

Impressions

For Private Circulation only

Theme of this
Bulletin:

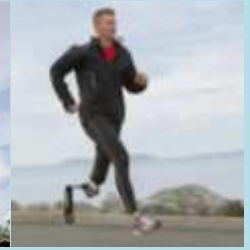
**Nirbhau- Nirvair
(No Fear - No Hate)**

No. 23/31 – October 2023
(Monthly e-Bulletin)
www.nevedac.com



Editor
Dr. V.J.S. Vohra

**Fear never
builds the
future,
But FAITH
and Creating
HOPE in the
World does**



Disability leads to Ability of Super Humans YouTube

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Sahyog Artificial Limbs Project

[Click here](#) to see on YouTube

On 12th October 2023 plaster casts / measurements for 07 patients - 1 Above Elbow artificial arm, 3 Below Knee artificial legs, 2 above knee artificial legs and pair of Knee Ankle Foot Orthoses were done at Nevedac Prosthetic Clinic, Zirakpur. 6 beneficiaries for artificial limbs are being sponsored by PP Ashok Puri's brother, PP Anil Puri and his spouse R'Ann Teresa of Rotary Twin Cities Club, RID 5020 (USA) and his sister Mrs Asha Malhotra. 2 KAFO are being sponsored by PDG Rtn David Hilton, Rotary Club Dehradun.



The chief Guest of the function was PP Rtn Ritu Singal who is a Life Coach also. She gave a very inspiring talk to motivate the beneficiaries to go ahead in life with pride and dignity with a feeling that disability is no more a liability. She also announced that one more beneficiary will be sponsored by her. Also present were PP Rtn Ashok Puri, R'Ann Sudha Puri, R'Ann Indu Vohra and PP Rtn Dr VJS Vohra.



DS Bali 'Daman'
Senior Advocate and
famous Shayar of Chandigarh
Mob.: 9878828666

बेवजह किसी को सताया नहीं करते
दोस्त दोस्तों को भुलाया नहीं करते
हो कैसी भी महफ़िल मेरे यार
बिन बुलाए वहां जाया नहीं करते
बैठे हों जिस राह पे रहेज़न
उस राह से आया नहीं करते
साफ़ कीजिए अगर दिखाना है आईना
धुन्धला आईना किसी को दिखाया नहीं करते
गीत जिस की न हो लह
वह गीत 'दामन' गाया नहीं करते



Dr Vohra acknowledged the dynamic leadership of Sahyog District Chair PP Rtn Salil Bali. He said fitment of artificial limbs is a very professional prosthetic clinical process, which has to be carried out as per the norms and guidelines of Rehabilitation Council of India and WHO. Provision for follow up of patients is being maintained, which is very important aspect of the rehabilitation cycle.

PP Ashok Puri thanked Rtn Ritu Singal for her presence. Our immense gratitude to PP Anil Puri for his continuous support to Project Sahyog from USA.



**Big thanks to PP Anil
Puri and R'Ann Teresa
for once again showing
your generosity towards
Disability Empowerment**



**PP Salil Bali – Hope
Created, Gift of
Dignified Life and
Rotary Public Image
initiative**

**Donations for the cause of Disability Empowerment accepted under section 80-G of
Income Tax Act. Contact Dr VJS Vohra Mobile / Whatsapp: +91 9814006829**

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Statutory Warning Rehabilitation Council of India



भारतीय पुनर्वास परिषद्
सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मंत्रालय,
विभाजन सशक्तिकरण विभाग के अधीन एक सार्वजनिक निगम
REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA
A Statutory Body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)



STATUTORY WARNING

Practicing without RCI Registration
In Govt./Non Govt. Organization and by any Private Practitioner
is an Offence under section 13 (3) of RCI Act No. 34 of 1992

It has been observed by the Council that Children with Disabilities (Divyangjan) are being trained/ served by Quacks/Unqualified/Non-registered Personnel/Professionals.

If anyone found serving "Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)", without having RCI Certification, shall be prosecuted before the Court of Law under Section 13(3) of RCI Act, 1992 as under:

"Any person who acts in contravention of any provision of sub-section (2) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both".

General Public is requested to report such instances to the Council along with documentary evidence by post/fax/email to enable the Council to take appropriate action such as filing of FIR against such persons.

