



# What more can you do?

A Rotarian asked, What more can we do to eradicate polio from India? My reply was, “Contribute more.” The puzzled Rotarian asked, “But how can more contributions alone help?” I just said, “Give more and more, again and again, you will know.”

An important lesson in the Polio Eradication Programme that must be learnt is that it requires huge amounts of money to spread awareness. The analogy is simple. Why do corporate spend enormous amount of money on advertising their products and services? It is to make the people know.

From more than hundreds of polio cases a few years ago, we were able to contain the virus to just 42 cases during 2010 and till the end of March 18, 2011 we have only one case. How did this happen? Those who went barefoot into the slums and many times to inhospitable locations to talk to the parents to bring their children to the immunisation booths will vouch for every dollar that is spent. All aspects of the Polio Eradication Programme are important. The workers from our partner agencies such as WHO and UNICEF have to keep their spirits high when they work for long hours in areas that a well dressed Rotarian normally will avoid.

Governments and donors such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation support the programme with sizeable contributions because they have diagnosed the basic cause of why India is still a polio endemic country. There was a very large population spread over a vast area. Nearly one-third of them were illiterate. Hygiene factor was low and priority for the parent was earning the daily bread. The need to meet and talk to these people was never been greater than what it is now.



During the early days of the immunisation programme the people had to be educated that polio was preventable. All these advocacy programmes had to be done in languages that could be understood. Billboards, posters, flyers, stage plays, seminars, health camps and supplying vaccines had to be organised. All these needed the monetary support from every Indian who felt deeply for the children around them.

Rotarians have a great self-esteem. It recently became high when we declared that polio could be contained and probably we can see a polio-free India the next year. With an all time high contribution to TRF during 2009–2010, you brought India to the top three position. You would have found that you have a mission statement in your life. This mission statement will encompass all the good you do and all the potential you develop to do good to others. So, is there a limit to what more you can do? Definitely not.

Polio will not vanish by someone waving a magic wand. That is wishful thinking. District leaders who dissuade clubs from contributing to the Challenge Grant and to the polio eradication drive have a distorted view of the campaign. Our life in Rotary is represented by true values. In Rotary we look for opportunities to serve others. Every action of yours in saving a child today from polio has an intrinsic value. Our collective efforts will bring about a new generation of children who will never hear about this disease. Once you realise your role in this mammoth project, you will stop playing to the gallery.

So, what more can you do? You can give more in your relationship to the children of India. You can become more inspired to drive away polio. Give more of your wealth for the pleasure of seeing your children and those around you live without the fear of being stricken by polio. Every second of your life in Rotary will be immortalised. You get so much more in life for just sharing a portion of your wealth to The Rotary Foundation to do good on your behalf. The Rotary Foundation takes your rupee to every part of India and works to provide better health and education to children. When the world pats us next year for making India polio-free, you will be the first person to walk with your head held high. So, what more can you do?



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