

# Educators see optometry as a sound choice

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**Pune:** Optometry, a visual science that deals with the examination of human eye, is gaining scope in Pune as a profession with four colleges offering courses.

Officials of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) said that the country requires as many as 1.70 lakh optometry professionals to cater to the growing population.

Prakash Dalvi, motivational speaker at ASCO, said, "At present, there are close to 36,000 optometry professionals in India and the number is much lower than the actual requirement to cater to the population in India. There is an acute shortage and qualified optometrists are needed."

According to ASCO, in remote and rural areas people do not get proper guidance, diagnosis and treatment for eye diseases, hence it is observed that eye problems are concentrated in these areas in large numbers.

Dalvi said, "Optometry deals with all non-surgical aspects of a visual system and a professional can find refractive error and correction methods through spectacles, contact lenses, low vision aids among others."

Optometrist may also provide vision therapy exercises for squint and lazy eyes. "An optometrist is a primary healthcare professional who is institutionally educated and technically trained in the art and science of optometry," said Dalvi.

He cited an example of H V Desai College in Pune. "The situation is disappointing two years ago when just six candidates enrolled in 25 seats. Our association members created awareness among students and conducted career counselling programmes for two years. As a result, last year in H V Desai College there were 60 applications in 25 seats and it was an encouraging sign," he added.

## CAREER BENEFITS

- Secure job and income
- Recession-proof profession
- Option to choose one's own timings, work on part-time basis if one has to study further or if life situations demand
- Institutionally qualified optometrists are indispensable, whether it is a small, medium or large size eye hospital/ institution

## ELIGIBILITY

- Minimum: HSC
- English subject must
- Physics, Chemistry, Maths/Biology

## SKILL SETS ACQUIRED AFTER COURSE

- Correction of refractive errors of the eye and prescription of glasses
- Detection of ocular related systematic and neurological diseases
- Designing and fitting of contact lenses and low vision aids
- Primary eye care in school, colleges and occupational optometry industry.
- Counselling patients with partial sight, colour blindness and hereditary vision defects
- Evaluation of health status and pathological condition of the eye and visual system and referral of patients to specialists at the appropriate stage

## REMUNERATION

The initial pay package is promising. Fresh graduates are paid some-where around Rs 25,000-30,000 a month. For those who set up their own business, there is no upper limit to the kind of money they can earn

## COURSES

### Bachelor in Optometry

➤ This is a four-year degree course and first three years are academic while the fourth year is an internship. Minimum qualification is HSC (science)

### Diploma in Optometry

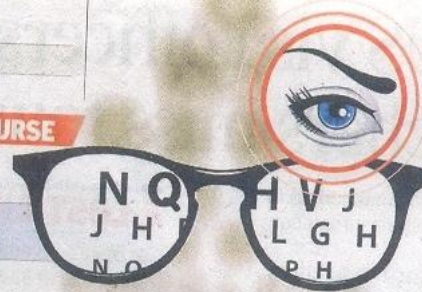
➤ This is two and half years course with two academic years and six months of internship. Minimum qualification is HSC science

### Diploma in ophthalmic technical assistant (DOTA)

➤ The minimum qualification for this course is class X pass and after completing two years of this course, candidate can get admission to the bachelor's degree course

➤ PhD and Masters in Optometry is also available to achieve further excellence in this field and there is also great scope for research and development in optometry field. Masters degree in optometry is a two years course after seeking bachelors degree

(Source: Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry)



## COLLEGES IN PUNE

- H V Desai College, Mohammadwadi
- Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Dhankawdi
- D Y Patil College, Pimpri
- MES College, Sadashiv Peth

## COLLEGE PROFILE: S P COLLEGE



### About the College

Sir Parashurambhau College campus is spread over 25 acres and offers courses from junior college to PhD level. It has 31 departments at the undergraduate level, 12 departments at post-graduate level and three offering PhD courses.

**Infrastructure** Apart from the well-equipped laboratories, the library houses more than 1.53 lakh books and subscribes to 80 journals. Facilities for computers, e-books and e-journals and LCD projectors are also available. The

college also provides several sports facilities including an Olympic-size swimming pool and an eight-acre sports complex.

**Established by** Shishan Prasarak Mandali in June 1916

**Seats**  
1,500  
for junior  
college

**Location**  
Tilak Road

**Famous alumni** Sikkim Governor Shrinivas Patil, MP Rajani Patil, cartoonist Mangesh Tendulkar, Marathi music director Anand Modak, actor Shrikant Moghe, actress Mrunmayee Deshpande

**Hangouts** The college has a canteen on campus. The gymkhana is also a popular hangout