

Crippling blow to polio

Ulemas played major role in educating Muslim community

Rajesh Kumar Singh
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What they did right

CONSISTENT EFFORTS of the State Muslim Ulema Committee in the drive against polio have helped reduce the number of polio cases in the community. Out of the 123 polio cases reported in UP till first week of July, 40 cases (33 per cent) are from Muslim community while 83 cases (67 per cent) are from other communities.

But this was not the case a year ago, with 70 per cent of the polio victims belonging to the Muslim community. "People were reluctant to give a polio dose to their children as the western countries supplied the vaccines", said Maulana S Kalbe Sadiq.

"But today the efforts of the health department officials and the ulema committee has paid off with more and more people coming forward to vaccinate their kids." The ule-

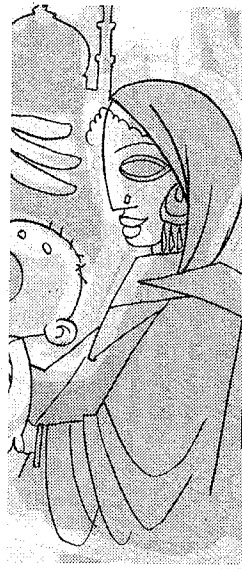
■ The State Muslim Ulema Committee came forward to educate community members to get their children vaccinated

■ The ulema committee condemned the fatwa issued by certain sect against the vaccine

■ Even the Saudi Arabian government asked Haj pilgrims to carry polio vaccination certificate

■ The committee spoke to break the misconception in mosques, madrasas and at religious congregations

ma belonging to various sects- Barelvis and Deobandis came on single platform. They educated people; calls were made during prayers at mosques, madrasas and in religious congregation. Maulana Fazlur Rahman Waizee, a member of the



ulema community said, "in the Kareli area of Allahabad large number of Muslim parents refused to administer vaccine to their children. I visited Kareli mosque and held a meeting with the local people after prayer. They returned convinced and all

the children were vaccinated." Maulana Khalid Rasheed Faranagi Mahali said the ulema committee condemned the fatwa issued by certain sect against vaccine. "We told the community members that there was nothing in the content of the vaccine that could be termed a 'haram' (unholy). Even the Saudi Arabian government had issued an order that those coming for Haj should carry polio vaccination certificate," he said. The international polio chairman of Rotary International, Robert Scott said efforts of the ulemas were a turning point in the fight against polio. Director, Rotary International, Ashok Mahajan said along with polio the ulema committee will focus on other diseases. "We would constitute such committee in Bihar and West Bengal where large number of cases have been reported," he said.