusing on infrastructure, capacity, and collaboration to combat COVID-19. Seva invested in critical equipment and supplies, including PPE, oxygen plant/concentrators, and safety materials to overcome the acute shortages. Seva also conducted training sessions for project staff and partners to equip them with information and tools to respond to the pandemic. Topics included best practices for COVID-19 safety measures, COVID-19 education and awareness, and the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for hospitals to ensure safety in outpatient eye care. Through these initiatives, Seva collaborated with the local

government, partner hospitals, and communities to support their response measures to the pandemic.

Bringing eye care closer to people’s doorsteps also became more critical during the pandemic, especially as travel restrictions persisted throughout the year. To ensure eye care services remained accessible, Seva invested in 9 new vision centers across Nepal last year. Altogether, these vision centers serve a population of more than 630,000.

Seva also piloted a Youth-led Outreach Project in the Eastern Region of Nepal. The project deputed a team of youth coordinators to increase patient flow to Itahari Eye Hospital, increased publicity of its services, and created awareness among the local community about eye health. In only a few months, the project strengthened the link between communities and the hospital and developed measures to ensure quality services and follow-up by the hospital. During this period of youth-led outreach intervention, the hospital saw a 1.3-fold increase of patients and, similarly, cataract surgeries increased by 2.6 times.

### IMPACT (FY 2021-2022)\*

<b>800,791</b> People receiving services	<b>87,917</b> Cataract surgeries performed	<b>94,373</b> Children screened	<b>1,428</b> Children receiving surgery	<b>27,997</b> Children receiving glasses
<b>4</b> New VCs funded through Seva	<b>46,500</b> People who now have access to care	<b>17,837</b> People receiving services at VCs	<b>2071</b> Community Health Promoters trained	<b>62</b> Doctors trained
<b>22</b> People participating in Eyexcel	<b>8</b> Hospitals participating in Eyexcel	<b>175</b> AOPS trained	<b>44</b> Administrators trained	<b>1</b> Eyexcel classroom workshop

\* Numbers based on reports received.

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