

Speech of the Honourble Governor of Assam
at the inaugural ceremony of 14th Annual conference, 2018 of
VISION 2020: Right to Sight - India

Honourable Director General of Health Services, Government of India Dr.Promila Gupta ji, Former Judge Supreme Court of India and Chairman, SKSH&EF Justice Shri S.N.Phukan, Medical Director of Shri Sankardeva Netralaya Dr.Harsha Bhattachajee, dignitaries off the dais, Ladies and Gentlemen and my dear friends from the media.

I am happy that Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya is hosting the 14th Annual Conference of VISION 2020: Right to Sight – India. I welcome all the faculties and speaker from across the country as well as the North-Eastern region. VISION 2020 is a WHO collaborative programme and reshaping the wellness and eye care of people across the world. I am confident that scientific deliberation, discussion and solution arrived to different issues will help to solve the eye-care problems in India and North-Eastern region in particular and the citizen will be benefited.

I am informed that Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya was established in 1994 with an objective of establishing state-of-the-art eye-care, medical education and research with dedicated approach to the community particularly in order to serve the underserved. The institution is constantly achieving their goal and refining their future aims and objectives for progressively sustainable development. The service of the institution was dedicated to the nation by the then Prime Minister Sri

P.V. Narasimha Rao in the 1995 and subsequently the institution has been declared as centre-of-excellence by the previous Prime Minister of India Dr. S. Manmohan Singh Ji in 2004. I am happy to inform you all that recently I have declared 140 community villages adopted by Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya under the “Hospital Based Community Eye Health Programme (HBCEHP)” as free from avoidable blindness. It is a remarkable achievement of the Community Dept. of Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya. I congratulate and encourage them to keep-up their good work. I was also informed that several other villages were also adopted for serving the rural community.

India has a champion and welfare programme the “National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI)”. It is one of the most successful welfare programme in the world. Under this programme, the prevalence of blindness has reduced approximately by 0.5%, but I believe as the population of our country is increasing, there is also proportionate increase of volume of patients. So the programme should carefully look into the issues and enhance activities so that the country remains free from curable and avoidable blindness as well as from visual impairment. The socio economic impact in blindness is enormous.

VISION 2020: Right to Sight- India is also a global initiative for elimination of avoidable blindness. It is a joint programme of WHO (World Health Organization) and “International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness” working with the similar mission and goal of

eliminating avoidable blindness worldwide by 2020. I understand the theme of this year conference is advocacy and inclusive programme for eye health. Advocacy in healthcare as well as partnership between healthcare providers are important. It has been observed that though eye care facilities is being provided by the Govt. of India at free of cost, many people are not coming forward to avail the service, and I believe to motivate them proper healthcare education, public awareness and advocacy are essential. The healthcare infrastructure and human resource including eye surgeon necessarily should be up-to the standard recommended by the Government. Confidence building among patients is important. I find the fixed vision centers and “Hospital Based Community Eye Health Programme (HBCEHP)”, as adapted by Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya is a good approach where the institution remains constant touch with the rural population. Assam is badly affected by blindness issues, so implementation of the programme in a scientific way will provide relief to the citizen. Connectivity and various logistic are also important issues. All these are to be solved by various innovations.

I wish a grand success of the conference.

Thanking you,

Namaskar

Jai Hind.