



## Refusal family relents, children get life saving vaccines

One of the biggest success stories in the polio high-risk area of Androon Bairoon Kotla in Devband block of Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh is the case of Mohammad Tanveer. Having not immunized any of his nine children, Mohammad was finally convinced of the need for polio immunization by the relentless efforts of CMC Moumeena.

Mohammad's wife used to turn away vaccinators saying, "None of my nine children are immunized. My God takes care of them. We don't need your vaccine." However, Moumeena did not give up. She continued to pay repeated visits to the family. Moumeena along with BMC Seema and local influencer Dr. Matluub explained to them the risks their children faced from the seven life threatening diseases, including polio, that can be prevented by taking the vaccines available free of cost at the health centres and the polio immunization rounds. With relentless efforts, the family got convinced and agreed to immunize their five-month-old daughter. The mother when pregnant ensured she was administered the 2 Tetanus shots and that her newborn was routinely immunized.



Moumeena counsels a young mother on polio and other health issues.

## Amitabh Bachchan conferred Polio Eradication Champion award

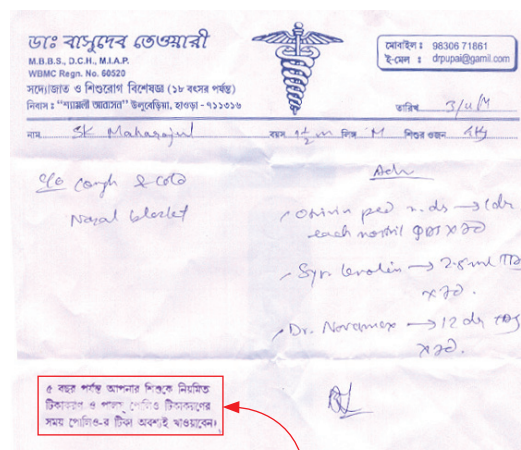
UNICEF polio ambassador, Mr Amitabh Bachchan, has been conferred the Polio Eradication Champion award by Rotary International for his invaluable support to the Polio Eradication Programme in India. Lauding the tireless work of the frontline workers, Mr Bachchan said, "We have to continue this wonderful work. I dedicate this award to our country men and assure my continued support to the efforts in making India and the world polio-free".



Mr Bachchan was conferred Rotary's Polio Eradication Champion award in Mumbai.

## Stamping out polio

Registered medical practitioners in polio high-risk areas of West Bengal are now putting a stamp on their prescription with polio messages. The NGOs working as community mobilizers for UNICEF started this initiative in Kolkata. In the last few months, this initiative has been expanded to Howrah and South 24 Parganas. The endorsement of polio messages by the popular pediatricians have helped address refusals in these areas due to fear of polio vaccine.



A doctor's prescription slip with the polio message.

## DID YOU KNOW ?

- India has not reported any case of polio for over a year and has been removed from WHO's list of polio endemic countries.
- India would be certified polio free only in 2014 if the country does not report any more cases of polio caused by indigenous poliovirus.
- As of 5th of June, 67 cases have been reported globally from Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Chad compared with 195 cases in the same period last year.

## Veteran of war against polio

**58**-year-old Vikram Jha has actively participated in the polio immunization campaigns since the launch of the eradication programme in India in 1995. Currently he is a transit vaccinator in Simri Bakhtiyarpur Block of Saharsa, Bihar. "I am proud to be associated with the polio eradication programme. I want to see the children of my country free of this crippling disease," Jha says. Vikram Jha's spirit and enthusiasm is an inspiration for everyone in the team to continue the fight against polio.



Vikram Jha (right) with team member Hemchand Jha has worked tirelessly for a polio-free India.

## Bulawa Toli: The young advocates for polio

The commitment and enthusiasm displayed by the Bulawa Toli from a local primary school in Dabkaura village of Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh, resulted in an impressive 96% booth coverage during the April polio round. Mr Sewa Ram, the school headmaster, organized polio rallies with his students and formed a bulawa toli with the support of BMC Narendra Kumar. Donning caps and badges with polio messages, the young advocates ran house-to-house shouting slogans and blowing whistles, drawing parents' attention and reminding them to bring their children for polio immunization at the polio booths. The young brigade, accompanied by the community mobilizers, even carried children to the booth for immunization, with their parents' consent.



Children from the bulawa toli as they go about on booth day.

## STAR MOBILIZER



CMC Ayesha counsels a mother on polio and routine immunization.

Ayesha is a CMC from Maulana Azad Nagar in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. When she joined the SMNet in 2007, there was widespread community resistance to polio and routine immunization. Ayesha resolved to mobilize and motivate these resistant families for immunization. She made regular visits to these households advising mothers on health and nutritional issues, such as the benefits of institutional delivery, importance of routine immunization and exclusive breastfeeding, and use of zinc and ORS to manage diarrhea. She also engaged influencers from the community and peer groups to convince these families.

With her determination and sincerity, Ayesha has established trust and rapport with the families who now approach her for advice on various health issues. Today, there is not a single family in her area that refuses polio vaccination or routine immunization. 71% of the children in the area are fully immunized.

## QUOTABLE

"In Asia and Africa, tens of millions of government workers, Rotarians, volunteers, political and religious leaders (not to mention parents) have worked for decades to ensure that every child is protected. Just two years ago India was home to half of all the world's children with polio. Now, thanks to a concerted drive, we were able to celebrate India's first polio-free year in history."

**Ban Ki-moon**

Secretary-General, United Nations

## Protecting Lives, Protecting Borders

The jawans of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) are protecting borders as well as the lives of children in the bordering areas of East Champaran in Bihar. Having joined hands with the SMNet, this force lends its support to the transit mobilizers by generating awareness through pre-round mass awareness rallies and setting up the highly visible polio gates at the borders. Their contribution to the programme is remarkable. Coverage in Sikta alone has gone up from 254 in March 2011 to 361 in the corresponding month this year.



The jawans of SSB support the SMNet during the polio round.

## POLIO FACTS

- ♦ Every child must be immunized every time, especially newborns who are vulnerable due to their low immunity. It is safe to give OPV to children suffering from mild illness such as cold, cough, fever and diarrhea.
- ♦ If a child has missed the polio dose during the round, the child should be immunized at the next planned session. Immunization is available free of cost at government health facilities.