"This Statutory Warning is issued in public interest".

(Signature)
14.5.2019
(Dr. Subodh Kumar)
Member Secretary

B-22, Qutub Institutional Area, New Delhi - 110 016
Tel: 011-2653 2426, 2653 2364, 2653 4267, 2653 2816 Fax: 011-2653 4291
E-mail: rci-depawd@gov.in Website: www.rehabcouncil.nic.in

STATUTORY WARNING

PRACTICING WITHOUT RCI REGISTRATION IN GOVT. / NON GOVT. ORGANIZATION / PRIVATE PRACTITIONERS IS ILLEGAL UNDER RCI ACT NO. 34 OF 1992 U/S 13(3).

It has been observed by Council that Children with Disabilities are being served by quacks/unqualified Non Registered Personnel/Professionals.

If anyone found serving "Persons with Disabilities" without RCI Certification shall be prosecuted before the Court of Law under Section 13(3) of RCI Act, 1992.

"This Statutory Warning is issued in Public Interest".

Non-registration can have serious consequences :

- Not eligible to work in Government or Private Sector
- Not eligible to provide service in the field of disability Rehabilitation and Special Education
- Cannot practice as rehabilitation professional anywhere in India

For Registration apply through your institute from where you have qualified.

RCI
CERTIFICATION
is legally must.



MY RIGHT IS TO BE SERVED BY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL
DAYS OF CHARITY HAVE GONE

For further information please contact:



Member Secretary
REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA
A Statutory Body of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India
B-22, Qutub Institutional Area, New Delhi-110016
Phone: 01-11-2653 2364/26534267, Fax: 01-11-2653 4291
E-mail: rehabstat@nic.gov.in Visit us at: www.rehabcouncil.nic.in

Monthly e-bulletin, 'Impressions' is dedicated to late Colonel DS Vohra, Founder of Ministry of Defence **Artificial Limb Centre**, Pune and Founder of **Nevedac Prosthetic Centre**, Chandigarh, father of Dr VJS Vohra, Founder & CEO of **Nevedac Prosthetic Clinic** / Co-Founder of Nevedac Prosthetic Centre and Hony Prosthetic Adviser to Governments Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh.



Padma Awards
Ministry of Home Affairs
(Govt. of India)

Padma Shri (1988)
Col. (Retd.) Darshan Singh Vohra
Social Work
Chandigarh



Col. D.S. Vohra
(1915-1998)



Nevedac®
Prosthetic Clinic

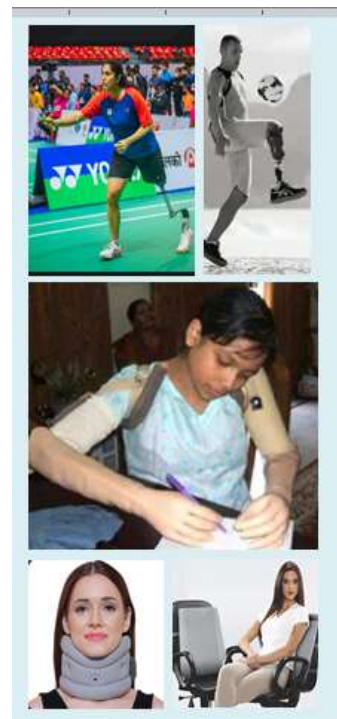
Dr. VJS Vohra
Sr. Consultant
Artificial Limbs & Orthotics
Rehabilitation Council of India
Certified Prosthetic Orthotic Professional
Regd No. RCI / AA00001

Hony. Prosthetic Adviser:
Governments of Punjab, Haryana,
Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh
Reimbursement for Govt Employees

ARTIFICIAL LIMBS
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Ageism: Untying the Knots

Author



We are caught in the web of ageism since we are just 4 years old. Old person is perceived as one who is weak, walks with the help of a stick, has grey or no hair and needs

help in most day to day tasks. Such stereotyping is reinforced by our multimedia, including films and television serials. Some people may go on to believe that the elderly are a burden to the family and the society as a whole. Ageism binds the elderly in a web. Like racism, the knots of this web need to be untied.

