

## These three decades were worth it, says Dr Rao

04 April 2015 | Features | By Rahul Koul Koul

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The rotavirus vaccine was launched on March 09, 2015 by the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi at Delhi. Developed by Hyderabad based Bharat Biotech, the oral rotavirus vaccine, ROTAVAC has been proved to be safe and effective in preventing rotavirus diarrhoea that annually kills nearly 80 thousand children under the age of 5 years.

However, it is important to remember that such initiatives don't succeed until there are people whose persuasion skills keep the partnerships going. This initiative too had its heroes. Sharing his experiences is one of them.

"Have been fortunate to be the part of vaccine development all through," says, Dr T S Rao, senior advisor, department of biotechnology who has been associated with the programme for three decades.

"I still remember the day 25 years ago when both Dr M K Bhan and Dr Roger Glass walked into my room at DBT and we had a fruitful discussion for hours. This laid the foundation of matrix of long term efforts by hundreds of researchers that was based on pure passion to do something for nation. No doubt global partnerships later on added value and made the vaccine

possible," Dr Rao told BioSpectrum feeling nostalgic about the experiences he had while spearheading the programme.

Dr Rao credits all the joint work done by agencies in India and abroad with equal support from prominent scientists and bureaucrats. "This surely serves an example for the next stage and shows how 'Make in India' is possible with persuasion and continuation to ensure sustainability" he summed up.