



Chhayankan (Visual Art)

Freedom from Polio, chained to the veil!

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On January 14, 2014 India became polio free as not a single case was reported in three years. The polio eradication campaign was launched in 1995, that year the estimated number of polio cases was 1,50,000. The number came down to 741 in 2009, 42 in 2010 and the last case was reported on 13 January 2011. During the pulse polio campaign, on each National Immunization Day nearly 2.3 million vaccinators under the direction of 1,55,000 supervisors visited 209

million houses to administer 172 million children under five years of age across the country. To reach people on the move, mobile vaccination teams immunize children at railway stations, inside running trains, at bus stands, market places, construction sites, etc. Around 5 million children were immunized by transit and mobile teams during every round in UP, Bihar and Mumbai alone.[1]

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This picture is a testimony of the commitment shown by the workers in making India polio free. The health worker is administering polio drops in a school compound; her veil represents the strict custom practiced in villages in north India where a married woman must cover her face in front of men. It is pertinent to ask a question: Freedom from polio achieved, when will women achieve freedom from male dominance?

Reference

1. India Polio Fact Sheet, January 2012. [cited 2014 Mar 26]. Available from <http://www.polioeradication.org/Portals/0/Document/InfectedCountries/India/PolioIndiaFactSheet.pdf>
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