

## Parent Better Informed Now: Survey

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Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) coverage evaluation survey 2010 finds that parents of six percent children refuse vaccines for their kids while 14 percent make delay in completing the full dose of six vaccines.

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One percent children still remain out of EPI coverage, says the EPI survey, findings of which were disseminated at a seminar in the capital on Wednesday.

Nielson Bangladesh conducted the countrywide survey between May and July 2010 to assess that how many children are vaccinated against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, tuberculosis, polio, and measles before completing first birthday.

"The number of fully vaccinated children last year increased by four percent from 2009," EPI's deputy programme manager Md Tawheed Hassan said.

Of the non-vaccinated children, according to the survey, 24 percent found it hard to reach the vaccine point while 18 percent fear side-affect like raised body temperature.

Speaking at the seminar, state minister for health Mujibur Rahman Fakir emphasised on concerted efforts to bring all the children under EPI coverage.

Health secretary Humayun Kabir suggested stepping up efforts in areas where the coverage was still low.

"Children in hard to reach areas, including marshlands, hilly areas and where religious superstitions are still predominant, remain out of vaccine coverage," Hassan told bdnews24.com.

"Even some children of 'very busy' parents in urban areas also remain out of vaccination," he said.

Rajshahi division was the highest coverage region while Sylhet division the lowest in 2010.

"Strong monitoring brought us the success," civil surgeon of Rajshahi district Shah Amanullah Chowdhury told bdnews24.com. "We award our best performing field workers and supervise their activities regularly."

An EPI official of Sylhet division cited superstitions and poor communication network as reasons for their poor performance.

Hassan, however, hoped that they would be able to bring more kids under vaccination coverage in the coming years as 6,500 field workers were being imparted training.

"We will launch interpersonal communication and take steps to increase the coverage in the hard to reach areas," he said.

Aiming to reduce child deaths from the vaccine-preventable six diseases, the government started EPI activities in 1979. EPI has now over 200,000 vaccine outreach centres, 24 in each union, across the country.

Apart from EPI's round the year routine immunisation programme, the government also conducts special campaign for

polio vaccines twice a year.

Source: bdnews24.com