

## Awards for tobacco control announced

*Burning Brain Society (BBS), a leading civil society organisation working on public health and civil rights has announced annual awards for people working on tobacco control. Awards in eight categories to be given to Police, State Government, District Administration, Journalists, NGO's, Social Workers, Schools and Business Houses*

Chandigarh, Chandigarh UT, IND, 2008-05-19 12:31:15 (IndiaPRwire.com)

Burning Brain Society (BBS), a leading civil society organisation working on public health and civil rights has announced annual awards for people working on tobacco control. The awards shall be given to individuals and organisations contributing their bit to save a million lives lost every year to tobacco in India.

Currently tobacco kills nearly 5.4 million people per annum worldwide, out of which every fifth person is an Indian. According to WHO, Tobacco caused 100 million deaths in the 20th century. If current trends continue, there could be up to one billion deaths (Equivalent to current population of India) in the 21st century. Tobacco remains the biggest cause of heart attacks and cancer. What is more unfortunate is that nearly eighty percent of tobacco-related deaths will occur in the developing countries like India within a few decades. The shift of tobacco from developed to developing countries is caused by a global tobacco industry marketing strategy that targets young people and adults in developing countries.

BBS chairperson Hemant Goswami informed that the 'Annual Tobacco Control Warrior Awards' shall be given in eight categories every year. The recipients would be selected from India by way of selection, invitation and by nomination. The categories in which the annual awards would be given are;

**Best Enforcement Activity (TWO):-** To be given to an individual police official and/or enforcement official for best performance in enforcing the law. Another to be given to a police station/department with maximum prosecution under tobacco control legislation every year.

**Best Mass Media Effort (FIVE):-** Journalist, one each from English, Hindi and vernacular Media; and two from electronic media for their effort to dispel the myths and misinformation campaign of the tobacco industry and facilitate the scientific evidence and facts to reach the masses.

**Best Civil Society Efforts (TWO):-** One for a Civil Society Organisation (NGO) working on tobacco control and another for a community/resident welfare organisation.

**Tobacco Control Bravery Award (TWO):-** Any individual who has challenged the might of the industry in any way and produced concrete results. One each for a male and female.

**Best State Government Initiative (ONE):-** The State Government doing best work to protect people from secondary smoke and enforcing smoke-free legislation.

**Best District/City Initiative (ONE):-** A District/City doing the best work in tobacco control and in

enforcing the tobacco control legislation.

**Best Educational Institute Initiative (ONE):-** An educational institute and/or educational board/University which have undertaken tobacco control activities producing physical results.

**Best Business House (ONE):-** To be given to a corporate/business establishment which protects its employees from any form of tobacco exposure, has made the work-place smoke-free and initiated efforts to make all of its employees and their families tobacco-free

'At least two lakh workers die every year due to exposure to second-hand smoke (smoke from other people's cigarette/beedi) at work. An estimated seven hundred million children, or almost half of the world's children, breathe air polluted by tobacco smoke, particularly at home which causes many serious diseases in children,' informed Devender.

Talking about the necessity to give these awards to persons working on tobacco control, Hemant said, 'People don't realize, but the tobacco epidemic which kills nearly ten lakh people every year in India is man-made and entirely preventable. On an average, one death every six seconds is caused due to tobacco use. If we put in a little bit of efforts, tobacco can be de-glamorised and millions of lives can be saved. So the good work of all those who are producing results in tobacco control despite the interference of the tobacco industry and against all the odds must be recognised publicly.'

Devender Madan, Secretary-General of Burning Brain Society informed that 2008 awards would be given with the support of 'Tobacco-Free World Foundation' but over the years BBS would be developing an independent corpus for these annual awards.

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A non-profit news agency.

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