We continue with ageism negatively directed against the elderly, age 60 years and above. Ageism has negative effects on self esteem. It also affects the physical and mental health, social interactions, expectancy of life, financial status, job satisfaction, job opportunities, seeking and getting adequate medical care and insurances (life, health and travel). Only few of the negative effects have been scientifically studied, others are mere hypothesis.

Physical health. These effects are mostly due to self directed Ageism. Some may be also be due to the negative attitude of family members or the society at large. Not seeking medical care when sick. Even when medical care is sought, the health care provider just diagnoses it as 'age related, no treatment required.' Even when treatment is given, some do not take it regularly or refuse to observe dietary or other lifestyle changes. Above attitudes results in shorter lifespan of over 7 years as compared to others. Those with self directed Ageism take much longer to recover from diseases as compared to others. They have lower immunity. Elderly are found to be excluded from clinical



Maj General Krishan Chauhan
Retired Army Medical Corps
[Former Additional Director, AMC](#)

trials which could ultimately improve their health. The number of doctors who specialise in diseases of elderly, is quite limited as compared to paediatricians. With ever increasing number of seniors in our society, this problem needs to be addressed at the earliest.

Mental health and Psychological well being. Those with self directed Ageism may also have a feeling of worthlessness. They feel that they do not add value to the family and society. This negativity drops their cognitive abilities. Their memory begins to fade and they may become candidates for dementia. The family may start treating the elderly like a child. They are not given even simple domestic tasks thus making them feel worthless.

Social well being. Social isolation may be forced by the family's attitude, 'Don't go outside, you may get hurt'. It may also be due to low self esteem. Whatever the reason, such isolation further damages the mental health.

Financial and related effects. Retirement by itself is a psychological trauma. Age related or early retirement is a double jeopardy in physically and healthy individuals.

There is financial loss as well as loss of self worth. New job opportunities for the 'retired' persons are limited. Even those in a job may be

overlooked for promotions. They are not offered career improvement training courses. Targeted crimes against seniors on the digital platforms are the newer kinds of Ageism.

Ageism needs to be tackled in numerous ways, depending on it's occurrence. Self directed ageism is the most essential to win. If one can defeat low esteem due to increasing age and slowing down physically, half the battle is over. The age old saying that *Age is Just a Number*, is true in the 21st century. The expectancy of life has increased. Better housing, better diet, more knowledge, good medical facilities and immunisation has shifted the target of old age to a hundred years.

Do not stress over the wrinkles and greying hair. Or for that matter, minor lapses of memory. These are signs of maturation, accepting them gracefully remove a lot of stress and negativity. God and people admire our good intentions and actions, not our skin and hair. Do look after your physical health. Periodic health check ups, medication for any chronic disease and supplements as advised by the doctor must be taken. Do not blindly accept one doctor's words, "Your disease is due to old age. Nothing can be done." Take a second opinion even if the spouse or children disagree.

Make a list of your achievements till date. This will give you a positive attitude and confidence to deal with the ageists. Remain active. Don't buy that rocking chair. It just reminds us of inactivity and passivity. Be active, if you cannot run, walk upright. Do yoga, take part in homely chores and interest in the garden/ potted plants. Keep a pet and take care of it. It will keep you engaged. Volunteer for helping others. Mentor the juniors of your speciality / learned skills.

Continued on page 6.....

Sahyog Artificial Limbs project - A professional clinical process

Contributed by:

PP Dr VJS Vohra

Senior Consultant, Nevedac Prosthetic Clinic

Resource Person, Disability Empowerment, Rotary District 3080

Sahyog Artificial Limbs project was launched in August 2021 by PDG Ajay Madan, under the dynamic leadership of Sahyog District Chair PP Salil Dev Singh Bali. The project is being implemented by Rotary Club Chandigarh Midtown, with support of Rotarians and Rotary Clubs of RI District 3080. Over 330 beneficiaries have been provided artificial limbs till date under Project Sahyog.

Due prosthetic clinical procedure has been adopted as Prosthetics and Orthotics are specialized healthcare service that deals with the design, fabrication and fitting of prosthetic and orthotic devices to assist patients with physical disabilities and limb amputations. Prosthetics and orthotics services and facilities have to be provided by certified prosthetic orthotic clinicians, who are qualified, recognized and certified by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), the regulatory body responsible for overseeing that prosthetic orthotic treatment is carried out as per provisions of Rehabilitation Council of India Act, to ensure the quality, safety and care provided to persons with disabilities. The RCI Act is a legal framework that establishes the standards and guidelines for prosthetic and orthotic services, and unqualified individuals or facilities and camps offering these services, is illegal and are liable for prosecution under the RCI Act.



