

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Supporting Free Cleft Reconstructive Surgeries of Underprivileged Cleft Patients

01 Project Details

Project number	10354
Project title	Supporting Free Cleft Reconstructive Surgeries of Underprivileged Cleft Patients
Project duration	Mar 2021 – Mar 2022
Approved budget	Rs. 525 lakhs
Major stakeholders	Underprivileged cleft patients
Location	Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
Implementation agency	Smile Train
Assessment agency	Thinkthrough Consulting, New Delhi

In India, birth defects are listed as the cause of death in around 7% of deaths among children under the age of five.¹ A cleft of the lip and/or palate is one of the most common birth defects and widely prevalent in Asian population. Its' occurrence among the Asian population is reported to be around 1.7 per 1,000 live births or higher, with approximately 35,000 new-born cleft patients added every year to the Indian population². Immediately after birth, patients with cleft of the lip and/ or palate face several issues and if not treated on time, it can further lead to issues such as misarticulation, malnourishment, hearing and breathing problems, low self-esteem, and confidence etc.³

The average cost of each surgery for simple cleft defects at private hospitals is between INR 25,000 and INR 50,000, whereas government hospitals conduct the surgeries for free of cost, however, they lack adequate infrastructure, funds, and staff⁴. Insufficient financial resources, both on the part of patients and government healthcare facilities, have given rise to a detrimental cycle resulting in a growing number of untreated cases. Private hospitals have better facilities, but high costs make it impossible to provide cleft care services at nominal rates. Bajaj Finance Limited partnered with Smile Train India to provide support for free cleft reconstructive surgeries to ensure safe treatment and rehabilitation for underprivileged patients born with cleft.

¹ World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia, 2013, *Birth defects in South-East Asia: a public health challenge: situation analysis*, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia. Available at:

<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/204821>

² Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Department of Health Research – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India, 2019. Available at: https://main.icmr.nic.in/sites/default/files/ICMR_press_Conference.pdf

³ National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Facts about cleft lip and palate*. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/cleftlip.html>

⁴ Srinivas Gosla Reddy, Avani Pandey, Aditya Bansal, 2021, *Cleft surgery in India - Past, present and future and a model for global knowledge transfer*, Available at:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8361316/#bib2>



02 Key Activities

- Identification of hospitals (new existing with adequate infrastructure)
- Identification of surgeons with more than five years of experience
- Verification of new partners through partner checklist by Smile Train's Program Manager and independent Medical Advisory Council (MAC)
- Verification of existing partners based on annual review of hospitals
- Onboarding of hospital to join the Smile Train network and sign agreements
- Identification of target beneficiaries
- Verification of documents submitted by the parents/guardian
- Consultation and assessment of the patients before the surgery to check severity
- Undertaking cleft lip and/or cleft palate surgery
- Verification of surgery (Global team verifying post operative pictures and documents of the patients on STX. Smile Train team verifying through interactions with the beneficiaries)
- Identifying gaps through the quality Of surgery recorded on STX
- Undertaking training of surgeons to address gaps identified in surgeries

03 Key Impact

For the scope of this impact assessment, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria developed by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was leveraged. The pillars assessed for the purpose of this assessment were- Relevance, Execution Excellence, Impact and Sustainability.

90%

90%

of the respondents, stated cleft to be diagnosed post birth of the child

88.90%

of the respondents belonged to households with an annual income of less than INR Eight Lakhs per annum

99%

of the respondents reported availing free of cost surgeries

of the respondents mentioned that they learned about this project from word of mouth/reference

53%

of the respondents received post operative care like speech therapy and orthodontic services

35%

of the of the total beneficiaries (3, 919) travelled from their native states to the states of respective hospitals

The impact assessment focuses on four key components:

Impact on physical health:

94%

of the respondents reported improvement in nutritional intake post-surgery

83%

of the respondents reported improvement in speech clarity post-surgery

81%

of the respondents reported improvement in breathing post-surgery

Impact on psychosocial function:

90%+

of the respondent reported improvement in the attitude and confidence of the beneficiary post-surgery

78%

of the respondents perceive an increase in acceptance from their family post-surgery

80%+

of the respondents observed behavioural change towards the patient post-surgery

Impact on institutional barriers:

65%

of the respondents perceive that that the beneficiary has started receiving acceptance in social spaces like community functions, parks etc. post-surgery

74%

of the respondents reported improvement in the performance at school post-surgery

Impact on the larger ecosystem:

95%

of the respondents reported getting surgeries within the stipulated time as suggested by the surgeons

About 94% of the respondents reported overall satisfaction with the surgery provided as a part of the project and the impact it had on the life of their ward, of which 87% of the respondents reported a high satisfaction rate. Due to the degree of satisfaction reported, over 97% of the respondents reported recommending these surgeries to potential beneficiaries
