

Ramayamma
International
Eye Bank



L V Prasad Eye Institute

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Eye Banking in India

Blindness has devastating effects on individuals, families and communities, impacting education, economic development and child mortality rates, and India is home to the greatest magnitude of blindness from corneal problems. Of the 12 million blind in India, 1.1 million are blind in both eyes due to corneal disease, injury or infection.

The only known cure for corneal blindness is corneal transplantation, using healthy corneas donated by individuals upon their death. But despite the heightened awareness regarding eye donation during the past two decades, India still lags in meeting the demand for donor cornea tissues. The supply of donor tissues falls short of the needs for sight restoration surgery for various social and religious reasons. According to the Eye Bank Association of India (EBAI), against the annual requirement of 100,000 donor corneas in India, in 2012-13 the corneas collected were 44,806 and the corneas utilized for transplantation were 20,632.

There is a need for a more systematic and multi-tiered approach to eye banking in order to bridge the gap between the need and availability of quality donor corneas. The establishment of RIEB in 1989 was primarily aimed at overcoming the challenge and creating a Centre of Excellence in eye banking not only in terms of quantity but also the quality of donor cornea tissues.



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Chronology of Events

From an Eye Bank to a Centre of Excellence in Eye Banking

1989

Establishment of the Ramayamma International Eye Bank (RIEB) with initial support from the Gunnam Subba Rao Trust and technical support from the International Federation of Eye and Tissue Banks (IFETB), Baltimore, USA.

1990

Initiation of Hospital Cornea Retrieval Programme (HCRP).

1994

Established Mc Carey-Kaufman (MK) Medium preparation laboratory.
Switched over from whole globe enucleation to corneal excision procedure.

1995

Initiated training program for Eye Bank professionals with support from Eyesight International, Canada.

1999

Contributed to development of 'Medical Standards of Eye Banking in India' document.

2001

Installation of Specular Microscope.
Community Distribution commenced in addition to taking care of the supply to LVPEI surgeons as also corneal surgeons across the country.

2003

Established international training and resource centre for eye banking and corneal transplantation, with support from Orbis International, USA, and Eyesight International, Canada, the first of its kind in India.

