

Nowhere to Go

We have allowed our world to be driven by various diseases including polio for too long. Now, this year 2011, is the opportunity to drive polio away. This year belongs to Rotarians. But who are Rotarians? They are people who nurture and enhance the spirit of service. All that they do with enthusiasm brings joy and love.

Consider what Rotarians have done in India for the past few years, especially during the last two years to contain the polio virus. Their service dimension and determination to eradicate polio dissolved the boundaries of caste, creed and religion. Children all over the world have to be saved from polio. That was their mission.

The crusade against polio brought about a sense of belongingness, responsibility, compassion and caring for the whole world. The NIDs kindled everyone's spirit and created a sense of universality.

What happened earlier in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra when polio cases were reported was a lesson that paved the way to realign the forces and strategies in combating the polio virus. Though the virus sneaked through into West Bengal during 2011, the good news is that only one case has been reported till the beginning of July 2011.

Rotarians were able to relate to everybody in West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Borders were secured and the effectiveness of the NIDs and SNIDs were improved. The majority of the Rotarians who were disillusioned by the outbreak of polio in West Bengal united together



with the hope of taking the battle to the very end. It was heartwarming to see Rotarians forsake their individual interests to take responsibility for the children of their country. The INPPC team ensured that the Rotarians are not carried away by emotion and end up taking impulsive action in sensitive areas. The IPPC drove home the point that polio eradication is not possible as long as fear, disbelief and suspicion prevailed in the community. Rotarians were trained to enter into areas that could have been safe havens for the polio virus and destroy it.

We as a nation are on a threshold of a revolution, or so we believe. Polio eradication seems definitely possible sooner than later. The whole nation's input for the past two decades is going to produce the desired result now. Yes, the polio virus has now been

cornered. More and more children are being immunised. Routine immunisation programmes are more effective. Borders have been sealed. With nowhere to go, the eradication of the virus from the world seems imminent. We still need resources to make this happen. What TRF needs immediately is a more inclusive world of Rotarians who can contribute liberally to destroy the polio virus now. To make a difference for human lives around us, a deep sense of inclusiveness is crucial. If only a small percentage of Rotarians support TRF, the much needed revolution will not happen. The District Governors and the DPPCs must empower the Rotarians to participate in this final phase of polio eradication. Unless the grassroots Rotarian is educated, trained and made fit to participate in the last phase of the polio eradication programme, we may sit on the threshold forever, seeing it pass by.

Remember, if the virus escapes now and surfaces in some other area, your children or grandchildren will have nowhere to go since the country will again become unsafe. The polio virus is now being destroyed and this opportunity cannot be wasted.



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