It is essential for individuals seeking prosthetic or orthotic services to ensure they are being attended by certified professionals who comply with the RCI's standards to receive safe and effective care. This helps maintain the quality of prosthetic and orthotic treatment and ensures that patients receive good quality devices and support they need.

An overview of the steps involved for fitment of artificial limbs and devices adopted by a prosthetic clinician in a well equipped prosthetic clinic, is given below:

Clinical Assessment: The first step is the prosthetic clinician assesses the patient's physical condition, amputation level, age, medical history and functional needs. Patient's overall health and lifestyle is analyzed for determining the appropriate type of prosthesis and components.



Physical Examination: The prosthetic clinician performs a physical examination of the residual limb (stump). The clinician checks for any skin conditions, swelling, scarring, and any specific anatomical factors that could affect prosthetic fitting. A detailed analysis is conducted by the clinician.

Measurement and Plaster Cast: Measurements of the residual limb, that is the stump, are taken for the length and circumference, taking care of various anatomical landmarks. A plaster cast is taken of the stump to create a model of the residual limb. Plaster bandage is wrapped around the stump to capture the contours to create a negative plaster mold which is then filled with plaster of Paris to convert it into a positive mold. Necessary modifications are done on the mold for creating the socket, which is the most important part of the prosthesis that fits over the stump.



Socket Creation and Fabrication: The socket, which is a crucial component of the prosthesis, is created based on the positive model. It is custom-designed to provide a secure and comfortable fit. The socket is made from various materials and chemicals and it is shaped to distribute pressure evenly on the residual limb.

Continued on next page.....

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Sahyog Artificial Limbs project - A professional clinical process

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Component Selection: Once the socket is fabricated, the prosthetic clinician selects appropriate components such as knee joints, pylon, foot and accessories for lower limb amputees, depending on the level of amputees and based on the patient's functional needs and lifestyle. For upper limb amputees selection has to be made by the prosthetic clinician for prosthetic hand, cosmetic gloves, elbow joint and other components depending on the level of the amputation.



Assembling and Alignment: The chosen components are assembled and aligned to create the artificial limb. Proper alignment is crucial to ensure that the prosthesis functions effectively and provides stability during walking.

Fitting and Adjustments: The patient is fitted with the prosthesis, and adjustments are done to ensure a proper fitment. This involves fine-tuning and alignment of socket with the component parts to ensure maximum function and comfort to patients.

Training and Rehabilitation: The patient is provided with training and rehabilitation to adapt to the new prosthesis, its maintenance and to perform daily activities with artificial limb.

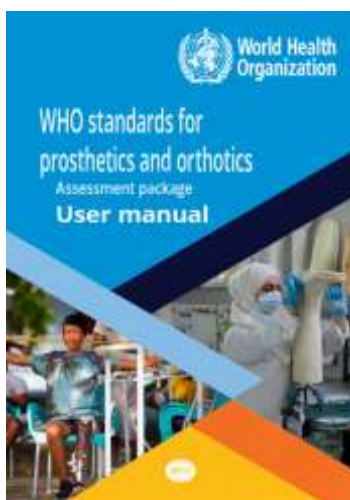
Gait training: Gait training in the parallel bars is very important for fitment of artificial legs for the patients to learn how to walk with prosthetic leg.



Follow-up Care: A regular follow-up in the prosthetic clinic is very important part of rehabilitation process, to monitor the patient's progress and make necessary adjustments to the artificial limbs. Patients need a regular contact with the prosthetic clinician.



Throughout this process, the prosthetic clinician works closely with the patients to ensure that the artificial limb is tailored to their specific requirements, allowing them to regain confidence, mobility and independence.



World Health Organization has set Standards and issued Implementation manual for Prosthetics and Orthotics and identifies the requirements to be considered for prosthetic orthotic service. It urges the promulgation of State regulations to ensure that patients are protected from malpractice and poor-quality services. Prosthetics and orthotics clinicians are recognized as independent health professionals with a distinct professional title, profile and job description.

