

On 26th October 2012, I was informed by the District Governor of Rotary Rtn (Dr.) Rakesh Prasad and PDG Rtn. Sandeep Narang, Senior Rtn Dr.(Prof.S.S.Jha) President Rotary Club of Ranchi Rtn. Rekha Singh that I was chosen to be a part of a Polio Corrective Surgery Camp team which was planned to be conducted in Nigeria representing the Rotary District 3250 from 1st December to 13th December 2012.

Herewith I am presenting my report about visit to Abuja in Nigeria from 1st December to 13th December.

I, along with my Anaesthetist friend Dr.U.K.Sinha, arrived Mumbai on 30th November 2012. We stayed in Mumbai that night. The next day (1st December) at about 5 pm we arrived at Platinum Suite, where I met all the other members of the tour. We had a meeting about planning for the trip. There I came to know that we were a part of a team of 25 members including 12 Orthopaedic Surgeon, 5 Anaesthetists, 1 Pathologist, 1 General Surgeon and 6 Volunteers. The meeting was presided by the Past District Governor Rtn Dr.Deepak Purohit who is the Project Chairman and Past Dist. Governor Dr.Rajiv Pradhan - Project Counsellor. The meeting was followed by dinner.

We proceeded to airport at about 1 am along with medical equipments, supplies, consumables and all cartons of medicine and instruments.

About 5am we boarded our flight for ADDIS ABABA from where we changed the flight for Abuja at 12:30 local time. We landed at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International airport which is named after the Nigerian first president. At Abuja many people came to receive us. Among them were PDG (Rtn) Saliu Osifumhe Ahmed (Project Chairman), Past Rotary International President Jonathan B.Majiyagbe, A.G.Rtn. Sikru. We reached at The Hotel Top Rank at Utako of District Abuja. A Welcome party was organised for us at night.

The next morning i.e on the 3rd December, our project was inaugurated by The Honorable Health Minister of Nigeria Rtn.Dr.Onyebuchi Chukuku. This was preceded by National Anthem of both the countries.

The next day we were divided into two groups – one going to University of Abuja Teaching Hospital and other to Federal Medical Centre at Keffi in Nassarawa state. I was in the group going to Kaffi – about 70km from our hotel, taking 1 hour and 30 mins to drive. We had meeting with the Hospital medical supritendent, Head of Department of orthopaedics, medical staffs and Indian and Nigerian volunteers. We were warmly welcomed by the hospital authorities and very humbly offered any kind of help we needed. Then we were taken around the hospital to acquaint with the hospital environment and after that we started our work.

Our working hours in OT was 8:30am to 5pm. I was assisted by Nigerian Orthopaedic surgeon and nurses. I was surprised to see that the type of cases which we operated in India 15 years back in small children still prevail in Nigeria. The deformities due to Cerebral palsy, Clubfoot and other congenital conditions were also prevalent other than those due to polio. Our team conducted soft tissue Release, Bony operations and tendon transfers, depending upon the age, deformities and severity of deformities. I have always loved teaching and I found that the Nigerian doctors who worked with me were very curious to learn the operative procedures and follow-up. I loved training them.

The day used to be tiring, but the encouragement for the next OT was the 3 magical words:- **“Well done, Sir”** and there was a burst of energy to do more. When we finished our daily work and walked out of the OT, the smiling and the thankful faces of the guardian provided the encouragement and energy for the next day.

The silent message behind this camp was to make our patients and parents our messenger to the Nigerian society to encourage their people to immunize their children against polio so that it could be eradicated from Nigeria as it has been done almost all over including India.

Nearly 600 patients were pre-selected from Polio endemic areas of Nigeria including Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Jigawa, Banche Nainja, Yobe, Nasarawa, Borno, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara and brought to Kubwa for screening with the help of Federal Ministry of health, Nigeria.

780 surgeries on 353 polio affected and other conditions like cerebral palsy, congenital diseases etc were done.

Another highlight of the mission was that the Nigerian Federal Minister of Health Dr. Onyebuchi Chukuu, who himself is an orthopaedic Surgeon and an Active Rotarian joined the Indian Doctors to operate a polio corrective surgery on 6 year old girl from Zamfara as a gesture of solidarity with the team from India.

Every evening was eventful after our hospital work. We were invited by Indian High Commissioner H.E Mr. Sachdeva at High Commission Of India in Nigeria on 05.12.12; Rotary club of Garki on 06.12.12 where we interchanged our club flags followed by dinner ; We were invited by Past Rotary International President Jonathan B. Majiyagbe at his house for dinner where we were facilitated by giving memento by Felix A.E. Obadan district Governor 9125. On 07.12.12, A party was organised at Serraton Hotel by Federal Ministry of Nigeria where Health Minister of Nigeria presented an appreciation memento to our team. It was followed by dinner.

Sunday was a free day. We were taken around Abuja. Abuja is the capital of Nigeria. It is a planned city built in 1980, with the population of 776,298 (2006 census). Abuja's geography is defined by ASO rock, a 400 mt monolith left by water erosion. The Presidential Complex, National Assembly, Supreme Court are the main occupant of the town extending to the south of the rock. Nigerian national Mosque and Nigerian National Christian Centre are the prestigious landmarks. It is the wealthiest and most expensive city of Nigeria. It is in tropical belt with a dry climate.

In afternoon all rotary clubs of Nigeria united and there was a good entertainment followed by lunch. On the last day i.e: 11.12.12, a party was organised in our hotel where an appreciation certificate was presented by The Rotary International District 9110, 9125, 9140 to each member of our team.

God has His ways to make us useful to this world and I now realise that I have been very fortunate that I was a part of this great mission and could add my little bit to change the life of very few children of God. Perhaps it would not have been possible without the active support of wonderful people who were the driving force behind me like Past RI President Rtn Raja Saboo, Past President RI Rtn Kalyan Banerjee, Past President Jonathan B. majiyagbe, DG Rtn Dr. Rakesh Prasad,

PDG Rtn. Sandeep Narang, Senior Rtn Dr.(Prof.)S.S.Jha, PDG Rtn Dr.Deepak Purohit, PDG Rtn Dr.Rajiv Pradhan, DG Rtn Dr.Girish Gune, last but not the least President of my club Rtn Rekha Singh. Our efforts would not have brought any fruit without the whole hearted support of our Nigerian Rotarian colleagues especially PDG Rtn Saliu Ahmed, DG Rtn Felix A.E.Obadan , DG Rtn Kmoru Omotosho and Rtn Onyebuchi Onuoha,and AG Rtn Sikru – my heartfelt thanks to all of them. And of course, Thankyou to Dr.U.K.Sinha, my Anaesthetist friend who accompanied me from Ranchi, and a great companion throughout my journey.