



## World Health Organization's Specs 2030

**For Prelims:** Specs 2030, [Refractive Error of Vision](#), [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

**For Mains:** Impact of vision impairment, Challenges India faces in providing vision

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

Millions around the world suffer from **vision problems**, with a significant portion in need of spectacles. However, **access to eye care remains a challenge**, particularly in **low- and middle-income countries**.

- In response to this crisis, the **74<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly, 2021** has embarked on an initiative called "**Specs 2030**" to provide integrated and **people-centered eye care**.

### What is Specs 2030?

- **About:**
  - The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) is set to launch the SPECS 2030. The initiative's goal is to assist **member states in addressing the unmet need for spectacles** while ensuring the delivery of quality eye care.
- **Vision:**
  - It envisions a world in which everyone who needs a **refractive error intervention has access to quality, affordable and people-centred refractive error services**.
- **Mission:**
  - It has the mission to support Member States with the achievement of the 74th World Health Assembly endorsed **2030 target on effective refractive error coverage**.
  - The initiative calls for coordinated global action amongst all stakeholders across 5 strategic pillars, in line with the letters of SPECS, to address the key challenges to improving refractive error coverage.

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### What is a Refractive Error of Vision?

- **About:**
  - Refractive error of vision is a common eye condition that **affects the way light is focused on the retina ( a light-sensitive layer of tissue in the back of your eye)**, leading to **blurred or distorted vision**.
  - This condition can manifest in **various forms and severity levels**.
- **Types of Refractive Errors:**

| Types of Refractive Errors            | Description  | Correction   |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Myopia (Nearsightedness)</b>       | Difficulty seeing distant objects, clear near vision. Light focuses in front of the retina.            | Corrected with a concave lens.                           | <p>(a) Far point of a myopic eye<br/>(b) Myopic Eye<br/>(c) Correction for myopia</p>                           |
| <b>Hypermetropia (Farsightedness)</b> | Difficulty seeing nearby objects, relatively clear distant vision. Light focuses behind the retina.    | Corrected with a convex lens.                            | <p>(a) Near point of a Hypermetropic eye<br/>(b) Hypermetropic eye<br/>(c) Correction for Hypermetropic eye</p> |
| <b>Presbyopia</b>                     | Age-related difficulty focusing on close objects, typically around middle age.                         | Corrected with bifocal lenses (both convex and concave). | <p>Presbyopia<br/>Presbyopia Corrected</p>  |
| <b>Astigmatism</b>                    | Blurred or distorted vision at any distance. Irregular cornea or lens shape causes uneven light focus. | Corrected with a cylindrical lens.                       |   |

- **Symptoms of Refractive Errors:**
  - The most common symptom is blurry vision. Other symptoms include Double vision, Hazy vision, Seeing a glare or halo around bright lights, Headaches, and Eye strain.

## Other Types of Common Eye Defects/ Diseases

- **Color Blindness (Color Vision Deficiency):**
  - The most common type of [color vision deficiency](#) makes it hard to tell the difference between red and green. Another type makes blue and yellow look the same.
- **Cataract:**
  - A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye, which is typically clear. It occurs when the structure of crystallin proteins that make up the lens in human eyes deteriorates.
- **Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD):**
  - It is an eye disease that can **blur central vision**. It happens when **aging causes damage to the macula** — the part of the eye that controls sharp, straight-ahead vision. The macula is part of the retina (the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye).
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):**
  - It is an eye condition characterized by inflammation of the conjunctiva, the thin membrane

that covers the white part of the eye and lines the inner eyelids.

▪ **Glaucoma:**

- It is a **group of eye diseases that can cause vision loss and blindness** by damaging a nerve in the back of your eye called the **optic nerve**.

## What is the Impact of Vision Impairment?

▪ **The Global Vision Crisis:**

- According to WHO, over **2.2 billion people globally suffer from compromised eyesight**.
- At least **1 billion of these cases could have been prevented** with access to proper eye care.
- A staggering **90% of individuals with vision impairment** or blindness reside in **low- and middle-income countries**.

▪ **India's Urgent Need for Vision Care:**

- India is facing a huge challenge of providing eye care and glasses to millions of people who suffer from vision impairment due to uncorrected refractive errors.
  - According to the WHO, **at least 100 million Indians need spectacles** but have no access to them.

▪ **The Economic Impact of Vision Impairment:**

- Vision impairment results in a significant global economic loss of approximately USD 410.7 billion.
- The cost of ensuring access to eye care and treatment for all is estimated at USD 24.8 billion, according to the WHO.

▪ **The Alarming Rise of Myopia:**

- Myopia is increasing globally. In China, the average onset of **myopia has shifted from 10.5 years to 7.5 years in just two decades**.
- East and South Asian countries, including Taiwan, Korea, China, Singapore, and Japan, are witnessing a significant surge in myopia cases.
- **By 2050, it is projected that 50% of the world's population will be myopic**. It is predicted that half of the world's population will require glasses in the near future.

## Way Forward

- **Implementing strategies to reduce screen time**, encouraging outdoor activities, and monitoring children's eye health can help combat myopia.
- Encouraging individuals of **all ages to undergo regular eye check-ups** is essential for early detection and intervention.
- Building infrastructure for **accessible eye care services**, especially in remote and underserved areas, is critical.
- Public **education campaigns should be launched to increase awareness** about refractive errors and their impact on vision.
- Encouraging governments, NGOs, and the private sector to collaborate and invest in the **Specs 2030 is essential to achieve its goals**.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Mains

**Q.** Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. (2018)