The enforcement of these guidelines and regulations primarily falls under the jurisdiction of individual countries and their respective regulatory bodies. In India the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) is the primary regulatory authority responsible for overseeing and regulating the prosthetic and orthotic service.

Running prosthetic clinic / establishments and camps without qualified prosthetic professionals is illegal and unethical, resulting to poor prosthetic orthotic service and many health complications for the patients. Follow-up care by a prosthetic clinician is not there once the camp is over.

Unqualified persons providing healthcare service are liable to be prosecuted. Indian courts have passed orders against illegal and unprofessional practices in healthcare services. These legal actions are taken to protect the rights and well-being of patients and to ensure that healthcare services are provided by qualified and certified professionals in compliance with the law.

Approaching 60 & 65s

A friend of mine crossed 60 and is heading to 65. I asked him what's changing? He sent me following lines:

Yes, I am changing. After loving my parents, my siblings, my spouse, my children, my friends, now I have started loving myself.

Yes, I am changing. I just realised that I am not "Atlas". The world does not rest on my shoulders.

Yes, I am changing. I now stopped bargaining with vegetables & fruits vendors. After all, a few Rupees more is not going to burn a hole in my pocket but it might help the poor fellow save for his daughter's school fees.

Yes, I am changing. I pay the taxi driver without waiting for the change. The extra money might bring a smile on his face. After all he is toiling much harder for a living than me.

Yes, I am changing. I stopped telling the elderly that they've already narrated that story many times. After all, the story makes them walk down the memory lane & relive the past.

Yes, I am changing. I've learnt not to correct people even when I know they are wrong. After all, the onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.

Yes, I am changing. I give compliments freely and generously.

Contributed by



Major Jasbir Singh Vohra

After all it's a mood enhancer not only for the recipient, but also for me.

Yes, I am changing. I've learnt not to bother about a crease or a spot on my shirt. After all, personality speaks louder than appearances.

Yes, I am changing. I walk away from people who don't value me. After all, they might not know my worth, but I do.

Yes, I am changing. I remain cool when someone plays dirty politics to outrun me in the rat race. After all, I am not a rat and neither am I in any race. But, the best part is that you still remain a rat after winning a rat race.

Yes, I am changing. I am learning not to be embarrassed by my emotions. After all, it's my emotions that make me human.

Yes, I am changing. I have learnt that it's better to drop the ego than to break a relationship. After all, my ego will keep me aloof whereas with relationships I will never be alone.

Yes, I am changing. I've learnt to live each day as if it's the last. After all, it might be the last .

Yes, I am changing. I am doing what makes me happy. After all, I am responsible for my happiness, and I owe it to me.

We can all learn to treat others with more compassion and stop being judgmental. Peace be with you all.

Ageism: Untying the Knots

Continued from page 3

Meeting and socialising with other seniors is an excellent way to combat ageism. Join a Senior citizens club. Meet and discuss ageism with other seniors. Go on outings with them. Read, listen to videos, watch the news. Learning new skills is not difficult if we really want to. Try not to be dependent. Remain Positive. Remember, the more we age the wiser we are. Learn from youngsters.

Our grand children may be a better teacher of newer gadgets and technology. On the other hand, passing on skills or knowledge to younger persons refreshes our brain and improves our self confidence. Interacting with grandkids can keep one alert and mentally sharp. Do not talk about 'good old days'. Rather, talk about how newer technology or ideas can improve efficiency. Keep your network open. Keep options open too. If one door closes, others will open. Ageing is inevitable. We can start by spreading the message against ageism to create awareness on the society. Can we build pressure on our elected members to make laws against Ageism? Big movements start with small steps.

Please take the first step. If you are young and able, remember, the children are watching. They will behave in the same manner as their parents. By then it may be too late.



Paul Harris – The Founder of Rotary A Lawyer by Profession

Paul Percy Harris was born on April 19, 1868. He played his innings till January 27, 1947 (78 years). He spent 42 years of his life with Rotary (1905-1947). 40 years with his legal profession (1896–1936). He blended Rotary with his legal profession. He was the founder of Rotary. Rotary was his gift to the world.

