

# Target - Polio Eradication



*Shanu, a 14-year-old polio survivor in Lucknow.*

At a recently held meeting with the Government officials, Ministers, Rotary leaders and other agencies polio eradication efforts was the major discussion agenda and the Government is in full support to fortify all efforts to conquer Polio.

It seems that after many years of Rotary's involvement in this crusade, Rotarians are showing signs of neglect. There is no doubt that most of the senior Rotarians have seen varied efforts to control polio and may show signs of ennui but over the last few years over 30,000 new Rotarians have entered our clubs and for them to show sluggishness is not acceptable. The club leadership owes the responsibility of informing, motivating and exhorting the new Rotarians to participate in polio eradication drive. Most of the clubs give only lip service to polio eradication and visit a centre or two on Pulse Polio days and supervise immunisation procedure for a few minutes or hours. This is not enough. Rotary is committed to conquer polio and has spent very huge amounts to support the cause. Only a cosmetic involvement is not what is expected of us. We need to reinvent in polio and we need to give more time and talent to excite and motivate new Rotarians.

Secondly, we can not rely on Government agencies and Municipal staff to carry out our dream project. We need to reinvolve ourselves in the process of immunisation. Routine immunisation is perhaps reasonably well spread but our stress on routine polio drops needs to be reactivated. Rotary clubs have medical men and women

who can motivate the doctors practicing in the remote areas, slums and low-cost housing societies to spread the message of good health through routine immunisation. Urban areas may have better facilities but rural and semi-rural areas often are neglected. Rotary has entered many of these areas and Rotary can be a torch bearer of health promotion.

Earlier, we had seen resistance to immunisation programmes from select groups but this resistance is now minimal. We need to work in tandem and insure that we put that drop in the mouth of the child.

If more than 95 percent of the world is almost polio free—why not India? The last lap of our race is to be run with that extra burst of speed that will take us past the winning post.

We need to remember that unless we wipe out polio from this globe, our credentials will remain challenged and Rotary will not be able to approach the communities in future for any project however worthy it may be, if we fail to eradicate polio. We have made a promise. It is for us to fulfill that promise.



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