



SPEECH

**OF
SMT ANUPAMA SINGH,
FIRST LADY OF THE STATE,
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
ON LAUNCHING OF
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN
A JOINT INITIATIVE BY
MUSKAN SOCIETY, DEPTT OF HEALTH &
PROJECT HIGHWAYS**

**AT
RAJ BHAVAN DARBAR HALL,
ITANAGAR**

**ON
MONDAY, 16 NOV, 2009**

On behalf of Muskan Society, the Department of Health and Family Welfare, the Raj Bhavan officials and on my own behalf, I extend my heartiest welcome to all of you. I am very happy that you all could join us today as we launch the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign right here at the Raj Bhavan. I am overwhelmed by your gracious presence.

I would like to thank our Honourable Minister for Health and Family Welfare Shri Tanga Byaling ji for being with us here today. Sir, your very presence makes lots of difference as it indicates how concerned the department and the State Government is on the very important issue of breast cancer. We are also very happy that you are with your team, The Team Healthy Arunachal, including Health Commissioner Anshu Prakash, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Moji Jini, Dr. M. Basar and Dr. Tsering, who have enlightened us on this silent killer.

I also would like to thank Dr. Ritu for her address as well as her phenomenal work that she has done to educate young women about this disease. As you all know, Dr Ritu Biyani has made it her life's mission to spread awareness about cancer, particularly breast cancer, among women, not just in the urban centres in India but in the remote and tough-to-communicate stretches of the country, touching the four tips of India at Kutch, Kanyakumari, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. Let us give a big round of applause for the lady who is no less than The Nightingale.

I am really thankful to Dr. Ritu for having the courage to share her story with us today. It is important for her and other survivors and for us to remind that sharing of their stories really makes a difference.

I would like to thank my dear friends, Chairperson of State Women Commission Smti Komoli Mossang, Jarjum Ete, Padmini Singla, Mamta Riba, Dr. Chaitali P. Lokhande, Dr. Tasso Kampu all the members of Muskan Society. I thank each one of you for your outstanding work in organizing this function.

Friends, we are really encouraged by the presence of all the ladies and girls, who are here to attend this very important campaign. I take this as a harbinger of success. You are raising the voice against this silent killer so that governments, NGOs and the private sector can come to the realization that breast cancer poses a threat to the survival of our women population. This campaign should speak to the conscience of the society so that every person join hands and help, save and improve the lives of thousands of women in the State. I am sure we can and we will.

Ladies and gentlemen, I take this privilege to inform you that His Excellency, The Governor has extended his best wishes to all of us for this campaign, which aims at raising awareness about breast cancer. The Muskan Society, in it's small initiative, with collaboration of Health and Family Welfare department and my dear Dr. Ritu will be organizing the awareness event at Ziro, Daporijo, Aalo, Yingkiong and Pasighat as well.

As we have learned and are now well aware that breast cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer death among all women. Like all of you, when I hear the word 'cancer' I see only faces of pain. Faces of children with family tragedies. We have all seen what cancer does, and we are here today because we hope for a day when it doesn't happen to anyone else.

Make no mistake about it: this dream can happen in our lifetime, if we as individuals redouble our commitment to make it happen.

Many of these deaths can be prevented, through regular screening and early detection and treatment. In fact, if detected early through self-examination and mammograms, the survival rate for most types of breast cancer will exceed 90 percent. The number of breast cancer diagnoses continues at an unacceptably high level, the overall survival rate is decreasing due to lack of awareness. Therefore, let's spread the message that women in Arunachal Pradesh need to get smart and get themselves screened.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have to play a role in this progress. Early detection remains the key. That is why initiatives and programs on screening are so important: We have to involve anganwadi workers, the ASHAs, our learned teachers and Goan Burahs.

I would like to suggest that we need to organize walkathons, rallies and small group meetings at all level. Postering and distribution of pamphlets are a must. Exhibitions of food that prevent cancers and carcinogenic items will be very educative.

We also have to improve access for patients to cutting-edge clinical treatment. There may be many women who die because they could not get adequate treatment which is not acceptable today. This is something that could happen to any one of us and we must prevent it. For this we need the help of State Government, and with Shri Byaling here with us, we really hope for more cooperation and more importantly fund allocation for the programme. Let there be no doubt – the cost of inaction is even greater.

We also need to continue our efforts in availing improved, quality and breakthrough medications and treatment for breast cancer for our people. That too, if possible at a subsidized rate. Efforts should be made to provide financial help to the patient. As it is the fairer gender case, I would like to appeal to my mothers, sisters and daughters to come forward on a mission mode.

Here, one more thing I want to emphasize one more issue and that is - we should react positively towards the effected person. As any cancer survivor will tell you: the power to fight cancer comes from the heart and from the soul. Support from family members and community is of paramount importance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe we can do great things in life and let's begin it with this campaign. It is our concern for our own people that we are here today. It is our calling. It is our character, our pride. Working together, marching together, fighting together, I know we will be successful.

With these few words, I commence the launching of the Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign.

Let it be the first step towards a Cancer Free Arunachal.

Jai Arunachal, Jai Hind.