Paul Harris as a school going boy was mischievous. He was even expelled from the High School. He went to study law at the state university of Iowa. He graduated in law in 1891.

Paul's journey as a lawyer, the details of which are not easily available. In spite of effort. Still, I am weaving some together. Paul was prominent in his profession. He was a member of the Board of Managers of the Chicago Bar Association at the International Congress of Law at Hague. He was also a committee member of the American Bar Association. Even in the field of law, he was honoured with Doctor of Laws by the University of Vermont. Also, Doctor honoris causa, College of Law, Lima, Peru. His contribution in the field of Law was duly recognized.

After doing law, he set out on a five year mission. To learn life by travelling. Living in different parts. Experiencing different cultures. Imbibing wholesome mindset. Equally, an outlook to deal with different challenges of life. He grew well. He started his legal practice in 1896. He set up his office in a small rented suite in Chicago. In Chicago to get good practice was not a problem because of the social and business conditions prevailing during that time.

How the Rotary idea germinated. It is an interesting story. In 1900, Paul had been in the legal profession for four years. He went with a professional friend to his home. After dinner, they both went out for a stroll. Paul's friend greeted different businessmen in their stores with a friendly feeling. A thought crossed Paul's mind. Why not such greetings and fellowship in Chicago also. He continued to toy with the idea for sometime. He was professionally also engaged. He took his time. Finally, Paul invited his three clients who were local businessmen to meet on February 23, 1905. Their names were Silvester, Gustavus and Hiram. They belonged to different professions and businesses. Different faiths. The founding four were of different origins, USA, German, Swedish and Irish. All the four agreed to form a club drawing one member from each business or profession. Acquiring new friends. Building friendship and fellowship. Meeting every week by rotation. This is how Rotary took its birth. Soon, Paul realized that Rotary required greater purpose. Service to community - to humanity. The rest is history.

Paul had an accidental meeting with Manual Munoz, an old timer at the university level. This meeting proved of historical importance. Munoz joined Rotary. He went on a business trip to San Francisco. He not only marketed his company product but Rotary also. He met Homer Wood, a lawyer by profession. He kindled his curiosity about Rotary. Wood started correspondence with Paul. This led to the formation of world's second Rotary club in 1908 at San Francisco.

Rotary started moving fast. By the year 1910, 16 Rotary clubs had been chartered with a total membership of 1800 Rotarians. Accordingly, a conference of national association of Rotary clubs (NARC) was organized in 1910. Each club was to nominate one delegate for every 50 Rotarians. 29 delegates representing different clubs attended the conference. Paul was elected as President. He was also elected President the next year. At the end of his second term, Paul resigned.

He cited demands of his professional practice and personal life as the reasons for doing so. He was elected **President Emeritus** by the convention action. A title that he held until his death. No other President had this singular honour. The Rotary club started functioning outside US at Winnipeg, Canada. Thereafter, the Rotary moved to different parts of the world.



He tore the jacket while climbing a barbed wire fence. Jean mended his jacket. This led to their lifelong association. They were married on July 2, 1910. In 1912, they moved to their own house in Chicago. Jean was not only the life partner. She was also the Rotary partner. She invariably accompanied Paul on all his Rotary meets and visits. The life history of Paul remained intertwined with the story of Rotary. The year 1910, is significant for another reason. On a Saturday afternoon, Paul was walking with a strikingly attractive Jean. Paul was wearing a fine Harris Tweed jacket.

He was a lawyer among lawyers. His legal professional background helped him in picking up his three clients as the original Rotarians. From 1905 to 1936, the Rotary grew so well. So rapidly. These were the three decades when he was most active professionally also. He had refused the third time as President (1912-13), because he could not cop up both with Rotary and his profession. The profession of law was demanding. It is rare feat that he could blend his legal profession with Rotary.

These were the decades when Rotary from a sapling grew into a tree. In fact Rotary trees emerged in different parts of the globe. Alongwith Rotary, he also grew professionally. Truly, Rotary and legal and judicial coparcenary are partners in service. Judges find out the truth and do justice. Doing justice is divine service.

