

In Quest of Victory

Rotary senses victory in polio eradication. But that is the easy part. When it comes to polio eradication, victory is all about your drive and ability to ensure that every child is vaccinated.

When the National PolioPlus Orientation and Planning Meet was in session on April 26th and 27th, 2011, the DGEs might have come with the thought, “They’ve all been told before.” But this time the National Committee Members did not hash and re-hash the whole time on technical details of the virus or how the NID is to be run. Rotary leaders including RI President-elect Kalyan Banerjee, PRIP Rajendra K Saboo, PRIP Wilf Wilkinson and the Chairman of INPPC PDG Deepak Kapur spoke about their life experiences on how they combated this virus and shared their knowledge with the participants.

The DGEs and DPPCs were told very categorically that they cannot shut themselves away from the expert’s rich knowledge of polio eradication if they wanted to celebrate victory this year. The ‘just one case’ feeling was good but complacency can make one grow into many.

We can be proud that during this year’s meet the mood was upbeat that polio may be on the way out from India. The DGEs should remember that when it comes to eradicating polio, it is now or never. The sense of relief was also shared by Dr. Hamid Jafari, WHO. He appealed to the Rotarians to help the health department in identifying migrant labour in their area and children who must be vaccinated. The final push towards polio eradication may be the most difficult phase of this programme. Advising the Rotarians to take extra precautions, PRIP Rajendra K Saboo said that we cannot afford to have this virus surface



PRIP Wilf Wilkinson addressing the meet.

in new areas and highlighted the war-like panic which broke out when polio cases were detected in West Bengal and Malegaon.

RI President-elect Kalyan Banerjee asked, “Why is polio not going out of India when it has been eradicated from rest of the world?”

As the District Governor you have access to umpteen resources. The help available from INPPC should be used effectively. If the clubs in the district do not make the NIDs a success the district will lose its bite and shine. There is no point if the DGE mumbles half-heartedly about why the DPPC was ineffective or the clubs failed to turn up in large numbers during the NIDs. Rotary International buoyant mood stems from the fact that there has been only one case of polio from January 2011 till now. This has been achieved with great sacrifice and with a huge cost. The Rotarians in the polio endemic states were able to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the health workers and other partners in the programme and contain the virus to a very small area.

The outcome of the meet will depend on how effectively the DGEs and DPPCs put their knowledge to

work. Due to misplaced priority, clubs seem to squander their resources on just small projects. Every project is important, but today the need is polio eradication. This needs to be the priority for the DG and the club President. Rotary encourages you to change the world in your own way on your terms. However, Rotary International is now in sight of victory over polio. During this last and decisive phase of the eradication programme, should you not be pooling your monetary and physical resources to drive polio out of India? Don’t you feel you owe this to our leader Rtn. Kalyan Banerjee who will lead the Rotary world in 2011–2012? Polio eradication programme cannot become the victim of the myopic outlook of Rotarians here. Will you write the new chapter on India’s liberation from polio?



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