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Better eye health could boost Indian economy by $27 billion

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Indian economy loses more to avoidable sight loss than any other country bar China and the US Top 20 countries with the biggest Gross Domestic Income (GDI) losses from avoidable sight loss



Avoidable sight loss would add $27 billion (Rs 2.2 trillion) per year to India’s economy, according to new research released. The Love Your Eyes campaign is releasing the figures to highlight how improved eye health boosts productivity, urging business leaders to put eye health on the workplace wellbeing agenda.

The study, conducted by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and Prof. Kevin Frick from Johns Hopkins, calculated the costs of avoidable sight loss among people over 50. India had the third-highest potential savings of all countries in the study. Top 3 countries with the biggest Gross Domestic Income (GDI) losses from avoidable sight loss are China, US and India.

As technology transforms the world of work, the future economy will be dominated by service industries and office-based jobs involving the prolonged use of screens. Without proper precautions, this can lead to eye strain and negatively impact eye health.

Sight loss costs the global economy $411 billion every year, according to the Lancet Global Health Commission on Global Eye Health. An estimated 30% of people with sight loss experience a reduction in employment, with women, people in rural communities and ethnic minority groups among the groups most affected. However, 90% of sight loss is avoidable with early detection and treatment.

In India, there are currently 70 million people with visual impairment. Preventing sight loss with early detection and treatment for eye conditions like cataracts and myopia is vital to protect livelihoods and allow businesses to thrive.

Vinod Daniel, CEO of India Vision Institute says, "People from disadvantaged and rural communities lack adequate access to eye care, and are thus denied vision screenings and a pair of corrective glasses. This means uncorrected refractive error is costing the country billions in lost productivity, and valuable earnings for the individuals affected. Early detection is crucial to preventing blindness. We work directly with communities, schools and workplaces to provide free vision screenings and spectacles to those who otherwise wouldn't have access. Preventing vision loss changes everything for them and allows them to thrive in work and life."