A reference to Mahatma Gandhi would be relevant. He was a Barrister. He was admitted as an advocate of the High Court of Bombay in 1891, the year in which Paul did his law. Gandhi practiced for 22 years. He would accept the cases of only those clients where he was convinced that they were speaking the Truth. He would never tutor the client or the witness. His clients were very happy with him. They used to bring such truthful clients to Gandhi. They would take the others to other lawyers. This was in Rotary spirit. I wonder, whether Paul knew about Gandhi. I doubt. About one thing, I am sure. Paul would have loved Gandhi to be embraced as a Rotarian.

Paul was not a sparkling speaker. His wisdom. His vision. They were thought provoking. He was quotable. The breadth of his knowledge was unending. He retired from his law practice in 1936. He wanted to be free and more time for Rotary. He was travelling all over the world. In the name of Rotary. He was a distinguished looking gentleman. Tall. Slender. He breathed Rotary. He nurtured Rotary. Rotary scaled new heights. Yet, he was humble and humane. Paul and Jean strengthened Rotary together. Jean, the wife was equally involved in Rotary. She went with Paul all over. She fully shared the glory of Rotary with him. She did far more for Rotary than is generally realized.

Paul passed away on 27 January 1947. Thank you, Paul for this gift to the world. The Rotary tree was 42 years old when you left us. Today, it is running its 119th year. Adding years only means, it is getting stronger and stronger. Rotary is a perfume. Its fragrance is spreading. It will continue to spread.



PP Rtn Dr Balram K Gupta
Lifetime Achievement Awardee
RI District 3080

Disability as a driving force for success

Story by a Polio Survivor Badara Dafé, Rotary Club of Dakar Soleil, Senegal

Polio is a very coercive and disabling disease. But as a polio survivor, I've been able to draw extra motivation from the disabilities the disease left me with. It gave me a taste for effort and hard work. I was able to turn what seemed like a threat into an opportunity.

I contracted polio at the age of one in Dakar, Senegal. The fever lasted for days, and paralysis set in, especially on the right side of my legs. Although the doctors initially thought I had malaria, it ended up being polio.

After several operations and countless sessions of functional re-education, I was able to walk on crutches. It didn't stop me from playing soccer with my friends, going to the beach, and so on. Overall, I have excellent memories of my childhood.

Even so, I was aware of my reduced mobility and that's why I concentrated on my studies. I quickly realized that I had to work harder than able-bodied people to succeed. I was able to do my classes without any difficulty, with the precious help of my schoolmaster, who would let me go 10 minutes before the other pupils so that he wouldn't knock me over.

I studied mathematics and computer science in Senegal, then continued my studies at the Université Paris Saclay in Orsay, where I graduated with a degree in computer science, specializing in databases. Having started my career in Paris, I worked for a number of major French companies, before returning to Senegal in 2000 to join the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO). I served there for 21 years before recently setting up my own business consultancy firm.

I have been thankful for the ability to study and work and earn a living with dignity, and for a mother who helped me face every obstacle and accompanied me with tireless dedication. My family and all those around me have played, and continue to play, a vital role. Those of us with disabilities face difficulties of various kinds: accessibility, apprehension, stigmatization, and isolation. But anything is possible with a strong mind and an understanding, committed environment.

I was introduced to Rotary in 2013 by a friend who was a doctor and member of the Rotary Club of Dakar Soleil. He explained Rotary's polio eradication efforts. I immediately said to myself that I wanted to be part of this noble effort. Today, I'm president of my club and very much involved in the Senegal Polio Committee.

Polio has no cure but is preventable by vaccine. As a Rotarian and polio survivor, I urge you to join my fellow Rotary members and I in our continued effort to eradicate this disease. No child should ever have to suffer from its effects again.



Excerpted by
Mukesh Arneja
Past District Governor
Rotary District 3012, Delhi

Impressions is a monthly e-Bulletin, its theme being Nirbhau - Nirvair (No Fear - No Hate), to provide independent platform for sharing developments in Disability Empowerment - Artificial Limbs and Assistive Technology / Devices, Rotary Information of humanitarian service to advance goodwill and peace around the world, Healthcare matters, non-political and good news/topics – serious or humorous, about general interests on domestic and international fronts. The aim of this e-Bulletin is to encourage new ideas and original thinking with a positive approach.

Note: For advertisements in this bulletin please contact Dr VJS Vohra on Mobile / Whatsapp: +91 9814006829