

Minoti Borthakur - Courage to fight the odds!



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Aiyushman Dutta 5 August 2008 79851 views

When the going gets tough, the tough gets going, so sang Billy Joel. But when the going really gets tough, life tends to get disheartening, discouraging and everyday seems like drudgery. But once you make that breakthrough, you derive power in the truest sense of the term. Meet Professor Minoti Borthakur, who has not only proved the relevance of these words but is encouraging disheartened people to start dreaming and hoping once again.

Minoti's story is one of courage and determination as she dared to fight a cunning and baffling disease like cancer, even when all doctors had given up hope, and emerge victorious. And in the process, she has set an example for others with her immense courage and faith in the Higher power. Her fight did not end with her conquering the disease for she has been encouraging people to live life positively besides providing support to cancer patients and depressed people. And to aid her in this direction, she penned her experiences while fighting the disease in the form of a book three years back.

There is good news for people of the northeast now. Minoti's highly acclaimed book, *Mur okhukhor ek bosor* (One year of my ailment) has now been translated for the benefit of thousands of cancer survivors in Northeast India. Cancer has a high rate of incidence in the northeastern periphery of the country, primarily due to the extensive use of tobacco and other oral stimulants.

The English translation of the book *A Cancer survivor's struggle and success* was released recently at Guwahati by noted litterateur and Gyanpith award winner Dr. Mamoni Roisom Goswami, in the presence of veteran writer Dr. Hiren Gohain. Hailing Minoti's efforts in providing support to hundreds' of people afflicted by the dreaded disease, Dr. Gohain said, "Cancer patients have to undergo huge mental trauma and in most cases, the patient loses mental strength to carry on. Minoti's book will encourage them to fight the disease and she will be source of inspiration for generations to come".

A person who fought against the disease for more than a year, Minoti has been an epitome of strength for those around her. In fact, she had started meditation classes in her college when she encountered cases of depression, mental fatigue and low self-esteem among her students. She did not lose hope even after doctors of the famed Tata memorial Hospital gave up all hope of her recovery and instead, she implemented a strict regimen of meditation, yoga and a highly nutritional diet with ample doses of spirituality. She says, “In most cases, the patients and their families are unaware of the nutritional needs and cancer care needs of the patients. I have tried to include all these aspects in detail in the book”.

Stressing on the need for more support for cancer patients in the region, Minoti, who has been working with other cancer patients in the northeast, said, “Following its release in 2005 and the tremendous response of the people, a lot of patients from other States who come to the B. Barooah Cancer Institute for treatment have been asking for its English version. I hope the book would not only encourage the patients but also the family members and equip them with the necessary tools and mental strength to fight the disease”.

Authorities of the sole cancer research hospital of the region – the B. Barooah Cancer Institute – have hailed Minoti’s dedication towards the welfare of the cancer affected people of the region. BBCI Director AC Kakoti said, “Borthakur is a living example that nothing is impossible if one has the grit and will to achieve. She is closely associated with the cancer patients and we hope this book would immensely benefit patients from other North-eastern states”.

Minoti Bothakur retired as the head of the department of philosophy, Cotton College. She now runs a honorary counselling centre - “Minoti’s counselling centre” - where she imparts training in yoga, meditation besides imparting counselling to increase the mental strength of her clients.

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