



AISHWARYA BACHCHAN

BRING A SMILE

https://youtu.be/kTw_KyXcHIc

Good afternoon everybody, ladies and gentlemen, and the Smile Train extended family. I congratulate Smile Train today for completing 500,000 cleft surgeries in India. In the context of what we're talking about, it is a short span of 18 years, and I consider myself extremely privileged to be sharing this, in celebrating this occasion because, in the honourable work that Smile Train does, this is truly and very endearingly referred to as a "milestone". One that we collectively are extremely proud of. And one we feel blessed to be a part of.

Smile Train and I have now been associated for almost a decade. And this journey has truly been wonderful. Thank you for having me on board, on this wonderful journey. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to be a part of making a difference in the lives of so many children born with a cleft, and I'm happy to see so many children treated.

I've had the opportunity on various occasions with Smile Train to have interacted with the children. Post their surgeries, and we all talk about at our various meets about how the kids get a new lease of life and get to enjoy all the privileges that we all do on a day-to-day basis of this blessed life. And it's really, truly very, very fulfilling to experience that first-hand with the children.

But all this would not have been possible without the dedication and the work of all you doctors. Thank you so much for partnering with Smile Train, all the nurses, the speech therapists, the orthodontists, the workers on the ground, on the job, thank you for your dedication and your continuous efforts to help the dreams of so many children and their families come true. And by providing cleft care to all these children, we are actually able to give them a wonderful life. And this in itself is a blessing for each of us. Your dedication, your hard work, and your compassion truly is the driving force of Smile Train.

The outreach workers who travel from village to village to reach out to children with clefts, uniformed personnel of border security force and Sashastra Seema Bal and their Wives Association who connect children with Smile Train in border areas and difficult geographies. The government partners who work with Smile Train under the National Health Mission. You all make invaluable contributions in ensuring that every child has access to cleft treatment.

It gives me joy to see the generosity of the corporate sector in India and all the individual donors. Thank you so much for keeping this journey ongoing. With everyone's support and dedication, I'm confident of many, many more "milestones" to come.

I have been fortunate to have also had the opportunity of sharing on this, my journey, my family's participation. My parents and my daughter also recently or be it very early in her life has gotten introduced to the work that we do together with Smile Train. And I'm so thankful, so grateful to God that I've been able to share in this experience and get them to recognize and get them to participate in such effective work with children. I'd say world over, but at this point, currently very, very strongly even here in India.

Last year, Smile Train very, very generously offered to honour my father the late Mr. Krishna Raj Rai by announcing his birth date, the 20th of November as the day of Smiles. Thank you so much because this meant so much to us. My father worked with me, with Smile Train, and you know, you all who know me over the years, know that I like to always do something more effective and more concrete, on every personal occasion actually of our family. That's what my parents always taught me.

So, these things don't get announced, but we've always done it. So, when the, my daughter's birthday is on the 16th of November and dad's is the 20th. So, the year before, in fact, was the first time, his last, that I celebrated Aaradhya and dad's birthday together. So, this year was particularly emotional for us as a family. And I really wanted to do something very, very effective. And with daddy, it had to be about smiles. It had to be about celebrating everything that he has taught me, everything that we have passed down through me to Aaradhya. It had to be about bringing a smile to people's lives. And we have worked together with Smile Train.

So, thank you so much that we have together decided that the 20th of November will be the day of smiles. And we continue to bring smiles into so many children's lives, people's lives and their family's lives. Every day deserves to be as a day of smiles, in everybody's life. I always say it's in the now, it's in the present. You've got to thank God for this blessing called life every minute. And we have to make a difference every minute that we can. And hence, a day of smiles is every day. But yes, I guess I've chosen to underline it with the 20th of November.

I'm proud to be associated with Smile Train for all these years. And I extend my heartfelt congratulations once again, to everyone present here and all those who are unable to be present here with us today for your effective work, for your dedicated work. Thank you so much for making a difference in so many children's lives and supporting the work of Smile Train through the Aishwarya Rai Foundation, has been my small personal contribution in the larger picture of the honourable and effective change in the lives of cleft patients.

I look forward to continuing working with Smile Train for many, many more years to come. We refer to the number of years. We refer to the numbers in terms of the surgeries, these many "milestones" to feel inspired, to feel motivated, to feel validated with all the work that everybody does on a daily basis. But these are merely numbers and there's no end to wanting to achieve that next "milestone".

So, the work we all agree will be ongoing for as long as, and as far as our journey can take us. So, I won't put a cap on the number of years. We're all here to continue doing what we can do, and at the same time in all humility, I say, thank you. Thank you, each one of you. God bless. And I can't stop saying, thank you.

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